

# Friends of Huntley Meadows Park



**March 2011**

Email: [info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](mailto:info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)  
Website: [www.Friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](http://www.Friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

## *President's Message*

**N**ever fear, spring will soon be here! We all look forward to our first spring day in the park, the Spring Beauties carpeting the forest floor, the cacophony of amphibian song, and the activity of the birds as they search for mates and raise their young. Oh, and then there is the sound of excited children as they gather in the park for a well-anticipated adventure!

Spring is the busiest time at Huntley Meadows Park for school programs. There are some days in May when we can have hundreds of elementary school children here in the scope of a few morning hours. Most of them have paid to come (HMP program fee and bus fee) and it is usually their one field trip of the school year – a very special occasion.

As a volunteer program leader, I love these groups! They are full of energy, curiosity and have very open minds. We teach them about habitats and the importance of wildlife sanctuaries, what freshwater wetlands are, and what plants and animals live here. They learn how to use the trails in the park, read the interpretive signs, and how to listen and look while out in the wild. We also teach them how to tell tadpoles from fish, the difference between a beaver lodge and dam, and how wetlands benefit not only the animals that live there, but the people that live in the surrounding communities. These children, their teachers, and their parents leave with a very positive impression of wetlands. It is my hope that they will visit and explore other natural places and become good environmental stewards.

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park have made a financial commitment to HMP of \$10,000 for the construction of an outdoor classroom. This will be of great value to our program leaders and the groups that they are working with. With your generous response to this year's appeal letter, we are well on our way to reaching our financial goal. Thank you!

In March 2011 FOHMP will be asking people who drive to the park to make a parking donation. We are suggesting a donation of \$2.00 per car or a \$20.00 donation for a year's worth of parking. There will be an explanatory sign in the parking lot and a self-serve

donation box. This is a donation, not a fee, and whether or not to donate is a decision to be made by each individual. The funds collected will go into FOHMP's account and will be used only to support Huntley Meadows Park. In general, the Board has agreed to designate 40% for education/programming, 20% for Resource Management Projects, 20% for special projects, and 10% for site operations. I'd like to extend my thanks to Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay and Fairfax County Park Authority Board member, Ed Batten, for their support of this project.

Supervisor McKay has also been a great supporter of the FOHMP position on the plan to widen the roads near the park's South King's Highway entrance. We have been listened to and are confident that this project will be done in a way that is environmentally sensitive to HMP and the surrounding watershed.

As a final note, please plan to attend our FOHMP Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 16, 7-9 pm. I look forward to seeing you there.

*Kathi McNeil*

## **FOHMP Annual Meeting** *Saturday, April 16th 7 to 9 p.m.*



**C**elebrate spring with the FOHMP board, park staff and Friends members at our annual meeting on April 16th. Festivities will begin in the Visitor Center with light refreshments. A brief business meeting will be followed by highlights of the past year and recognition of new life members. We'll then walk to the wetland to hear a special springtime song performance by our local amphibian population. The courtship songs of frogs and toads should be in full swing and a not-to-be-missed ritual of spring is hearing them. Celebrate the park with the best friends of the park. We look forward to seeing you there. Dress for the weather and bring a flashlight if you wish.

**Please RSVP to 703-768-2525.**



## Park Manager's Message

### *A Walk on Huntley's Wild Side*



**W**ith all the creatures flying, buzzing and leaping to life in spring, I love the idea of each of us trying to create a wildlife oasis in our suburban yards to help sustain songbirds, bees, butterflies, toads and frogs looking for a good meal. In this most frenetic and productive season, local wildlife need endless supplies of energy to defend territory, find and court a mate, breed, and raise young.

Protected natural areas like Huntley Meadows function as a wild grocery store and energy bank to help serve wildlife needs. However, Huntley is in fact a “natural island in a suburban sea”, and there are far more ships in this sea than could ever find a port at Huntley. As declining populations of native bees, butterflies, and birds navigate through the sea of Fairfax County suburbia this spring, why not provide a flower-filled harbor for them to refuel?

