

# Friends of Huntley Meadows Park



**September 2010**

Email: [info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)  
Website: [www.Friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](http://www.Friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

**K**udos and flowers to Huntley's own **Norma Hoffman**, this year's Elly Doyle Park Service Award recipient. This top Fairfax County Park Authority award recognizes volunteers for outstanding contributions to Fairfax County parks. Norma has deservedly received numerous awards for her long service to the County, and this is one more jewel in her crown. Her devotion to Huntley is legendary and she has fought long and hard to protect the park. When the county threatened to build a road through the park, Norma co-founded the Citizens Alliance to Save Huntley. They successfully waged a 15-year campaign to keep the road from being built. Starting in the mid 1980s, Norma sought preservation of Historic Huntley by encouraging the county to acquire it. Since 1984 Norma has shared her love of Huntley Meadows Park as an official volunteer donating 100-200 hours each year. We are so grateful to have her support and devotion. She's incredible! ***Congratulations, Norma.***

## **Boardwalk Repairs this Fall**

The current boardwalk was installed in 1993 and, although the structure and anchors are in good shape, the surface boards are ready to be replaced. To extend life, reduce maintenance costs and eliminate concerns over chemicals used in pressure-treated lumber, we will use a plastic composite material. We hope to expand the start of the boardwalk into the woods to address trail erosion issues. Plexiglas viewing windows to watch wildlife under the boardwalk may be added, as well as various markings and signage for increased interpretation. The wetland restoration project will not impact the boardwalk, so we need not delay boardwalk repairs. The one exception is the stretch of boardwalk after the tower, which may be flooded by a few inches after the wetland restoration. We will be adding extra boards to make it higher. Repairs will start this November and should be finished by the New Year. Construction will be done in sections with the hope that we never have to close off the whole boardwalk. Boardwalk repairs will be funded by the 2008 bond.

## **The Cattails that Ate Huntley Meadows**

This has been a bumper crop year for cattails in the central wetland. Cattails are a vital part of any healthy inland marsh and a valuable native plant. Redwing Blackbirds nest in them, muskrats use them for food and building materials, and rails use the thick stands as shelter. The problem is when they become too thick and start to form a monoculture. The primary reason for this year's cattail expansion is simply that Huntley's non-tidal wetland is aging and slowly filling in. Without the scouring effect of tides or a river, non-tidal marshes fill in over time and cattails lead the charge. Controlling the water levels (and therefore controlling the spread of cattails) through our wetland restoration project is the best long-term, low-impact method for preventing the wetland from filling in. Until the project occurs, we will prune cattails that block the boardwalk and we may explore a combination of cutting and controlled burns, just as we do in our managed meadows. We would follow methods used in wildlife refuges and time any cattail management so as not to interfere with sensitive wildlife seasons.

## **Wetland Restoration Update**

No, we haven't forgotten about the wetland restoration. We're still working with state and county regulatory agencies to work out various issues associated with the site's topography and construction of the dam. As the wetland continues to slowly age and fill in, we continue to look forward to a time in the near future when we can control the water levels and therefore maintain and preserve the wetland for decades to come. We will keep you apprised of any project updates. Feel free to join Kevin on his monthly Park Manager Walk and Talks to learn more. We'll hold more public meetings on the project as soon as there is any significant news to share.



## Park Manager's Message

### *A Walk on Huntley's Wild Side*

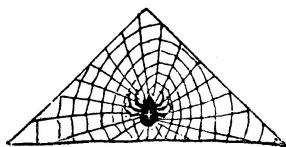


**W**elcome back from whatever fun locales, near or far, you may have explored this summer! Late summer, especially August, is also when many wild creatures begin to travel and disperse. Now that fall is approaching, those wildlife journeys are in full swing.

Most of us are aware of the many birds that migrate south every fall to spend their winters in warmer regions. Some species, like Broad-winged Hawks, Scarlet Tanagers, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, travel great distances, from as far as Canada and New England to Central and South America. Other species, like Bluebirds, Robins, and Tree Swallows, may simply shift several states south, traveling from Pennsylvania to Virginia or from Maryland to the Carolinas.

