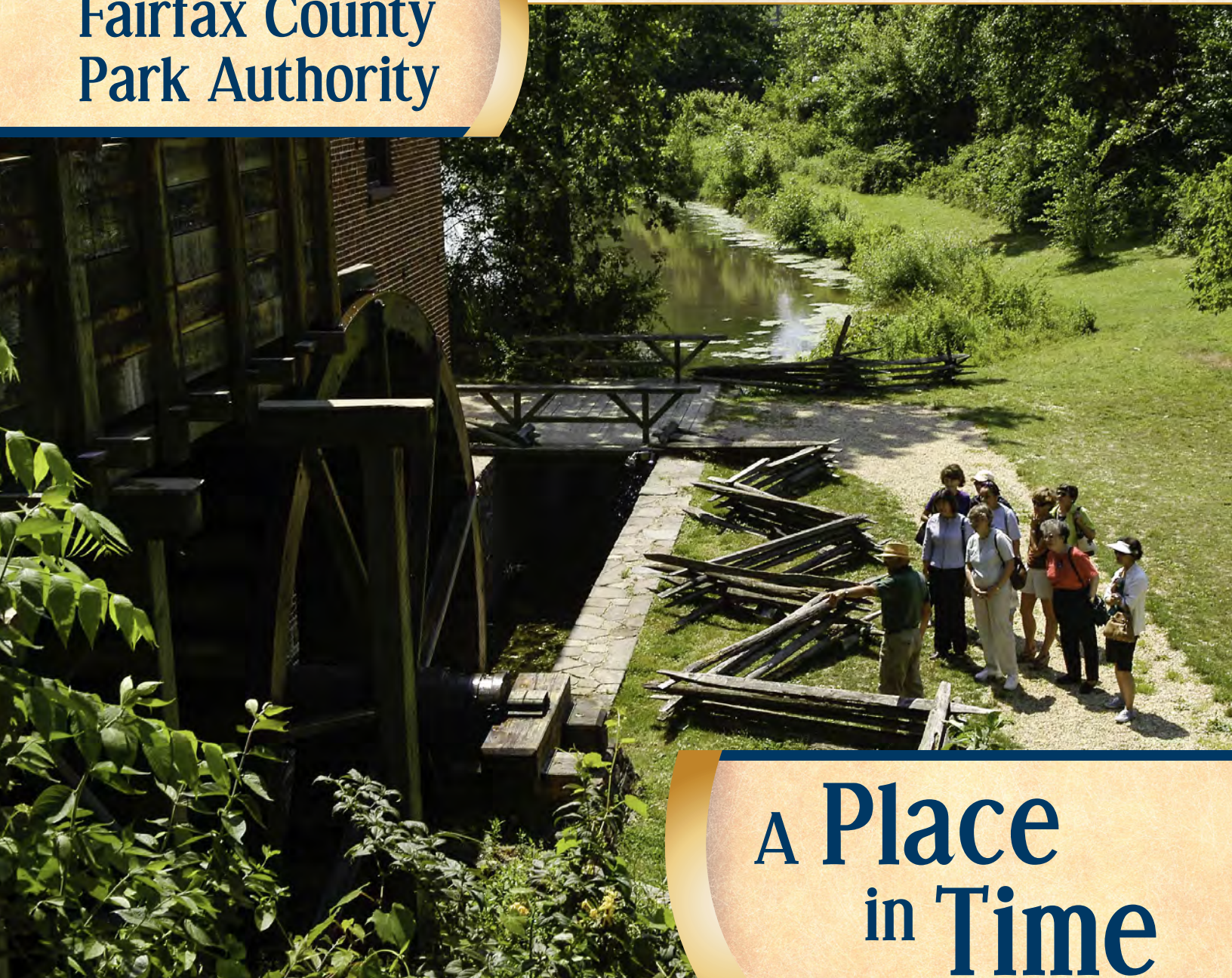


# Fairfax County Park Authority



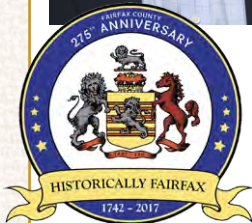
## A Place in Time



FY 2017 Strategic Plan and Annual Report



# Marking Our Place in Time



Each year at this time, we present this report which reflects on the Park Authority's accomplishments over the previous fiscal year and charts the course for the coming year. This year, we decided to include a few historical notes to commemorate the Park Authority's unique place in time. You see, 2017 marked the 275th anniversary of Fairfax County, and part of our mission is to preserve natural resources and historical artifacts so that future generations can enjoy and learn from them.

Our present-day success stems largely from our community's overwhelming support of parks year after year, even in the face of economic challenges. The voter-approved 2016 Park Bond demonstrates our community's commitment to improving and maintaining our facilities and preserving our natural resources. With nearly 24,000 acres of parkland and 427 parks in Fairfax County, the park bond will help ensure our award-winning park system can operate with its high standard of excellence for years to come.

Two significant Park Authority achievements in FY17 are the new double-decker driving range at Burke Lake Golf Center and the new observatory at Turner Farm Park. The driving range is the first new construction at Burke Lake Golf Center since it opened in 1970. The Turner Farm observatory in Great Falls is a testament to the power of partnerships between the Park Authority, our Park Foundation, the Annalema Society and private donors to create enriching learning opportunities for generations to come.

This year, the Park Authority Board demonstrated its commitment to creating equitable recreational opportunities for all county residents by adopting the One Fairfax resolution. In doing so, we join with the Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County Public Schools in embracing this guiding principal in our policies, practices and strategic investments as we work toward a unified vision for our community.

