

# Fairfax County Park Authority

---

LOB #336:

## **LAKEFRONT AND WATERPARK OPERATIONS**

### **Purpose**

This LOB manages three lakefront parks (Lake Accotink, Burke Lake, and Lake Fairfax) as part of its overall mission. The mission of this LOB is to set aside public spaces for and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations; and 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.

### **Description**

This LOB is accomplished by a combination of merit, seasonal and volunteer staff. The parks are open seven days a week year-round for general public access and activities such as picnicking, hiking and fishing, while certain services and amenities are operated on a seasonal basis, such as boat rentals, tent and RV camping, mini-golf, train rides, carousels, waterpark, food services, and educational and summer camp programs. Lake Fairfax Park is the home of the Water Mine and is also a major sports destination with numerous athletic fields, both lit and unlit, and Burke Lake has the County's most popular cross-country trail for high school team practices and meets. Lake Accotink is a less congested park and is interconnected through many miles of trails in a wide range of neighborhoods. Fewer amenities are included in this smaller footprint of a more natural resource based park.

### **Benefits**

This LOB is offered for the benefit of Fairfax County residents and visitors. These parks are among the most visited in the County: in FY 2014, there were 1,471,254 visitors at Burke Lake, 462,893 visitors at Lake Fairfax Park and 267,057 visitors to Lake Accotink Park. The lakes, facilities and services provided serve a wide and diverse spectrum of the local and regional community, from anglers to campers, fitness enthusiasts, youth and adult sports team participants, photographers, walkers and joggers, and many thousands of families seeking a fun day outdoors enjoying the natural beauty of the parks or other activities such as canoeing, playing mini golf or taking a miniature train ride around a lake.

The lakefront parks have a positive impact on the quality of life in the County because they:

- Provide opportunities to strengthen family and community relationships;
- Improve health and physical fitness opportunities;
- Are considered 'extremely' or 'very important' to the quality of life of 93 percent of households; and
- Provide a much more positive outlook on the quality of life in the County to residents who use their parks in contrast to residents who don't use the parks.

# Fairfax County Park Authority

## Mandates

This LOB has three parks with lakes located within them that require specific oversight during storm events. The Park Authority, in coordination with the Department of Public Works Environmental Services (DPWES), provides visual monitoring of all three dam structures and as such has installed measuring equipment to permit staff to properly and safely view the devices from a suitable distance. Lake Burke is owned by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), the surrounding park land comprising Burke Lake Park is owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA). Many of the rules and regulations including the operating hours concerning the lake, fishing, the VDGIF public boat launch and parking area are established by the VDGIF and may vary from the rules, regulations and hours established by the FCPA for Burke Lake Park. VDGIF is also responsible for the dam structures at Burke Lake.

## Trends and Challenges

The main trends include an increase in visitation, movement to a part-time staffing model, and growth in program diversity. The major challenges that this LOB faces include planning for peaks and valleys of visitation, managing hours open, and diversity of program oversight that requires a wide range of staff skill sets.

## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>LOB #336: Lakefront and Waterpark Operations</b>			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$2,018,958	\$2,030,654	\$2,357,350
Benefits	145,675	138,472	145,452
Operating Expenses	1,140,453	1,222,321	1,108,120
Work Performed for Others	0	0	(120,781)
Capital Equipment	19,643	20,244	0
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$3,324,729</b>	<b>\$3,411,691</b>	<b>\$3,490,141</b>
General Fund Expenditures	\$1,172,535	\$1,247,271	\$1,167,688
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,798,220</b>	<b>\$2,945,257</b>	<b>\$3,275,000</b>
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	21 / 21	21 / 21	19 / 19
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>21 / 21</b>	<b>21 / 21</b>	<b>19 / 19</b>

# Fairfax County Park Authority

---

## Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Estimated Lakefront Park attendance	2,138,796	2,201,204	2,273,643	2,319,116	2,365,498
Total number of campsites rented	4,937	7,291	8,668	8,841	9,018
Total number of boats rented	9,828	15,012	16,035	16,356	16,683
Total number of participation in amusements	97,367	112,468	111,015	113,235	115,500
Value of Volunteer Hours Worked	\$31,601 based on 1,369 hours	\$72,698 based on 3,151 hours	\$56,355 based on 2,443 hours	\$57,482 based on 2,492 hours	\$58,631 based on 2,541 hours

All key measures of visitation and participation in the lakefront parks are increasing as residents and visitors continue to flock to these major parks. Modifications and improvements are continually made over time in response to resident and visitor demand – examples in the past few years include upgrades to campground facilities and the expansion of the Water Mine facility in August 2015.

The volunteer corps is critical to the continued success of the operation of this LOB. By using volunteers, the Park Authority reduces the salary expenses.