

SECTION 1

FAIRFAX COUNTY GOVERNMENT:
AN OVERVIEW

FAIRFAX COUNTY GOVERNMENT: AN OVERVIEW

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SECTION 1

1.1 Introduction

Fairfax County is a diverse and growing community. It is home to over 1.1 million residents, almost double its 1980 population. Over a third of the county's residents speak a language other than English at home, and nearly 60 percent are college graduates. The county has a total land area of 395 square miles, a fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017) adopted budget of \$7.45 billion, including the General Fund and appropriated funds such as state and federal grants, and a 2014 median household income of \$110,674. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/gendemo.htm.

The county is governed by the elected Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (board). The board engages residents and businesses, protects investment in the county's most critical priorities and maintains strong responsible fiscal stewardship to ensure:

- A quality educational system.
- Safe streets and neighborhoods.
- A clean, sustainable environment.
- Livable, caring and affordable communities.
- A vibrant economy.
- An efficient transportation network.
- Recreational and cultural opportunities.
- Affordable taxes.

To ensure the third priority – a clean, sustainable environment – Fairfax County has pledged to “continue to protect our drinking water, air quality, stream valleys and tree canopy through responsible environmental regulations and practices. We will continue to take a lead in initiatives to address energy efficiency and sustainability and to preserve and protect open space for our residents to enjoy.” See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/board/priorities/.

Advancing the board's priorities requires the coordinated efforts of many actors working within the governance structure provided by state law. This section describes the county's governance structure and briefly discusses the roles of key agencies and partners working on behalf of a clean, sustainable Fairfax County.

1.2 Fairfax County Government

1.2.1 County Governance

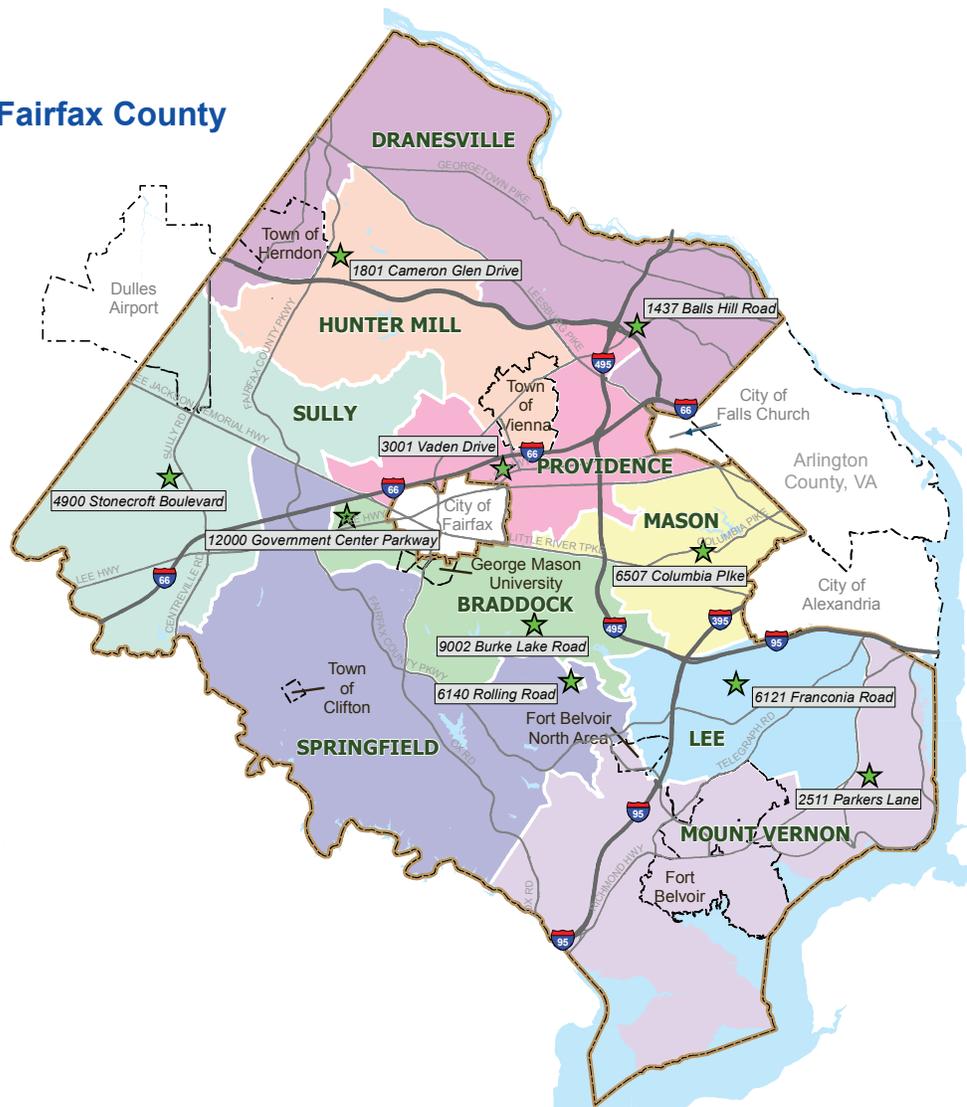
The Fairfax County government is organized under the Urban County Executive form of government as defined in the Code of Virginia. The county’s governing body is the Board of Supervisors.