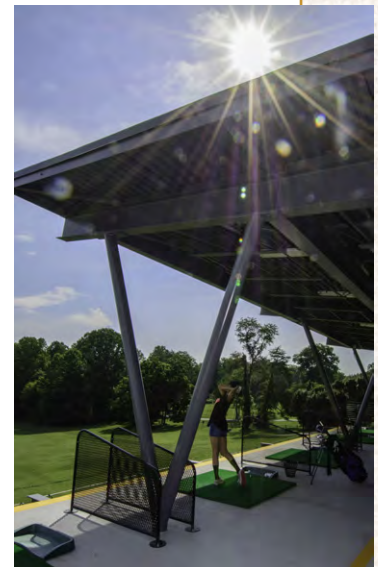
Across the board we have so much to be proud of—a Governor's Award for Environmental Stewardship at Huntley Meadows Park, numerous awards for staff accomplishments,

and a continuing effort to engage our community in planning for future needs. Thanks to a community that values its parks, our system is thriving, and we are grateful for that support.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will G. Bouie".

William G. Bouie  
Chairman, Park Authority Board



## Great Parks, Great Communities

Meet the Needs of a  
Diverse Community

Enrich Citizen  
Quality of Life

Customer

## Strengthen Financial Sustainability

Stabilize Funding

Expand Alternative  
Resources

Financial

## Improve Business Practices

Inform and Engage  
the Public

Leverage  
Technology

Manage and  
Protect Property

Optimize Programs  
and Services

Business Process

## Promote Organizational Excellence

Maintain Quality Workforce

Create Positive Work Environment

Learning and Growth



# Stabilize Funding

**Address the continued instability in the Park Authority funding environment by optimizing various funding sources to accomplish targeted financial and service goals.**



## New Burke Lake Driving Range Opens

Golfers feel right at home on Burke Lake Golf Center's new double-decker driving range, which opened in April 2017. The new, lighted range includes 24 heated stations giving players expanded practice and learning options year-round from sunrise to 10 p.m. The range is part of a \$6.6 million capital improvement project that will include a new clubhouse with an expanded pro shop and dining facilities.

## Lee District Carousel Opens

Children of all abilities can take a spin on a new, accessible carousel at Lee District Park. The new feature opened in June to the delight of park visitors who already enjoy other park attractions such as the



accessible treehouse, the Tiki Village Playground and Chessie's Big Backyard. The new carousel includes Chesapeake Bay-themed animals including a turtle, frog, hummingbird and swan as well as traditional horses. The attraction and new picnic shelters complete the

final construction phase of the Lee District Park Family Recreation Area, which was supported by the Fairfax County Park Foundation. The total cost of the project was \$1,065,000.

## Mount Vernon RECenter Renovation and Expansion

Plans got underway in FY17 to breathe new life into Mount Vernon RECenter's aging infrastructure. To better meet the needs of members, the facility's renovation and expansion plans include:

- Expanding public building space
- Expanding fitness and multipurpose rooms
- Expanding locker rooms with accessible family changing rooms
- New building and pool systems to support growing service demands

Renovation plans also include the potential to add a second sheet of ice to National Hockey League dimensions in the ice arena and the potential to add a leisure pool in the aquatics area.



## RECenter System Study Recommendations Set for 2017 Release

The Park Authority's 2016 Needs Assessment revealed the popularity of RECenters as well as general recognition that reinvestment in the the aging RECenter infrastructure is needed to meet the public's demands now and in the future, and ensure the facilities are fiscally sustainable.

In response, the Park Authority hired Brailsford & Dunlavey, Inc. (B&D), CENTERS, and Hughes Group Architects (HGA) to conduct research, including detailed financial analysis and public engagement, and develop research-based recommendations designed to meet future RECenter needs in a financially sustainable manner.







### Lakefront Parks Continue to Thrive

From expanded lakefront nature programs to special events, residents were delighted to disconnect from electronics and expand their horizons outdoors. The Park Authority's lakefront parks added a full complement of outdoor programs for children and adults. In addition, two major events - Baskets for Bunnies and Winter Wonderland – were huge successes as hundreds of families enjoyed fun-filled days featuring amusement rides, crafts, special activities and entertainment. As a result, the Lakefront parks cost recovery improved in FY17 to 111.67%. The net revenue is used to reinvest in the aging infrastructure.



**Top:** Lake Accotink dam construction, circa 1918.

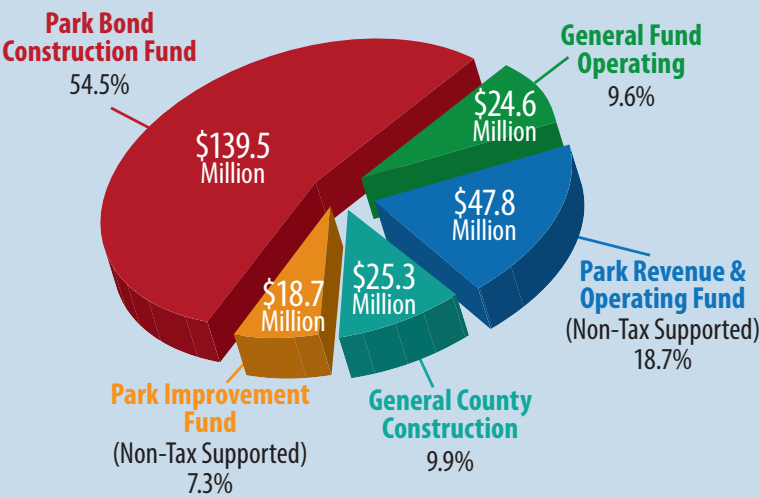
**Bottom:** Today, Lake Accotink is a popular spot for fishing, boating and hiking.

### FY 2017 Revised Budget

### Fairfax County Park Authority Funding Sources

Park Authority funding falls into five budget categories.

