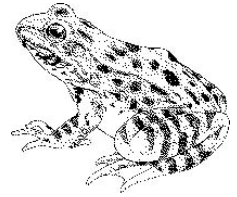


# FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK



JUNE 2005

E-MAIL ADDRESS: [info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

WEB SITE: <http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org>

## President's Message

I remember writing an article once that started off by saying that spring was the best time at Huntley Meadows, and then went on to point out that each season is special at HMP. I'm back to the glories of spring, again. Maybe it is the best season. The birds are migrating through, the sun is warm, the plants are blooming. The place is just exquisite. Spring is wonderful here in other regards, too. Our annual Wetlands Awareness Day celebration occurs in spring. It is our big, no holds barred party commemorating the miracle of wetlands. Elsewhere in this issue you'll read how phenomenally successful WAD 2005 was.



Spring also brings us the annual Birdathon. As I have written here before, the birdathon raises money for the park's Natural Resource Management Internship, provides playtime for several

positively driven birders and supplies valuable biologic data for the Park's use. Andy Higgs' summary of the results are included in this issue.

Coming in June will be the Volunteers recognition party. This is also an annual event complete with awards, good food and entertainment. If there is ever a good reason to volunteer, the Volunteer Party is it.

Finally, our annual membership meeting is held in June. It will be June 7 this year. This is the meeting at which your Board is elected for a one year term. If you have questions or issues to put before the Board, this is a good time to do it.

So, I guess spring is the best time at Huntley Meadows . . . . . although, y' know, autumn is pretty special . . . . .

Harry

# **FOHMP ANNUAL MEETING**

**TUESDAY JUNE 7 at 7:00 P.M.**

## **PROGRAM: HUNTLEY'S MEADOW**

Field ecologist Rod Simmons will give a slide-illustrated talk on meadows and meadow ecology. From Huntley's meadow to natural grassland communities of the region, learn about one of the east coast's rarest habitats. A field botanist with the City of Alexandria, Rod is technically trained as a geologist and biologist and has been studying the plant life of our region for over two decades. A board member of both the Maryland and Virginia Native Plant Societies, Rod champions protection of native plants and their habitats.

The talk will follow a short business meeting; refreshments will be served.

### **Birder's Exchange Collection Drive Update**

Our Friends group has been working this spring collecting used optics and field equipment for the Birder's Exchange program. This program, administered by the American Birding Association, helps conservation of neo-tropical migrants by putting binoculars, scopes and other equipment directly into the hands of avian researchers in Latin American countries. Unlike our country, bird research is not well-funded in the tropics, especially in the poorer countries. Researchers are often working without even the most basic equipment like binoculars and field guides. Considering how many of "our" birds spend half of their lives in the tropics, conservation research is equally as important in Latin America as it is here. Since the 1960's there has been a steady decline in the populations of more than 130 species of Neotropical migrants that breed in North America and winter in Central and South America. It's important that we do what we can to stem this decline in our country and in Latin America.

We've had a great response from some very generous people who have donated over 20 pairs

of binoculars and 6 scopes and tripods. As I write this, it's only May 11th so we're still hoping for more donations before the end of May. FOHMP is taking care of packing and shipping the equipment to the ABA, who then have the donations hand carried to Latin America. If you haven't gotten around to bringing your equipment in, we will still accept donations through June. After that, please send donations directly to the American Birding Association/Birder's Exchange, 720 West Monument St., Colorado Springs, CO 80904. If you have nothing to donate but would still like to give, monetary donations are gladly accepted.

Many thanks to all those who have donated equipment. Generous donors include: Wells Burgess, John and Barbara Perry, Priestley Toulmin, Jessie W. Bynum, Thomas Nardone, Paul Mocko, Mary Floyd, Fred and Norma Hoffman, Joe Sasfy, Marianne Mooney and the HMP staff. We have had some donations with no names attached so please give us a ring at the visitor center if your name is not listed here so we can thank you all personally.

Marianne Mooney

## Birdathon 2005 Summary

On Tuesday, May 10th, I arrived at the park just after 5 AM, and heard my first Cardinal of the morning before I was even out of the car. A Scarlet Tanager was singing from near the visitor's center as I donned my binoculars, though the trail seemed quiet as I walked towards the wetland. Emerging from the woods, I was greeted by a beautiful scattered fog, stars shining down from a clear sky, and a chorus of Common Yellowthroats. I found Chris French was already at the tower, where the Canada Geese were getting loud enough to drown out any nearby warblers. And with that, the 9th annual Birdathon was under way. Before we were finished, the four teams of staff and volunteers had tallied 107 species, just one shy of the record established last year.

