



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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Information Release

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April 20, 2016

IR-045

Explore the Secret Life of Salamanders at Three Park Sites

The secretive salamander plays an important role in the ecosystem, and the Fairfax County Park Authority will mark national Salamander Conservation Day with programs at three parks on Saturday, May 7, 2016.

Riverbend Park, Hidden Oaks Nature Center and Huntley Meadows Park will offer visitors a chance to see and learn about some of the 14 species of salamanders that call this area home, including the rule-breaking red or lead back salamander that departs from standard amphibian ways by laying its eggs under moist logs, instead of in water. Naturalists will be on hand at all three parks to guide walks and answer questions about these critters that like to hide from prying eyes.

Riverbend Park starts things off with Salamanders Undercover at 11 a.m. Participants will work side-by-side with a naturalist on a forest salamander survey, searching for salamanders in the park's streams and learning about the secret lives of these amphibians through hands-on discoveries. This free program is designed for participants age six to adult. For those who don't want to wait until the official salamander celebration on May 7, another survey program will take place on Sunday, May 1 at 10 a.m. The cost of that two-hour program is \$8 per person.

Riverbend Park is located at 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls, Va. For more information, call 703-759-9018 or visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/>.

Hidden Oaks Nature Center offers a free program at 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 7, called Secretive Salamanders. A naturalist will lead a leisurely 45-minute stroll on the Old Oak Trail and roll logs in search of these interesting creatures. Participants will learn about the salamanders' habitat and the valuable role they play as insect-eaters. Visitors age four and older are invited to attend.

Hidden Oaks Nature Center is located at 7701 Royce Street, Annandale, Va. For more information, call 703-941-1065 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-oaks/.

At 4 p.m., Huntley Meadows offers a 90-minute program called Spellbound for Salamanders. Participants will be guided on a 1.5-mile walk through salamander habitat to try to spot salamanders and learn about the role they play in promoting healthy forests. This event is designed for those seven and older, and children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a registered adult. The cost is \$6. Meet at the 6901 S. Kings Highway entrance to the park. Participants should remove all dirt and mud from their shoes before arriving to help prevent the spread of pathogens.

Huntley Meadows Park is located at 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, Va. For more information, call 703-768-2525 or visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/>.

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If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.