

Fall 2021

Newsletter

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park



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Submit Your Photos for 2021 FOHMP Photo Contest

We are thrilled to once again offer the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) Photo Contest Fundraiser at the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center auditorium. Submissions are being accepted from November 1 through November 28, 2021. The show will open Sunday, December 12 and run through February 27. Winners will be announced virtually.

We are hoping to showcase images that capture unique moments at HMP to engage and inform those who view the show. Tip - historically, judges have preferred unique poses and movement over beautiful, but static images. We will award in the following categories, assuming the category gets at least five (5) entrants:

- Birds
- Flora
- Insects
- Landscapes
- Mammals
- Reptiles & Amphibians



2020 First Place Winner

There is a \$5 entrance fee per photo and a maximum of three entries allowed per photographer. Youth participants (high school or younger) do not incur an entry fee. Photos need to be taken at

'Photo' continued on page 2

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

'Photo' continued from page 1

Huntley Meadows Park and be predominantly nature themed. Photos must be matted/mounted, but not framed, and should not exceed 18 inches by 24 inches.

There are two ways to submit your entries:

- Submit photo info and entry donation electronically: <https://forms.gle/USUuuZxTBVpwuKXUA>
- Print the paper entry form from the FOHMP website and pay by check: <http://www.fohmp.org/Photo%20Contest%202019%20entry%20form.html>

All photos must be dropped off at the Huntley Meadows Park Norma Hoffman Visitor Center at 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306 by November 28. Complete Photo Contest Guidelines can be found on the 2021 Photo Contest page of our website <http://www.fohmp.org/index.html#photocontest>, or you can email questions to Katie Baker at treasurer.fohmp@gmail.com.

Trees: Important to Our survival and to the Survival of Many Other Species

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

Fall is a beautiful time of year in our region. It is especially beautiful outdoors surrounded by all of the beautiful colors of autumn. Our native trees deserve special recognition at this time of year for showing us their spectacular fall colors--the glowing yellow leaves of willow oaks and tulip poplars, the reds of black gums and red maples, and the orange of American hornbeams, persimmons and serviceberries. When all these native trees are at their peak fall colors, wow, the hillsides are ablaze when the sun shines on them. I am sure you have noticed that the forest glows this time of year when walking the trails at Huntley Meadows Park (HMP). The forest at Huntley Meadows is a great place to see different species of native trees in the habitat or growing conditions they need to do well. When walking the trails, remember to look upward to see these fantastic specimens.



Cathy Ledec hugs a native oak tree.

Our native trees are important to the survival of humans and our native wildlife. Trees play a critical role in the functioning of our ecosystem. Native trees are especially important since they are adapted to local climate conditions, have co-evolved and are interdependent with the multitude of insects, birds and other wildlife, soil microbes, bacteria, fungi and more within the ecosystem. Native trees benefit from a supportive environment and work hard for us in key ways. Some of their work includes inconspicuous processes, such as removing pollutants from our air, improving our health and well-being (during the pandemic many of us sought refuge in nature, surrounded by trees), absorbing and filtering stormwater (climate change has brought increased frequency and intensity of precipitation events), providing wildlife habitat (native oaks support more than 500 species of butterfly and moth caterpillars), buffering noise, preventing erosion, reducing the urban heat island effect, and reducing our utility bills (through shade).

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The importance of our trees is now being recognized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS). On September 14, 2021, the BOS approved the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP). The CECAP can be found in its entirety here (pay special attention to pages 144-154): https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/sites/environment-energy-coordination/files/assets/images/cecap%20report%20release/cecap%20draft_designed%20report_sept%202021_release_508.pdf. Note that the CECAP plan describes actions that can be taken that include trees (pages 152-153).

Many of the trees we enjoy today were planted by humans or naturally sprouted in the early 1900's. What trees will be around for future generations? We have to plant today for there to be trees in our future. It is time for each of us to "pay it forward" on this one. Are you interested in getting involved with tree planting efforts in our region? Have you planted trees for the future on your property or helped plant them on someone else's property? You can pick up ideas for activities at the Plant NOVA Trees website www.plantnovatrees.org. This five year campaign launched by Plant NOVA Natives is focused on increasing awareness of the importance of our urban forest and on actions that each of us can take to plant or maintain native trees in our region. There is a calendar of events from which you can select activities, or perhaps you can lead a tree planting effort at your house or in your community. Planting season in our area will begin again in early spring 2022, and now is the time to start planning. When it comes time to obtain native tree seedlings for planting, I recommend Earth Sangha's Wild Plant Nursery where you can purchase locally propagated native tree seedlings. Their plant list is on-line, so it is easy to research in advance which native trees will work best for your landscape's conditions <https://www.earthsangha.org/wpnlis>.

