

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park



Fall 2016

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

Dominion Virginia Power Project Update

By Cathy Ledec, President of Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

Are you wondering what happened with the Dominion Virginia Power Project on Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) property (see September's newsletter)? I'm pleased to report that we have a **WIN** for our **ENVIRONMENT**...a **WIN** for protection of our **NATURAL RESOURCES**...a **WIN** for **BIRDS**...a **WIN** for protection of **HISTORIC VIEWSHEDS**...and a **WIN** for protection of **HISTORIC, CULTURAL** and **ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**. Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP), Friends of Historic Huntley (FOHH), the County of Fairfax, and Dominion Virginia Power (Dominion) came to an agreement just moments before the State Corporation Commission hearing on the proposed power project was to begin on June 15, 2016. This agreement addressed our most significant concerns. Dominion agreed to lower the maximum height of the power poles from 125 feet as proposed, to 100 feet. This change virtually eliminates the adverse impact on the Historic Huntley viewshed. Lowering the poles also reduces, though does not entirely eliminate, the potential risk for bird collisions with the top grounding wire. We also agreed on certain requirements for a bird monitoring project in the project area. Dominion and FOHMP agreed that if these criteria are met within the agreed timeframe, Dominion will install, as a cost of the rebuild project, bird flight diverters along the entire rebuild section of the transmission line within HMP. If the agreement criteria are met, Dominion would also pay for a monitoring program to report on bird fatalities along the easement, and will publicly disclose data related to any such study.



From left to right: Cathy Ledec, Diane Donley, George Ledec, and Caroline Gamble in Richmond for the SCC regulatory meeting.

We also asked, and Dominion agreed, that concrete washouts for the Rebuild Project utilizing the 100-Foot Structure option will utilize leak proof matting under the concrete washout pit to prevent all concrete residue from leaching into the soil or surface or subsurface water. This is required under EPA Stormwater Best Management Practice: Concrete Washout Document, EPA 833-F-11-006 (Feb. 2012), but it is important to remind everyone of the need to work with great care in this very sensitive conservation area. This re-statement of the EPA requirement accomplishes that. The concrete washout areas will be on Fairfax County Park Authority property (though not on HMP property).

We Need Your Voice!

Join with ours in asking for more parks, green spaces and natural areas along Richmond Highway!

Embark Richmond Hwy Community Meeting
November 29, 2016, 7:00-9:00pm
Walt Whitman MS, Auditorium
2500 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306

For more information visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/embarkrichmondhwy/meetings.htm>.

Dominion agreed to prepare revised detailed alignment sheets showing the power pole base locations with respect to the location of wetlands, rare plants and the George Washington Boundary ditches for use by Dominion project staff and contractors. In addition, Dominion will identify on site "no-go zones" (areas to be avoided and marked as such to alert contractors by some type of on-the-ground marking). Dominion agreed to prepare (or have prepared) a detailed analysis of historic resources, which would include detailed mapping, document research, and historic plat analysis, in

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Monday Morning Bird Walk

By Harry Glasgow

As summer blends into autumn, the area bird populations change as well. September brought us some interesting adjustments to our home birds as well as some migratory species. Several juvenile Little Blue Herons spent a significant part of the summer in the central wetlands before leaving in mid-September. While annual visits of these birds is not unusual, having them stay for nearly two months at Huntley Meadows is. Moreover, this year's crop had several juveniles and at least one adult, whereas our previous visitors amounted to two or three juveniles at most. Cornell data shows regular sightings of Little Blue Herons in our area from August through September, but Huntley records show only a week or so for just a few birds.



Little Blue Heron by Ed Edar

On the September 20 Monday Morning Birdwalk, we were able to positively identify a Long-billed Dowitcher (LBD) mixed in with several other shorebird species. Old timers can remember an LBD in the very distant past, but we can't find a Huntley record. Any help would be appreciated. Also on the 20th, we sighted several species of shorebirds, among them a Stilted Sandpiper. We are still waiting for the on-rush of warblers, but as of this writing it hasn't happened. Stay tuned.

All are welcome to join the Monday Morning Birdwalk. We'd love to see you!

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.

News from Park Manager Karen Sheffield



Long-billed Dowitcher

I hope you have been able to visit Huntley Meadows Park and witness the spectacular shorebird activity this season. If you missed it, the Long-billed Dowitcher seems to top the list as a new species record for the Park. (Yes, I'm expecting email comments on this!) Thank you to all the birders who document and report sightings. You play an important role in wetland management.

This season a birding day including five to nine species of observed shorebirds was not uncommon. Amongst the most often seen were Killdeer, Greater Yellow Legs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, and very rare for the Park, Stilt Sandpiper and Long-billed Dowitcher.

Increased diversity and abundance of these birds is influenced by the relative attractiveness of the wetland to these species. Thoughtful wetland management and a little luck from Mother Nature with rainfall created these appealing conditions.

