



Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

March 2010

Email: info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org
Website: www.Friendsofhuntleymeadows.org



Spring Awakenings

Eco-Savvy Expo

Sunday, April 11th, 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Bring nature home from Huntley Meadows Park! Our Eco-Savvy Expo will offer all you need to make your yard an environmentally friendly place. There will be programs, walks and a native plant sale featuring Virginia natives from Nature By Design. Rain barrels, native seed mixes, bee boxes and books on wildlife will be available for purchase. Our sponsoring organizations will be there to talk to you and to offer advice on how to create space for nature in your garden. Please join us.

Schedule of Events:

Bee Boxes and Bee Gardening - 12:30-1:30 p.m. (\$6)

Butterfly Gardening Tips - 2-3 p.m. (\$6)

Guided Nature Walk - 3:15-4:30 p.m. free

How to Install and Use Rain Barrels - 3:30-4 p.m. free

FOHMP Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 24th, 7 pm.

Celebrate spring and the **25th Anniversary of the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park** with the FOHMP board, park staff and Friends members at our annual meeting on April 24th. Festivities will begin in the Visitor Center with refreshments. A brief business meeting will be followed by highlights of the past year and recognition of new life members. We'll then walk to the wetland to hear a special springtime song performance by our local amphibian population. The courtship songs of frogs and toads should be in full swing. A not-to-be-missed ritual of spring is hearing them. Celebrate the park with the best friends of the park. We look forward to seeing you there. Dress for the weather and bring a flashlight if you wish. Please RSVP to 703-768-



Wetlands Awareness Day

Sunday, May 2nd, Noon to 3 p.m.

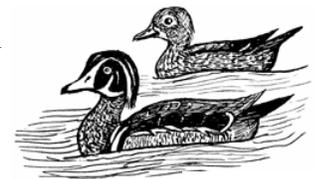
The biggest event on the HMP calendar is Wetlands Awareness Day. Hundreds of people come to the park to learn about the importance of and to experience the beauty of wetlands. Interpreters are stationed along the boardwalk where they unlock the mysteries of wetland soils, give close-up looks at wildlife through telescopes and impart visitors with a sense of what an amazing place Huntley Meadows is. There's also a Fun Fair for kids with games, prizes and an old-fashioned cake walk. Sponsored by FOHMP. Call Melissa Gaulding at 703-768-2525 if you're interested in volunteering to help out at the event.

Wild Side Wagon Rides

Sunday May 16 and May 23

12:30, 2:30, or 4:15 p.m.

Take a 90-minute tractor ride 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, and stop for a snack at the observation platform. Meets at the South King's Highway entrance to the park. This popular new program fills up quickly so call the park to make your reservation at 703-768-2525. \$6 (Children must be 6 or older)



Wood Ducks

*"Not having an interpreter in a park is like inviting a guest to your house, opening the door, and disappearing."
Support parks and park interpretive programs!*

William Carr



Park Manager's Message

A Walk on Huntley's Wild Side



The wildlife that use our parks, songbirds, flying squirrels, owls, pollinators, frogs, etc., often need to cross property lines to find food, water, mates and shelter. This brings them into our neighborhoods. So, to truly provide for the wildlife of Huntley Meadows and other parks, we can all create “mini” wildlife sanctuaries at home, a sort of rest stop plus grocery for traveling wildlife in need. I think of this as spring approaches and the gardener in me starts whispering... conspiring with my inner naturalist to create the “perfect garden” for bees, butterflies, finches, hummingbirds, tree frogs, thrushes, box turtles and other great critters. A list emerges of native plants that will act as wildlife magnets while somehow surviving deer browse, summer droughts and Virginia clay. “It can’t be done!” claims my inner realist. So what’s the answer?

Of course, there is no *perfect* answer, just as there is no *perfect* plant list. The joy of combining gardening, native plants and attracting wildlife is that each site is different, with its own unique palette and partnership of native plants, local wildlife and gardening challenges. However, if you live in Northern Virginia, there are several tough native plants that are guaranteed to attract wildlife, while also surviving this area’s weather, herbivores and rough soil.

There are literally hundreds of great native plants to use in a Northern Virginia wildlife garden. Your favorite species may be missing from this list, as are many of my favorites. I’ve tried to keep it simple and just pick a few over-achievers. The following list focuses on tough, wildlife magnets and includes the few native species that I know to be truly deer-resistant (DR). Everything not listed as DR can (and probably will) be munched by our hooved friends, so only use them if deer are not an issue in your neighborhood or you have other methods for discouraging deer. Pick a few that fit your yard, dig a hole and start creating your own wildlife sanctuary. Have fun and get started this spring!