**Total Budget: \$256,114,649**



**Park Revenue and Operating Fund**  
Revenue generated from park site user fees.

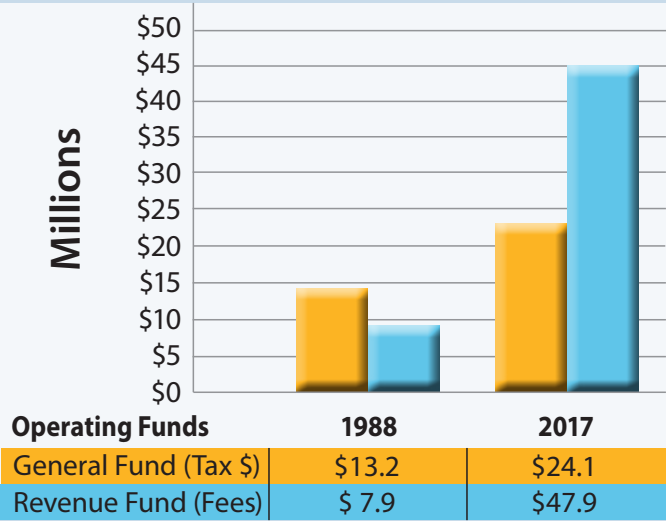
**Park Improvement Fund**  
Funding to complete repairs or develop revenue-generating facilities and programs.

**General Fund**  
Tax dollars that provide limited operation and maintenance funding for parks that don't produce revenue.

**General County Construction Fund**  
Tax dollars appropriated for critical facility repair and maintenance.

**Park Bond Construction Fund**  
Financing for construction projects and capital improvements.

### Creating a Sustainable Park System



Since 1988, the Park Authority has worked to effectively address operational funding needs through user fees and strategic partnerships.



# Manage and Protect Property

**Continue to lead collaborative efforts to manage and care for our parks, facilities and infrastructure, and protect natural and cultural resources.**

## Colvin Run Stream Restoration

Preserving natural resources is a major part of the Park Authority's mission, and the agency's efforts to help achieve the county's five-year pollution reduction goals continued in FY17.

One major effort that was completed was the Colvin Run restoration project. Colvin Run gets large amounts of stormwater flow, which changed the channel size and alignment in Lake Fairfax Park. As a result, stream banks were eroding, the stream habitat was degraded and the park infrastructure was subject to storm damage. In partnership with the Dept. of Public Works and Environmental Services, the Park Authority restored 1,700 feet of Colvin Run below the Lake Fairfax dam, and almost 500 feet of tributaries. In addition, it will provide better access to the stream for recreation and environmental education while protecting banks from excessive foot traffic that can kill vegetation and cause erosion.



## Little League Home Reborn at McNaughton Park

The first pitch of the 2017 baseball season at McNaughton Park in Alexandria ushered in a new era for the Woodlawn Little League, which has played ball at the park's athletic complex since the 1960s. Thanks to bond funding and grants, the season opened on newly renovated, state-of-the-art athletic fields that meet current athletic standards and will serve young athletes for years to come. Amenities for the park's four, lighted fields include covered dugouts, bullpens, batting cages, bleachers and fencing as well as an additional 173-space parking lot. Utility connections were also installed to accommodate future restrooms and a concession stand.

## Farrington Park Playground Offers Safety and Fun

Just about everybody wants a safe, fun place for their kids to play, which is why replacing the aging community playground at Farrington Park in Alexandria was a big deal. The park's aging equipment had exceeded its life expectancy and failed to meet current playground safety guidelines. The new playground opened in June featuring new playground structures and tot lot equipment, a timber border, safety surfacing, drainage, benches, picnic tables, fencing and an upgraded accessible route. The \$185,000 project was completed by the Park Authority in partnership the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and Cunningham Recreation and Custom Park Services.



## Level Playing Fields for All

The Park Authority continues to strive to meet the needs of the growing athletic community in Fairfax County through the use of synthetic turf fields. Lighted, synthetic turf fields allow for year-round use in most weather, thus increasing the playable hours by 62%. In the last year, seven fields were replaced and a new synthetic turf field at Pine Ridge Park was added.

## Protecting Natural Resources



The Park Authority's Natural Resource Management Plan identifies collecting natural resource data as an essential component of park planning, decision-making and education. Two natural resource datasets have been completed (deer browse and non-native invasive plants) and added to the county GIS system. This information can be used in park acquisitions, planning, and management activities to protect our resources.

## Preserving History

Some of the Park Authority's historic properties are being rejuvenated thanks to the agency's innovative Resident Curator Program (RCP). The new program is designed to preserve historic properties by offering long-term leases to qualified tenants who agree to rehabilitate and maintain these historic resources. A curator can be a private citizen, a non-profit entity or a for-profit entity (depending on the park.)

The Resident Curator Program launched in FY17 with three pilot properties, Turner Farmhouse, Ellmore Farmhouse and Stempson House. By the end of FY19, the Park Authority projects that nine historic properties will be eligible for leasing to resident curators.



## FCPA Stewardship Earns National Recognition

The Park Authority's continuing effort to protect the area's natural resources was recognized for excellence with the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) 2016 Barb King Environmental Stewardship Award. Enhancing



Stewardship is a guiding Park Authority value, and the award nomination cited educational partnerships with schools, such as the Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE), community stewardship publications, volunteer environmental cleanup events at park sites, summer education programs, and environmental design practices, such as the Oak Marr RECenter renovation, which earned LEED Silver Certification. The national award was presented at the NRPA conference Best of the Best ceremony in St. Louis, Missouri on October 6, 2016.

## Springfield's Trailside Park Partnership Rejuvenates Little League Fields



When the Park Authority teamed up with the Central Springfield Little League (CSLL), the result was a winning strategy that breathed new life into an old baseball complex at Trailside Park in Springfield.

Thanks to the partnership, the complex now sports new fencing, backstops, dugouts and bleacher pads at the diamond fields that meet current athletic field and accessibility standards. In addition, the asphalt drive lanes and parking areas were repaved to improve access and to correct drainage problems. CSLL provided \$39,200, which included a \$19,200 grant from Little League Baseball, to help fund the upgrades. The Park Authority provided a \$20,000 Mastenbrook Grant to match the funds contributed by CSLL for the project. The balance of the \$370,860 project came from park bonds.

