

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park



Winter 2017

Website: www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/friendsofhuntleymeadowspark

President's Message

By Cathy Ledec, President of Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP)

I had the pleasure of traveling to Southeast China this past January. My husband and I traveled to this region to see birds and were lucky to see many, including the elegant Red-crowned Crane, my favorite bird of the trip. We also saw many other beautiful and very special birds, including globally threatened wetland species such as the Swan Goose, Baer's Pochard, Scaly-sided Merganser, Black-faced Spoonbill, and Oriental Stork. Sadly, we missed seeing the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Relict Gull, two highly endangered species that rely upon China's rapidly disappearing coastal mudflats.

When traveling in other parts of the US as well as abroad, I find myself observing how environmental issues are taken into consideration with development projects. It is important to not re-invent the wheel, so we should learn from the helpful experiences of others. I am especially keen to note those practices that may be transferrable to Huntley Meadows Park (HMP), Fairfax County Park Authority, and Fairfax County overall.

While in China, I was pleased to observe very significant tree planting efforts along most urban streets and major roadways, including all of the road rights-of-way and medians. These new trees are certainly helping to improve air quality (an enormous challenge in China), provide needed shade (thereby reducing the urban heat island effect), beautify the urban streetscape, absorb storm water, control erosion, and reduce roadside noise. China has also made impressive progress in recent decades with reforesting its previously denuded hillsides; it was encouraging to see numerous hillsides that had been re-planted with a variety of presumably native species. On the other hand, I was very disappointed to observe the rapid loss of wetlands to expanding urban development; this included the reclamation of coastal mudflats, filling in and degradation of freshwater wetlands, and extensive new building construction within major floodplains.

The different examples of good and bad development practices in China and worldwide often provide useful insights to the development challenges faced here in Fairfax County. For example, with the EMBARK Richmond Highway planning effort underway, we need to ensure that maintaining and even expanding tree cover is an integral component of the plans for our neighborhoods along this corridor (a direct neighbor of HMP). We also need to prevent the further loss of wetlands, degradation of waterways, and construction within designated floodplains and Resource Protection Areas, as is being proposed in the vicinity of Dogue Creek, an important waterway that connects HMP with other aquatic ecosystems and is also an important wildlife corridor. We, and I refer to not just me and those of us actively attending the EMBARK meetings but all of us, must tell the EMBARK Advisory Group that we want balanced growth that includes ensuring that environment is included in the higher density planning.

My trip to China reinforced for me the importance of HMP as a well-protected wetland ecosystem that nonetheless faces significant pressures from planned developments outside of its borders--including but not limited to the EMBARK Richmond Highway planning effort. We are very fortunate indeed that FOHMP exists to advocate for the Park and reduce the outside pressures that would threaten the integrity of the Park and its ecosystems and wildlife. I am proud and honored to work with the dedicated and passionate Board and members that make up FOHMP.

I hope to see you outside on the trails!

Go Green

We now offer an electronic version of our quarterly newsletter! If you wish to receive you newsletter via email please email us at: friendsofhmp@gmail.com.

FOHMP DOES NOT SHARE OUR EMAIL LIST WITH ANY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.



Monday Morning Bird Walk

By Harry Glasgow



Long-billed
Dowitcher

As a sort of sideline to the serious task of birding at Huntley Meadows every Monday morning, the regulars at the Huntley Meadows Monday Morning Birdwalk dwell on the glories of winter time headgear. It is the time for funny hats. When it is really cold, we begin donning our winter gear, and this always includes hats. Some in our group don't wear hats when it's not cold, so we are sometimes startled to observe their choices of winter head gear. Often, we can't immediately recognize old friends when they bundle up, and we have to draw close to examine the little of a friend's face that may be showing in order to figure out who they are.

Winter clothes are more for warmth and protection from the elements than for fashion, but some of us try to be stylish as well as warm. One of the most popular funny hats these days is the Mad Bomber Hat. It is a replica of headgear worn by the bomber crews in WWII, a very effective barrier to the cold, and quite funny!



Chullo

Another favorite piece of headgear also dates from WWII. It is the Watch Cap worn by sailors standing a frigid watch on the unheated wing bridges of ships working the north Atlantic.

The Chullo is becoming popular. This distinctive style is from the Andes but has been adapted throughout the winter world. Scandinavian versions can be quite imaginative and colorful. It may take a little for the average American to accept the slightly amusing look, but it can really keep you warm.



Watch Cap

Now, if you really want to look cool AND stay warm, come in to the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center and look over the collection of Huntley Meadows winter hats. Nothing funny there: just toasty head and ears!

