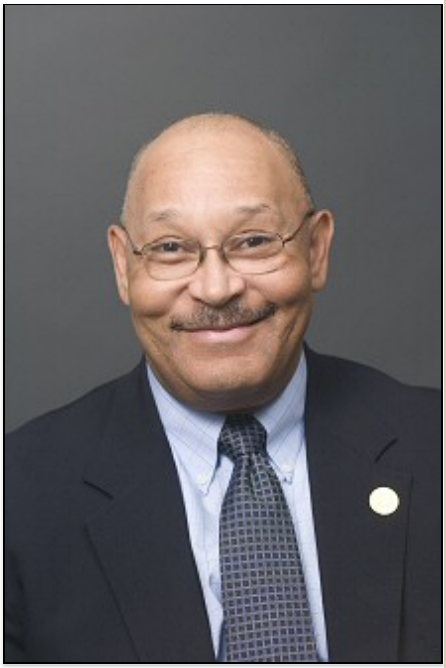
Welcome to Our Parks



The Fairfax County Park system offers a wide array of recreational opportunities for the residents of this community, provides multiple venues for competitive sports such as youth and adult soccer, football, and swimming, as well as cross country running and cricket. Hundreds of thousands of individuals come to our parks and facilities on an annual basis. Clearly, we are an important part of your lives. And for that we are grateful.

Our dual mission also mandates our stewardship of natural and cultural resources, and to that end we continue to make good progress. A new **Natural Resource Management Plan** will help us fulfill the other half of our mission to be good stewards of the land and protect and preserve our natural resources. Our invasive management programs as well as our recent work to help our lands heal and acknowledge the importance and value of our natural capital are all a tremendous step in the right direction.

We are pleased that so many people want to make us an integral part of the quality of life in Fairfax County. And although this presents many, many challenges, we feel that we are up to the challenge and doing it right. That may be a lofty claim but it is supported by our re-accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). This designation ensures that an agency has met national standards considered important to quality operations. You can read further details about this tremendous accomplishment elsewhere in this annual report.

Doing it right means not just getting the basics in place such as friendly and efficient customer service at our **RECenters**, its going that extra mile at our golf courses to ensure that you enjoy your experience on the greens. It's ensuring that your children's experience at summer camp will be safe, fun, and filled with adventure. It's making certain that our community concert series go off without a hitch at dozens of locations each weekend during the summer. From free fireworks for the community, to walks in the woods, astronomy and scout programs at our nature centers and lakefront parks or historic re-enactments, the Park Authority is committed to serving the residents of Fairfax County.

As Chairman of the Park Authority Board I remain optimistic and although there will certainly be challenges ahead, I believe we are well positioned to move into the future boldly. Look for new leadership to move us forward. Expect the staff to begin implementation of our **recently adopted Strategic Plan**. Participate in our approaching Needs Assessment and get ready for more evidence of what it takes to do it right.

Personally, I invite you to get involved. Come to a Park Board meeting. We welcome your comments. Go to a neighborhood park and enjoy or get involved as a volunteer. Perhaps you would prefer to simply donate to the Park Foundation or join a Friends group. That's fine too. These parks belong to you and you can make a positive impact our park system.

Let's embrace the possibilities as we move forward into a new year.

Best wishes,
William Bouie, Chairman Park Authority Board

From the Desk of the Acting Director

I have had the privilege of serving the residents of Fairfax County at the Park Authority for more than 33 years and during that entire time, I found the work to be extremely fulfilling. Whether I was working at poolside or managing a park; running the Park Services Division, the Resource Management Division, or being the Deputy/Chief Operating Officer the work has always been captivating and a true labor of love. I believe with all my heart that this community is well-served by a dedicated cadre of Park Authority employees and a talented, innovative volunteer Park Authority Board. In good conscience I can truly attest that parks make a difference in the quality of life for our residents as I've witnessed it time and time again. Certainly in my present leadership role, I have gained a whole new perspective and a far greater understanding of the complexity of this organization, as well as the broad array of topics that cross the director's desk but all in all, we have to return to our primary mission: sustaining the provision of recreational opportunities and the protection of our natural and cultural resources.

With that mission in mind we have worked very hard to put in place the tools we need to provide first class services and programs, to address the needs of our natural capital and the ethos of stewardship, to protect those precious last vestiges of open space and to provide world class facilities such as synthetic turf fields, updated RECenters, challenging golf courses and skate parks, modern and safe equestrian facilities and accessible trails and playgrounds. Despite an ambitious capital improvement program and commitment to renovation, there is still much work to be done.

And it's not only my opinion that we offer among the best services in the country; it's proven in our national accreditation and receipt of Gold Medal honors, in our receipt of competitive grants and awards, retention of employees and customers and high passage rates for voter-approved park bonds.

Over the past year and into the future you will hear about some of our recently completed plans, or reports and surveys that are currently in the works. For example, the newly adopted Strategic Plan looks five years into the future and provides guidance in several topical "big picture" areas. Plan implementation is underway and will guide us in moving forward. Our Needs Assessment will help us to better understand the desires of the community and set the stage for future capital improvement

programs. One of our priorities is to improve upon citizen engagement and we plan to work harder to find out what our customers want today, who they are, what barriers and diversity issues exist and how we can better serve them. Our Financial Sustainability Plan will assist the Park Board and the staff in finding the right balance between programs that are either financed through tax dollars or subsidized by our Revenue Fund operations and fee-based programs. The challenge to maintain programs that do not cover costs becomes ever larger as General Fund support diminishes and the backlog of capital needs continues to build. Working closely with the county will be critical to our success.

Our commitment to the environment has never been stronger. We are now putting into action elements of past Natural Resource Management Plans as well as finalizing a new plan that goes that next step and recognizes natural capital as a resource worthy of protection. The plan, now nearing adoption is a testament to the professional staff we have in the Resource Management Division as well as a firm understanding by the Park Board that although trails, ball fields and playgrounds are important, we must also appropriately manage our more than 23,000 acres of open space and woodlands.

A new director will arrive shortly and I am certain that Kirk Kincannon, a Fairfax County native has the passion, intellect and integrity to lead this agency into the future. We have extraordinary people in key positions throughout the Park Authority, and although many will be retiring after long careers, succession planning and transferring that critical knowledge and history will make this transition seamless. Focusing on hiring vibrant workers to replace those leaving and investing in the existing staff by providing them with the skills and knowledge to succeed must be a focus to ensure our continued success and relevancy.

I would be negligent if I did not mention the many partners, volunteers and Friends organizations which help support the Park Authority. Our partners, including the Park Foundation, the elected officials at the local level up to Congress, as well as those willing to spend a day cleaning our waterways or pulling weeds. Each partnership brings a vital energy to our organization that builds community and awareness of being good stewards and simply giving back. We appreciate your time and talent. Over 210,000 hours of volunteer service was provided in the past fiscal year, valued at $4.4 million in dollars, and so much more in accomplishment.

Annual reports are limited by their very nature. Such is true with this one as well in that we can only tell part of the story; share only some of the details. So I close by reiterating how proud I am of this organization and what an honor it has been to be part of. The people may change, but the resources we have gathered stand as a legacy to be enjoyed well into the future.

Sincerely,
Cindy Messinger, Acting Director

Doing It Right – Volunteer Leaders at the Helm

Fairfax County Park Authority Board

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board is appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. These 12 appointees are comprised of one representative from each of the nine magisterial districts, plus three at-large members. The board sets policy and establishes priorities for the park agency. The board holds public meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. at park headquarters in the Herrity Building, adjacent the Government Center.

Current Park Authority Board officers are:

- Chairman William G. Bouie, who is completing his fifth term as Chairman and represents the Hunter Mill District
- Kala Leggett Quintana, an At-large Member of the Park Board who serves as Secretary
- Providence District Representative Ken Quincy serving as Board Treasurer

Other members of the Park Board include:

- Edward R. Batten, Sr., Lee District Representative
- Mary D. Cortina, At-large Member
- Linwood Gorham, Mount Vernon District Representative
- Faisal Khan, At-large Member
- Harold L. Strickland, Sully District Representative
- Richard C. (Rip) Sullivan, Jr., Dranesville District Representative
- Michael W. Thompson, Jr., Springfield District Representative
- Frank S. Vajda, Mason District Representative
- Anthony Vellucci, Braddock District Representative

You can locate biographical information about each member, find out about current and past agendas, view archived materials and read about the Park Authority vision and mission at **http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/board**.

Doing It Right – A Glance into the Crystal Ball

There are often projects and items that transcend the timing of any published document. Here are a few items worthy of a preview:

Perhaps the biggest change coming to the Park Authority in early 2014 will be the arrival of a new director. On November 19, 2013, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors confirmed the appointment of Kirk W. Kincannon as director of the Park Authority. Kincannon was selected by the Park Authority Board earlier that month. He will join the staff in late January.

Kincannon, speaking with the Sun Gazette Newspaper said of his new job, "It will provide some great challenges," adding, "It brings me back home and it also lets me contribute back to the community that really gave me my start."

Most recently, Kincannon served as the director of parks and recreation for the City of Boulder, Colorado. He served in that position since 2009, where he oversaw a staff of 1,000. During his tenure he developed two Strategic Plans and implemented both. One plan focused on improvements to park planning processes and the second realigned the agency.

Kincannon worked previously at Park Authority RECenters, and also worked for seven years as manager of Lake Accotink Park. After this local service he worked as director of parks, recreation and tourism for five years in Wytheville, Virginia. In 2000 he began as deputy director of parks, natural resources and capital projects with the City of Alexandria, Virginia. He ascended to the director's position in 2004.

Overall Director Kincannon has demonstrated success in managing a variety of budgets, revenue producing services and facilities, strategic planning, community outreach, partnerships, expanding services to diverse communities, and has navigated multiple agencies through difficult economic times. He is hesitant to speak to any wholesale changes in the works at the Park Authority noting in published reports, "I'll have to understand the full realm of the situation before making any calls."

He is a native of Fairfax County and welcomes this opportunity to return to family and friends.

Natural Capital Defined

Look for a new buzzword that will be a household word in the near future: natural capital. What is natural capital? That's difficult to really say as the term is still evolving; however, one definition worthy of consideration states, "….the elements of nature that produce value (directly and indirectly) to people."

The natural capital management pilot project at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park has emerged complete with a brand identity that will hopefully resonate with those who embrace our environment. It's called Helping Our Land Heal: A Natural Capital Stewardship Model. A logo was developed in-house and its inaugural push with tabletop activities for children was unveiled at the Park Authority booth at Celebrate Fairfax in June 2013. You can find out more about this pilot program and our Natural Resource Management Plan online at **http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management/resources-nrp.htm**.

Needs Assessment Study to Serve as Foundation for Capital Improvement Plan

Another item that is bound to generate comment (let's hope) and interesting data is the approaching Needs Assessment Study. This study will determine countywide park and recreation needs and

determine how best to meet those needs. The last Needs Assessment was completed in 2004. The Needs Assessment serves as the foundation for our ten-year capital improvement plan.

Staff will be evaluating proposals for completion of this project and selecting a consultant in early 2014. As the project proceeds there will be timely updates, public outreach opportunities and survey results to report. A final report including the Needs Assessment as well as the ten-year Capital Plan will be presented to the Park Board at the conclusion of the project.

Fiscal Sustainability Plan Projects Get Underway

There are five new capital projects either underway or being planned at this time which will bring new and improved state of the art services to our residents. These projects were originally identified in the **Financial Sustainability Plan** (FSP), approved by the Park Authority Board in December 2011. The FSP seeks to stabilize our business, our funds and to build a solid foundation of sustainability for the future. Achieving that goal will take a multi-year and multi-task approach but these first steps related to the Revenue Fund investment are considered to be a critical step forward.

The last new facility investment in the Revenue Fund was the development of the Cub Run RECenter which opened August 2006 and the expansion of the South Run RECenter fitness area September 2008. In order to ensure stability of the Revenue Fund, a long term program of investment must be established through the existing Capital Improvement Plan process that is supported by regular schedule of Park Bond Referendums.

The five Revenue Fund projects invest approximately $23 million of 2012 Park Bond Funds for existing facility expansions that have a projected annual net operating revenue return of $ 2.1 million by FY 2017.

