



Friends of Lake Accotink Park Newsletter

February 2023

NOTES FROM THE FLAP BOARD

By Mary Keeser, FLAP President

Looking back, our volunteers, sponsors, supporters, and dedicated partners, through our combined efforts, made 2022 our most impactful year. Let's commit to continue to work together to make 2023 just as impactful by supporting our mission: protect, restore, preserve, and educate all concerning the natural, historical, and cultural resources of Lake Accotink Park.

Let's get the word out to ensure our legions of volunteers return and bring neighbors, friends, family, organizations, their companies, and clubs to once again eagerly secure boots, gloves, safety vests, trash tools, bags, and a positive can-do attitude to help all make a positive impact. All projects and activities are funded through donations and grants to FLAP. Together, as a community, our ability to ensure positive impacts is endless. We do need your help to continue monthly clean-ups; dog waste station care and refill; Margaret Kinder Education and Pollinator Garden care and educational tours; and special programs and projects including the Young FLAPer program, Pictures With Santa, high school events, various organizational speaking opportunities, and FCPA working groups and support activities. We plan, organize, provide supplies and outreach, coordinate, and execute with our partners.

As a 100% volunteer organization, we are depending upon our community to apply their many talents and skills in order for us to accomplish our missions and goals. We are pleased to announce the FLAP board unanimously selected and approved Martin Shepard "Shep" as the Dog Waste Station Committee Deputy. Over the past several years, he and his dog Bella (photo above) have shown dedicated selfless commitment walking the trail checking, filling, cleaning, and maintaining the waste stations. He has also gone beyond the call of duty to ensure our logistics accountability system for the Dog Waste Stations and supplies are maintained and reported, which has resulted in usage accountability needed to secure financial support for this program. Shep has unquestionably made a huge impact to not just



the Dog Waste Station Committee but to Friends of Lake Accotink Park as a whole. If you see him and his faithful puppy Bella on the trail, please let them know how grateful we are for their service.

Thanks again all for your continued support. See you on the trail!

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Quarterly Trash-Off Competitions for FCPS High Schools

WHEN: March 5 and April 22

WHERE: Lake Accotink Park Marina
Stay tuned to FLAP social media for more details and updates.

1Q General Membership Meeting

WHEN: March 22, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Community of Christ, 5610 Interchapel Road, Springfield VA 22151

2Q General Membership Meeting

WHEN: May 24, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Lake Accotink Park Large Pavilion

Lake Accotink Park Community Appreciation Day

WHEN: Aug. 12, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

WHERE: Lake Accotink Marina
Save the date! More info to come.



Caring For & Exploring the Pollinator Garden

WHEN: 2nd Sunday of every month

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Lake Accotink Park
Margaret Kinder Pollinator Garden—Adjacent to the Marina

Our experts will guide you through the pollinators and pollinator plants, and starting and maintaining your own pollinator garden. Work alongside the experts as they care for the plants, water, and clean up. We'll provide the tools and gloves, or you can bring your own.

Sign Up



Monthly FLAP Lake Accotink Park Clean Up

WHEN: 2nd Sunday of every month

TIME: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

WHERE: Sign in at Lake Accotink Marina

Pick up debris carelessly dumped, check and refill bags in dog waste stations, trim vines, and more. We'll provide gloves, FLAP information, clean-up bags, tools, maps, and more. You will also be loaned a FLAP safety vest. Volunteer 4 times and receive your very own safety vest to personalize!

Sign Up

A Note From Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw

Dear Friends,

On Tuesday, Jan. 10, I helped kick off a community meeting to discuss the **Long Branch Central Watershed Management Area Project**, a collaborative effort of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), the Fairfax County Park Authority, and the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD). The project is highly significant due to its impact on Lake Accotink Park. The primary goals of the project are to meet the Long Branch waste load reduction requirements imposed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, improve water quality within the watershed, and improve habitat and environmental health.

The Jan. 10 meeting featured a presentation of the **Implementation Work Plan**, which is the culmination of about 2 ½ years of work. DPWES began its initial assessment in Summer 2020 followed by a public meeting in February 2021, a watershed study and community outreach, evaluations with the project team and community stakeholders, continued field studies, and an update to the community in April 2022. This presentation provides an overview of the initial watershed assessment work and of the recommended projects. It discusses project grouping, phases of implementation, and the planned monitoring going forward.

