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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA)

Equity Lead(s): Sara Baldwin & Matt Peters

Date: December 2023

At Fairfax County Park Authority, our senior management and staff are driven by a commitment to cultivating a park system that embodies equity, diversity, and inclusion at its core. FCPA's mission encompasses a dual-pronged approach, focused on establishing a strong organizational framework to support equity projects forward while also creating an environment that fosters safety and belonging in the workplace and actively addresses racial biases and systemic racism.

FCPA continues to build a resilient and inclusive organizational structure that champions equity initiatives throughout our Park Authority. By collaboratively engaging with departments, stakeholders, and communities, we strive to establish a foundation that empowers all individuals to actively participate in shaping our park system's future. Through strategic planning, policy refinement, and continuous assessment, we work on infusing equity into every facet of our operations, ensuring lasting and meaningful change.

Fairfax County Park Authority recognizes the need to elevate awareness and knowledge surrounding race and systemic racism within our workforce. We are committed to delivering quality comprehensive educational opportunities based on best practices that challenge stereotypes, foster empathy, and addresses biases. By facilitating dialogue and promoting ongoing learning, we aim to equip every member of our team with the skills needed to identify and dismantle unconscious biases, fostering a culture of understanding and inclusiveness.

FCPA is committed to driving transformative change. Through our dedicated efforts, we aspire to create a Park Authority that serves as a model of inclusivity, where every community member feels valued, heard, and empowered. Together, we strive to dismantle barriers, promote equitable practices, and nurture an environment that thrives on the richness of diversity. By setting a powerful example, we endeavor to redefine the boundaries of equity within park management and, in doing so, contribute positively to society at large. Below is a summary of the accomplishments in calendar year 2023.

FCPA has been putting strategies in place to achieve the goals outlined in the Equity Impact Plan (EIP). Most of the goals are ongoing or will go across several calendar years. The Director's Office and Senior Management Team are fully supportive about advancing equity in FCPA. All divisions in FCPA have been involved in the planning, development, and implementation of the EIP and will continue to be involved in the future.

**Goal 1:** Increase the diversity in FCPA staff at all levels of the organization.

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

**Goal 1 Progress:** The Park Authority continued its efforts in both the sourcing and selection phases of the recruiting process to increase the diversity of its workforce (both merit and non-merit) during CY2023. The Agency also revitalized its Intern Program with a focus on growing a multi-cultural workforce. Merit BIPOC recruitments increased its upward trend achieving a 10-year high of 39% in CY2023. Even more significantly, 50% of the Agency's initial appointments (i.e., external hires) were BIPOC applicants. Specific initiatives and actions are summarized below:

1. Sourcing
  - a. All merit jobs continued to be posted to multiple diversity job boards (Washington Post, Indeed, Handshake, and Diversity.com).
  - b. Capitalized on social media in addition to standard merit job boards, including Facebook (Meta), Instagram and Twitter (653,000 impressions and 5,196+ clicks, at an average cost/click of \$0.22.)
  - c. Established regular communications with local colleges (Northern Virginia Community College, George Mason University (GMU), James Madison University (JMU), Virginia Tech, etc.), and implemented sponsorships with GMU and JMU.
  - d. Continued to coordinate with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Human Resources attended job fairs at University of District of Columbia (UDC) and Howard University (HU), and also posted ads to the HBCU job board.
  - e. Partnered with each of the 28 Fairfax County Public Schools high schools, working closely with their central offices and work-based learning (WBL) programs, and participating in middle and elementary school career fairs. These efforts resulted in 28 non-merit job fairs (roughly 150 hours - a total recruiter time 1,100 hours).
  - f. NeoGov does not allow job advertisements in languages other than English; however, FCPA ran non-merit ads (i.e., WaterMine and Rec-PAC) and social media recruiting posts on social media in both English and Spanish.
  - g. Finally, direct community outreach has been delayed until the hiring process for the new Marketing/Communications Brand Manager is complete.
2. Selection
  - a. Continued to request and aggregate demographic information [received from the Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs] for all merit certification list applicants to support subsequent analytical efforts.
  - b. Implemented a new process to pre-brief every merit hiring panel. Similar hiring panel training was presented during town halls and supervisor roundtables.
  - c. A racial and social equity question bank has been developed and is now used in all merit hiring panels.
  - d. The Agency hired its first ever Equity Officer this year to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion work of One Fairfax.
3. Intern Program. The Park Authority standardized and expanded its paid and unpaid internship programs in CY2023 to capitalize on the opportunities associated with growing the Agency's workforce of 2040. The Agency authorized an initial 40 paid intern positions (Status G, Work Student II/III positions) along with an unlimited number of unpaid internship positions. Water Mine and Rec-PAC workforce BIPOC representation was 48.4% and 56.8% respectively this past

# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

summer.

**Goal 2:** Create a culture within FCPA that considers One Fairfax in all decision-making and fosters opportunities that advance racial and social equity.

**Goal 2 Progress:** The Park Authority focused on foundational training to normalize racial and social equity during the CY2021-2022 timeframe and has now begun to include operationalization factors that will enable the Park Authority to achieve the goals identified through One Fairfax. CY2023 projects, as discussed below, included the continuation of training, the initiation of racial and social equity discussion groups, and participation in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Employee Survey to provide a baseline for further progress.

- a. Training. The Park Authority identified and funded equity training as a top corporate priority and a total of 263 employees participated in equity training during CY2023 (12 sessions of Unconscious Bias and nine One Fairfax Race – The Power of an Illusion (RTPI) & Advancing Racial Equity – The Role of Government (ARETRG) courses). Cultural Intelligence has been identified as the next training to be offered to FCPA employees beginning January 2024. Additionally, a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/One Fairfax curriculum for new hires was created in Employee U.

			Merit		
2022 Equity Trainings			Emp	Employees	NM
ARETG			54	51	3
RTPI			84	59	25
Unconscious Bias Part 2			25	0	0
Unconscious Bias Part 1*			100	92	8
				202	36
FCPA	New	Employee			
Orientation			Emp	Merit	NM
FCPA	New	Employee			
Orientation (ILT-CO28-NEO100)			51	38	13

- b. Racial and Social Equity Discussion Group. Small Group Equity Discussions (SGED’s) commenced in January 2023 to provide a space for participants to engage and reflect on issues of equity and institutional and structural racism that challenge the operationalization of One Fairfax at FCPA. 11 SGEDs were completed in an environment that encouraged employees to openly share their insights, personal experiences, and suggestions without fear and to foster a more equitable workplace and equitable outcomes for the residents we serve. The program recognized that there has been a historical stigma against racial and social equity discussions in the past and explicitly sought to pull out employee assumptions, stereotypes, and biases to facilitate a critical discussion of those unconscious barriers to One Fairfax operationalization. As such, one of the key objectives of the SGEDs was to intentionally examine and improve FCPA policies, practice, programs, and organizational cultural messages that contribute to differential outcomes for our employees and customers based on race. Common discussion topics included racial & social equity, unconscious

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

bias, personal experiences, stereotypes, assimilation/absorption, personal/government responsibility, the value of cognitive diversity, critical race theory, and the history of racism in United States.

- c. GARE Survey. The Park Authority collaborated with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Employee Survey to Park Authority employees. The survey was designed to assess racial equity knowledge, skills, and experiences thereby informing future action steps toward advancing racial equity in the Agency. A total of 277 employees participated in the survey, for a 63.7% response rate. Survey respondents reported a range of knowledge, skills, and experiences with race and racial equity. Nearly all (97.7%) respondents agreed they felt competent in their interactions with people of other races. A majority of respondents agreed it was valuable to examine and discuss the impacts of race (91.8%); that they possessed a basic understanding of concepts related to racial equity (97.3%); and, felt comfortable talking about race (87.9%). The Park Authority is currently in the process of rolling out the survey to its employees to develop specific action plans.

**Goal 3:** To provide accessible, high quality, complete parks within a 10-minute walk of all Fairfax County residents.

**Goal 3 Progress:** FCPA has put a strong focus on the development of equity tools to ensure an equity lens is used in all decision-making processes.

