

A Lifetime OF DISCOVERY



Welcome to the Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report. I hope you enjoy your “virtual” visit to the Fairfax County Park Authority via this publication. This report, while aligned with our Strategic Plan update, captures just a moment in time illustrating system wide progress and accomplishments both large and small during the reporting period. In my tenure as Chairman of the Park Authority Board over the past decade, I find the hardest thing to explain in simple terms is the width and breadth of our community’s legacy park system and its complexity.

This was a banner year and I would be remiss if I did not mention that in FY2019 – in fact, the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA), in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), named the Fairfax County Park Authority as a finalist for the 2019 National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. In September, we won the Grand Plaque in the Class 1 category for populations greater than 400,000. Simply put that makes us the best park system for large counties and cities in the nation.

Agencies are judged on their ability to address the needs of those they serve through the collective energies of citizens, staff and elected officials. This is the fourth time that the Park Authority has earned this prestigious honor. While this award was presented to us just outside the 2019 Fiscal reporting window, we felt it was clearly worthy of a mention.

I am very proud of this achievement that reflects so well on our entire community. We could not have done this without your support, without a talented and dedicated staff, without strong partnerships and Friends organizations, or without the Park Foundation. Certainly, we would not flourish without the support of the Board of Supervisors and other elected and appointed officials.

In this report, you will read about programs and projects throughout our park system – the day-to-day, nuts and bolts that make us unique – diverse camps and entertaining, free concerts in our parks, a well-used and growing trail system, updated RECenters, new facilities including playgrounds, athletic fields, and picnic shelters and a commitment to site maintenance to mention just a few top-of-mind issues. As always, the best is yet to come.

Back in 2015 we fully embraced developing a One Fairfax mindset to improve park system equity and access for all. As a result, the Park Authority has doubled our contribution to more than \$1 million each year to our scholarship program where we provide scholarships to nearly 9,000 individuals. This good work helps ensure increased access to the benefits of physical and mental activity from the recreation services the Park Authority provides to county residents.

In the coming year we will put our newly developed equity plan into action. It’s new day for increased park and recreation access, as the Park Authority will work closely with Fairfax County to improve the health benefits that go together with our park system. In 2020 we will ask you, as voters, to approve another Park Bond in order to ensure continued care and maintenance for our existing park system, provide increased protection of open space, stewardship of our natural resources and development of new facilities to meet our population growth impacts and needs.

These are exciting times and I know that the Park Authority, as stewards of your county park system, are up to the task and eager to continue delivering our excellent services as we enter the next decade. Thank you again for your continued support!

William G. Bouie
Chairman, Park Authority Board



FCPA Wins National Gold Medal for Excellence in Parks and Recreation

For the fourth time, the Fairfax County Park Authority has received the National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. The American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA), in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), presented the award to the Park Authority at the 2019 NRPA Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Park Authority won the Grand Plaque in the Class 1 category for populations greater than 400,000. Awards are presented after agencies have been rigorously judged on their ability to address the needs of those they serve through the collective energies of citizens, staff and elected officials. At the honors ceremony, Park Authority Executive Director Kirk W. Kincannon said the agency was “honored and humbled” to be recognized as “The Best in the Nation.” In Kincannon’s words, “We do what we love and we love what we do every day of the year because parks matter and parks build strong and healthy communities all across this great nation.”

Park Authority Board Chairman Bill Bouie said, “This award is a tribute to the quality of life in Fairfax County and the importance of parks in the health and wellness of our residents. We can only do this with a great staff, and support from the Board of Supervisors, the Park Authority Board, and our residents. Our citizens love their parks and this award is a tribute to them.”

Founded in 1965, the Gold Medal Awards program honors communities throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition.

AWARDS

National Association of County Park & Recreation Officials (NACPRO)

- Outstanding Volunteer, Michael Applegate
- Outstanding Support Organization, FROGS (Friends of Green Spring Gardens)
- Historical and Cultural Facility, Stempson House Resident Curator Program

National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC)

- Award of Excellence (1st Place), Writer’s Portfolio Category, Karen Thayer
- Award of Excellence (2nd Place), Brand Identity Category, Women & Golf Fairfax
- Award of Excellence (2nd Place), Magazine Category, Parktakes
- Award of Excellence, Calendar Category, Healthy Strides 2019 Calendar

Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)

- 2018 Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting presented to FCPA Finance Team

Virginia Recreation & Park Society (VRPS)

- Distinguished Volunteer Service, Stephen Thormahlen
- Best New Renovation/Addition (Bricks and Mortar), Population Greater than 200,000, Pinecrest Golf Course’s Indoor Valis Family Learning Center
- Best New Environmental Sustainability, Population Greater than 200,000, John C. and Margaret K. White Horticultural Park Restoration

Additional:

Burke Lake Golf Center’s driving range was recognized as one of the Top 50 Public Ranges by Golf Range Magazine, a publication of the Golf Range Association of America

Fairfax County Park Authority Summer Camps were named to Northern Virginia Magazine’s “2019 Best Summer Camps” list

Frying Pan Farm Park was honored for its outstanding land-use stewardship with the 2018 Fairfax County Clean Water Farm Award from the Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District

Inspire

A Passion for Parks



Quick Facts

14,930,628
FY19 Park
Visits

27,570
Children enrolled
in camps

1,646,581
RECenter visits

14,945
Total programs
offered

150,246
Total program
registrations



DISCOVERY TRAIL TAKES OFF

The Discovery Trail Map was designed to generate awareness of and increase visitation to Resource Management Division sites as well as lakefront parks. This year's free Discovery Trail Map encouraged participants to blast off for summer fun in Fairfax County Parks. The theme explored transportation history in 12 featured parks and helped commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Visitors who collected stickers for their maps at eight or more parks received a prize packet valued at \$93. It included tickets to park amusements such as camping, mini golf, and boat, train and carousel rides. Participants also were entered in a drawing for new bicycles and safety helmets donated by Spokes, Etc. and Trek through the Fairfax County Park Foundation. The Discovery Trail promotion tallied more than 18,000 park visits from people ranging in age from 2 to 92.



SPRINGfest CELEBRATED

Fairfax County celebrated Earth Day and Arbor Day on April 27, 2019, with a day of free activities for families at Sully Historic Site. SPRINGfest visitors could run an environmental obstacle course, participate in environmental crafts, check out bees and trees, consult with Master Gardeners, touch-a-truck, and enjoy a puppet show, cooking demonstrations, music and poetry. The event featured more than 75 vendors, exhibitors and food trucks.