The projects include a fitness expansion at Oak Marr RECenter (targeted completion August 2014), fitness expansion at Spring Hill RECenter with the addition of an indoor gymnasium and running track (targeted completion February 2015), expansion of the clubhouse at Twin Lakes Golf Course (targeted completion February 2014), Clubhouse replacement and expansion of the driving range at Burke Lake Golf Course (targeted completion Spring 2016) as well as renovation and

expansion to the Water Mine at Lake Fairfax Park (targeted completion May 2015).

Get ready for terrific new facilities with state-of-the-art amenities, expanding opportunities for banquets and golf outings as well as attractions for older children at the ever-popular Water Mine. It's an exciting time at these facilities!

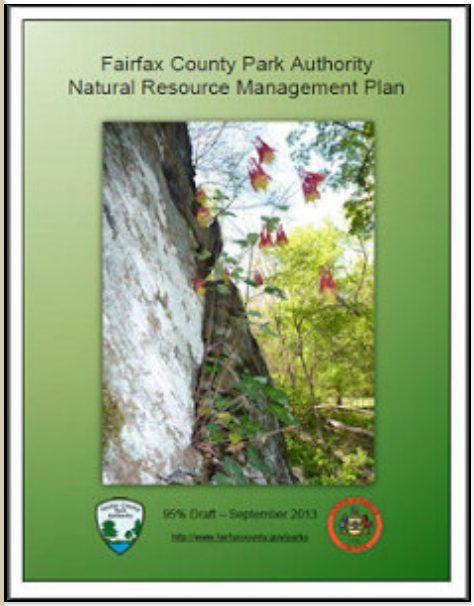
New Communication Channels Ensure That We Hear You

Look for continued innovation in terms of enhanced communications with the Park Authority. Fresh efforts to more effectively engage the public will be prominent in the not too distant future with new engagement platforms that encourage you to join in the conversation on master plans or other park-related topics of interest. Look for more tweets and Facebook posts as well as we ramp up to utilize all the tools in the toolbox. We will be working collaboratively with Channel 16 and the Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs to use new video and audio options as well.

We also anticipate new community survey work that will help us to better understand customer concerns, needs, and desires. And you can expect to see updates and customer friendly enhancements on our website that will help you transact business or get information. Our mobile application is live as well!

There are opportunities to share your opinions on our blog as well as continuing opportunities to share your opinions at public meetings, outreach events, or online. Find out how you can speak directly to the Park Board at each of their regular meetings by visiting **http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/boardagn2.htm**, or send us an email at **Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov**.

Protecting the Natural World – A New NRMP Nears Completion

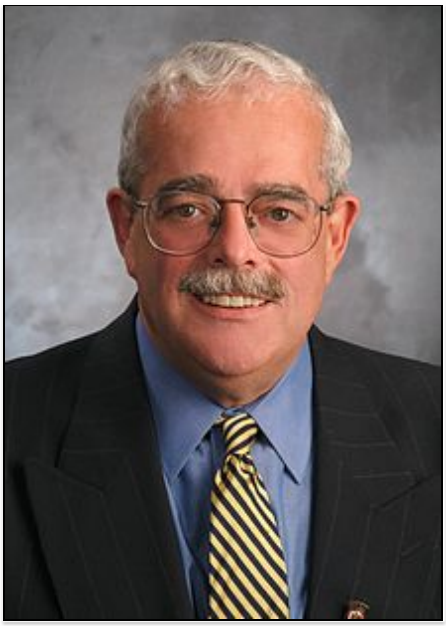


Park Authority staff is currently revising the agency **Natural Resource Management Plan** (NRMP) and after lengthy review with stakeholders, elected officials and the Park Authority Board a final draft is in the works and approval is anticipated in early 2014. The plan proposed 25 actions arranged under four management themes which are considered to be both strategic and evergreen.

Having an NRMP is a policy requirement. This plan provides direction to staff to incorporate natural resource management into all Park Authority functions and requires that the agency inventory, plan, protect, manage, educate, and build partnerships to ensure proper stewardship in support of the agency mission.

The Park Authority Board approved the first agency wide NRMP on January 14, 2004. This plan built the foundation to fulfill the Park Authority stewardship mission and directed staff in the establishment of best practices. Many of the recommended actions contained in this initial plan have already been completed. There is a current need to revise this plan in order to update the actions and provide a new vision to move forward.

Recognizing the "Father" of the CCT



On June 7, 2014, those who love trails will be out in force to mark National Trails Day®, as well as to celebrate the renaming of the Cross County Trail to the "Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail." This action, approved by the Park Board on June 12, 2013, will recognize the significant contributions Congressman Connolly made in ensuring the creation and completion of this 41-mile trail.

Connolly, then Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, provided tireless support for this community driven idea forwarded by Fairfax Trails and Streams. He championed this multi-year, multi-phase, and multi-million dollar project.

The CCT is well-known and used by countless trail enthusiasts on foot, or bicycle, or horse. Congressman Connolly noted at the time of the announcement, "I am truly humbled by this unexpected honor. The Cross County Trail is one of my proudest accomplishments in public office."

Congressman Connolly added, "There are a lot of people who share this honor with me. This project is a true example of what can happen when the local community, volunteers, and elected officials work together."

More details on the renaming ceremony will be forthcoming.

World Police Games Planning Underway

It's official. The World Police and Fire Games are coming to Fairfax County in 2015 and the Park Authority will host events at several venues. The dates are June 26 through July 5 and thousands of spectators and athletes will be in town for the competition. The games are an Olympic-style event held biennially throughout the world to promote friendly competition and international relationships among participants.

Sixty different sporting events will take place ranging from soccer and basketball to running, boxing, and events related to job performance by first responders. For all the details visit **www.fxva.com/wpfg**.

What's Old Get's New Life – Resident Curator Program

An implementation study supporting the establishment of a Resident Curator Program (RCP) in Fairfax County is underway. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors directed Park Authority and Department of Planning and Zoning staff to work with the Fairfax County History Commission to evaluate how a RCP would work in the county. The county has contracted with John Milner Associates, Inc. (JMA) to deliver a

program implementation package identifying what it will take to execute and maintain a successful RCP in Fairfax County. JMA began its work in early July 2013. The study is expected to be completed by May 2014.

Resident curator programs identify publicly-owned historic properties with no immediate or practical public use and through an open and competitive process, select outside parties with skills, resources and vision to rehabilitate a property in accordance with accepted preservation standards for historic buildings. In exchange for rehabilitating the property, the curator gains use of the property and pays little or no rent.

A program in Fairfax County would potentially provide a fiscally responsible means to put many of the county's historic properties back into use. Find out all the details online at **http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/resident-curator-program.htm**

Recognition Comes From Many Places

There were numerous honors earned by individuals and agency staff members. Some of the many awards received include:

- The Virginia Recreation and Park Society (VRPS) Distinguished Volunteer presented to Ken Quincy, Providence District Member of the Park Authority Board
- The VRPS Distinguished Private Sector Award presented to REI for work in support of the Park Authority
- The National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) Best in Show honors were presented to the Take Back the Forest program
- NAGC Special Event honors were also presented to the Take Back the Forest program
- The NAGC honors for best Commercial/Studio/Staged Photography were presented to Park Authority photographer Don Sweeney for his fitness portrait (Insert photo)
- The NAGC honors for best Audio Communications were presented for the Audio Tour of Ox Hill Battlefield Park
- The Fairfax County Sesquicentennial Committee's Civil War Trails marker project received an award under the category of Heritage Tourism at the Virginia Association of CVBs annual meeting. This sign project includes the installation of Civil War Trails markers at Lewinsville Park, Mason District Park, and Freedom Hill Fort
- Resource Management Division employees Aimee Wells and Liz Crowell received a Team Excellence Award from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for participation in the Indigent Cemetery project
- Manager Mike McCaffrey of Hidden Pond Nature Center in Springfield, Virginia, received the National Association for Interpretation's (NAI) national Outstanding Interpretive Manager Award
- Suzanne Holland, the assistant manager at Hidden Oaks Nature Center in Annandale, Virginia, won the 2013 Outstanding Interpretive Manager Award from Region 2 of NAI.

Quality Assurance Found in CAPRA Accreditation

More than 40 members of the Park Authority staff as well as members of the Park Authority Board joined in celebration of this achievement with the Board of Supervisors. Reaccreditation is the equivalent of the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for parks. Members of the County Board spoke highly of the Park Authority with

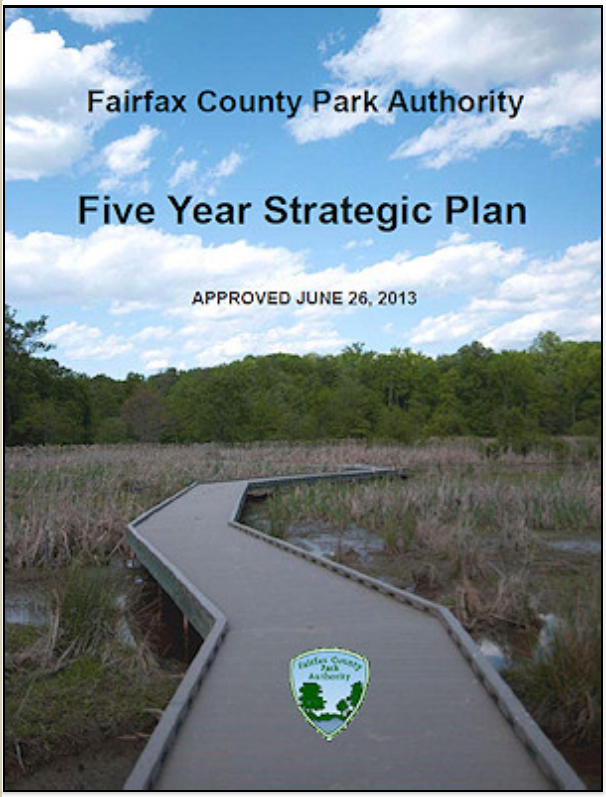
Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust putting it succinctly, "We love our parks."

The Park Authority was reaccredited on Monday, October 7, 2013, following a brief hearing in Houston, Texas. The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies' (CAPRA) designation ensures that an agency has met national standards considered important to quality operations. The Park Authority was initially accredited on October 16, 2008, meeting all 155 standards at that time. An agency is required to apply for this designation every five years.

"Ultimately, the big winners are the people who use our parks, love our sites and system amenities and support the Park Authority." – Cindy Messinger

The hearing was attended by Acting Director Cindy Messinger who represented our interests along with Chief Operating Officer Sara Baldwin. Messinger said at the time, "This was a significant achievement during a challenging time, but our staff and our community partners rallied and we were able to self-assess, make adjustments where needed and move forward. This makes us very proud and is indicative of the hard work at every level of this organization." She concluded, "Ultimately, the big winners are the people who use our parks, love our sites and system amenities and support the Park Authority."

Accreditation is a rigorous process of assessment and peer review using national standards of best practices to better promote the quality of agency services and delivery of systems. The benefits of accreditation are numerous. Accreditation serves as a benchmark for how an agency is doing as compared to best practices and policies. Accreditation gives independent verification that basic standards and desirable practices and policies have been met, which in turn helps to build community support and recognition. Accreditation can also lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness of operations, enhance services and provide the public with evidence of agency accountability.



Strategic Planning Comes of Age at the Park Authority

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board adopted the **2014-2018 Strategic Plan** on June 26, 2013. This action set in motion an agency-wide effort to integrate strategic initiatives with operating plans into a broader set of strategic priorities. Once again, the Park Authority used a balanced scorecard approach which balances specific objectives and measures across a variety of key strategic areas. By utilizing a scorecard of key measures, the Park Authority can gauge its progress toward a set of stated objectives over the next five years.

Connecting individuals and communities with the many park benefits and creating greater understanding about how parks positively impact our quality of life in Fairfax County is the ultimate outcome of this strategic plan. The Park Authority recognizes six areas of emphasis in which parks make a difference in our daily life: physical health,

mental health, social functioning, youth development, the environment, and economic well-being.

Using the Balanced Scorecard approach, and stakeholder input, four strategic perspectives are embraced: the customer's perspective, the financial perspective, business process, and learning and growth. Guiding visions outline how the agency plans to strengthen the value parks provide to the community, strengthen the Park Authority's financial stability, improve business practices, and to promote organizational excellence.

