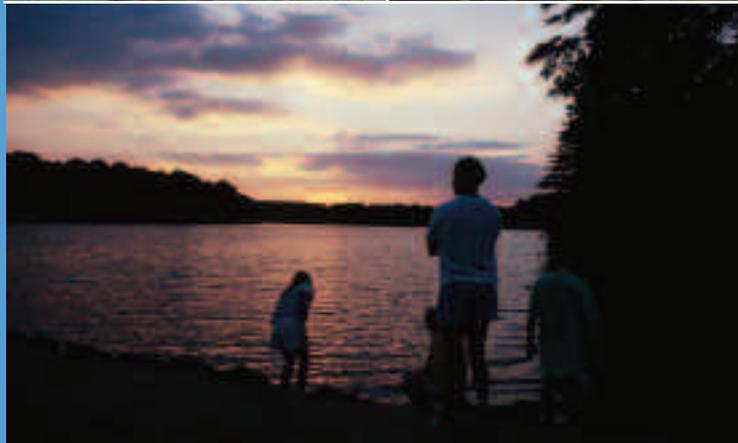


Stewardship Basics



A Primer for Fairfax County Park Authority Staff



Stewardship

Sstreams

Trees

Environment

Wetlands

Artifacts

Roots

Deer

Soil

Heritage

Involvement

People

Educate the public

Recycle

Use hybrid equipment

Bike to work



You hold the future of park resources in your hands!



Plant trees

Carpool

Promote
Educate
Observe
Practice
Learn
Everyday!

Stewardship Basics

A Primer for Fairfax County Park Authority Staff

From John Dargle,
Fairfax County Park Authority Director

As a new resident, I have enjoyed exploring parks with my family. Fairfax County parks are blessed with rich and diverse natural and cultural resources. Our lives are enriched by the vibrancy of wildlife, wildflowers, forests and streams and the historic buildings, landscapes and structures that reflect our past.

As Fairfax County Park Authority employees, we are the keepers, or stewards, of these resources. To ensure these treasures are here for future generations to enjoy, each of us, whether we work in a park or in an office, must practice and promote stewardship daily.

Stewardship is a critical part of the agency's mission. But it is action, not words, that will make resource stewardship a reality. By working together, proper care of our natural and cultural resources is achievable. It is a mission that is possible.



Park Authority Mission

"To set aside public spaces for and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations.

To create and sustain quality facilities and services which offer citizens opportunities for recreation, improvement of their physical and mental well being and enhancement of their quality of life."



Fairfax County Park Authority

Stewardship Basics



Nurturing stewardship is everyone's responsibility.

Care, Educate, Inspire

Stewardship is about working together to care for the environmental and cultural resources of Fairfax County. People become stewards for different reasons. They may want to help ensure clean water and air. They may be motivated by wanting to share something with their children. They may be inspired by spiritual beliefs. Whatever prompts our commitment, it is easy to take an active role in stewardship. It can be a small and simple act, or it can be much bigger. Either way, it all adds up to a Fairfax County that looks to its past with pride and to its future with confidence.

Why should I care about stewardship?

The Fairfax County Park Authority is the caretaker of Fairfax County's treasured cultural and natural resources. These resources are nonrenewable. That means if we let them disappear, they won't come back. With the county growing like it is, stewardship of the precious resources that remain has become more important than ever.

What is stewardship at the Park Authority?

The Park Authority defines stewardship as "the careful and responsible management of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to us by the citizens of Fairfax County in order to ensure their integrity for present and future generations."

What is the Park Authority's stewardship role?

The Park Authority's stewardship role falls into four main categories:

- Protect, preserve and interpret resources on parklands.
- Educate staff and the public about the benefits and importance of stewardship.
- Provide expertise for staff, residents and other agencies in best practices for stewardship.
- Advocate stewardship at the local, regional, state and federal levels.

What is your stewardship role?

The Park Authority wants each of its employees to have a "Stewardship Ethic;" in other words, to think and champion the idea of stewardship, then put it into action.

PROMOTE: First, employees can promote stewardship through individual actions such as recycling or driving less.

LEARN: Second, employees must learn about stewardship and be aware of the agency's natural and cultural resources.

OBSERVE: Third, all Park Authority employees can be eyes on the watch for resource issues. This could be as simple as reporting a dump site on parkland or as exciting as discovering an important artifact.

EDUCATE: Perhaps most important, Park Authority employees can be a voice to present the message about the importance of stewardship to other agencies and the public.

PRACTICE: Finally, Park Authority employees can practice stewardship in their jobs.

Why is stewardship important at the Park Authority?

