

Summer 2021

Cicadas – The 2021 “Can’t Miss” Photo Opp



Whether you love them or hate them, there’s been no avoiding those clumsy-flying, red-eyed cicadas in Fairfax County this year. The Brood X periodical cicadas made a noisy return after 17 years, but fortunately for nature photographers, these critters were very camera friendly.

Unlike many wildlife photography subjects, they did not hide from humans, were not well camouflaged, did not move quickly, and often held a pose for extended periods. That made it relatively easy to document their brief lifespan above ground from the time they first crawled from holes in the dirt through their transformation into winged creatures looking for a mate.

Here are some favorites from the Park Authority’s photo collection that document the cicadas’ emergence.

The transformation begins from dirt-dweller to tree-top noisemaker...



All grown up and ready for their close-ups...



Cicadas emerge in massive numbers to help avoid becoming food for other animals...



What 17 years looks like in the life of this cicada-loving former Park Authority Pohick Ranger and volunteer...



Photo credits: Jane Gamble, Suzanne Holland, Carol Ochs and Dave Ochs.

Photo Contest Fundraiser Captures Life on the Farm



First place winner in the Family Fun (Adult) category -- Madison Kateregga

The Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park raised more than \$1,000 in their inaugural photo contest this spring that was launched to help support the farm and feed and care for the farm's animals.

Friends board member Bonnie Horowitz managed the contest that attracted more than 100 entries from March 5 through April 22. A panel of three judges selected 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mention winners in such categories as Fur & Feathers, Mooove On Over and Being Neigh-borly. Honors were handed out in both adult and youth categories.

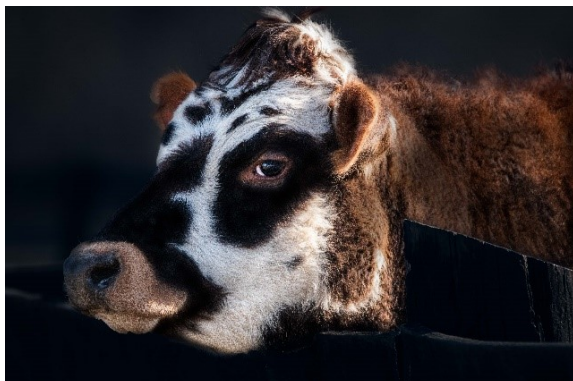
Here are the other first-place honorees. You can see all the winners on the Friends' website.



Fur & Feathers (Adult) – Damian Diccox



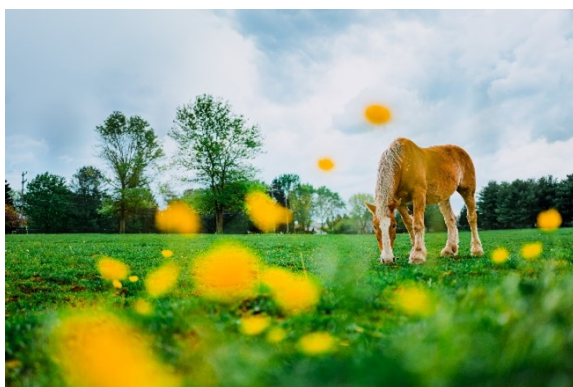
Fur & Feathers (Youth) – Avery Canedo



Mooove on Over (Adult) – Marcus Crisp



Mooove on Over (Youth) – Summer Duba



Being Neigh-borly (Adult) -- Matthew Coulon



Being Neigh-borly (Youth) -- Avery Canedo



Work It! (Adult) -- Janice Kane



Work It! (Youth) -- Marleigh Norrod

Keep your eyes open. You may see some of these photos again in Frying Pan Farm Park promotional materials.

Win With Photos After Dark



The Fairfax County Park Authority is currently working with the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) to receive an urban dark sky place designation, and part of that effort involves the sharing of dark sky educational opportunities. In that spirit, we would like to share that the IDA is currently accepting submissions to its second annual [Capture the Dark Photography Contest](#) with eight contest categories, such as Creatures of the Night, The Impact of Light Pollution and Youth. There will be prizes for winners of each category.