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Access (PROSA) Plan, an equity tool developed and approved in 2023, assesses the quality, quantity, and access to parks throughout the county with a particular focus on the communities of opportunity in the county. FCPA used the One Fairfax Vulnerability Index and built upon it to develop the Park Authority Race and Equity Index (PAREI) tool. These tools are in the process of being housed in the enterprise system to make them accessible to all FCPA employees. These equity tools will guide all FCPA's acquisitions and capital improvements in the future.

A variety of different equity analysis have also been performed in 2023 using equity tools:

- Mastenbrook Grants (matching grants available to community groups to enhance the park system) are being mapped yearly to ensure equitable distribution, and new formal processes are being put in place in 2024 to make these grants more accessible in communities of opportunity.. In 2024, outreach efforts will be conducted to educate the community about the grants.
- Environmental Improvement Project Grant: The Park Authority was awarded a grant to add bicycle racks to parks. The basis for the selected parks is based on PROSA's equity lens/communities of opportunity and high-density areas.
- Support equitable acquisitions by providing PROSA analysis on land being considered for acquisition.
- FCPA is in the process of establishing equity processes in the areas of development reviews by analyzing them through PROSA. The full process will be established in calendar year 2024.
- Comprehensive Plan: PROSA will be part of the Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation Element updates.
- PROSA will be the basis for the upcoming needs assessment and equity will be a main component of the next FCPA Strategic Plan.

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

**Goal 4:** All Fairfax County residents have a safe 10-minute walk to a park via trails, sidewalks, crossings, etc.

**Goal 4 Progress:** Typically, historic under investment or disinvestment areas not only prevented the community from progressing economically and achieving home ownership, it also affected the development of infrastructure among other things. FCPA has embarked on mapping, tracking, and assessing the past and future capital investments in parks in Fairfax County. A cross-division team has been working on it since August 2023. FCPA is aiming to have this map completed and analyzed by May 2024. This map will be used as an equity lens to inform all future capital investments in the county.

Staff are actively participating in various initiatives in partnership with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation to work towards the goal of making parks accessible to all residents. Equity tools, PROSA and PAREI, are used to analyze and identify barriers to achieve these goals. These initiatives are ongoing and include:

- Participation in an ActiveFairfax working group to ensure equitable and walkable park access is a focus area in the plan.
- Identifying needs for mid-block crossings.
- Informing the scope of the Countywide Trails Plan/ Bike Master Plan to ensure it incorporates improvements for nonmotorized access to parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

**Goal 5:** Provide safe parks countywide.

**Goal 5 Progress:** FCPA recognizes safety as an equity issue. A task force representing multiple divisions has been working on developing a program design for park rangers. Results will be presented to the Board of Supervisors and the community to show the benefits of a Park Ranger Pilot program. Some of the milestones achieved so far include:

- Extensive research was conducted, and several jurisdictions were consulted to inform decision making.
- Analysis of potential duties was conducted as well as cost and trends on past issues at FCPA parks.
- Operational assistance on reducing police burden was also analyzed for issues such crowd control, parking, etc.
- Developed a potential organizational structure.
- Analyzed equipment cost.
- Engaged in ongoing communication with other stakeholders, like the Police Department

This task force will continue to work on developing a design for a program.

**Goal 6:** Provide parks that are clean and litter-free in all areas of the County.

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

**Goal 6 Progress:** Using equity tools, FCPA identified parks in communities of opportunity.. Most of the clean-ups happened in communities of opportunity.. Community volunteers were engaged in these tasks. Next year, numbers will be accurately tracked. It is anticipated that these clean ups will continue to be organized in the future as well as community engagement efforts in those areas.