Created in 1950, the Park Authority was established to protect, preserve

and provide access to natural and cultural resources. As the county's largest landowner, with 23,500+ acres in more than 390 parks as of 2006, much of the responsibility for preserving Fairfax County's treasures rests with the Fairfax County Park Authority. We are endowed with a rich natural and cultural heritage. Preserving this heritage for present and future generations is critical to the quality of life for Fairfax County residents



WHAT RESOURCES ARE ENTRUSTED TO THE PARK AUTHORITY?

Cultural and natural resources can be found in all of our parks, including in lakefront parks, as part of golf courses and on other parkland. This represents more than 9% of Fairfax County's total land area of about 260,480 acres.

What cultural treasures are protected by the Park Authority?

Cultural resources provide links to our past. Fairfax County is the guardian of numerous cultural resources directly related to the founding and growth of the county, state and nation. They are the physical objects that remain from a people's way of life that provide a glimpse of how those people lived. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historical archaeological sites; historic buildings and structures; historic districts; cemeteries; cultural landscapes; historic records, artifact collections; horticultural resources; and historic practices, processes and methods (such as farming practices, milling, blacksmithing, tanning, natural ice production, daily life, cookery and music). Examples of important cultural resources include the archaeological site at Mount Air Historic Site; the earthworks at the Confederate Fortification Historic Site; and the historic house, outbuildings, cultural landscape and archaeological remains at Historic Huntley. These resources comprise our cultural heritage and are subject to our stewardship and protection.

What natural treasures are protected by the Park Authority?

Natural resources are objects or values which make up the natural world. They are tangible objects such as plants, animals, water, air, soils, geologic features, fossils and scenic vistas. Natural resources are those elements of the environment not created by humans. Examples of some of the outstanding natural resources found in our parklands include wetlands at Huntley Meadows, riverfront property at Riverbend Park, most of the county's streams in our stream valley parks and pockets of habitat for wildlife in urban parks. Over the last half-century, the Park Authority has acquired land specifically for the protection of streams, wetlands, forests and other resources. Undeveloped land in Fairfax County is becoming scarce, thus the protection of parkland will become even more critical in preserving natural resources. It is essential that we preserve our natural areas for the enjoyment of all county residents and for the protection of our watersheds.

What is in place to protect these treasures?

There are a number of rules, policies, plans and procedures in place to protect natural and cultural resources on parkland. The Agency Natural Resource Management Plan (approved by the Park Authority Board in



Mount Air Historic Site, Lorton, is the agency's first interpreted cultural resource site.

Stewardship Action: what you can do!

- Turn off lights when not needed.
- Save paper, make double-sided copies.
- Buy environmentally-friendly cleaning products.
- Recycle at your park.
- Fuel vehicles during the coolest time of day.
- Pick up trash on trails.
- Learn about the resources protected by the Park Authority and what threatens them.
- Learn where to get more information and when to follow up on questions.
- Practice stewardship on the job.



Waterfalls and vistas are treasures of Scotts Run Nature Preserve, Great Falls.



Plans, policies and procedures protect park resources.



The Park Authority's mission connects stewardship and recreation.



Learning about the agency's resources is an on-going process.

January 2004) lays out strategies to help guide park planning and management to protect natural resources. Review the plan at (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/nrmp.htm>). An Agency Cultural Resource Management Plan lays out strategies to protect cultural resources. In addition, the Heritage Resource Management Plan, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1988, sets research priorities for county cultural resources. The Park Authority has several policies related to resource protection which can be found in the Park Policy Manual. In addition, park regulations, enforceable by law protect resources. Review these policies and regulations at (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parkpolicy/parkpolicyframe.htm>). For example, park patrons must keep their pets on a leash to protect wildlife and must clean up pet waste to protect the quality of water in our streams.

What funding is available to protect these resources?

The 2004 Park Bond included \$3.83 million for facility improvements at nature centers and historic sites, as well as natural and cultural resource management and protection. There is a great need for dedicated ongoing funding for natural resource management and staff continues to pursue options for such funding through the budget process. For cultural resource management and protection, additional funding is available through proffers and grants.



WHAT ISSUES IMPACT THESE VALUABLE TREASURES?

The Park Authority's mission includes both stewardship of parklands and providing opportunities for passive recreation (such as hiking and bird watching) and active recreation (such as exercise, fitness and sports) opportunities. Establishing and following policies and procedures that balance these needs are critical to our success as good stewards.

Issue 1: Targeted Land Acquisition

With little undeveloped land remaining in the county, the Park Authority must target key properties for acquisition. This could include properties that connect existing parkland or properties that contain unique natural characteristics or cultural resources.

Issue 2: Lack of Public Awareness

Stewardship education for the public and fellow employees can make a big difference in increasing appreciation and understanding of our cultural and natural resources, and the work we do to protect them. You can make a difference. Every time you answer a question you can give someone a better understanding of stewardship. Other ways to educate and reach out include publications, exhibits and programs. All of these methods can potentially increase public support for parks and promote volunteerism and citizen involvement.

