

Spring 2021

Newsletter

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park



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Save the Date!

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) Annual Meeting will be held virtually on Sunday, June 13 starting at 3:00 pm. Anyone interested is encouraged to join us to learn what FOHMP has accomplished in FY20-21.

Members are eligible to vote for next fiscal year’s Board members.

Please email friendsofhmp@gmail.com to reserve a space; the Zoom link will be sent on the day of the meeting.

Programs at the Park

Huntley staff have created diverse offerings of on site and virtual programs for family's and individuals of all ages. From cicadas to bats and drawing to corn grinding, the programs give another look at the diverse history and nature of Huntley Meadows Park.

As of this publication, all on site programs are held entirely outdoors. Learn more about what is available, and sign up on the Park’s website at:

https://fairfax.usdirect.com/FairfaxFCPAWeb/ACTIVITIES/Search.aspx?place_id=7891.

Make a Donation by Shopping Amazon

You can earn money for Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) while you shop using the AmazonSmile program. Shop at smile.amazon.com, and you’ll find the exact same experience as at Amazon.com. However, Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your designated charitable organization at no cost to you. To set or change your charity to FOHMP, use this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1338505>, and thank you for choosing FOHMP as your charity of choice through AmazonSmile.

Help Friends of Huntley Meadows Park streamline our administrative work, use our PayPal link to renew your membership or donate! <http://fohmp.org/membership.html>

Park Manager's Message

By: Karen Sheffield, Park Manager

Thank you, thank you, thank you. These words contain so much gratitude for your support for Huntley Meadows Park over this pandemic time. As a Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) member, you have donated much needed financial support that helped us sustain the Park grounds, natural resources, and programs. By providing this support, you've helped us to keep our quality Park services during a very challenging year. A special thanks goes to the FOHMP Board for their kind words and actions to help us through this difficult period. Their support has made a big difference.

The Park and Park staff are in for another big change as Brian Moore, the Park's Maintenance Crew Chief retired in early May. In his 25+ years at Huntley Meadows, Brian helped build and install sections of the exhibits in the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center that visitors still enjoy today. He's maintained the Park grounds to a high standard and receives many visitor compliments for it. His numerous responsibilities that kept the Park safe, clean, and in running order are too many to list. One of the last major projects Brian completed was the installation of the wetland waysides along the Heron Trail (see below)! Most of all, Brian will be greatly missed for his sense of humor and the fun that he brought to his job.

As budgets and staff headcount remain tight, we are unsure when we'll have a new Huntley Maintenance Crew Chief. We ask for your patience during this time.

While visiting the Park this spring, look for the new wetland wayside exhibits that Brian and Steve Lindblom, Maintenance Crew Volunteer installed along the Heron Trail. This project was many years in the making, and a huge thank you goes to everyone who gave feedback on the draft exhibits. Many enhancements were made from the comments received. Hope you enjoy the waysides!



One of the new waysides installed at the entrance to the boardwalk.

Bird-a-thon and Beyond! Results

This year's Bird-a-thon was another success! The annual Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) fundraiser supports the Park's 2021 summer Resource Management (RM) Intern. The intern selection process is in full swing, and the selected intern will start in early June working with Resource Manager Dave Lawlor on plant surveys, water quality testing, and other projects to support a healthy Park ecosystem.

For a second year, we asked our friends to bird with us in back yards, local parks, or other locations. The results were fantastic! We had participants from across the country logging bird sightings and getting outside! Once we total the results, we will share them on our website www.fohmp.org.

The official tally from the Park surveyors is 92 species!

If you wish to contribute to Bird-a-Thon and Beyond! financially, please send your Bird-a-thon related donation by May 31st using our dedicated Bird-a-Thon PayPal link www.fohmp.org/birdathon%20beyond%202021.html.



Prothonotary Warbler taking flight. Photo by Ed Eder

A Way Forward: What Does This Mean For You?

By: Cathy Ledec, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park President

For more than a year, the global pandemic has had a major impact on all of our lives. Many of us have lost loved ones to this illness, and to each of you I extend my deepest sympathies. May you know that we share your sadness and hope that your happy memories help you get through these challenging times.

Can you see it yet? There is a light at the end of the tunnel of this global pandemic, and for me, it appears to get brighter every day. Already more than a year has passed since the emergency shutdown was announced here in the Commonwealth of Virginia. At times for me, time was passing by very slowly. Now that I look back, it seems that the past year has flown by. My hope is that systems at the federal level, informed by valid and real science, are put in place to prevent - or at least minimize - a repeat pandemic. It will take time to re-start the systems that were dismantled, but I look forward to this.

There are lessons that we can learn from our pandemic experiences. Each of us needs to reflect on these and use them to inform our own way forward. I suggest that we all need a positive way forward. How will we step outside our pandemic bubbles to interact anew with nature? What have we learned?

We have been lucky that Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) has remained open for us to enjoy during this period. For all of us who have survived, we will need to adjust to and help shape our "new normal". Our methods of interacting and greeting others on the trails are different. When greeting others, we have learned to step back to ensure at least six feet of physical distancing is achieved (we create our own protective bubbles)--then we engage in conversation with others about our sightings in the Park. How each of us lives and functions through each day has also changed. What are your own takeaways, and how will you use these to move forward?

