



# Friends of Lake Accotink Park Newsletter

November 2022

## NOTES FROM THE FLAP BOARD

*By Mary Keeser, FLAP President*

You would not be enjoying our newsletters without the hard work, patience, and drive of Stephanie Kern, our FLAP publisher, who together with Colleen Blessing, FLAP editor, manage to take our input in various tenses, styles, and media and turn it into a polished newsletter that is a joy to read. Thank you, Stephanie and Colleen.

We have continued to work on several important projects, activities, and efforts; additional information is provided in this newsletter and on our social media. We would like to welcome Karen Roos back to the FCPA Lake Accotink park team. Karen transitioned to support other FCPA parks over the years; she returns bringing a wealth of expertise to her new position here. Welcome back, Karen!

We are very pleased to announce Charles Smith from Public Works and Environmental Services will be our upcoming General Membership Meeting guest speaker. Charles will discuss the Lake Accotink dredging, as well as other projects in the Accotink watershed. Please plan on joining us Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. at 5610 Inverchapel Rd, Springfield.

Critical to our success are our committee directors, members, and volunteers. We need your talents, skills, and dedication (a few hours a month) for the following FLAP committees: Stewardship, Recreation, Fundraising, and Special Projects. Encourage your neighbors, colleagues, friends, and family to get involved and make a positive difference to your Lake Accotink Park. To volunteer, send your contact information to [contact@flapaccotink.org](mailto:contact@flapaccotink.org).

Don't forget to attend the Elly Doyle Fairfax County Park Authority Service awards—a virtual ceremony on Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. Friends of Lake Accotink Park is humbled

to have one of our very own volunteer leaders—Yasmine Marrero, director of Young FLAPers—honored by receiving the Elly Doyle Youth Award. As an organization, FLAP is thrilled to thank all of our dedicated volunteers throughout the years who have given selflessly and whose actions have resulted in our being presented the Harold L. Strickland Award.

Additionally, congratulations to our all-star volunteer Lisa Kurtz for being honored as Braddock District Citizen of the Month.

Thank you for your continued support and being an active member of Friends of Lake Accotink Park. Together we can make a positive impact for our environment, our community, and our Lake Accotink Park. See you on the trail!

"Protect, restore, preserve and educate all concerning the natural, historical, and cultural resources of Lake Accotink Park."

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## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

### **Elly Doyle FCPA Park Service Awards**

**WHEN:** Nov. 18, 7–8 p.m.

**WHERE:** Virtual Ceremony

[Register](#) by Nov. 17 at 10 a.m.

### **Quarterly Trash-Off Competition for FCPS High Schools**

**WHEN:** Nov. 27, 12–2 p.m.

**WHERE:** Lake Accotink Park Marina

[Register to participate](#)

### **4Q General Membership Meeting**

**WHEN:** Dec. 15, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

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

### **Pictures With Santa**

**WHEN:** Dec. 18, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

**WHERE:** Large pavilion adjacent to Lake Accotink marina

Enjoy holiday goodies (humans and dogs), prizes, pictures with Santa, and more. [Free tickets](#)

Questions? [contact@flapaccotink.org](mailto:contact@flapaccotink.org)



### **Caring For & Exploring the Pollinator Garden**

**WHEN:** 2<sup>nd</sup> 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:** 2<sup>nd</sup> 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,

I want to express my sincere appreciation to FLAP President Mary Keeser and the many FLAP volunteers who made the 60th anniversary of Lake Accotink Park celebration a resounding success. Thanks to your efforts, we gave our beautiful park the celebration it deserved and gave thousands of community members the opportunity to learn and enjoy all it has to offer. I am so grateful to the dedicated

FCCA staff and volunteers who worked to make the anniversary a unique, educational, and inclusive experience. I look forward to seeing you all at the 75th anniversary celebration!