The Board of Supervisors consists of ten members: the Chairman (elected at large) and one member from each of nine supervisor districts of approximately equal population. The supervisors (other than the chairman) must be residents and qualified voters of their districts and be elected only by voters living in those districts. All voters in the county may vote for the chairman. The board elects the vice chairman annually from among its members at its first meeting in January. Board members are elected for four-year terms. There is no legal limit to the number of terms a member can serve.

Supervisor Districts in Fairfax County

Supervisor Offices

- ★ Office Addresses
- ★ Chairman's Office



The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



From left to right: Daniel G. Storck (Mount Vernon District); John C. Cook (Braddock District); Catherine M. Hudgins (Hunter Mill District); Jeffrey C. McKay (Lee District); Sharon Bulova (Chairman, At-Large); Penelope A. Gross (Mason District, Vice Chairman); John W. Foust (Dranesville District); Kathy L. Smith (Sully District); Linda Q. Smyth (Providence District); and Pat Herrity (Springfield District)

Chairman, At-Large

Sharon Bulova

703-324-2321, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/

Braddock District Supervisor

John C. Cook

703-425-9300, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/braddock/

Dranesville District Supervisor

John W. Foust

703-356-0551, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dranesville/

Hunter Mill District Supervisor

Catherine M. Hudgins

703-478-0283, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/huntermill/

Lee District Supervisor

Jeff C. McKay

703-971-6262, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lee/

Mason District Supervisor and
Vice Chairman

Penelope A. Gross

703-256-7717, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mason/

Mount Vernon District Supervisor

Daniel G. Storck

703-780-7518, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/

Providence District Supervisor

Linda Q. Smyth

703-560-6946, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/providence/

Springfield District Supervisor

Pat Herrity

703-451-8873, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/

Sully District Supervisor

Kathy L. Smith

703-814-7100, TTY 711

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/sully/

The board establishes county government policy, passes resolutions and ordinances (within the limits of its authority established by the Virginia General Assembly), approves the budget, sets local tax rates, approves land use plans and makes appointments to various positions. These actions are taken in open meetings, which the public is encouraged to attend. All discussions are held in public, with the exception of issues exempt from the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, such as legal or personnel issues.

Board members also participate in various committees, subcommittees and regional agencies, which are listed at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/board-committees/. Several board committees address aspects of sustainability, including the Environmental Committee, the Community Revitalization and Reinvestment Committee and the Transportation Committee. Each of these committees is a “committee of the whole,” or comprised of all board members.

Sustainability issues are also addressed in regional committees in which board members are active participants, including:

- Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (COG) Region Forward Committee.
- COG Climate, Energy and Environmental Policy Committee.
- Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee.
- COG Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee.
- COG Task Force on Regional Water Supply Issues.
- Potomac Watershed Roundtable.
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

The Board of Supervisors appoints a County Executive to act as the administrative head of the county. The County Executive serves at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors, carries out the policies established by the Board of Supervisors, directs business and administrative procedures and recommends officers and personnel to be appointed by the board.

Like other Virginia local governments, Fairfax County has limited powers. Virginia courts have concluded that local governments in Virginia have only those powers that are:

- Specifically conferred on them by the Virginia General Assembly.
- Necessarily or fairly implied from a specific grant of authority.
- Essential to the purposes of government – not simply convenient, but indispensable.

More information about this doctrine of limited authority for local governments, which is commonly called the Dillon Rule, is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/about/dillon-rule.htm.

The Board of Supervisors web page, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/board/>, provides links to the board members' individual web pages, podcasts, RSS feeds, a "Find Your District Supervisor" application, Board of Supervisors' news, committee assignments, goals and priorities, pictures of presentations to residents and more. An organizational chart of Fairfax County government is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/county-org-chart.pdf.