Kevin Munroe

For more information about each species, visit the FOHMP website or stop by the park and ask for the full plant list.

Trees:

White Oak (*Quercus alba*)
Slippery Elm (*Ulmus fulva*)
Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)
Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*) DR
American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) DR
Common Paw Paw (*Asimina triloba*) DR

Shrubs:

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.)
Silky Dogwood (*Cornus amomum*)
Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*)
Summersweet Clethra (*Clethra alnifolia*)
Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*) DR
Coastal Leucothoe (*Leucothoe axillaris*) DR
Shrubby St John’s wort (*Hypericum prolificum*) DR
Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) DR

Wildflowers:

Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
Goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.) DR
Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*) DR
Giant Hyssop (*Agastache* sp.) DR
Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum* sp.) DR
Meehan’s Mint (*Meehania cordata*) DR

Ferns:

Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) DR
Evergreen Wood Fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*) DR

Build a Wildlife Sanctuary

Saturday March 27, 3-5 p.m.

Join Park Manager Kevin Munroe for a Power Point presentation about planting for wildlife and backyard conservation. Reservations required. \$6

Park Manager Walk and Talks

Saturday March 13, April 17, and May 22, 4-6 p.m.

Join Park Manager Kevin Munroe on these monthly walks. Find out about the wetland restoration project and learn about the wildlife for which the Park is known. Reservations required. Cancelled if rain. *Free*

Dazzled By Dragonflies

Saturday April 3, 3-4:30 p.m.

You won’t want to miss this illustrated presentation about these fierce predators and daring aerial acrobats, conducted by Park Manager and dragonfly expert Kevin Munroe. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Reservations required. \$6 (9 years and up)



How To Be An Advocate

We have all been encouraged to appeal to our County Supervisors not to enact the suggested 15% budget education for the Park Authority in the fiscal 2011 county budget. Most of us do not make such a case to our elected officials very often, and may be uncertain how to best present our opinions. Chairman Bulova has a well-honed presentation on how to go about influencing your elected officials, which I have heard more than once. It lists 5 points to remember. These points are:

1. Understand the Legislative Process. Know what can and cannot be done, and who can do it. Some actions can only be done at the State level, others more locally. It is meaningless to complain to a County official about matters taking place in the General Assembly, and vice versa. In this case, the budget is a County matter. But there are portions of the budget that are mandated by the state (education, public safety, etc) over which the County has little control. The Park Authority budget cuts are squarely a County decision!
2. Know your subject and set expectations for what you want to do. Learn how the budget is developed and adopted, how the Park Authority fits in the larger County fiscal operation, and what will be lost if the reductions are imposed.
3. Have a clear message, articulate the problem and propose a solution. It is much more persuasive to offer a solution to a problem than to simply complain. Suggest alternatives that the official can ponder and possibly apply to the overall budget situation.
4. Work with all stakeholders. Engage with all constituents of the affected community. We are doing that in this Park Authority budget issue through the efforts of the Federation of Friends Groups. But this problem also affects other areas of the County (Libraries, schools) so we should be coordinating our efforts with supporters of these groups as well. This makes others part of the process and instills a sense of ownership of the problem, a sense of teamwork, and a general 'we are all in this together' attitude.
5. Be prepared to persist. Budget deliberations are usually long, uphill crusades. It is of little use to write a letter and think you are done. You have to stick with the effort – follow up with visits, phone calls, letters to editors, recruiting helpers (see rule 4), and to never let up. It was once said that 90% of winning is simply showing up. So, if you want to win, be persistent.

Two points that I would add: First, don't threaten. It is counter productive to write a letter asking for something in the first paragraph, and then threaten to withhold your vote in the second paragraph if they don't get it for you. Second, demonstrable facts always win over emotion. Be calm, be positive, and be right!

Harrison Glasgow

FOHMP board member

Park Cuts in 2011 Fairfax County Budget

Huntley Meadows and the Fairfax County Park Authority are going to need your help to make this a good year for our parks. All of us have heard the bad news about the County Budget deficits. The proposed 15% cuts to the FCPA budgets are going to have a severe effect on the stewardship and preservation of our parkland. Here is what you can do to help: Please contact members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

We need to publicly advocate for parks and for the County's natural resources. Send an email, make a phone call, write a letter or register to speak at the budget hearings. Your efforts will be a crucial part of protecting our natural and cultural resources and quality of life today and in the future.

Call in your support for parks

County's Budget Hotline: 703-324-9400

You will have two minutes to record your opinions.