POETRY CONTEST HELD

In recognition of National Poetry Month in April, the Park Authority and the Fairfax County Park Foundation invited local elementary and middle-school students to write poems inspired by the fun, joy and excitement of time spent in parks. For the first time, the annual poetry contest tied in with the theme for the 2019 Park & Recreation Week: "Game On!" Nine winners were selected from 132 entries and were awarded a \$50 park Authority gift card. Winners were also invited to read their park-inspired poem at Springfest.



LAKE FAIRFAX - MARC GENBERG TRAIL NAMED

The Park Authority celebrated the American Hiking Society's National Trails Day on June 1, 2019, by renaming Trail #8 at Lake Fairfax Park in honor of the late Marc Genberg. Genberg was an outstanding trails volunteer, mentor and bicycling coach who dedicated many hours to the park. In honor of the occasion, a replica trail marker was presented to his wife Toni Genberg.

FIRST HIKE

Hundreds of people welcomed 2019 by taking a hike on Fairfax County Park Authority trails. More than 280 photos were submitted for the 2019 First Hike Fairfax photo contest – more than triple that of the previous year. The 2019 contest was expanded to encourage more park-goers to get outside and explore Fairfax County parks and trails on January 1. Photo eligibility was expanded from five trails to the entire Park Authority trail system, and voting was expanded to include more than just Facebook users. Two winners received a four-month RECenter pass valued at \$300.



WOMEN & GOLF RECEPTION 2019 - #DRIVEON #INVITEHER

The benefits of playing golf are legendary in business and in health – for men. In fact, 90% of Fortune 500 company CEOs, most of whom are male, spend time on the course networking and enjoying the health, social and business benefits associated with the game. Getting more women to enjoy this sport and its myriad benefits, inspired GolfFairfax to reach into the community and say welcome to women. More than 150 women participated in the second annual Women & Golf reception held at Twin Lakes Golf course this summer. New and experienced golfers enjoyed free mini clinics hosted by Golf Fairfax's five golf academies and learned more about instructional programs, party rentals and events. The day-long event also featured golf vendors, exhibitors and a fun-filled atmosphere of mingling, music and new golf opportunities along with guest speakers from Women's Congressional Golf, LPGA Women Who Play, DC Chapter and Women on Course. With the assistance of the Fairfax County Park Foundation, more than \$4000 in sponsorships and in-kind donations were raised to help fund giveaways, a DJ, guest speakers and other program elements.



PARK AND REC MONTH OBSERVED

Parks are an integral part of life in Fairfax County and across the nation. They provide crucial health and wellness opportunities, as well as access to green space and opportunities for family fun. In honor of National Park & Recreation Month, sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed July Park & Recreation Month in Fairfax County and encouraged residents to get their "Game On." The Park Authority served up a bucket list of 31 FREE activities to enjoy – something new for each day of the month. Activities included hikes, picnics, fishing, golf, animal visits, scavenger hunts, art exhibits, garden walks, playgrounds and a splash park.

More Info: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gameon>



300 DOGS ATTEND IDES OF BARK/DOG DAZE

More than 300 dogs and nearly 900 human guardians made tracks to the fourth annual Ides of Bark family event at Grist Mill Park. Local pet and dog-centric businesses lined the path offering visitors information, food, pet grooming, pet gifts and more. The event also featured an agility course and a dog park loaded with tennis balls and squeaky toys. The popular Fairfax County K-9 officers demonstrated their talents in scent work with bloodhounds, and McGruff made an appearance, too. This annual event sponsored by the Mount Vernon Supervisor's Office and the Fairfax County Park Authority.



Partnerships

Strengthen and Foster Partnerships



PARK FOUNDATION: TWO DECADES OF GIVING

The Fairfax County Park Foundation will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2020. For the past two decades, the Foundation has provided support for the Park Authority by raising private funds, obtaining grants and creating partnerships that supplement tax dollars to meet community needs for parks and park programs. In its first year, the Park Foundation raised \$3,039. The grand total over the years hit \$9,789,641 in FY19.



Fairfax County Park Foundation

Some other highlights from FY19:

- Donation total: \$1,176,757 for parks and outreach programs
- Largest Individual Gift: \$360,000 agreement by the Lazar Family to endow Natural Resource Management over the next decade
- Legacy Circle: 26 Members pledged to leave a legacy via their will or other planned gift
- PACT Summer Camp: 345 Weeks of summer camp provided to children in homeless shelter, transitional and supportive housing.
- Class Scholarships: 8,257 FCPA classes provided to individuals demonstrating need
- Rec-PAC Scholarships: 2,226 in FY18* awarded to children from low-income families in summer 2019

FITNESS INSTRUCTORS EARN CANCER CERTIFICATION

Ten Park Authority fitness trainers have been certified as cancer exercise specialists by the Cancer Exercise Training Institute, and FCPA is partnering with 2Unstoppable to connect women who have or had cancer with exercise partners. The goal is to coordinate efforts with 2Unstoppable and INOVA Life with Cancer, raise awareness and promote the resources RECenters have available to those recovering from cancer. In December 2018, Spring Hill partnered with 2Unstoppable for a walk and talk that allowed women to meet for gentle exercise and support after their cancer diagnoses. Another walk is planned for December 2019, and more training for fitness instructors is planned in FY20.

INOVA PARTNERSHIP EXPANDS

The Park Authority's partnership with INOVA Physical Therapy continues to grow. The program, which allows individuals to transition seamlessly from physical therapy to community-based fitness under one roof, is in its fourth year of operation at Audrey Moore RECenter. In 2017, a satellite clinic was opened at Cub Run RECenter, and in 2018, a satellite clinic opened at Spring Hill RECenter. Other RECenter sites are being considered for a possible fourth site. In FY19, there were 880 client check-ins at Spring Hill, 1,663 at Cub Run, and 3,983 Audrey Moore. The program produced \$86,458 in revenue in FY19 from check-in fees and rent.

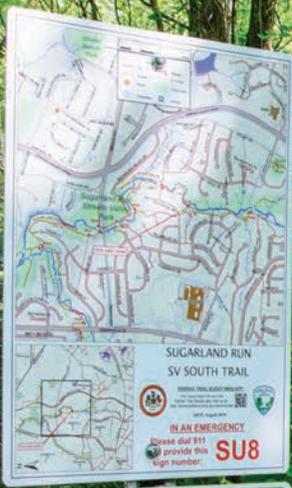


VOLUNTEER PROJECTS ABOUND

Volunteers contributed a total of service hours 131,800 to the Park Authority in FY19. They supported parks and RECenters through activities ranging from trail maintenance to front desk service, watershed clean-ups to historical interpretation, and animal care to special events. The new Cleanup Blitz Program in Park Operations connected businesses with volunteer opportunities to promote teambuilding and giving back to the community. Employees from Amazon Data Center, Booz Allen Hamilton, Capital One, Doody Calls, EQR, Google and HDR Inc. volunteered at parks across the county and gave of their time to conduct clean-up projects, and even do a little carousel painting.