What I find even more extraordinary are the seasonal movements of insects – impressive travelers in their own right, especially since they're working with a much smaller set of wings than hawks and swallows. You're probably familiar with the multi-generation migration of the monarch butterfly. In the fall, it's possible to see thousands of monarchs moving through the Washington, D.C. area on their way to Mexico. But were you also aware of the seasonal movements of boxelder bugs, spiders and dragonflies? Boxelder bugs, like many insects, choose hibernation as their survival technique for the winter months. These beautiful insects, with their brilliant red Xs on slate-black backs, travel around the edge of their territory until they find a suitable log, dead tree, stone pile or house in which to sleep through the winter. They're harmless, colorful and create quite a spectacle when they emerge in spring, sometimes from the window frames of our buildings. Their autumn travels are of a relatively short distance – but those of our local spiders and dragonflies can be quite extraordinary.

Migrating spiders? That can't be right – they don't have any wings! What they do have, however, is silk. If they send out just the right amount as they point their little spider abdomens towards the sky, they can catch autumn winds and travel hundreds of miles. Yes, hundreds. Young spiders hatch from egg cases in huge numbers in late summer and fall.



**T**o ensure enough food for all those hungry mouths, their first order of business is often dispersal. If they get caught up in a good air current, their travels can take them across state lines, rivers, lakes, and even oceans. Young spiders carried by their silk sails have been found hundreds of feet up, sharing skies with airplanes and floating over the middle of the ocean. Who knew baby spiders were international travelers and accomplished aeronauts? If you visit Huntley's boardwalk on a September morning, you may be treated to thousands of tiny spiders throwing themselves to the wind from the boardwalk railings. Who knows where their autumnal journeys will end?

Lastly, there are Huntley's amazing dragonflies. Most species live out their lives in relatively small territories of several miles at most. However, a few

species travel hundreds of miles to prolong their fall by a few weeks and spread their eggs into new watersheds. Common Green Darners, Carolina Saddlebags and Wandering Gliders all travel along the coast in the fall, some flying from as far as New York to southern Virginia. They do not over-winter, dying a few weeks after reaching their southern destinations, but not before mating and laying eggs hundreds of miles from where they were born, spreading their genes into new territories.

To help navigating migrants of all kinds, turn your yard into a rest-stop and re-fueling center. For food and water offer bird baths, even pans of wet mud, along with goldenrod, asters and eupatoriums. Reduce pesticide use, put silhouettes on your windows to prevent collisions and plant clusters of native shrubs and evergreens for shelter. Now sit back and enjoy your guests.

**Kevin Munroe**

#### ***Park Manager Walk and Talk***

*Saturday September 25, October 23, November 20*

Join Kevin Munroe on a walk to share questions and learn about the wildlife for which the park is known. Reservations, 703-768-2525. 4 to 6 p.m. Free

#### ***Birth of a Wetland***

*Saturday October 2, 10 a.m.-noon.*

Walk along woodland streams with Kevin tracing the wetland from its beginning in the Woodstone neighborhood down Barnyard Run to the marsh boardwalk.

Reservations. \$6

# Resource Management News

On the morning of July 19, 2010, Huntley Meadows Park Resource Manager Dave Lawlor led a crew to Dogue Creek in search of the infamous snakehead fish, a destructive invasive species. Their survey used a combination of electro-shocking and netting to capture and count fish species. Thankfully, no snakeheads were found. Crew members included staff from DPWES and Huntley Meadows, as well as interns and AmeriCorps volunteers.

The crew surveyed the section of Dogue Creek just upstream from Wickford Park. It was the second time this stretch of water had been sampled in the past three years. In the past, snakeheads had been found about a mile downstream from the site. Ten small, largemouth bass were caught, which was a surprise and a stroke of good fortune. It is believed that largemouth bass would suppress snakehead numbers should the snakeheads migrate further up the creek. Lawlor said, "I think the presence of largemouth bass is good news."

The total number of fish collected was down 69% from 471 fish in 2008 to 144 fish in 2010. The number of species was also down this year, dropping 23% from 17 species in 2008 to 13 species in 2010. Lawlor pointed to at least two factors that can account for the drop in total numbers and number of species. First, he noted water conditions were not ideal. The water was a little murky and the fish were hard to see in the deep pools once they were shocked. Secondly, the last 75 feet of the 100 meter sampling section was not sampled because a crew member inadvertently disturbed a nest of yellow jackets and a couple of people on the shocking crew are allergic to bees. For safety sake they decided to skip the top portion of the sample site.

The chart provides a complete list of fish species that were netted and counted.