Providing nectar and native blooms for our wild visitors in summer and fall is relatively easy, but what can we plant that provides spring food? Typically, home gardens are planted with spring flowers that are exotic, and provide very little nectar or pollen for our hungry wild neighbors. Daffodils, crocuses, forsythia, and tulips have very little nutritional value for wildlife.

If you have room, the best source of spring calories for songbirds are trees like hickory, oak, elm and willow. These trees produce thousands of pollen-filled blooms each spring, which attract large numbers of tiny insects that feed on tree pollen. Songbirds then flock to the tiny flowers to feast on all those insects, along with the occasional mouthful of pollen and flower parts. Oaks and hickories flower in May, making them the most important for migrants like warblers and vireos. Elms and Willows flower earlier in March and April, providing insect food for other species like kinglets and chickadees. White Oak, Mockernut Hickory, Slippery Elm and Black Willow are four excellent native species.

If finding room for a large tree is a tall order for your suburban yard, then plant a smaller tree. Redbuds do a fantastic job of providing an early season nectar source for insects. Alders, although less flashy, are

multi-stemmed shrubs that produce lots of pollen, which attract spring insects. Remember, anything that attracts tiny insects in spring will be a buffet for songbirds. Smooth Alder (*Alnus serrulata*) or Speckled Alder (*Alnus rugosa*) are two great natives, but if you can't find them, other species are fine. Just be sure if you purchase a cultivar of some kind that it's *not* sterile, as cultivars often are. If it doesn't produce fertile flowers, it's useless as a wildlife food. Another great spring shrub for wildlife is blueberry, especially Highbush Blueberry – their spring blossoms are very attractive to bees.

How about planting some spring native wildflowers that produce plenty of nectar for winged diners? Phlox, especially Wild Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) and Creeping Phlox (*Phlox stolonifera*) are excellent, bright, low growing spring natives full of nectar. Two more of my favorites are Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) and Beard's Tongue (*Penstemon* sp.). Plant these wildflowers and your garden will become a magnet for insects.

Finally, why not plant now for early summer? The absolute best native flowers for feeding local pollinators in June and July are Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), Milkweeds (*Asclepias* sp.), Mountain Mints (*Pycnanthemum* sp.) and Giant Hyssops (*Agastache* sp.). Plant Goldenrods (*Solidago* sp.) and any of the Eupatoriums, and you'll also have a wild buffet for late summer and fall.

**Kevin Munroe**



#### **Park Manager Walk and Talks Monthly on Saturday afternoons**

March 12, 4 to 6 p.m.

April 23, 4 to 6 p.m.

May 14, 5 to 7 p.m.

Join Park Manager Kevin Munroe on these monthly walks. Find out about the wetland restoration project and learn about the wildlife for which the Park is known. Cancelled if rain. *Free*



## Park News



### **FIRE AS A TOOL**

#### **Check out Huntley's Meadows!**

On January 25<sup>th</sup> a managed burn was conducted in all four of the meadows off the Hike-Bike trail. Fire is an essential tool for managing and maintaining the health of native meadows. We time our burns for the winter months and are lucky to have had good weather conditions this year.

Thanks to volunteers **Adam Bucher** and **Steve Lindblom** for working the fire line with forestry and Park Authority staff. Take a walk this March and watch as the blackened ground turns brilliant green with new growth. Woodcocks displaying at sunset in early spring love these burned-over areas.



### **WETLAND RESTORATION UPDATE**

Please join Kevin Munroe on one of his **Park Manager Walk and Talks** this spring to learn about the wetland restoration project. Staff and volunteers have been learning more about hemi-marsh cycles and gathering data through three different monitoring projects. The park cleared several important hurdles related to permitting issues. Kevin has also been talking with staff, volunteers and FOHMP board members about the benefits of a dam made of concrete, rather than earth and clay. He'd love to go over these development with you, so please attend one of his walks.