Write letters and address them to:

Sharon Bulova, Chair

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 530

Fairfax, VA 22035

Or email them to the Board's clerk :

clerktothebos@fairfaxcounty.gov

Attend the public Budget Hearings

The FY2011 Fairfax County Budget Hearings are scheduled for April 6, 7 and 8. They will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center. To testify at the hearings, register in advance with the Clerk to the Board by calling 703-324-3151. You will have three minutes to speak. The public hearings are scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. on the 6th and 3 p.m. on the 7th and 8th.

For more information on the budget, visit:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget

Spring Art News

Wildlife Photography by the Northern Virginia Photographic Society

Opening reception Sunday, March 7, 2 to 4 p.m.

Members of the Northern Virginia Photographic Society will be exhibiting their best nature shots this March and April. Some of the members are familiar faces at Huntley Meadows. Volunteers Fred Siskind and Marilyn Gaizband belong to this long-standing, prestigious club. Corey Hilz who has taught nature photography here, and Bob and Jorja Feldman who have exhibited here, are members, too. The public is invited to join the photographers at the opening reception. The show will be hanging in the Visitor's Center during March and April.

The Northern Virginia Photographic Society promotes the enjoyment, mastery and furtherance of photographers of every skill level. To find out more visit their website at www.nvps.org.



Wildlife in Watercolors

Paintings by B.J. Opfer

Artist's reception, Sunday, May 16th, 2 to 4 p.m.

B.J. Opfer is an accomplished wildlife artist who has been painting local wildlife for 25 years. His paintings have been exhibited at art shows in Northern Virginia and at nationally recognized juried shows. Using watercolors to emphasize the softness of feathers, his paintings are sensitive and realistic portraits. Birds from his backyard are often his subjects as well as waterfowl and shorebirds of the coastal region. His portfolio also includes small mammal paintings. Original paintings will be on sale as well as prints. A portion of the proceeds supports Huntley Meadows Park. The public is invited to attend the artist's reception on May 16th. The paintings will be on display in the Visitor's Center during May and June.



Pileated woodpecker by B.J. Opfer

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park 2009 Photography Contest

FOHMP held their fifth annual Photography Contest in December. The show, for amateur photographers, featured photographs taken at the park. We wish to thank our juror, Scott Musson, for having so carefully chosen the winning photos. A great big thank you also to the staff and volunteers who assisted in hanging and labeling the photos.

The photography show is a fundraiser for FOHMP as well as an excellent opportunity for amateur photographers to share their work with the public. We wish to thank all those who together submitted an amazing total of 100 photographs for the show. We congratulate the winners and thank you all for participating.

Sarah Stromayer, Art Show Coordinator

Adult Category Winners

- First Place: Dale Nelson
- Second Place: Mary Radaban
- Third Place: Curtis Gibbons
- Honorable Mention: Nancy Pryor

Youth Category Winners

- First Place: Sharon McGrath
- Second Place: Anna McGrath
- Third Place: Kyle Delaney

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

- T. O. Miller***
- Stuart and Linda Nottingham***
- Laurie and Eric Winakur***

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



Huntley Meadows Park News

Deer Exclosure Sign Completed and Installed

The deer exclosure on the HMP entrance road has a new interpretive sign explaining why the huge fence is there and its purpose. After over a year of working with a team of interpreters and HQ staff to finalize the sign, the results are pretty awesome. The sign looks great and has a removable side panel, making it easy to update every couple of years to show the progress of plants inside the deer exclosure. Comparisons of chronological photos will depict the forest's growth inside and outside the exclosure. Our team of expert volunteer botanists is monitoring vegetation three times a year to record changes in the plant communities. The grant-funded project is also being monitored for long-term changes to the forest canopy without the influence of deer on the ecosystem. We expect in a couple of years the difference will be plain to see and maybe by then the fence will blend into the forest and be less visible. A special thank you to Brian Moore and HMP volunteer Adam Boucher for installing the sign on a very cold January morning.