1.2.2 Cities and Towns

In Virginia, cities and counties are distinct units of government and do not overlap. Fairfax County completely surrounds the City of Fairfax and is adjacent to the City of Falls Church and the City of Alexandria. Property within these cities is not subject to taxation by Fairfax County, and the county generally is not required to provide governmental services to their residents. However, pursuant to agreements with these cities, the county provides certain services to their residents.

Unlike cities, incorporated towns are overlapping units of government within the county. There are three incorporated towns in Fairfax County: Clifton, Herndon and Vienna. These towns have land use policies and regulations that are independent of the county's, although other county ordinances and regulations are generally effective in them. Property in these towns is subject to county taxation and the county provides certain services to their residents.

1.2.3 Boards, Authorities and Commissions

Advisory bodies and citizen participation play very important roles in Fairfax County government. The Board of Supervisors has established dozens of boards, authorities and commissions (BACs) to ensure that residents and other stakeholders are involved in all aspects of the county government's functions.

Residents interested in serving on a county board, authority, commission or committee, should contact their Supervisor.

A complete list of BACs is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bacs/. BACs with environmental roles include the following:

Boards, Authorities and Commissions	
Name	Purpose and Link
Agricultural and Forestal Districts Advisory Board	To advise the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission regarding the proposed establishment, modification, renewal, continuation and determination of agricultural and forestal districts; to render expert advice on the desirability of establishing such districts. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bacs/BoardDetails.aspx?BoardID=23335
Airports Advisory Committee	To advise the Board of Supervisors on all airports and aircraft operations affecting Fairfax County; to expand the committee's responsibilities and feasibility of establishing a countywide aircraft noise complaint center. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bacs/BoardDetails.aspx?BoardID=23354
Board of Zoning Appeals	To hear and decide: (1) appeals of administrative decisions made pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance; (2) applications for special permits and variances as authorized by the Zoning Ordinance; and (3) applications for interpretation of the Zoning Map where there is uncertainty as to the location of a zoning district boundary. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/bza/
Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exception Review Committee	To review applications to conduct land disturbing activities within Resource Protection Areas. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/cbay/erc/
Engineering Standards Review Committee	To provide technical and engineering advisory services to the Board of Supervisor; to thoroughly review the input data for the annual update of the Public Facilities Manual. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bacs/BoardDetails.aspx?BoardID=23312
Environmental Quality Advisory Council	To advise the Board of Supervisors on environmental matters through ongoing review of the quality of the county's physical environment and to advocate and promote environmental preservation, protection and enhancement. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/eqac/
Fairfax County Park Authority	To be responsible for the acquisition, development and maintenance of the parks in the county. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/

Boards, Authorities and Commissions	
Name	Purpose and Link
Geotechnical Review Board	To adopt ordinance amendments, official map and criteria regulating development in areas of Marumsco/Marine Clay soils and other problem soil areas. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bacs/BoardDetails.aspx?BoardID=23317
Health Care Advisory Board	To be responsible for a periodic review of a comprehensive health plan for the county; to initiate an on-going health care information process in coordination with local, regional, state and federal agencies. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/hcab/
Planning Commission	To advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters related to the orderly growth and development of Fairfax County; to approve or disapprove the location, character and extent of all public facilities in the county. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/
Redevelopment and Housing Authority	To be responsible for providing rental housing for low-income families in Fairfax County. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rha/aboutfcrha.htm/
Trails and Sidewalks Committee	To report to the Board of Supervisors for the purpose of providing citizen input and oversight to planning and developing a countywide trails system. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/trails/
Transportation Advisory Commission	To advise the Board of Supervisors and provide information and comments on major transportation issues faced by the county. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/tac/
Tree Commission	To provide advice to the Board of Supervisors based on an annual reevaluation of the administration and implementation of local law relating to vegetation preservation and planting; to provide leadership in developing an understanding of the objectives and methods of tree conservation; to assist the Urban Forest Management Division in the development and maintenance of technical specifications and guidelines. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bacs/BoardDetails.aspx?BoardID=23331
Wetlands Board	To preserve and prevent the despoliation and destruction of wetlands within its jurisdiction while accommodating necessary economic development in a manner consistent with wetlands preservation. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bacs/BoardDetails.aspx?BoardID=23219

1.2.4 Other Authorities and Commissions

The following authorities and commissions have regional environmental responsibilities:

Fairfax County Water Authority (FCWA) – FCWA, known as Fairfax Water, is Virginia’s largest water utility, serving nearly two million people. Fairfax Water operates two water treatment plants with a combined capacity of 376 million gallons per day and produces, on average, 163 million gallons of water per day. Fairfax Water also purchases up to 30 million gallons of water per day from the Washington Aqueduct. See www.fairfaxwater.org/.

Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) – NVRC is a regional council of 14 member governments in Northern Virginia. NVRC’s energy and environmental programs and projects include those addressing energy efficiency, water resources and solid waste and recycling. See www.novaregion.org/.

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) – NVRPA was established in 1959 to protect natural resources from the threat of urban sprawl and provide recreational amenities. NVRPA currently owns about 7,000 acres in Fairfax County. See www.nvrpa.org.

Upper Occoquan Service Authority (UOSA) – UOSA was formed in 1971 to construct, finance and operate a regional water reclamation facility. It is currently authorized to process 54 million gallons of wastewater a day. See www.uosa.org/.

1.3 Energy and Environment Agencies and Business Areas

1.3.1 Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

The mission of the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) is to build and maintain healthy, safe and environmentally responsible communities in Fairfax County. DPWES’s areas of responsibility include building and infrastructure construction, land use, solid waste management and stormwater and wastewater management. The following highlights several DPWES divisions:

- **Capital Facilities** provides Fairfax County with quality, cost-effective buildings and infrastructure in a safe, timely, and environmentally-sound manner. The Capital Facilities division implements the county’s Green Building policy, described in both Sections 2.2.8 and 4.2. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/construction/capitalprojects.htm/.

- *The Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP)* oversees the county's municipal solid waste management system, through public outreach/education, demonstrated best management practices and enforcement of the county's solid waste management ordinance and related environmental requirements. The program mission and statutory authority covers the storage, collection, recycling and disposal of all municipal solid waste (MSW) generated within the county. The program also manages two MSW disposal sites and provides refuse and recyclables collection to 45,000 county residents and county government operations. Further, the SWMP implements the county's 20-year Solid Waste Management Plan, which is required by State regulation to be reviewed and updated every five years.

For decades, the program has also provided a suite of services that further promote sustainable values, including:

- Source reduction, reuse and recycling education and outreach to residents and target industry/business sectors.
- Ready access to recycling, through curbside *and* drop-off programs, for as many materials as practical within market limits.
- The use of waste-to-energy (WTE) as the primary disposal technology.
- Resource recovery to minimize impacts from waste disposal systems (e.g., metal recovery from WTE ash, landfill gas-to-energy).
- Specialty waste collection, to provide economies-of-scale for more expensive or specialized recycling and disposal options. Examples of these specialty programs include E-waste collection, household hazardous waste collection, used tire recycling and document shredding events.
- Research and adoption of state-of-the-art technologies that support sustainable and efficient solid waste management and keep the county's integrated solid waste management system functioning well. Recent examples of the SWMP's work in this area include pilot programs to explore food waste composting and alternate technologies for recycling glass, and using the closed portion of the I-95 landfill as a potential host for pollinators and for the generation of solar power.

More information about these programs is contained in Sections 2, 3 and 4. Also refer to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/recycling/.

- *Stormwater Management* develops and maintains a comprehensive watershed and infrastructure management program that protects property, health and safety, enhances the quality of life and preserves and improves the environment. The business area plans, designs, constructs, operates, maintains and inspects the county's extensive

stormwater infrastructure. It also performs environmental assessments through coordinated stormwater and maintenance projects. Several Stormwater Management initiatives are discussed in Section 3.4.1. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/.

- *Wastewater Management* safely collects and treats wastewater in compliance with all regulatory requirements using state-of-the-art technology. The county's wastewater collection and conveyance system, one of the nation's largest sanitary sewer systems, covers nearly 234 square miles. The total system capacity is 157.18 million gallons of wastewater per day for about 340,000 residential and business connections in Fairfax County. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater/.

1.3.2 Other County Departments

A number of other county departments and agencies play instrumental roles in promoting environmental stewardship and prudently managing natural resources.

- *Land Development Services* provides oversight and enforcement of site and building requirements for construction projects within the county including environmental requirements like erosion and sediment control and Chesapeake Bay regulations. Its efforts support the county's Tree Action Plan and Tree Canopy Goals, both of which are discussed in Section 3.6, and the Environmental Improvement Program. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/develop/.
- *Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA)*, which was created in 1950 by the Board of Supervisors, currently owns over 23,000 acres in Fairfax County. Its mission, as expressed in its *Great Parks, Great Communities Plan*, is:

To set aside public spaces for and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations. To create and sustain quality facilities and services that offer citizens opportunities for recreation, improvement of their physical and mental well-being, and enhancement of their quality of life.

More information about FCPA, including its resource management practices, is provided in Section 3.5. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/parks/.

- *Department of Planning & Zoning* provides proposals, advice and assistance on land use, development review and zoning issues to those who make decisions on such issues in Fairfax County. DPZ's mission is to promote livable communities which enhance the quality of life for the present and the future. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/.