**Goal 7:** Enhance community engagement opportunities for people of color.

**Goal 7 Progress:** FCPA has been successfully working on increasing engagement opportunities for people of color. These efforts include:

**Launching open house days at Rec Centers that are promoted to communities of color in each district and utilize the events to learn more about the communities' recreational needs and interests.**

In CY23, FCPA Rec Centers held Open Houses at all sites. Open Houses were built into the FY24 Membership Sales Plan for September, January, and May. Park Services staff in partnership with FCPA's Marketing and Communications Division ( MarComm)staff met to strategize and put together an outreach plan to advertise directly to communities of color. FCPA is currently trying to evaluate this effort by measuring how much promotion was directed specifically at communities of color and was able to track the total attendance at the Open Houses yielding the following results:

May 2023 Open House Attendance: 363 (unusually high participation at Oak Marr and Cub Run due to aquatics events held on the same day)

- i. May 2023 promotion: not tracked.

September 2023 Open House Attendance: 242

- ii. September 2023 promotion: Parktakes Ad, General Flyer, Calendar of events item, press release, organic social media post, paid social media, target emails to existing customers, posters at sites.
- iii. Expansion plan: Nextdoor post, google event page, targeted email to faith-based groups, send electronic flyer to county partners (NCS, DPWS, BOS, Libraries, community centers, schools, etc.)

The process for gathering data will continue to be refined in 2024.

Other strategies are also being used to reach out to diverse communities. The Marketing and Communications Division of FCPA has been consistently using Public Input to reach out beyond the typical attendees at public meetings.

- [PROSA phase 1 Community Survey Report](#) -554 respondents
- [PROSA Phase 2 Community Survey Report](#)- 396 respondents
- [Lake Accotink Community Survey Report](#)- 1117 respondents

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

In addition to PublicInput, several outreach and engagement efforts were conducted in person and virtually during 2023, specifically regarding PROSA:

- In-person outreach conducted at Gum Springs Community Center
- In-person outreach conducted at Reston Farmer's Market
- Virtual Public Meeting
- In-person outreach conducted at Wakefield Farmer's Market
- Media Information Release (IR)
- In-person outreach conducted at Oakmont Farmer's Market
- In-person outreach conducted at Pohick Regional Library
- In-person outreach conducted at Centerville Regional Library
- Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) Meeting Presentation
- Mount Vernon District's Parks Public Input Committee
- Additional outreach included PROSA mentioned in the ParkTakes Fall 2023 Issue with the Chair's Introduction, and in the ParkTakes Winter 2023 Issue with a full-page article on PROSA.

Marketing and Communications is working on expanding the diversity of public engagement and exposure to FCPA initiatives.

### **Use national and local data (FCPA community survey) to determine the social media platforms that best reach communities of color.**

The Park Authority currently manages seven social media accounts across five platforms including Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn. In addition, FCPA actively coordinates with the Office of Public Affairs to manage posting content through the county's Next Door account. Fairfax County is currently reviewing expanding agency access to Next Door.

FCPA collaborates with other agencies to reach targeted audiences through their social platforms. The County is also conducting a pilot test of the Thread platform, created by the Instagram team. In accordance with the Fairfax County social media Policy, FCPA is limited in its use of social media platforms to those which have been approved by the Office of Public Affairs. The FCPA remains closely involved in discussions pertaining to new social media platforms and options.

### **Utilize and train staff on the best practices outlined by the County's community engagement taskforce.**

The FCPA Outreach Coordinator has been engaging FCPA staff and ensuring the use of the community engagement framework. In addition to participating in the general and regional community outreach meetings organized by NCS. The process to conduct outreach efforts is being reviewed and strengthened in 2024.

### **Develop a policy regarding language access and translation services and include prioritization of programs for translation services.**

FCPA has set aside specific funds to comply with the County-wide Access to Languages Policy. A process to utilize the funds has been organized. All FCPA staff were trained on the Language Access Program (LAP)

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

via a town hall in CY 2022. A standard operating procedure is currently being developed and will be completed in 2024.

**Goal 8:** Increase access to recreation/wellness opportunities regardless of income.

**Goal 8 Progress:** FCPA has been working tirelessly on finding opportunities to increase access to recreational and wellness opportunities. Progress made includes:

**Offering fitness programs in Title I school buildings in conjunction with other programs for children.**

FCPA staff met to brainstorm strategies for achieving this goal and engaged Resource Management staff to learn more about access to Title I schools. FCPA is currently working on identifying partnerships with FCPS. In 2024 FCPA will research potential costs for implementation, and if financially viable, the team will continue to develop a plan to implement these activities in the community.

