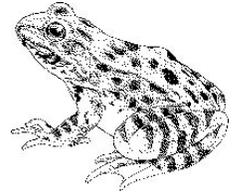


# FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK



APRIL 2007

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E-MAIL ADDRESS: [info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

WEB SITE: <http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org>

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## Note From the President

Spring is upon us now and it is always a time when I feel energized! The garden begins to bloom, the birds are busy, and I begin teaching school groups again at HMP.

Over the past few months I have been thinking quite a bit about our home, "mother earth". Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth", presented such clear evidence of how humankind is changing the balance of the natural world through our use of it's resources.

More than ever, I believe it is our responsibility to do what we can to help correct this imbalance. Everyone can do something. My parents, who are in their 80s, have replaced all of their incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs. Many of us are choosing to drive hybrid cars and are using public transportation. I am making a concerted effort to drive less - to combine errands, etc. Through your involvement in FOHMP, you are supporting the preservation of habitat, green space and environmental education.

Personally, I put my heart into the education of the youth. Hopefully, each child that gains a love and respect to the natural world will carry that with them into their adult lives. These children will be our future leaders and the earth's caretakers. I have great hopes for them and the world

they will live in.

Speaking of leaders, our Park Manager, Gary Roisum, will be retiring this spring. He has been the manager of Huntley Meadows Park since it's inception and has overseen the construction of two visitor centers, two boardwalk trails and all the additional trails, and has weathered all of the controversies that surround a county park with a sensitive habitat surrounded by development. We are very thankful to him and will miss him. We are planning a special issue of the newsletter in May where we will highlight his accomplishments. ***All members of FOHMP are invited to join Park Authority Staff for a reception in honor of Gary on Friday, May 11, 4-6:30, at the HMP Visitor Center.***

Our new Park Manager will be in place at the time of our annual meeting on June 16, 7-9pm. I'm hoping that the new manager will be able to attend. Also, don't forget to come to Wetlands Awareness Day on May 6th!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 16, 7-9pm. It's the FOHMP Annual Meeting and Walk in the Park.

Hope to see you there!

Kathi McNeil

## Park Manager's Message

The Huntley Meadows Park Central Wetland Restoration project is making progress. The year long project will pick up pace this spring as the weather warms up. Burgess and Niple, Inc. continues with the first phase of the project. Activities include topographical survey, hydrologic/soils analysis, vegetation mapping and evaluation of wetland management alternatives. Phase two of the project will include environmental assessment, public meetings, design/construction plans, necessary permitting, wetland management plan and water level control structure, as necessary.

The consultant will present results of the phase one work at a public forum to be held on **Wednesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Groveton Elementary School** on Harrison Lane in Alexandria. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this interesting and informative presentation. Attendees will have the opportunity to comment on the information provided.

Please pass this important date on to anyone else who may be regarded as a stakeholder in this unique wetland treasure.

Gary Roisum  
Park Manager

## Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park wish to thank all of the wonderful photographers who submitted photos for our 3rd Annual Photography Contest. We did sell seven of those photographs. All of the entries were beautiful and the show a great success.

We hope you have already begun taking photos for next year's show. Thanks again for your generosity, time, and cooperation.

Sarah Stromayer

## Taking Local Action to Protect Water

Low-flow shower heads, rain barrels, and non-toxic cleaners are popping up in Northern Virginia households, thanks in part to the Water Stewardship Team program, a local initiative which teaches individuals about simple lifestyle changes to protect and conserve water.

Although water is critical to our survival, many of us do not know much about the water that is a part of our everyday lives. We all live in a "watershed," which consists of the land surface that drains into a local water body, such as a stream or a river. Our behavior impacts our local streams, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay—often in ways we may not even realize.

The Water Stewardship Team program started in 2003 and has been very successful, with more than 200 households completing the program. Under this initiative, volunteer leaders create neighborhood teams. Each team then has a series of five get-togethers to learn about actions to take in the household that improve water quality and conserve water. The program is managed by Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment in partnership with Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Falls Church, the Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District and Fairfax County.

