



# FORT DUPONT COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SHAPED BY HISTORY & ANCHORED IN NATURE **OCTOBER 2021**

## FORT DUPONT GREEN INITIATIVES - BIO BASINS

There are a number of different stormwater management methods in use in this country; green roofs, rain barrels, permeable pavements, vegetated swales, etc. At Fort DuPont, we are incorporating bioretention areas, which are shallow, landscaped depressions that allow runoff to pond in a designated area, then filter slowly through soil and vegetation. Small-scale bioretention areas are also known as rain gardens. They are not only effective at attenuating peak runoff, they can also remove stormwater runoff pollutants.

A bioretention system consists of a soil bed planted with suitable non-invasive (preferably native) vegetation, and layered underneath with at least two feet of soil-based

bio-media before the existing subsoil. Stormwater runoff entering the basin is filtered through the planting bed before infiltrating through all the layers into the existing subsoil below the soil bed. Vegetation in the top of the bed provides uptake of pollutants and runoff and helps maintain the pores and associated infiltration rates of the soil in the bed. The carefully chosen plants are those that thrive in a wet environment; they soak up much of the water and discharge it into the atmosphere.

These basins are engineered specifically not to overflow. Recently, we had a storm that deposited 6 inches of rain in two hours, and we were pleased to see that the biobasins worked exactly as they were designed.

### INSIDE

**DID YOU KNOW?**

A POLKTOWN HISTORY

**TWO IS BETTER**

MEET THE DONALDSONS

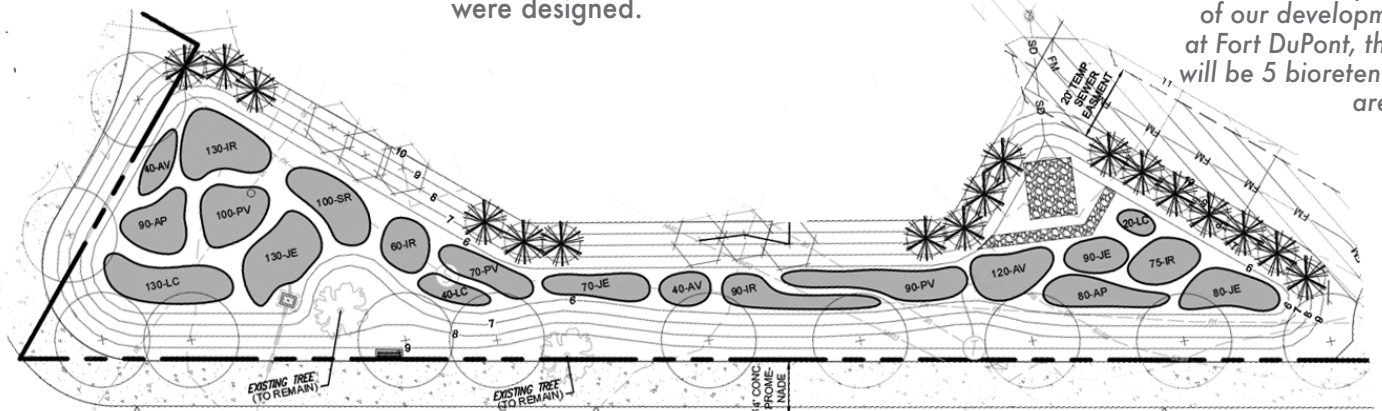
**MORE PROGRESS**

NATURAL GAS IS HERE

**INTRODUCING**

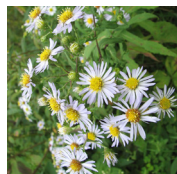
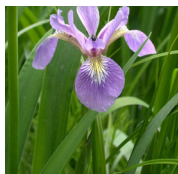
FORT DUPONT HONEY

...MORE



*In the first phase of our development at Fort DuPont, there will be 5 bioretention areas.*

The vegetation that will be planted on top of the substrate has been carefully chosen, first and foremost for its efficiency in the process, but they also beautify the natural landscape and support the pollinators. Some possible variations (shown below) are Softrush, Crooked Stem Aster, Broomsedge, Goldenrod, Blue Flag Iris, Cardinal Flower and Switchgrass.



DID YOU KNOW?

# A POLKTOWN HISTORY

BY CRAIG  
O'DONNELL  
PRESIDENT, FRIENDS  
OF THE AFRICAN  
UNION CEMETERY

Today, Polktown is a few houses at the Reedy Point Bridge approach, across from Ft. Dupont's entrance. Between 1830 and 1960 it became a thriving hamlet founded by free Blacks. The name (say "Poketown") came from a Mr. Polk, a white landowner.

The Friends of the African Union Cemetery, headquartered in Delaware City, worked with many partners to restore the hamlet's cemetery and create a public plaza along the canal trail. The cemetery originated in 1835 when several members of the Black community bought the land.

The Friends also devote energy to rediscovering Polktown's past. In 2010, University of Delaware researchers used census and tax records to reconstruct several free Black communities.

In 1800, only five free Black households (30 people) lived independently, with another 56 residing with white employers. With the C&D Canal in operation by 1829, Delaware City began to grow commercially. For decades, the surrounding landowners needed farm labor, so

Polktown grew over 30-plus years.

In 1845, free Blacks began buying single or double lots south of the canal.

In 1850, Polktown had 14 free Black households; by 1870 there were 29. In 1870, there were at least 17 lots on the Port Penn road and five more on 5th Street across the canal.