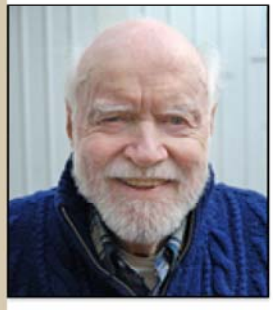
Beyond these vision statements an implementation plan outlines projects to be accomplished over the next five years with measures and accountability built into a robust reporting process. We invite you to explore the plan, to become familiar with objectives and initiatives that will impact park services you receive, the parks and facilities which are improved and maintained, and the broad array of recreation and stewardship programs offered for your family to enjoy.

The **2014-2018 Strategic Plan** is a vibrant, living document. It is supported by an enthusiastic staff and a Park Board dedicated to excellence.

You can access this document at:

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/downloads/strategic-plan-fy14-18-final.pdf.

The People We've Known…



On May 9, 2013, a longtime supporter of the Park Authority and passionate local historian passed away. Mayo Stuntz was 97-years-old when he died, but his legacy of public service, his commitment to the preservation and nurturing of all things historic, and his commitment to this community will be long remembered. The Washington Post recalled him as a "soldier, author and Virginia gentleman". He was all that and lots more.

He was a decorated World War II veteran. He served with the Central Intelligent Agency for 25 years. He was the founder of the Fairfax County History Commission, served on the Board for 47 years, and also found time for participation on the Landmarks Preservation Committee.

It was his work as Chairman of the Sully Foundation, Ltd. for a quarter century that made significant change and heralded progress at this Park Authority site. Under his guidance the county water system came to Sully, as did accreditation, fire suppression systems for the house, new historic acquisitions, the building of the Sully slave quarter, and support for myriad other site needs.

In recognition of his work, the Fairfax County Park Authority Board approved creation of the Mayo Stuntz Cultural Stewardship Award. This award recognizes outstanding service through the stewardship of historic resources and dedication to parks. It also honors significant contributions toward the understanding, preservation, education, and interpretation of history in the county.

The inaugural recipient of the award was the Sully Foundation, Ltd. which received this honor in November 2013.

What's In a Name?

Energy, Dedication and Accomplishment for Tireless Norma Hoffman

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board approved the renaming of the visitor center at Huntley Meadows Park in honor of longtime volunteer and former Park Authority Board member Norma Hoffman. The action was taken on April 24, 2013. Hoffman has devoted nearly 38 years to the preservation, protection, and promotion of Huntley Meadows Park and its wetlands. She is a tireless volunteer with more than 30 years of service completed.

Shortly after the Park Authority acquired the wetlands in 1975, the idea of placing a four-lane highway that would run through the site gained support. This was not acceptable to Hoffman, an environmental activist who quickly became a catalyst for the community and helped organize a force of over 600 individuals who formed Citizens to Save Huntley. This grassroots movement was instrumental in preserving the wetland and the park for future generations. The road option was reconsidered by local officials and rejected.

She also maintained an unrelenting pursuit on behalf of the acquisition of the mansion at Historic Huntley. In 1985, Hoffman co-founded the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, assuring continued environmental support and fundraising for the park. The group's founding established the format for similar friends groups that now exist throughout Fairfax County.

She is a hands-on advocate and teacher. She is an inspiration to young and old alike.

Went to a Garden Party – Sally's Rain Garden

Inspired by the memory of volunteer, activist and environmentalist Sally Ormsby, and with generous contributions from the Sally B. Orsmby Memorial Fund, the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Park Authority, a rain garden was designed and installed at the Packard Center in Annandale. Project contributors included Merrifield Garden Center, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, and Earth Sangha.

This rain garden is an example of Sally's legacy in action. Rain gardens are a low-tech solution to run-off and can be aesthetically beautiful.

HACAN Initiative Introduces Parks to Diverse Families

Over 45 students in the Culmore area connected with parks and varied activities through a year-long monthly program supported by grants from the Park Foundation and the Rotary Club of Bailey's Crossroads. Families attending Hispanics Against Child Abuse and Neglect Hacan), an enrichment program for local families, enjoyed doing farm chores at Frying Pan Farm, zooming down slides at Cub Run's pool, exercising Zumba-style at Providence RECenter, meeting live reptiles at Hidden Oaks Nature Center, and playing miniature golf at Jefferson District Park. Often, Hidden Oaks staff led cultural and natural history programs featuring guests ranging from Mason District

Supervisor Penny Gross to Ultimate Frisbee team captains, fulfilling the goal of doubling attendance at the weekly student meetings.

Friends Groups Provide Additional Site Support

The Park Authority depends on the support of Friends groups to fundraise, advocate, and volunteer on behalf of many of our park sites. The Park Authority and Park Foundation work hand in hand to assist in the formation of these organizations which generally sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Park Authority. Friends groups are generally independent, non-profit organizations. **Click for more information** about how to contact the Friends group of your choice.

Elly Doyle Awards Celebrate Groovy Volunteers and Donors

The Fairfax County Park Authority honored volunteers, philanthropists, and leaders in environmental stewardship at the annual **Elly Doyle Park Service Awards**. Held in mid-November, the event's theme was "Volunteers are Groovy," and decorations and musical performances by the Parkettes reflected Summer of Love nostalgia. The Park Authority relies heavily on its community partners and the evening was a time for everyone to come together and share the love.

Elly Doyle Awards Celebrate Groovy Volunteers and Donors

Although the event has grown over the years to recognize contributors other than volunteers, the Elly Doyle Park Service Award was established in 1988 to honor the many contributions of Ms. Ellamae E. Doyle, a longtime member of the Park Authority Board. Ms. Doyle served as chairman of the board from 1965 to 1968 and was instrumental in the protection of cultural and natural resources. Appropriately, the Elly Doyle Park Service Award publicly salutes those who provide distinguished volunteer service to Fairfax County parks.

Three Elly Doyle Awards were presented during the ceremony. The Friends of Historic Huntley, a nonprofit organization devoted to the preservation and restoration of Thomas F. Mason's Huntley estate, was recognized for its part in the planning and fundraising for the mansion's restoration and reopening to the public. The historic site is now open and new educational programs are held there. Jean Laub, a retired teacher and volunteer for over 20 years at Hidden Oaks Nature Center, was recognized with an Elly Doyle Award for her service to the public as a greeter, naturalist, teacher, and summer camp leader. William Stemple, a year-round volunteer for over 19 years at Greendale Golf Course, was recognized for the many ways in which he supports golfers and staff at the course. A host of other outstanding volunteers were also recognized for their efforts.

Each year a student honoree is named, and in 2012, that honor went to Hidden Pond's Envirothon Team. The team of high school students represented the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District at the state competition for the second year in a row and took home second place in the natural resources competition. Throughout the year, participants learn about stewardship and management concepts and work to solve real and hypothetical environmental problems. The knowledge they gain while studying makes them better interpreters at the nature center and often leads to a career in the natural sciences.

The students weren't the only group thinking about the environment in 2012. The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, an organization that has helped preserve over 5,000 acres of natural areas since 1994, received the Sally Ormsby Environmental Stewardship Award for their ongoing support of land acquisitions, park clean-ups, invasive plant removal, and tree plantings. The Sally Ormsby Environmental Stewardship Award was established by the Park Authority Board in 2007 and honors the legacy of its namesake, Sally Ormsby, who was a citizen steward of great renown and accomplishment.

Volunteers and environmentalists are the heart and soul of many Park Authority programs and facilities, but the agency also benefits greatly from the generosity of individuals and corporations. The Fairfax County Park Foundation Board established the Eakin Philanthropy Award in 2009 to recognize visionary financial and material contributions to the parks. The award is named for the Eakin family, a benefactor of local parks for over four generations. In 1951, LeRoy Eakin, Sr. donated 14 acres of land in the Accotink Stream Valley that became the community's first park. Since then the Eakins have donated 240 acres of parkland and established a trust that provides matching funds for improvements to the Accotink Stream Valley.

Three Eakin Awards were presented during the ceremony. Fred Crabtree, lovingly known as Mr. Baseball, received the award posthumously. He dedicated his time, talents, and money to youth athletics for over 50 years. Crabtree served with distinction on the Park Authority Board from 1969-1992, where he made it his mission to acquire parkland. Crabtree passed away March 11, 2012. The Park Foundation presented an Eakin Award to the PNC Foundation for securing donations totaling $50,000 for Arts in the Parks, a summer entertainment series geared toward children. Hilltop Sand and Gravel Company was the final Eakin Award recipient. Michael Gailliot, president of Hilltop, facilitated funding and donations totaling more than $100,000 for Chessie's BIG Backyard playground at Lee District Park. Hilltop also supported the PACT summer camp program and local concert series.

Every individual and group honored during the ceremony, whether through flower power or the power of the purse, helps the Park Authority provide the best recreational services in the country.

Healthful Fun, Facilities Expansion Mark Successful Year

The Park Services Division has worked very hard during the past year to ensure that residents of Fairfax County have many opportunities to enjoy recreational activities that keep them happy and healthy. Renovations and expansions have begun at **Oak Marr** and **Spring Hill RECenters** and additional indoor space is being added to **Twin Lakes Golf Course**. We are literally building more fun into our parks and more activities than ever to keep our residents active and busy throughout Fairfax County.

People in Fairfax County love going to classes and they come in droves. In fact, more than 140,000 individuals took part in our programs during the past fiscal year, generating more than $9 million in revenues. Our most popular programs include children's camps for spring, summer, and winter. We experienced an abundance of fun, games, and educational opportunities. There was an emphasis on wellness as well as understanding nature through stewardship education.

One of the most notable changes in our aquatics section was that swim lessons stopped using the American Red Cross program after over 34 years of use. The change has provided positive, new opportunities for swimmers on a regional basis through a collaborative approach. Park Authority staff joined with staff from the Reston Community Center, the Town of Herndon, Reston Association, Town of Leesburg, Winchester, Fauquier County, Culpepper County, and Stafford County to research other learn-to-swim training agencies and ultimately, to collaborate in the development of a jointly created learn-to-swim program under the name Virginia Swims.

The Fitness and Wellness Section provides comprehensive fitness and wellness programs that support and promote healthy and active lifestyles. Some successful ventures include an expansion in personal

training programs and opportunities, plus the addition of new TRX equipment and reformer equipment. **Take 12 Steps for Community Health** continues to have a positive impact on the community with newsletters, calendars, and workshops.

The PACT program certainly made its mark on the community in a very positive way. The purpose of Parks and Community Together (PACT) is to provide a two-week day camp experience for children ages 3 to15. These kids are from diverse backgrounds but they have one thing in common: they are residents of transitional housing shelters in Fairfax County. They live at one of several temporary housing facilities for homeless families who have experienced domestic violence or economic deprivation. The kids from the shelters are integrated into existing programs at park facilities.

PACT received $51,834 from local and regional donors willing to assist children with great needs.

There were nearly 5,000 children served through the **Rec-PAC summer program** this year. The program operated in 48 schools, with weekly attendance of approximately 3,100 children.

The scholarship program saw an increase of almost 4% over 2012. The 9,153 scholarships in FY 2013 represented 49 percent of all registrations. Based on a direct cost of $47.71 per child per week, the Park Authority absorbed $324,108 in expenses for these full fee waivers. Rec-PAC successfully attracts a disproportionately high number of lower income households. Approximately 75% of participants receive reduced fees.

Spring break camps saw increased registration and programs. Fifty-four camps were offered, 777 registrations were received, and revenues totaled $176,000. Registration was up 5%; revenues increased by 7.7%.

Doing It Right – Golf Enterprises

USGA Amateurs Get the Best From Professionals at Laurel Hill

Laurel Hill Golf Club hosted the 88th U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship in July, the penultimate occurrence of this historic championship. One hundred fifty-six of the world's best amateur golfers competed for the James Standish Trophy and a possible invitation to the Masters Tournament. Jordan Niebrugge, a sophomore at Oklahoma State University, fended off a late charge by Michael Kim on the 36th and final hole for a dramatic win with a score of 1-up in match play.