The program is unique in a number of ways. Each team is matched with a coach, who helps the team leader recruit team members and then works with the team leader to organize and lead team meetings. From the point of view of the team leader, the program offers a chance for people to get to know their neighbors and complete concrete activities with guidance from a coach. The process includes a lot of time for social interaction, with wine and cheese or potlucks a frequent part of team meetings.

Since 2003, thirty-five neighborhood teams have completed a total of 1,180 new actions to protect and conserve water and have reduced water use by more than 2.8 million gallons a year. Each participating household took an average of eight new actions. The most popular actions were re-

ducing use of toxic cleaners, reducing use of water for personal care, and installing a rain barrel.

Feedback from teams indicates that participants are enjoying the social interaction involved in taking part in a neighborhood team. Participants cite meeting like-minded neighbors and having the opportunity to learn about community issues as the best parts of the program. The program also emphasizes leadership and taking action.

“What attracted me to the process was the concept of empowerment at a level that would work. Seeing the process and team members getting empowered was very gratifying,” said Charles Studholme, a team leader who led a team in 2005.

The next training will be Sunday, May 6, 2007, 2:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls St., Falls Church 22046. Participation is limited to residents of Arlington and Fairfax Counties and the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church. To request an application form, please contact the ACE office at 703-228-6406 or [volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org).

Charles Studholme



## Deer Population Survey Yields Surprise at Huntley Meadows Park

The plant communities at Huntley Meadows Park have been suffering over the past two decades due to an increasing population of deer. In order to monitor the deer population, we have been using Infrared (IR) triggered cameras mounted throughout the park. The resulting pictures from these cameras are used in a ratio driven model to estimate deer populations. First, Branch antlered bucks are counted because they are individually identifiable due to differences in antler development. By identifying “x” number of bucks in the park, a ration of does, fawns and spikes (young male deer with antlers not well enough developed to be unique) can be obtained by comparing occurrences of these different categories in the photographs obtained from the IR cameras. The results of the 2007 deer census estimate 170 deer in the park or approximately 77 deer/mi<sup>2</sup>. Normal eastern forests support 15-20 deer/mi<sup>2</sup> before plant communities begin to suffer. Although we are not a normal eastern forest due to the higher carrying capacity of the surrounding neighborhoods with their highly fertilized lawns, shrubs and other landscaping, we would like to be relatively close to this deer density to avoid excessive pressure on the plant communities.

During 2007 we took about 1,000 photos. The most interesting photo from the 2007 survey was a picture of two very healthy coyotes. Although there have been many reports of coyotes in the area, this is the first confirmed sighting in Huntley Meadows Park. This picture was taken the night of January 8, 2007 in the north central portion of the park. This time frame coincides with the normal breeding season of coyotes. Coyotes are a welcome immigrant to Huntley Meadows Park. They should help reduce the over population of resident Canada geese and to a smaller extent the over population of white-tail deer by reducing fawn survival.

When European settlers came to North America the coyote’s approximated range was from the

Mississippi River westward to the Rocky Mountains. The coyote initially expanded their range westward and continued expanding their range toward the east in the early 1900's as wolves and mountain lions were exterminated. Coyotes are now found throughout the entire state of Virginia and in all 48 contiguous states. Coyotes were first documented in Virginia in the early 1950's and by the early 1990's coyotes were being exterminated in the western portion of the state due to predation of livestock.

Coyotes are here to stay. Humans have been trying to exterminate them from their original range out west for over 100 years and coyotes have nearly tripled their range. Coyotes are very adaptable predators and pose a threat to small pets that frequent outdoors, including cats and small dogs. Coyote attacks on humans are very rare and usually involve the acquisition or protection of food sources.

Dave Lawlor  
Resource Manager

## Celebrate Wetlands Awareness Day

Wetlands Awareness Day is fast approaching and preparations will be starting soon. We'd love to see you on May 6 from noon to 3pm. Volunteers are always welcome or you can just come to enjoy the fun. We'll need folks to give away prizes at the Fun Fair and interpreters out on the boardwalk. And there's always room at the FOHMP membership table to talk to visitors about the park. If you'd like to help out but can't be there that day, there are cakes to be baked for the cake walk. Call Melissa Gaulding if you're interested in volunteering and we'll put you on the list.