Issue 3: Human Erosion Affects Parkland

Human activities may degrade both natural and cultural resources. Examples include panning for gold at Scotts Run; using Civil War earthworks as mountain bike jumps; damage to preserved Civil War tent platforms caused by park visitors; and damage to habitats by increased

park visitation and unplanned expansion of trails. In addition, when neighbors encroach on parkland (dumping grass clippings, mowing on parkland, etc.) these actions have negative impacts on the park's natural and cultural resources. Dumped yard waste may attract unwanted wildlife and introduce invasive destructive plants into natural areas. Cutting or removing plants decreases the vegetative cover that helps filter air pollutants, modify temperatures and control runoff. Digging or removing artifacts destroys the integrity of historic sites. When park neighbors extend their yards, store materials and build structures on parkland, they take acres of public access land away from county citizens. All of these actions cost money. Each year, the Park Authority spends thousands of dollars on efforts to clean up and restore damaged park property. Stewardship education will help decrease this kind of damage by involving park users and neighbors as "eyes" for resource protection.



We want park users to tread lightly on parkland.

Issue 4: Stewardship and Park Planning

Natural and cultural resources are important factors in planning and developing parks. These resources must be included in all general management plans and conceptual development plans and must be considered in all capital improvement projects. Something as simple as trail placement can have significant impacts on natural and cultural resources, and thus proper planning is critical to ensure the most appropriate decisions are made.

This includes:

- Creating resource inventories which enable us to learn about the natural and cultural resources found on parkland.
- Developing policies and procedures for obtaining natural and cultural resource inventories.
- Establishing categories for natural and developed parkland and methods for determining such categories.

This will enable the Park Authority to make the most effective and informed decisions about resource management and parkland use.



CULTURAL RESOURCES REQUIRE ACTIVE MANAGEMENT

As development in the county increases, the documentation and protection of Cultural Resources becomes even more important. Cultural Resources are non-renewable resources. Once they are destroyed, they are gone forever. Therefore, we must manage them effectively.

You can help others understand these cultural resource issues!

Why do people take artifacts?

The removal of artifacts is a major concern on parkland, especially at unstaffed parks. Although artifact looting or relic hunting on park property is against the law, it still occurs. Evidence of this activity can be found at most of our Civil War era sites as well as on other park property. Relic hunters are active in Fairfax County and environs. Artifacts are bought and sold through online auctions, and it is a big business.



Staff observations provide critical data about the county's natural resources.



Excavations conducted by county paid and volunteer staff unearth a wealth of knowledge.



Archaeological artifacts found together tell the story of the past.



Historic furnishings breathe life into the past at historic sites.



The slave cabin at Sully Historic Site, Chantilly, united new research findings with old construction methods.

Why is artifact hunting on parkland against the law?

Artifacts found on county land belong to all Fairfax County citizens. The Park Authority is the caretaker of these artifacts. Individual artifacts are only a small part of the picture of the past. Think of each artifact as a piece of a puzzle. Each piece may be interesting in and of itself, but without all of the pieces we do not get the full story about what occurred at a site. Archaeologists look at all artifacts found together in a single deposit to interpret what happened and when it happened, just like a detective examining clues to solve a mystery. As a tangible link to the county's history, these artifacts together help us tell the story of the past to today's audiences.

How does the Park Authority care for artifacts and historic collections?

The Cultural Resource Management and Protection Section facility at the James Lee Center in Falls Church serves as the central repository for archaeological collections (artifacts and related documents) recovered in Fairfax County and for such collections that have relevance to the interpretation of the county's past. Collections include those materials recovered from excavations on parklands and elsewhere by county staff and by consultants. There are more than three million archaeological artifacts in the archaeological collections housed at the James Lee Center. More than 3,000 official archaeological sites have been documented in the county and registered with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Historic collections, which include furniture, museum objects and associated documentation, are used in Park Authority historic buildings to help interpret life in the past. They are a significant part of the county's treasures. Many of these collection pieces belonged to past county residents. Housed at Walney Visitor Center at the Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, these collections come under the management of the Resource Management Division's Historic Collections Section.

Why spend money on historic buildings, structures and features?

The Park Authority is the steward of many significant historic buildings, structures and features. As such, the Park Authority is responsible for the protection, stabilization and maintenance of those resources. Examples include the Manassas Gap Railroad, Historic Huntley, the remains of historic mills, Civil War earthworks and historic cemeteries. These represent a small percentage of the historic resources that were present in the county in the past. With the expansion of development, historic buildings, structures and features have rapidly disappeared. It is the Park Authority's mandate to be stewards of these resources. Once these resources are gone, they won't be here for future generations.