So what were the highlights? Well, the counters seemed to feel the star sighting of the day was a tie between the Kentucky Warbler (found by Chris) and the Lincoln's Sparrow (found by Ben Jessup's team). But there were plenty of other great sightings. Besides the Kentucky, 19 species of warbler were tallied, including Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, Pine, Blackpoll, Prothonotary, Worm-eating, and Canada Warbler, along with American Redstart who seemed to be working on a nest. Raptors were well represented, with Osprey and Bald Eagle as well as Red-tailed, Red-shouldered and Cooper's hawk. For the shorebird, five Semipalmated Plover headlined a group including Killdeer, both Yellowlegs species, plus Spotted, Solitary, and Least Sandpipers. Flying over the wetland were Double-crested Cormorant, Common Loon, and Common Nighthawk, while woodland treats included Orchard and Baltimore Oriole, a Warbling Vireo, both Blue and Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Hermit, Wood and Swainson's Thrush.

The most numerous bird of the day was a surprising 217 Blue Jays, followed by 129 Common Grackle, 110 Canada Geese, 98 Red-winged Blackbird, 90 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, 85 Common Yellowthroat, and 82 Red-eyed Vireo. The normally abundant Yellow-rumped warbler was counted only 12 times, ranking it behind the Common Yellowthroat, Ovenbird (31), Northern Parula (20), and Black-throated Blue (18) among the warblers.

But of course, this is not just another "big-day" count. It provides us with the opportunity to remember Ken Howard and Ed Weigel, two volunteers who enriched the Huntley Meadows experience for so many people. The donations this event inspires will fund an internship for another young person, helping to insure that Ken Howard and Ed Weigel's good work will continue into another generation.

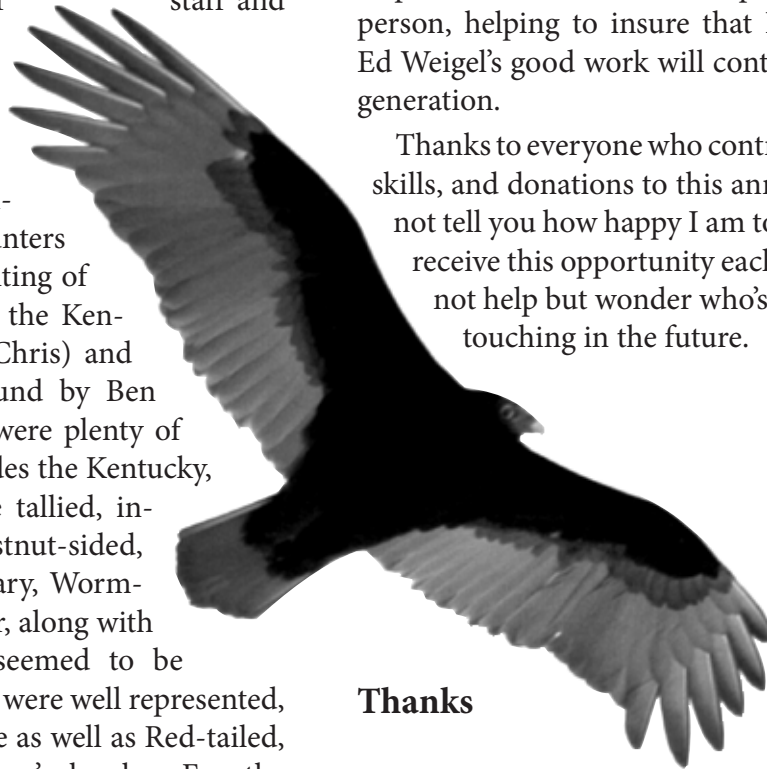
Thanks to everyone who contributed their time, skills, and donations to this annual event. I cannot tell you how happy I am to see these interns receive this opportunity each year. And I cannot help but wonder who's lives they will be touching in the future.

Andy Higgs

## Thanks

Many thanks to all who have generously donated money to this important fundraiser. To date, 28 folks have contributed over \$1300 toward the Natural Resource Internship. We are still accepting contributions in order to reach our goal of \$2500. We appreciate your support.

Ann Stat



## Park Manager Comments

You may have observed unusually low water levels in the park's central wetland recently. Nature's engineers, beavers, have focused their dam building activities downstream from the central impoundment. Several dams and lodges can be seen in the lower reaches of Barnyard Run and Dogue Creek, indicating a very active beaver population.