Competition to host this championship is very intense and staff demonstrated excellent customer service and superior course maintenance during a week that proved very challenging with record heat recorded throughout the event. The USGA championship team responsible for the six-day competition had high praise for the professionalism and performance of Laurel Hill staff.

Laurel Hill could not have held such a successful event without the support of nearly 400 volunteers, staff from other Park Authority golf courses and sites, as well as representatives from other county agencies to include the Office of Public Private Partnerships, South County High School, Visit Fairfax, and the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

"It is a tremendous honor for the USGA to have selected Laurel Hill Golf Club to host this national championship," said Peter Furey, director of golf for the Fairfax County Park Authority. "This selection speaks well for the vision of the Park Authority and Fairfax County in transforming a once desolate and underutilized property into a beautiful and challenging test of golf. A championship like this draws competitors from public access courses and speaks well of the Park Authority's mission in public golf."

Designed by Bill Love and opened in 2005, Laurel Hill Golf Club is situated on rolling terrain that previously housed the District of Columbia Corrections facility at Lorton whose prisoners operated a dairy farm on the site. The course hosted the U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship sectional qualifier in 2009, a U.S. Women's Amateur Public Links Championship sectional

qualifier in 2010 and 2011, and the Virginia State Golf Association Public Links Championship in 2008-2010.

Hosting the 88th U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship allowed Laurel Hill and the Park Authority to shine in the national spotlight. The Park Authority will continue to benefit from this exposure for years to come as awareness of Laurel Hill's unique history and challenging play has increased among the golfing public.

Laurel Hill Partners For Reclaimed Water

Innovation is at work in the southern end of Fairfax County and Laurel Hill Golf Club is soaking up the benefits. The Noman M. Cole, Jr. Pollution Control Plant Water Reuse Project will provide up to 24 million gallons of treated reclaimed water to irrigate the Laurel Hill golf course. This is a proven source for irrigation water that is safe, cost-effective, and good for the environment. The program began this summer.

Reclaimed water use reduces the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous that reaches the Chesapeake Bay. Applying reclaimed water to vegetated areas filters out remaining trace amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous which would otherwise flow to the Bay. These chemicals act as nutrients for the vegetated areas reducing use of chemical fertilizers.

This project is coordinated with and permitted by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and local agencies. Funding is partially provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Doing It Right — Giving Never Felt So Good

Park Foundation Seeks to Close Gap Between Needs And Public Funding

Sometimes there are just some things that take some extra funding and support in order to accomplish. That's where the **Fairfax County Park Foundation** comes into play. The Foundation inspires philanthropy in order to help bridge that gap between identified needs and available public funds for parks and open space. The Park Foundation assists the Park Authority by raising private funds, obtaining grants, and creating partnerships that supplement tax dollars to meet the community's needs for programs, scholarships, services, parkland, and facilities.

More than $1.2 million was raised in Fiscal Year 2012 and Fiscal Year 2013. Here are just a few examples of the projects and programs which were supported:

- 2013 Partners in Preservation grant to restore Colvin Run Mill
- Summer Entertainment Series
- Arts in the Parks
- Chessie's BIG Backyard fully accessible playground at Lee District Park
- Scholarships for homeless and low income children and adults providing summer camp and classes
- Take 12 Steps for Health
- The 88th USGA's U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship at Laurel Hill Golf Club
- Invasive Management Program
- The Meaningful Watershed Education Experience
- Open Space Land Preservation Fund
- Trail Construction and Maintenance Fund
- The Adapted Aquatics program

Park Authority Takes to the Stage

More than 250 summer concerts were hosted and nearly 60,000 residents attended the 2013 **Summer Concert Series** for young and old. These concerts were supported by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Park Foundation and its benevolent donors, as well as local and corporate business entities. More than $314,000 was collected to support these free performances. Concerts and sites were expanded to enable more performance ventures throughout the community.

Bluegrass Barn Concerts Attract Top Talent to Frying Pan Farm

In the fall of 2012 the Fairfax County Park Authority partnered with the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park to introduce the Bluegrass Barn concert series. This new indoor series featured legendary and regional bluegrass musicians in Frying Pan's visitor center on Sunday evenings. Bluegrass fans enjoyed 11 traveling acts from November through April, including well-known artists Jimmy Gaudreau, Bill Emerson, and Junior Sisk. Concerts started at 7 p.m., but aspiring musicians and fans were invited to arrive early for an acoustic jam session and to meet band members when possible. The park's onsite food vendor, Gordon's Grille, added to the festive atmosphere by selling hot BBQ sandwiches and other country classics, as well as an assortment of beer and wine. The Bluegrass Barn series, now in its second season, has revived the farm's tradition of music and fellowship and continues with a full slate of performances in 2013-2014.

Children Enjoy Arts In The Parks

The Arts in the Parks Children's Series is especially popular. The Park Services Division staff worked hand-in-hand with the Park Foundation to seek major grants. The effort resulted in securing $21,000 in contributions with a $15,000 donation from PNC Foundation. Program attendance was also up by 12 percent due in large measure to increased attendance at Frying Pan Farm Park events.

For more information on how you can support this non-profit organizations' efforts visit **http://www.fairfaxparkfoundation.org/** or call 703-324-8582.

Park Operations Protects and Maintains Growing, Aging Park System

There is nothing easy about the work undertaken every day by the personnel in the Park Operations Division. They may get the pleasure of working outdoors amid natural settings, but for the most part they are called into action to fix or maintain those recreational amenities we all take for granted as we enjoy them regardless of weather conditions, time of night or day or schedule constraints.

Weather or natural disasters can be a very significant factor in the costs associated with maintenance and our ability to maintain anticipated maintenance schedules. In recent years we have dealt with an earthquake that damaged several Park Authority facilities, flooding after tropical storms, a derecho or straight-line wind storm, snows and icing, as well as heat waves, and occasional thunderstorms that drop trees and cause system wide damage. There is nothing boring about a day in Park Operations.

The Park Operations Division provides facility **support for over 400 parks** which includes athletic fields, trails, playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts as well as infrastructure. They provide energy consumption oversight and management as well as oversight of the Tririga Computer Integration Facilities Management system. When residents report a park or trail maintenance issue, a work order is generated through this computer system which also provides equipment and facility lifecycle data and tracks maintenance and repair work orders.

Park Operations is also charged with the management of contract services including mowing contracts that provide services at park fields and school athletic sites across Fairfax County. Contractors help to ease the maintenance workload as park staff resources are stretched by an expanding park system and fiscal constraints. Park Operations employees are often our frontline staff members handling residents' questions and concerns regarding park encroachments, tree concerns, and the status of fields and other site amenities.

Energy Management Plan Lights the Way

The Park Authority serves as steward of the county's natural resources, as well as providing recreational opportunities for residents. It's a dual mission that brings

diverse concerns and opportunities together. One area of operations in which these two parts of the agency's mission intersect is energy management. As a result of recent lighting upgrades RECenter patrons are enjoying improved lighting in pool areas, racquetball courts, and gymnasiums, and site managers are enjoying smaller monthly utility bills. The improved illumination and reduced energy consumption are tangible results of the Park Authority's Energy Management Plan. This board-approved plan guides strategies to reduce energy costs, maximize services, and minimize the impact of energy use on the environment. Using funding from park bonds, the revenue fund, county EIP, and federal grants, the Park Authority's energy manager is improving energy efficiency at sites throughout the county.

RECenters, with their cavernous indoor swimming areas, gymnasiums, racquetball courts, numerous community rooms, and vast parking lots, were an obvious starting point for implementing the plan. Lighting represents a large share of a RECenter's monthly utility costs and energy consumption. Upgraded lighting systems were installed with newer, more efficient lights and control systems that provide more consistent lighting and use less electricity. Conservation goals were evident immediately. Energy use in the agency's gymnasiums has been reduced by 74 percent and natatoriums are using up to 70 percent less energy than before. Energy use is down 65 to 75 percent in racquetball courts in large part because new sensors automatically turn off the lights when the courts are empty.

One might think that using less energy to light outdoor areas equates to reduced visibility; however, the opposite is true. Safety was not sacrificed in RECenter parking lots where energy use has been reduced by more than 70%. In fact, the parking lots are brighter now and shaded LED lamps reduce glare, actually making it easier to see other people.

A new lighting system at **Frying Pan Farm Park's** activity center regulates artificial lighting based on the amount of natural light streaming through windows and skylights. Energy consumption drops by up to 80 percent on sunny days! Smarter lights installed in the parking lot and along pathways at Huntley Meadows Park have made walking safer for humans, and the shaded lamps reduce light pollution that interferes with wildlife migration and sleep cycles.

Fairfax County is an active community, and games are played on lighted athletic fields and courts well beyond sunset. Athletic fields now have Web-based lighting control systems that can be scheduled to shut down when not needed. Lights can be turned off remotely if games are canceled because of bad weather or other reasons. Tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts now have time-control systems to schedule lights for one-hour games and to shut down lights afterward if not needed.

The addition of modern control systems has made it easier for the agency to manage lit areas throughout the system. Moving forward, the energy manager will continue to track energy usage and strive to reduce the agency's carbon footprint through technological innovations. Finding ways to use less energy and save money each month is good for both the environment and the taxpayers.

Park Authority Makes Significant Progress on Accessibility Fixes

In January 2011 Fairfax County Government signed an agreement with the Department of Justice (DOJ) that sets forth the corrections that are being made to address the violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act found in a recent DOJ audit. The Park Authority has been busy with its required fixes ever since and progress is steady.

The Park Authority continues to work with the county to ensure our facilities are assessed and comply with the current ADA Standards set forth by the DOJ. To date the Park Authority has completed all infractions identified by DOJ with the exception of several infractions that require design and permits. These infractions are currently assigned to the Planning and Development Division and agency project teams were established for correction of these infractions.

Agency staff also conducted a self-assessment (required by DOJ) on the remaining facilities not audited by DOJ. The additional infractions sited by park staff are currently being corrected and will be an agency priority for completion within the next several years. Agency staff meets regularly with county staff and the Disability Services Board to communicate the progress that is being made on non-compliant ADA issues.

Joint Task Force Lays Out Future of Synthetic Turf Fields

At the request of the Fairfax County School Board, in partnership with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Park Authority Board, a joint Synthetic Turf Task Force was formed to develop recommendations on development of new synthetic turf fields and their locations, funding of these fields, planning replacement of existing and new synthetic turf fields, as well as maintenance of existing synthetic turf fields.

The task force, led by the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, was comprised of community leaders and county staff who had a direct connection to the current and future synthetic turf field efforts. Park Authority Board Chairman Bill Bouie and School Board Liaison Ken Quincy were both members of the task force and served alongside Park Authority staff including Todd Johnson, director of the Park Operations Division.

The Task force made several recommendations including:

Recommendation 1: Synthetic turf fields and lights within school sites should be standard components in new school construction and future capital improvement renovation schedules. At high school sites, the two-field model should be standard for rectangular sports use.

Recommendation 2: The diamond sports community should be engaged to determine interest in expanding the conversion of natural grass softball and baseball fields to synthetic surfaces. The completion of the next Park Authority Needs Assessment should be used to guide that discussion to include gauging the desire of the diamond sports community to redirect a portion of the Athletic Services Application Fee.

Recommendation 3: Future synthetic turf field development should be guided by recommendations in this report for oversight, locations, development schedule, and share of public funding allocations.

Recommendation 4: Install the two-field model at all high schools that currently do not have synthetic turf fields. Complete the eight school sites to include 15 total synthetic turf fields within a three-year cycle by 2016. Convert rectangular stadium and auxiliary natural grass fields to synthetic turf at each of the following eight high schools:

- Annandale High School

- Edison High School
- Hayfield Secondary School
- Mount Vernon High School
- South County High School
- JEB Stuart High School (One rectangular field per space constraints)
- Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
- West Potomac High School

Recommendation 5: Continue to support community partnership opportunities directed at future synthetic turf field development, maintenance, and replacement.

Recommendation 6: Modify construction standards to incorporate new stormwater management requirements and develop consistent guidelines for promotion of the county's adoption of the use of green construction.