Although most of the shorebirds have now moved on, the diversity and abundance of native wetland plants this season will create a profusion of waterfowl food for this winter. With continued luck from Mother Nature and careful wetland management, it could turn out to be a fabulous winter season for these birds. Don't forget your binoculars! (If you do, we have a limited number of binoculars to borrow from the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center.)

Hope to see you at the Park!

FOHMP President Cathy Ledec Honored

Cathy Ledec has been honored with the Virginia Recreation and Park Society (VRPS) Distinguished Volunteer Service Award. Cathy, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) President since October 2012, received her award at the organization's annual conference on November 7, 2016 in Roanoke, VA.

Cathy Ledec with her award at the Virginia Recreation and Park Society's annual meeting.



Ms. Ledec began volunteering at Huntley Meadows in the summer 2003 and even met her husband at an annual Huntley Meadows bird count. As FOHMP President, she has advocated to defend Huntley Meadows Park from environmental, natural, and cultural resources threats and has devoted hundreds of hours to these causes. Cathy also helped bring and celebrate the Park's two-decade wetland restoration project to culmination.

Due to Cathy's efforts FOHMP hosted representatives of nearly two dozen Friends organizations at Huntley Meadows Park in Spring 2016. The successful meeting was designed to unite these organizations into a Federation of Friends that could establish shared goals.

Congrats Cathy and thank you for all that you do for Parks (especially Huntley Meadows Park) and the environment in Fairfax County!

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particular of the George Washington boundary ditches in a specifically defined portion of the easement area. This detailed analysis will be completed before any rebuild work for the 100-foot structure option in the noted area within the easement is undertaken by Dominion. We thank Dominion for agreeing to these improvements to the Rebuild Project.

I would be remiss to not share with you that many hours, in fact many hundreds of hours, were spent researching current technical material, consulting with experts, preparing testimony, responding to questions, submitting testimony, copying documents, preparing more testimony, and all of this under very tight deadlines. My hope is that others who are faced with the daunting and intimidating task of challenging a large utility company that you will know that we were there once too. We leaned on each other and you can lean on us knowing that we support your efforts to protect the natural, cultural, historical and archaeological resources that might be gone forever without your efforts.

My deepest expression of thanks goes to our team members, Diane Donley (our attorney), Todi Carnes (President, FOHH), Carolyn Gamble (Board member, FOHH), and all members of the FOHMP and FOHH Boards of Directors. A special thanks to George Ledec who provided significant technical advice and guidance throughout this project. Diane Donley, our attorney, is a treasure beyond measure. Words cannot express how grateful we are for Diane's legal guidance and direction, and the commitment shown by her to this project. Diane donated many hours of her time, and we thank her for putting up with us as we stumbled our way through the Virginia State Corporation Commission's regulatory process.

We also thank our friends throughout Fairfax County (and beyond) who provided written comments to the State Corporation Commission (SCC). These comments were heard and this positive, precedent-setting result is partly because of you. Remember when you walk on the trails at HMP and hear the wind whistling through the trees, the frogs croaking, the birds singing, the bees and other insects buzzing, know that these sounds are nature's way of thanking you for protecting her.

I look forward to seeing you on the trails!

New Tree Commissioner Announced

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) Board is pleased to announce the appointment of FOHMP President Cathy Ledec as Tree Commissioner for the Mount Vernon District. The appointment was made by Mount Vernon District Supervisor Daniel Storck and approved by the Mount Vernon Board of Supervisors during their October 18, 2016 meeting.

Congratulations Cathy!

Staff Member Kylie Stark Receives Award

Huntley Meadows Program Manager Kylie Starck received the prestigious 2016 Outstanding New Interpreter Award from the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). The award is presented annually to one person who demonstrates a recognized potential in interpretation, assumption of leadership roles, creativity in programming or facility development, and a commitment to the profession of interpretation.

At Huntley Meadows, Kylie has raised stewardship awareness and connected many more people to the Park and the County's treasured resources. Kylie:

- Pioneered, created, and led nature birthday parties, tot programs, and week-long nature camps;
- Significantly increased the Park's involvement in designated national day events, such as Kids to Parks Day;
- Is involved in Teachers in Parks, a training program designed to give teachers tools they need to safely and actively engage students with nature;
- Has worked with the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOMHP) to create a financial assistance program that has aided more than 300 students in Title I schools; and,
- Has worked with FOHMP to create a 'Kids to Camp' program that provides financial assistance for children of in-need families to attend camps.

Kylie Starck teaching campers about the American Box Turtle



Kylie began her career as an interpreter in 2012 with the Park Authority, working both in cultural resource interpretation at Colvin Run Mill Historic Site and in natural resource interpretation for the Fairfax County Public Schools 7th grade Meaningful Watershed Environmental Education program. She also became a Certified Interpretive Guide through NAI.

Congratulations Kylie for helping to create quality programs for everyone to enjoy, learn from and share with others.

Thank you FOHMP for your support in these efforts!