So why are the beavers less active in the central impoundment? The most likely explanation is that beavers have gradually depleted their "winter" food supply in recent years. Consequently, they have found more favorable conditions downstream with easier access to preferred food supplies.

In the early 1990s, park staff contracted a consultant to examine the likelihood of beavers abandoning the central impoundment in favor of more favorable habitat. TAMS Consultants, Inc. was asked to develop and evaluate several management options for the central wetland. In July 1993 the consultant produced a report, "Potential Wetland Management Activities at Huntley Meadows Park." A summary of the report is available at the Visitor Center information desk.

The park staff has been closely monitoring conditions in the central wetland for several years and has been in consultations with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, and other professionals. In addition, staff have been soliciting comments from park patrons and working closely with the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park to address this issue.

Management alternatives are still being evaluated, and funding sources are being explored. If you would like to offer your comments on future management of the park's central wetland, you may contact me by mail or email me at [Gary.Roisum@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Gary.Roisum@fairfaxcounty.gov). The complete report by TAMS Consultants is also available for review at the visitor center.

Gary Roisum

## Views of Huntley Meadows

Paintings by Brenda M. Sylvia



The auditorium is filled with colorful, familiar scenes of Huntley Meadows Park. Be sure to spend some time with Brenda Sylvia's paintings between now and the end of June. 20% of sales will be donated to Friends of Huntley Meadows Park.

Brenda M. Sylvia is a landscape painter who loves nature despite living in an urban area. The act of painting outside and experiencing nature firsthand is an integral part of her work. She is energized by the beauty of nature, and she shares her emotional response to a particular place through her paintings. She has visited Huntley Meadows Park at all seasons over the last few years and has spent many days painting there. Brenda believes it is critical to have access to natural areas such as this park, because they can serve as a refuge from the pressures of our daily lives. Ideally, her Views of Huntley Meadows show will remind people of the natural beauty which can be found in their neighborhoods if they just take the time to enjoy it.

## Wetlands Awareness Day

Wetlands Awareness Day was the Park's biggest celebration ever! We had at least 1,000 visitors over the course of the day, and the lines for Fun Fair activities were always long. Visitors enjoyed music, live animals, and boardwalk interpretation.

The staff wants to thank Friends of Huntley Meadows Park for all their continued support of the event. FOHMP purchased all the snacks and drinks that kept staff and volunteers going throughout the day, funded our entertainment, and bought the delicious cake served for the 30th anniversary party. We could not have done it without you!

Melissa Ann Gaulding



## What a Day!

Oh, the weather outside was sunny  
And the cake was oh, so yummy!  
But out to the muck I must go...  
Love it so, love it so, love it so!

I had yet another wonderfully fun time at this year's Wetlands Awareness Day. Suzanne Lepple and I spent the afternoon in one of our favorite spots - just a foot or so off the boardwalk! We used soil augers to show visitors samples of the lovely gray clay that resides under the few inches of muck. Children and adults were encouraged to take a small piece of clay and mold it as we shared information about how the clay got there, how much of it there is, and how it is an integral part of this unique habitat.

We had some aquatic visitors also. A rather large snapping turtle swam around behind us and while I told visitors that they eat mostly plant material I was secretly hoping that it didn't get too close! A parade of about 4-5 baby snapping turtles (quarter-sized) floated by, driven by the current to places unknown. A Painted Turtle and a Northern Water Snake were spotted nearby.

Everyone was enjoying the view from the boardwalk and all of the great information that was being shared by our experienced and very enthusiastic volunteers!

While I was out "mucking about", my daughter and son were part of the volunteer crew back behind the visitor center running the kid's games and crafts, cake walk and face painting.

I mentioned cake in my beginning ditty. There was a lot of it with very delicious icing (I can personally attest to that)! To kick off the day we celebrated the 30th year of Huntley Meadows Park as a Fairfax County Park. Admiring and supportive words were spoken and memories of the 20th birthday celebration came to mind.

At the end of the day, as we walked back to the visitor center, we spotted a Pileated Woodpecker

foraging on the forest floor. How exciting! And just days after the news about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, so you know what each of us was thinking about.

While unpacking back at the visitor center, I not only could see the success of the day in everyone's faces, but was also greeted with, "Mom! I won two cakes!" Sure enough, Malcolm had won not just one, but two cakes in the cake walk. One with a very lively looking frog eyeing a tasty looking fly and the other a study in "pink" with a giant, glittering pink salamander on top.

What a Day!

P.S. So much thanks to the HMP staff and all of my fellow volunteers! It's great to be a part of such a great team effort!

