Spectacular Seasonal Changes Await Your Visit to Huntley Meadows Park

Did you notice? It is almost here! I’m talking about springtime. This is a very special time of year for us to tune up our observation skills and see spring come forward and show itself to us. Green shoots will start to peek out from underneath the leaf litter. The trees will begin to show buds, and our resident birds will begin singing more often as they claim their nesting territories. Watching waves of color begin to appear when looking at trees from a distance is an early indicator that spring is just around the corner. If you are lucky enough to be flying in an airplane heading southward, have a look out the window and you’ll see reddish colors of the tree buds from the air.

With so many gray days this past winter, I am yearning for sunny, warmer days. With warmer weather coming, there are lots of reasons for you, your family and friends to visit Huntley Meadows Park (HMP). For me, it’s that breath of fresh air and that special time of year when everything in the Park starts to wake up. When I walk the trails, I can’t wait to see which tree, plant or critter is out just waiting for us to come and see. Especially when the trees start to bloom, it almost seems like they are calling to us, “Come look at me!” I always get a great feeling of peace when I walk through the forest, especially in spring, I hope you do too.

The next time you and your family walk the Park trails, take a moment to stop and listen to the sounds of nature around you. Have all family members stand quietly for a minute or two. Then ask each other, “What did you hear?” After doing this a few times, you may find that your sensitivity to the sounds around you will be heightened. Do you hear the rustling of last year’s leaves in the wind? Or the sound of the water dripping over the beaver dam? It is really helpful for all of us to stop and listen to nature. There is a lot of research being published lately about the importance of getting out in nature for our improved health and well being. Honestly, I feel so much better after a quiet walk through the forest at HMP. Letting go of stress, turning off my gadgets, no need to worry about traffic on the trails. There’s lots to see. I hope to encounter you or your family on the trails next time I’m out there!

NOTE - Lots of spring programs are scheduled at HMP. There is a list of upcoming programs in this newsletter! Come and visit! We hope to see you soon!

Cathy Ledec, President, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
Plan Amendments #2018-IV-BK1 and #2018-IV-TR1 were proposed by Supervisor McKay to remove two conceptual paved bike trails from Huntley Meadows Park (HMP).

Planning Commission Public Hearing held January 16, 2019. See the video here: http://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=10

We take this opportunity to thank our Friends and supporters for submitting emails, letters of support, signing the paper petition and e-petition and especially those who provided in-person testimony. We especially thank Will Friedman, an area student at Carl Sandburg Middle School, for representing the future generation and telling the Planning Commission to protect HMP. He also told them that HMP is a Wildlife Sanctuary not a transportation corridor. As of January 15, 2019 we had received 6,541 expressions of support requesting that our decision-makers remove these trails from the County’s Plans. Some high profile people and organizations submitting letters included Virginia Delegate Paul Krizek, Virginia Delegate Mark Sickles, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Friends of Historic Huntley and the Virginia Native Plant Society-Potowmack Chapter. There were also letters from government agencies including the Fairfax County Park Authority Board who referred to Huntley Meadows Park as "...one of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area’s most extraordinary natural resources." (oh by the way, we agree with you!) The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Natural Heritage program also recommended removal of these conceptual trails.

What’s next? The Fairfax County Planning Commission voted unanimously to remove the conceptual bike trails from the County Plan on January 30, 2018. In the interim all our Friends and supporters are working hard to submit follow-up testimony for consideration.

When will a decision be made on these Plan Amendments? We are pleased to announce that as we went to publication the Fairfax County Board of Supervisor’s Meeting, held February 5, 2019, voted unanimously to approve the Plan Amendments to remove the conceptual bike paths from the Bicycle Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. Work on a follow-on motion, made by Supervisor McKay, will begin immediately to bring key stakeholders together to identify alternative bike routes around the Park. We look forward to participating in this important next step.

2018 Photo Contest Recap

Congratulations to all the entrants of the 2018 Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) Photo Contest. The quality of this year’s show was amazing. FOHMP Board has enjoyed hosting the event, and visitors to the Park have been commenting on how wonderful all the photos are.

This year’s contest winner was Paul Lebras with the submission of *Egret Moon*, a truly unique photo featuring a magnificent Great Egret and a mid-day moon. The judges commented, “The composition of the branches and moon are terrific as well as the complementary colors of the sky and beak. [...] The whites and warm yellows pop out against the field of blue.”