**Matthew Kaiser**

**Deputy Public Information Officer, FCPA**

*Reprinted with permission of the Fairfax County Park Authority.*

Yellow bullhead	10
American eel	12
White sucker	16
Satinfish shiner	6
Creek chubsucker	3
Tessellated darter	9
Lamprey	4
Green Sunfish	27
Pumpkinseed	2
Bluegill	10
Largemouth Bass	10
Creek chub	30
Eastern mudminnow	5

### ***The Shocking Crew***

*Bottom row from left: Shannon Curtis, Erin Shaw, Katie Man, Josh Hartley, Cherie Nelson, Eric Prunchak (standing)*

*Top row: Eric Forbes, Heather Ambrose, Jonathan Christian, Dave Lawlor, Brian Moore, Brooke Lewis, Amy O'Donnell*



### **Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up Saturday, October 16 9-11:30 a.m.**

Help clean litter near the park along Lockheed and Harrison Lane to prevent it from washing into the wetland. Meet at Visitor Center to sign-in and pick up trash bags. Bring gloves and dress for the weather. Students may earn community service credit. Call the park at 703-768-2525 to register.

Questions? Call Suzanne Lepple at 703-768-0462



### ***Many thanks to these additional people who donated to the 2010 Birdathon:***

***Connie Carpender***

***Sandra Galleta***

***David Greenberg***

***Dexter Hinckley***

***H. Phillips Jesup***

***Robert and Lee Ann Kinzer***

***Philip and Holly Kline***

***Anders Price***

***Mary Ann Rametta***

***Donald and Nancy Richardson***

***John and Paula Sullivan***

***Pam Tinker***

*We have raised almost \$2,000 with your help. Thanks again to all of you who have donated to the Birdathon. Your support helped fund this year's resource management intern, Amy O'Donnell.*

## Fall Art News

### *A Natural Perspective*

*Art by Jenna Fournel*

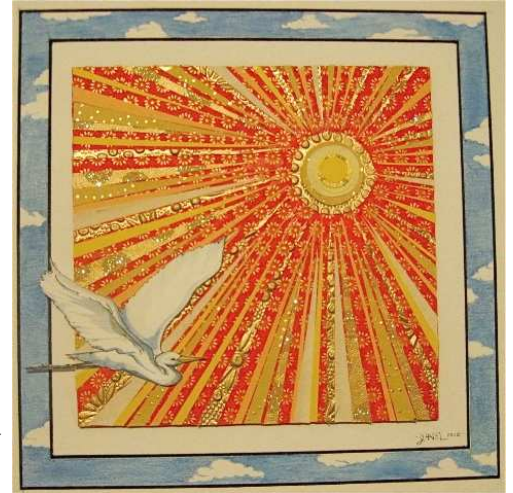
*September 12 to October 31*

*Reception on Sunday September 12 from 2 to 4 p.m.*

Painter and printmaker Jenna Fournel is featured this Fall in the Huntley Meadows Visitor Center Gallery. Her work is inspired by the desire to bring the rich perspectives found in nature to the spaces in which we dwell physically, emotionally and mentally. Through paintings, etchings, photography and collage, she captures the whimsy, wonder and beauty of the wild things she loves.

Jenna studied children's book illustration under Roberto Innocenti in Florence, Italy. That experience led her to find ways to synthesize the beauty of words with the beauty of images. She finds themes in nature conducive to this pursuit.

This year Jenna is going to give visitors an opportunity to learn the art of collaging. She will provide supplies and refreshments, teach techniques and lead a walk on Saturday September 25 from 1-3:30 and again on Saturday October 2 from 9 to noon. The cost is \$20. Call the park for more information.



### Friends of Huntley Meadows Park 2010 Photography Contest

### Give Us Your Best Shot!

*Entries due November 1 to 15*

**Awards reception December 12 , 2 to 4 p.m.**

The FOHMP Photo Contest is a nature-themed photography contest and a Friends of Huntley Meadows Park fundraiser. We invite all to submit your favorite photos taken at the park. Contestants must submit photos between **November 1-15, 2010**. No late entries will be accepted. A panel of judges will select photos from the pool of contest entries. Selected photos will be exhibited at the HMP Visitor Center from December 12, 2010 to February 28, 2011. All photos exhibited may be used by the Park for promotional or fundraising purposes. All proceeds from the sale of exhibited photographs and entry fees will be used to support Huntley Meadows Park.