Deer Management at Huntley Meadows Park 2009 – 2010

Deer management is back on the schedule in 2009-2010 with our new County Wildlife Biologist, Vicky Monroe, leading the charge. We've had three sharpshooting events this season, tying us for the most visits to any county park. So we are very thankful to Vicky for making Huntley Meadows Park a priority. With our offerings of Krispy Kreme donuts, coffee, chili (Thank you, Nancy) and pizza to the Wildlife Biologist staff and tactical team on shooting nights, we hope to keep it that way for many years to come. During the three sharpshoots this year, we culled a total of 40 deer with 22 bucks and 18 does. The deer meat was donated to Hunters for the Hungry to feed the needy. Over the last three years, the park has received very little deer management support from the Wildlife Biologist due to budget cuts and staff shortages. For that reason, we decided to remove as many deer as possible this year, resulting in larger numbers of bucks taken than in normal years. Next year, we will return to the standard procedure of targeting reproductive does. The deer management program was very successful and efficient this year and we hope for the same next year. The most recent deer population survey at Huntley was done in the fall of 2007 and resulted in an estimated 203 deer using the park. This equates to 91 deer per square mile using the park. The typical eastern forest can sustain approximately 15 – 20 deer per square mile without damaging existing plant communities. We will be back at it again next year.

Internship Opportunities at Huntley Meadows

Thanks to Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and Birdathon supporters, there are two internship opportunities at Huntley Meadows Park this summer. If you wish to gain practical experience in nature center operations and teaching children about the natural world, then the **Naturalist Internship** may interest you. Those who seek a career in wildlife management or environmental sciences may wish to apply for the **Natural Resource Management Internship**. Both positions are 11 weeks beginning May 31, 2010 and ending August 13, 2010. Interns work 40 hours a week and receive a stipend of \$2700. To apply please send a resume and letter of intent by March 26, 2010 to Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, VA 22306, attention Carolyn Gamble (carolyn.gamble@fairfaxcounty.gov) for the Naturalist Internship and attention Dave Lawlor (dave.lawlor@fairfaxcounty.gov) for the Natural Resource Management Internship. Call the park at 703-768-2525 for more information.

Volunteer Opportunities *(If interested, call Ann Stat at the park at 703-768-2525).*

Program Leader for Wednesday or Friday mornings

Teach twice each month between 9:30-noon. Lead a class of elementary students, their teachers and chaperones on a wetland field trip.

Weekend Front Desk VOD (Volunteer-on-Duty)

Volunteers needed for weekends at the Visitor Center's front desk. Greet and orient the public, answer phones, take program reservations and make sales.

Trail Monitors

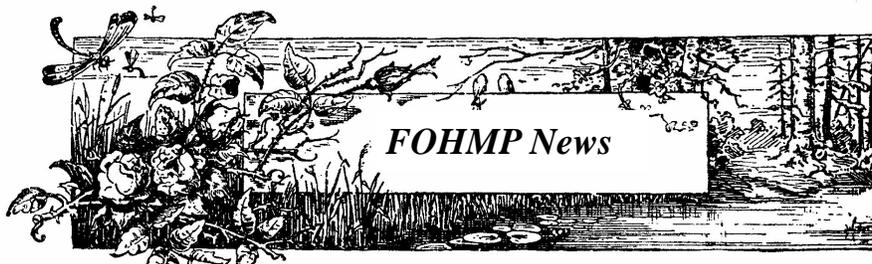
Be the eyes and ears for the park. Walk the trails and interact with the public by answering wildlife questions and chatting about park rules.

Eco-Savvy Expo and Wetlands Awareness Day

Volunteer help needed for these half-day events.

Highway Clean-up

Volunteer to help clean-up near the park's Entrance road on March 27th.



The meaning of life is to give life meaning

My son, Malcolm, picked out a bumper sticker with this quote on it when he was about 10. It has stood the test of time on the back bumper of our van for the past six years and 125,000 miles, while other stickers have come and gone. As we struggle with the challenges of these political and economic times, it is not always clear what gives our lives meaning. When things are going well, it is easy to plow ahead – take on one project after another, and pat ourselves on the back for a job well done!

Thus said, in the past couple of decades, Fairfax County has been moving forward and providing its citizens with the amenities of a progressive, financially sound, and nationally recognized municipal government. Due to our current economic and political challenges, Fairfax County does not have the resources to continue services at the level we, as residents, are accustomed to. This brings me back to the opening quote. What gives our lives meaning? We all have asked ourselves this question, perhaps more than once, and seek answers.

For me, educating people of all ages about the natural world, its valued and limited resources, and working to protect these resources for everyone, is something that gives my life meaning. I believe that there are many of you who will agree. We have all been a part of a movement to share our thoughts with Fairfax County elected and appointed officials through petitions, letters and meetings. ***Please don't give up the fight yet! The final FC budget will not be voted on and adopted until late April!*** It is crucial that we have the resources to enable future generations to experience and learn how our natural world works. There is a balance that will need to be managed and maintained. It is a passion of mine, but also a responsibility as a current resource user.