We are looking forward with excitement to the 2019 Photo Contest. We will begin taking submissions mid-October. So come stroll the trails in search of photography magic.
**Park Volunteers Make A World of Difference**

By Park Manager Karen Sheffield

Every day Park volunteers work to ensure Huntley is the best place it can be and to make the Park a wonderful place for you to enjoy. Volunteers are the Park’s sunshine as they bring friendship, enthusiasm and expertise to share with Park visitors.

Have you seen people carrying equipment or wearing boots in the Park? Volunteers monitor natural habitats, survey for specific species, and record plant and wildlife data important to the Park’s natural resource goals.

Do you think the trails are in good shape even after the record rainfall of the past year? Paid and volunteer staff replaced damaged trail culverts and responded quickly to repair damaged and washed out trail segments to help prevent further erosion and damage.

Did your child join in the camp program? Volunteers, including interns, assist Park staff with camps and other children’s programs throughout the year.

Have you taken a tour of T.F. Mason’s villa at Historic Huntley? Volunteers assist in maintaining the house, lead tours, and assist with other Historic Huntley programs.

Have you called the Park or stopped in the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center? Friendly volunteers welcome you to the Park, answer your questions, and share stories and their expertise.

Volunteers also help with maintenance and cleaning the buildings, pulling invasive plants, animal care, recording plants in the herbarium and much more!

Volunteers are a vital part of what makes Huntley a treasured place to visit. Last year volunteers donated over 9,700 hours of their time to Huntley. Many thanks go out to all the Park volunteers!

If you’ve considered volunteering, we’re always looking for friendly, dedicated people to join the Huntley team. Check out the current volunteer opportunities and fill out an application at https://volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/recruiter/index.php?class=OppSearchResults&orgid=71671&recruiterID=1380.

### You Shop Online, Amazon Donates

Donate to Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) as you shop.

If you shop on Amazon, you can identify FOHMP as your favorite charity. For every transaction you complete, FOHMP will receive a donation equal to 5% of your purchase. Simply register FOHMP as your preferred charity at https://smile.amazon.com.

This costs you and FOHMP nothing. Amazon makes the donation automatically!
**Cathy Ledec Elected Chair of the Fairfax County Tree Commission**

We share the great news that Cathy Ledec, President of FOHMP, was elected on January 17, 2019 as the new Chair of the Fairfax County Tree Commission! The Fairfax County Tree Commission is a body of volunteers who are appointed by the Board of Supervisors as well as representatives from county and state agencies. The Commission provides advice to the Board of Supervisors on matters relating to urban forestry and leadership in promoting tree conservation within the county.

Cathy was appointed by Supervisor Dan Storck as the Tree Commissioner for the Mount Vernon District in 2016. Since then she has been busy out in the community planting native trees, leading tree planting events, and working with developers to convince them to preserve our native trees and plant more trees wherever possible. She is also working to improve Fairfax County policies with a focus on improving our urban forest.

Actions of the Tree Commission that may relate to Huntley Meadows Park include advising on pest management policies, urban tree cover management in neighborhoods near the Park, and more.

Congratulations Cathy! All of us look forward to your leadership on the Fairfax County Tree Commission!

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**Grant Awarded!**

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) is honored to have been awarded a grant from Wildlife Acoustics for hardware related to an acoustic monitoring system. The grant included: two each SM 4 recorders, external acoustic microphones (SMM A2), 50m cables, extra windscreen and clip packs, and replacement microphone stubs for the SM4 recorders.

Wildlife Acoustics is a “provider of bioacoustics monitoring technology”, and the board of FOHMP wishes to thank them for awarding this grant to our organization. The technology will improve Park staff’s understanding of the natural resources they manage and provide vital information to inform their management decisions.

The FOHMP Board had voted unanimously to financially support the purchase of the equipment that will help staff monitor for rare birds in remote locations of the Park. However, after learning of the grant opportunity, FOHMP submitted a proposal and was fortunately chosen as a recipient of the grant.

This Wildlife Acoustic grant has significantly reduced the financial cost to FOHMP of this system by covering the purchase of the acoustic monitoring system equipment. With this hardware delivered and software purchased through member donations, FOHMP is very much looking forward to having this acoustic monitoring system in place and learning more about what can be found in the wetland!

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A Little Blue Heron, photo by Ed Eder, can easily be seen at HMP when it visits in the summer. New acoustic monitoring equipment will help staff find what’s not so easily seen.
2019 BIRD-A-THON DONATION FORM
Please submit form by May 1, 2019

Name:__________________________________________________________

Address:________________________________________________________

City:___________________________ State:___________ Zip:__________________

Donation Amount:__________________

Please make checks payable to FOHMP, and mail this form with your check to:
Huntley Meadows Park - Bird-a-thon
3701 Lockheed Blvd. Alexandria, VA 22306

Alternatively you can use our PayPal feature on the bottom of the Membership page of our website http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/membership.html. Click on the button for “Make a tax deductible donation”.