## Tribute to Al Aitken

Alfred Aitken, the first president of Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, died on November 30, 2006.

Al's successful leadership helped to prevent a four lane highway from being built through Huntley Meadows Park in the 1970's.

His goals for the group were to: protect, enhance and preserve the physical, cultural, and natural heritage of Huntley Meadows Park by educating the public to the value of the park's wetland habitat; providing volunteer services to the park and channeling donations of money and materials to the park.

His support continued for over 20 years after he left the presidency.

Al's professional career was as a scientist. As a volunteer, he contributed greatly to the community. He was active in the Woodley Tree Save Organization, which is continuing to work to preserve a piece of property from development on Route 1.

His survivors include his wife, Doris and their son, Mark, both devoted members of FOHMP.

We will always be grateful to Al.

Norma Hoffman



Photo by: Ken Larsen

WAD 2006

## Spring Nature Happenings

### March

Red-shouldered hawks performing aerial displays  
Spring beauties beginning to show  
Red-winged blackbird males displaying to females  
Muskrats are very active  
Spotted turtles out and about  
American toads trilling  
Peak waterfowl watching



Photo by: Curtis Gibbens

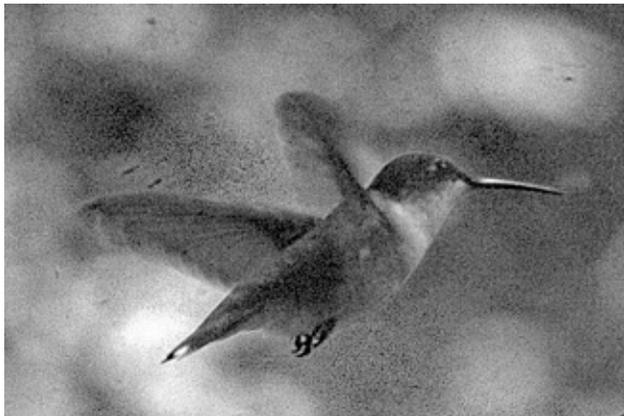


Photo by: Ken Larsen

### April

Shad migrate up the Potomac to spawn  
Geese sitting on eggs for 28-30 days  
Tent caterpillar “tents” are evident  
Hummingbirds return  
Wild azaleas in bloom  
Tadpoles can be seen

### May

Northern water snakes meeting  
Peak warbler migration  
White-tailed deer fawns born  
Green frogs begin to call



Photo by: Fred Siskind

# HUNTLEY MEADOWS BIRDATHON 2007

Spring is upon us, and the birds are once again on the move. Woodcock will be displaying over grassy meadows that were recently coated with snow. Juncos and kinglets will be heading north, making way for returning thrushes and warblers. Yellowlegs, egrets, and hooded mergansers will be seen where the water was completely frozen over. Plenty of birders will also be returning to the park, searching for some elusive call in the woods that will make their day memorable. And that means it will also soon be time for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Huntley Meadows Birdathon on May 8th.

Every year, staff and volunteers set out in early in the morning to count exactly how many species are present. This event has grown from what was once an annual survey of species by park staff into something more important. It provides an opportunity to remember two volunteers, Ken Howard and Ed Weigel, 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 internships made possible by the donations made annually to this event.

A resource management internship provides a young person with an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a future in conservation. Just think, your donation today could help the next Ed Weigel or Ken Howard get started. This year, as always, we will be hoping to reach 100 species for the day. We've done it five times now, with 108 species in 2004 the record. If you donate, say, 35 cents per species, then reaching 100 species would produce a donation of \$35. That would go a long way towards helping us reach our annual goal of \$2500.

I believe this is an outstanding cause. Like many of you, I knew Ken and Ed well, and count myself fortunate for the insights into the natural world that they provided me. I want to see their good work continue, and I hope you will feel the same way.

