What Can You Do?

How we treat the land has lasting impacts. There are many things you can do to help with the Helping Our Land Heal Forestry Pilot program. Here are some of them.

- Sign up for one of our programs. We have many programs listed in our Calendar of Events that talk about HOLH. Ask the person at the desk about the programs. Once you have attended one of these programs, you will be able to help with the Helping Our Land Heal Forestry Pilot program. Here are some of them.

- Protect Natural Materials. All naturally occurring materials, including wood, wood chips, sod, earth, humus, rocks, minerals, fossils, sand, water, should not be tampered with or removed.

Please Follow Park Rules. These rules are in place to protect the forest. When you are familiar with the rules and follow them you are helping protect the park.

1. Protect the Animals. Persons or pets should not harass, capture, remove, injure or kill any animal, its young or its eggs, or disturb the nest, den, burrow, lodge, roost, dam or other structure found in a park.

2. Protect Plants and Fungi. Plants and fungi (e.g., mushroom), including cuttings, flowers, seeds, berries or nuts, should be left as they are found.

3. Protect Natural Materials. All naturally occurring materials, including wood, wood chips, sod, earth, humus, rocks, minerals, fossils, sand, water, should not be tampered with or removed.

Visit the Helping Our Land Heal Website. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resource-management/holh.htm

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park
701-631-0013
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ec

Visitor Center Hours: Mon., Wed.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sat. and Sun. 12 p.m.-5 p.m. Closed Tues.

Helping Our Land Heal

A Natural Capital Stewardship Model
The Way We Treat the Land has Lasting Impacts

Planting grass, mowing or dumping yard waste in parkland damages the ecosystem. Pesticides kill beneficial insects, and fertilizers may pollute streams if applied incorrectly.

All-terrain vehicles are prohibited on all park trails in Fairfax County. They scare wildlife and wear away trails. Bikes can cause trail damage and erosion, so riding is limited to certain trails and parks.

Mowing, high foot traffic and lack of foliage lead to compacted soils where roots become starved for oxygen and few animals live. Hard soils contribute to excessive water runoff, flooding and erosion.

Allowing pets to roam wild increases the threat to wildlife through hunting, or destruction of nests and habitats. There are dangers to your pet as well.

Overabundant deer deplete native vegetation through overbrowsing. Many forests lack native vegetation near the ground, and there are fewer young trees to replace the old when they die.

Invasive species such as honeysuckle, English ivy and pachysandra are not eaten by native animals. They crowd out native species and reduce the diversity of life in the forest.

Steep stream banks are a sign of soil erosion. As higher volumes of rainwater flow into streams due to hard packed soils and lack of anchoring roots, soil is washed into the stream, starving fish and insects of oxygen.

Litter is not just unsightly, it attracts unwanted pests and pollutes streams. Some materials release toxins into the water. Releasing non-native pets into our waterways disrupts local ecology.

Managed deer populations allow native plants and other wildlife to thrive. Fewer deer also means healthier deer because food sources are more plentiful.

Healthy streams teem with life. Fish, insects, amphibians and crustacians thrive in waters rich in oxygen and other nutrients. They also play an important role in the food chain for non-aquatic wildlife.

Stream banks that are full of native vegetation reduce soil erosion. Gently sloping banks form catch pools and eddies which provide fertile spawning and nesting habitat for native wildlife.

Native plants and animals are part of a balanced ecosystem. Native and migratory species often depend on the availability of certain plants in specific seasons in order to maintain their populations.

Pets should be kept on a leash for their safety as well as the safety of native wildlife and other trail users. Keeping pets close and on the trail reduces their exposure to ticks, rabies and risk of injury.

Leaf litter and old wood retains moisture and reduces erosion. Softened ground is ideal habitat for insects and animals that break down the surface debris and create nutrient-rich soil. Healthy soil then invites plant and tree growth.

Healthy trees are key players in air quality. Foliage cleans the air by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. Trees also provide natural habitat for native birds and wildlife.

Carving into or peeling bark off trees opens the door to insects and disease. Trees weaken and die due to air pollution and strangulation from invasive vines.

Be a good steward of your parks. Park staff need your help caring for parkland. Follow the rules and protect wild places. Stay on trails, and don’t remove, collect or tamper with plants or animals.

Choose climate-hardy native plants when landscaping your yard. Reduce the need for pesticides by installing bird boxes to attract nature’s pest controllers.

Illustration by Phyllis Saroff