Support the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park 23rd Annual Bird-a-thon

Lindsay Schneider, the 2018 Resource Management (RM) Intern said of her time working with Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) staff and volunteers, “Their wisdom and passion for nature has been inspiring and incredibly beneficial in furthering my understanding of species and their habitats.” Lindsay went on to say, “This internship taught me so much about water quality, land stewardship, invasive species management and habitat enhancement for native plant and wildlife species. The experiences I am having this summer will greatly aid in helping me achieve my future career goals.”

Experiences like Lindsay’s are why for more than 20 years, early on a May morning, Park staff and volunteers have walked the trails through HMP to count birds. This annual survey evolved as an event to remember and honor two exceptional men: Ken Howard and Ed Weigel. Both were volunteers who shared their love of nature with any Park visitor lucky enough to chat with them. Their work continues through the Park’s RM Internship, made possible by funds raised through the HMP Bird-a-thon. This internship provides a young person with needed hands-on experience as he or she begins a career in conservation. Over the years, many on the Board of Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) have had the privilege of interacting with the interns, and we all believe this opportunity has a positive impact on their future endeavors as the next generation of stewards of our parks and green spaces.

The FOHMP Board requests donations (see donation form above) to support this annual event. Your generous donation will help us reach our goal of $3,000 to fund the 2019 RM Intern.

Those who participate in the bird count enjoy their involvement with this fundraiser. They have counted birds in all kinds of conditions, from cold and rainy, to downright hot, tallying anywhere from 90 to as many as 108 species in one day! But no matter what happens, the feeling is that it’s always such a treat to be in the Park. Anticipation of meeting the new RM Intern and what valuable experiences that intern will receive provides trail conversation throughout the morning.

Thank you for your continued support,
The Board, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
Welcome Judy Dority to the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park Board!

We introduce to Friends of Hunley Meadows Park (FOHMP) members our newest Board member Judy Dority. She is a Virginia Master Naturalist and Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) Resource Management volunteer. You may have seen her working on the native plant berm around the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center, leading groups of volunteers on invasive plant pulls and clean-ups, walking the Park with fellow volunteer and awesome mentor Karla Jamir as they survey and catalog plant species for the HMP Herbarium, and working on and planning other Park projects.

Judy tells us that nature has been a passion of hers since some of her earliest memories. Her youth was mostly spent in the woods with her brothers and sisters in northeastern Ohio. Always fascinated with how the soil, plants, trees, insects, animals, and climate work perfectly together to sustain each other as a whole, Judy dreamed that one day she could become a Naturalist and work in the woods. At 21 years old, she decided to follow in her father’s footsteps and enlisted in the Navy. Her specialty was micro to macro scale meteorology, oceanography and climatology across the globe. In 1994, on assignment, Judy moved to Northern Virginia. It didn’t take long to realize that this was the place that she wanted to call home. She was eventually able to do that in 2016. It was then that Judy realized her life-long dream to become a Master Naturalist and to “work” her dream job at HMP.

FOHMP is lucky that we were able to convince Judy to join our Board of Directors. We are sure you will encounter her at the Visitor Center or out in the Park on the trails. We look forward to all the great things we can do with Judy on our team!

Stream Clean Up a Success!

Nearly 15 years ago, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) and Friends of Historic Huntley adopted Lockheed Blvd. and Harrison Lane, from Fairchild Dr. & Lockheed Blvd. to Groveton Elementary School on Harrison Lane, through the Virginia Department of Transportation Adopt-A-Highway program. Every year both friends groups go out on those roads and pick up trash.

On January 26th the ‘next generation’ assisted with the FOHMP sponsored cleanup that had been postponed from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service due to snow and icy weather. Forty-five students from Edison High School's National Honor Society showed up early on Saturday. They did a great job helping remove trash from within Huntley Meadows Park (HMP), Lockheed Blvd. and Harrison Lane (the two roads connecting at the main entrance to Huntley Meadows).

Six adult HMP volunteers were grateful for the students' enthusiasm and willingness to stay more than three hours! Some of the trash on Lockheed Blvd. and Harrison Lane was frozen in puddles and ranged from the ubiquitous cigarette butts, plastic bags, Styrofoam, cans, and bottles to a hub cap and large construction boards. This activity was no walk in the park! Volunteers picked up enough debris to fill twenty-five large trash bags. Thank you to all who were involved, and Go Eagles!!