Kathi McNeil



## Upcoming events June 1 - August 21

Huntley Meadows Park and Visitor Center 703-768-2525

The Visitor Center is open 9am-5pm, Monday, Wednesday-Friday. On June weekends the Visitor Center is open 9am-5pm. On July and August weekends the Visitor Center is open 9am-1pm. The Visitor Center is closed Tuesday. Grounds open dawn to dusk.

### **Saturday, June 4** - Summer Birds and Breakfast

(Adults), 7-9:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Explore the woodland and wetland to observe summer bird life. Following the walk, cool off and enjoy juice and bagels at the Visitor Center. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot.

Binoculars and field guides recommended. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$5

### **Sunday, June 5** - Birding for Beginners - Optics and Field Guides

(Adults), 7:00-10:00am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Interested in birding? We can get you started! Learn about the birds in the park and some basic identification skills. Program begins with a discussion of field guides and optics. Reservations required. FREE

### **Sunday, June 5** - Sssnakes!

(Families), 1-2:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through discussion and a walk learn about some of Huntley's scaly inhabitants. Appropriate for families; children must be six years or older. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE

### **Monday, June 13** - Young Explorers - Dazzling Dragonflies

(6-8 yrs.), 3:15-4:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through indoor and outdoor activities learn about the life cycle, behavior, and identification of Huntley Meadows' many dragonflies and damselflies. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$3

### **Wednesday, June 15** - Nature Detectives - Dazzling Dragonflies

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through story, activity, and craft, learn about the life cycle, behavior, and identification of Huntley Meadows' many dragonflies and damselflies. Reservations required. \$5

### **Thursday, June 16** - Nature Detectives - Dazzling Dragonflies

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 6/15.) Reservations required. \$5

**Friday, June 24** - Café Cattail

7-9:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Welcome to Huntley Meadows' very own coffeehouse! Enjoy a relaxing evening applauding our community's talents. Musicians, dancers and poets are encouraged to share their arts with a nature theme. Reservations required for performers only. Sponsored by FOHMP. FREE

**Saturday, June 25** - Summer Stroll

(Adults), 8-10pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Glittering fireflies, gnawing beavers and a parade of raccoons. Huntley Meadows Park never sleeps! Learn about Huntley's night life through a short lecture and a walk to the wetland. Sponsored by FOHMP. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$2

**Sunday, June 26** - Dragonflies

(Adults), 9-11:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Learn about the life cycle, behavior and identification of Huntley's many dragonflies and damselflies. Venture to the wetland to observe these acrobatic fliers in action. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. FREE

**Saturday, July 2** - Video - Feathered Jewels

10-10:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Hummingbirds are a marvel of nature. Learn more about these beautiful and agile flyers. FREE

**Sunday, July 3** - Video - Feathered Jewels

10-10:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 7/2.) FREE

**Saturday, July 9** - Bat Watching

(Adults), 8-9:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. The only mammals with true flight can find insect prey in complete darkness. Learn about the diversity and adaptations of these fascinating animals at a slide illustrated lecture. Then search twilight skies for bats on the wing. Reservations required. FREE

**Sunday, July 10** - Art Show Reception

11am-1pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Meet photographer Kathleen Udell at the opening reception for her exhibition, on display through September. FREE

**Tuesday, July 12** - Bat Watching

(Families), 8-9:30pm, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Families can search twilight skies for bats on the wing. Learn to use a bat detector and see a slide show for a close look at these fascinating animals and their habits. Appropriate for families; children must be 6 years or older. Reservations required. FREE



**Saturday, July 23** - Buglover's Paradise

(Families), 10am-noon, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. The park is buzzing with insect activity-grasshoppers, butterflies, ladybugs and leafhoppers. Stop by our classroom for self-guided activities, a craft and videos. Appropriate for children 4 years & up. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Sponsored by FOHMP. \$2/child

**Sunday, July 24** - Buglover's Paradise

(Families), 10am-noon, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (See 7/24.) Sponsored by FOHMP. \$2/child

**Wednesday, July 27** - Nature Detectives - Busy Bees

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30 am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. How sweet it is! Through story, craft and an activity learn about the social insects that make the sweet food we call honey. Reservations required. \$5

**Thursday, July 28** - Nature Detectives - Busy Bees

(3-5 yrs.), 9:30-10:15am or 10:45-11:30 am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 7/27.) Reservations required. \$5