## Planning and Paving Improve Popular Lakefront Park

In an effort to plan for future needs, the Lake Accotink Park master plan revision team undertook a creative and extensive public outreach effort, including seven public meetings (open houses, workshops, etc.), a robust interactive web page, interactions with park users in the park, and outreach to local schools and houses of worship. To overcome language barriers, special outreach efforts were made with the help of multi-lingual partner groups. Given the park's diverse user population, this level of outreach is critical to the success of the Lake Accotink Park Master Plan revision and will help ensure future needs are identified and included in the planning process.

Some infrastructure improvements were also completed at Lake Accotink Park in FY17. Park patrons now have a safer route through the park thanks to entrance road improvements including new asphalt, speed humps, pavement markings and signs. The \$340,000 safety project was funded through the county's general construction fund.



## Sinking Funds Help Maintain Facilities

The Park Authority has access to two funding sources to address smaller projects not covered by bonds, such as lifecycle maintenance and replacement. The county government's General Fund Sinking Fund comprises tax dollars that are used to maintain, repair or replace park property that does not generate revenue, such as trails, parking lots and bridges. Over the past two years, the Park Authority has used sinking funds to replace or repair aging bleachers, pool filters, elevators and masonry at revenue-generating facilities such as RECenters.



The Park Authority's Revenue Fund Capital Sinking Fund is generated through park user fees. It has been used to upgrade indoor instructional space at golf courses as well as to resurface the Water Mine's Lazy River.

## Park Authority Expands Green Space

The Fairfax County Park Authority grew by more than 50 acres to 23,418 acres in FY17. Nearly five acres of the newly acquired parkland, known as the Holladay Field, was received in March from the Board of Supervisors in the Dranesville District. It consists of a full-sized rectangular field and a practice field.

The Park Authority also received nearly 64 acres of vacant land from Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC in exchange for about 13 acres of Halifax Point District Park, which is located near a large utility easement and substation. The new parkland connects Halifax Point District Park to Poplar Ford Park in the Sully District.

## Voters Say Yes to 13th Park Bond

While it is often difficult to tell how voters feel about some issues, it's clear that Fairfax County voters value their parks! The 2016 Park Bond was the 13th consecutive park bond approved by county voters since the first one back in 1959. The \$107 million park bond includes funding

for facility renovations and upgrades, cultural and natural resource stewardship projects, land acquisition and new park development.





# Expand Alternative Resources

**Secure non-traditional funding sources and in-kind services that supplement and further enhance the Park Authority programs, services, facilities and mission.**



## Go Ape: A Public Private Partnership That Swings

The Park Authority's first woodland obstacle and zip line course opened in May giving park patrons a fully immersive outdoor activity with a thrilling view of the park's forest canopy. The new course at South Run Park in Springfield was developed in partnership with Go Ape, an outdoor adventure company. Through the agreement, the Park Authority provides the venue, Go Ape covers all construction, maintenance and operational costs and both entities share in the revenue. The partnership provides the community with an exciting outdoor activity without spending taxpayer dollars.



## Park Volunteer Hours Increase by 10%

The Park Authority increased volunteer hours by over 10% in FY17. Volunteer managers looked for new projects and volunteer opportunities to increase community engagement and to help defray operational costs.

## Grants Team

The Park Authority established a Grants Team to coordinate and enhance the process for obtaining grants. The team reviews current practices in identifying, submitting and reporting all grants and identifies opportunities to make the grant process more efficient and effective. The goal is to ensure a coordinated approach for grant applications and to increase the number of grants received by the Park Authority.

## Smart Park Growth for A Sustainable Future

In FY17, the Park Authority gained proffers to increase the number of publicly accessible park acres by 17.82. Dulles Rock Hill Park (2.6 acres) and The Park at Tysons II (2.3 acres) were opened to the public (4.9 acres total) in FY17 and will be maintained by private entities.



## Planning to Grow the Park Foundation

The Fairfax County Park Foundation created a development plan to strategically align Foundation resources with Park Authority initiatives. In addition, the Park Foundation expanded its Legacy Circle members from 8 to 20 individuals who pledge to include the Park Foundation in their will or estate plan.

## Providing Equitable Access to Recreation

Thanks to the Park Foundation, camps, classes and adapted recreation programs received more than \$150,000 in alternative funding. These scholarships are awarded to individuals based on financial need.



**FCPF**

Fairfax County Park Foundation

## Governor Recognizes Huntley Meadows Park

Huntley Meadows Park's wetland restoration project was recognized in April with the prestigious Governor's Environmental Excellence Award Gold Medal.

The park and its wetlands play a vital role in the overall health of the watershed by filtering surface water and helping to prevent flooding. The award was presented to Fairfax County Park Authority representatives at the 28th Annual Environment Virginia Symposium in Lexington, Virginia.







## Mastenbrook Grant Program Boosts Park Projects

Public-private partnerships brought 13 park projects and improvements to life in FY17 through the Mastenbrook Grant Program.

Toward the end of FY17, dugout pads and athletic field fencing were installed at Idylwood Park, the glasshouse was renovated at Green Spring Gardens and field #6 at Grist Mill Park was converted to Bermuda grass. The grants are named for former board member John Mastenbrook who

suggested creating a grant program to encourage public-private ventures that would improve Fairfax County parks and fill a gap between limited bond funding and the community's desire for new neighborhood facilities. The total value of FY17 projects was \$2,111,476.

## New Pump Track Provides Family Fun

Lake Fairfax Park's new pump track opened in October offering fun for cyclists of all ages and skill levels. The name comes from the pumping motion used by the rider's upper and lower body as they ride around the continuous loop of dirt berms and "rollers." Pump tracks are suitable for cyclists of all ages and skill levels and just about any type of bike will work. The Fairfax County Park Foundation secured \$20,000 in funding to support this project through MORE, The Bike Lane and People for Bikes. In addition, the Park Foundation paid for the facility's information kiosk.



## Dulles Station Demonstrates the Power of Proffers

Dulles Station Community Park is a great example of the value and importance of a rezoning/development proffer that required a community park be constructed to serve as a public gathering space. The park serves the residents of the community at no cost to the taxpayer and provides much desired amenities.

