

# CELEBRATE EARTH DAY



Celebrate Earth Day at the largest celebration in Northern Virginia with the Park Authority on Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Sully Historic Site. Learn to make a “Healthy Planet, Healthy People” through fun, hands-on activities, and games. Visit with vendors and exhibitors to find out how you can make an impact in your home and community. Consult with Master Gardeners and buy plants for your home garden. Enjoy entertainment including live music, a local poetry contest, touch-a-truck, a large obstacle course, historic house tour, animals and more. Sample local cuisine from various food trucks. Earth Day is open to all ages. The event is free; parking is \$10 per vehicle. Join the Fairfax County Park Foundation to sponsor this popular event! For more information, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/topics/earth-day](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/topics/earth-day).



Join the City Nature Challenge and earn volunteer hours by participating at local area park locations. Participating in the event is incredibly easy, completely free, and absolutely fun! Participants need only download the iNaturalist app to their smartphone, snap pics of whatever wild species they find and upload the pictures in the app to make an observation. All observations made during the event dates of April 28 - May 1 will be tallied together for our location and results will be revealed on May 8, 2023.

What started in 2016 as a friendly competition between San Francisco and Los Angeles to see which city could gather the most observations of wild-life using the iNaturalist app has grown into an international annual bioblitz event spanning 445 cities across 47 countries. Fairfax County, which is represented as part of the Washington DC Metro Area, ranked 6<sup>th</sup> place in observations (38,143), 8<sup>th</sup> place in numbers of species observed (2,970) and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in total number of participants (2,114) during the 2022 event. This incredible showing was due to Fairfax County resident's love and appreciation for their abundance of parks, trail systems, and green spaces where a wildlife species reside.

Observations made during the event are collected using the free smartphone app iNaturalist which is a social network of naturalist, biologist and citizen scientists that contribute to the mapping and sharing of biodiversity across the globe. For every observation, a pin is added to a world map indicating the location of the observation. This open-source information is available for all to see and reference to benefit researchers everywhere.

Observations collected during the event provide a massive global snapshot of the natural world and provides an immense amount of data for the scientific community. Casual participants never know what rare natural occurrence they may be documenting when they make their observations which could result in an important find such as a rare animal species, the spread of an introduced species, or a new species altogether!

For additional information and to join the City Nature Challenge, scan the QR code.