**Wednesday, August 3** - Young Explorers-Colors and Patterns

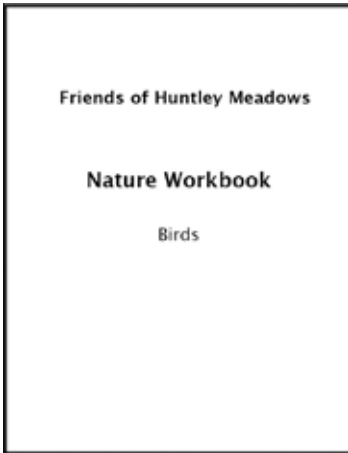
(6-8 yrs.), 10-11:30 am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Through indoor and outdoor activities learn how animals and plants make and use color and pattern. Reservations required. Canceled if rain. \$3

**Saturday, August 20** - Video - Insects

10-10:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. Take a close-up look at the amazing world of insects. FREE

**Sunday, August 21** - Video - Insects

10-10:30am, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 703-768-2525. (SEE 8/20.) FREE

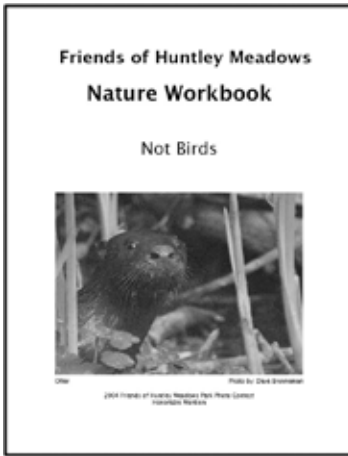


## Nature Workbooks

Earlier this year, Friends of Huntley Meadows began a project to compile Nature workbooks to include pictures taken in Huntley Meadows of birds and animals that are seen in the park. Visitors can use these notebooks to identify and appreciate what they see. The notebooks are meant to be very specific to Huntley Meadows Park. We now have two workbooks – one covering birds and the other covering ‘not birds’. I encourage you to stop by the nature center and look at the notebooks on your next visit.

A team of volunteers including Andy Higgs, Glenn Curtis, Harry Glasgow and myself review donated photos to choose the photos which best represent the species and its life in the park. The notebooks currently include 34 species of birds and 14 species of not birds. Andy Higgs pointed out in his summary of the Birdathon that 107 species of birds were identified in the park in just one day. Clearly, we have plenty of room for more pictures. If you have any questions or have pictures to contribute, please contact me at [newsletter@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:newsletter@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org).

Ken Larsen



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## Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

### Board of Directors:

Harry Glasgow (President)  
Sarah Stromayer (Vice President)  
Glenn Curtis (Secretary)  
Sally Cureton (Treasurer)  
Ken Larsen (Newsletter Editor)  
P.J. Dunn (Web Site Manager)  
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Norma Hoffman                Kathi McNeil  
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Chuck Studholme



Web address:  
Email addresses  
General Information:  
Membership Info: Harry Glasgow  
Donations and dues: Sally Cureton  
Newsletter Inquiries/submissions: Ken Larsen  
Questions For Park Staff

<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org>  
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[treasurer@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:treasurer@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)  
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[staff@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:staff@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

# Are You A Member?

*Please*

help support Huntley Meadows Park and join

*The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park!*

Become a member of FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK. (FOHMP) and help to protect and preserve the park. Your annual dues (tax deductible) will keep you informed and help support the nature center's programs. Please fill out and mail this application today!

## *Membership Information*

*Note* Our new dues schedule is as follows:

- |                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| ◆ Senior \$5.00      | ◆ Family \$15.00               |
| ◆ Individual \$10.00 | ◆ Lifetime Membership \$150.00 |

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes! I would like to join FRIENDS!**

\_\_\_\_\_ I'd like to renew my membership. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_.00 annual dues for a \_\_\_\_\_ membership. (*Please make checks payable to FOHMP.*)

Additional \$\_\_\_\_.00 donation enclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have some comments and/or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm interested in learning more about volunteering at the Park.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to volunteer at the Park.

If you checked that you would like to volunteer, please help us by indicating your areas of knowledge and/or interest. \_\_\_\_\_

- FOHMP Volunteer Coordinator    Park Watch    Promoting Friends    Special Events    Mailing
- Phoning Members For Lectures and Special Events    Letter Writing Campaign    As Needed

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Mail To:** FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK

c/o Huntley Meadows Park  
3701 Lockheed Boulevard  
Alexandria, VA 22306

E-MAIL ADDRESS: [info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

PHONE: 703/768-2525

WEB SITE: (<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/index.html>)



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Your membership expires on the date in the upper left corner..  
NOTE: Please check your mailing label for accuracy & notify us of any changes .