Park Foundation

Strengthen and Foster Partnerships



FRIENDS SIGN UP

The Park Authority is getting by with a little help from its friends. These community-driven, resident-powered, often non-profit organizations are self-governed but agree to work in collaboration with the Park Authority to benefit specific park sites. They fundraise, provide manpower, and advocate for parks and the assets of the Park Authority.

For more than 50 years, Friends groups have supported, enhanced, and advocated for Fairfax County's parks, facilities, and services. To acknowledge and expand upon their benefit, the agency's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan included a project to develop agency-wide consistency in the way the Park Authority partners with these groups. In FY2019, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with the following eight groups:

- Founders, Benefactors, Supervisors & Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park
- Friends of Colvin Run Mill
- Friends of Fairfax County Archaeological and Cultural Resources
- Friends of Green Spring Gardens
- Friends of Hidden Oaks Nature Center
- Friends of Historic Huntley
- Friends of Lake Accotink Park
- Friends of Pimmit Barn

They join two groups that signed MOUs in FY2018.

PARK VOLUNTEER TEAMS THRIVE

The Park Volunteer Team (PVT) program is quickly growing! In FY19, PVTs volunteered 498 hours of their time to improve our parks. The Park Authority also published a handbook for anyone interested in starting a new Park Volunteer Team, which is available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/park-volunteer-team. There are currently 15 PVTs working with the approval of the Park Authority to assist in maintaining parks. These groups are focused on individual parks, with members drawn together by a mutual interest in maintaining their favorite sites. Some focus primarily on cleanups, and others are expanding their reach to include special events and activities with proceeds that benefit the Park Authority.

RIVERBEND WILDLIFE SURVEYED

Riverbend Park partnered with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) for a survey and study of arthropods, such as caterpillars, beetles and spiders, that birds and other wildlife rely on for food. Under the partnership, the park served as a host site for Caterpillars Count! – a citizen science project that studies the abundance of arthropods and the impact that seasonal and climatic changes have on them. Riverbend hosted a Caterpillars Count! training workshop in May as its first step as a program host site. Project representatives from UNC helped the park set up survey areas in upland and lowland forested areas. Educators from around the region were then taught about the project, how to identify arthropods, and how to record information for the surveys.

In the first year of the survey, five counters at Riverbend Park observed 699 arthropods over 12 different dates, including 143 caterpillars. Two counters at Scott's Run Nature Preserve observed 146 arthropods over nine different dates, including 20 caterpillars. Researchers are particularly interested in when caterpillars are available because they are a major food source for nestlings of migratory birds.

Mastenbrook Grant Program Celebrates 20th Anniversary

In FY2019, the Park Authority's Mastenbrook Volunteer Matching Fund Grant program celebrated its 20th anniversary of improving county parks through public-private partnerships. Since inception, program grants totaled \$1.7 million to individuals and groups to help fund 187 park projects. Those projects are valued at more than \$12 million. Funding for the program comes from Park Bonds.

The grant program was established at the suggestion of long-time park advocate John Mastenbrook. His idea was to establish a funding source to match volunteer funds or in-kind services to encourage public-private ventures in the parks. Mastenbrook served on the Park Board for 21 years, and the grant program was named in his honor for his key role in its development.

Mastenbrook grant improvement projects include adding field lighting at Hooes Road Park, synthetic turf at Nottoway Park, field fencing at Pine Ridge Park, scoreboards at Clermont Park and batting cages at Reston North Park. These grants have also been used to build or improve playgrounds, dog parks, landscapes, gazebos, picnic shelters, trails and equestrian facilities and to equip the roll-top observatory at Turner Farm Park, to construct outdoor fitness stations and to support resource protection initiatives.

Advance Park System Excellence



**RENOVATION OF FACILITIES/
\$ INVESTED IN LAST FIVE YEARS**
\$52,420,000 has been reinvested in facilities over the last 5 years.

