

FALL  
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# FRIENDS OF ROYAL LAKE

NEWSLETTER



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## TRAIL PROJECT A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

By Paul Gross

Don't you just love it when an idea becomes a plan, and a plan yields a tangible result?

Better yet is when the plan is a collaboration among various groups within the community. That is what happened for the recent installation of a new trail segment at Lakeside Park.

Last year, Ed Richardson, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Area Four Maintenance Manager, asked the Friends of Royal Lake (FORL) leadership team if it would support the

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Gross, cont'd

addition of a new trail segment to the circuit trail around Royal Lake. The purpose of the new trail segment was to address a safety issue by reducing the number of park patrons running or walking through the Lakeside Park parking lot. FORL added the proposed project to the master list of trail and park improvements for possible work this fall.

Eagle Scout candidate, Jagger Larson was looking for a significant project as the final step in his effort to achieve the Eagle Scout award. He approached FORL about possibilities for a community supported park improvement project. FORL provided Jagger an extensive list of potential volunteer projects. He picked one of the hardest: a new trail segment.

Jagger then worked with FCPA and FORL to develop a plan, obtain authorization, and recruit volunteers. On October 12, 2019, 50 hardworking volunteers along with FCPA staff created a new addition to the trail at Lakeside Park.



This very successful project involved people of all ages collaborating and working together to make Lakeside Park and our community better for everyone.

We thank FCPA's Ed Richardson and his team for their hard work and technical assistance. A special thanks to Jagger Larson for his initiative and leadership and to all the volunteers who turned out to spread 44 tons (the equivalent of the weight of 20 elephants!) of gravel on the new trail segment.





# AN EAGLE SCOUT CANDIDATE'S JOURNEY

By Suzanne Doherty

Jagger Larson, a 15 year old freshman at Robinson High School and a member of Boy Scout Troop 1508, is just about to achieve the pinnacle in a boy's scouting career. Jagger joined the Cub Scouts when he was 8 largely because he "loved being outdoors" and advanced to the Boy Scouts when he was 11. From that time, he had his eye on being an Eagle Scout. He attributes his ambition to his grandfathers who, as youths, wanted to be Eagle Scouts but did not have the opportunities to do so.

Both grandfathers continued scouting as adult leaders assisting many others to obtain the rank of Eagle, including Jagger's father, who continues an active role in Scouts. Jagger has been well mentored to this moment in his life!

Becoming an Eagle Scout requires year of persistent dedication (and parental support!) to serving in various leadership roles and earning the necessary 21 merit badges in such activities as archery, first aid, and wilderness survival. The joint FCPA, FORL, Boy Scout project completed on October 12 fulfills Jagger's final Eagle Scout requirement.

One of the main qualifications for the project was that it make a community contribution with lasting impact. When thinking about the possible projects FORL offered for consideration, Jagger recognized that many joggers and families with children had to walk through the Lakeside parking lot to follow the trail around the lake. He decided that addressing this safety issue with a new segment of the trail circumventing the parking lot would make a significant improvement to Lakeside Park. (Cont'd)





(Doherty, Cont'd)

In addition to working with FCPA and FORL to design the new trail segment, plan the details of the workday such as the delivery of materials by FCPA, Jagger recruited over 50 volunteers--friends, neighbors, church members--to help bring the project to fruition and who, at the end of the day, joined him in a ribbon cutting for the new trail segment.



“The best thing,” Jagger says, “was seeing people walk the trail even as we were finishing it up.” Recognizing that the project was instantly beneficial to park visitors was, in his words, “really cool.”

The next step in Jagger’s journey to Eagle Scout is a Board of Review for his project and the Boy Scouts of America signing off on its successful completion. He will receive his Eagle Scout award in a “Court of Honor” ceremony followed by a celebration with proud parents, grandparents, family and friends. Jagger hopes there will be cake...maybe with an eagle on the icing.