Please see photos of event on the top of page seven.
**Go Green with Paperless Newsletter**

If you wish to receive the quarterly newsletter via email please notify us at: friendsofhmp@gmail.com.

*FOHMP does not share our email list with any other organizations.*

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**Do You Need a Receipt?**

The 2018 tax season is here. If you paid membership dues or made a monetary donation to FOHMP in 2018, these contributions may be tax deductible.

If you would like a letter of receipt, please send your request to friendsofhmp@gmail.com, and we will be happy to provide one.

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**Save the Date!**

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, June 2, 2019 from 3-5pm in Huntley’s Norma Hoffman Visitor Center (3701 Lockheed Blvd, Alexandria, VA 22306).

Anyone interested is encouraged to join us to learn what FOHMP has accomplished in FY18-19. Members are eligible to vote on the next year’s board members.

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**Merchandise**

New merchandise! The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) is now offering zip up hoodies in navy blue, gray and black!

All FOHMP logo merchandise (pins, cinch bags, long and short sleeve t-shirts with heron image printed on the front, ball caps, many winter cap styles, and a collection of used books) can be found at the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center gift shop. In addition, staff has cultivated a diverse collection of nature and history related books and other items.

All proceeds from logo items and used book sales go to the FOHMP and Friends of Historic Huntley to support Park activities.
### Huntley Meadows Park Nature and History Programs

Find the full list of programs with detailed descriptions, locations, costs, and registration codes at [https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows/classes-camps](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows/classes-camps); or call 703-222-4664 to register.

**SPRING BREAK & SUMMER CAMPS** - sign ups began on February 7th!

### FEBRUARY

**14, Thursday** - *The View from Huntley*  
(16-Adult) $5, 1 - 2 pm, Code: B05.4EF5  
Take a trip through time as we examine Alexandria’s—and the nation’s—history from the perspective of Historic Huntley.

**16, Saturday** - *Colorful Cardinals*  
(2-6 years & Accompanying Adult) $10, 10 - 11 am, Code: BE4.1857  
- The *Art of the Book: Calligraphy*  
(12-Adult) $15, 1 - 3 pm, Code: 73C.CDAD

**17, Sunday** - *Super Moon Hike*  
(6-Adult) $8, 7:30 - 9 pm, Code: F08.6228  
Bring a flashlight. Approximately 1.5 mile walk on uneven terrain. Cancelled if rain. Meets at the S. Kings Hwy entrance to the Park.

**23, Saturday** - *Mount Vernon and Huntley: Lives Bound Together Tour*  
(Adults) $64, 10 am - 2:30 pm, Code: 4F4.EA20  
Cancelled in the case of severe inclement weather.

### MARCH

**1, Friday** - *Homeschool Open House*  
(FREE)  
(Adult) 1 - 3 pm, Code: F0D.38B4  
This program presents an overview of past curricula to parents while offering an opportunity for parents to request topics for the future.

**2, Saturday** - *Family Woodcock Walk*  
(6-Adult) $8, 5:30 - 7 pm, Code: 3C9.40B4  
(see notes for *Evening Woodcock Walk* February 23)  
- *Snowflakes & Cocoa*  
(3-12 yrs.) $10, 3 - 4 pm Code: E83.B72E

**6, Wednesday** - *Birding into Citizen Science*  
(Adults) $9, 10 am - 12 pm, Code: 710.F9F5

**7, Thursday** - *Colonial Life for Homeschool*  
(6-12 yrs.) $12, 1 - 3 pm, Code: 925.3F04

**9, Saturday** - *Evening Woodcock Walk*  
(Adults) $8, 5:45 - 7:15 pm, Code: 2C7.F7FB  
(see notes for *Evening Woodcock Walk* February 23)  
- *Festival of Owls*  
(4-Adult) $15, 12 - 2 pm, Code: 028.618D

**10, Sunday** - *Birding for Beginners-Winter Birds*  
(12-Adult) $10, 8 - 11 am, Code: 8.47E+02

**13, Wednesday** - *Nature Detectives*  
(3-5 yrs. & accompanying adult) $12, 10 - 11:30 am, Code: 02B.4FD0

**16, Saturday** - *Family Woodcock Walk*  
(6-Adult) $8, 6:45 - 8:15 pm, Code: 3C9.4EC2  
(see notes for *Evening Woodcock Walk* February 23)  
- *Turtle Meet & Greet*  
(2-5 yrs. & accompanying adult) $10, 1 - 2 pm, Code: 9BF.3C9D

