



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rock Creek Conservancy Celebrates Redesignation of Rock Creek Park Resources Named for Melvin Hazen

Bethesda, MD (February 23, 2022) - Rock Creek Conservancy celebrates the recent decision by the National Park Service to remove the designation of Rock Creek Park resources named for Melvin Hazen. This decision follows an ongoing discussion about the legacy of Hazen, a District leader in the early 20th century who promoted exclusionary city practices.

Rock Creek Conservancy, alongside community members and partners, [called for a change](#) in name of the creek, trail, and park named for Hazen to better reflect the inclusive and equitable values of our community and to highlight the stories of those whose legacies are less known today.

In March 2021, the Conservancy and Rock Creek Park hosted a virtual session in the Race, History, and Rock Creek series examining the [history and legacy of Melvin Hazen](#). Hazen has been recognized for his work to acquire land for Rock Creek Park, including Piney Branch and Fort Reno. His methods were legal but discriminatory—as a city surveyor responsible for the implementation of the Alley Dwelling Act, he cleared what was known as Reno City (modern day Fort Reno), a thriving African American community, by declaring it a “blight” and evicting all residents.

Rock Creek Park is a place that can and should bring people together through shared community values. Redesignation of these resources helps to usher in a new, more complete understanding of our local history and is an opportunity to honor individuals whose stories have remained unknown or obscured. We extend our gratitude to Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton for supporting the change and the staff of Rock Creek Park and the National Park Service for moving this process forward, and look forward to a brighter legacy in Rock Creek Park.

In celebration of the removal of the designation, the Conservancy will gift a new sign to Rock Creek Park to replace the sign at Reno and Tilden Streets NW.

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About Rock Creek Conservancy:

Rock Creek Conservancy is an awarding-winning 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the restoration of Rock Creek and its 33-mile watershed as a natural oasis for the benefit and enjoyment of all people. As the only organization devoted solely to Rock Creek and its parks and as a philanthropic and stewardship partner of Rock Creek Park, the Conservancy engages communities and volunteers, enhances visitor experiences, and provides direct restoration to Rock Creek.

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