#### Contest Rules

1. An entry fee of \$5.00 must accompany each photo, maximum submission is **4**. The fee is waived for those 18 and younger.
2. All photographs must have been taken at Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax County, VA.
3. Photographs taken with both film and digital cameras are acceptable.
4. Only photographs of a nature theme will be considered ( plants or animals.) Photos may contain images of people as long as the provisions in the Copyrights and Permissions section are followed. Please contact the Park for this information.
5. Photographs must be matted. Mounts should be standard sizes and should not exceed 18"x24".
6. Name, address, and telephone number should be entered clearly on the **BACK** of the mounted photograph. No identifying marks should appear on the front of the photographs, to preserve anonymity.
7. The decisions of the judges are final.
8. Photographers will be notified before December 1 if their photos will be included in the exhibit. Photographs that are not included in the show may be picked up at the opening reception on December 12.

#### Award Categories

1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners and Honorable Mentions will receive ribbons and certificates.

**Entry Forms are available at the Visitor's Center along with a list of eligibility requirements.**

# Huntley Meadows Happenings

## Fall Birds and Bagels

**Saturday, September 18, 8-11 a.m.**

Enjoy an early morning walk in search of resident and migrating birds, then relax and recap the sightings during a continental breakfast at the Visitor Center. Binoculars and field guides are



## Wild Side Wagon Ride!

**Sundays: September 19, October 3, 17, and 30, and November 14**

*Rides depart at 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.*

Take an exciting 90-minute interpretive ride in a custom-built wagon pulled by a tractor. Travel with a park naturalist to parts of the park that are difficult to reach on foot. Look for and learn about songbirds, wildflowers, butterflies, and waterfowl. Stop for a snack at the observation platform. \$6

## Café Cattail

**Friday, September 24, 7-9:30 p.m.**

For the last ten years the Friends of Huntley Meadows has sponsored Café Cattail, an open mike coffeehouse for nature lovers. Original poetry, sing along rounds, dance and musical performances by people ages 5 to 85 are commonly enjoyed at this quarterly event. The community atmosphere harkens back to the days before TV and even radio, when family and friends entertained each other. Please join us and share in the joy of celebrating nature through the arts. Free.

## Collage Workshop

**Saturday September 25, 1-3:30 p.m.**

**Saturday October 2, 9-noon**

Painter and printmaker Jenna Fournel will teach you how to turn images from nature into 3D works of art. Supplies, refreshments, and a walk with the artist included. \$20

## Birding for Beginners

**Saturday, October 2, 8-11 a.m.**

Interested in birding? We can get you started! Learn about the birds in the park and tryout different optics. Catch the fall birding excitement! \$6 Ages 12 and up.

## Night Walk

**Saturday, October 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

Visit the park at a time rarely seen by the public. Walk through the woods to the wetland with naturalist PJ Dunn, looking for hunting bats and working beavers. \$6

## Teen Night Hike

**Friday, October 17, 6:30-8:00 p.m.**

Celebrate the night life. Hike the park after dark with a naturalist. Look for hunting bats, beavers, and listen for owls. \$6 Ages 12-16.



## Nature Photography Show

**Sunday, November 7, 2 to 4 p.m.**

Meet local photographer Michael Dubois at the opening of his November one month show in the Huntley Meadows Visitor Center Gallery. Michael has taken many of his beautiful photographs at Huntley. The opening reception is free and open to the public.

## Birding for Beginners

**Sunday, November 21, 8-11 a.m.**

Observe the transition of our bird community as the summer breeding population moves south and winter residents arrive. A park naturalist helps you sharpen your bird identification



## Owl Outing

**Saturday, December 4, 4:30-6:30 p.m.**

Learn about the secret lives of the park's owls. Following an indoor presentation, take an off-trail walk in search of these nocturnal birds of prey. \$6

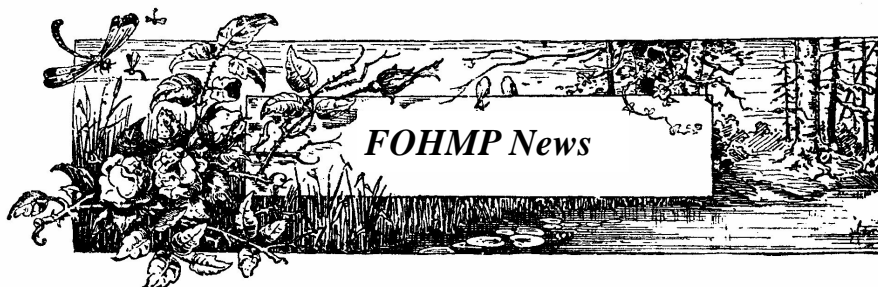
## Huntley Holiday Happening

**Sunday, December 12, 1-4 p.m.**

Looking for something special for the nature-lover on your list? Enjoy an afternoon of shopping with a 10% discount on merchandise during the event, yummy treats and holiday crafts. Free



