

# Glen Echo Planning Report

Dear Friends of Glen Echo:

Here are the combined results of the November 7th public meeting/workshop, the October 28th and 30th residents'/instructors' workshop, and consultations with the park staff. The results of these sessions have been organized here into specific categories. If we haven't correctly translated what you said, or if you have thought of other issues since the meeting, please let us know. You can write to the Planning Team at this address:

Glen Echo Planning Team  
National Park Service  
MacArthur Boulevard  
Glen Echo, Maryland 20768

We appreciate your willingness to share your ideas with us. We will keep you informed of our progress and urge you to continue to participate.

The Planning Team

## Meeting/Workshop Results 11/80

### GOAL AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The National Park Service must establish specific goals and policies for the use and management of Glen Echo Park as a serious center for the arts and participatory arts education—a place where people are at work perfecting their skills and sharing their knowledge.

Note: There was some discussion about how the arts program ought to function. Whether to provide "Program" space or "Artist" space, or some combination of the two. No consensus was reached except that all agreed the park must decide and establish a policy on this issue.

2. In order to eliminate any impression of Glen Echo as just another arts and crafts center, residencies should offer something unique and of top quality. This could be facilitated by extending residency contracts to attract talented artists and allow them enough time to establish their studio and programs (at least three year residencies).

3. A program should be provided to feature a marriage of cultural awareness and environmental education.

4. All age groups should be included in programs and activities at Glen Echo, and specific opportunities for "mixed-generation" exchange should be provided.

5. Do not program events that are likely to exceed the capacity of park facilities (restrooms, seating, parking, food service, trash collection) to absorb the numbers of people, vehicles, traffic, etc.

6. All aspects of the Glen Echo experience must have an educational component, including support activities such as the operation of the art gallery and management of food service facilities.

7. All programs supported by Glen Echo Park should contribute to the "life" and activity of the art park environment.



8. Artists must make a commitment to public involvement and to sharing their work (teaching or exhibiting) in return for studio space.
9. In response to the shortage of inexpensive studio space in the Washington Metropolitan area, Glen Echo provides a valuable service to the arts community and should continue to provide as much studio space as at present; or more if possible.
10. Requirements need to be established which specify the qualifications for residencies and park staff positions and establish performance standards for these.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

1. The blue stone surfacing material in the parking lot contains asbestos fibers that are a potential public health hazard.
2. Views of the Potomac River and C&O Canal are limited because of the location of buildings (maintenance area, Spanish Ballroom, Auto Awareness, Crystal Pool). These same structures are also visible from the C&O Canal towpath affecting the natural scene.
3. The view of the park from MacArthur Blvd. looks like the rear entrance, and is not inviting to the public.
4. Inadequate drainage in area used by Park Police for horse grooming creates stagnant, standing water problems. Runoff from the parking area into Minnie-Ha-Ha Creek is a possible source of water pollution.
5. Because paved surfaces within the park function as both walkways and as surface drainage during rainy periods, they are subject to accelerated deterioration.
6. The use of Minnie-Ha-Ha Creek for flushing aqueduct pumps creates safety and erosion problems due to flooding. The culvert that carries the creek under the parking area is not capable of handling runoff during severe storms and the culvert headwalls have collapsed as a result.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. Steep slopes descending to the George Washington Memorial Parkway make the west escarpment a potential hazard.
2. Service access to most buildings is via the midway and pedestrian use areas creating congestion and public safety problems.
3. People are psychologically uncomfortable in the park at night. Night-time security is reduced by poor lighting, limited surveillance from adjoining buildings, few other people around, and no security patrol or night watchman.
4. Break-ins and burglaries have occurred since the park was established. The condition of the buildings, lack of evening police patrol, and poor lighting make it difficult to secure park facilities.
5. Physical hazards to the safety of the public need to be eliminated.
6. There is no first aid facility at the present time.
7. A potentially serious public health problem exists due to infestation of fleas and raccoons in the Spanish Ballroom.
8. Facilities housing food service do not meet minimal public health and safety standards.