### **HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK SUMMER INTERNSHIPS**

Three internship opportunities are available at Huntley Meadows this summer. All positions are 11 weeks beginning May 31 and ending August 12. Interns work 40 hours a week and receive a stipend of \$2700. To apply please send a resume and letter of intent by March 25 to Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, VA 22306, attention Carolyn Gamble ([carolyn.gamble@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:carolyn.gamble@fairfaxcounty.gov)) for the Naturalist Internship and Cultural Resource Internship. Address letters to attention Dave Lawlor ([dave.lawlor@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:dave.lawlor@fairfaxcounty.gov)) for the Natural Resource Management Internship. Call the park at 703-768-2525 for more information.

#### **Cultural Resource Internship**

This internship is designed to give interested college students and recent graduates the opportunity to work with park staff at Historic Huntley, a soon to be restored federal period villa, and at Huntley Meadows, a 1,428 acre wetland preserve. The house, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, was built by Thomson Mason, grandson of George Mason. The preserve occupies the land then used by Mason for farmland. The internship provides practical experience in a hands-on setting and gives participants the chance to develop skills needed for a career in cultural resource management and the rare opportunity to see the early stages of planning for the interpretation of this small but significant house.

#### **Naturalist Internship**

This internship is designed to give interested college students and recent graduates the opportunity to work with park staff at a 1,428 acre wetland preserve operated by Fairfax County, Virginia. It provides practical experience in a hands-on setting and gives participants the chance to develop skills needed for a career in environmental education, wildlife conservation, and nature center operation.

#### **Natural Resource Management Internship**

This internship is designed to give interested college students or recent graduates the opportunity to work with professional park staff to preserve and enhance wildlife habitats at a 1,428 acre wetland preserve. It provides practical experience in the skills and abilities needed for a career in wildlife management and environmental sciences. Duties include assisting resource management crew with habitat management for wetlands, meadows, and forests, taking part in water quality assessments, participating in invasive species programs and working on vegetation classification.

# Spring Art News

## James Strohmeyer: *A Bit of Nature*

Opening reception: Sunday April 3, 2 to 4 p.m.

James Michael Strohmeyer was born and raised in Mesa Arizona and divides his time between there and this area. He was an artist-in-residence at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton. In 1993, he founded Wet Paint Productions, a design and fabrication business which transforms space into art. His custom artwork is in a number of homes and businesses in the southwest. His show will run through April.



Preen by James Strohmeyer



Ame Perlman

## Ame Perlman: *Paintings and Relief Prints*

Reception: Sunday May 8, 2 to 4 p.m.

Ame's passion for art is intertwined with her passion for nature. Landscape painting and printmaking are her chosen mediums. She has been inspired by her travel experiences and exploration of geospatial and organic patterns found in the natural world. Ame's work has been featured in solo and juried group exhibitions throughout the United States and Canada. She received a National Park Service award in recognition of her interpretive illustrations. The public is invited to attend the artist's reception on May 8th. Her paintings will be on display in the Visitor Center during May and June.



## FOHMP 2010 Photography Contest

FOHMP held their sixth annual Photography Contest in December. The show, for amateur photographers, featured photographs taken at the park. We wish to thank our juror, Marilyn Gaizband, for having so carefully chosen the winning photos. A great big thank you also to the staff and volunteers who assisted in hanging and labeling the photos.

The photography show is a fundraiser for FOHMP as well as an excellent opportunity for amateur photographers to share their work with the public. We wish to thank all those who together submitted an amazing total of 100 photographs for the show. We congratulate the winners and thank you all for participating.