**Expanding Rec Center program offerings into community buildings and parks.**

FCPA staff held a meeting to brainstorm strategies for achieving this goal. Park services will identify locations within the park system that recreation offerings could be successful. Partners in this initiative are Resource Management Staff and Park Ops for unstaffed parks. Success will be measured by looking at how many classes are offered, how many classes run, and the total number of unique participants.

**Developing a free learn to swim program to ensure all youth in Fairfax County can swim by a set age (TBD).**

Park services staff met with representatives from various departments to brainstorm strategies for developing a free learn to swim program that would ensure all youth in Fairfax County can swim by a set age. It was determined that investigating a community partnership or grant funded pilot program would be the best next step. Fairfax County Park Authority envisions working with Fairfax County Public Schools and Pre-K Programs to discuss which age group would be most appropriate to target. Park Authority staff recommend measuring the number of children who complete water safety classes, the number of children who participate in free swim lessons, the number of children who can float upon completion of swim classes, and the number of children who can swim 5 yards upon completion of classes to determine program success.

**Offer specialty programming at a Rec Pac site(s).**

Park services staff met with the business office and the director's office to determine how to offer specialty programming at Rec PAC sites. This goal was accomplished during summer of 2023. Partners in this initiative were the FCPA Director's Office and camp vendors.

The following results were achieved:

- a. 4 vendors were engaged
- b. \$67,213.50 in programming was subsidized
- c. Ice-less Ice skating was offered

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

### **Promote the free fishing gear FCPA received from DWR grant.**

- FCPA's waterfront parks with a grant from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) began offering free fishing pole rods to borrow during office business hours at Burke Lake Park, Lake Accotink Park, Lake Fairfax Park, and Riverbend Park. The program was promoted through a feature article in FCPA's Parktakes magazine, FCPA's fishing webpage: [Fishing | Park Authority \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#), and the VDWR webpage. Each site had a poster promoting the program and a survey. The program was featured during special programming including an event at Lake Fairfax during Latino Conservation Week in which over 60 people attended to learn how to fish and promote conservation by various FCPA instructors. Throughout the year, the gear was "rented" over 130 times across the parks. They were also used to teach fishing and conservation at all summer camps, engaging approximately 850 campers. The program will continue in 2024 with use of the rods at other summer camps and increased promotion and engagement with other county agencies.

### **Establish Mobile Nature Center equipped with a variety of natural and cultural resources, interpretative media, and interactive supplies. The mobile center creates a park without borders that can directly engage with community members in their local unstaffed parks and public spaces (schools, community centers, etc.). Seek alternative funding, where appropriate.**

FCPA with the Fairfax County Park Foundation (FCPF) applied for funding through the Community Foundation of Northern Virginia (CFNOVA) and the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways Grant Program. Both requests were approved for a total of roughly \$79,500 in grant awards for programming supplies for the Wonder Wagon mobile nature center. The funds also support part-time personnel who throughout summer 2023 participated in more than 14 community events to collect input from over 500 children and adult community members about how they would like to interact with the Wonder Wagon and the topics they are most interested in.

The FY24 general fund budget request was approved in part, providing the opportunity to proceed with hiring two new merit full-time senior interpreter positions, which FCPA is in the process of hiring. The FCPF campaign was successful in securing generous donations to acquire an all-electric van in fall 2023, which is being outfitted with shelving and the exterior wrap is in development.

FCPA staff met with School Aged Childcare (SACC) leadership to establish a visitation schedule for after school programming at Title 1 schools beginning in spring 2024. Additional pop-up locations and schedules are in development with a goal of 150 events in CY2024. These events and information will be featured on the new website and google calendar to get the Wonder Wagon rolling in January 2024: [Wonder Wagon | Park Authority \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

**All new program proposals for the Resource Management Division (RMD), Park Services Division (PSD) and Golf will be reviewed with a One Fairfax lens and documented.**

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

A business plan for the Lake Fairfax In-line skate facility was developed. The plan included evaluating how One Fairfax goals could be included in facility operations and documented those considerations. In addition, the Park Authority Recreation Program Plan was updated in 2023 and incorporates One Fairfax themes throughout the plan. In 2024, a tool to incorporate One Fairfax principles in program planning will be developed and metrics refined.