The 2.6-acre park includes playgrounds for preschoolers and elementary-age children, as well as a seating area, plaza, clustered fitness area, multi-use court, and a dog park with a shade pavilion. The \$1.6 million project also includes a trail, landscaping, irrigation, and signage.

## Park Authority Builds Friends' Group Relationships

Community-led Friends groups have long provided support and advocacy for Park Authority parks, facilities, and programs. This year, the Park Authority and Friends groups began working together to strengthen that longstanding partnership by developing policy and procedures to guide the relationship and to legally protect future Friends group initiatives.

## Eakin Family Continues Park Legacy

In collaboration with the Park Foundation and the Eakin Park Family Trust, the Park Authority will build an accessible 20-by-24-foot picnic shelter with four tables and a grill in the agency's first park, Eakin Community Park in Fairfax.

The Eakin Park Family Trust provided a \$70,000 donation to the Fairfax County Park Foundation in support of this \$105,000 project. The Eakin Park Family Trust was established to improve parkland donated by the family in 1966.



**Top:** Park philanthropists Le Roy Eakin, Sr. and his wife, Mabel Eakin, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with their children on January 1, 1952. Pictured in back (l-r): Le Roy Eakin, Jr., Jack Eakin, Helen (Eakin) Eisenhower and Glen Eakin.

**Bottom:** Eakin Mantua Park, created from donated land, continues the Eakin family legacy as it grows to serve the local community.



# Optimize Programs and Services



**Ensure continued provision of a wide range of facilities, programs, and services to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse population in a manner which is financially sustainable.**

## FootGolf Gains Recognition

FootGolf at Pinecrest Golf Course continues to flourish with a 33% increase in rounds and group rentals in FY17. Contributing factors include a new FootGolf reservation system, increased awareness through the American FootGolf League and participation in community events. FootGolf at Pinecrest was recognized as the best new program by the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society.



## Collaboration Provides Clear View of the Night Sky

From the Big Dipper to galaxies far, far away, the new roll-top observatory at Turner Farm gives stargazers the power to see the night sky in a whole new realm. The observatory, which opened in October 2016, is the result of a collaboration between the Analemma Society and the Park Authority that began in 2007. The observatory features a retractable roof that allows park-goers to



gaze at the stars from the classroom through three powerful, permanently mounted telescopes. The \$1 million facility was funded in part by park bonds, telecommunications funds, Mastenbrook Grant money, and donations from Jean and Ric Edelman through the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

## The First Tee Teaches So Much More Than Golf



In partnership with The First Tee of Greater Washington, a world of opportunity now awaits children and teens at Laurel Hill Golf Club in Lorton and Oak Marr Golf Complex in Oakton. The First Tee teaches golf and life skills encompassing core values that help young players age 7 to 18 flourish both on and off the golf course. At the heart of the program are nine core values:

honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy, and judgment, and how to apply these lessons to the future. Plans are underway to begin the program at Twin Lakes in FY18.

## Healthy Vending Complements Healthy Lifestyles



The Park Authority took its mission to engage the public in leading healthy and active lifestyles a step further by boosting the nutritional standards of its vending machines in RECenters and lakefront parks in FY17. The new options are lower in sugar and fat and statistically outsell traditional options 3-to-1 nationwide.

## Liberty Bell Trail Completed

What better way to celebrate the Liberty Bell Trail's completion than to designate National Trails Day as its opening day? The 10-foot-wide asphalt



trail opened in June 2017 and runs from the intersection of Burke Lake Road and Coffey Woods Road to the bend in Burke Road near Liberty Bell Court. The trail project also includes a steel frame bridge across Pohick Creek near Mill Cove Court. Combined with public and private trails and sidewalks, it provides access to two VRE stations, the Burke Village Shopping Center, and many residential communities, resulting in opportunities for recreation and an alternative transportation route to key public transportation destinations. Funding for the \$859,500 was provided by the Federal Highway Administration reimbursable grants program administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation-Transportation Alternatives Program.



## SpringFest: Healthy People, Healthy Planet

In April 2017, Springfest moved to Sully Historic Site for a day of free family-friendly activities and games celebrating Earth and Arbor Days. Presented in partnership with Clean Fairfax, the one-day festival drew crowds of more than 3,700 to the new location to celebrate the natural environment and healthy living.

Highlights included a touch-a-truck section with antique and modern vehicles, a pop-up farmer's market, a tree planting, a tree scavenger hunt, and booths that highlighted the local environment. Winners of the Park Authority's Poetry Contest read their works and received awards. The county Showmobile featured fitness demonstrations, music and dance performances, and an annual Arbor Day proclamation declaring Fairfax County a Tree City USA site. Healthy Strides operated an obstacle course for children. Sully offered guided tours as well.



## Every Body Golf School Marks 20th Anniversary



Golfers of all abilities have benefitted from the Park Authority's longstanding partnership with Every Body Golf School at Oak Marr Golf Complex. For the past two decades, the premier teaching facility and its PGA, LPGA and USGTF golf professionals have offered private, semi-private, and large or small group classes for beginners, advanced players, and those looking for tips, tricks, and techniques to lower their scores. The Every Body Golf School celebrated its 20th anniversary in June with food, free ten-minute golf lessons, demonstrations, club fittings and drawings for free golf lessons.



## Frying Pan Welcomes Jack and Charlie

An important component of Frying Pan Farm Park's educational mission was restored in April 2017 when two new Belgian draft horses, Jack and Charlie, arrived for service thanks to individual donors and the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park.

Though the equine pair quickly became a favorite of farm visitors, Jack and Charlie actually serve an important purpose – pulling wagons and farming equipment for educational demonstrations to help illustrate Fairfax County's agricultural history.



**Top:** Kidwell Farm, circa 1920.

**Bottom:** Today, Kidwell Farm at Frying Pan Park is a thriving reminder of Fairfax County's agricultural history. The livestock, crops and 1930s machinery are a source of education and fascination for visitors of all ages.



Then  
& Now



# Inform and Engage

Engage the community to raise awareness of park benefits, value, offerings and challenges; broaden support for the park system; increase public involvement in park planning and decision making; and stimulate growth in park use and volunteerism.