Thank you very much.

**Andy Higgs**

**Birdathon at Huntley Meadows Park**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DONATION AMOUNT: \_\_\_\_\_



Please make checks payable to FCPA-HMP and add on the memo line,  
***Donation - park ops.***

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

Results will be posted by June 1 on the FOHMP website at [Friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](http://Friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

If you would like a hardcopy, please check the .

## Upcoming Events

### Adults

April 1 Sunday

Birding for Beginners

(Adults), 8-11am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Sharpen your bird identification skills while birding with a park naturalist. Meets in the Visitor Center parking lot. Reservations required. \$2

April 20 Friday

Café Cattail

7-9:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Welcome to Huntley Meadows' very own coffeehouse! Enjoy a relaxing evening applauding our community's talents. Musicians, dancers and poets are encouraged to share their arts with a nature theme. Reservations required for performers only. Sponsored by FOHMP. FREE

April 21 Saturday

Spring Birds and Bagels

(Adults), 8-11am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Search for warblers, thrushes, waterfowl and a host of other birds as we approach the peak of spring migration. Following the hike, relax and recap the sightings during a continental breakfast at the center. Binoculars and field guides recommended. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. \$6

May 12 Saturday

Birding at South King's Highway

(Adults), 6:30-9:30am. This is the height of neotropical songbird migration. Binoculars and field guides are recommended. Meet at the park's South King's Highway entrance. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE.

May 19 Saturday

Advanced Birding at South King's Highway

(Adults), 6:30-9:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. This walk is intended for experienced birders. Visit parts of the park known for warblers and other neotropical songbirds. Dress for off-trail hiking. Binoculars and field guides are recommended. Meet at the park's South King's Highway entrance. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE

May 20 Sunday

Birding for Beginners

(Adults), 8-11am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 3/3.) Reservations required. \$2

## Families

April 4 Wednesday

Swamp Serenade

(5 yrs. and up), 7:15-8:45pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Listen to the singing frogs and toads as their courtship songs fill the wetland. One flashlight per family is recommended. Canceled if cold. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. \$5/family

April 20 Friday

Café Cattail

7-9:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Welcome to Huntley Meadows' very own coffeehouse! Enjoy a relaxing evening applauding our community's talents. Musicians, dancers and poets are encouraged to share their arts with a nature theme. Reservations required for performers only. Sponsored by FOHMP. FREE

April 28 Saturday

Wetland Wonders

(9 and up, with parent), 4-9pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. During this in- depth program, see the park as you never have-off trail and after dark. Check water quality, examine aquatic invertebrates, learn to identify frog calls, and watch bats. Bring your own dinner. Reservations required. \$20

May 6 Sunday

Wetlands Awareness Day

Noon-3pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Enjoy an afternoon of wetland interpretation, wildlife presentations and a Fun Fair for kids. Bring your friends and family to celebrate the importance of wetlands to wildlife and you. There is a modest fee for some activities. Sponsored by FOHMP. FREE

May 26 Saturday

Young Wetland Animals

(Families), 9:30-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Spring is bursting with young life! Enjoy a hands-on workshop to learn more about baby animals and their parents, followed by a walk to the wetlands. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$20/family.

## Children

April 3 Tuesday

Spring Break Camp - Wildlife Watchers

(6-8 yrs.), 9-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. The park is waking from the cold winter; birds are singing, plants are greening up and amphibians are emerging from hibernation. Experience this seasonal excitement through nature activities, walks and crafts at our three-day camp, Tuesday through Thursday. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. \$60

April 16 Monday

Young Explorers - Frogs

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through a story and walk learn about these master jumpers and evening singers. Reservations required. \$3

April 18 Wednesday

Nature Detectives - Frogs

(3-5 yrs.), 10-10:45am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through story, activity and craft learn more about these fascinating animals. Reservations required. \$5

April 19 Thursday

Nature Detectives - Frogs

(3-5 yrs.), 10-10:45am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 4/18.) Reservations required. \$5