How does the Park Authority protect historic buildings and structures?

It is better to preserve the historic materials in a structure than to repair or fix them. It is better to repair than restore a building to a single moment in time. It is better to restore than reconstruct a structure from the ground up based on what it might have looked like. It is better to retain genuine old work of several periods than to arbitrarily "restore" the

whole by new work to a single time period. Every reasonable care and expense is taken to make sure that new work is similar in materials, methods and quality of old construction; and that modern uses should be consistent with the preservation of the building's values.



NATURAL RESOURCES REQUIRE ACTIVE MANAGEMENT

Natural areas undergo constant change and require active management to retain their functions and values. This is particularly true within rapidly urbanizing areas like Fairfax County, where the impacts of surrounding development often place tremendous stresses on natural areas.

You can help others understand these natural resource issues!

Why aren't all plants acceptable in parkland?

Fairfax County retains areas of rich vegetative diversity, often found on parklands. Knowing what kinds of plants are on parklands (taking inventories), monitoring their health and managing vegetation for long-term vitality are all important for effective management. In addition, we must preserve rare and significant plants and control non-native invasive plants that threaten the natural environment. Non-native invasive plants, such as English ivy, bamboo, stiltgrass and multiflora rose are those which do not naturally occur in the region and cause harm to naturally occurring plants and animals. The control of non-native invasive plants is a critical step in preserving the native vegetation and wildlife on county parklands.

How do we handle wildlife issues?

Thanks to conservation efforts, Fairfax County still has a rich diversity of wildlife in our parks, including river otter, bald eagle, fox, deer, beaver, reptiles and amphibians. We must assess the health of parkland animal populations, help to preserve rare and significant wildlife, promote habitat protection, and mitigate and resolve wildlife issues within the community. It is inevitable in an urban county that conflicts will occur between wildlife and human residents.

Two of the most frequent conflicts with wildlife in Fairfax County parkland concern beaver and deer. Beavers dam up streams and use trees for food and to build dams and lodges. The perceived damage that beavers cause can add to the value of natural resources, and thus tolerance of beaver is encouraged.

Living with deer in an urban area results in safety concerns due to car accidents, as well as damage to vegetation both in private yards and in natural areas. In addition, the population levels of deer are too high for the amount of land they live on and cause poor health in the deer themselves. The Park Authority participates in the county's deer management program that not only looks at ways to tolerate deer, but also aims to reduce deer populations through herd reduction.



Fairfax County's urbanizing landscape creates stewardship challenges.



If not controlled, invaders like English ivy overcome native plants.

Some of the things that strongly impact our parklands include:

- water and air pollution
- stormwater runoff
- non-native invasive plants
- wildlife conflicts
- encroachment by adjoining property owners



Volunteers help monitor streams.



Wildlife is protected in parks.



Branch out as a steward by learning more about the county's resources.

How does the Park Authority impact water resources?

Water resource protection is one of the most important issues facing the county. Fairfax County has 980 miles of streams, most of which are on Park Authority land, and many of which have been dramatically degraded over time by pollution, stormwater runoff and erosion. We must focus on preserving water quality, rebuilding and revitalizing stream valleys, and protecting county streams, ponds, wetlands and rivers from further degradation or destruction.

What is being done to improve air quality?

The Park Authority, along with the county, is taking a proactive approach to improve air quality, such as altering work schedules on poor air quality days, upgrading equipment, purchasing hybrid vehicles, reducing mowing and educating the public on the benefits of this reduction.

Can plants and animals be taken or released on parkland?

It is illegal to remove or release plants and animals on parkland. This can damage the natural environment. This damage can occur through the spread of disease or by displacing native plants and animals. Collection of plants and animals of any kind on parkland is prohibited except under special circumstances (such as a scientific study), when there is written permission from the Park Authority.



WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?

For resource management issues, contact these FCPA sections:

Resource Management – General703-324-8674

Natural Resource Management and Protection703-324-8580

The Natural Resource Management and Protection (NRMP) Section is part of the Resource Management Division of the Park Authority. This section is responsible for advising on natural resource issues agency-wide in the areas of policy, planning, development and land management.

Cultural Resource Management and Protection703-534-3881

The Cultural Resource Management and Protection (CRMP) Section is part of the Resource Management Division of the Park Authority. This section is responsible for the management and protection of cultural resources both for the agency and county-wide. The CRMP Section is the steward of more than 3 million artifacts, archaeological site files and archives housed in the James Lee Center in Falls Church. Section staff participates in the development of cultural resource policy, in the planning process and in land management.

Encroachments703-324-8594

Where can I learn more?

- www.fairfaxcounty.gov/stewardship
- www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources
- <http://infoweb/parks/stewardship/>