## PARK FACILITIES

1. Every space should be rehabilitated and occupied, or removed if beyond repair.
2. Many park structures are in a deteriorated condition due to age and lack of maintenance. Energy related questions, structural integrity, public safety and appearance issues are being addressed in the current Structural Study.
3. The recycled park offices do not provide adequate office, conference, and storage space for administrative and operational needs.
4. Improve and increase the gallery space in order to present a more representational cross-section of the arts in residence at Glen Echo.
5. Glen Echo needs a year-round auditorium/lecture hall with movable seating (Spanish Ballroom if heated year-round) to accommodate audiences of 300-400 for writers' center programs, meetings and special lectures and performances.
6. The existing multi-purpose space is not adequate for potential interdisciplinary programs, programs for special groups, or for special needs of the different arts that use it now.  
Multi-Purpose Space(s)  
One multi-purpose classroom space does not function well for the wide variety of classes (arts) that use it.  
At least four multi-purpose classroom spaces are required--each suited for specific kinds of use:
  - a. small metal/glass works
  - b. "Sloppy" arts: painting, print-making
  - c. performing arts
  - d. consumer interests
7. The Park Police Substation needs to have separate mens' and womens' locker room facilities. The facility is inadequate for safely processing suspects.
8. Maintenance--Material storage and maintenance shop facilities are inadequate in size and equipment, and are currently occupying potential public use areas.
9. Utilize appropriate technology (wind power, passive and active solar, insulation, multiple glazing etc.) to provide park energy where applicable, and provide educational programs and materials to explain it instead of disconnected "science fair" exhibits.
10. In keeping with the spirit that has created today's Glen Echo from the recycled remains of earlier times, make recycling and re-use of surplus materials a park policy.

## PARK PROGRAMS

### A. FESTIVALS AND PERFORMANCES

1. Glen Echo should extend its present activities by improving its facilities for year-round use.
2. Non-compatible activities - Frequently sounds from different sources overlap disruptively during days when several outdoor performances and carousel band organ are going on simultaneously.
3. The existing program should be broadened to include film and lecture series.
4. Chautauqua Days. Schedule artists' demonstrations and other Chautauqua day events and performances to avoid overlaps and conflicts. Reduce the number of required demonstrations by artists but require more formal presentations. Provide staffed information facility near entrance to the park on Chautauqua Days.



5. The international resources of the community should be utilized in order to represent different cultures at park programs.

6. An adult theater for performing arts should be established.

#### B. CREATIVE EDUCATION CLASSES

1. Establish outreach programs with public schools and established educational institutions to keep them informed about programs available at Glen Echo.

2. Provide more senior citizen activities. Give them the opportunity to teach and share their knowledge and experience.

3. More collaborative and interdisciplinary works and programs should be undertaken by Glen Echo artists.

4. Educational activities other than classes should be provided for children. This might include a nature center, a children's museum, adventure playground, etc..

#### USER NEEDS

##### A. ACCESS

1. Steep grades on the entrance path make access difficult for people with mobility limitations and visitors with small children in strollers.

2. The current location of the Metro bus stop is dangerous and creates traffic congestion at times. Pedestrian access to the park from the bus stop is both confusing and dangerous. The bus stop should be re-located to MacArthur Blvd. near the side entrance to Glen Echo park. A shelter and bus turn-around should be provided and bus hours for evening activities should be extended.

3. Pedestrian access through the parking lot is dangerous and unpleasant.

4. Access from Glen Echo to the C&O Canal should be identified by improving signing.

##### B. INTERACTION WITH OTHERS

1. There is no common gathering area where people can meet informally over a cup of coffee to exchange ideas, chat, or relax in the company of others. Lack of such a common area limits opportunities for discovery of new ideas and cross fertilization among the arts and between artists and non-artists.

2. Travs Bar should be purchased and turned into an historical tavern. This would require research of the building's history.

##### C. INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Landscaping should be improved and increased in order to define areas and provide shade, color, texture and general relief from pavement. Some areas could be devoted to gardening.

2. Minne-Ha-Ha Creek, a potentially useable natural area, is virtually inaccessible and can be a hazardous area because of steep slopes.

##### D. OUTDOOR RECREATION

1. Use abandoned sites such as the pool and the miniature golf course for recreational activities. Suggestions include re-opening of the pool and the miniature golf course, and using the pool for ice-skating.

2. Playground- The Glen Echo playground is well designed for physical development, but is only limited to that. More opportunities for imaginative and creative play with loose parts, water play, and interaction with natural environment (living things and processes) are needed.