Staff have met and determined there is a need for a standardized tool to help evaluate programs with an equity lens. In CY24, a team of staff will focus on developing project criteria to be used agencywide. Some examples of how an equity lens has been incorporated into new Park Authority programs thus far include the Sully Community Center Equity Pilot, the Nature Mobile Center, and equity tools like PROSA and PAREI.

### **Staff developed and implemented the Sully Community Center Equity Pilot sliding fee scale initiative for the 2023 camp season.**

In partnership with the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), the Park Authority Board approved bond funding to build a second court at Sully Community Center. A memorandum of understanding was created between the two agencies which enables the Park Authority to offer classes, camps, and rentals for the community. The facility opened on September 17, 2022, and has been running camps and classes as well as hosting gym space for various organizations. In the summer of 2023, NCS & FCPA partnered at Sully Community Center (SCC) and offered a variety of summer camps. This is the first time FCPA summer camps have been held at an NCS site. NCS worked with FCPS to identify children from low-income families who might be interested. NCS and FCPA worked with families through the enrollment process, and offered a sliding scale for registration. The Sully pilot offered numerous lessons learned about outreach and administration of a sliding fee program.

#### ***Summer 2023 Camp Pilot:***

- 504 Registrations in Sully Camps
- 27% Registrations: Sliding Scale
- 92% In Pilot were Non-White (52% Hispanic, 23% Asian, 17% Black)
- Free lunch provided to every child in the camps
- Transportation provided to/from surrounding areas
- 69% of campers said that if the SCC camps weren't available, they would have stayed home instead
- 92% of families said that the SCC camps helped their child try a new activity
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**Continue working with HR&Advisors to assess the equability of FCPA's revenue fund and identify an approach to ensure FCPA programs and facilities are accessible to all county residents. (*Additional action steps will be added once the HR & A report is complete.*)**

FCPA has been working with HR&Advisors on identifying approaches that ensure that access and facilities are accessible to all county residents. FCPA's main focus will continue to be advocating for equitable and

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

sustainable change in FCPA's revenue model. The county mandate that requires FCPA's programs and services be self-sustaining has led to a park and recreation system accessible only to people with financial means to pay for our programs and services; those without have limited to no access.

As an organization that relies on over 60% of its budget through fees and charges while providing access to important programs and services, addressing the inherent inequity of our current revenue model will be critical.

The result has been participation in FCPA programs and facilities that don't reflect the demographics of Fairfax County. Through joint efforts of the FCPA Board and the County Board of Supervisors, FCPA has partnered with consultants to help determine what the fee-based programs should look like with an eye towards equity. Recommendations including feedback from advocates and the community will be presented to FCPA's Board and County Board of Supervisors in 2024.

**Enhance the Park Authority's ability to analyze participation in programs, facilities, and parks by adding a race question to the registration system and utilizing Placer A.I. technology to track visitation.**

FCPA have been using Placer A.I. to obtain data about its customers. In 2023, this data was used to track attendance at Park Authority's events as well as Rec Centers. This data can be disaggregated by race and income level. Although the data has some limitations, it can help inform the decision-making process and ensure equity is advanced at all levels of the organization.

**Goal 9:** Enhance the engagement of the Latino community in parks and recreation.

**Goal 9 Progress:**

**Create social media and web content to highlight Latino Conservation Week in July. Host event in September throughout Hispanic Heritage Month.**

FCPA offered several Spanish-speaking activities across multiple sites throughout Latino Conservation Week instead of hosting a single event. The most popular were the free wagon rides that shared the history of Frying Pan Farm Park in Spanish. Throughout Latino Conservation Week, FCPA staff met with Latino community members to share programs and receive community input at events sponsored by HACAN (Hispanics Against Child Abuse and Neglect) Family Day at Lake Accotink Park and Morning Star at the Woodrow Wilson Library. Additionally, the Summer Entertainment Series featured related programming such as Bolivian dancers to highlight the cultural richness of the community.