Planting native trees will help us and our neighbors by improving environmental conditions and giving us a flourishing neighborhood in which we can live healthier lives. I look forward to seeing you soon on the HMP trails, or perhaps at a community tree planting event.



Cathy Ledec next to Grandmother oak (native swamp chestnut oak)

Huntley Meadows Park Programs

Program topics at Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) include photography, art, nature, and history. Offerings are provided for families, individuals, and groups of all ages. In addition, school programs are offered for schools, homeschooled individuals, or anyone wanting to supplement children's learning opportunities for students of all ages. The programs provide another look at the diverse history and nature of HMP.

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

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

2021 Summer Interns

Staff was excited to welcome back the full compliment of interns for summer 2021. Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) Naturalist Interns and the Historic Huntley Intern helped with camps.

All the interns (including a Virginia Native Plant Society Intern and a Natural Resource Management Intern) were able to interact with staff and to explore the natural habitats of a truly unique wildlife sanctuary. HMP interns bring their own talents and backgrounds to their summer positions with aspirations of improving their knowledge base. As they learned, these interns also gave back to the Park in more ways than can be listed here.



Tori holding a Red Shouldered Hawk at the South Western Virginia Wildlife Center.

My name is **Victoria (Tori) Nutt**. I was the 2021 Natural Resources Intern at HMP. As with most people, 2020 really threw me for a loop. The Covid-19 pandemic cancelled several summer positions I had lined up and caused me to have to take an extra semester to finish my bachelor's degree at Virginia Tech. To say I was getting discouraged is an understatement. It felt like everything I had been working towards was being pushed aside, and I wouldn't be able to have a satisfying end of university experience. When I came across the Natural Resources Internship offered through Huntley Meadows Park (HMP), I almost didn't apply, feeling sure that something would pop up, and I wouldn't be given the opportunity to participate. I couldn't have been more thrilled when I received the call informing me that I'd been offered the position.

Throughout the internship, I was given the opportunity to see all aspects of park management HMP had to offer me. The Natural Resources Internship that I've completed centered around the water quality assessment of the central wetlands within the Park. I utilized aquatic macroinvertebrates as indicator species in order to determine the general health of the waterbody as a whole.

While this was the focus of my internship, it wasn't nearly the full scope of everything that I learned and experienced. This summer, I also had the opportunity to assist in resident Canada goose management, conduct native sedge surveys throughout the Park, aid in invasive plant removal through chemical and physical means, document bluebird nesting habits, conduct vernal pool surveys and maintenance, and participate in numerous other Park projects and general trail maintenance activities. I was able to hone my skills with ArcGIS (a mapping software) and Microsoft Excel and am very confident in these skills moving forward into my career in wildlife science.

This summer looked a bit different than past Natural Resource Internship programs as the head supervisor for my position, David Lawlor, former HMP Resource Manager, took a position at Fairfax County Park Authority Headquarters working as a Lead Ecologist. Dave was making the transition into his new position during my internship. While we were sad to see him go, I'm glad to have been given the opportunity to know and be trained by Dave as well as get to know Visitor Services Manager Casey Pittrizzi who became my supervisor for the last portion of the internship. Observing the various tasks unique to Dave's and Casey's roles was eye opening and gave me what I believe to be the most well-rounded experience I could have had in my internship, and I am incredibly thankful for both of them.

My name is **Luis Teran**, and I was one of the three Huntley Naturalist Interns for the summer of 2021. With the completion of my internship, I graduated from George Mason University with a major in Parks and Outdoor Recreation. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to join the team at Huntley Meadows Park (HMP).

During my internship, I learned about many of the Park's different plants and animals, how to identify various plants by the pattern of their leaves and what they could have been used for back when Native Americans used to live in the area. I also learned to identify whether the animals and plants were native to the area or if they were invasive species.

I had so much fun during this internship working with the kids, the staff, and the other interns. Helping with the camps allowed me to realize that this is what I want to do with my career. I plan on joining the US Forest Service or the National Parks Service in the future and to use what I learned at HMP on the job.

I want to thank the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park for supporting my internship. I enjoyed my time with the children, the public, staff, and other interns, who I now call friends. It was really nice to spend my summer outdoors for once in a very long time. If I could stay at the Park and continue helping the staff out, I would do so.



Luis on the Huntley boardwalk during a camp activity.