Lastly, we received an overview of the Park Authority's Watch the Green Grow program, as well as programs in partnership with NVSWCD on areas such as urban agriculture, invasives management, and residential stormwater runoff control. I want to thank FLAP, Friends of Accotink Creek, and our other local environmental groups and civic associations who have worked closely with the county. I look forward to continuing our partnership towards a cleaner and healthier watershed system.

Yours in service,

James R. Walkinshaw
Braddock District Supervisor

Volunteer Spotlight: Sarah Hymans

I volunteer at Lake Accotink because protecting the environment has always mattered a lot to me, and since we only have one earth, we should take care of it! The community at FLAP is great because everyone who volunteers and manages the program is so passionate about this work and you can tell. It is also rewarding to see the efforts you've made when you carry back big bags of trash. You can find some interesting things; I've brought back bike tires before! You can



have such a positive impact by volunteering with FLAP, even if you don't recognize it. Small acts such as picking up trash in the morning do make a difference for the environment, and it's never too late to start! It is important that we take care of community parks so that everyone can continue to enjoy them while helping keep the larger world clean.

PARK UPDATES

Lake Accotink Park Master Plan

The plan is on hold pending completion of the dredging study. **Questions?** Contact Adam Wynn at adam.wynn@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Visit [fairfaxcounty.gov](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov) for updates and information on the Lake Accotink Park Master Plan.

Lake Accotink Park Staffing

We are currently looking to fill Manager on Duty positions and will be looking to fill marina and camp staff positions beginning in late March or early April. Apply at the Lake Accotink visitor center or email park manager Dan Grulke at Dan.Grulke@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Lake Accotink Dredging Project Update

Public Meetings February 15 and 16, 2023

Additional analysis has been completed to assess lake dredging options. The Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Sciences will be presenting this information and staff recommendations at two meetings. Information will be posted on the project webpage prior to the meetings, and comments will be received after the meetings to gather public input.

· **Virtual Meeting:** Wednesday, Feb. 15, at 7 p.m.

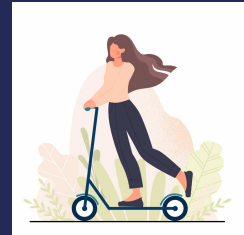
A meeting link will be provided on the below webpage prior to Feb. 15.

· **In-Person Meeting:** Thursday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m.
Kings Glen Elementary School Cafeteria, located at 5401 Danbury Forest Dr., Springfield, VA 22152.

TIMELINE

Begin Assessment: Winter 2021

Complete Alternatives Analysis: Spring 2022



Use of Electronic Conveyances on Park Trails

Commonwealth of Virginia law allows the use of electric powered bicycles (e-bikes), skateboards, scooters, e-skateboards, hoverboards, e-scooters, electric personal assistive mobility devices (such as Segways and wheelchairs), and electric personal delivery devices wherever regular bicycles are allowed.

As e-bikes and other electronic conveyances are becoming more popular, chances are that you, a friend, or neighbor will own or rent one in the near future. These devices allow users to carry heavy loads, climb steeper hills, commute further, and keep up with more fit riders. As such, they provide inclusive riding opportunities for the less fit and mobility impaired, providing an opportunity to address

Complete Construction Plans: Summer 2023
Begin Construction: 2023
Construction Ongoing Through: 2026
Warranty and Monitoring: 2026 through 2031

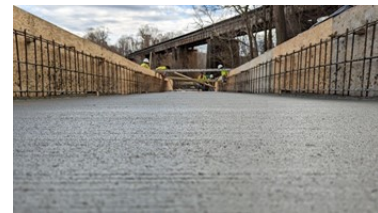
Questions? Contact Charles Smith at charles.smith@fairfaxcounty.gov. Follow [here](#) for updates and info.

health equity issues; thus, improving parks and communities for the population. Check out [this guidance](#) for novice and experienced riders wishing to ride within Fairfax County's parks.

Questions? Contact Heather Lynch: heather.lynch@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Update: Lake Accotink Dam Stream Crossing

The project involves creating approximately 300 linear feet of asphalt trail improvements and 325 linear feet on an elevated concrete pedestrian crossing over the dam outfall in Lake Accotink Park. Total project costs, inclusive of design, permitting, testing, utilities, construction, and administration, are just over \$3 million dollars. Active construction is anticipated to be completed by early 2023. Residents should expect occasional construction traffic entering and exiting the Accotink Park Road entrance. Signs will be posted along closed portions of the surrounding Lake Accotink Trail during construction.



