



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



PHOTO CUTLINE

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January 12, 2022
CTL-001

Winners Named in 2022 First Hike Fairfax Photo Contest

On January 1-2, 2022, the Fairfax County Park Authority joined park systems across the country to encourage everyone to start 2022 with a hike. First Day Hikes are part of a nationwide initiative led by America's State Parks to encourage people to get outdoors. Despite wet weather, thousands of people came out to explore the Fairfax County Park Authority's trail system and take steps toward improved health and fitness in the new year. More than 170 photos were submitted as part of the First Hike Fairfax 2022 Photo Contest presented by the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Fairfax County Park Foundation. The Park Authority Executive Director, a panel of Park Authority judges and a public vote have determined the following winners:

- **James Stone, Hidden Pond Nature Center**
People's Choice: \$100 Park Authority Gift Card OR a 25-Visit FCPA Rec Center Pass
More than 900 people voted on the People's Choice Winner. With 122 votes, this photo of a bridge on the trails at Hidden Pond Nature Center received 13 percent of the vote, making it the most popular of the 24 finalists selected by the judges.
- **Sarah Baldwin, Waverly Park**
Judges' Choice: \$100 Park Authority Gift Card OR a 25-Visit FCPA Rec Center Pass
A panel of judges thought this photo offered a unique perspective of our parks. Since fungi grow best under wet conditions, the photo highlights the beauty that emerges in the parks on rainy days. The sharp detail of the hymenium gills of a mushroom are beautifully framed by the towering trees.
- **Erin Nicole Graf, Burke Lake Park**
Director's Choice: \$100 Park Authority Gift Card
Park Authority Executive Director Jai Cole chose this photo of two children running through the trails at Burke Lake Park. "We had some fantastic photographs submitted and I loved them all, but this photo really spoke to me. As a mom of two kids, this photo captures the pure joy of the moment these children were set free to run and just have fun. Thank you, Erin, for sharing this moment with all of us."
- **Billy Swistak, Burke Lake Park**
Best in Show (Landscape/Scenery): \$50 Park Authority Gift Card
Judges really enjoyed the warm tones and framing of this photo. The lakeside scene – complete with geese peacefully floating on the water - conveyed a sense of tranquility that so many people seek in our parks.



- **Ashley DeAntonio, Lake Fairfax Park**

Best in Show (People): \$50 Park Authority Gift Card

Judges thought this photo perfectly captured the spirit of First Hike Fairfax – different generations ringing in the new year on the Park Authority’s trail system. With a butterfly on his cap, the young nature lover is enjoying his perch on his dad’s shoulders.

- **Elaine Starr, Huntley Meadows Park**

Best in Show (Wildlife): \$50 Park Authority Gift Card

Judges were amused by this photo of a blue heron landing on a row of turtles. They were also impressed with the photographer’s ability to capture this quick interaction with such detail. They appreciated how stunning the blue feathers were against the darker background.

- **Mary Robinson, Lake Accotink Park**

Best in Show (Pets): \$50 Park Authority Gift Card

The Pets category was added this year following feedback from past participants. Judges were drawn to this pup’s cocked head and big brown eyes. In addition to the dog, they liked the photographer’s choice to include the train bridge, misty waters and tree reflection in the background.

First Hike Fairfax kicks off a new year of Healthy Strides activities for the whole family. For more fresh ideas, visit the Healthy Strides web page (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/healthy-strides>) and sign up for the e-newsletter with monthly tips to get you and your family energized.

Find out more about how easy it is to support local parks by visiting the [Park Foundation](#).

For more information on First Hike Fairfax, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/first-hike

Media Note: Download the winning photos at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/cutlines>

See all First Hike Fairfax 2022 photos at: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjzxMY2>

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January 12, 2022
IR-007

McLean Central Park Development Concept Revision Meeting Set

The public is invited to attend an information meeting on the McLean Central Park Development Concept plan on Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held online so that members of the public can participate safely and conveniently from their homes. You can watch the meeting at www.pubinput.com/McLeanCentralPark, or listen by calling 855-925-2801 and entering the access code **2881**. Preregistration is optional and not required.

McLean Central Park, located at 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., is a 28-acre public park adjacent to the McLean Community Center and Dolley Madison Library. This popular park contains a variety of natural spaces and active recreation areas, including tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds and trails to serve the community.