For a complete showing of the Huntley Meadows Funny Hat parade, come on a Monday Morning Birdwalk on a very cold day. It's a real hoot.

The Monday Morning Bird Walk has been a weekly event at Huntley Meadows Park since 1985. It takes place every week, rain or shine (except during electrical storms, strong winds, or icy trails), at 7AM (8AM November-March), is free of charge, requires no reservation, and is open to all. Birders meet in the parking lot at 3701 Lockheed Blvd, Alexandria, VA. Questions should be directed to Park staff during normal business hours at (703)768-2525.

Celebrate Wetlands Awareness Day!

Sunday, May 7th, 12-4PM
FREE



Bring the entire family and come enjoy an active, colorful afternoon with live animals, Park history presentations, nature activities, and family fun. Learn all about wetland ecology, local natural history, and the importance of our wetlands.

Do you need a receipt?



The 2016 tax season is here! If you paid membership dues or made a monetary donation to FOHMP in 2016, these contributions may be tax deductible.

If you would like a letter of receipt, please send your request to friendsofhmp@gmail.com, and we'll be happy to provide one.

Volunteers

By Karen Sheffield, Park Manager

Happy 2017! I hope you'll celebrate the new year with a winter visit to Huntley Meadows Park. With the leaves off the trees, winter is a wonderful time to see Huntley's landscape. The eloquent tree silhouettes, the many colored sunsets and an ever changing wetland adds to the stunning scenery. Enjoy peaceful walks, connect with friends or go wildlife watching. For many people, Huntley is a place to enrich healthy living and to recharge and reconnect.

Huntley staff kicked off the new year with the winter Volunteer Appreciation Party. Volunteers and staff gathered in the snowflake themed auditorium to partake of delicious foods and share stories and park experiences. With 8,634 volunteer hours donated to the Park in 2016, there were many stories! Volunteers helped children find and observe toads, pulled invasive plants, welcomed many first timers to the Park, and helped behind the scenes to keep Huntley's treasures vibrant and beautiful. A quotation that encapsulates Huntley volunteers and the importance of their work comes from the famous words spoken by Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." The Huntley volunteers are that change and make significant contributions to the Park. For this, I am very grateful.

May your 2017 be enriching, and I hope you're able to make Huntley a part of that.



Volunteers pose for a group photo during the Volunteer Appreciation Party, January 2017.

Historic Huntley Discovery Day

Did you know that Huntley Meadows Park was once the property of one of our Founding Fathers? Or that 2017 is the 275th anniversary of Fairfax County?

These facts and more can be explored during Discovery Day at Historic Huntley, Saturday, April 22 from 1-4 pm. Experience first-hand some of the things that make Huntley and its history special. Churn butter or crank home-made ice cream to assimilate Huntley's farming past. Take a photo with our Huntley the Cow mascot. See historical artifacts, maps and documents. There will even be ways you might be able to add to our historical knowledge.

More details about Historic Huntley Discovery Day's exciting activities will be forthcoming. Save the date, and look for more information in the coming months. Discovery Day is free, but donations will be gratefully accepted.

New Lifetime Members

Edward Gomez
Danielle Kozlowski
Tony Morris
Bonnie Rathbone
Kathleen Luisa
Jacob Williams

Leila Balali
Kristina Zanotti
Lisa Browning
Bernard and Barbara Hummelt
The Pearson Family

Support the Huntley Meadows Park 21st Annual Bird-a-thon

Every year on an early morning in the beginning of May, Park staff and volunteers spread out across Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) to count birds. In 1997, an annual survey evolved into an event to remember and honor two exceptional men: Ken Howard and Ed Weigel. Both were volunteers who shared their love of nature with any Park visitor lucky enough to chat with them, inspiring visitors, volunteers and staff. Their work continues to this day through the Park's Resource Management Internship funded by the HMP Bird-a-thon. This internship provides a young person with the opportunity to begin a career in conservation and to get hands-on experience in this wonderful Park. Over the years, many on the Board of Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) have had the privilege of interacting with the interns, and we all believe this opportunity has a positive impact on their future endeavors as the next generation of stewards of our parks and green spaces.

Here is what some of the past years' interns have said about their experiences:

"I wanted to learn more about birds and reptiles, but I never expected to learn as much as I have."

"I have learned [to identify] countless forest, meadow and wetland plant species, and I've learned about invasive plant management and herbicides."

About performing water samples and collecting and identifying macroinvertebrates, "The diversity and amount of organisms I've gathered have really surprised me. Seeing the dedication of Huntley's staff and volunteers continues to inspire me to work harder."