*Sarah Stromayer, Art Show Coordinator*

### Adult Category Winners

- First Place: Curtis Gibbens
- Second Place: Dale Nelson
- Third Place: Mary Rabadan
- Honorable Mention: Catlin Garvey, Curtis Gibbens, Mark Jette, Frank Munoc



### Youth Category Winners

- First and Third Place: Alexander Kluskens
- Second Place: Bernard Kluskens

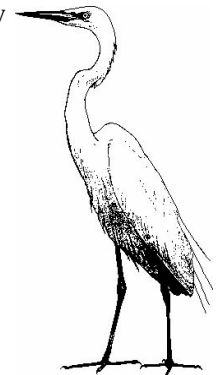
The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park would like to thank the following new Lifetime members:

- George Morduch*
- Kevin McCall*

We appreciate the support from our members that allows FOHMP to achieve our goal of helping to preserve and protect the park. If you would like to give a "lifetime" of support to Huntley Meadows by becoming a life member, please send a donation of \$150 to:

Treasurer, FOHMP  
3701 Lockheed Blvd.  
Alexandria, VA 22306

*Thank you!*  
*Connie Carpender*  
*Membership chair*





# Huntley Happenings



## Birding for Beginners

Sunday March 6, 8 to 11 a.m.

Sharpen your waterfowl identification skills while birding with a park naturalist. Meets in the Visitor Center parking lot. Register online. \$6

## Birds and Bagels

Saturday March 12, 8 to 10:30 a.m.

Search for wintering waterfowl and early spring birds. Following the walk, recap the sightings over breakfast at the center. \$8 Call park for reservations, 703-768-2525.

## Evening Walk

Saturday March 19, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Join Park Naturalist PJ Dunn to hike the trails after dark, listening for owls and frogs and watching for beaver activity. Register online. \$6

## Dazzled By Dragonflies

Saturday April 2, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Ever wonder how dragonflies can hover, dive and zoom at 40 mph? What do they eat, who eats them and what kind of courtship do they have? The surprising answers are in this exciting presentation. Includes a discussion on how to create your own dragonfly pond. Register online. \$6

## Birding for Beginners

Sunday April 3, 8 to 11 a.m.

Learn about optics and field guides as you birdwatch with a park naturalist. Register online. \$6

## Eco-Savvy Expo

**Sunday April 10, Noon to 4 p.m.**

Bring nature home from Huntley Meadows Park! Our Eco-Savvy Expo will offer all you need to make your yard an environmentally friendly place. There will be programs, walks and a native plant sale featuring Nature By Design nursery. Rain barrels, native seed mixes, bee boxes and books on wildlife will be available for purchase. Our sponsoring organizations will be there to talk to you and to offer advice on how to create space for nature in your garden. Please join us. Free, except small fee for some presentations.

## Café Cattail

Friday April 15, 7 to 9:30 p.m.

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. FREE

## Spring Birds and Bagels

Saturday April 16, 8 to 10:30 a.m.

Search for warblers, thrushes, and a host of other birds during migration. Following the walk, recap the sightings during a continental breakfast at the Center. Call the park for reservations. \$8

## Wetlands Awareness Day

**Sunday May 1, Noon to 3 p.m.**

The biggest event on the HMP calendar is Wetlands Awareness Day. Hundreds of people come to the park to learn about the importance of and to experience the beauty of wetlands. Interpreters are stationed along the boardwalk where they unlock the mysteries of wetland soils, give close-up looks at wildlife through telescopes and impart visitors with a sense of what an amazing place Huntley Meadows is. There's also a Fun Fair for kids with games, prizes and an old-fashioned cake walk. Sponsored by FOHMP. Call Melissa Gaulding at 703-768-2525 if you're interested in volunteering to help out at the event.

## Off-trail Birding at South King's Highway

Saturday May 7, 7 to 9:30 a.m.

Search for neotropical songbird migrants. Dress for going off trail. Binoculars and field guides are recommended. Meet at the park's South King's Highway entrance. Call the park for reservations. \$6

## Wild Side Wagon Rides

Saturdays May 21 and 28, 12:30, 2:30, or 4:30 p.m.

Take a 90-minute tractor ride with a park naturalist to parts of the Park that are difficult to reach on foot. Look for and learn about songbirds, wildflowers, butterflies, and waterfowl, and stop for a snack at the observation platform. Children must be registered and accompanied by a registered adult. Register online. \$6

## Birding for Beginners

Saturday May 21, 8 to 11 a.m.