- *Facilities Management Department (FMD)* provides a full range of facility management services to the approximately 240 county-owned and leased facilities in its portfolio. Key FMD services include energy management, capital renewal, maintenance, repair and renovation. The department also provides space planning and interior design services, as well as custodial, security and moving services. Several of FMD's energy-related initiatives and accomplishments are described in Section 4.4.
- *Department of Health*, through its Division of Environmental Health (DEH), protects and improves public health by using its regulatory authority and community-based outreach activities to prevent, minimize or eliminate exposure to biological, chemical or physical hazards. DEH's regulatory activities include the permitting and inspection of the operations of various businesses that can potentially impact the community's health, pest surveillance and public health complaint investigations. Section 3.9 discusses five of the potential environmental hazards and exposures that pose a risk to human health that DEH addresses: contaminated ground and surface water; vector-borne diseases; rabies; radon; and naturally-occurring asbestos. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/eh/.
- *Department of Vehicle Services (DVS)* provides fleet management services support to all county customers and ensures that county vehicles and equipment are maintained in accordance with all federal, state and county safety and environmental policies, procedures and regulations. DVS is fully committed to conservation of the county's natural environment and to initiatives that contribute to cleaner air and water. Section 4.7 discusses several of these DVS initiatives. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dvs/.

1.4 Interagency Collaboration and Coordination

Fairfax County has long recognized the need for coordinated and proactive policies and initiatives to address its environmental and energy related challenges. Federal and state guidelines and regulations demand diligence in the development of concrete strategies for a healthy environment, as well as inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional coordination to address environmental issues that know no organizational or political boundaries.

1.4.1 Internal Collaboration and Coordination

The county has established two committees to facilitate agency collaboration and coordination: the Environmental Coordinating Committee (ECC) and its companion, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Coordinating Committee (EECCC). Both are inter-agency

management committees intended to facilitate communication among agencies and to break down walls that separate individual agencies and their respective missions. Committee members act as advisors to and a “sounding board” for each other about environmental and energy issues, including programs, initiatives and strategies.

Both committees develop recommendations on policy and practice related to the environment and energy efficiency, which are then presented to the appropriate parties (i.e., the County Executive and/or the Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee). Recognizing that federal and state legislation and administrative proceedings may affect county policies, the ECC and EECCC keep abreast of the status of relevant legislation and administrative proceedings and provide guidance as to any application in Fairfax County.

Both committees also coordinate closely with the county’s Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC), which is an independent, board-appointed advisory committee. EQAC is tasked with reporting the state of the environment in Fairfax County and in recommending a variety of policy and programmatic actions that the board can take in support of the environment. EQAC also provides a forum for citizen input on environmental issues through its annual public hearing and e-mail address. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/eqac/ for more information regarding EQAC and its *Annual Report on the Environment*.

1.4.2 Regional Collaboration

As discussed in Section 1.2.1, board members are active participants in committees and initiatives within the metropolitan Washington, D.C. region, particularly those sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

County staff is also active on a regional basis. The COG committees and boards in which county staff participates includes:

- COG Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee.
- COG Built Environment and Energy Advisory Committee.
- Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee and the MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee.
- Transportation Planning Board.

Information about the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and its committees and boards is available at www.mwcog.org/about/. Information about the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, including its programs and projects, is available at www.novaregion.org/.

1.5 Partner Organizations

Fairfax County provides financial or other tangible support to a number of agencies and nonprofit organizations that promote the general health and welfare of the community. The county's environmental partners include:

Clean Fairfax Council works to prevent litter, encourage recycling and promote sustainability. See www.cleanfairfax.org/.

Earth Sangha promotes conservation through its native plant nursery and ecological restoration projects. See www.earthsangha.org/.

Fairfax County Restoration Project connects, creates and promotes efforts to restore ecosystem functions through collaboration with public, private, and volunteer organizations. See www.fcrpp3.org/.

Fairfax ReLeaf works to conserve, restore and promote sustainable urban forests by engaging volunteers in tree planting projects. See www.fairfaxreleaf.org/FFR/about.html.

Northern Virginia Conservation Trust helps local governments and private landowners preserve natural areas, trails, streams and parks through voluntary conservation easements. See www.nvct.org/.

Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District works for clean streams, protected natural resources and community engagement in Fairfax County. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/.

Volunteer Fairfax matches the skills and interests of volunteers and donors to the needs of local nonprofit organizations, helping to build a better community through service. See www.volunteerfairfax.org/.



Huntley Meadows wetland restoration, facilitated by the Fairfax County Park Authority, brought together county and community partners