



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

M E M O R A N D U M



TO: Chairman and Members
Park Authority Board

VIA: Timothy K. White, Acting Director

FROM: Cindy Walsh, Acting Director
Resource Management Division

DATE: November 8, 2007

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Cindy Walsh".

Agenda

Resource Management Committee
Wednesday, November 14, 2007 – 3:45 p.m.
Board Room – Herrity Building
Chairman: Frank Vajda

1. Introduction of David Ochs
2. Advancing Resource Stewardship through Heritage Interpretation (with presentation) – Information*
3. The Virginia Master Naturalist Program Partnership (with presentation) – Information*

*Enclosures



Committee Agenda Item
November 14, 2007

PRESENTATION

Introduction of Dave Ochs

At a previous meeting Park Authority Board member Harry Glasgow requested that Dave Ochs, editor of *ResOURces* newsletter, be formally introduced.

Mr. Ochs was hired as the editor for the Resource Management Division's *ResOURces* newsletter in September 2006 after more than three decades as a radio sports reporter. He spent 23 years in the national broadcast office of The Associated Press. Since his arrival here as the *ResOURces* editor, distribution of the newsletter has increased 26%. The publication has won two top-level platinum Hermes Creative Awards from the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, one gold and two platinum MarCom Awards for writing, photography and government publications from the same organization, and an award of merit from the International Association of Business Communicators.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS:

None

STAFF:

Timothy K. White, Acting Director

Cindy Messinger, Acting Deputy Director/COO

Cindy Walsh, Acting Director, Resource Management Division

Michael Rierson, Manager, Resource Stewardship Branch

Dave Ochs, Stewardship Publications Editor, Resource Management Division

Board Agenda Item
December 12, 2007

INFORMATION

Advancing Resource Stewardship through Heritage Interpretation (with presentation)

During leisure experiences most people resist the same formal communication used in a classroom. Instead, park staffers throughout the world create engaging, relevant, and purposeful interpretive experiences to communicate resource stewardship messages. At the Park Authority these interpretive programs, exhibits and publications advance stewardship by increasing the public's awareness, appreciation, understanding, and caring both about and for Fairfax County's natural and cultural resources.

This work is in alignment with the Park Authority 2006-2010 Strategic Plan objective to advance stewardship.

The high-quality interpretation provided for Fairfax County citizens is the result of capable and talented individuals who have honed their skills through practice, observation, evaluation, training, and, more recently, by achieving professional certification.

Staff will present an overview of the interpretive profession, highlight the professional certification program administered by the National Association for Interpretation, introduce some of the 39 Fairfax County Park Authority staff who have earned their professional certification credentials, and provide a short demonstration of an interpretive program.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS:

None

STAFF:

Timothy K. White, Acting Director
Cindy Messinger, Acting Deputy Director/COO
Cindy Walsh, Acting Director, Resource Management Division
Charles Bittenbring, Director, Park Services Division
Todd Johnson, Director, Park Operations Division
Mona Enquist-Johnston, Manager, Volunteer, Interpretation and Program Services Section

Board Agenda Item
December 12, 2007

INFORMATION

The Virginia Master Naturalist Program Partnership (with presentation)

The Fairfax Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program was chartered in 2007 with the Fairfax County Park Authority as a partner. The charter is part of a “statewide program to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of the natural resources and natural areas within their community for the Commonwealth of Virginia.” This program is also aligned with the Park Authority Strategic Plan objective to create a broad support base by engaging partners.

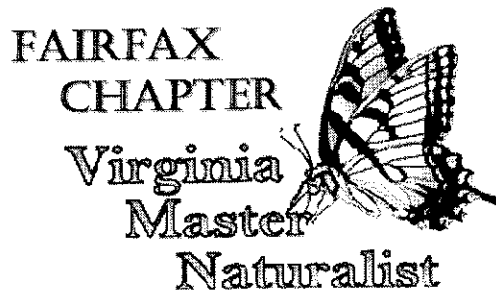
Staff will provide a brief overview of the Fairfax County Park Authority’s partnership with the local chapter, highlight the requirements and benefits of this relationship, and provide an update on our interactions with the Fairfax Chapter’s inaugural class of 25 students.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS:

Attachment 1: Engaging a New Partner for Resource Stewardship, Resource Management Committee Briefing

STAFF:

Timothy K. White, Acting Director
Cindy Messinger, Acting Deputy Director/COO
Cindy Walsh, Acting Director, Resource Management Division
Todd Johnson, Park Operations Division
Charles Bittenbring, Director, Park Services Division
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Engaging a New Partner for Resource Stewardship

Resource Management Committee Briefing

Introduction of this statewide program

Purpose

- It is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.
- It is a chapter-based program that started in 2006 with ten chapters. The goal is to have chapters throughout the state. A similar program exists in 12 other states (e.g. Texas, Florida, West Virginia, etc.)

State and local requirements

- Chapter charters must be approved and each chapter must have an advisor from a state agency.
- The process for becoming a certified Virginia Master Naturalist typically takes 6 to 12 months. One starts by completing a 40-hour training course offered by a local chapter of the program. An additional 8 hours of advanced training are also required. An important part of the certification process is the required 40 hours of volunteer service.

Park Authority's partnership with the Virginia Master Naturalist Program

The local Fairfax Chapter went through the chartering stage and was approved. In September 2007 they began the training cycle, with 25 participants.

Expectations of Fairfax Chapter partners

1. Coordinate support for training the chapter's incoming Virginia Master Naturalists by providing instructors and/or venues for training such as meeting space or outdoor areas.
2. Coordinate a steady stream of agency-wide service projects for chapter members. Projects may include any of the following:
 - Educational Programming: such as interpretive programs in parks, presentations at fairs, and educational presentations for identified audiences
 - Citizen Science Activities: including collecting data, monitoring, biological inventories and other research-oriented activities
 - Stewardship Activities: for example - improve habitat and other natural resources, or improve public access to these areas including invasive plant removal, habitat restoration, and trail building

Engaging a New Partner for Resource Stewardship

Continued

Benefits to the Park Authority for being a partner

- Advance stewardship
- Increased public involvement in natural resource management
- Trained volunteers to conduct stewardship education programs, do field research and to carry out natural resource-related projects
- Gain park advocates
- Statewide visibility

Park Authority's investment as a partner

Training

- Serve as instructors (specialists)
For fall 2007 Fellows, Schwab, Olien and Enquist-Johnston are members of the faculty and parks are offering advanced training
- Venues for training sessions (use of meeting space in facilities plus use of parks, 25% of training must be in the field)
For fall 2007 field trips have been scheduled to Ellanor C. Lawrence and Huntley Meadows parks plus a training session offered at Hidden Oaks Nature Center

Service Projects

- Park projects
For fall 2007, 14 agency-wide projects were offered.

Partnering logistics

- Mona Enquist-Johnston, to serve as the agency contact for the Fairfax Chapter of the Virginia Naturalist Program. She serves as the contact for chapter requests regarding trainers, training locations and the placement of individual and group projects. She interacts with the designated contacts in the Park Services, Park Operations and the Resource Management divisions to coordinate the use of staff and facilities for training and to coordinate projects. The appointed contacts Gregg Rosenthal (Park Operations Division), Tammy Schwab (Park Services Division) and the Volunteer Services Coordinator I (Resource Management Division).
- A written agreement was developed and signed by Tim White, FCPA Acting Director and Marilyn Schroeder, VMN Coordinating Committee. This document was prepared to clarify roles and responsibilities.

More details:

www.virginiamasternaturalist.org