Recommendation 7: Establish an oversight committee to oversee and periodically meet to monitor joint collaborative efforts for synthetic turf field development. Members should establish procedures consistent with the findings and recommendations in this report as a guide for their analysis. Members of the committee should include representatives from the following organizations:

- Park Authority
- Fairfax County School Board
- Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
- Fairfax County Athletic Council
- Staff representation from the county and public schools

To view the complete report and a fact sheet on synthetic turf go to **http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/syntheticturf.htm**.

Tournaments For Turf Initiative Proves Popular

The Fairfax County Park Authority is dedicated to providing superior recreational opportunities for an ever-changing community of over 1.1 million residents with diverse backgrounds and interests. A 2004 Needs Assessment clearly identified a deficit of 95 rectangular fields to meet the growing population in our county. In response, we have invested in the conversion of more than 48 natural grass fields to synthetic turf fields. This has significantly increased access and field capacity, improved playing conditions for user groups, and reduced maintenance requirements and costs.

However, the time has come to address the turf replacement costs required to maintain these state-of-the-art athletic fields to ensure that field users continue to enjoy the high-quality experience currently provided. The Park Authority is committed to providing and maintaining these fields, yet there is limited funding available to do so. Therefore, we are now hosting tournaments in collaboration with our community partners to raise funds for our synthetic turf replacement reserve.

The kick-off "Tournaments for Turf" event was a successful adult flag football tournament held on July 6, 2013, hosting 13 teams and about 200 participants. Since then, additional tournaments have taken place

including a “Moonlight Madness” adult coed softball tournament, an additional flag football tourney on Thanksgiving weekend, as well as The Fairfax Cup, a youth street soccer event held in December.

For more information on each of these exciting tournaments, visit **www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/tournaments-for-turf**.

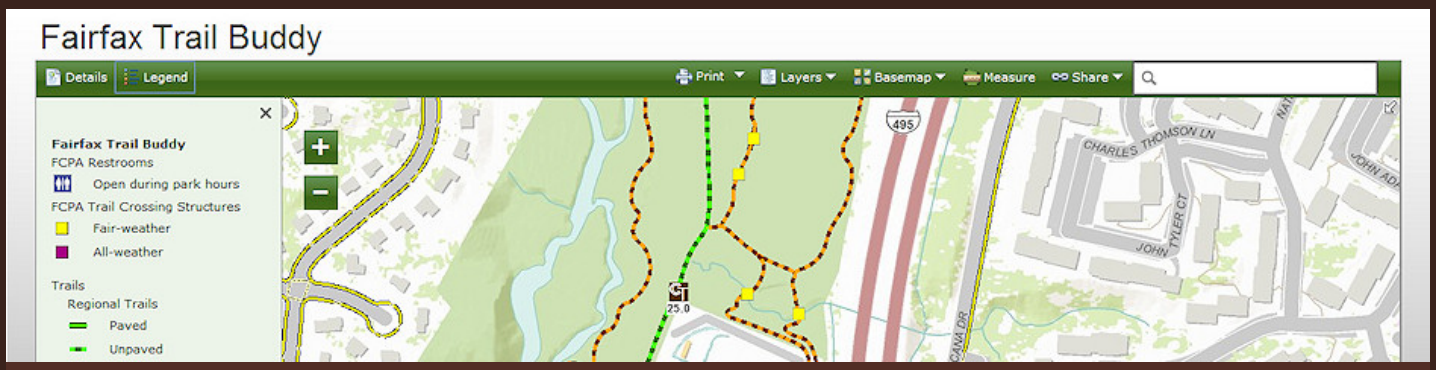
Mastenbrook Matching Grants Help Community One Project At a Time

The Mastenbrook Volunteer Matching Fund Grant Program (**Mastenbrook Grant Program**) was established by the Fairfax County Park Authority in May 1999. Providing a matching grant fund program for volunteer projects was first suggested by John Mastenbrook during the development of the 1998 Park Bond program. The late John Mastenbrook, a longtime park advocate, served on the Fairfax County Park Authority Board for 21 years. His vision was to establish a source of monies to match volunteer funds or in-kind services in an effort to encourage public/private ventures to improve county parks. In recognition of his role in the development of this program, it was named in his honor.

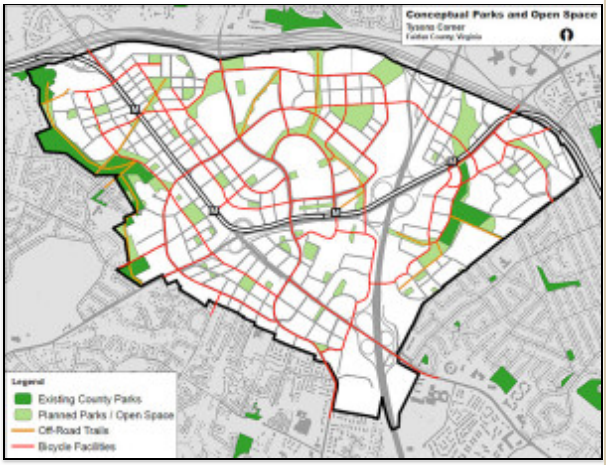
In Fiscal Year 2013, 12 grant projects were approved worth over $330,000 in park improvements. These include the following initiatives:

- Northern Virginia Travel Baseball contributed toward the installation of dugout covers on diamond field 1 at Alabama Drive Park. The dugout covers will aid in protecting players from the sun and rain.
- McLean Youth Soccer contributed toward the restoration of rectangular field 4 at Spring Hill Park. The project included adding clean topsoil, grading the field surface to improve drainage and playability, and sodding the playing and overrun areas.
- The Southwestern Youth Association contributed toward the renovation of the infields on diamond fields 1 and 2 at Lincoln Lewis Vannoy Park. The renovations graded the infields to improve drainage and playability and included adding premium infield mix and sod.
- The Sully Foundation Ltd. contributed toward improving the interim visitor center sidewalk and other site enhancements which are part of the new visitor center at Sully Historic Site. All of the improvements will enhance the experience for the visitors to the site.
- The Alexandria Dive Club contributed toward the installation of a new three-meter diving board at Lee District RECenter. The additional diving board will benefit both the general public as well as students.
- West Springfield Little League contributed toward the installation of a batting cage adjacent to diamond field 3 at Byron Avenue Park. The batting cage will provide additional practice opportunities for players.
- Central Springfield Little League contributed toward the installation of a batting cage adjacent to diamond field 1 at Trailside Park. The batting cage will provide additional practice opportunities for players.
- Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts (MORE) and The Bike Lane contributed toward the establishment of new trails and restoration of undesirable trails being abandoned at Lake Fairfax Park.
- Westgrove Pumphouse Association for Canine Kindness (PACK) contributed toward the installation of fencing for the interim use off-leash dog area at Westgrove Park, which opened for use in the fall of 2012.
- Gunston Soccer Club contributed toward the conversion of rectangular field 4 at Grist Mill Park from cool season grass to Bermuda grass. The project included grading the playing surface to improve drainage and playability as well as the installation of the new grass surface.

- The Munson Hill Park community contributed toward the expansion of the playground at Munson Hill Park. The expansion includes a dome climber, seesaw, and spinning seats.
- Burke Athletic Club contributed towards the installation of new fencing adjacent to rectangular field 1 at Patriot Park. The new fencing will help prevent balls from being kicked into the woods and other natural areas adjacent to the field.



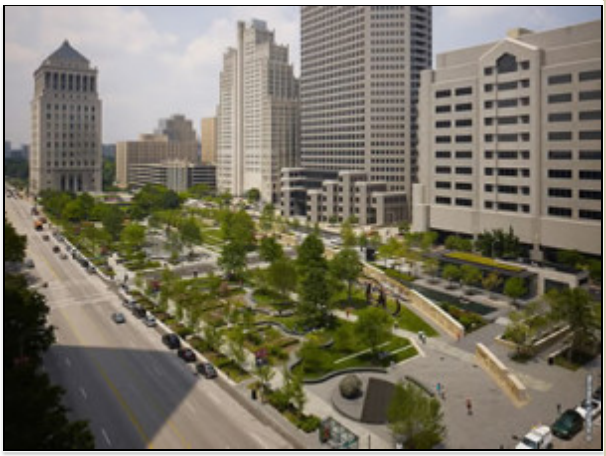
Planning For the Parks of Tomorrow While Meeting Current Needs



The **Planning and Development Division** is comprised of a professional staff that is highly qualified to provide a nationally-recognized countywide park system through its land acquisition, real estate services, and planning and development services from park concept to concrete. Public input is essential in planning the park system and helps define park experiences of tomorrow. All participants have a voice in the planning process. Parkland acquisition, open space preservation, and park development projects are generally funded by voter-approved general obligation bonds and supplemented by alternative funding sources, such as the **Open Space Land Preservation Fund**, partnerships, grants, and proffers.

The division is divided into three functional areas: Land Acquisition and Management, Park Planning and Project Management.

Planning Tysons



Great cities have great parks. Tysons is envisioned to be the County's great urban downtown where a robust park system will add value and benefits to residents, workforce and visitors. Big changes have already begun in Tysons in anticipation of the arrival of Metro in 2014 and building on the **Transforming Tysons Plan** adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2010 that envisions a walkable, vibrant urban downtown for Tysons by 2050. While that may sound like a long horizon, planning now is essential. Park planning staff led a cross-agency effort to create the comprehensive Tysons Park System Plan that will be published in early 2015 for extensive public input.

Progress in creating a variety of interesting urban parks in Tysons has begun. Private commitments to integrate urban parks and athletic fields into future developments that received rezoning approvals this year will yield over 40 acres of publicly accessible urban parks including 21 acres of dedicated public land. Five new athletic fields in Tysons have also been approved and will be delivered over time beginning with the first two in mid-2015. Pending and future rezonings will continue to add urban park and recreation facilities to meet the needs generated by growth in Tysons.

Urban Parks Framework Adopted as County Policy

As parts of the County have become more urban, we recognized that parks in these areas needed to evolve as well and developed an **Urban Parks Framework** that has been used to plan and create urban parks in Tysons, central Springfield, Reston, Annandale, Richmond Highway and Bailey's Crossroads/Seven Corners. The Urban Parks Framework provides guidance on urban park types, location and design. In May, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors reviewed and approved the Urban Parks Framework as County policy in the Comprehensive Plan. This policy will serve the County well as transit-oriented development areas and other growth areas are transformed over the next few decades.

Walking the Walk with Trail Buddy – Fairfax County Blazes a New Digital Trail

With over 900 miles of trails, bikeways, and sidewalks in Fairfax County, our residents have lots of safe places to walk, run, and ride their bicycles. This vast network of interconnecting trails also provides an alternative to motorized commuting for those who prefer speeding to work on two wheels rather than languishing in stalled traffic. But with so many different routes, how are people supposed to find their way from Point A to Point B? This was the problem that GIS Analyst Buddy Rose and Trails Planner Liz Cronauer set out to solve when they created **Fairfax Trail Buddy**, a new Web-based mapping tool.

"We have had the GIS trail database for four years and have wanted to find a way to share it with the general public," said Cronauer. "This tool allows us to move into the 21st century by giving people access to electronic data and move away from paper maps."

After six months in development Fairfax Trail Buddy was published online in June 2013. The Park Authority, part of a multiagency, multidiscipline effort, led the way in establishing the application, gathering GIS data from other county, state, and federal agencies, as well as municipal governments and George Mason University. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation worked in parallel to create the Bike Fairfax Interactive Map and staff members from the county's GIS department implemented the application. This collaborative effort resulted in a comprehensive digital map that helps residents navigate county roadways and trails with ease.

The application displays on all types of devices, so users can access the interactive maps from their desktop, tablet or smartphone. When accessed from a mobile device with GPS, Fairfax Trail Buddy shows users exactly where they are on a trail or bike route, giving them the security of knowing where they are at all times. It's hard to be lost with this tool in hand.

Surveys remind us that trails are still the most popular amenity in our park system. Fairfax Trail Buddy makes it easier and safer for residents to explore stream valleys and lakefront parks, and encourages cycling as a commuting option.

Check out Fairfax Trail Buddy at **www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/trails**, or download the ArcGIS application on your smartphone. ArcGIS runs on both iOS and Android operating systems and is available on iTunes and in the Google Play Store.

