



# FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



## INFORMATION RELEASE

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October 26, 2022  
IR-141

## Hidden Oaks Nature Center Recognized for Educational Videos

As the pandemic canceled field trips and access to nature centers, Fairfax County Park Authority staff members looked for creative ways to fill that educational gap. One way was to go virtual in support of the Virginia standards of learning in science.

Hidden Oaks Nature Center took that challenge to heart, developing a video alternative to onsite field trips. That effort was recently recognized with a third-place win in the pandemic pivot category by the 2022 NAI (National Association for Interpretation) Interpretive Media Awards. The National Association for Interpretation is a nonprofit professional association of natural and cultural resources interpreters, primarily in the United States.

Visitor Services Manager Suzanne Holland and naturalist Alex Doumbia played key roles in this endeavor. With the financial support of the Northrop Grumman Corporation and the Fairfax County Park Foundation, plus the advice of Fairfax County Public School elementary school science curriculum coordinator Jill Curry, the staff created 15 short videos of mini field trips and posted them on YouTube for county students and the public to get a virtual experience. The videos, each running between four to seven minutes, highlighted topics in the K-7 curriculum.

Two were created in Spanish, featuring naturalists Cesia Lobo and Alex Doumbia. The videos showcased live native animals, local outdoor nature venues in parks, and a diverse set of instructors who connected the students to the message in an engaging, mock field trip format.

With easy access to short clips at no cost to the school, teacher or parent, this online resource provided local experiences that students could relate to and visit at an area park with their parents. Some experiences were exactly like an in-person field trip -- from tagging a monarch butterfly to stream monitoring for aquatic insects -- these videos enabled tens of thousands of students to benefit from local nature experiences and supported meaningful connections with their virtual learning.

For over a decade Northrop Grumman Corporation and Fairfax County Park Foundation have supported direct experience watershed education through a grant to Hidden Oaks Nature Center. This grant enables over 1,000 seventh graders and 600 fourth graders from Title 1 schools to attend fields trips to the nature center.

The videos are currently available at the Virtual Exploration Center website at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/virtual-resource-center> in the science and nature tab.

Happily, the live animals in the videos are now able to be viewed in person at Hidden Oaks Nature Center, located at 7701 Royce St., Annandale, Virginia. For more information, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-oaks](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-oaks) or call 703-941-1065.



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## New Survey Will Help Develop Park Planning Strategy

Add your voice to the conversation via a short survey. The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) is developing a Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Access Strategy known as PROSA. The PROSA Strategy will provide a framework for equitable access to the park system and will be completed in 2023. Park officials believe the new plan will provide a pathway toward improved park access and a balance of recreational experiences.

Community input is key to this process. The public is invited to participate in the community survey and help shape the future of our local park system. The survey can be completed online at <https://publicinput.com/PROSA>. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and is available in English, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese languages. The survey runs until Dec. 11, 2022.

Virtual PROSA work sessions have started and another is planned for Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. You can register for the meeting at <https://publicinput.com/Register/P32085>.

FCPA staff will also be attending events throughout the community over the coming month to gather more input and to ensure diverse voices contribute to PROSA.

For more information, please visit the project webpage at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/planning-development/planning/prosa>; or contact the Public Information Office via [Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov).

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October 26, 2022  
PSA-172

## Get Creative This Holiday Season at Green Spring Gardens

Before the hustle and bustle of the holidays, treat yourself to a day of fun and learning. November and December are the perfect time to get creative with arts and crafts indoors. Green Spring Gardens has several fine arts programs that will not only teach you new skills, but also help you to create beautiful handmade decorations for your home.

On Saturday, Nov. 12, 2022 join artist Marni Maree in the Watercolor Workshop “Yippee Yupo!” Forget everything you know about painting on paper and enjoy the spontaneity of painting on a plastic surface, such as yupo. You will learn how to create various textures as you paint and “unpaint” your subject using your regular watercolor supplies. A supply list will be emailed before class. Bring a lunch. The program runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and is appropriate for those 16 years and older. The cost is \$110 per person.

Due to high demand, on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022, there will be two Winter Wreath Workshops to choose from: one from 10:30 a.m. until noon; and a second from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Create a beautiful winter wreath to take home for your front door after Green Spring staff members demonstrate the dazzling possibilities. Greens, forms, ribbon and cones included in the supply fee. Please register for both the program and supply fee. The cost is \$42 per person (plus \$25 supply fee). This program is appropriate for those 16 years and older.

Finally, on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022, certified floral instructor Betty Ann Galway will help you create a beautiful floral present for yourself or a loved one in the Floral Design Workshop “Holiday Sparkle.” Register for both the class and the supply fee. Bring disinfected shears and a short box or container that will help you transport your arrangement home. The program is appropriate for those 16 years and older, and the cost is \$42 per person (plus \$35 supply fee).

Register online through Parktakes at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

Green Spring Gardens is located at 4603 Green Spring Road in Alexandria, Virginia. For more information, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring) or call 703-642-5173.

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PSA-173

## Halloween in the Woods Comes to Riverbend Park

Join lots of little ones for Halloween in the Woods at Riverbend Park on Halloween morning, Monday, Oct. 31, 2022, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Join Riverbend Park's Forest Preschool teachers for a Halloween bash. There will be crafts, games and nature exploration. The event is for children ages 3 to 5 years old. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Meet at the Nature Center.

Costumes are encouraged but remember to dress warmly as the program takes place outside. The cost is \$15 per person. Preregistration is required via Parktakes online at [www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/parktakes).

The Riverbend Park Nature Center is located at 8814 Jeffery Road in Great Falls, Virginia.

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

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