Thanks again for all that you have done so far! FOHMP raised over \$8,000 in our first ever appeal with at least a third of our membership participating. These funds will be earmarked for seasonal salaries, resource management and environmental education programs and internships at Huntley Meadows Park. I know that we are being listened to and hopefully making an impact- keep up the good work for the next couple of months while taking time to enjoy spring in all its beauty!

Kathi McNeil, FOHMP President



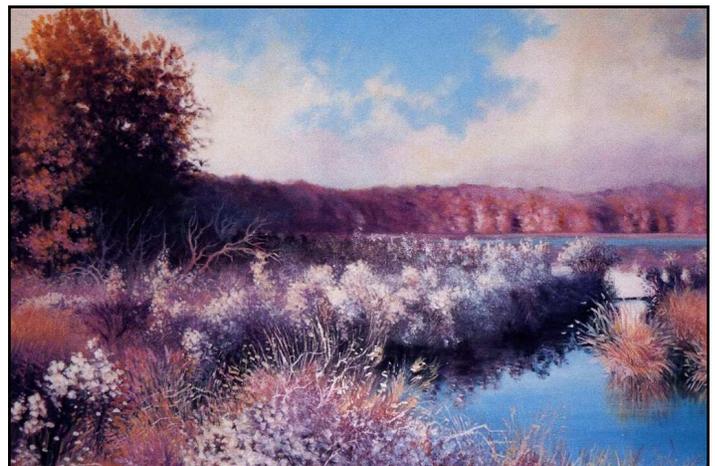
2009 Elly Doyle Award Winner Kathi McNeil

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park President and site volunteer, **Kathi McNeil** was honored at the Elly Doyle Park Service Award reception in November. She was recognized with this top Fairfax County Park Authority volunteer award for her leadership role as two-term president and long-time board member of FOHMP. She was also acknowledged for her many years of contributions as an educator, park steward and park advocate. Our congratulations to Kathi on this well-deserved award, and many thanks for her tireless hours spent promoting our parks.



Yvette St. Laurent

We are saddened to report the death of a wonderful friend of the park. **Yvette St. Laurent**, a local artist who loved Huntley Meadows and painted many beautiful Huntley landscapes, died December 30, 2009, after a long illness. Her oil painting of Historic Huntley, which she donated to Friends of Historic Huntley, is currently on display in Supervisor Jeff McKay's office. Several of the park staff have her artwork at home. Her kindness and her ability to paint the magic of Huntley Meadows will always be remembered.



Support the Huntley Meadows Park Birdathon

The other day I was listening to a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks calling and reflected that, although it's winter, raptors were deep into their courtship rituals. It dawned on me that spring nesting time was just around the corner. Cardinals, chickadees, and house finches will soon be heard singing in the morning. Before you know it, there will be reports of warblers appearing in trees which a short time ago were covered with snow. And that means it's almost time for the Huntley Meadows Park 14th annual Birdathon on Tuesday, May 4th.

Every year, park staff and volunteers set out very early in the morning to count bird species in the park. Over the years, this event has grown from an annual survey to something more important. It now provides an opportunity to remember and honor Ed Weigel and Ken Howard, two volunteers who for years inspired a love of nature within the park visitors they met. They shared their time, wisdom, wit, and enthusiasm with everyone, acting as true ambassadors for Huntley Meadows. Their good work continues to this day through the park's Natural Resource Internship that is funded by the Birdathon. This internship provides a young person with an opportunity to begin a career in conservation and to get hands-on experience in a great park.

As always, our goal is to record 100 species for the day. We've done it five times with 108 species in 2004 being our top record. To make a donation, you can do it per species or just by a dollar amount. If you were to donate only a quarter per species seen, 100 species would produce a donation of \$25. That would go a long way towards helping us reach our annual goal of \$2,700. This is our traditional fundraising event of the year when we ask our members to donate to a good cause. We have always appreciated the generosity of park supporters in helping us to meet our goal.

I believe this is an outstanding cause. Like many of you, I knew Ken and Ed well, and count myself fortunate to have learned so much about the natural world from them. I want to see their good work continue, and I hope you feel the same way. Thank you very much.

Andy Higgs



2010 Huntley Meadows Park Birdathon

Name: _____

Address: _____

Donation Amount: _____

Please make checks payable to **HMP-FCPA** and write *donations-birdathon* on the memo line.

Mail this form and check to:
Huntley Meadows Park Birdathon
3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306

Results will be posted by June 1 on the FOHMP website: www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

If you would like a hardcopy of the results, please check the

***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. Your dues will help fund new initiatives and programs and your support will help us to be 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



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