May 14 Monday

Young Explorers - Snakes

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through a story and walk learn about these unusual park residents. Reservations required. \$3

May 16 Wednesday

Nature Detectives - Snakes

(3-5 yrs.), 10-10:45am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through story, activity and craft learn about these unusual park residents. Reservations required. \$5

May 17 Thursday

Nature Detectives - Snakes

(3-5 yrs.), 10-10:45am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 5/16.) Reservations required. \$5

## Treasurer's Report

Lifetime memberships are continuing to come in at an amazing pace. If you are interested, the cost is \$150/person. What a delightful thought that so many people want to make sure to continue their connection to the park and this organization that supports it. Thank you for your vote of confidence.

Our biggest expense for the first quarter of 2007 was \$1,000. to replenish the stock of Wetland stickers that are handed out at the visitors center to the children who come to the exhibit room.

If you haven't seen these stickers, ask for one the next time you visit. They are always a hit with our smallest guests.

Now is a good time to check out sales items that benefit Friends at the center. We have t-shirts, sweatshirts, tote bags and visors. All of the net proceeds from the sales of these items benefit this organization.

Sally Cureton

## New Friends of Huntley Meadows Park Lifetime Members

We would like to thank the following new lifetime members for their support of Huntley Meadows Park:

Suzanne and Fred Lepple

Kathi McNeil

Gary O'Brien

Nancy Pryor

Michael Ready

Marianne Mooney and Joe Sasfy

Richard Sigman

Connie Carpender

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## Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

### Board of Directors:

Kathi McNeil (President)

Sarah Stromayer (Vice President)

Glenn Curtis (Secretary)

Sally Cureton (Treasurer)

Ken Larsen (Newsletter Editor)

P.J. Dunn (Web Site Manager)

Connie Carpender (Membership)

Harry Glasgow                      Suzanne Lepple

Andy Higgs                              Marianne Mooney

Norma Hoffman                      Chuck Studholme

Ben Jesup



Web address:

Email addresses

General Information:

Membership Info: Connie Carpender

Donations and dues: Sally Cureton

Newsletter Inquiries/submissions: Ken Larsen

Questions For Park Staff

<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org>

[info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

[membership@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:membership@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

[treasurer@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:treasurer@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

[newsletter@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:newsletter@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

[staff@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:staff@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

# Are You A Member?

*Please*

help support Huntley Meadows Park and join

*The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park!*

Become a member of FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK. (FOHMP) and help to protect and preserve the park. Your annual dues (tax deductible) will keep you informed and help support the nature center's programs. Please fill out and mail this application today!

## *Membership Information*

*Note* Our new dues schedule is as follows:

- |                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| ◆ Senior \$5.00      | ◆ Family \$15.00               |
| ◆ Individual \$10.00 | ◆ Lifetime Membership \$150.00 |

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes! I would like to join FRIENDS!**

\_\_\_\_\_ I'd like to renew my membership. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_.00 annual dues for a \_\_\_\_\_ membership. (*Please make checks payable to FOHMP.*)

Additional \$\_\_\_\_.00 donation enclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have some comments and/or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm interested in learning more about volunteering at the Park.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to volunteer at the Park.

If you checked that you would like to volunteer, please help us by indicating your areas of knowledge and/or interest. \_\_\_\_\_

- FOHMP Volunteer Coordinator    Park Watch    Promoting Friends    Special Events    Mailing
- Phoning Members For Lectures and Special Events    Letter Writing Campaign    As Needed

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Mail To:** FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK

c/o Huntley Meadows Park  
3701 Lockheed Boulevard  
Alexandria, VA 22306

E-MAIL ADDRESS: [info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

PHONE: 703/768-2525

WEB SITE: (<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/index.html>)



FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK  
c/o Huntley Meadows Park  
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Alexandria, VA 22306  
info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org  
<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/index.html>



Your membership expires on the date in the upper left corner..  
NOTE: Please check your mailing label for accuracy & notify us of any changes .