In September, severe weather cancelled the Fairfax Fiesta, a Hispanic Heritage Month partnership with Celebrate Fairfax.

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

While FCPA plans to pursue these again in the future, we would like to offer more resources for the Hispanic and Latino communities throughout the year, instead of focusing on a single event, such as the geocaching and orienteering workshop at Colvin Run Mill with Spanish translation held in summer 2023.

FCPA received FY24 Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) funding to host train the trainer classes for Spanish speakers on nature topics in partnership with Nature Forward and other organizations at Huntley Meadows Park. Additionally, FCPA is co-sponsoring Landscaping with Native Plants workshops in Spanish with Plant NOVA Natives in early 2024.

Outreach and educational materials through the Watch the Green Grow program have been translated into Spanish to increase resources available for outreach event with partners like Second Story at the Culmore Community Center. FCPA will continue to expand these partnerships throughout 2024, with an emphasis on the Reston area.

### **Work with community partners and non-profits to build community connections.**

Over the last year, FCPA partnered with many groups to support activities and outreach to various communities. Partners included Defensores de la Quenca, HACAN, Second Story, Celebrate Fairfax, Nature Forward, Fairfax Master Naturalist, Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Justice High School teachers, RECPAC camp sites. Coordinated activities and events with these community partners and non-profits will continue in 2024.

**Goal 10:** Expand and enhance programming and interpretation related to the history of Black people in Fairfax County. Research and develop an interpretative guide and short orientation video for site staff that includes strategies for teaching about and discussion of Black history (terminology, how to address feelings, how to handle uncomfortable conversations, etc.).

**Goal 10 Progress:** Throughout 2023, FCPA staff began building a regional network of interpretation professionals on this topic. Opportunities arose with staff to establish relationships with the National Park Service and the Native American liaison to engage the Native American community in the review of related-interpretative signage and programming, including our popular school field trips that serve thousands of FCPS students annually. This will continue through 2024, including training opportunities.

While FCPA dominated the Juneteenth-related offerings in Fairfax County ([Juneteenth in Northern Virginia 2023 Events | Visit Fairfax \(fxva.com\)](#)), the community-led event hosted at Sully Historic Site was especially notable. Over 300 visitors participated in a program featuring the significance of the holiday, participated in a freedom walk to the representative quarter for the enslaved, attended the Forgotten Road Tour, listened to the Emancipation Proclamation being read, learned about what life was like for enslaved people through representative interpretation, and enjoyed lunch. *Shawwny on Social* led the program development and marketing, and arranged for singers. *Shawwny* was joined by Rev Lynda Alicudo who provided decorations, signage, lunch and volunteer support from her congregation for this meaningful event.

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

In 2023, interpreters from all sites were invited to participate in Black history tours at Park Authority sites including Colvin Run Mill, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Frying Pan Farm Park, Historic Huntley, and Sully Historic Site. The goal of the effort is to enhance FCPA tours and build confidence with sharing difficult history. As a community of practice, the FCPA interpreters provided constructive feedback on each other's programs, while also sharing the challenges and successes of their programs. In fall 2023, a special projects historian was added to increase our quality check on interpretive waysides and the inclusion of Black stories.

In 2024, the work of the Untold Stories Committee will resume with ethical interpretation training and the development of employee guides.

### **Improve confidence in staff delivery of programs through peer coaching based on employee surveys.**

The initial survey of Resource Management Division (RMD) interpreter will be released in December 2023 to serve as a baseline for subsequent years.

### **Increase the number of facilities and properties related to people of color with interpretation.**

This is ongoing. In 2023, research on the Banks and Quander families to develop web content and language for future signage. This research is crucial and will be supported in the future by a special project historian. Current efforts underway include signage at Historic Centreville, Historic Huntley, and Walney Visitor Center at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park.

### **Utilize the Program Planning JEDI checklist to assess if programs are welcoming for people of color and accommodating for people of all abilities.**

The justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) checklist is a guide that programmers can review their program advertisements to remind them of ways to make their programs more inclusive. A survey to be conducted in December 2023 will collect information as to the frequency of use and effectiveness of the checklist. In 2024, the program loading spreadsheet will be slightly modified to indicate the use of the checklist and integrate this confirmation into an existing process.