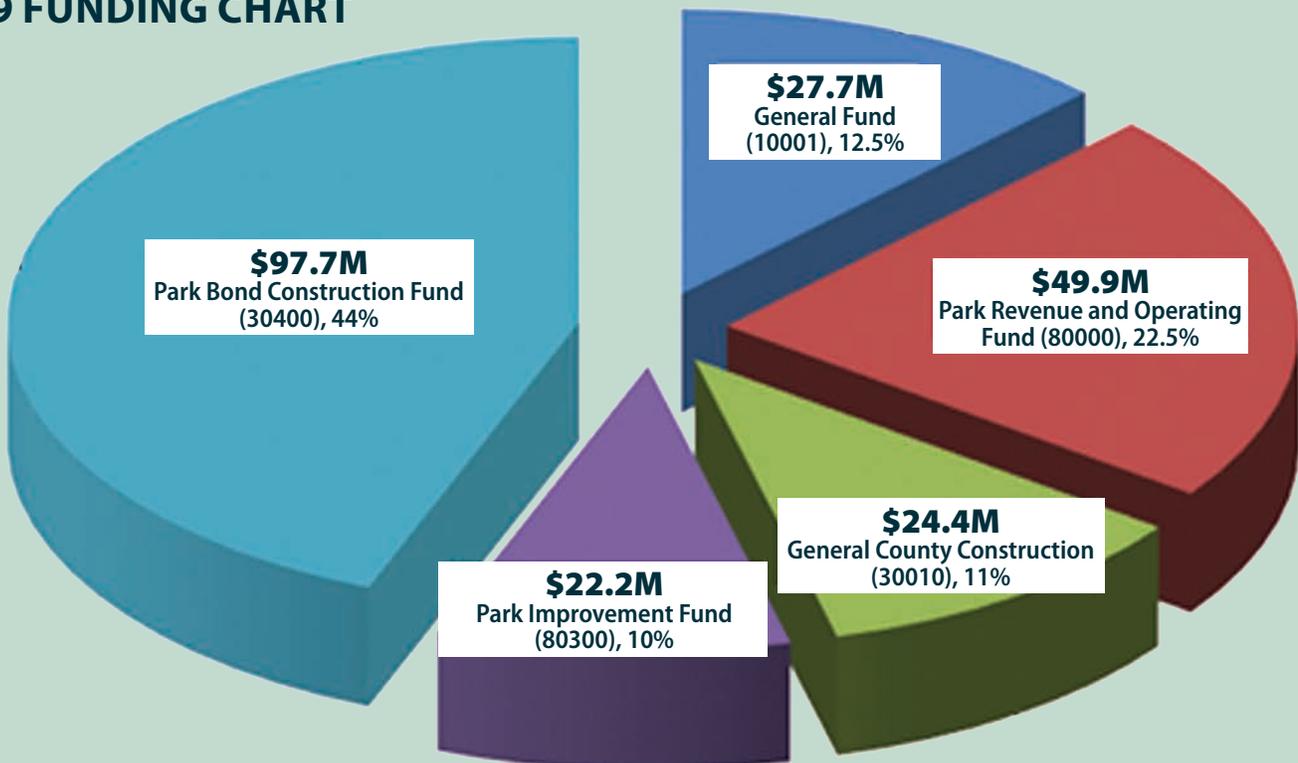
IDEA PORTAL



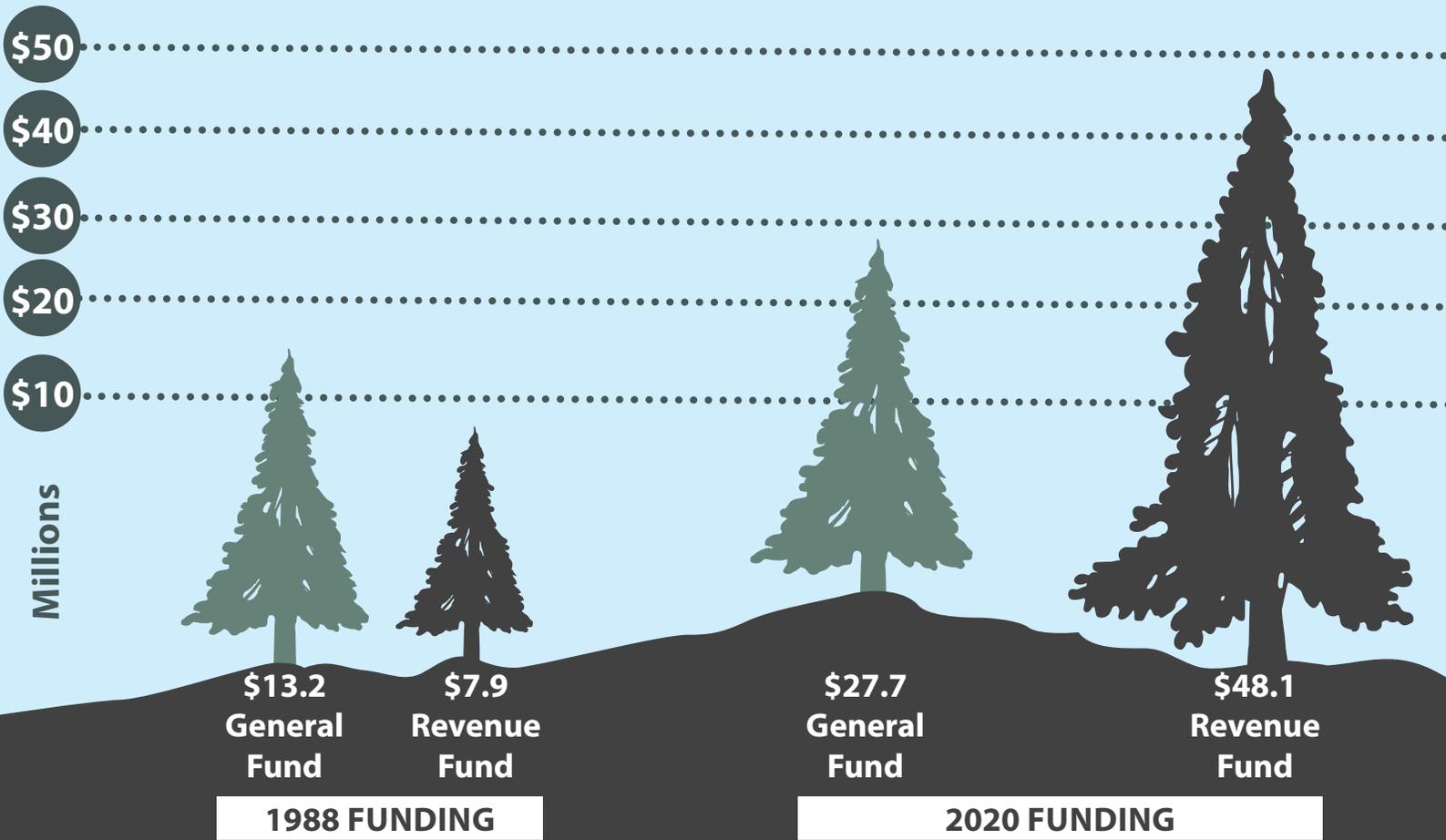
A new Idea Portal for staff opened this past summer in response to an employee concern regarding communications within the Park Authority. An initiative was included in the Strategic Plan to develop a way for staff to submit ideas about agency operations. A team was assembled, and the agency-wide Idea Portal was born. Ideas that are submitted are posted to the portal for an open comment period and are then reviewed by agency leaders. In its first month, nine ideas were submitted for leadership review.

FIVE (5) PARK AUTHORITY FUNDS FY 2020 REVISED BUDGET TOTAL BUDGET: \$222,079,420

FY19 FUNDING CHART



CREATING A SUSTAINABLE PARK SYSTEM



RECDYNAMICS GOES LIVE

The RecDynamics online registration system completed 611,724 transactions for \$37.34 million in FY19. It had posted just over one million transactions since its launch in May of 2018 through the fall of 2019. There are approximately 171,000 total households in the system and nearly 27,000 of them were added in FY19.

New RecDynamics features were added throughout FY19, introducing reservation modules for:

- School Field Trips
- Picnics
- Water Mine outings

The new registration system is now providing a streamlined, customer-centric approach to signing up for Park Authority classes, programs, events and camps. Work is ongoing for additional system enhancements to once again, make it easier for customers to navigate the system.

EMPLOYEES HONORED

Oak Marr RECenter was honored in 2018 as the site of the year at the Park Authority's annual Trailblazers luncheon and awards presentation in October. These peer-driven awards honor individuals, groups and sites for service above and beyond in the past year.