**17, Sunday** - *Interpreting Maps-Finding the Path*  
(9-Adult) $9, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, Code: F1A.BD0C

**20, Wednesday** - *Spring Equinox Full Moon Hike*  
(Adults) $9, 8 - 10 pm, Code: F06.015E  
- *Sketch Hike-Spring Ephemerals*  
(12-Adult) $8, 7 - 8:30 pm, 2C7.748C

**25, Monday** - *Nature Drawing - 5 week series*  
(Adults) $50, 4 - 5 pm, Code: 01E.290D

**30, Saturday** - *Family Woodcock Walk*  
(6-Adult) $8, 7 - 8:30 pm, Code: 3C9.6459  
(see notes for *Evening Woodcock Walk* February 23)  
- *Kids Nature Journaling*  
(8-13 yrs.) $15, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm, Code: 06E.901F

**31, Sunday** - *Interpreting Maps-Boots on the Ground*  
(9-Adult) $9, 2:30 - 4:30 pm, Code: 6E4.BFB3
APRIL

6, Saturday - Spring Beauty On Duty!
(4-12 yrs. & accompanying adult) $12, 1 - 2:30 pm,
Code: AD2.682F

7, Sunday - Sketch Hike-Birds
(12-Adult) $15, 1 - 3 pm, Code: DB9.B4CD

12, Friday - Birding for Intermediates
(16-Adult) $10, 8 - 11 am, Code: 0B8.EF67

13, Saturday - Kids Nature Journaling
(6-9yrs) $15, 10 am - 12 pm, Code: 1.52E+41
  - Twilight Boardwalk Stroll
(6-Adult) $9, 7 - 9 pm, Code: 343.F901

14, Sunday - Ice Cream at HH
(2-Adult) $8, 2:30 - 3:30 pm, Code: 633.11D0

26, Friday - Taux Trail for Homeschool
(6-12 yrs.) $10, 1 - 3 pm, Code: 82A.B0C4

MAY

2, Thursday - Taux Trail for Homeschool
(6-12 yrs.) $10, 1 - 3 pm, Code: 82A.B0C4

3, Friday - Symphony of Frogs
(Adults) $8, 7:30 - 9 pm, Code: 1BD.71C8

4, Saturday - Ice Cream at HH
(2-Adult) $8, 11 am - 12 pm, Code: 633.CB03
  - Hey Bud - It's Spring!
(Adults) $9, 10 am - 12 pm, Code: C41.D39A

5, Sunday - Wetlands Awareness Day
FREE family event, 12 - 4 pm.

10, Friday - Family Owl Outing
(6-Adult) $8, 7:30 - 9 pm, Code: A78.14F8

11, Saturday - Delicious Dairy at HH
(2-Adult) $8, 3 - 4 pm, Code: 66F.D040
  - Flower Pots and Violets
(3-6 yrs. & Accompanying Adult) $10, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, Code: 5A6.BAF2
  - Wetland at Dusk Walk
(Adults) $9, 7:45 - 9:45 pm, Code: F3C.E332

24, Friday - Symphony of Frogs-Families
(6-Adult) $8, 7:45 - 9:15 pm, Code: 5D7.2226

25, Saturday - Vernal Pools Sketch Hike
(12-Adult) $15, 10 am - 12 pm, Code: EA7.84F2
Meets at South Kings Hwy entrance.

26, Sunday - Corn Grinding & Clay Pottery
(4-Adult) $12, 2 - 4 pm, Code: 147.33DC
  - Birding for Beginners
(12-Adult) $10, 8 - 11 am, Code: A4F.2BA6

JUNE

1, Saturday - Wetland at Dusk Walk
(Adults) $9, 8 - 10 pm, Code: F3C.0E88

INTERNERSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Huntley Meadows Park staff are now accepting applications for the Naturalist Intern, Natural Resource Management Intern, and Historic Interpretation Intern positions. All internships are supported financially by the Friends boards. To learn more about the details of each available internship please visit https://volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/recruiter/index.php?class=OppSearchResults&orgid=71671&recruiterID=1380 and scroll down the page.
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:

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

Dues information (Annual):
____ $15 Individual
____ $20 Family
____ $10 Student/Senior
____ $150 Lifetime Membership
____ Donation

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________

Email: ________________________________________________________________

Telephone: ____________________________________________________________

Alternatively you can use our PayPal feature on the Membership page of our website http://www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/membership.html.