For more than 20 years the FOHMP Board has sponsored the Bird-a-thon - that's more than 20 Resource Management Interns! All who participate in the count thoroughly enjoy their involvement with this fundraiser. Many are repeat volunteers for the event, and some have participated every year! They have counted birds in all kinds of conditions, from cold and rainy, to downright hot. Each year brings a new experience and new numbers, like sighting the all-time high of 108 species in 2004 or searching for one house sparrow to boost our numbers to 90 species. But no matter what happens, the feeling is that it's always such a treat to be in the Park.

The FOHMP Board requests donations (see donation form below) to support this annual event, which funds the yearly Resource Management Internship. Your generous donation will help us reach our 2017 goal of \$2,800.

Thank you for your continued support,
The Board, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

2017 BIRDATHON AT HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK
Please submit form by May 5, 2017

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Donation Amount: _____

Please make checks payable to FOHMP and mail this form with your check to:
Huntley Meadows Park - Bird-a-thon
3701 Lockheed Blvd. Alexandria, VA 22306



Alternatively you can use our PayPal feature on the Membership page of our website
<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/membership.html>.

Nearing the End

Renovations on Historic Huntley's Tenant House continue. The work has revealed architectural surprises that bring into question the structure's original purpose and use. Learn all about these findings and join a lively conversation about their meaning at an April 1st history discussion, 1:00 p.m., at the Huntley Meadows Park Visitor's Center. Register in Parktakes (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) using registration code 3402821601. Cost is \$5.

Historic Huntley in the middle of construction. New windows will be installed in early spring.



New Staff Member Jessi Cushman

I started working as an interpreter at Huntley Meadows Park in November 2016 before graduating from Virginia Tech with a Masters of Agricultural and Life Sciences with an Education Concentration. My passion is to work within my community to foster a love for nature.

At Huntley, I run the Nature for Tiny Tots and Nature Detectives Programs, as well as various Scout Badge Programs. It is incredibly rewarding to be able to work within the community and see kids make a connection with their environment.

When I am not busy with environmental stewardship endeavors, I enjoy reading, learning to play guitar and drums, snowboarding, baking, and being with friends and family.



Jessi showing bird bones to children during an outreach program.

Huntley Meadows Park Programs

All programs **require reservations**, unless free. Sign up and find DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS online using Parktakes. Search "Huntley" at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes, or call 703-222-4664. For help, call Huntley Meadows Park at 703-768-2525.

FEBRUARY

11 Saturday - Toys at Historic Huntley (call to confirm location if inclement weather) -

(Ages 4-Adults), 1-2pm. \$7.

Registration code: 5781832601

11 Saturday - Evening Walk - (Adults), 5:15-7:15pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3401881801

12 Sunday - Live Animal Lunchtime! - (Ages 3-adults), 12-1pm. \$7.

Registration code: 3401036101

18 Saturday - Sketch Hike: Winter Trees and Landscapes - (Ages 12-Adults), 10am-12pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3401027702

25 Saturday - Winter Birds and Feeder Workshop - (Ages 4-Adults), 12-2pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3401041201

25 Saturday - Evening Woodcock Walk - (Adults), 5:30-7pm. Meets at S. Kings Hwy parking lot. Canceled if rain. \$7.

Registration code: 3401834001

26 Sunday - Birding for Beginners: Winter Birds - (Ages 12-Adults), 8-11am. \$10.

Registration code: 3401837401

MARCH

4 Saturday - Winter Tree ID - (Ages 12-Adults), 12-2pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3401027802

4 Saturday - Family Woodcock Walk - (Ages 8-Adults), 5:30-7pm. Meets at S. Kings Hwy parking lot. Canceled if rain. \$7.

Registration code: 3401011902

10 Friday - Family Owl Outing - (Ages 6-Adults), 5:45-7:15pm. \$7.

Registration code: 3401039402

11 Saturday - Festival of Owls - (Ages 4-Adults), 12pm-2pm. \$9.

Registration code: 3401041101

11 Saturday - Evening Woodcock Walk - (Adults), 5:45-7:15pm. Meets at S. Kings Hwy parking lot. Canceled if rain. \$7.

Registration code: 3401834002

12 Sunday - Live Animal Lunchtime! - (Ages 3-Adults), 12-1pm. \$7.

Registration code: 3401036102

18 Saturday - Family Woodcock Walk - (Ages 8-Adults), 6:45-8:15pm. Meets at S. Kings Hwy parking lot. Canceled if rain. \$7.

Registration code: 3401011903

25 Saturday - Spring Awakening Sketch Walk - (Ages 11-Adults), 10am-12pm. Drawing materials included in the cost of the class, courtesy of the Running Brooke Fund. \$8.