Individual honors included:

- Employee of the Year – Tammy Higgs
- Customer Service – Laurie Holcomb
- Stewardship – Michael Chipouras & Katherine Frandanisa
- Supervisor of the Year – Tammy Schwab
- Committee's Choice Award – Barbara Nugent

Team award recipients included:

- Quality of Life Award -- South Run Aquatics Team (John Sifrit, Linda Mulloy, Sands Smith & Gerianne Basden)
- Diversity Award -- Women & Gold Reception Team (Roberta Korzen, Sarah Oberther, Maureen Sullivan, Margaret Demott, Kara Spain, Cindy Fortuno, Andy Elkins, Ryan Carmen, Edison Rosales, Gary Temple & Alex Titus)
- Team of the Year Award -- Web Reconstruction Core Team (Don Tubel, Roberta Korzen, Dave Ochs, Stephanie Powers-Loughry, Brian Laws, Elizabeth Ehrreich, Adam Wynn & Mary Nelms)



Advance Park System Excellence



VALIS GOLF LEARNING CENTER DEDICATED

The new Indoor Valis Family Learning Center at Pinecrest Golf Course allows golfers to work on their game year-round, rain or shine. It features a TrackMan 4 Golf Simulator, new indoor practice bays and a new teaching bay for electronic swing analysis. The expanded facility was named in honor of Wayne and Angela Valis, recognizing their generous donation of the TrackMan 4. In 2019, the Virginia Recreation and Park Society named the facility the Best New Renovation/Addition in the Bricks and Mortar category for a population area greater than 200,000.



NOTTOWAY PARK FIELD RENOVATED

Field #4 at Nottoway Park in Vienna took on a new look in FY19. The field was reoriented and enlarged to create a 360'x 210' multi-sport field for field hockey, football, soccer and lacrosse. Synthetic turf was installed to extend playability. Funding for the \$1.7 million upgrade was provided via the 2016 Park Bond.

MASTER PLANS COMPLETED

Everyone loves it when a great plan comes together, and the Park Planning Division completed three park plans in FY19:

- Lake Fairfax Park (Master Plan Revision): On September 26, 2018, the Park Authority Board approved the park's Revised Master Plan. New planned facilities include an off-leash dog area, a central gazebo, playground, rental cabins, interpretive meadow, cricket field, multipurpose center, expanded pump track, adventure course, and a recreation path loop.
- Bren Mar Park (2232 Determination): On December 6, 2018, the Planning Commission determined that the public improvements detailed in the park's 2018 Master Plan conformed with the County's Comprehensive Plan. New planned facilities include an off-leash dog area, an additional picnic shelter, playground, meadow/open play area, and additional parking.
- Franconia District Park (2232 Determination): On June 26, 2019, the Planning Commission determined that the improvements detailed in the park's 2018 Master Plan Revision conformed with the County's Comprehensive Plan. New planned facilities include expanded parking and traffic calming, permanent restrooms, fitness stations, a playground, picnic areas, community garden features, upgraded athletic fields, and natural resource management opportunities.

10 Master plans provide guidance for future park development but are always subject to available funding.





WILTON WOODS PLAYGROUND REPLACED

Citing aging equipment, and a lack of ADA accessibility, Park Authority staff determined that playground equipment replacement was needed at the Wilton Woods School Site. Although the equipment installed in the 1990s had been repaired, the site had exceeded its life expectancy and no longer met playground safety guidelines or provided ADA access. The next step was to demolish the existing playground.

A project team determined a replacement playground would include separated equipment for age 2-5 years and age 5-12 years. Playground equipment, borders, safety surfacing and an ADA bench were replaced. As part of the project, an ADA trail was installed from the parking lot to the playground. Project costs were estimated at \$120,000.

AZALEA PARK BLOOMS

The Park Authority worked closely with the Greater Hillwood Citizens Association to plan the improvements to Azalea Park in Falls Church, VA. The planning and construction process took about one year. The project included installation of new playground equipment, fitness equipment and site furnishings. Project costs were estimated at \$176,000.

On September 14, 2019, a ribbon-cutting ceremony and azalea planting marked the completion of work at the fully redesigned park. Cunningham Recreation, Custom Park Solutions and Denison Landscaping provided services for the project, which had a total cost of \$176,500. Funding was acquired through proffers.



BACKLICK PARK REFRESHED

On January 24, 2018, the Fairfax County Park Board approved a major renovation plan that included a new playground area, picnic shelter and tennis court at Backlick Park in Annandale, VA. Backlick Park was master-planned in 1978, and its facilities were constructed primarily in the early 1980s. Most of the funding for the \$1,092,000 renovation came from the voter-approved 2016 Park Bond. Construction began in early 2018.

Active construction was anticipated to be completed by the end of June 2018, but rainy weather delayed completion until a few months later. Ribbon cutting ceremonies took place on Saturday, November 17, 2018. Construction included the installation of a new shelter and picnic tables, a new playground, a new fitness area, renovation of the tennis courts, new tennis court lighting and the repaving of the trails and parking lot.



MONTICELLO PARK GETS ACTIVE

The Park Authority promoted the health of both two- and four-legged residents with the opening of new facilities at Monticello Park in Burke. Monticello now features an obstacle course/playground designed with tweens and teens in mind, an off-leash dog park, multi-use space and trails. The \$1.5 million project was funded by the 2016 Park Bond.



COMMUNITY TRAILS IMPROVED

Fiscal Year 2019 was a busy year for trail improvements, repairs and expansions. At the heart of Park Authority efforts was work on the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail (GCCCT) opened in 2006. Much of the 41-mile, multi-use trail lies in active floodplains, thus the Park Authority has focused on hardening the surface to reduce the sediment loading in the streams from trail-surface erosion.

- A project to pave approximately 3,000 Linear Feet of gravel trail in Sally Ormsby Park was completed in May of 2019. The project includes culvert replacements and steel bridge repairs. Phase 2 and 3 will pave an additional 5,600 Linear Feet of the GCCCT and replace one steel bridge in Eakin Park.
- Two more GCCCT improvement projects included eliminating an at-grade stream crossing, 4,400 Linear Feet of asphalt paving, replacing one bridge for the section of the GCCCT between Old Keene Mill Road and Hunter Village Drive and repairing asphalt trail sections near Woodburn Road.

Out of a total of 162 projects that have been evaluated using the Trail Development Strategy Plan criteria, 36 have been completed and 12 are currently in design or construction phases.

LIBERTY BELL TRAIL ENHANCED

Additional work was completed on the Pohick Stream Valley Trail in FY2019. This project consisted of 2,500 LF of new asphalt trail in Pohick Stream Valley. It is an extension of the Liberty Bell Trail project completed in 2017.

SUGARLAND RUN TRAIL IMPROVED

Trails remain one of the most popular amenities our park system offers. Visitors to Herndon are enjoying the new and improved Sugarland Run Stream Valley Trail. Approximately 12,000 linear feet of the old trail was milled and repaved from the bridge near Kingstream Circle to Wiehle Avenue and from Wiehle Avenue to Dranesville Road in Sugarland Run Stream Valley Park. The \$400,000 project addressed general wear and tear, as well as trail damage due to severe flooding.





