

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

Spring 2020

Website: www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/friendsofhuntleymeadowspark



Parks and Natural Areas Are Especially Important Now

By: Cathy Ledec, President of Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP)

Friends, the coronavirus global pandemic has brought into focus how important our parks and natural areas are to all of us. Many are flocking to the ones in our neighborhoods for physical and emotional well-being during this challenging time. For me, nature in our parks and natural areas is my “go to” healer. During periods of stress or challenge, I look to nature to inspire me, and I am never disappointed. These days our lives are filled with so many challenges, worries, and things that can increase stress levels, it is especially important for all of us to find ways and places that can bring improved balance to our lives and perhaps a sense of “Parks Are Important” continued on page 5

Visit Huntley Meadows Park Through Photos

A photo gallery of times past and adventures that will be...



Colorful Sassafras trees. Photo by Roberta Bucher.



American bullfrog looking for lunch on Huntley mudflat, summer 2017.



Spotted Turtles lining up for a swim, summer 2018.



A unique view of wetland summer 2019 vegetation.



A colorful central wetlands on a fall morning.

Message from Park Manager Karen Sheffield

I recently returned from a trip to the Himalayan region of India to attempt to see wild snow leopards. Five minutes into our first meal, news came that a snow leopard had just crossed the road nearby. Everyone abandoned lunch and grabbed backpacks – since we hadn't even gotten into our rooms yet – and went down the road. We spent the next several hours sitting on the rough, rocky, high desert landscape getting glimpses of a now resting snow leopard 150 feet away. The snow leopard would give us views as it would occasionally turn, stretch and reposition amongst the rocks. Near the day's end, we watched the cat walk up and over the mountain. It was, and still is, surreal to have this experience, one that I doubted would ever happen.



A view of the Himalaya's.
Photo by Kit Sheffield.

We returned to our small lodge located in a village consisting of five families. During my stay, I got a chance to know some of the families who live in the heart of snow leopard territory. One charming woman, just a few years older than I am, is so happy to have visitors during the slow winter season. Most of all, she can't believe that so many people come from all over the world to her village just to see a cat.

This reminded me of an Australian woman I met during a previous trip in the U.S. What did she really want to see more than anything? A squirrel. I let her know her chances were good, and it was fun to be around her every time she delighted in squirrel sightings. It helps remind me that wonderful things are really all around us.

Finding enchantment and awe in the everyday lifts our spirits and nourishes our souls. I hope during this challenging time you find something that enchants you each day, and you can surround yourself with things that enrich your life.

Neighborhood wildlife sightings (foxes, groundhogs, birds) and warm showers from the tap are my two of my daily enchantments!

Please ZOOM with Us - 2020 Annual Meeting

All Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) members are invited to attend the virtual 2020 Annual Meeting of FOHMP on Saturday, June 20, 2020 from 3-5pm.

To ensure the safety of us all, this year’s Annual Meeting will be a **virtual meeting** via Zoom. A message containing a link and instructions on how to join this electronic meeting will be sent to you by email (if you are unsure if we have your email address, please provide it to friendsofhmp@gmail.com).

The formal meeting program will provide members an update on FOHMP’s accomplishments this past year. It will also include a presentation from the amazing Natural Resource Manager at Huntley Meadows Park, Dave Lawlor. He will present on his work to monitor wetland birds using the acoustic monitoring equipment FOHMP received via a grant from Wildlife Acoustics. The Board is grateful for the support of our FOHMP members and supporters as we continue to support staff and projects at Fairfax County’s regionally and globally significant resource-based park.

The most important part of the Annual Meeting will be the election of our Board of Directors, as required by our bylaws and articles of incorporation. We invite you to join the virtual meeting and cast your vote. Nominees for the FOHMP Board of Directors are listed below.

If you are unable to join the 3:00 pm meeting on June 20, 2020, you may designate another FOHMP member to cast your vote at this meeting. It is important for you to assign a proxy if you cannot attend so we can establish a quorum for this important vote.

Proxy Vote

Please reply **no later than noon on June 10, 2020** for your proxy to be counted.

To provide your proxy:

- 1) Print your name in the blank space below.
- 2) Place an “X” before Option 1 or 2 below.
- 3) Fill out and sign, drop off at the Visitor Center (when it is reopened), or mail to FOHMP, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, VA 22306.

PROXY FORM

I, _____, am providing my proxy to:

_____ **Option 1:** the president of the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

_____ **Option 2:** the following FOHMP member (*confirm they will attend*)

Member name: _____

Proposed FY 2020-2021 FOHMP Board Members

Catherine (Katie) T. Baker

George Ledec

Connie Carpender

Suzanne Lepple

PJ Dunn

Kat Dyer

Douglas (Doug) Mason

Martha Orling

Harry Glasgow

Karla Jamir

Ann Stat

Ben Jesup

Catherine (Cathy) Ledec

Judy Dority

Recommendation: The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park Board of Directors recommends a vote in favor to elect these candidates to the FOHMP Board for the fiscal year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

24th Annual Bird-a-thon

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP) hosts a Bird-a-thon every year to raise funds to support the summer Resource Management (RM) Intern. Due to the closure of Fairfax County Parks (see details here <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/coronavirus>) this annual event, as it usually is held, had to be canceled.