**POSTSCRIPT:** *Local troops of Boy Scouts of America have consistently volunteered at FORL workdays to maintain Royal Lake parks' trails and public amenities as well as managing the invasive species that threaten the ecoculture of the parks. Several Eagle Scout candidates have earned their award through projects to preserve the health of the Royal Lake ecosystem. FORL is very grateful to our local boy scouts for their ongoing support of our mission.*



# WHY THE PINK RIBBONS ALONG SHANES CREEK?

By Greg Sykes

Shanes Creek is a major Royal Lake tributary that is identified as a seriously degraded waterway that deposits a large amount of sediment into Royal Lake. The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) is in the early phase of addressing the erosion problem along Shanes Creek to improve water quality flowing into Royal Lake and further downstream. DPWES' strategy will be to shore up or otherwise correct specific, high priority areas and allow the rest of the stream to flow naturally.

Before any actual restoration begins, Shanes Creek's length, parkland areas, and property lines from Roberts Road to the lake were surveyed and mapped. Those pink ribbons and flags mark different features such as wetlands, stream courses (including any tributaries from storm drain outfalls), underground utilities, and soil sample locations. Archeological teams dug test pits, searching for significant sites needing further excavation; some flakes from making stone tools (a common find) were unearthed. A core-borer took soil samples for substrate analysis. Any tree, live or dead, having at least a 12-inch-diameter received a uniquely numbered medallion. DPWES and its contractors, primarily Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., did much of this work.

The resulting pre-design plans were released last March for 30-day review. The plans contain items such as technical, topographic diagrams akin to a building's blueprints, tree listings, and proposed restoration sites. The project is still in the early stages, so exact plans are subject to change. In June, DPWES posted concept plans on its website. (<https://www.slideshare.net/fairfaxcounty/rabbit-branch-at-collingham-drive-stream-restoration-information-meeting-july-16-2019>). The targeted year to begin on-site restoration work is 2021. The aim of the project is to restore Shanes Creek to as pristine a condition as possible, which will improve the quality of the water in Royal Lake and water continuing its way into the Chesapeake Bay.

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**IMPROVE LAKE WATER QUALITY** 



## ATTENTION HOMEOWNERS!



The amount of sediment that builds up in the lake each year depends on various upstream factors. An increase in impervious surfaces (e.g., roads, parking lots, decks, and rooftops), tree loss, and the amount of rainfall in the year contribute to stream bed and bank erosion, resulting in more sediment deposited into Royal Lake. Prior to the lake dredge in 2017-18, DPWES estimated that 80 percent of the sediment comes from waterway erosion such as that found on Shanes Creek.

Landowners can offset water run-off from decks, expanded driveways, and other impermeable features by building rain gardens, installing rain barrels, planting native trees, and dedicating at least half of the property to native habitat to sponge up excess water before it reaches the streams. For more information, check out <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/soil-water-conservation/drainage-problem> - a handy webpage on soil and water conservation, including steps to stem erosion and help with drainage problems.



Members of the NOVA Audubon Society on a bird watch around Royal Lake



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**MAINTENANCE WORK DAY**-November 16, 9am-noon. Volunteers meet at the picnic area where Braddock Nights concerts are held. Shovels, rakes, tampers, and especially wheelbarrows are welcome since this workday involves spreading gravel over areas that get soggy on rainy days. Please join us for any part of the three hours you can spare!

**ROAD RAIDERS**-November 9; meet at 7:15 am near Crooked Creek Park on Commonwealth Ave for donuts and coffee ; help with road cleanup from 7:30 to 8 am.

### A Note From A Road Raiders Volunteer

By Matthew Bugeaud

Whenever I'm looking for a volunteer opportunity, the Kings Park West Road Raiders group is always one of my first choices. Road Raiders is led by some amazing people. My brother James and I volunteer with them every month, and have found it to be an excellent way to earn volunteer hours. While I personally live quite a distance from the Royal Lake area, it is still very close to my school, Robinson, so it means a lot to me to be able to keep the Kings Park and Royal Lake environment cleaner and healthier.

Recently I've gotten some of my other friends to come along and join us, and it truly warms my heart to see them enjoy it just as much as I do. If you're a high school student willing to get up at 7:30 on a Saturday to help keep the community clean, then Road Raiders should be right up your

alley. Volunteer mornings usually last from 30 minutes to an hour, and involve easy tasks such as picking up trash along roads or park trails, or maintaining the grass and trees that run alongside them. I've recently been seeing more Robinson students participating in the volunteer group, and I hope to be able to get even more to join in in the future!



Matthew (second from right) and friends on a mission





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