An initial development concept was presented at a virtual public meeting on May 24, 2021. Public comments about the plan were accepted until July 30, 2021, and the input received was used to develop a revised concept. The proposed facilities and improvements in the revised concept plan are responsive to the feedback received from the public and stakeholder groups. The meeting will include a question and comment session and instructions for participation will be provided on the webpage. A recording of the meeting and the presentation slides will be made available on the project webpage. Comments regarding the revised concept plan will be accepted until March 18, 2022 and can be sent to Parkmail@fairfax-county.gov.

For more information, [please visit the project webpage](#); or contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662 or via Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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January 12, 2022
IR-008

South Run's Successful Eagle Scout Program Seeks Volunteers

South Run Rec Center in Springfield, Virginia, is proud to have hosted more than 100 Eagle Scout projects over the past 20 years. These projects make a tremendous difference in our parks, bringing the expertise and enthusiasm of young volunteers to a variety of projects and initiatives that address natural resource stewardship throughout the park system.

Currently, there are many opportunities for scout service projects that focus on stewardship of our natural resources. However, South Run needs qualified volunteers willing to serve as Scout Program Coordinators to facilitate these projects. Scout Program Coordinators play vital role in the success of our many volunteer projects, and without that help, far fewer scouts will have the opportunity for projects at South Run.

Scout Program Coordinators should enjoy working outdoors and participating in a variety of stewardship activities. You must be 18 years of age or older, be interested in youth development and stewardship, be available on weekends, and pass a background check, including review of your driving record.

For more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Kurt Lauer at jlauer@fairfaxcounty.gov; or call 703-866-0566.

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January 12, 2022
IR-009

Park Authority Names Director of Resource Management Division

The Fairfax County Park Authority announced the selection of Laura Grape as the new Director of the Resource Management Division (RMD). The appointment will be effective Feb. 12, 2022. The Park Authority's Resource Management Division Director provides leadership, strategic direction and guidance to the division's 200-plus merit and limited-term staff. Grape will focus on matters related to identification, preservation and interpretation of the cultural, natural and horticultural resources of Fairfax County and the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Park Authority Executive Director Jai Cole noted, "Laura brings a wealth of relevant experience to this position. As an ecologist and one who respects both the environment and our historic past, I am very pleased that we were able to recruit an individual who has demonstrated her ability to lead, her commitment to the environment and a sense of value of these resources by residents and visitors."

Grape served as Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) since 2012. She led day-to-day administrations, strategic and budget planning and development, and program creation and implementation. She has been instrumental in efforts to support natural resource conservation, preservation, enhancement and restoration throughout Fairfax County.

Before her work at NVSWCD, she served as Senior Environmental Planner at the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, where she worked collaboratively with Northern Virginia municipalities on cross-cutting natural resource issues. She coordinated the Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners, performed climate adaptation analyses to determine communities at risk of sea level rise and storm impact, identified regional land conservation priorities to support natural and cultural heritage resources, and initiated the Plant NOVA Natives campaign to promote the value of native plants and make them readily available.

Additionally, Grape was an ecologist with Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, conducting biological, chemical and physical assessments, delineating perennial streams, developing watershed plans, and coordinating watershed outreach and education.

She is a graduate of George Mason University's College of Science and the Carter School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, where she played and captained its Division I Women's Lacrosse team. She is a 2012 Fellow with the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute at the University of Virginia and served as Fairfax County's representative to the NOVA Parks Board from 2013–2016.

She spent her childhood in West Springfield, Virginia, up the street from FCPA's Hidden Pond and Pohick Creek Stream Valley parks. Her perspective and appreciation of natural and cultural heritage was formed in her youth, as she explored the pond and streams, played on tot lots, followed stream valley trails, hunted for the old Keene Mill, and engaged in interpretive programs at the nature center. The Grape family resides in Manassas.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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January 12, 2022
PSA-005

Colvin Run Mill Offers Adorable New Crafting Class

Register now to learn to make an adorable, posable mouse using needle felting techniques and wool from Frying Pan Farm Park. Needle felting three dimensional sculptures is a newly popular craft, but it blends with a rich history of the use of wool and felt all around the house. Presented by 4-H Fair award-winning artist Tammy Schwab, participants will learn to combine wool and other fibers with a wire armature to create a cute, posable mouse figure. Supplies for this project are included in the class fee of \$45.

The class is for appropriate for those 16 years of age and older and will meet at 7 p.m. on two Thursday nights for one hour each. Class is scheduled for Jan. 20, with the second session on Jan. 27, 2022. [FairfaxFCPA - Session Details \(usedirect.com\)](#)

The class will be held at Colvin Run Mill Historic Site located at 10017 Colvin Run Road in Great Falls, Virginia. For more information, call 703-324-8750 or email Tammy.schwab@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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