### **Continue peer coaching and Black History Month program review at Colvin Run Mill, Frying Pan Farm Park, Green Spring Gardens, Historic Huntley, and Ellanor C. Lawrence Park**

Site interpretive staff were asked to give their Black history programming in advance of Black History Month to the interpreters from other sites who then made comments and suggestions. Participation in the Black History events at sites was lower than anticipated. Colvin Run Mill presented "What We Know – Enslaved People of the Mill" with only five attendees. The "African American at Walney" walking tour at the Ellanor C. Lawrence Park had two participants. Higher success was achieved at Frying Pan Farm Park with eighty-four attendees during the "Black History of the Meeting House" event.

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

### **Develop the approach and budget for updating the interpretative plan for Sully Historic Site.**

Sully Magisterial District was named after Sully Historic Site, a former plantation and currently a Park Authority museum. During her public engagement efforts regarding the potential renaming of the magisterial district, Supervisor Smith heard differing viewpoints, which shared a common theme of needing to heal the community. She committed to helping tell the story of the community's complicated and misunderstood history. Supervisor Smith chose to retain the name of Sully District with a pledge to learn more about the impact our history has on the community today and to move forward and embrace the intentional consideration of equity when making policies or delivering programs and services for all. The process of updating the Interpretative Plan for Sully Historic Site offers an opportunity for more robust discussion about the themes and methods for the interpretation and sharing of Black history and culture in Fairfax County.

In 2023, FCPA established a project outline to initiate an inclusive process to review and update the interpretative plan. The Board of Supervisors demonstrated support for this effort by providing third quarter funding. This intensive effort will kick off in 2024.

### **Support the Cultural Resource Survey (architectural and other Cultural Resources) at Gum Springs in coordination with County Department of Planning and Development. The goal is to have the Gum Springs community listed in the County Inventory of Historic Sites; and ultimately, the Virginia Landmark Register and the National Register of Historic Places.**

The Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) has finished its review of the submittals and has selected a candidate to conduct the survey. The contract is currently under review. The Archaeology and Collections Branch will review the draft and final reports produced as part of this effort.

### **Provide technical assistance to the Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum in the care of its collection.**

Staff from the Archaeology and Collections Branch provided guidance to the Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum with their Collections Assessment for Preservation Program (CAP), an initiative of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). The purpose of the program is to assist museums with best practices and what would be needed for future AAM accreditation. In preparation for the AAM site visit, Kelsey Atwood, our Collections Manager, assisted Gum Springs Museum's Executive Director, Ron Chase, with collections management tasks, including sorting and organizing archival materials and assistance with the organization of collections objects. AAM conducted a site visit on November 16-17, 2023. A report of their findings will be submitted to the Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum by December 31, 2023. The report will include recommendations for the next steps.

### **Partner with Friends of Fairfax County Archaeology and Cultural Resources (FOFA) to feature presentations on African American cemeteries as a topic for the next symposium.**

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# CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## ANNUAL REPORT

The Archaeology and Collections Branch, Friends of Fairfax County Archaeology and Cultural Resources (FOFA), and Gunston Hall sponsored a symposium of historic cemeteries. It included presentations on African American cemeteries, including information on cemeteries in Fairfax County, Richmond, and elsewhere. The Fairfax County information includes research gathered from ongoing investigations being done as part of the cemetery inventory. About 100 people were in attendance in person, with an undetermined number present virtually. The symposium is to be made public on YouTube.

**Utilize the History Commission’s African American History Inventory (AAHI) document and searchable database, created by George Mason University (GMU), and the Department of Conservation and Recreation, African American Resource Survey in Fairfax County, as resources for interpretation.**

The AAHI document was completed by the Fairfax County History Commission and a searchable database was produced by George Mason University. This document is on the County website where it is available to researchers. It gathers references to African American history in a single location. This expedites research efforts. It is a living document and additions and updates to the inventory are welcome. Updates are to be provided to a designated History Commission contact.