*All programs require reservations unless they are free. Sign-ups can now be done online at the Parktakes site: please go to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes). Or call 703-222-4664. For help or information, call Huntley Meadows at 703-768-2525.*



**A Path**

I've heard over the years that Telegraph Road started out as a path used by Native Americans. In 1820 it was referred to as Potomac Path and considered the modern highroad from Alexandria to Fredricksburg. It later became known as Telegraph Road and presently borders the north side of Huntley Meadows Park and provides access to the hike-bike trail.

Today it is a well-used corridor from I-95 to Alexandria and Washington, D.C. Fairfax County and the Virginia Dept. of Transportation are working jointly to plan and execute improvements to Telegraph Rd from the intersection of Van Dorn to just beyond the intersection with South Kings Highway. I am happy to report that the Park Authority staff has been involved in the planning and through their efforts and with the support of FOHMP and Supervisor McKay, the preliminary plans for construction are environmentally sensitive to our watershed and the preservation and resource management of HMP. I encourage you to come to the first public meeting on this plan, which will be on September 23, 2010, at Hayfield High School, 5-8 pm.

In terms of the Fairfax County Budget planning for FY2012, I have not heard that any cuts are being asked of the Park Authority. This is good news so far, but we must be on our guard, as we know these things can change over the course of the year. FOHMP is continuing to support Huntley Meadows Park both financially and in volunteer personnel.

Kudos to FOHMP Board Member and long time volunteer, Norma Hoffman, who has received the Elly Doyle Award and will be recognized by Fairfax County at a ceremony in November. Norma is the founder of FOHMP, which grew out of another group that she led for years named CASH (Citizens Alliance to Save Huntley Meadows). Her leadership, persistence, and persuasive talents kept a road from being placed across the north end of the park.

Now, back to "the path". I attended a memorial service at HMP in May for a long time volunteer, Jack Moore. It was a lovely service and gathering. Jack was an active volunteer in the 1980's and 90's. At that time I worked for the Park Authority at Huntley Meadows Park and one of my duties was to organize a volunteer program. We began writing job descriptions, interviewing prospective volunteers, and organizing ways to evaluate and recognize their work. It was very exciting and very rewarding! I made lifelong friends during that period, some of whom have left us and others who have been by my side as I've traveled along the path of life. My point is – always remember how valuable your time and efforts are to Huntley Meadows Park, the HMP Staff, and the general environmental well being of our community. It's a Path worth following!

**Kathi McNeil**  
**President's FOHMP**



On Saturday, October 23, 2010 Huntley Meadows will host a walk-a-thon fundraiser for its neighbor, Frog Pond Early Learning Center.

From 8:00am to 10:00am, Frog

Pond students and their families will enjoy spotting birds, butterflies, dragonflies and frogs, as they make their way to and from the Huntley Meadows boardwalk. Participation in the walk-a-thon is open to the public. Immediately following the walk-a-thon, Frog Pond Early Learning Center will host a Fall Festival, where families can partake in traditional fall fun from 10am to 2pm at the Frog Pond Early Learning Center, 7204 Harrison Lane in Alexandria. All are welcome! For more information, please contact Frog Pond Early Learning Center at 703-765-7662.


The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park would like to thank the following new Lifetime members.

<b>Janet Bogue</b>	<b>Ken Lawwill</b>
<b>Nahuntly Billmyer</b>	<b>Thomas R. Miller and</b>
<b>Margaret and Richard Ewell</b>	<b>Julia R. Muth</b>
<b>Harrison Glasgow</b>	<b>Art and Sharon Money</b>
	<b>Pat Stoffel</b>

We appreciate the support from our members that allows FOHMP to achieve our goal of helping to preserve and protect the park. If you would like to give a "lifetime" of support to Huntley Meadows by becoming a life member, please send a donation of \$150 to:

