

Waterparks Offer Sensory-Friendly Events

This summer, both Park Authority outdoor water parks will offer sensory-friendly times to accommodate individuals and families with autism or sensory-sensitive needs. The events at Our Special Harbor (OSH) and The Water Mine will include limited capacity, reduced sounds and staff trained to respond to children with special needs.

Shoshana Rothman brought her son Sam to a sensory-friendly event at OSH last year. "It gave him the opportunity to enjoy a typical activity that would otherwise be too overwhelming and inaccessible to him," said Rothman. "He lived his best life that morning. We are so grateful to the Park Authority for providing us with that special moment in time."



Our Special Harbor splashpad is designed for children of all abilities. It includes wheelchair-accessible features and calming stimuli such as water tables and gentle bubblers. Water wheelchairs are available. Admission is free. The Water Mine is a larger water park that allows visitors to be fully immersed in water. Louder features will be turned off during these events. Regular admission fees apply.

For more details, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/waterparks-spray-grounds.



Photo: Sam Rothman enjoys a sensory-friendly visit to Our Special Harbor.
Photo courtesy of Shoshana Rothman

LAKE ACCOTINK 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Lake Accotink Park celebrates its 60th anniversary this summer. The public is invited to enjoy a day filled with activities on Saturday, August 27, 2022, from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. You'll find the park's many amenities operating free of charge, a variety of no-cost classes, as well as environmental educational tables and exhibits. A brief program acknowledging the occasion will be held at 11 a.m. Anniversary events are co-sponsored by the Friends of Lake Accotink Park.

Park Manager Dan Grulke anticipates a great turnout. "The park represents lots of things to many different people. I hope the public will come out help us celebrate this special anniversary together," says Grulke.

Lake Accotink Park lives up to its reputation as a wonderful place to spend a day with the family. Over its 493-acres visitors find a site rich with history and imbued with natural and cultural resources. Interpretive signs help visitors understand its rich cultural history. A hillside pollinator garden speaks to natural resources that abound. Be active and take a ride on the historic carousel, rent a paddleboat or explore the many trails. Be engaged with the many classes and camps or relax with the engaging summer performance series.

Lake Accotink Park is located at 7500 Lake Accotink Park Road in Springfield, Va. Find out more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-accotink