QUANTUM FIELD OPENS

Tyson's got a bit greener with the Quantum Field opening, valued at more than \$3 million. This lighted, state-of-the-art synthetic turf rectangular field and its adjacent parking lot were the result of a proffer agreement between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Park Authority and The Meridian Group. The field accommodates five sports on a 180' by 360' surface. The project also included black vinyl perimeter chain link fencing, concrete walkways, bleacher pads, athletic field and parking lot lighting, sound-containing walls and landscaping.

Tyson's continues to grow as both a workplace and home to thousands of families. As Tyson's transforms from a suburban commercial center to a major regional urban center, a connected network of urban parks will distinguish the area as a great urban center that includes, well considered park placement, connectivity, recreational facilities, civic spaces and community building features, as well as the desire for cultural and natural resource preservation and interpretation.

So too, the need for increased recreational opportunity, including athletic fields such as Quantum Field. According to park planners the major rezoning applications approved since 2010 generated a need for 9.7 new athletic fields. To date, three have been provided and 6.7 are proffered but remain to be built through either land dedication, facility construction or a contribution of funds. With other applications pending approval, it is estimated that an additional 2.25 fields would be needed in the future. Approximately 5.7 million square feet of constructed development has occurred to date.

DRONES AND EBIKE REGULATIONS UPDATED TO PERMIT PARK USE, COMPLY WITH STATE MANDATES



Effective July 1, 2018, the use of unmanned aircraft (drones) is allowed on Park Authority lands. Pilots are expected to abide by all applicable FAA regulations, safety guidance, and airspace restrictions. The Fairfax County Park Authority Board also updated Regulation 1.17 of its Policy Manual to comply with the Virginia Code. This regulation change formalizes the practices that went into effect on July 1. UAS are welcome in the parks without prior permission. A permit is still required for model rockets and radio-controlled cars, boats, and other non-aircraft.

Although the Park Authority is not able to regulate the use of drones, we are hopeful that operators will respect other park users, stay clear of wildlife and natural and cultural resource areas and generally, be respectful in their use of unmanned aircraft over parkland.

Between 2015 and 2017 electric powered bicycle (e-bike) sales in the United States increased by 90%, outpacing all other bicycle sales. E-bikes have emerged as a viable transportation and recreational option to the car and traditional bicycle. E-bikes also reduce barriers to bike riding by providing inclusive recreation opportunities to people of all ages and health levels. In so doing they promote healthier lifestyles for Fairfax County residents.

Commonwealth of Virginia law allows the use of e-bikes wherever regular bicycles are allowed. Virginia Code sections §10.1, §15.2, and §46.2 regulate e-bikes with a power rating less than 1000 watts, and top powered speed of 25 mph as bicycles that can be used on trails and shared use paths. Furthermore, Virginia Code §15.2-5704(17) grants the Park Authority the ability to adopt rules and regulations concerning the use of properties under its control, only if those rules and regulations are not in conflict with the laws of the Commonwealth.

On April 10, 2019, the Park Authority Board voted to approve an update to Park Authority Regulation 1.14, Motor Vehicles and Traffic, to align with Virginia Code and NOVA Parks regulation on the use of electric powered bikes on park trails.

Guidelines were also approved to provide recommendations for e-bike use on park trails.

Kids Learn Stewardship

QUICK FACTS

Be Great Stewards – Quick Facts

of school field trips:
47,445 students from 246 schools
in four counties

of stewardship programs: 1,835

of program registrations: 25,893



Deer Management

- 732 Fairfax County Police Department volunteer hours to harvest white-tailed deer at 94 parks (578 individual volunteers)
- Deer management occurs on 21,119 acres (88% of total Park Authority acreage)
- Assessed 14 parks for deer browse impacts and 22 parks for deer density estimates using camera surveys

Care for the land

- 3,302 acres were surveyed for invasive species this past summer with our interns
- Classified and mapped 3,725 acres of natural vegetation communities at nine parks (vegetation ecologists)
- Implemented 82 acres of prescribed fire at three parks
- Completed the Huntley Meadows Natural Resource Management Plan
- Kicked off the Western Area Natural Resource Management Plan (includes multiple parks)



DEAD RUN STREAM RESTORED

McLean's Dead Run Stream restoration project concluded with a celebratory ribbon cutting on June 1, 2019. The degraded, 3,200 linear-foot stream was improved using natural channel design and riparian corridor enhancements to reduce flooding, stabilize the stream banks, protect property, reduce erosion and tree loss and improve water quality and habitat. Leaders from the Park Authority and the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) attended the celebration. The project was dedicated in memory of DPWES landscape architect John Palmer who worked tirelessly to make the restoration one of the best in Fairfax County. Members of his family were on hand to help cut the ribbon.

RIVERBEND SHELTER OPENS

Riverbend Park's new outdoor education shelter opened in April to support the park's numerous environmental educational programs. More than 300,000 people visit the Great Falls park annually, including thousands of local school children and scouts who meet with naturalists and explore the natural world along the Potomac River. Community members can also rent the large shelter for community gatherings and celebrations. The \$864,000 project, which also included 18 new parking spaces, a segmented block retaining wall and stormwater management, was financed through voter-approved park bonds.



NATURE PLAYCE CELEBRATED

Hidden Oaks Nature Center celebrated the 10th anniversary of Nature Playce – a place where children can safely explore the wonders of the natural world. The one-third acre woodland area is unstructured, encouraging kids to wander and discover. Naturalists keep the play area safe for young children, clearing out such things as poison ivy, allowing kids the freedom to climb on boulders, dig in the dirt, find hidden dinosaur tracks, balance on fallen trees and peek under rocks. Nature Playce was inspired by Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods*, and the author's concerns about a growing Nature Deficit Disorder among today's children.



STUDENTS VISIT PARKS

More than 47,000 students from 246 schools in four counties got to "play hooky" from school in FY19 and spend time on a field trip in Fairfax County parks. Field trip

offerings included historic exploration at Colvin Run Mill and Sully Historic Site, gardening at Green Spring Gardens, farming at Frying Pan Farm Park, and science discoveries at Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Hidden Pond Nature Center, Huntley Meadows Park, Lakefront Parks, Riverbend Park Cub Run RECenter, and Ellanor C. Lawrence Park.

In addition, park staff visit fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms each year as part of the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE). The program meets Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement education requirements for elementary school students. Students rotate through stations that cover erosion and land use, native plant habitats and schoolyard biodiversity data collection.



POLLINATORS IN ACTION

Where would we be without the honeybee? In September 2018, Green Spring Gardens visitors learned about the importance of bees to our food supply. There were opportunities to meet a beekeeper, see inside a beehive, learn a bee dance and take part in a bee scavenger hunt. Information was provided on how to help these vital pollinators thrive. Green Spring hosted the free event with the Northern Virginia Beekeepers Association.