Treasurer, FOHMP  
3701 Lockheed Blvd,  
Alexandria, VA 22306

**Thank you,**  
**Connie Carpender, Membership Chair**



# Summer Interns



## ***Natural Resource Management Intern***

My name is Amy O'Donnell and I was selected as the resource management intern for the Huntley Meadows this summer. I recently received my Bachelor's degree from George Mason University, majoring in Biology so this internship was right up my alley. When I came to interview for the Natural Resource Management internship, I was asked what I would like to take away most from this internship if I was selected. I answered that I would love to be more knowledgeable in plant identification. I can say with confidence that not only am I better at that, but I'm better at so much more! For instance, before this summer I probably couldn't name more than 5 benthic macroinvertebrates (bottom-dwelling water critters), but now not only could I name more than 5...I can do it to the genus level! I am a slightly experienced ATV driver (but it is going to be a bumpy ride), as well as a master weed puller. When I wasn't inside with my eyes glued to a microscope identifying water bugs, I was told that there are always invasive plant species to be pulled. So, several times this summer that's exactly what I did! Gloves on, boots up and bug-sprayed I was out in the meadows pulling Mile-a-Minute and Autumn Olive.

I was fortunate enough to familiarize myself with the staff at Huntley Meadows Park as well, an extremely welcoming bunch of characters that I won't soon forget. From office pranks to baked goods, it was always a blast hanging out with any and all of them.

I was extremely lucky to have received this position with the park and so am tremendously grateful to the Birdathon participants and the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park for funding my internship; my summer wouldn't have been the same without your help!

***Amy O'Donnell***

## ***Naturalist Intern***

When I first started typing this letter, I began it as if I was introducing myself for the first time. Then I realized that this seemed inadequate since it doesn't quite explain what I have experienced here at the park. I was 15 years old when I first volunteered at Huntley. I remember meeting Annie, Carolyn, Suzanne, and Gary Roisum and thinking these people are cool and they really love the park. I volunteered until I went away to college at Mary Washington where I studied and Environmental Science, Geology, and Biology, choices influenced by my time spent at Huntley Meadows. I visited the park whenever I was home for the holidays and often brought college friends with me to visit Huntley. I would still volunteer whenever I could.

When I took a job at a Therapeutic Day School teaching inner city high school students with special needs, I immediately noticed their lack of understanding of the natural world. I put together a program that incorporated visits to the many county parks. When I brought the students to Huntley, I saw in many of them for the first time a spark of wonder and appreciation for the natural world. That is what Huntley Meadows does to people. I have always really wanted to be a naturalist, so last year I applied for and was hired as a HMP weekend seasonal. I applied for the naturalist internship so I could learn to plan public nature programs and gain experience working during the week at Huntley.

I have learned a whole lot this summer from working closely with the park staff who have watched me grow up and have played big roles in nurturing my love of nature. I've had some amazing experiences; searching for the elusive snakehead in the wetlands, planting the seed of wonder for nature in the minds of "tiny tots", identifying plants and macroinvertebrates, seeing how resource management works, planning for Buglovers, pulling it off with the help of our wonderful volunteers and assisting in teaching young children in the day camps.

When I thank FOHMP for this opportunity, I am not only thanking you for the wonderful opportunity and learning experience that this internship has provided me, but for the wonderful park that without your dedication and spirit would not be here today –if you had not fought to keep it when they wanted to build a road through it and continue to fight for today— without which I and every intern before me and after, as well as every individual who has stepped or will step foot into the park will be able to continue to learn to appreciate and grow to love nature.



***Interns are funded through Birdathon donations and the support of the FOHMP membership.  
Thank you for your generosity!***

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

*Please support Huntley Meadows Park by joining our Friends group. By becoming a member, you will help to protect and preserve the park. Dues help fund new initiatives and programs and your membership will help us to be stronger advocates for the park. Fill out and mail the application to this address:*

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

***Dues information:***

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

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

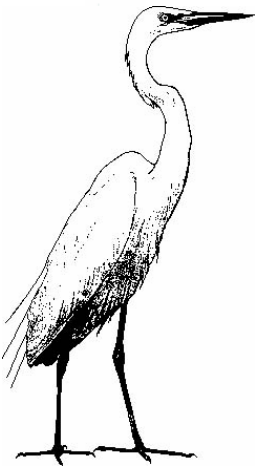
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Friends of Huntley Meadows Park**  
3701 Lockheed Blvd  
Alexandria, VA 22306  
703-768-2525



Please check your mailing label for accuracy and notify us of any changes.  
Your membership expiration date is in the upper left corner.