Colette Combs, originally from Massachusetts and New Hampshire, was the 2021 Historic Huntley Intern and is a rising junior at American University. At school she serves as the Chief of Staff for her University's Model UN Conference and works as a Teaching Assistant in the Honors Program. This summer she assisted with summer camps at Historic Huntley and conducted historical research on the Fairfax area surrounding Historic Huntley. Colette is passionate about shining a light on previously ignored voices and stories in history, which has led to a fascination with LGBTQ+ history. She believes that to understand the social and political hierarchies of gender and sexuality and how they function in society, it is essential to investigate the hidden histories of the LGBTQ+ community. Colette found that many LGBTQ+ individuals have been vilified or written out of the historic record, and she feels it is time to finally do justice to their lives and stories. Researching such a hidden community has proven to be difficult, but has also been a rewarding learning experience and a labor of love for Colette. Her passion has developed into a desire to help nurture other people's curiosities and love for history. Colette also had an excellent time assisting with summer camps. She really enjoyed mystery spy camp, which she helped design. Thank you to the Friends of Historic Huntley for this opportunity!



Colette at one of her numerous speaking engagements.

Hi! My name is **Emery Poulsen**, and I was the Virginia Native Plant Society Intern at Huntley Meadows (HMP) for the summer of 2021. I am set to graduate from Virginia Tech in the spring of 2023 with a degree in Environmental Informatics and a minor in Geographic Information Science. I have lived in Fairfax County, Virginia for my entire life and have always been interested in learning about the natural world. I am very grateful for the opportunity to work in HMP this past summer, and I have both learned a ton and enjoyed my time immensely.

Huntley Meadows is a special park to many people residing in Fairfax County, as it has a wide variety of habitats, which come with opportunities to see wildlife. For many, the boardwalk over the wetland is the most notable part of HMP. Birders gather with their cameras and binoculars, hoping to get a glimpse of a rare bird. During my time at HMP, three Roseate Spoonbills paid us a visit, as well as an Avocet and a juvenile White Ibis. Having the opportunity to see these rare birds meant a lot to me and has even sparked my interest in birding, with which I had very little experience before coming to Huntley Meadows.

During my time as an intern, I had a wide variety of experiences and played a number of different roles. I participated as a resource manager, conducting Canada Goose surveys all across Fairfax County and spraying for invasive plants such as Japanese stiltgrass in the Park. I was part of the maintenance crew, along with Resource Management Assistant Chase Brown and Resource Management Volunteer Steve Lindblom. We cleaned up trash along the trail and repainted signs in the Park. I was a birder, attending bird walks at 7 am every Monday (along with the occasional trip to Denny's afterward with the other birders). I was a rare plant advocate, conducting surveys for rare sedges and purple milkweed to better protect their populations. I collected vernal pool data and monitored Bluebird boxes with Larry Cartwright, HMP volunteer. I got to be an ecologist, conducting water quality assessments in four locations throughout the Park and installing bat monitors in three locations. I played the role of a visitor, enjoying a tour of Historic Huntley and spending time on the boardwalk. I even had the opportunity to become CPR certified while at HMP. I was a student, learning about wildlife journaling from Program Leader Margaret Wohler, and learning about native grass on the grass walk with Margaret Chatham and Alan Ford from the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. I was a data scientist, using Microsoft Excel and ArcMap (a mapping software) to work with and make sense of Park-related data. I worked with interns from Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Headquarters to conduct invasive plant surveys, where we surveyed for invasives like Japanese stiltgrass, oriental bittersweet, ailanthus, and Japanese barberry, and then gave a score to sections of the Park based on biodiversity and percentage of invasive coverage. Later in the summer, once the purple loosestrife began to bloom, we gathered a team of volunteers to hike out to the powerline easement and start to pull up the invasive pest. My fellow interns and I were treated to multiple free meals, all of which were well-appreciated. When the temperatures soared in July, I began to spend more time in the Park office, writing reports on the status of the rare sedge populations within HMP and creating a fern guide for the Park. I spent a lot of time with Tori Nutt, the summer Resource Management Intern who wrote the HMP Water Quality Report for 2021. While we played a lot of roles this summer, above all, we were interns, learning and soaking it all in.



Emery posing in chest waders in the central wetland.