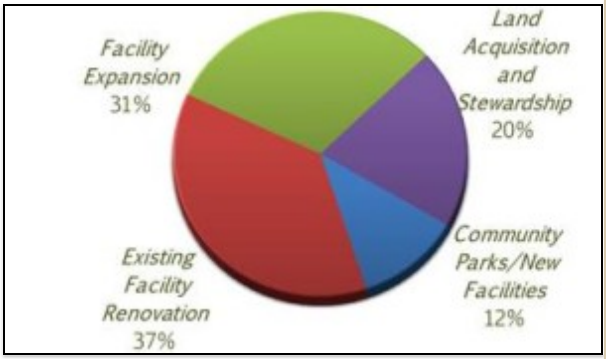
For their essential roles in creating Fairfax Trail Buddy, Buddy Rose and Liz Cronauer received Outstanding Performance Awards from the Board of Supervisors. They were recognized in a ceremony along with fellow honorees from FCDOT including Vanessa Aquayo, Adam Lind, and Tom Wampler. Also honored for project work was Sandy Woiak from GIS.

GIS Day Award for Best Use of GIS on the Web was also presented to the project team on November 21, 2013, recognizing the success and popularity of the new program.

2012 Park Bond

The voters in Fairfax County solidly approved the 2012 Park Bond which provided funding for capital projects for the Fairfax County Park Authority as well as the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

In May 2012 the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors authorized a $75 million Park Bond referendum as part of the Fiscal Year 2013 through 2017 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This referendum provided $12 million for the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and $63 million for the Fairfax County Park Authority.



The Park Authority worked hard to create a balanced approach to capital improvements. Using the Needs Assessment 10-year capital plan, facility condition assessments, park master plans, the Strategic Plan, and stakeholder input as tools for project selection, the allocation of park bonds fell into three categories: stewardship and land acquisition, facility renovations, and park development. The project list balances priority needs, reinvestment in aging facilities, advancement of phased projects, and improving the park experience.

Capital Projects: The New and Improved

Spring Hill Park received entrance improvements during the reporting period. This project consisted of the construction of new traffic signals on Lewinsville Road and required right-of-way improvements that include right and left turn lanes, utility relocation, and the removal of a park entrance on Artnauman Court. Project costs were $203,000.

The renovation of 122 sand bunkers at **Laurel Hill Golf Club** was completed at a cost of $480,000. The bunkers were renovated using the "Better Bill Bunker" system that replaced existing fabric and sand with a two-inch polymer treated gravel drainage layer and five inches of premium bunker sand. The renovated bunkers provided high quality playing conditions for the APL Championship.

An upgrade of the **fairweather crossing south of Vale Road** was completed. The project consisted of the installation of large, flat, stepping stones to improve the crossing on the Cross County Trail at the tributary of Difficult Run. The stones were hand-selected at a local distributor and installed by the FCPA Mobile Crew. Project costs were under $6,000.

Fourteen **way-finding signs for the Pimmit Run Stream Valley Trail** between Olney Park and Bryan Branch Road were installed at a cost of $8,000. The signs were designed in-house using the county's GIS database and trails layer.

Upper pond dam reconstruction at Pinecrest Golf Course was completed at a cost of $1.3 million. The project consisted of demolishing the existing upper pond dam embankment, spillway structure, and outfall channel. Once these were removed, construction began on a new reinforced concrete spillway structure, stilling basin, and outfall channel.

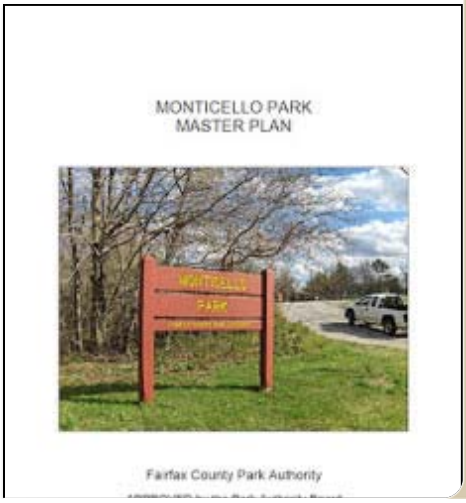
Magic Leaf Trail improvements in the Mount Vernon District removed the existing trail and stream crossing to provide a safer, more accessible route along this branch of the South Run Stream Valley Park. The new trail replaces a section of trail that was severely degraded with a more sustainable surface of 1,350 linear feet of six-foot-wide asphalt trail and a new large double culvert crossing. This concrete and stone structure along with the new trail surface will better withstand the extreme flood conditions which arise in this tributary. Project costs were $92,650.

Walney Pond was vastly improved with the completion of dredging, LID improvements, and observation deck construction. The project included removal of encroaching shoreline vegetation, removal of silt from the bottom of the pond, and installation of a silt capture basin and subsurface energy dissipation in the fore bay. The observation deck, damaged in recent flooding, was reconstructed. Project costs were $15,000.

Laurel Hill Greenway benefitted from upgrades during the fiscal year. This project provided 2,200 linear feet of ten-foot-wide asphalt and four-foot stone dust dual surface trail on the Laurel Hill Greenway between Giles Run Bridge and Furnace Road. Additionally 800 linear feet of eight-foot-wide asphalt trail between the bridge and the meadows area parking lot were completed. Project costs were $174,000.

Park Master Plans

Monticello Park is a six-acre site located along Guinea Road in the Braddock District. The park master planning process was initiated in the fall of 2010, with a public information meeting held in April 2011. A draft plan was presented at a public comment meeting in February 2012. The draft plan was revised and approved by the Park Authority Board on June 27, 2012.



Riverbend Park is a 411-acre resource-based park located along the Potomac River in Great Falls. The master plan revision provides a balance between protecting park resources while expanding interpretive programming, enhancing the park's financial sustainability, and producing new amenities that support a wide

range of park users. Plan features include additional parking, outdoor classrooms/picnic shelters, improved circulation, new interpretive features, and support facilities. These changes will assist Riverbend Park in continuing to evolve to meet the needs of the community while ensuring protection of the park's important resources.

Bren Mar Park is a 35–acre local park located along Edsall Road in Alexandria. This master plan revision included several parcels added to the park since the original 1975 master plan, as well as accurately reflecting the existing uses and conditions that differ from the original plan. The revised master plan also provides expanded passive recreation opportunities and community uses through an enhanced trail network, additional on-site parking, additional picnic facilities, as well as a lighted off-leash dog area. The majority of the site remains in a natural state.

Nottoway Park is 91-acre district park located on Courthouse Road in Vienna. The master plan revision was limited in scope and responded to community concerns regarding the needed tree removal that would take place if rectangular field #7 was added and the outfield at diamond field #3 expanded. These athletic field features were removed from the master plan in favor of an expanded existing rectangular field. The plan was also revised to reflect existing park features.

The approval of **Westgrove Master plan** formalizes an interim dog park use as a central feature while adding natural resource protection to the remainder of the park enhanced by trails, interpretation and an outdoor classroom. This 21-acre local park reclaims a former sewage treatment plant on Fort Hunt Road in the Mount Vernon area in its new use to support two-legged and four-legged visitors while also supporting a partnership with the neighboring Belle View Elementary School to complete its outdoor classroom experience.

The master plan revision for **McLean Central Park** in the heart of McLean focused on the addition of two acres of land as well as strengthening the relationships between the park, the Dolley Madison Library and the McLean Community Center. The expanded local park consists of nearly 28 acres. The approved master plan envisions a multi-purpose amphitheatre to be added in the future that will provide opportunities for park and community programming and will serve to build community in this central park.

Securing New Land Provides Expanded Recreational Opportunities

The Park Authority continues to acquire parkland in order to protect and buffer natural areas and historic sites and to provide room to develop new recreational facilities. As the population grows and Fairfax County continues to transition to a more urban landscape, vacant land in the county has diminished rapidly. As vacant land becomes scarcer, there is increasing pressure to redevelop existing neighborhoods and commercial areas. Redevelopment provides opportunities to make communities more livable by providing new parks and new pedestrian and bicycle connections.

The Park Authority, through its **Great Parks, Great Communities** planning initiatives, developed applicable countywide objectives related to land acquisition which include:

- Use of adopted service level standards and land acquisition criteria to guide parkland acquisition for recreation usage.
- Continued work toward equitably balancing the distribution of parkland in relation to users throughout the county.
- Creation of urban parks in higher density/mixed use areas of the county (i.e. Tysons Corner, Transit Station Areas, and Commercial Revitalization Districts).
- Protect and preserve lands with significant cultural resources, as well as significant natural resources in Fairfax County through the land acquisition process.
- Consider land management and budgetary impacts of all potential land acquisitions.

The acquisition of parkland is an ongoing effort accomplished through a variety of means including purchase of land, donations, and proffers. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has also been instrumental in the growth of Park Authority property holdings through the transfer of property deemed surplus. Current acreage of parkland and open space totals 23,256 acres, making the Park Authority one of the largest landholders in Northern Virginia.

Recent acquisitions include several parcels as outlined below:

Addition to McLean Central Park (Dranesville): In March 2013, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) transferred two parcels to the Park Authority totaling 0.36 acres. The properties are located at the intersection of Dolley Madison Boulevard and Ingleside Avenue and add to the overall acreage of McLean Central Park.

Addition to Huntington Park (Mount Vernon): Also in March 2013, a 6.36-acre property was dedicated to the Park Authority by MHI Huntington LLC to satisfy the recreation requirements of the Huntington Mews subdivision. The mostly forested property is improved with a hiking trail and is adjacent to Huntington Park.

Addition to Raglan Road Park (Hunter Mill): In April 2013, Georgelas-Tysons Metro West LLC funded the purchase of a 1.18-acre parcel adjacent to Raglan Road Park. The property was transferred directly to the Park Authority from the owner; however, the costs associated with the purchase were funded by Georgelas-Tysons Metro West LLC to satisfy the developer's recreation obligations proffered as part of its Tysons Metro West rezoning.

Stringfellow Park (Springfield): In May 2013, the BOS transferred a 17.67-acre parcel to the Park Authority that is improved with three rectangular athletic fields. Prior to its ownership the Park Authority had been maintaining the park and fields under an agreement with the BOS.

Addition to Willow Pond Park (Springfield): Also in May 2013,the BOS transferred a forested, unimproved parcel containing 9.64 acres to the Park Authority. This parcel will add acreage to Willow Pond Park.

Addition to Old Colchester Park and Preserve (Mount Vernon): In June 2013, the Park Authority purchased a 1.16-acre parcel for $270,000. The property was one of a few privately held properties located within the boundaries of Old Colchester Park and Preserve and has frontage on the Occoquan River.

Addition to Historic Centreville Park (Sully): In August 2013, the Park Authority purchased a 0.47-acre parcel located on Mount Gilead Road and adjacent to Historic Centreville Park. The property, purchased for $305,000, will be added to the existing park holdings and is currently unimproved.

Two New Skate Parks Bring Fairfax County up to Speed

Fairfax County became a regional skateboarding destination in 2012 with the addition of a new skate park at **Lake Fairfax Park** in Reston and the expansion of **Wakefield Skate Park** in Annandale. The Park Authority turned to Spohn Ranch, a prominent skate park design firm whose designs have been featured at international skateboarding events such as The X-Games and the Dew Tour, to design and build the new concrete facilities. With input gathered from local skaters, Spohn Ranch created two memorable skate parks for skaters to hone their skills.

The Park Authority opened its first skate park in 2004 at Wakefield Park for about $960,000. Since that time the popularity of skateboarding has exploded across the country. To meet the growing demand, the Park Authority Board earmarked funds in the 2008 Park Bond for more skate park development.

After a collaborative planning effort that included workshops and online interactions, Wakefield was expanded with the addition of a 6,220-square-foot concrete street plaza. The obstacles replicate elements that skaters seek in public spaces, such as ledges, rails, embankments, and stairs. The total cost of the expansion was $388,000.

A few months later a new 15,235-square-foot skate park opened at Lake Fairfax. The park includes the county's largest bowl structure and other innovative obstacles not found in surrounding jurisdictions. Also included in the $1 million project were two shelters near the entrance where skaters and spectators can stand comfortably out of the sun.