The submission window closes on July 23, 2021, at noon PDT. Find details at www.darksky.org/capturethedark. Please keep in mind that Fairfax County Parks are closed after dark, unless you have registered for an after-hours program.

Aerial Photos and GIS Provide Clues to Life in Ages Past

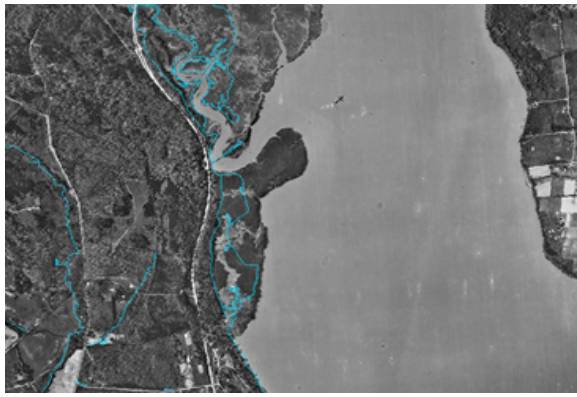
Drone photography is relatively new, but there have been eyes in the skies of Fairfax County since 1937. Aerial photos from 1937, 1943 and 1953-54 have been providing archaeological clues about early life in the region, and there are [mapping tools online](#) that allow you to see how your neighborhood has changed over time.



Braddock Road through Centreville, Virginia in 1937.

Fairfax County maintains a large database of written historical documents, as well as maps and photographs, but making the photographs really work for archaeologists has required digitization of hundreds of photos and modern computers.

Digitized versions of the aerials have been placed into the county's Geographic Information System (GIS) database in a process known as geo-referencing that assigns map coordinates to each point in a picture. The photos are then precisely linked with co-ordinates on present-day maps, allowing the photographic images to be accurately superimposed on the maps. The images can be stacked to "see" the history of an area evolve over time and reveal changes in landforms and development.



See the shoreline change in these aerial views of the Potomac in 1937 vs. 2002.

The Park Authority's archaeological staff has been able to use these images to track the chronological development of historical buildings and identify unusual ground features that may represent archaeological sites. For example, when the county received a rezoning application in an area of known Civil War features, it used the aerials to pinpoint the site of a former fort. The clue was an unusual star-shaped feature in a 1937 aerial. These photos are saving time, money and history.

Park Policies



Photo credit: Don Sweeney

You can pose your kids. You can pose your pet. But please don't try to pose wild animals when taking photographs in any of the Fairfax County Park Authority's 429 parks.

Yes, it can be frustrating sometimes waiting to capture that perfect shot, but consider it part of the challenge of wildlife photography. If it was easy, anyone could do it!

Some of the unethical practices that have been witnessed in county parks include photographers going off trail, rolling logs, and picking up and posing turtles, frogs and salamanders. According to park policy, any collecting, handling or capture of non-game wildlife on Fairfax County Park Authority property must be approved under a Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources State Collection Permit. Remember that improper handling of wildlife could be harmful to the animal – or you.

Focus on Improving your Photo Skills



If you're not happy with the photos you've taken so far this summer, step up your game with a Park Authority photography class.

Frying Pan Farm Park is offering a four-session Digital Photography (13-Adult) class that begins July 14. If you've already mastered this class, try Digital Photography II at Burke Lake Park. Those classes begin July 10.

The Park Authority offers a variety of photo classes throughout the year that cover the basics or focus on specific topics, such as nature photography and cell phone photography. There are photo camps and classes for kids, too.

To see current offerings, check out [Parktakes Online](#) and type "photo" in the search text box.



SNAPSHOTS Reflections

We would love to hear from you! Comments or suggestions for SNAPSHOTS E-News are welcome. We encourage you to contribute an article and share your photographs to be included in a future SNAPSHOTS E-News.

Email comments, articles and photographs to Parkpix@fairfaxcounty.gov

[Contact Us](#)

Contributors

Editor: Judy Pedersen, Public Information Officer

Writers and Contributors: Carol Ochs

Layout and Design: Don Tubel

Photograph Contributors: Don Sweeney, Jane Gamble, Carol Ochs, David Ochs



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Contact Info:

Phone: 703-324-8662

Email: FCCA-Parkpix@fairfaxcounty.gov

Website: fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/