I find that I feel more sensitized to the sights and sounds of nature. Nature has always been an important part of my everyday life. This spring, however, it seems like someone has turned up the volume. Perhaps I have become more sensitized to the sights and sounds of nature during the pandemic. Do you feel the same?

When I'm at HMP, I try to stop and take a few moments to listen to the sounds of nature. Whether it is the sound of the wind in the trees, or the dribbling of the water flowing over rocks, or the sound of a bird rooting around in the leaf litter, I spend time regularly in the Park soaking in nature's wonders. This helps my well-being, as I feel more balanced and less stressed. I've always enjoyed the sounds and sights of our natural world, and am thrilled to have many more visitors at the Park who also soak in the joys of nature.

The pandemic has taught us about how necessary it is to have protected areas like HMP and how important these protected areas are to our health and well-being. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that our parks and remaining natural spaces will remain fully protected and well-managed, now and for future generations. Your voice is more important than ever before, and I urge you to use it in support of continued protection for HMP. We also know now that post-pandemic, **we really need more open spaces and natural areas**. All of us need to use our voices to advocate for more of them.

Fortunately, nature also still extends beyond our protected "islands" of natural habitat like HMP. Our gardens are valuable spaces for us and native wildlife; we should nurture these and create spaces where we thrive and support wildlife at the same time. I enjoy this immensely, and you can too. At my urban townhome, we are surrounded by native plants and trees that provide important habitat for local wildlife. Your

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garden (and even your balcony) can also be an oasis for nature. Fill these spaces with native trees and plants, and native wildlife, especially birds, will spend more time serenading you. The more of us that do this, the more our wildlife will have places to live and raise their young beyond the boundaries of protected natural areas like HMP. The result will be more spaces for nature and more joy that we can feel when it surrounds us at our homes.

I look forward to a promising new future and to seeing you at the Park!

Happy spring to everyone!

New Logo Merch!

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) will continue to have merchandise pop-up events now that warmer weather is here. We have so much fun seeing all our friends in the open air of the Park, and every dollar earned at the events goes toward helping FOHMP to support and promote this priceless urban sanctuary. This spring, we will have a new zip up hoody design to go along with our popular hats and t-shirts.

Pop-up dates and times will be determined as the weather and schedules permit. Please follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/friendsofhuntleymeadowspark where we will announce each event date with as much advance notice as possible! Please be aware that less than 24 hour's notice might be as advanced as we can get for some dates.



New long sleeve t-shirt hoodies.

Brian Moore, Retired

By: Dave Lawlor

Brian Moore has been a constant at HMP for almost three decades, keeping the Park running on many levels. His impact was readily noticed by anyone entering the Park, from keeping the parking lots and trails clean to maintaining the Park's infrastructure and everything in between. He was usually out of the limelight, working behind the scenes on anything and everything you can imagine. Brian was the backbone of every Wetlands Awareness Day since it's inception; prepping, setting up, taking down, and supporting exhibits, staff, and volunteers during the event.

SOMEHOW Brian kept the Park organized and orderly in an ever increasingly chaotic environment amidst the programs, kids, interns, and the camps, oh so many camps!! No one will ever know his secret!! He knew where everything was in the Park, in each shed and building; if he didn't know where it was, it meant it was gone! His organizational skills are world renowned, well maybe not, but they should be!!

Huntley Meadows sets the standard for the Park Authority for upkeep and maintenance of Park infrastructure and equipment. Brian was the main reason for that high standard. Brian's attention to detail allowed him to see things many would miss, usually because they were just the start of a much bigger issue. He could catch those issues in the infancy stages, saving the County money and preventing disasters! Brian maintained all nine buildings under HMP's purview in every manner possible for almost 30 years.

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Brian also played a crucial role in Resource Management Projects, including repairing and replacing nest boxes for the blue bird and wood duck programs, bush hogging the meadows and trails, prepping for Prescribed Burns, supporting the deer management program, managing invasive plants, and training interns and seasonal staff. The list goes on and on!

Brian was at Huntley so long it’s impossible to imagine the Park without him, but we are now facing that sad fact. Brian retired in early May. He left a permanent mark on the Park in so many ways; the public, staff and the Park will all miss him very much. We wish Brian the best of luck on the next leg of his journey. Thank you Brian for everything you have done for Huntley and the Park Authority!!



Brian doing maintenance on the Visitor Center roof.



Brian is excited about the next stage of life!

Donation and Membership Form

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

To renew a membership, become a FOHMP member or to make a donation, please complete this form and mail it to: Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Dues information:

- _____ \$15 Individual, Annual
- _____ \$20 Family, Annual
- _____ \$10 Student/Senior, Annual
- _____ \$150 Lifetime Membership

Donation information (please insert donation amount here):

- _____ General Donation
- _____ Donation in the name of _____
- _____ Donation to be applied to _____ fund



Alternatively, you can use our PayPal link by clicking [here](#), or find the PayPal link on our website www.friendsofhuntleymeadow.org.

Website: www.fohmp.org

Renew or Donate: <http://fohmp.org/membership.html>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/friendsofhuntleymeadowspark

Phone: 571-336-2674