Spring is the most exciting time for birding.

Look for and learn about nesting birds and migrants. \$6 Register at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes).

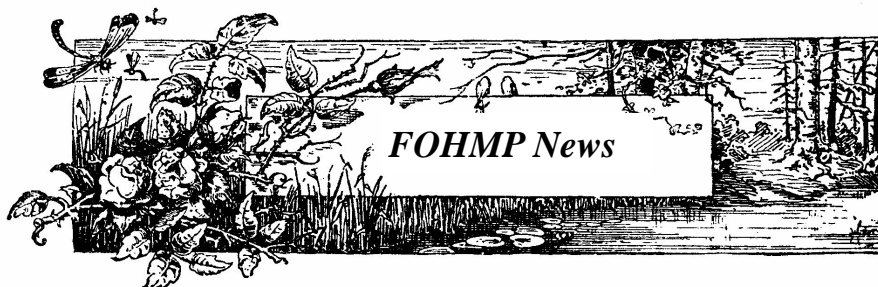
## For young visitors:

### Nature for Tiny Tots

Classes begin Tuesday April 5 at 9:30 or 10:45 a.m.

Over the course of this eight week series, children and their parents learn about the plants, animals, and habitats of the park, through songs, crafts, and activities. A \$5 materials fee is due to the instructor at the first class. Register online. (24 to 42 mos.) \$69





**New in the Exhibit Room**

Next time you are at the center, check out the new microscope station. Many thanks to FOHMP for funding this through a Park Authority Mastenbrook matching grant. Later this year, the grant will also pay for new backlit habitat panels. Thank you to our dedicated friends group for making these improvements possible.



**2010 Elly Doyle Award Winner Norma Hoffman**

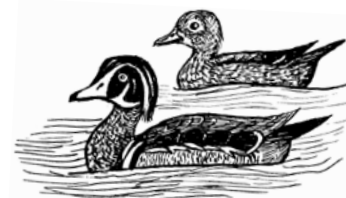
Friends of Huntley Meadows Park board member and site volunteer, **Norma Hoffman**, was honored at the Elly Doyle Park Service Award reception in November. She was recognized with this top Fairfax County Park Authority volunteer award for her many contributions to Huntley. Since 1984 Norma has shared her love of Huntley Meadows Park as an official volunteer donating 100-200 hours each year. Her devotion to Huntley is legendary and she has fought long and hard to protect the park. When the county threatened to build a road through the park, Norma co-founded the Citizens Alliance to Save Huntley. They successfully waged a 15-year campaign to keep the road from being built. Norma also sought preservation of Historic Huntley and urged the county to acquire it. Our congratulations to Norma on this well-deserved award, and many thanks for her tireless hours spent protecting our park.

<b>Friends of Huntley Meadows Park Budget</b>	
<b>July 2010 - June 2011</b>	
<b>INCOME:</b>	
Dues	\$4,500
Donations	\$2,500
Sales	\$1,800
Photo Show/Contest	\$400
End of Year Appeal	\$8,000
Co-sponsorships	\$1,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$18,200</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>	
<b>Grants:</b>	
Naturalist Intern	\$2,700
Scholarships (schools/camp)	\$800
Wetlands Awareness Day	\$400
Facility Equipment	\$1,000
Resource Manage. Equip.	\$300
Seasonal Salaries	\$2,000
Mastenbrook grant	\$8,000
Co-sponsorships	\$800
Misc. (incl. staff training)	\$500
Parking donation box	\$4,000
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>\$20,500</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	
Website	\$240
Newsletter	\$1,100
Sales (patches, t-shirts, etc.)	\$1,000
Fundraising (appeals &)	\$400
Misc. (incl. Photo Show)	\$300
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,040</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$23,540</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$(5,340)</b>
<i>Note: \$10,072 bank CD purchased for 25 mo. @ 2% APY due 10/23/12</i>	
<i>Total assets are currently \$27,400</i>	