Donate through Amazon

If you shop on Amazon, you can identify Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) as your favorite charity. For every transaction you complete, FOHMP will receive a donation amount of 0.5% of your purchase. Simply register FOHMP as your preferred charity at <https://smile.amazon.com>.

This costs YOU nothing and costs FOHMP nothing. Amazon makes the donation.



Holiday Merchandise



Holiday shopping? Be sure to make a stop at the Huntley Meadows Park Norma Hoffman Visitor Center gift shop. In addition to the wonderful nature and history related items, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park has Park specific pins, hats, cinch bags, tees, and more!

Restoration Begins!

The photo below shows beginning renovation of the Historic Huntley Tenant House. The effort was initiated in September 2016 and is expected to continue through early next year. The Friends of Historic Huntley gives a "shout out" to Historic Huntley intern Sarah Rogers who is working to identify, resolve, and document preservation issues brought to the fore by the renovation.



FOHMP Board Dollars at Work

Dear Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
A message for you follows; hark!
Kat and Jen on a trip; "What a lark!",
You say. But that is off the mark.
Instead the trip was a professional spark,
Ever promoting our learning arc!

Regional National Association for Interpretation rallied
At Cacapon Park, West Virginia; near 100 were tallied.
Sharing experience, knowledge, and food in the "galley",
Improving nature and history interpretation skills, right up our alley!!!
Thanks to all of you, we were there with "Tom, Dick and Sally".

We had a great time meeting peers with fresh views
Studied ferns, stars, and maps so we won't go askew,
Boned up on story telling and treasure hunts with clues.
We enjoyed beautiful weather, and a stunning view,
For this wonderful experience we want to **thank you**
For filling our interpretive bags anew!



Kat Ochs and Jen Crawford at scenic overlook in Cacapon Park, West Virginia for the National Association for Interpretation Region 2 Annual Conference.

WANTED: USED BOOKS

We are looking for used book donations for our used book sale at the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center gift shop. We are especially interested in books with the following themes:

- Guides (animals or plants; other parks or natural resource areas)
- Environmental protection and preservation
- Gardening (especially with a focus on native plants)
- Local and Native American history (DE, MD, VA area)
- Kid friendly (nature/natural history theme)
- Cooking



Bring books to the front desk at the Visitor Center. Or email us at: friendsofhmp@gmail.com and arrange for a Friend to pick them up for you.

All proceeds from book sales go to the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park to support Park activities.

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.*

NOVEMBER

19 Saturday - Owl Outing (Adults), 4:30-6:30pm. \$8.
Registration code: 3404866601

DECEMBER

3 Saturday - Owl Outing - (Adults), 4:30-6:30pm. \$8.
Registration code: 3404866602
10 Saturday - Boardwalk Astronomy - (Ages 12-Adults), 6-8pm. Canceled if inclement weather, \$8.
Registration code: 3404865102

11 Sunday - FOHMP Photography Contest Opening – (All Ages), 1:00-3:00pm. FREE
19 Monday-21 Wednesday - Winter Wildlife Rangers Camp - (6-12 yrs.), 9am-4pm. \$175.
 Registration code: 3401206901

JANUARY

2 Monday - Animal Vets Workshop Day Camp - (6-11 yrs.), 9am-4pm. \$65.
 Registration code: 3401953201
14 Saturday - You Can Build It! At Historic Huntley (call to confirm location if inclement weather) - (Ages 4-Adults), 1-2:30pm. \$8.
 Registration code: 5781037701
14 Saturday - Winter Tree ID - (Ages 12-Adults), 1:30-3:30pm. \$8.
 Registration code: 3401027801
20 Friday - School's Out Nature Adventures Day Camp - (6-12 yr.), 9am-4pm. \$60.
 Registration code: 3401220701
21 Saturday - Family Owl Outing - (Ages 6-Adults), 4:30-6pm. \$7.
 Registration code: 3401039401
22 Sunday - Birding for Beginners - Woodpeckers - (Ages 12-Adults), 8-11am. \$10.
 Registration code: 3401879601
28 Saturday - Sketch Hike: Winter Trees and Landscapes - (Ages 12-Adults), 10am-12pm. \$8.
 Registration code: 3401027701
28 Saturday - Evening Stroll - (Ages 6-Adults), 5-7pm. \$8.
 Registration code: 340182790

FEBRUARY

4 Saturday - World Wetlands Day Celebration! - (Ages 4-adult), 12-2pm. \$8.
 Registration code: 3401040701
6 Monday - School's Out Nature Adventures Day Camp - (6-12 yr.), 9am-4pm. \$60.
 Registration code: 3401220702
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), 10:00am-12:00PM. \$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. See 1/14, \$8.
 Registration code: 3401027802
4 Saturday - Family Woodcock Walk - (Ages 8-Adults), 5:30-7:pm. 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). 12:00-1:00pm. 47.
 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
20 Monday - Taux Trail for Homeschool - (Ages 6-12), 1-3pm. \$12.
 Registration code: 3401023701



**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