Yours in service,

**James R. Walkinshaw**  
Braddock District Supervisor

## **Volunteer Spotlight: Isabella Napoli**

My name is Isabella Napoli. I am a senior at W.T. Woodson High School and am very passionate about the environment. Growing up, my family has taken advantage of Lake Accotink amenities such as the night-time kayak tours, Merry-Go-Round, peddle boats, and a variety of the kids events, so I've developed a fondness for the area. Over the years, my passion and commitment to environmental causes has developed as well, growing exponentially over the past year. Because of this love for the outdoors, I and others have created a group of students dedicated to eliciting at least local levels of environmental change. One way we do this is by participating in the monthly Lake Accotink clean up. While there, we take advantage of the time to work in the butterfly garden as well. The butterfly garden is a pollinator garden with plenty of examples of diverse native flora that support our ecosystem's pollinators. When we went in early October, I helped out at the volunteer booth, some members did the regular Sunday trash pickup, and then I and another student assisted in some garden work, pulling out weeds, invasive plants, and vines from the area.



Personally I love nature, I love being outside, and I love the science of ecology. Nature and ecosystems are just fascinating to me, but there's a lot we get out of it as a group separate from a pure enjoyment of the outdoors. There are the surface benefits such as collecting service hours for school or clubs, but there's a lot more students can get out of experiences like these—especially in nature. There have been so many studies on the effects of being outside toward improving mental and emotional health, as well as offering opportunities to exercise and socialize. Putting yourself out there to help local communities can expose you to opportunities to grow. This work can teach you many life skills that colleges and jobs look for as well as expose you to different areas of life where you might find something you're passionate about. Lake Accotink is a very welcoming community and loves to involve anyone who's interested and passionate. Participating in anything—even just a 2 hour clean up once a month—is enough to make quite an impact.



## THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS



### **FLAP Dog Waste Station Team**

L-R: The team is lead by Karole and Bob Nielsen with expert advise from Blue. Karole and Bob (also FLAP Treasurer) have supported this project from day one, growing it from one station to the now 11 stations co-located with the kiosks along the trail. Through Karole's hard work, FLAP was awarded a \$1,500 grant from TranUrban. Martin "Shep" Shepherd is our steadfast steward who can be seen on the trails rain or shine checking and refilling the stations. Siobhan Chewning and her puppy, Luna, were eager to join the team to help fill the stations while taking their daily walks around the lake. David Waiter and his puppy Luna were asked to help out, and they had such a good time meeting people and helping, they decided to continue. Thank you, David and Luna. **\*\*FLAP currently has 11 stations along the trail; email [contact@flapaccotink.org](mailto:contact@flapaccotink.org) if service is needed.**





## Fall Greetings From the Margaret Kinder Educational Pollinator Garden Team!

It's fall in the Pollinator Garden, and the native plants are beginning to go dormant for the winter. Which may make you wonder, "Where do the pollinators go for the winter?" Some, like Monarch butterflies, migrate south; but most remain in the area. Many species of moths and butterflies winterize as immature larvae or caterpillars, hiding in leaf litter or mulch. In Virginia and Maryland, there are over 400 native species of bees. Most are solitary—nesting underground or in cavities of trees and other shelters. A few insects hibernate as adults, such as 'ladybug' beetles. Some even replace the water in their bodies with glycerol, a type of antifreeze!

How does Lake Accotink's pollinator garden help these and other creatures during winter? A few of our plants are late-bloomers, whose nectar and pollen will feed the bees and insects through fall. But all our native plants help wildlife. The hollow stems serve as an overwinter site for some insects and solitary bees. Leaf litter, mulch, and ground tunnels will provide winter shelter for others. The seeds from flowers and native grasses will provide hearty nutrition for birds, like cardinals and finches.

How can you help pollinators in your own yard? Leave the leaves! Leaf litter provides an excellent habitat for many pollinators. Gently rake whole leaves into a corner pile, or use 2-3 inches of leaves to insulate your garden beds. Wait until spring to cut dead flower stalks and plants, so pollinators can overwinter or lay their eggs. The insects that overwinter can also provide food for baby birds in the spring. Procrastinating means less work for you now, and your pollinators will thank you.