The project is currently on schedule for Spring 2023 opening. The piers are complete, and crews are currently working on forming and pouring the decking (see photos to the right).

Questions? Contact Heather Lynch at heather.lynch@fairfaxcounty.gov. Follow [this link](#) for updates and info.



Free Rod Rentals to Help More Anglers Enjoy Fishing Experience

The Fairfax County Park Authority's waterfront parks, including Lake Accotink Park, have launched a new partnership with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources to provide a fishing rod

rental program with funding obtained through a grant from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. The program is currently up and running at Burke Lake and Riverbend Parks. The Lake Accotink and Lake Fairfax Park programs are expected to launch in March 2023.

"This is an exciting opportunity to invite more residents to enjoy the experience of

fishing, particularly beginners—those who might not have their own gear and those who don't have the means to purchase a fishing rod,” said Dan Grulke, Lake Accotink Park Manager.

Fishing rod rentals will be issued at no charge. For more information about the program, please contact Dan Grulke at Dan.Grulke@fairfaxcounty.gov.

In addition to the new program, Park Authority staff have developed a wonderful online resource for new and experienced anglers. The website —fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fishing—provides expert advice, tips, and resources for making the most of your fishing experience.

YOUNG FLAPers

Recap of the Fourth Quarterly Trash-Off: A High School Showdown!

By Young FLAPers Director Yasmine Marrero



At the end of November, four Fairfax County high schools came to Lake Accotink Park to compete in the fourth quarterly Trash-Off: A High School Showdown! Annandale, Justice, Lewis, and West Springfield high schools competed against each other for who could collect the most trash in two hours. Congratulations to Justice HS for winning among the small teams, and to Lewis HS for collecting the most trash overall!

At each Trash-Off, students help protect the Lake Accotink ecosystem by collecting dangerous trash to be safely disposed of by the park management. Engaging the youth is incredibly important to keep our community environmentally friendly, so thank you to the participating schools for taking on the challenge! **Our next Trash-Off is planned for March 5, and it's never too early to sign up.** Contact Young FLAPers Director Yasmine Marrero (youngflappers@flapaccotink.org) for

LAKE ACCOTINK WILDLIFE CORNER

Chronic Wasting Disease Detected in White-Tailed Deer in Fairfax County



*By Alexandra Lombard, Department of Wildlife Resources
Wildlife Health Coordinator*

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) has confirmed chronic wasting disease (CWD) in an adult male deer legally harvested in Vienna, VA. The deer was brought to a taxidermist in late October 2022, and DWR obtained the sample shortly thereafter as part of the Department's proactive statewide CWD surveillance efforts. At the time of harvest, no outward signs of disease were noted, and the deer appeared to be in good condition. Because this is the first CWD-positive detection in Fairfax County, a county bordering Disease Management Area 2 (DMA2), the DWR conducted an extensive forensic investigation to confirm the harvest location of this deer.

No regulatory changes will be made until the conclusion of the 2022-2023 deer hunting season. Until then, the following are strongly recommended:

1. Carcass transport: Do not transport whole deer carcasses or any parts containing brain or spinal cord tissue out of Fairfax County to a non-DMA county.
2. Carcass disposal: Double-bag deer parts and place directly in a landfill or a trash receptacle to be picked up with the regular trash collection.

REMINDER: It is illegal to feed deer at any time of the year in Fairfax County.

CWD Testing

Hunters in Fairfax County may choose to get deer tested for CWD at no cost by bringing the head to a CWD drop site in DMA2, which includes neighboring Loudoun County. Hunters are encouraged to continue hunting deer. Hunter-harvested deer are essential to tracking CWD.

Thanks to the Fairfax County Deer Management Program, extensive CWD testing has been conducted throughout the county for the past few years. Since the 2019-2020 season, over 750 deer have been tested, with this being the only detection to date in the county.

The DWR has been closely monitoring CWD prevalence and spread in northwestern Virginia (DMA1 and DMA2) for over 13 years. DMA3 in southern Virginia was added after a positive detection in Montgomery County in 2020. Across the rest of the state, DWR has been conducting CWD surveillance for the past five years with the assistance of cooperating taxidermists. From 2009 to the end of the 2021-2022 hunting season, 134 positive cases of CWD were detected in Virginia.