On the north side, Mary Trusty rented a home from a free Black with children John (7) and Elizabeth (15), and young couple Eliza and Walker Harris (laborer). Joshua Seiney was a 62-year old laborer. Neighbors George Young and his wife Martha housed Ann Smith (17) and their three children. William Gibbs (64) and his wife, Genty, owned two houses Gibbs was a boat steward.

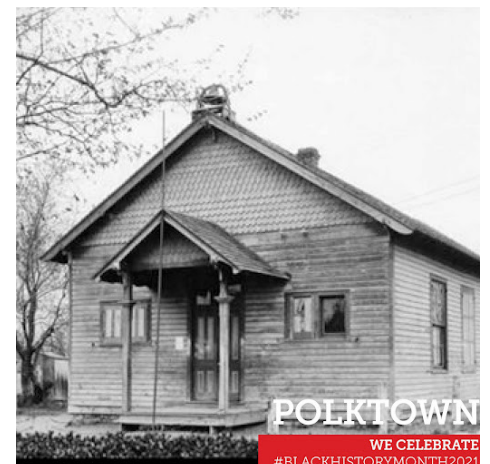
On the south side, Lebonsey Pernell was a Methodist pastor and the other 19 household heads were laborers like William Watson, Alexander Draper, George Shorter or widows Betsey Green and Caroline Caulk.

From 1850 to 1910, a period of 60 years, we find three generations of Boyers living in the same house, and extended

family right alongside. This speaks to the stability of the community. Women moved as they married, but sons brought wives and families into the house. Families in Polktown during this time were Shorter, Bostic, Sadler, Pernell, Bayard, Elbert, Draper, Ambrose, Reynolds, Watson, Webb, and more.

At least two churches existed: in 1872, St. Peters Methodist bought a 5th Street lot from James Henry. A second church was south of the canal. The Freedman's Bureau helped build a school, opening in 1867.

*The FAUCC Epitaph newsletters – 2019, 2020 and 2021 – contain a wealth of information about the place, and people, in Polktown. To learn more, see <https://www.africanunioncemetery.org/newsletter.htm#2020>*



# MOVING THE NEEDLE FORWARD

Yard waste will now be picked up in Fort DuPont on Mondays by Cutting Edge. If they miss some houses on Monday, they come back around on Tuesday. This service is included in your taxes so there is no additional cost to you. We also have arranged for special trash pickup of large, bulky items or electronics, etc., through GFL (Green For Life.) If you would like to arrange for a special pickup, call them to schedule it at 302-378-5400. Depending upon the item you want collected, they may charge a small fee.



The natural gas lines at Fort DuPont are now complete and residents may convert their propane service to natural gas at no cost to them. DelMarva has hired an independent contractor to contact each of the residents and work with them to make plans for their in-home conversion. Reskovitz Plumbing and Heating will be doing the work.

## DECLARATION UPDATE

A meeting was recently held with the residents working on the Homeowners' Declaration details. Comments are being vetted between members of this committee and will be incorporated into a document with suggestions.

That document will then be distributed to all residents for comments at the next community association meeting.

We will post that meeting information on Facebook and our website event calendar when set.

## PETS & PEOPLE OF FORT DUPONT MEET THE DONALDSONS



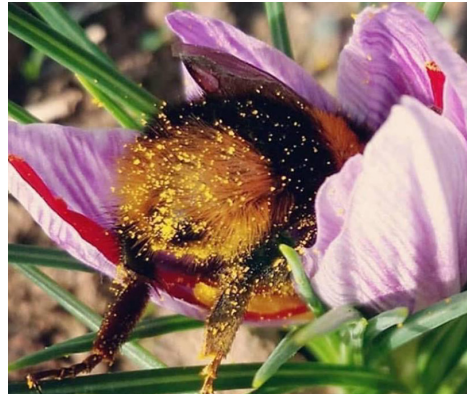
Sarah and Mark Donaldson moved to Fort DuPont back in August of 2020. They have been on quite the journey since then. In January of 2021 they were married. In August of 2021 they welcomed Kayleigh and Lacey into their family, which includes their two Pomeranians, Tobi and Chloe. They are excited to start their family in a wonderful neighborhood, surrounded by great neighbors and support from everyone around them.

# FORT DUPONT GREEN INITIATIVES - BEES

As we mentioned in a previous newsletter, our beekeeper, Thomas Lunt, managed to save a hive that was damaged from a storm here in Fort DuPont. It has now grown into 5 healthy hives and Fort DuPont Honey is born!

The use of locally grown honey has been reported as a way to help relieve symptoms of allergic rhino-conjunctivitis and associated allergic conditions including asthma. And you can't get any more local than in your own back yard!

We'll be making this honey available for purchase in limited quantities at \$18 per bottle. You can also pre-order your bottle by emailing Terry Buchanan at [tbuchanan@fortdupont.org](mailto:tbuchanan@fortdupont.org).



## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

1. The last four lots along Cook Street have settled with Rockwell.
2. New roofs have been installed on a number of historic buildings.
3. Renovation on Building 23 has started. This is where DNREC will relocate their park office.
4. Another 95 trees have been planted, bringing the 2-year total to 180.
5. Restoration on two of the Old Battery Lane duplexes is underway. Unfortunately, two of the six duplex buildings are to be demolished.
6. Construction of the roundabout is scheduled to start this coming February. Duration is expected to be three months.

### Residents:

*Do you have questions about Fort Dupont? Email them to Terry Buchanan, our Director of Communications at [tbuchanan@fortdupont.org](mailto:tbuchanan@fortdupont.org).*



## COME EXPLORE

A HISTORIC WATERFRONT COMMUNITY  
IN DELAWARE CITY, DE

[FORTDUPONT.ORG](http://FORTDUPONT.ORG)