## Celebrating Fairfax County's 275th Anniversary



**The present-day Lord Fairfax poses beside a caricature of his ancestor with a portrait of the real Thomas, Lord Fairfax VI in the background.**

The Park Authority was an enthusiastic partner and supporter of events and activities commemorating Fairfax County's 275th anniversary, including the official celebration June 17 at the historic Fairfax County Courthouse. Interpreters from Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Frying Pan Farm Park, Colvin Run Mill and Sully Historic Site staffed exhibits and activities celebrating county history. The Park Authority also offered spring and summer day trips to historic Fairfax county

locations. The 2017 Discovery Trail Map summer family activity mirrored the 275th anniversary theme celebrating milestone moments in 12 featured parks, and a caricature of Lord Fairfax VI, the English nobleman for whom Fairfax County is named, created a lot of buzz on social media. Participants were encouraged to snap a selfie with him and post the photo to Instagram at #WhereIsLordFairfax. Present-day nobleman, Nicholas, Lord Fairfax XIV, participated in the fun when he spotted his "ancestor" during the official anniversary celebration.



## Historic Markers Help Us Remember Our Past

The Park Authority dedicated two markers that commemorate distinct places and times in Fairfax County history:



**The Pines** - The marker at the entrance to Pine Ridge Park in Annandale tells the story of a close-knit African American community that settled there at the turn of the 20th century. William Collins, Sr., the descendant of freed slaves, bought 22 acres there in 1905 with money he saved from serving with Teddy

Roosevelt's Rough Riders in the Spanish American War. The Johnson, Robinson, and Sprigg families soon purchased lots, too and established a farming community with a saw mill and a church. The community thrived for generations until the County acquired the land through eminent domain to build a new school in the 1960s at the time of desegregation. The school was never built, and the property eventually became parkland. Descendants of those who were displaced attended the marker dedication in October 2016 to remember The Pines and to celebrate the marker's placement, which was coordinated by the Fairfax County History Commission.

**Conn's Ferry Crossing** - The newest historical marker at Riverbend park commemorates President James Madison's daring escape from British capture during the War of 1812. After spending the night in the woods, Madison crossed the Potomac River at Conn's Ferry on Aug. 26, 1814 near the present-day Riverbend Park boat launch. Madison was fleeing British troops who invaded Washington and burned many public buildings there, including the White House, the U.S. Capitol and the Treasury building. After crossing the Potomac, Madison found refuge at a house in Brookeville, Md., and returned to the still smoldering nation's capital a few days later. The historical marker was dedicated in August 2016.





## 50+ Enables Seniors to Connect, Engage and Play



In an effort to reach everyone from empty nester to active seniors, the Park Authority launched its 50+ web portal in FY17. The new web tool connects seniors with park programs tailored specifically for adults 50 years of age and older, including fitness and wellness, arts and learning, gardening and nature, recreation, concerts and festivals, golf and more. In Fairfax County, 23.2 percent of households include adults who are 65+, and this group represents 11.5 percent of the county's total population. The 50+ web portal is part of a larger, countywide effort

aimed at addressing the needs of a rapidly aging population in Fairfax County. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fifty-plus](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fifty-plus) to connect, engage and play!



**Family walk at Huntley Meadows. Photo by Jennifer Coyne.**

## First Hike Fairfax - Healthy Steps for a Happy New Year

Hundreds of people and pets put their best foot forward on New Year's Day to participate in the Park Authority's inaugural First Hike Fairfax program. Hikers included families with children, bike riders and photographers.

Participants submitted more than 80 photos taken along the trail,

and the top 10 photos were awarded prizes and posted on Facebook. Through First Hike Fairfax, the Park Authority joined with state parks across the country to encourage people to step outside, enjoy the trails and get some exercise on the first day of the year.

## Engaging the Public with Long-Range Park Plan

After years of assessment and community engagement, the Park Authority developed its Great Parks, Great Communities Park and Recreation System Master Plan that will guide park use and maintenance decisions for the next 10 to 20 years. A draft of the plan encompassing the agency's 425+ parks and services was completed in FY17 and presented to the community for public comment. The plan is expected to be finalized and adopted by the Park Authority Board by winter 2017.



## Honoring America's Veterans

More than 300 veteran and active-duty service members and their families were treated to a day at the RECenter of their choice Veterans Day and at the RECenter or Lakefront

Park of their choice on Memorial Day. The Fairfax County Park Foundation covered admission costs for the Honoring America's Veterans program to provide a complimentary day of fun for those who have made untold sacrifices for our country.



**Then  
& Now**



**Top:** Riverbend Camp, c. 1900.

**Bottom:** Today, Riverbend has 350,000 visitors per year and holds educational programs, campfires and events for the entire family to enjoy. Kayak rentals are a key element to enjoying the stretch of the Potomac River that borders the park. The popular Bluebell Festival heralds the rich spring wildflower season in the park every year.



# Foster a Positive Work Environment

**Ensure an inclusive work culture with two-way communication and a collaborative work environment that supports recognition of valued employees.**

## Internal Communications



In response to the results of an employee survey that showed gaps in employee communication, the Park Authority formed an Internal Communications Committee in FY17 to identify opportunities for improvement across the agency. The diverse group representing all Park Authority divisions developed recommendations designed to facilitate open communication that fosters transparency, collaboration and employee recognition. Final recommendations were presented to the agency's leadership team this fall.

## County Archaeologist Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

It's said that those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Dr. Elizabeth Crowell, manager of the Park Authority's Archaeology and Collections Branch, spent her entire 30-year career preserving the past so that future generations can learn from it, and for her work, she was honored in FY17 with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference. Crowell has worked tirelessly as an archaeologist at both historical and prehistoric sites. Since 2003, she has supervised the Park Authority's important archaeological and cultural preservation initiatives that offer research and insights about life in Fairfax County dating back hundreds and thousands of years.