CWD has been confirmed in at least 29 states, three Canadian provinces, northern Europe, and South Korea. In North America, this incurable disease is found in deer, elk, and moose. It is a slow-acting and progressive neurologic disease that ultimately results in death of the animal. The disease-causing agent, called a prion, is spread through the urine, feces, and saliva of infected animals. Infected animals may not develop any symptoms of CWD for several months to over a year after exposure. Clinical signs of CWD may be staggering, abnormal posture, lowered head, drooling, confusion, and marked weight loss.

There is no evidence that CWD can be transmitted naturally to humans, pets, or livestock. However, there is still much that is unknown about the potential for transmission to

humans. Although the CWD diagnostic tests are not food-safety tests, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that hunters test all deer harvested from known CWD-positive areas and not consume meat from animals that test positive.

Regulations pertaining to chronic wasting disease, maps of affected states, and information about CWD can be found on the DWR website at dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/diseases/cwd. If you would like to report a sick deer, please call the Wildlife Helpline at 1-855-571-9003.



Critter of the Quarter: Red-Bellied Woodpecker

By Dave Gibson, FLAP Board Member at Large

Often described as omnivorous and adaptable, red-bellied woodpeckers (*Picus ventres rubro*) thrive in Northern Virginia parks and the neighborhoods surrounding them. Originally concentrated in woodlands and wetlands of the southeastern U.S., they range westward just past the Mississippi and north through our Canadian border. Climate change is opening territory even further north, as average temperatures rise.

The RB appears pale white overall, offset by a boldly black-and-white striped back, with flashing red cap and nape. The female's red cap goes to the crown of her head; the space from there to the bill is covered by velvety gray feathers. A patch of pale red on the lower belly gives the bird its name.

Smaller than the piliated but larger than the hairy and downy woodpeckers, RBs of both sexes average around 9.4 inches in length with wingspans between 13 and 16.5 inches and weigh in at just 2 to 3.2 ounces. They are built to cling to trees and look awkward on horizontal surfaces, where they seem to tilt forward. Proportionally large compared to the bird's size, the tongue extends about 2 inches past the tip of the bill. It is reeled in through a set of bones and muscles in the skull called a hyoid apparatus. This makes it very useful for extracting insects from under tree bark. A harpoon-like barb at the tip of the tongue gives an additional advantage. They have been known to remove up to 85% of borer larvae in a single ash tree. Nevertheless, RBs happily visit backyard feeders, including hanging suet cages.

RBs nest in cavities, and nest holes are precious abodes. They have been known to take over the nests of other birds, including the much smaller (and endangered) Red-Cockaded Woodpecker. More often, however, they are victims to the aggressive European starling. Hawks are their principal predator, while snakes, owls, squirrels, and larger woodpeckers threaten RBs' eggs.

Courtship often features drumming on trees or, for greater effect, on aluminum rain gutters. Breeding pairs produce 4-5 eggs, and both sexes incubate them for 12-14 days. The young are fed by both parents for 22-27 days after hatching, and they may continue to feed fledglings for 6 or more weeks after they leave the nest.

I was eyewitness to a male RB mentoring his youngster in feeding at our deck-railing feeder, first feeding seeds to it beak-to-beak, then standing by until the young bird learned what to eat for itself. During these sessions, Daddy RB stood guard and fended off other hungry birds. For a few weeks after the fledgling had established a feeding routine, the father/mentor continued to observe from a nearby tree.

Submit your articles with photos for consideration in our next FLAP quarterly newsletter to publisher@flapaccotink.org. Please send by the end of March.

Friends of Lake Accotink Park Board

Position	Name	Email
President	Mary Keeser	president@flapaccotink.org
Vice President	Vacant	vice.president@flapaccotink.org
Secretary	Jim Hickey	secretary@flapaccotink.org
Treasurer	Bob Neilson	treasurer@flapaccotink.org
Member at Large	Dave Gibson	memberAL@flapaccotink.org

We're accepting candidates for board positions, as well as various other committees and special projects. It is your Lake Accotink Park—help make a difference for about an hour a month! Send an email to contact@flapaccotink.org.



[Donate to FLAP](#)

Text FLAP to 22828 to receive monthly updates.

Friends of Lake Accotink Park | FLAP P.O. Box 1203, Springfield, VA 22151

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