Registration code: 3402837501

25 Saturday - Evening Woodcock Walk - (Adults), 6:45-8:15pm. Meets at S. Kings Hwy parking lot. Canceled if rain. \$7.

Registration code: 3402834001

25 Saturday - Evening Stroll - (Ages 6-Adults), 7-9pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402827901

27 Monday - Nature Drawing - (Adults), 4-5pm. Any supply fee is payable to instructor at first class. \$40, 4 classes.

Registration code: 3402326302

APRIL

1 Saturday - Vernal Pools Sketch Hike - (Ages 12-Adults), 10am-12pm. Meets at S. Kings Hwy parking lot. Canceled if rain. \$8.

Registration code: 3402045201

15 Saturday - Backyard Bats Alive! - (Ages 5-Adults), 3-4pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402045101

15 Saturday - Boardwalk Astronomy - (Ages 12-Adults), 8-10pm. Canceled in case of rain or other severe weather. \$8.

Registration code: 3402865101

22 Saturday - Huntley Discovery - (Families), 1-4pm. FREE, donations welcome.

'April cont'd on page 7'

'April cont'd from page 6'

22 Saturday - Evening Walk - (Adults), 7:30-9:30pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402881801

23 Sunday - Birding for Beginners - (Ages 12-Adults), 8-11am. \$10.

Registration code: 3402842501

30 Sunday - Toys at Historic Huntley - (Families), 2-3pm. \$7.

Registration code: 5782832601

MAY

6 Saturday - Sketch Hike: Birds - (Ages 12-Adults), 10am-12pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402031501

6 Saturday - Spellbound for Salamanders - (Ages 7-Adults), 12:00-1:30pm. Meet at the 6901 S. Kings Hwy. entrance. Please remove all dirt/mud from your shoes before arriving and spray your shoes well with a 3% bleach solution provided upon arrival to help prevent pathogens. \$7.

Registration code: 3402889401

7 Sunday - Wetlands Awareness Day (All ages), 12-4pm. This event is held rain or shine. No reservations needed. FREE.

11 Thursday - Mason, Custis & Lee Family Tour- (Ages 16-Adults), 10am-3pm. Trip cancellation deadline: April 28, 2017. \$60.

Registration code: 5782930201

13 Saturday - Evening Stroll - (Ages 6-Adults), 7:45-9:45pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402827902

20 Saturday - Live Animal Lunchtime! - (Families), 12-1pm. \$7.

Registration code: 3402036101

20 Saturday - Delicious Dairy at Historic Huntley - (Families), 1-3pm. \$8.

Registration code: 5782827201

26 Friday - Twilight Hilltop Tour at Historic Huntley - (Adults), 7:30-8:30pm. \$5.

Registration code: 5782833901

27 Saturday - Wetland in Bloom - (Ages 5-Adult), 10am-12:00pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402842201

27 Saturday - Bread and Butter Tea at Historic Huntley - (Families), 1-2:30pm. \$8.

Registration code: 5782037901

27 Saturday - Evening Walk - (Adults), 7:45-9:45pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402881802

28 Sunday - Birding for Beginners - (Ages 12-Adults) 8-11am. \$10.

Registration code: 3402842502

JUNE

3 Saturday - Hardtack and Johnnycakes - (Families), 1:30-2:30pm. \$7.

Registration code: 5782038001

10 Saturday - Twilight Hilltop Tour at Historic Huntley - (Adults), 7:30-8:30pm. \$5

Registration code: 5782833902

10 Saturday - Evening Stroll - (Ages 6-Adults), 8-10pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402827903

17 Saturday - Boardwalk Astronomy - (Ages 12-Adults), 8-10pm. \$8.

Registration code: 3402865102

21 Wednesday - Summer Solstice Sketch Ride - (Ages 13-Adults), 7:00-8:30pm. Meets at the South Kings Highway entrance. \$7.

Registration code: 3402834701

Children's Programs

Huntley Meadows Park offers a variety of programs and school days off camps for children ages 2-12, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts. For more information visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/calendar.htm> to view the complete list of classes offered. Or call 703-768-2525 to speak with a staff member.



**Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
Membership and Renewal Form**

Please support Huntley Meadows Park by joining our Friends group. Dues contribute toward funding new initiatives and programs, and your membership support will help us to be stronger advocates for the Park.

Fill out this form and mail the application to:

Dues information (Annual):

- \$15 Individual
- \$20 Family
- \$10 Student/Senior
- \$150 Lifetime Membership
- Donation

**Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
3701 Lockheed Blvd.
Alexandria, VA 22306**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____



Alternatively you can use our PayPal feature on the Membership page of our website <http://www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/membership.html>.



**Friends of Huntley
Meadows Park**
3701 Lockheed Blvd.
Alexandria, VA 22306