The opening event at Lake Fairfax in October reflected the community's excitement and commitment to the project and featured skating demos by local skate crews and pros. Vendors gave away boards, hats, t-shirts, and sweatshirts, and the owner of Spohn Ranch flew in from California to speak about the importance of skate parks and his experience building them. The Park Authority recognizes that skateboarders need safe places to ride and will continue to identify and add skateboarding areas to master plans where appropriate.

Oak Marr Synthetic Turf Fields Make Room for Cricket Too

It's a wide expanse of attractive green synthetic turf and it is popular with athletes who love "traditional" field sports, as well as cricket. These two converted fields are located adjacent to Oak Marr RECenter and the adjacent mini-golf course. Each field measures 190' by 370' and is striped for multiple sports. Together, the fields can be used as a cricket pitch, offering county residents a new facility for an ever growing sport. The construction project also included new sod, goal posts, a retaining wall with guardrail and stairs, a storm drain system, and an accessible route to the fields.

Converting the two fields to synthetic turf completes a project that began when a $400,000 field lighting system was installed. The cost to convert the fields was approximately $1.7 million. The development of these fields presented unique challenges due to the existence of subsurface rock that impacted grading for both fields. It was also necessary to relocate utilities in order to lengthen the fields.

Despite these hurdles, the fields draw players regularly and have proven to be well worth the efforts.

Great Falls Nike Field

Players, officials, and members of the community gathered at Great Falls Nike Park Field #4 to dedicate the new synthetic turf field and state-of-the-art lighting system in March 2013. The $1.4 million project was the result of a cooperative venture between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Park Authority, Great Falls Lacrosse, the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, the Athletic Council, and the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Stormwater Division and Land Development Services.

Cricket on the Rise in Fairfax County

Fairfax County is the definition of a cultural melting pot. People from around the world are drawn to the area's promise of safe communities, good schools, and the best parks in the country. The Park Authority's challenge is to provide recreational facilities that meet the needs of this changing population. New residents are searching for places to play games popular in their home countries. For example, the number of people participating in cricket, a bat and ball sport older than baseball, is growing each year. However, there currently aren't enough cricket pitches to meet the needs of the cricketers that play on them. But that is changing, one field at a time.

Cricket teams currently book times on fields at a handful of public schools and at Newington Heights Park, Lake Fairfax Park, and Oak Marr Park – the only synthetic turf cricket pitch in the Park Authority's inventory. According to Planning and Development Division Director Dave Bowden, a second pitch will

This marked the first synthetic turf field in the Great Falls community. Several key actions and a cooperative spirit led to the completion of this collaborative project. DPWES became interested in the project and offered to evaluate design options which would assist the community not only in provision of the field upgrade but also in enhancing stormwater management controls and measures. The hope was to use this project to help resolve past flooding issues in the adjacent neighborhood. DPWES funded all design and construction costs related to the new stormwater controls which were installed as part of the project. In the end, DPWES funded over $365,000 toward stormwater retention.

Helping resolve community flooding issues was a bonus for all involved. Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust remarked at the time, "The community and especially the youth who play on the field, will greatly benefit from the cooperation, hard work and creative efforts of the many groups and individuals who helped make this happen."

be built at Timber Ridge as part of a development proffer. "The Park Authority will continue to seek to add cricket pitches as part of synthetic turf field development when it makes sense to turf one large rectangle or two adjacent fields," he said.

Cricket pitches are larger than standard multiuse rectangular fields, so finding a suitable field on which to play is difficult. Also, cricket games take a long time to play – up to five days for one version of the game – so fields can't accommodate as many teams per day as fields scheduled for soccer, lacrosse, and football. Fields across the county are already scheduled from dawn well into the night which makes it that much more difficult to squeeze in time for cricket matches. Cricketers also prefer playing on synthetic turf for the same reasons as players from other sports: synthetic turf requires less maintenance and offers a more consistent playing surface than natural grass fields.

The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) scheduled 750

cricket participants in 2013. That's 200 more cricketers than played five years ago. However, due to the lack of fields, NCS had to turn away over 300 players last year. As these leagues continue to grow, more field time will be needed for their games.

Most Americans are unfamiliar with cricket's rules; however, it is an extremely popular sport in England, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the West Indies. In Fairfax County, cricket is mainly played by adults with ties to these countries. But awareness is rising among children as adult players become coaches and companies sponsor free clinics for kids that draw young cricketers from Maryland and surrounding jurisdictions.

Throughout the D.C. metro area, cricket's popularity is growing, and the Park Authority will continue to build cricket pitches where it can. Cricketers' voices are being heard and they have a seat at the right table. After all, one of the newest members of the Park Authority Board, Faisal Khan, also

serves as the president of the D.C. Metro Area Cricket League.

Managing Our Cultural and Natural Resources: If Not Us, Who?

The **Resource Management Division** (RMD) interprets and preserves Fairfax County's natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment, health, and inspiration of current and future generations. RMD staff members carry a unique perspective on the natural world, a great appreciation for our natural and cultural resources, and a special passion for parks.

Virtual Colchester Platform Becoming a Reality

Archaeological investigations at Colchester continue to yield valuable information about the cultural heritage of Fairfax County. Since July, the Park Authority has acquired additional property, adding to the area of the Old Colchester Park and Preserve located in the Mount Vernon District. The Colchester Archaeological Research Team (CART) immediately initiated archaeological investigations to comply with park policy and aid with park management and master planning. Excavations at Colchester have exposed over 9,000 years of human activity from early American hunter-gatherer societies to the remains of a Virginia tobacco port town.

CART investigates our earliest Native residents and our colonial past using best practices devised by the expert crew for this project. The methods devised ensure that no data is lost from scientific excavations in the field, through laboratory analysis, and into a final GIS project. The project, Virtual Colchester, is being created by the CART GIS specialist and consists of a 3D projection of the park during the colonial era. It is being expanded to include the entire human occupation of the park and is entirely driven by data collected by FCPA archaeologists. The award-winning project will provide a platform to interpret the park for the interested public in an interactive format that can be updated as ongoing investigations reveal more of our past.

SpringFest Celebrates Green Living, Brings Out Large Crowds

In 2013 the county's Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrations were combined into one family-friendly event, SpringFest Fairfax. The inaugural celebration of the environment was held on a warm, sunny day in late April at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton and

featured a broad range of activities and entertainment. Attended by over 3,500 people, SpringFest provided environmental workshops and exhibitions, kicked off the farmer's market season, and raised awareness of the arts center.

The Park Authority helped plan and market the event and had a visible presence with a tent where kids could build a bug box, compete in watershed races, watch puppets, make a native seed packet, see live reptiles, and spin a prize wheel. Park employees also booked the on-stage entertainment and helped lead pony rides. During a brief welcoming ceremony Chairman Sharon Bulova and other members of the Fairfax Board of Supervisors recognized the Park Authority's historic site, Colvin Run Mill, for being selected to participate in a regional contest to win $100,000 in restoration grants.

Other free activities offered by county agencies and community groups included tree plantings, crafts, games, kite flying exhibitions, Ultimate Frisbee demonstrations, a petting zoo, climbing wall, art demonstrations, Master Gardener and Master Naturalist exhibitions, and a native plant sale. A shuttle transported visitors to and from Occoquan Regional Park where visitors could rent kayaks and bicycles. Performances by Reptiles Alive, Billy B, and the Recycling Pirates had children and adults laughing and dancing.

Springfest was made possible by the Clean Fairfax Council, the Workhouse Arts Center, the Fairfax County Park Authority, the Fairfax County Park Foundation, the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, the Water Authority, Fairfax Connector, Fort Belvoir, and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

Rabbit Branch Park

It takes collaboration and cooperation to drive significant change. Residents of the Braddock District now enjoy newly reclaimed green space and forested areas in the community as a result of collaboration between residents, local and state officials, the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), and the Park Authority.

First there was an abandoned swim club that simply needed to be demolished. It was an eyesore and a public nuisance. The Kings West Swim Club Demolition Project removed all impervious surface areas and returned the site to a natural vegetative state. The parking lot, most walkways, pool bath, pump houses, surrounding concrete decks, as well as the tennis courts and basketball courts were demolished. It cost approximately $410,000 to complete.

Once demolition was completed, areas were regraded to ensure proper drainage. A bio-retention media – specially engineered filter soil – was backfilled into the former pool locations to help improve stormwater runoff quality and the site was landscaped with native plants. The plantings included trees, shrubs and seed mixes to help re-establish naturalized environments and habitats along Rabbit Branch.

In the end, Rabbit Branch has become a healthy riparian buffer and added nearly nine acres of green space to Park Authority holdings.

Huntley Meadows Park Wetland Restoration Reaches Substantial Completion

The central wetland at **Huntley Meadows Park** has been slowly but steadily filling in with silt and debris, which reduces water depth and wildlife habitat. To restore the wetland to its 1980s condition and provide long-term habitat for a community of locally rare plants and animals, the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Huntley Meadows Park community decided to engage in wetland restoration.

The five primary aspects of the project include an earthen berm to hold back water, a water control structure to manage water levels, expanding the wetland into the surrounding forest, five deeper habitat pools to provide year-round wildlife habitat, and numerous brush shelters and logs to provide additional wildlife habitat. Construction began in April 2013.

Project costs were approximately $3 million dollars funded through grants and park bonds. The project is managed by Fairfax County Park Authority staff. The project reached substantial completion in December 2013, and the new wetland area is now submerged. Renovation of the asphalt pedestrian trail connecting the South Kings Highway parking lot to Observation Platform will be completed this spring. **Read More >>**

Frying Pan Farm Park Meeting House Marker Dedication

Thousands of cars pass by the old white building each day without fanfare. Not too many people realize that the **Frying Pan Meeting House**, once a Baptist Church, is a significant historic structure and played an important role in the Herndon community for more than 200 years. A new interpretive sign dedicated in the spring of 2013 tells its story.

"Since the days of George Washington, the simple white structure here has been serving the needs of the community," said Bill Bouie, chairman of the Park Authority Board. The building came into Park Authority possession in 1984 when the last trustee of Frying Pan Baptist Church deeded the building adjacent to an old cemetery and its original two-acre plot to the agency. In the late 1700s the house was used for church services, burials, and prayer meetings. By 1840, the congregation consisted of 33 white members and 29 black members, many of whom are buried on the property.

Civil War battles took place nearby and both sides used the Meeting House as a hospital at various times. For the 100 or so visitors who attended the dedication ceremony, it was an opportunity to discover a bit of history nearby.

Historic Mill Wins Restoration Funding in New Media Contest

Colvin Run Mill Historic Site was awarded a $75,000 restoration grant

through the Partners in Preservation (PiP) program sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and American Express. The grant is the largest the mill has ever received. The money will be used to restore the grain elevator at the mill, complementing bond money earmarked for restoration of the second and third levels of the mill. Once all work is done, Colvin Run Mill will be one of only a few fully restored and operational mills in the world.

PiP has awarded preservation grants to historic places in eight major U.S. cities, and in 2013 it was the Washington, D.C. metro area's turn. Colvin Run Mill competed against 24 other finalists in a 15-day contest to win a slice of the $1 million prize pie. A committee made up of Park Authority and Park Foundation staff members developed and executed a campaign from March 1 to May 10 that concluded with an exciting, down-to-the-wire finish in a battle with the mill's closest competitor, Maryland's Greenbelt Theatre. In the end, Colvin Run Mill finished in fourth place, just ahead of the theater and behind historic heavy hitters like the National Cathedral (first), Mount Vernon (second), and the Sixth and I Street Synagogue (third). Other contestants included nationally known sites such as the Iwo Jima Memorial, Arlington House, and Congressional Cemetery.

The campaign committee developed a multifaceted communications strategy to spread the word and encourage the community to share posts on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and FourSquare, and, ultimately, to cast daily votes for the mill online. Campaign materials reminiscent of a c. 1811 election campaign – the year the mill was built – were created. Ten thousand printed information cards were distributed across Fairfax County, and thousands more were distributed electronically. Campaign buttons and stickers were worn by site staff to reinforce the preservation message. Banners and campaign signs were placed at every Park Authority site and public displays were installed at government buildings and libraries. The campaign was featured in a story in Parktakes Magazine, and the committee reached out to the masses at events like the Healthy Strides Expo at South Run RECenter, Springfest in Lorton, and at the mill's open house.