## Volunteer Manager Named Administrator of the Year

Parks rely heavily on volunteers to help with everything from RECenter operations to resource management. One Park Authority staff member received high honors this year for her volunteer management work at Spring Hill RECenter. Under Shawna Levins leadership, Spring Hill's thriving, multicultural, award-winning volunteer program has logged nearly 10,000 hours of volunteer service since she started working at the RECenter in 2005. Her success is the reason the Northern Virginia Association for Volunteer Administration (NVAVA) presented Levins with its 2017 Sandra Lee Fitch Volunteer Administrator of the Year Award.



## Long Time Park Planner Honored by National Association



Being a park planner is a little like having the ability to look into a crystal ball and predict the future. Sandy Stallman's 15-year Park Authority career involved conducting research, identifying future needs based on everything from growth patterns to demographics to guide park development decisions well past her retirement. Her trailblazing work has contributed to the Park Authority's national standing as one of the finest park systems in the country, and she was recognized in FY17 for professional lifetime excellence from the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO). Stallman's legacy to Fairfax County is a road map for future park system growth and a culture of strong, effective leadership in parks and recreation planning and development.





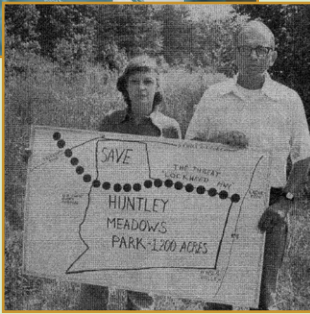


## Legacy Recognized by Fairfax County Park Authority Board

Perhaps the greatest measure of a positive work culture is the people who choose to work there as a volunteer. Norma Hoffman devoted more than four decades of volunteer service at Huntley Meadows Park and was passionate about preserving natural resources and teaching

environmental stewardship to children who visited the park. Hoffman also greeted people at the park's visitor center front desk for many years and did so up until two weeks before her death on June 11, 2017. Her activism stopped construction of a four-lane road that would have cut through the park and caused devastating environmental impact. She also co-founded the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park in

1985, which became a model for Friends groups at other county parks. The Park Authority Board honored Hoffman posthumously with the 2017 Sally Ormsby Environmental Stewardship Award, which recognizes those whose actions embody the spirit and values of stewardship and result in tangible environmental benefits.



## Outdoor activist savors victory for wetlands

PARK from A1

Hoffman, who said volunteers do some of the best work at the park's visitor center, is pictured for her dedication to her cause.

Norma Hoffman, an avid bird watcher and photographer, is pictured at a recent meeting of the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park. Hoffman is pictured with other volunteers at the park's visitor center.



Then  
& Now



**Top:** The land that would become Huntley Meadows park housed a Navy communications center between 1958 and 1975.

**Bottom:** After property was turned over to the Park Authority, beavers and other wildlife returned to the area, eventually creating the largest wetland habitat in the region. The park is home to a widely diverse population of birds, animals, amphibians and insects, and is a favorite spot for nature enthusiasts.



# Maintain a Quality Workforce

Align the organization to achieve consistently excellent performance and prepare for future challenges by expanding professional development opportunities and fostering diversity.

## Park Employees Earn National Certification

The Park Authority has long been recognized for excellence by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and much of that success is due to a highly qualified workforce. In FY17, 15 Park Authority staff members completed a rigorous process to earn credentials as Certified Park and Recreation Professionals (CPRP) by the National Certification Board (NCB) and the NRPA. CPRP certification is granted to recreation, park resources and leisure services professionals who meet educational and work experienced standards and who successfully complete the national CPRP examination.

The Park Authority's newest CPRPs are Megan Baker, Sara Baldwin, John Bartok, Susan Eggerton, David Jewell, Patrick McNamara, George Mehen, Sarah Oberther, Keith O'Connor, Josh Schmidt, Emilie Shumate, Sands Smith, Zane Stivers, Kevin Williams, and Christine Wu. These individuals represent a broad array of positions in the agency, from leadership posts to managers, site workers and more specialized professionals.



## Park Planners Honored for Training Program

Several Park Authority staff members from the Park Planning Division were recognized by the Board of Supervisors in December 2016 with a Team Excellence Award for their work with the county's Joint Training Academy (JTA). The Park Authority staff participated on the interdepartmental team to design and present a training curriculum, Land Development 101, for about 600 county staff members involved in the land development process. The purpose of the training is to foster partnerships, recognize the benefits of collaboration and to encourage a solutions-oriented culture by ensuring participants understand each of the steps of the Fairfax County land use and development process.



Then  
& Now



**Top:** Burke Lake Park opening day, May 25, 1963.

**Bottom:** Burke Lake Park is still a family-oriented haven. The 218 acre lake is a hot spot for bass fishing and tour boat rides. The popular train, carousel, playgrounds and trails have provided entertainment for generations.





## Interpreter Receives National Recognition

Huntley Meadows Park senior interpreter Kylie Starck received the 2016 Outstanding New Interpreter award from the National Association for Interpretation (NAI), an organization comprising parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, gardens, aquariums, historical and

cultural sites across the country. The prestigious award is presented annually to one person who demonstrates potential, leadership, creativity, and commitment to the profession of interpretation. Starck pioneered, created and led nature birthday parties, tot programs, and week-long nature camps at Huntley Meadows that have attracted large audiences since she started working at the park in 2012. In the last year alone, the number of participating school children in park programs increased by more than 50%.



**Top:** Colvin Run Mill, circa 1938.

**Bottom:** Modern-day staff at Colvin Run Mill reenacted the image taken 75 years earlier during the mill's heyday. Today, the 207-year-old, fully restored mill is open for tours and still produces flour and cornmeal for local restaurants and for sale in the park's general store.



# Leverage Technology

Utilize technology solutions to constantly improve customer experiences and increase efficiencies and accuracy in internal business processes.

