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Rock Creek Conservancy Welcomes Three Business and Community Leaders to its Board of Directors

Lisa Bolden, Catherine Nagel, and Donna Potts bring strong expertise in business, park philanthropy, and community engagement to Conservancy's vision of a thriving Rock Creek

Bethesda, MD (January 17, 2024) - Rock Creek Conservancy ("the Conservancy"), a watershed organization protecting Rock Creek and the philanthropic and stewardship partner to the entirety of Rock Creek Park, announced today the appointment of business owner and entrepreneur, **Lisa Bolden**, nonprofit leader and expert in parks, **Catherine Nagel**, and community and business leader (retired), **Donna Potts** as members of its Board of Directors.

In announcing their appointments, **Pavan Khoobchandani**, the chair of the Conservancy's board, said, "With the addition of the remarkable skills and experiences brought forward by Bolden, Nagel, and Potts we are confident in our ability to launch into our next stage of organizational growth. We have ambitious plans for a future with a healthy watershed; thriving and climate-resilient forests; a revitalized Carter Barron Amphitheater; and more equitable and inclusive parklands."

Khoobchandani noted that their combined accomplishments promise to help expand strategic direction, philanthropy, and people-powered restoration for the Conservancy, now in its 19th year of environmental leadership in DC and Montgomery County: "The need for such green space has grown only more urgent and complex over the years, with climate change exacerbating stressors on the forest; and the community seeking affordable ways to advance well-being. We are thankful to

have the strong, critical perspectives, and depth of personal experience of our three new directors to continue our guide us toward the goals in our strategic plan, ensuring Rock Creek and the watershed provide climate and social resilience, recreation, and opportunities for community service.”

Jeanne Braha, the Conservancy’s executive director, welcomed the service of Bolden, Nagel, and Potts as the organization continues to strengthen its leadership in advocating for the integrity and resilience of both the cultural and natural assets of Rock Creek Park, including revitalizing and restoring the Carter Barron Amphitheater and developing a framework to guide our failing forests on a path toward resilience: “These three community leaders and park champions will add fresh perspectives and collective wisdom to our board and supporters as we rally people-power to restore our forests, work towards the revitalization of the Carter Barron Amphitheater, and ensure that all Rock Creek neighbors and visitors feel welcome in its parklands.”

The Conservancy thanks departing board members **Ethan Landis**, **Mary Cheh**, and **Steve Hull** for their dedicated service to Rock Creek.

The year is off to a snowy and strong start for the Conservancy. On Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, the organization hosted nearly a dozen opportunities to give back to Rock Creek Park amidst the first snow of the season in partnership with the National Park Service. Volunteer events happen every weekend, with our annual [Extreme Clean Up](#) launching in April. Members of the public are welcome to volunteer in removing litter or invasive plant species in the park and throughout the watershed. Learn more: rockcreekconservancy.org/calendar

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About the new Board of Directors members:

Lisa Bolden is the founder, CEO, and principal designer of *Lis.a.Luxury Collection*, a custom maker of collection stemware and table decor based in the Capitol Riverfront section of the District that Lisa and her daughters McKay and McKenzie launched in 2016. She is a native of Birmingham and earned a degree in biochemistry at Spelman College and an MBA in Finance from the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business. Lisa has focused much of her career in investment and mortgage banking with companies such as Morgan Stanley, Banc One Capital Corporation, and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Catherine Nagel has served as Executive Director of City Parks Alliance since 2004, growing the nonprofit organization from its inception to an internationally recognized learning and advocacy network. Under Catherine's leadership, City Parks Alliance formed a Mayors for Parks coalition to permanently fund federal legislation, resulting in \$900+ million for urban parks in distressed communities. She has collaborated with practitioners and researchers at RAND Corporation, Georgia Tech, and Urban Institute to advance program and funding strategies for parks; strengthened equitable public-private park governance models; inspired the formation of urban park organizations globally; and connected a range of leaders from government, community-based groups, cultural institutions, the business sector, and philanthropy. Catherine launched the Greater & Greener conference, which is recognized as the leading international gathering of urban parks leaders. She has held executive leadership positions with National Association for Olmsted Parks, Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia, Greater Philadelphia First, and Nippon Television Network. She is a Salzburg Global Fellow and was a founding board member of World Urban Parks. She received degrees from Bucknell University (BA) and University of Pennsylvania (MLA), studied at Tokyo's Sophia University, and completed the Executive Leadership Program at Stanford University Graduate School of Business. Catherine writes and speaks frequently on the need for equitable investment in our nation's urban park and recreation systems.

Donna Potts is a retired communications professional and lifetime Washingtonian. She has worked at organizations as diverse as the Washington Convention Center, private industry, and the Shakespeare Theater. Donna was a founding member of the Friends of the Carter Barron Amphitheater and is currently a member of the steering committee of the Conservancy's Carter Barron Alliance. Donna and her family live in the Crestwood neighborhood of Washington, D.C..

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About Rock Creek Conservancy (rockcreekconservancy.org): Rock Creek Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to restoring Rock Creek and its parklands as a natural oasis for all people to appreciate and protect. As an official philanthropic and stewardship partner to the National Park Service, the Conservancy leverages a unique model of people-powered restoration to restore the forest, ensure clean water throughout the watershed, elevate the park visitor experience, and increase equity of access to this treasured greenspace.