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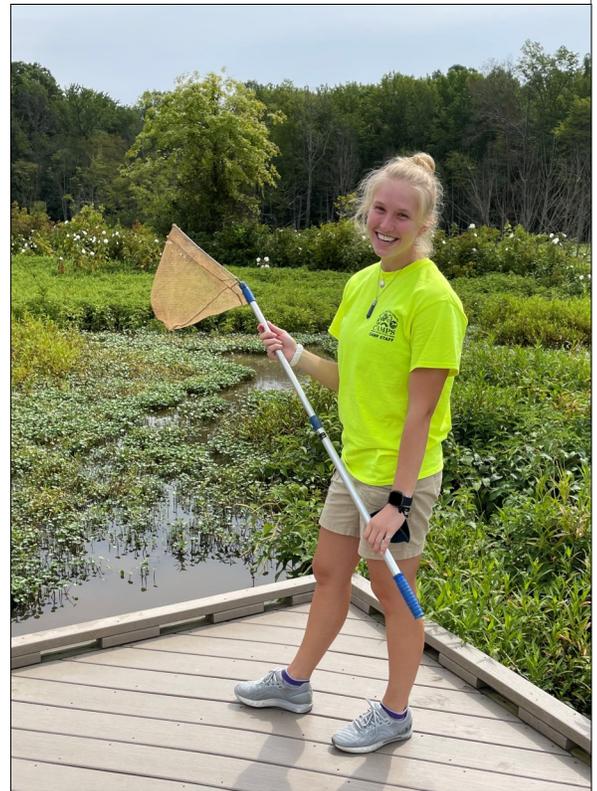
As most of you already know, Dave Lawlor, former Natural Resource Manager, earned a promotion and began to transition to a new job in the Herrity Building at Fairfax County Park Authority Headquarters about halfway through my time at HMP. Though his leaving was unexpected, Tori and I were able to make the best of it with the help of the wonderful staff here at Huntley, particularly Visitor Services Manager Casey Pittrizzi, who took over as our supervisor. I am very happy for Dave and wish him all the best in his new job, where I know he will excel at what he does. I am grateful to him for all that he taught me while we worked together. His sense of humor made the Virginia heat a little more bearable.

While I enjoyed returning to Virginia Tech this fall, I can say with certainty that I will miss Huntley Meadows Park and all of the smiling faces within it. I will look back on the summer of 2021 fondly, and will be sure to come and visit HMP whenever I have the chance.

My name is **Alexandra Wettengel**, and my 2021 position at Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) was that of a Naturalist Intern! I am from Southern Maryland and grew up loving the outdoors. So, it comes as no surprise how passionate I am about environmental awareness and protection, and all aspects of environmental sustainability.

I am currently a rising junior attending Colorado State University where I am pursuing studies in biological science. I hope to have a career in the field of environmental management, or at least be able to spend my time bringing awareness to environmental challenges. These goals made my opportunity at HMP the absolute best of both worlds!

During my internship, I had the privilege of not only learning the about the incredible biodiversity in the Park through hands-on training, but I was also able to educate and engage the youngest of our generation. Being immersed in the abundance of wildlife in the Park positively influenced my mindset and my summer, and I so enjoyed watching the campers learn to fall in love with nature. HMP has allowed me to experience not only one of the most entertaining and educational summers of my life, but also the most rewarding. In addition to being able soak up the fun-facts and up-close displays of beauty from the wetland, I was also able to demonstrate to the children in my camp groups the importance of their own role within their environment. This practice of educating campers about the interconnection of all natural systems and species will prove invaluable for my career aspirations and overall mission to inspire environmental appreciation and respect.



Alex getting ready to dipnet with campers during a camp activity.

My amazing internship experience would not have been possible without the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, and I am so thankful for the opportunity their support granted me. The Park itself was stunning in every aspect, and each staff member and volunteer I came in contact with only made the summer more enjoyable. I would like to give an additional shoutout to my fellow interns who helped with camps; Luis, Caroline, Collette and the G-level camp staff, Maria and Lara. I am so grateful that I was able to work alongside such great people in a Park as beautiful as Huntley Meadows.

Hello! My name is **Caroline Simonsen**, and I was one of the Naturalist Interns at Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) for the summer of 2021. I am a rising junior at Pennsylvania State University, and I am studying Environmental Resource Management with a specialization in Environmental Science. Although I am not certain what I want to do with my degree upon graduation, I know I need to work outdoors, even despite the mosquito bites. Throughout my experiences this summer, I learned an immense amount about nature and wildlife, and was able to teach what I know to children and watch their interest in the environment grow. This brought me so much joy, and I am extremely grateful to The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) for supporting this internship opportunity.



Caroline showing a spotted turtle to campers during a camp activity.

I was also able to teach my own lessons throughout four different camps this summer. It was extremely gratifying and fun to see the children in the camps become interested in the topics I chose and want to participate in the activities I organized. Personally, having the chance to walk around the Park and see something new every day, such as three Roseate Spoonbills or 17-year perennial cicadas, was very exciting. I was reassured to know that I never grow tired of nature. I look forward to applying my knowledge about invasive and native plant species, wildlife, and proper trail etiquette to my future career, whatever that may be.