Costumed committee members helped promote the campaign at PiP's media day in D.C. Fairfax County Government's Channel 16 created a promotional video that was placed on websites and shared on social

media. Social media was used throughout the campaign to share historic facts and photos and to invite the public to attend the mill's open house.

The campaign raised a great deal of public awareness of both the mill and of the Park Authority through local and national media. The efficient, collaborative, and positive manner in which this committee worked earned Team of the Year honors in the Park Authority's annual Trailblazer Awards program in which employees nominate their peers for recognition.

Riverbend Park Earns $10,000 in Social Media Promotion

The power of social media, the desire of a community to give back to the places we love, and the goodwill of a corporate sponsor all came together in 2012 during BMW of North America's Restore the Outdoors program. **Riverbend Park** in Great Falls was the final stop on a nationwide driving tour in which BMW's new X1 crossover vehicle was introduced. As part of the campaign, BMW posted photos on Facebook of the car parked at a dozen special outdoor areas along the way and offered to contribute $1 for each "like" the photos generated. Riverbend Park received a $10,000 donation for its participation in the social media campaign.

The Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB) and the Park Authority mobilized to garner 10,000 "likes," the maximum allowed by BMW. FORB used the funds to expand Riverbend's 2013 summer camps, hire four summer interns, and continue to support stewardship education and maintenance projects at the park. Who doesn't "like" those results?

New Civil War Marker Unveiled at Freedom Hill Park

Members of the McLean Historical Society and Historic Vienna, Inc. were joined by Fairfax County dignitaries, local residents and representatives of the Park Authority at a ceremony at which a new Civil War Trails marker was unveiled at Freedom Hill Park. The November ceremony allowed for the retelling of the story about the park's redoubt, a small earthen battery constructed during the Civil War as part of the defensive ring of forts around Washington D.C.

Restored by the Park Authority in the 1970s, the Freedom Hill redoubt was built in 1865. Soldiers from the Fifth Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery were stationed there.

Take Back the Forest

Park Authority staff completed a second year of Take Back the Forest invasive plant management efforts in April and May 2013. During those two months over 700 volunteers logged 1,700 hours of service. Take Back the Forest was funded for a second year with a $15,000 grant from REI in Fiscal Year 2013, and has since been awarded a third grant from REI of $10,000 for Fiscal Year 2014. Over the past three years retailer and corporate good neighbor REI, has provided a total of $35,000 in support.

The **Take Back the Forest** program encompassed other special events such as Global Youth Service Day, Virginia's Annual Invasive Plant Removal Day, Earth Day and Arbor Day.

Ox Hill Sesquicentennial

The Park Authority and the county's Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee hosted the county's Signature Event at **Ox Hill Battlefield Park** on September 1, 2012, the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Ox Hill. The event drew a large number of spectators and re-enactors. Officials spoke, bands played, and cannon fire resounded into the late afternoon.

Mason's Hill Draws Crowd

History lovers gathered at Mason District Park to dedicate a Civil War Trail Marker at Mason's Hill, which according to historians was used as an outpost for the First Virginia Calvary in 1861. It was later used as an observation post. The gathering brought out history buffs and Civil War enthusiasts who spoke of past deeds at the site.

Oakton Community Park Markers Tell Story of Schoolhouse

Recently placed signs help tell the story of the Oakton Schoolhouse, a unique and historic building that served the Oakton community children for many years. The schoolhouse was first opened in circa 1873 and served in that capacity until about 1913. It was a classic one-room schoolhouse which provided primary education for local children.

In the spring of 1851, Miss Mary Holland Bell, age 18, became the first teacher at the first schoolhouse called the Flint Hill School. She taught there for three years. In her diary she wrote, "There was a literary fund appropriated by the state for the use of indigent children so I was obliged to keep a correct record of the days that they attended at the class of each term and make out my account. I took it to the Town Treasurer to state that it was correct so as to get my pay, 3 cents a day (per child) was the price. Others had to look to their parents for remuneration." This was known as a subscription school.

Later, after the community outgrew the building, it was converted to a general store. Eventually it served as the "Appalachian Outfitters," which stood at the busy corner of Chain Bridge and Hunter Mill for many years. In 2007, when the Chain Bridge and Hunter Mill corner was slated for redevelopment, the schoolhouse was moved a couple blocks away to its current site on Hunter Mill Road.

It has been fully restored to its earlier condition and serves as an interpretive tool providing an example of a late nineteenth century one-room schoolhouse. Visitors may look inside the building which is not regularly open to the public.

The Hunter Mill Defense League and the Park Authority have jointly sponsored these two interpretive panels concerning the history of the schoolhouse and its first teacher.

Playground Adds to Site

To the side and rear of the schoolhouse sits a playground that was dedicated during the fiscal year. The 1,300-square-foot playground features a play system appropriate for children ages 2 to 12. A new concrete trail from the existing parking lot at the historic Oakton Schoolhouse has been completed as well and serves as an accessible pathway to the playground. Project costs provided through a developer proffer were $109,000.

Naturalization Ceremony Brings Families to Sully

Twenty-six children from 16 countries became official U.S. citizens during a ceremony at **Sully Historic Site** on Friday, July 26, 2013. The children recited the oath of citizenship and received certificates during the annual U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) children's naturalization event. Over 100 visitors were present to celebrate with the children as they received their certificates.

Inspirational remarks and congratulations were delivered by Sully District Supervisor Michael Frey, Fairfax County Park Authority Board Chairman Bill Bouie, and Hal Strickland, the Sully District representative to the Park Authority Board. A highlight of the ceremony was when the six-year-old daughter of one of the staff from USCIS played "America the Beautiful" on her violin.

The 16 countries of origin included Bangladesh, Bolivia, Egypt, El Salvador, Honduras, Iran, Canada, Iraq, Latvia, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Sudan, Syria, Vietnam, and Yemen.

The Sully Foundation, Ltd. supported the event by providing gift bags to the children and refreshments to all attendees.

Going Undercover

Three small capital projects made a large difference for many park users. The Park Authority created three new outdoor classrooms that allow stewardship education to take place outdoors. The spaces add a new dimension to understanding the importance of nature and our place in the natural world

A new patio was built at the entrance of **Hidden Pond Nature Center** to welcome park visitors and serve as an outdoor classroom.

Huntley Meadows and Hidden Oaks Nature Center added shelters that are being used for programs, classes and activities. They are also being rented to the public for parties and gatherings.

At the Top of Their Envirothon Game

The Hidden Pond Envirothon Team won the Virginia state competition at Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia, on May 20, 2013. The competition involved 18 teams throughout Virginia. The team members are all

Hidden Pond volunteers and include Murjan Hammad, Liam Berrigan, Owen Mulvey-McFerron, Matt Baker, Peter MacDonald, and alternates Sydney Spicer and Monica Banghart.

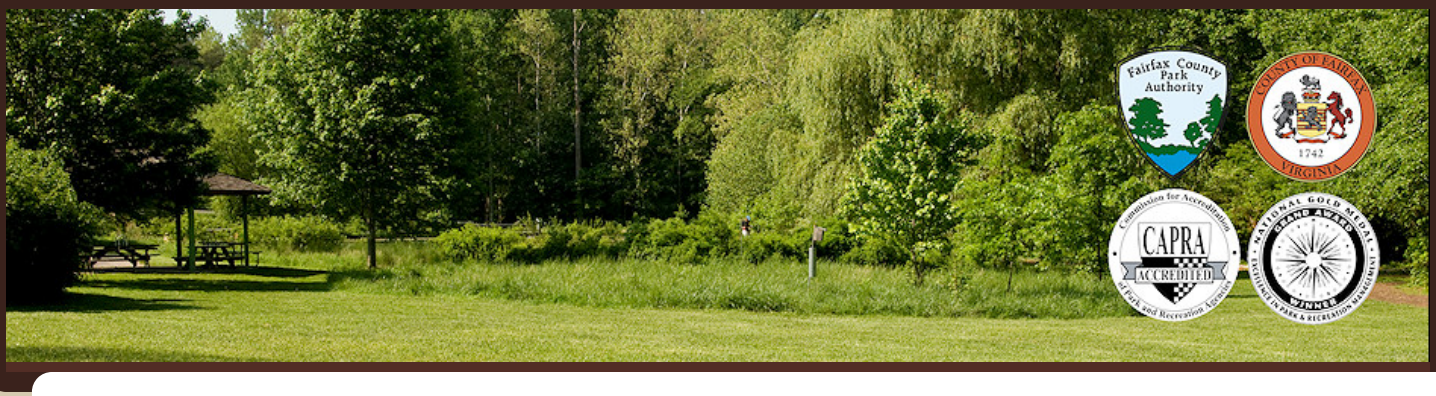
Prison to Park Festival Unlocks Laurel Hill's Secrets

A new event was held in the Giles Run Meadow section of Laurel Hill Park in September 2012. The Great Escape Prison to Park Festival celebrated Laurel Hill's dramatic transformation from the site of the D.C. Reformatory at Lorton (Lorton Prison) to a scenic park full of trails and recreational opportunities. More than 800 members of the community came out to see farm animals on display from Frying Pan Farm Park, ride ponies, and play children's games. Other activities included guided nature walks, disc golf and mountain biking demonstrations by local clubs, "SNAG" golf stations, live music in the Showmobile, and a giant sack slide down a hill.

But the event's biggest draw was guided wagon rides around the remaining prison buildings. Over 350 people toured the prison grounds, including the maximum security area, and heard gripping stories about the inmates who were once incarcerated there. The former prison is fenced and much of it is slated for redevelopment, so this was a unique opportunity for visitors to see the old buildings up close. The successful event introduced people to Laurel Hill Park and enriched their understanding of the site's colorful history.

Jump Aboard With Engine #62

The **Resource Management Division** continues to spread stewardship education throughout the parks. Now it is done by train on the Resources Railroad. This trackless train is used to give riders an interpretive program while traveling around a site's paths, trails, meadows, and other natural or cultural enriched areas. The train is hauled from park to park and has been used for camp programs, events, and at other scheduled times.



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RECenters

Friends groups provide hands-on assistance and much needed funding and support to Park Authority sites and activities. These organizations are always on the lookout for individuals interested in lending a helping hand.**Friends of Clemyjontri Park**http://friendsofclemy.com/Julie Clemente, President**Friends of Cultural Resources**

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Fairfax-County-Archaeology-and-Cultural-Resources/161653537197071

http://fofaweb.org/

Sallie Lyons, President

Friends of Colvin Run Mill

https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfColvinRunMill

Bob Lundegard, President

Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park

http://fryingpanpark.org/?page_id=22

John M. Pitzer, Chairman

Friends of Green Spring Gardens (Frogs)

http://www.friendsofgreenspring.org/home/membership

Clint Fields, President

Friends of Hidden Oaks Nature Center

http://www.friendsofhiddenoaksnaturecenter.com/
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Hidden-Oaks-Nature-Center/171930542843978

Scott Birdwell, President

Friends of Hidden Pond Nature Center

http://friendsofhiddenpond.wordpress.com/

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hidden-Pond-Nature-Center/137583847321

Susan Susa, President

Friends of Historic Huntley

http://www.historichuntley.org/Welcome_to_Huntley.html

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Historic-Huntley/615248895157121?directed_target_id=0

Barbara Ballentine, President

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

http://www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/

https://www.facebook.com/friendsofhuntleymeadowspark

Cathy Ledec, President

Friends of Mclean Central Park

Jack Wilbern, Vance Zavela

Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP)

http://www.accotink.org/FLAP/

Mark Greidingrer, Chair

Friends of Nottoway Park

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Nottoway/191218967563885

Vivian Morgan Mendez, President

Friends of Riverbend Park

http://forb.wildapricot.org/

Tim Hackman, President

The Sully Foundation Ltd

Sully Historic Site

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site/

Roberta Jeffries

The Sully Stitchers Group

Dottie O'Rouke, Marilyn Voigt

Friends of Turner Farm

http://www.greatfallshorsenetwork.com/turnerfarm/

Molly Hockman, Co-Chair; Pam McDorman, Co-Chair

turnerfarm@cox.net

Friends of White Horticultural Gardens

Dan Cornette

Park Policy Manual

Park Rules

Natural Resource Management Plan

Cultural Resource Management Plan