

# Proposal To Rededicate Historic Tree Marker At the Takoma, DC Recreation Center

## Summary

Historic Takoma, Inc. is collaborating with the Friends of Takoma Recreation Center on a project to re-dedicate an historic marker on the grounds of the Takoma Recreation Center, replace the community tree it originally marked with a newly planted Colorado blue spruce, and add a new plaque commemorating the replanting of the tree. The project will contribute to the preservation of Takoma, DC's civic history and help replenish the diminished tree cover at the Takoma Rec Center.

## Background

The historic marker, a metal plaque affixed to a concrete block, is lying on the Takoma Recreation Center grounds near the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Van Buren Streets, NW in Takoma, DC. The plaque reads “**Colorado Blue Spruce — Takoma Park Community Tree Commemorating George Washington Bi-Centennial — Presented by Citizens Association of Takoma, D.C., December 22, 1931.**”



The original planting of the Colorado Blue Spruce was part of a nationwide program administered by the American Tree Association (now defunct), in cooperation with the George Washington Bi-Centennial Commission, to commemorate George Washington's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday (Feb. 22, 1932). The program ultimately resulted in the planting of 10 million trees nationally. The organization that planted the tree, the Citizens Association of Takoma, DC,

founded in 1924, is no longer in existence. The plot of land on which the marker sits is part of a parcel of land purchased in 1927 to accommodate a school (eventually Coolidge High School, built 1938–39) and recreational facilities.

The historic marker has been for some years disassociated from the tree whose planting it commemorates, and is not in its original location. There is no remaining evidence of the original Colorado blue spruce to be found on the Takoma Rec Center grounds.

In considering what could be done as an alternative to leaving the marker in its present condition and location (and likely to be eventually lost), a number of members of the Takoma community, including Friends of Takoma Recreation Center president Gina Douglas, 4B02 ANC Commissioner Faith Wheeler, Takoma Rec Center site director Al Cook,



*ANC 4B02 Commissioner Faith Wheeler, Historic Takoma board members Jack Carson and Dorothy Barnes, Friends of Takoma Rec Center president Gina Douglas, and Takoma Rec Center site director Al Cook at the marker site.*

agreed that the best solution would be to replace the original tree and rededicate the marker.

### Scope

The Friends of Takoma Recreation Center and Historic Takoma, Inc. propose to reinstall the historic marker on the Takoma Rec Center grounds, to be accompanied by the planting of a new, 5-foot Colorado blue spruce (the Hoopsii cultivar, selected for its blueness), and the installation of a bench, as well as a new commemorative plaque. We propose to hold a rededication ceremony on December 22, 2011, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original dedication commemorating George Washington's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The proposed location for the tree, marker, and bench is a large open area on the north side of Van Buren, near the sidewalk and street for good visibility. This location appears to offer ideal growing conditions for the Colorado blue spruce tree, which requires significant sunlight and a space large enough that the mature tree (which can reach a height of 100 feet and a width of 40 feet) will not encroach on neighboring trees or Takoma Rec Center facilities.



*The proposed tree site and the location of the accessible water source are marked in red.*

### Sponsors

This project is sponsored by Historic Takoma, Inc. ([www.historictakoma.org](http://www.historictakoma.org)) in collaboration with the Friends of Takoma Recreation Center. Historic Takoma, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving of the heritage of Takoma Park, MD and Takoma, DC.