In order to still hold a spring fundraiser, the FOHMP Board decided to change the event to Bird-a-thon Beyond! We invited everyone to join us in counting the birds in their back yards or neighborhoods for a week in early May. The final tally is posted on our website, <http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/>.

For those who would like to donate to the fundraiser, it's not too late! You can donate a set amount, an amount for every bird counted, or for every species counted. For ease of processing, we prefer donations to be made through our Paypal account <http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/membership.html>. Alternatively, you can use the below form.



FOHMP members join the 2020 Bird-a-thon Beyond! count in their back yards.

2020 BIRD-A-THON BEYOND! DONATION FORM

Please submit form by May 31, 2020

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Donation Amount: _____

Please make checks payable to FOHMP, and mail this form with your check to:
Huntley Meadows Park - Bird-a-thon Beyond!
3701 Lockheed Blvd.
Alexandria, VA 22306



Alternatively, you can use PayPal by clicking [here](#), or finding the link on our website www.friendsofhuntleymeadow.org.

Do You Need a Receipt?

The 2019 tax season is still here. Federal taxes are due July 15, 2020. If you paid membership dues or made a monetary donation to FOHMP in 2019, these contributions may be tax deductible.

If you would like a letter of receipt, please send your request to treasurer.fohmp@gmail.com, and we will be happy to provide one.

Receiving Updates in Times of Change

Many changes have occurred in our community and all over the world in the past few months. The same is true for Fairfax County Parks, and Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) in particular. Newsletters are a wonderful way for us to share with our members what is happening at the Park and within Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP). However, the process of writing, editing, and mailing a newsletter is lengthy. To receive the most up-to-date information in times when the news changes as soon as it comes out of the reporter's mouth, please look to FOHMP's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofhuntleymeadowspark/>). You can also access FOHMP's webpage (<http://friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/>) for other useful information.

Follow the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) on their Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxparks/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/fairfaxparks/>) pages as well as the Park's website (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows>) for HMP site specific information. Available program options with detailed descriptions, locations, costs, and registration codes can be found at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows/classes-camps>; or call **703-222-4664** to register.

These sites are the best way to find out what is happening in the present. Additional notices, announcements, events, and programs are often posted on one or more of these sites closer to their relevant dates.

"Parks Are Important" continued from page 1

peace. Nature is in our parks and natural areas, and in most cases, it is very close by to where each of us is following the Governor's stay-at-home orders. You can experience nature directly via the view out of your window (from your stay-at-home office), or through your afternoon exercise walk next to the trees planted along the streetscape in your neighborhood, or even by observing the potted plant on your front stoop where bees are flying around its blooms.

During this difficult period, we know that Fairfax County is experiencing adverse impacts to the county budget. The coronavirus pandemic also poses a financial risk to our parks, because it affects funding of the Fairfax County Park Authority both in terms of its revenue streams and the county budget. We can all agree there is a need for urgent short term spending to address the health and economic impacts of the coronavirus crisis. However, when planning future budgets, we need to remember and advocate for the importance of our parks and natural areas, which need adequate budgets to manage them - especially evident during crisis periods.

All of our parks need our attention, especially during this challenging time. Our parks and natural areas fuel our health and well-being. We need to be vigilant in making sure that these areas remain protected and cared for. Some may take advantage of these times to expand encroachment or harvest natural resources illegally from our parks, or to push through policies or actions that are not favorable for our parks and natural resources. Many Park visitors, including FOHMP members, are paying close attention, not just to HMP during these times but to all parks and natural areas throughout Fairfax County. Won't you join us?

We all look forward to better days, when the COVID-19 pandemic will be behind us. In the meantime, please do all you can to stay safe and healthy. Soaking in the beauty of the natural world around us will help us stay grounded and contribute greatly to our well-being on numerous levels. Take the time during these stay-at-home periods to add more native plants (including native trees) to your yard. These actions will improve our natural world, for us and for the native wildlife that depend on us. Don't forget to follow the physical distancing recommendations, staying six feet or more away from those not in your household. After this public health emergency is over, I look forward to seeing you again on the trails of HMP.

My best wishes to you and your families for continued good health.



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

45 years of Huntley Meadows
1975-2020

PRSRT MKTG
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY
MEADOWS PARK
PERMIT NO. 8199

Membership **EXPIRATION DATES** expiring soon are printed to the right of your last name.

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
Membership and Renewal Form

Please support Huntley Meadows Park by joining our Friends group. Dues contribute toward funding new initiatives and programs, and your membership support will help us to be stronger advocates for the Park.

Fill out this form and mail the application to:

Dues information (Annual):

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____



Alternatively you can use our PayPal feature on the Membership page of our website <http://www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/membership.html>.