IMAS REACHES 61 LOCATIONS

Park Authority staff and volunteers continue to fight the invasive species that threaten parkland and animal health. These plants can degrade natural ecosystems and overwhelm woodland. The Invasive Management Area (IMA) Program is actively removing these species at 61 sites across the county and replacing the invasives with native plants. In FY19, IMA program participants planted more than 1,500 native species, plus nearly 100 pounds of native seed mix. Two-thousand volunteers contributed to the effort, donating 6,539 hours of their time.

VOLUNTEERS REPAIR HISTORIC SITES

The Park Authority serves as a steward to hundreds of historically rich buildings, ruins and surrounding landscapes, and the Historic Sites Volunteer Corps (HSVC) offers invaluable help to paid staff in keeping up with maintenance and repair. The group also serves as a presence for these unstaffed facilities to deter vandalism and unwanted activity.

The HSVC helps with activities such as:

- Building and replacing fences
- Caulking and sealing
- Periodic facility and grounds checks
- Cleaning
- Documenting & reporting failing conditions

- Landscaping
- Recruiting and public outreach
- Painting building interiors and exteriors
- Removing invasive and problematic plants
- Basic carpentry work

In the first half of 2019, HSVC completed four projects and offered 187 volunteer hours.



Helping Our Land Heal

- Started implementation of five ecosystem restorations under the Helping Our Land Heal (HOLH) program: OCPP living shoreline concept study, Riverbend Park meadow restoration, Elklick Preserve grassland restoration, Laurel Hill Park forest restoration, and Ellanor C. Lawrence Park (ECLP) forest mitigation.
- Continued implementation of four ecosystem restorations under the HOLH program: OCPP natural resource management plan implementation, Huntley Meadows Park depression swamp concept study, Fitzhugh Park natural resource management plan implementation, and Elklick Preserve forest restoration.
- Completed three ecosystem restoration projects under the HOLH program: Poplar Ford Park grassland restoration, John C. and Margaret K. White Horticultural Park restoration, and OCPP depression swamp restoration design and permitting.
- Outreach materials completed: four pop up displays (currently at ECL VC) and four videos with Channel 16.

Be a Volunteer

of volunteer hours agency-wide: 188,391

of volunteer hours in RMD: 109,219 in 231 different job opportunities.

of volunteer hours in Golf: 33,365 in 37 different job opportunities.

of volunteer hours in POD: 1,611 in 31 different job opportunities.

of volunteer hours in PSD: 44,195 in 125 different job opportunities.

Care for the land

% of land in its natural state: 73% (17,000 acres)

Actively managed parkland: 4,720 acres

Old Friends; Well Remembered



JANYCE HEDETIEMI

Janyce Hedetniemi was an esteemed member of the Park Authority Board, a member of the Planning Commission and a community activist who worked on many projects, such as the preservation of historic Oak Hill.

Ms. Hedetniemi was appointed as an at-large member of the Board in 2012 by Chairman Sharon Bulova, who asked her a year later to serve county residents on the Planning Commission. Despite her short tenure on the Board, she made a mark in the community and on the Board through her actions on behalf of residents and diverse constituencies, as well as her outspoken stand on a variety of issues and processes.

Ms. Hedetniemi worked on behalf of Friends organizations, serving as liaison to the Federation of Friends. She worked closely with area equestrians and took a keen interest in building relationships with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority as the Board's liaison to that organization. She served on numerous Board committees, including the Tysons Committee where she worked to ensure a place for parks and recreational amenities in the rapidly urbanizing area. She also placed a high value on educating the public about the impor-

tance of stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

In a resolution in her honor in 2013, the Board praised Ms. Hedetniemi for her "compassionate interest for health and the environment" and praised her for "dedicated and outstanding contributions to the parks and citizens of Fairfax County."

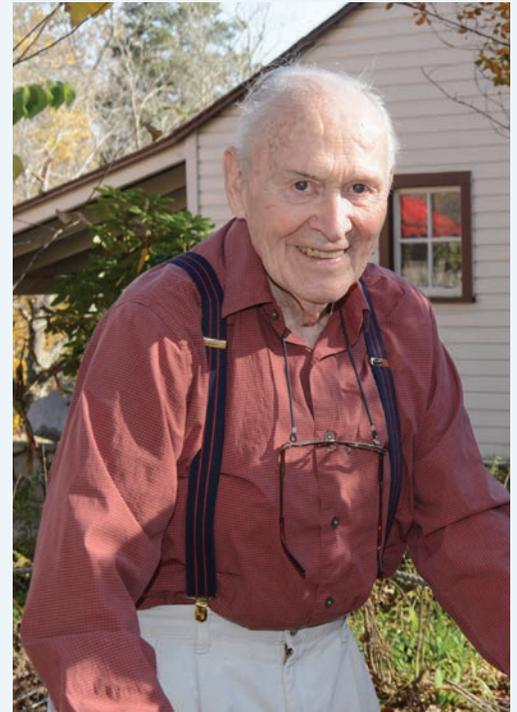
ROBERT "BOB" LUNDEGARD

Robert Lundegard was a long-time advocate for parks, education and history in Fairfax County and with his wife, Marjorie, was a major influence in implementing park recommendations for Colvin Run Mill Historic Site. Upon his passing in May, Dranesville Supervisor John Foust said, "It is impossible to think about Colvin Run Mill without thinking of Bob. He was a man of fierce determination and tireless energy who got things done. His efforts to renovate the mill and expand its educational programs have left a profound and enduring legacy."

Mr. Lundegard was known as a dedicated and visionary leader who saw the importance and value of educating the public, especially school children, about Fairfax County's colonial and 19th Century heritage. He pushed for restoring the mill and miller's house, efforts which led to today's fully operational facilities.

Mr. and Mrs. Lundegard were among the first members of the Friends of Colvin Run Mill when it formed in 1997. During Mr. Lundegard's tenure as president of the support organization, the group raised money for mill lights and for a portable demonstration mill. The Lundegards also raised funds for the mill through a partnership with a consignment shop in McLean and through Mrs. Lundegard's writing, publishing, and selling of more than a dozen books about mills in the region. Together they raised more than \$50,000 to support Colvin Run Mill's capital improvement plan.

The Park Authority Board voted to honor the Lundegards by naming the barn at Colvin Run the Marjorie and Robert J. Lundegard Education Center. In addition, the Lundegards were named recipients of the 2019 Mayo Stuntz Cultural Stewardship Award.