*A few Pollinator Garden volunteers (from left to right): Lisa Kurtz, Isabella Napoli, Margaret Kinder, and Philip L.*

## PARK UPDATES



## Dam Stream Crossing

*By Heather Lynch, Dam Stream Crossing Project Manager*

The Fairfax County Park Authority is in the middle of construction of the Lake Accotink Dam Stream Crossing Project (LADSC) at Lake Accotink Park. The project is on schedule for early Spring 2023 completion.

For more information, please contact project manager Heather Lynch at [heather.lynch@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:heather.lynch@fairfaxcounty.gov). or contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662 or via [parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov).



## What's Happening Around Lake Accotink

*By Dan Grulke, Lake Accotink Park Manager*

We have two openings for limited shift, manager-on-duty positions at Lake Accotink Park. Carousel and mini-golf operations are closed for the season and will reopen in Spring 2023.

Please visit the Lake Accotink Park web page for information on classes, events, and programs: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-accotink>.



## Get Ready: 4th Quarter FLAP Trash Off—A High School Showdown!

*Young FLAPers Committee*



The Trash Off is a quarterly competition to encourage local students to get involved with environmentalism, helping to keep the park clean by collecting trash and other pollutants from the park's almost 500 acres. Removing trash from Lake Accotink and the surrounding grounds is essential in maintaining the ecosystem's health and beauty.

Compete against rival high school teams. The team that collects the most trash wins a pizza party!

**The next Trash Off will be held on Sunday, Nov. 27, noon to 2 p.m.** Register under your school's team [here](#). And if you want to get involved in the Young FLAPers committee's other efforts, email [youngflappers@flapaccotink.org](mailto:youngflappers@flapaccotink.org). We'd love to hear from you!

LAKE ACCOTINK WILDLIFE CORNER

**Fairfax County Deer Management Program**



*By Katherine E. Edwards, Ph.D., Certified Wildlife Biologist,  
Fairfax County Police Department Wildlife Management  
Specialist*

The [Fairfax County Deer Management Archery Program](#) began on Saturday, Sept. 10, 2022, and will be conducted through Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023.

Under the oversight of the Fairfax County Police Department, in collaboration with the Fairfax County Park Authority, NOVA Parks, and other public landholders, the archery program is conducted in [parks and other locations](#) throughout Fairfax County.

The archery program began in FY 2010 and is part of an integrated [Deer Management Program](#) to reduce and stabilize the white-tailed deer population in Fairfax County in efforts to minimize safety and health hazards and other impacts related to an overabundance of deer. These impacts include deer-vehicle collisions, potential spread of diseases, and environmental damage attributed to deer that can impact the ecosystem. The program was approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2000 and is recognized as a safe and efficient method of deer population control by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

Because of its proven track record of safety, archery is a preferred deer management method in Fairfax County. Archery is a compatible use with residential areas and community parks, allowing for deer population management in urban and suburban areas. Since Virginia began tracking hunting injuries in 1959, no bystanders have been injured by an archer hunting deer anywhere in the Commonwealth. The Fairfax County Deer Management Program is conducted on approximately 100 properties countywide. Last year, 726 deer were harvested through the use of archery by hunters in the county program. The archery program accounted for 94% of the total deer harvests in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program.

Fairfax County's [Archery Program standards](#) require that all archers meet state hunter licensing, education, and safety requirements, and they must pass [qualifications](#) to demonstrate skill and marksmanship, in addition to carrying program identification. Archers are also required to have completed additional training through the International Bowhunter Education Program to participate in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program. All archers must also pass a criminal background check to be eligible for the program. Only hunters that have gone through this screening and selection process with the Fairfax County Police Department may hunt within the designated parks. All archers must comply with state and federal game laws and regulations, local ordinances, and program rules.

Parks remain open to the public during the archery program. Florescent orange signs are posted in parks where hunting is authorized. Hunters can only take shots at deer from elevated tree stands; hunting from the ground level is prohibited in county

parks. Tree stands must not be located closer than 100 feet from property lines or closer than 50 feet from established park trails. Archers are not allowed on private property without permission by the owner or tenant. Archers are approved to hunt at assigned sites Monday through Saturday during legal hunting hours, 30 minutes prior to sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset. No hunting is allowed on Sundays in county parks.