Prior to my internship, I had never been to Huntley. Now, having spent several months there, I can't imagine a better working environment. Being surrounded by so many open-minded, kind, and nature-loving people was wonderful, and I cannot thank FOHMP and the staff at HMP enough for this opportunity.

Park Manager's Message

By: Karen Sheffield

I'm so happy to share with you that visitors now have more options to interact with staff and volunteers at the Park. Please note that masks are required inside all County buildings regardless of vaccination status. The visitor center and gift shop are now open six days a week, Wednesday through Monday. If you didn't get a chance to see the new entryway exhibit at the visitor center before COVID, stop by and see the newest edition!

Visitors will now see roving naturalist volunteers along the trails at the Lockheed/Visitor Center side of the Park. The volunteers will share sightings, show some items of interest and answer visitor questions. This wonderful new engaging program was created by Halley Johnson, the Park's Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator. Nineteen volunteers completed the roving naturalist training program, and they look forward to greeting you along the trails!

If you've been thinking about volunteering at Huntley Meadows, we still have some front desk volunteer positions open. Visit the Park's website https://volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/custom/1380/organization_details/71671 for position descriptions and how to apply. All Historic Huntley and Huntley Meadows Park open volunteer opportunities are posted here.

Hope you enjoy your next visit to Huntley.

How Are Your Membership Fees and Donations Being Spent?

The FOHMP organization was overwhelmed by your generous donations and thrilled to see so many new and renewed memberships last year. With the visitor center closed, we expected substantial financial shortfalls, but our pop up donation events and your generosity kept us on track. In the 2021 fiscal year (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) FOHMP received:

- \$25,852.00 in unrestricted donations (funds may be spent as the Board chooses)
- \$3,637.76 in restricted donations (donations earmarked for specific budget line items)
- \$10,039.80 through pop up events
- \$3,680.00 in membership dues
- \$4,000.00 in grants
- \$1,291.94 through AmazonSmile and the FOHMP photography show

The Board approved spending \$37,171.40 of the money received for FY21. Monies received from grants, restricted donations, or interest earnings are not included in this tabulation. For the second year in a row due to COVID-19, we were unable to move forward with several expected expenditures, so we put more money into our rainy-day-fund (savings) than is typical, but we were still able to provide many critical supplies and funds to the Park. Here are highlights of what your generous donations and membership dues supported in 2021:

- Three naturalist interns and one natural resource intern who helped run summer educational camps and assisted with wetland maintenance and monitoring. They provided essential support to the staff and brought funds into the Park through the camps they facilitated.
- Natural resource management requires a broad range of purchases to help maintain the Park and assist staff to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently. Using funds from the FY21 budget, the Board assisted with software and accessories for the bat detector and equipment repair, and continued to add to the native plant berm in front of the visitor center.
- Education necessitates assistance with classes, community outreach, and staff training. This year the Board was excited to support the return of in person camps with educational and other camp supplies.
- Huntley Meadows has dedicated volunteer staff who help the Park run smoothly. We support them by purchasing needed supplies and recognizing their contributions at an annual party.
- Quarterly FOHMP newsletters keep our nearly 500 members up to date on what is going on at the Park. This years transition to e-newsletter reduced this line item to less than \$25 for the year.
- Board operating costs, such as filing fees, insurance, supplies, and hosting an Annual Meeting. We work hard to keep these annual expenses minimal, so your monetary support goes directly to HMP.

Thank you for supporting the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park through your membership and donations. Your generosity supports Huntley's natural resources, park staff, and volunteers, engages the community, and allows FOHMP to work to protect this beautiful natural area.



Terrace Update

The Friends of Historic Huntley (FOHH) has recently launched an effort to restore the site's terraces and landscape to a more managed, cultured appearance. This involves activities such as seeding bare patches, removing thatch and invasives, and repairing groundhog damage. Pictured here, from left to right, are Patty Young, Carolyn Gamble, and Robbie McNeil. They could use your help! To volunteer, please e-mail FOHH at info@historichuntley.org.

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) Merchandise

The Norma Hoffman Visitor Center is once again open to the public. This means FOHMP swag is available for sale at the Center’s gift shop! Proceeds from the sale of FOHMP logo merchandise (pins, long and short sleeve t-shirts in a variety of colors, hoodies, ball caps, and beanies) are used by FOHMP to support Park activities.

Friends of Historic Huntly (FOHH) has a collection of used books - sales of these books are used by FOHH to help support the Historic House.



FOHMP t-shirt.



FOHMP Ball caps and hats.



FOHH used books.

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.



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Donation and Membership Form

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP)

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