## DriveCam: It's All About Safety

One of the Park Authority's newest technological tools, DriveCam, is improving staff safety by drawing attention to driving behaviors while the agency's fleet vehicles are in use. The new DriveCam vehicle event recorders (VERS) were installed in February 2017 and staff members were trained to understand the system's capabilities. The VERS capture video and sound of all activity inside and immediately outside each vehicle, although only triggering events, such as hard braking or collisions are permanently recorded for review. The goal is to learn from incidents that could jeopardize safety and to prevent them from happening in the future. At the same time, the new technology is being used to reward staff members for good driving practices.



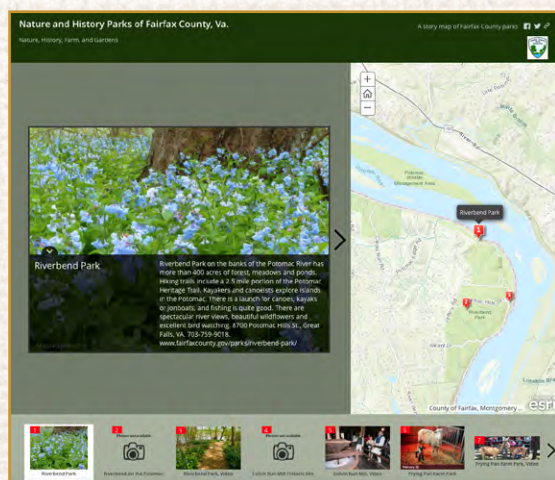
Fairfax County Golf @GolfFairfax · Feb 26

Forgot about your New Year's resolution to get social, healthy & have fun? #GolfFairfax welcomes all levels of play! [fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/)



## GolfFairfax Twitter Account Engages Golfers

The Park Authority's newest social media tool gives golfers instant access to information about everything from sales to course conditions to special events at the agency's seven golf courses. The @GolfFairfax Twitter account was launched in FY17 as the first "franchise" opportunity to engage customers and enhance marketing efforts. To date, more than 500 golfers have joined in the fun online. While Twitter specifically targets golfers, the agency's other social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram target multiple park user groups.



## Story Map: Innovative Way to See Parks Unveiled

There is a new way to tour some of your local parks, and thanks to the Park Authority's new web-based story map, you can take a tour of featured parks without ever leaving home. The new guide launched in FY17 is an online application based on Geographic Information System mapping technology. It presents a photographic and video journey along with interactive maps and highlights through Riverbend, Colvin Run Mill, Hidden Pond, Hidden Oaks, Huntley Meadows, Sully Historic Site, Ellanor C. Lawrence, Green Spring Gardens, and Frying Pan Farm parks. The new story map can be seen at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management).



# Looking Ahead



As the county's 275th anniversary year comes to a close, we have appreciated the opportunity to celebrate not only the accomplishments of the past year, but our park system's evolution in the county's history. From the very beginning, residents recognized the value of preserving natural resources and open space for leisure opportunities, and the result today is an expansive park system that is nationally recognized for excellence.

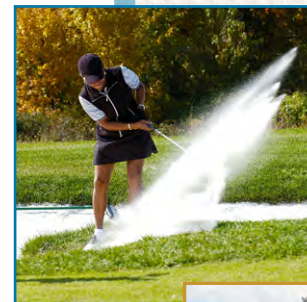
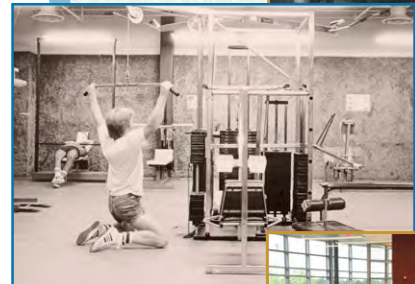
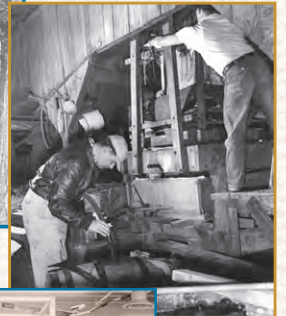
In the coming year, we expect to adopt our first agency-wide master plan, which was developed with a great deal of input from our community and will guide us through the next decade. We will begin addressing modernization needs determined by a recently completed RECenter study, and we will take our commitment to preserving and protecting natural and cultural resources to a new level by moving forward with plans for an environmental stewardship education center, an east-west addition to our trail system to compliment the Cross County Trail, and plans for an historic artifacts repository. We will also identify the first participants in our Resident Curator Program to restore deteriorating historic properties.

Ultimately, we will continue to work toward achieving the One Fairfax vision of providing high-quality parks, programs and services that offer equitable leisure opportunities for all Fairfax County residents. It's an achievable vision in a community that values its parks as much as Fairfax County does. Thank you for your support and for your love of parks. Together we will maintain the high standard of excellence that makes the Fairfax County Park Authority one of the finest park systems in the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K.W. Kincannon".

**Kirk W. Kincannon, CPRP**  
**Executive Director, Fairfax County Park Authority**





# A Place in Time

## FY 2017 Strategic Plan and Annual Report

### The Park Authority Board Would Like to Hear From You!

Fairfax County residents are invited to speak at the beginning of regular Park Authority Board meetings on any park topic with the exception of issues related to litigation or personnel matters, which are confidential. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. in Suite 941 of the Herrity Building located at 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Va. To learn more, visit the Board calendar page: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/boardagn2.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/boardagn2.htm).

### Park Authority Board Members - July 2016 - June 2017



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Chairman  
Hunter Mill District



**Mary Cortina**  
Vice Chairman  
Member-at-Large



**Michael Thompson, Jr.**  
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Springfield District



**Linwood Gorham**  
Treasurer  
Mt. Vernon District



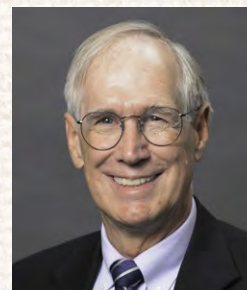
**Walter Alcorn**  
Member-at-Large



**Dr. Cynthia Jacobs Carter**  
Lee District



**Maggie Godbold**  
Sully District



**Timothy B. Hackman**  
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**Ronald Kendall**  
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