**FOHMP Spring Birds and Bagels Sunday May 22, 8 to 10:30 a.m.**  
Attend a special Friends birdwalk led by birder/board member Andy Higgs. Following the walk, recap the sightings during breakfast at the center. Reservations 703-768-2525. **Free to FOHMP members.**

**We are once again accepting donations of used nature books for our Friends Used Book Sale. Bring books to VC and note that they are for the sale. Books should be in good condition. Thank you for your support.**

**Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up, Saturday, April 9, 9-11:30 a.m.**  
Help clean litter near the park along Lockheed and Harrison Lane to prevent it from washing into the wetland. Meet at Visitor Center to sign-in and pick up trash bags. Bring gloves and dress for the weather. Students may earn community service credit. Call the park at 703-768-2525 to register. Questions? Call Suzanne Lepple at 703-768-0462.



# Please Support the Huntley Meadows Park Birdathon

One of the things I appreciate during the winter months is the call of a House Finch. As early as January, I begin hearing a slightly familiar song, and then look up to see a male perched high in a tree practicing a few tentative notes. As winter progresses, the call seems to build in length and confidence. By mid-February, he can be heard in full song and will be joined by other spring songsters like cardinals, chickadees and song sparrows. There's no denying then, that although snow may be on the ground, spring is on the way. By the time April rolls around, neo-tropical migrants will be joining in the dawn chorus. When they arrive, it's time for our teams to dust off their binos and head out for the annual Huntley Meadows Park Birdathon. This year will be our 15th birdathon and will be held on Tuesday, May 3rd.

Every year, park staff and volunteers set out before dawn for a long morning of counting bird species in the park. Fifteen years ago this event, long an annual survey, became an opportunity to remember and honor two exceptional men. Ken Howard and Ed Weigel were both volunteers who for years inspired a love of nature within the park visitors they met. They shared their time, wit, wisdom and enthusiasm with everyone, acting as true ambassadors for Huntley Meadows. Their good work continues to this day through the park's Natural Resource Internship that is funded by the Birdathon. This internship provides a young college student an opportunity to begin a career in conservation with some hands-on experience in this wonderful park.

As always, our target is to record 100 species for the day. We've done it five times so far, with 108 species in 2004 being our top record. To make a donation, you can do it per species or just by a dollar amount. If you were to donate only a quarter per species seen, 100 species would produce a donation of \$25. That would go a long way towards helping us reach our annual goal of \$2,700, which will fund a summer internship of 11 weeks. This is our traditional fundraising event of the year when we ask our members to donate to a good cause. We have always appreciated the generosity of park supporters in helping us to meet our goal.

I believe this is a great cause. Like many of you, I knew Ken and Ed well, and count myself fortunate to have learned so much about the natural world from them. I want to see their good work continue, and I hope you feel the same way. Thank you very much.

Andy Higgs



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## 2011 Huntley Meadows Park Birdathon

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

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

Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to **HMP-FCPA** and write donations-birdathon on the memo line.

Mail this form and check to:  
**Huntley Meadows Park Birdathon**  
**3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306**

Results will be posted by June 1 on the FOHMP website: [www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org](http://www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org)

***Friends of Huntley Meadows Park  
Membership and Renewal Form***

*Please support Huntley Meadows Park by joining our Friends group. By becoming a member, you will help to protect and preserve the park. Your dues will help fund new initiatives and programs and your support will help us to be advocates for the park. Fill out and mail the application to this address:*

**Friends of Huntley Meadows Park  
3701 Lockheed Blvd.  
Alexandria, VA 22306**

***Dues information:***

- \$15 Individual
- \$20 Family
- \$10 Student/Senior
- \$150 Lifetime membership

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

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

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Friends of Huntley Meadows Park**  
3701 Lockheed Blvd  
Alexandria, VA 22306



Please check your mailing label for accuracy and notify us of any changes.  
Your membership expiration date is in the upper left corner.