TURNER FARM LATEST RCP SITE

The historic Turner Farmhouse at Turner Farm Park is getting a new lease on life thanks to the Park Authority's second Resident Curator. Sarah Kirk and the Turner Farmhouse Foundation signed on to rehabilitate the historic farmhouse in Great Falls on Thursday, Nov. 1, 2018. The Queen Anne-style farmhouse was built in 1905 and is associated with Mark Turner, whose dairy farm was among those that predominated the Great Falls area in the early 20th century. It and exemplifies the area's cultural, economic heritage.

The Resident Curator Program allows for a curator to live in a historic Fairfax County property rent-free in exchange for rehabilitating the house and allowing public access. Under the terms of the lease, the house will serve as the Kirk family residence and equine farm while the Turner Farmhouse Foundation, with Sara Kirk as the acting principal, repairs the property's milk house, restores and preserves its historic corn crib and renovates an existing garage to serve as a retreat center.



**Be Great
Stewards**

Be Equitable and Inclusive



ACCESSIBILITY IS THE KEY

The Park Authority offers a variety of scholarship options to make programs accessible to all members of our community. PACT (Parks & Community Together) Scholarships are provided to children ages 6-17 living in homeless shelters and supportive housing. In Summer 2019, generous individual and organizations allowed 56 children to attend 345 weeks of camp and 142 extended care sessions! All PACT scholarships are funded through donations made by individuals and organizations to the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

79 percent of Rec-PAC families have incomes that make them eligible for some type of reduced fee or waiver. "Scholarships" are full fee waivers minus a \$12 co-pay.



TRACKLESS TRAIN DONATED

A new trackless train and picnic pavilion are adding to the fun at Clemyjontri, a park that features a unique playground that allows children of all abilities to play side-by-side. Children and adults can take a spin around the park in the trackless train, which offers a ramp for easy access. The new picnic pavilion is easily accessible from the parking area and playground, and provides a wonderful spot for community meetings, picnics and other gatherings. The new features were funded through the Park Foundation by the Friends of Clemyjontri, McLean Community Foundation and the Rotary Club of McLean.

ADA IMPROVEMENTS MADE AT HIDDEN POND

Parks are for everyone, and a major project in FY19 made Hidden Pond Nature Center more accessible than ever. New paved paths and safety guards are making the nature center, amphitheater, pond and woodland trails easily accessible for people of all abilities to enjoy.

ADAPTED AQUATICS CAMPS & PROGRAMS

Inclusion for all is a vital part of the Park Authority experience. Finding a path towards inclusion for everyone in need is key and in the past fiscal year more than 219 inclusive, adapted classes were offered. The Park Authority's adapted programming continued to expand in 2019 with a new Adapted Accotink Adventure Camp and a new Adapted Park Explorers program. Adapted Fitness Training was expanded to two new locations, Oak Marr and South Run RECenters.

PACT PROGRAM EXPANDS

Since 1997, Parks and Community Together (PACT) has provided summer camp opportunities to children in homeless shelters and transitional and supportive housing in Fairfax County. In FY19, the PACT program enabled 56 children to attend 345 weeks of summer camp and 142 extended care sessions, while giving their parents an opportunity to seek employment or learn valuable skills without having to worry about childcare. PACT is fully funded through contributions from local businesses, foundations and individual donors. In FY19, 21 donors contributed \$51,680.70 to PACT.

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT SERIES ATTRACTS THOUSANDS

Music and laughter filled parks across the county from June through August as the Park Authority offered a stellar line-up of free concerts, children's performances and drive-in movies. The annual Summer Entertainment Series featured musical styles ranging from acoustic to zydeco, international song and dance nights, puppet shows and magic acts for kids, and movies under the stars.

In 2019, there were 11 concert series that offered 170 scheduled shows at 16 different venues. Total attendance was 34,420. The free entertainment is made possible each summer thanks to donations to the Fairfax County Park Foundation from nonprofit organizations, individuals and private sector businesses. The program benefited from nine partnerships with Board of Supervisor offices and one partnership with Park Developers.



**Promote
Healthy
Lifestyles**



PARKS



The best park system for large counties and cities in the nation.

BY THE NUMBERS | 2019



23,548
acres
of parkland



427
parks



334
miles
of trails



11
dog parks

90% of residents live within a **1/2 mile** proximity to parkland



10 Farmers Markets

14,930,628
system-wide park visitors



25,696
camp
registrations



242,986
rounds of
golf played



170
FREE
summer
performances



188,386

volunteer service hours from 5,075 volunteers



14,945

Park Authority programs offered



1,646,581

RECenter visits



715

athletic fields maintained



2,338,305
total web
visits

Social Media Followers

23,593

12,589

7,179



Director's Message

Great parks build great communities and that is the business at hand. This past fiscal year was no exception with a slew of exciting efforts underway and systemic changes made to ensure all residents in our community enjoy the benefits of recreational opportunity and the joy of parks!

The Fairfax County Park Authority manages an award-winning park system that serves as a model for other communities nationwide. Parks provide a gateway to healthy activity and a sense of well-being. In fact, the correlation between access to parks and a longer, healthier lifespan is now proven. Everything we can do to increase proximity and access to parkland for everyone, is of benefit to our entire community. Our plans include rejuvenating neighborhood parks, acquisition of open space that remains and protection of vital green corridors, as well as the development of new recreational amenities in areas where communities need parks and also greater access to parks.

Parks are also a harbinger of better health. In short, people that live near parks and playgrounds, picnic shelters and trails live longer. Through the forethought and vision of officials and planners over the decades we enjoy proximate stream valley parks, lakefront and riverfront access, and hundreds of miles of trails that go from one end of Fairfax to the other and connect to other jurisdictions beyond Fairfax. Our commitment to providing you the best park system continues!

In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted a decline in life expectancy across America. Although Fairfax County ranks above average as one of the healthiest communities nationwide, there are more than one dozen neighborhoods within Fairfax that show vulnerabilities and ultimately, lower lifespans. These are our neighbors in need of recreational access and equitable facilities. All RECenters, ballfields and playgrounds must improve so that a standard expectation exists countywide – for all. Similarly, we must embrace and accommodate an aging population, a more ethnically diverse populace as well as the protection of our natural and cultural resources. We are also committed to greater public engagement in all decision-making and park planning initiatives via a host of online and in-person opportunities and platforms.

This report outlines our most recent accomplishments and sets the stage for future innovations, good decision making and practical changes that bring more to our park system and again, more to the millions of individuals who visit parks annually. I urge you to join us in this effort – volunteer, play, advocate and support your Park Authority.



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

2019 Park Authority Board Members

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, Virginia.

To learn more, visit the Board calendar page at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/board/meetings

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Braddock



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American Alliance of Museums



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For more information, please call (703) 324-8700
Access a digital version of this report at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/publications/strategic-plan-annual-report



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