

The Takoma Rec Center Tree Project

In July 2011, Jack Carson of Historic Takoma noticed a concrete marker lying on its side on the grounds of the Takoma Recreation Center near 4th and Van Buren Streets, NW. The plaque on the marker commemorates the dedication of a Colorado blue spruce in honor of the George Washington Bicentennial 80 years earlier.



Having previously spotted the marker on the Rec Center grounds a couple of years earlier, Jack came to the conclusion that something should be done to preserve it as a piece of history. He contacted some other community members, and the Tree Project was born: a plan to plant a replacement for the bicentennial tree on the Rec Center grounds and place the marker in front of it. The project is a collaboration between the Friends of Takoma

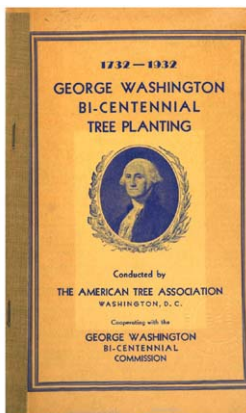
Recreation Center and Historic Takoma, Inc. The project had the dual aim of adding to the tree cover at the Rec Center and preserving and honoring the civic history of Takoma, DC.

Research uncovered the fact that the 1931 tree dedication was part of a nationwide project to observe George Washington's 200th birthday, a collaboration between the George Washington Bi-Centennial Commission and the American Tree Association (now defunct), in which citizens and community groups were encouraged to plant a tree or grove of trees in honor of George Washington.



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.

Individual and group participants in the project could register their tree on the Tree Association's National Honor Roll and receive a George Washington Bi-Centennial Tree Planting certificate.



The Citizens' Association of Takoma, D.C. was Takoma's first community group, and was instrumental in promoting the idea of a public school in northern Washington, DC and in bringing about the purchase of the tract of land that became Coolidge High School and the Takoma Recreation Center.

The Tree Project reached out to Casey Trees for help with the planting of the new tree, and on Nov 14, 2011 a Hoopsii variety Colorado blue Spruce (a variety chosen for its blueness) was planted on the Rec Center grounds, on a spot near Van Buren Street between 3rd and 4th Streets (roughly across from the old Pool House), with help from several members of the community.



Jack Carson Faith Wheeler, Luke Turner of Friends of Takoma Rec and Neighbors, Inc. president Shannon Cockett pitch in to help Casey Trees with the planting.



Jim Woodworth and the rest of the Casey Trees crew.

On November 30, 2011, the marker was “planted” in front of the new tree. A new plaque will be added onto the marker commemorating its rededication on February 22, 2012, 80 years after George Washington's 200th birthday.



The Tree Project has received a generous donation from Neighbors, Inc., and Historic Takoma is providing financial support as well. We are grateful for the ongoing support of Al Cook, site director of the Takoma Recreation Center, and from ANC Commissioner Faith Wheeler. We are also grateful to Casey Trees for their great effort in locating and planting a new Colorado blue spruce for us and to Brian Mahan for the beautiful job he did re-“planting” the marker.

A rededication ceremony will be held on February 22, 2012 at 1 p.m at the site.