## E. PHYSICAL COMFORT

1. Phones, drinking water, and shade are inadequate to meet visitor needs, particularly on hot, humid summer festival days.
2. Wholesome food should be sold - not only junk food.
3. All park users need a common meeting place with food and drink available during non-festival days.
4. Bathroom facilities should be provided for studios that don't have them.

## INFORMATION SYSTEM

1. The recent history (1972-today) should be documented and presented to the visiting public to help them understand what is happening at Glen Echo today.
2. Information Delivery System

Reception (Greeting Function) Many factors at Glen Echo Park combine to diminish the sense of arrival and orientation. Neither sign, nor facility, nor person greets the visitor at the threshold, invites them in and makes them feel welcome. The fortress-like configuration of park buildings, with all the action (With the exception of the carousel and festival performances outside) hidden inside with few places to peek in makes it difficult for potential park users (visitors) to know what happens at Glen Echo. People are basically shy about intruding into other peoples' territory unless made to feel welcome.

3. Navigational Information. Despite the large banners that identify areas of interest (sculpture, photography, ceramics, dance, fiber arts, etc.) people have difficulty finding their way around the park because entrances to many facilities are not very apparent, and, as mentioned above, it's not possible to see in to get a preview of what is going on. The few people that arrive by Metro bus can not easily find an entrance to the park and have to contend with crossing the traffic maze at the intersection of Goldsboro Rd. and MacArthru Blvd.

4. Public relations and publicity for park artists should be improved by quickly filling the public information position with a well qualified person; creating a summer residency to assist in public relations; and by establishing an information/orientation facility.

## INTERPRETATION

1. There is no space designated or reserved for presentations by the park interpretive staff.
2. Interpretive themes and programs at Glen Echo should emphasize the creative process with the art forms being practiced at the park. The media of the arts is an excellent tool for environmental education.
3. More techniques should be developed for presenting non-performing arts to the public without creating a "fishbowl" atmosphere.
4. Interpretive programs in history and natural history should be provided.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. Identify historical landmarks and Natural Register Properties.
2. Historic Structures Reports have not been prepared for historic buildings (Chautauqua Tower, Dentzel Carousel).
3. The "funky" architectural character of the park is a reflection of the historical evolution of the site and should be preserved. Don't just preserve the carousel and tower.
4. The extent and significance of archeological resources have only been partially determined.



ADJACENT LAND USE

1. There is a legal question between the National Park Service and Town of Glen Echo over ownership of Oxford Road. The questions of responsibility for maintenance and public use of the road are at issue.
2. Lands between MacArthur Boulevard and the streetcar line R.O.W. belong to the Army Corps of Engineers and Montgomery County. Treatment of this area, which is the apparent boundary of Glen Echo Park to passers-by, affects the visual quality of the park.
3. On popular festival days parking overflows into adjacent community and along road shoulders of MacArthur Boulevard.
4. Commuter parking is prohibited in the Town of Glen Echo on NPS property, and in the Glen Echo Shopping Center, forcing all commuter parking onto adjacent Bannockburn neighborhood streets. The parking lot and/or the strip alongside MacArthur Boulevard could be used for commuter parking.
5. The wooded hills surrounding the park constitute part of its value, but are in private ownership and there is no assurance that future development will not adversely affect the park and Potomac palisades.

OTHER COMMENTS

1. A Smithsonian Naturalist Center could be established at Glen Echo to provide all age groups with a well-equipped work/research center for amateur naturalists.
2. Artists should provide internships for developing artists to increase educational opportunities.
3. The internal physical structure of Adventure Theater needs to be better utilized. For example, storage space could be improved by building a full-sized loft.
4. Arts and crafts opportunities for senior citizens should be emphasized.
5. An auto diagnostic and garage evaluation center should be provided at Glen Echo.
6. A documentary on Glen Echo could be prepared which discusses both its history and its position as an urban park which offers a cultural experience.
7. The lighting in the Fine Crafts room needs improvement.
8. An authentic repainting of the carrousel animals is needed.
9. A possible central theme for Glen Echo is that of a National Folklife Center.
10. To help effect the budgetary and manpower constraints, establish a "Friends of Glen Echo" organization to raise funds and to organize volunteers.

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