More information about the Fairfax County Deer Management Program can be found at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/deer-management-program>



*These signs are posted in archery program areas, at park entrances, and at trailheads.*

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## Fall Driving: Be Alert for Deer

*By Katherine E. Edwards, Ph.D., Certified Wildlife Biologist, Fairfax County Police Department Wildlife Management Specialist*

Fall is breeding season for deer, and you can expect to see more of them on our roads. Please be aware that deer are unpredictable, and crashes with them are a safety concern. There are hundreds of reportable accidents involving deer in the county, and more than half of our annual crashes occur during the months of October, November, and December. Drivers should be especially cautious during the early morning and evening hours when deer are most active.

We urge motorists to pay attention, drive carefully, and remember these safety tips:

- Always wear your seat belt, and drive the posted speed limit.
- Do not text and drive. Avoid distractions!
- Watch for eye shine along roadsides. If you see one deer, it is likely that there are others nearby.
- Use high beams as traffic allows to spot deer further away. Be careful not to disrupt oncoming cars.
- If a deer is stopped in the roadway, slow down and flash your headlights. Deer can become mesmerized or blinded by bright steady lights.
- Slow down or stop if necessary to avoid hitting a deer, but you should never swerve out of the lane to miss one. A crash with another car or anything along the roadside is likely to be more serious.

- Take your foot off the brake at time of the crash. This reduces the chance of a deer crashing through a windshield or windows when hit.
- If you get into a crash with a deer, try to move your car off the road and out of traffic.
- If your car is immobilized in the roadway, turn on your flashers and immediately call police. Try to wait at a safe spot off the road.
- Rely on your own senses. Never depend on hood whistles, car horns, or other devices to scare deer out of your path.
- Pay attention to deer crossing signs, and be careful in areas where deer are known to travel.

If a deer is injured or killed, immediately report the crash through the police non-emergency line at 703-691-2131.



### **Critter of the Quarter: Crows**

*By Jim Hickey, FLAP Board Secretary*

On a visit to Lake Accotink Park, you may well see and hear the crows. They are common in the area, but there is nothing common about the crow.

Crows are big-brained birds. Their intelligence allows them to solve problems and work together. Crows have even been found to use tools. They have been observed using a cup to carry water to spread over dry mash. They can shape sticks and poke them in fence post holes to find food. Although they have big bills, they cannot crack open a walnut (for instance), so they will drop walnuts on a road and wait for cars to run over and crack them open.

Crows are very social birds. Most members of a flock are involved in raising the young, and they look out for each other. If a flock descends on a cornfield they will post a number of sentries to watch for enemies, such as large hawks. These sentries sound the alarm when trouble is spotted. The crows don't fly away, however. They fly at their

enemy and drive them off through sheer force of numbers. This very effective technique is called mobbing.

Often crows are seen dining on roadkill, but that's just a small part of their diet. These omnivores will consume fish, bugs, grain—just about anything. They are clever thieves, too. A few crows might distract an otter or other bird from their dinner while other crows sneak up and steal their food.

Experiments have shown that crows are capable of recognizing individual human faces. So the next time you spot a crow at the park, smile and tip your hat. You may just make a flying, feathered friend.

**Submit your articles with photos for consideration in our next FLAP quarterly newsletter to [publisher@flapaccotink.org](mailto:publisher@flapaccotink.org).** Please send by the end of December.

### Friends of Lake Accotink Park Board

Position	Name	Email
President	Mary Keeser	<a href="mailto:president@flapaccotink.org">president@flapaccotink.org</a>
Vice President	Vacant	<a href="mailto:vice.president@flapaccotink.org">vice.president@flapaccotink.org</a>
Secretary	Jim Hickey	<a href="mailto:secretary@flapaccotink.org">secretary@flapaccotink.org</a>
Treasurer	Bob Neilson	<a href="mailto:treasurer@flapaccotink.org">treasurer@flapaccotink.org</a>
Member at Large	Dave Gibson	<a href="mailto:memberAL@flapaccotink.org">memberAL@flapaccotink.org</a>

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](mailto:contact@flapaccotink.org).



Donate to FLAP



***Text FLAP to 22828 to receive monthly updates.***