



Friends of Little Hunting Creek Newsletter

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the date! 2018 CLEANUP is APRIL 14. High tide is 7:24 a.m., low is 2:04 p.m. Community service credits provided.

April 22, FOLHC Annual Meeting, 4 p.m., followed by potluck banquet.

May 5, Trash Day of Action: the Battle of the Bottle. Join the Northern Virginia Trash Action Work Force to demonstrate against plastic water bottle litter at the headquarters of the International Bottled Water Association. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/novatawf/> for updates. See article below.

County to Replace Sanitary Sewer Line Beneath Little Hunting Creek

A public meeting was held on Dec. 11, 2017, to inform local neighbors of the County's plans to replace a sewer line that runs under the stream bed of Little Hunting Creek.

The gravity-fed line serves 480 households in Wessynton, Woodland Park, and part of Riverside Estates. It brings sewage across the creek to the Little Hunting Creek pump station. From there sewage is pumped to Noman Cole Sewage Treatment Plant at Lorton.

The 12" cast iron pipe runs from Woodland Lane to Stockton Parkway. It needs to be replaced because it has sagged, which results in freezing problems, perpetual maintenance needs, costly emergency repairs, and risks to public health and the environment due to possible sewage backups or overflows. The pipe is the second most critical of County sewer lines at risk of failure. The sag is believed to be due to inadequate bedding support when the pipe was installed in 1961, or to other improper installation methods.

The County contracted with Arcadis Design and Consultancy to evaluate nine alternative

engineering solutions to the problem based on six criteria: homeowner disruption, operation and maintenance, cost, permitting requirements, easements needed, and schedule. Three alternatives were identified as viable, and the recommended alternative was to construct a new pipe using coffer dams. A coffer dam is used to isolate the creek and expose the area of the creek bottom where the pipe will be laid. The area inside the coffer dam would be dewatered, then an excavator would be used inside the coffer dam to dig the trench for the replacement pipe. Coffers would be built in one section of the creek at a time. After the new pipe is constructed, it would be connected to existing sewer lines on both sides of the creek, and the old pipe would be abandoned. The new proposed sewer would pass through one private property, at 8616 Stockton Parkway, near the current pipe.

Design work will continue until May 2019. Preliminary work to be done includes geotechnical investigation of soil conditions under the creek, work to confirm the projected alignment, wetlands delineation, field survey, vegetation survey, and permitting. Construction is projected to take place from July through November of 2019. There will need to be construction access from both west and east shorelines of the creek (at Woodland Park and Stockton Parkway), and some clearing may be needed. Barges and other in-water equipment will need to be docked and moored.

For more detailed information, go to <http://www.folhc.org/news/sewer.htm> and click on links to the report and to answers to questions raised at the meeting. Additional public meetings will be held as design work progresses.

FOLHC joins forces to form Northern Virginia Trash Action Workforce (TAWF)

If you participate in our cleanups, you know that a huge amount of litter floats down Little Hunting Creek each year. Here's the dirty truth: the Friends of Little Hunting Creek and Senator Scott Surovell have conducted annual cleanups of the creek since 2002. Since the Friends started keeping records in 2006, volunteers have picked up 3,343 bags of trash and recyclables, 258 tires, 177 shopping carts, and tons of additional bulk trash.

FOLHC has teamed up with other groups that are as sick and tired as we are of picking up litter to form the Northern Virginia Trash Action Work Force. Our goal is to eliminate all plastic waste from our watersheds. We have been leading stream cleanups for years, and it's time to address the issue at its source.

During 2017, we targeted the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) because discarded water bottles account for most of the bags of litter volunteers haul out of Dyke Marsh, Little Hunting Creek, Accotink Creek, and other local waterways. IBWA lobbies against reasonable policies to reduce litter, like bottle deposits, and to prevent the National Park Service from stopping sale of water in disposable bottles in national parks.

We began by meeting with IBWA executives to ask them to take more responsibility for their product, and drop their opposition to reasonable actions that might reduce water bottle litter. While the meeting was civil, they were unwilling to take steps to prevent their product from becoming litter (even simple steps, such as placing a prominent "Recycle Me!" logo on water bottles).

So, in May and October we staged Trash Days of Action, demonstrating outside IBWA headquarters on Diagonal Road at King Street Metro Station. We handed out flyers to commuters, wore water bottle-themed costumes, chanted, sang and marched with the American flag.

Our Trash Action Work Force partners are Alice Ferguson Foundation, Arlingtonians for a

Clean Environment, Clean Water Action, Corporate Accountability International, Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation, Friends of Accotink Creek, Friends of Dyke Marsh, Friends of Huntley Meadows, Friends of Lake Accotink Park, Potomac Riverkeepers Network, Sierra Club (Mount Vernon and Great Falls Groups), and 350 Fairfax.

We plan more actions this spring and summer, starting on May 5. Please join us!—email betsey@folhc.org to sign up. Maybe our growing numbers and loud voices will persuade plastic polluters to take responsibility and stop polluting. Check out our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/novatawff/>.



TESTIMONY AND ADVOCACY

From time to time, FOLHC speaks out on issues related to its mission. Recently, we testified at the annual public hearing of the County's Environmental Quality Advisory Council, the official advisors to the Board of Supervisors on environmental matters. We asked the County to do more to stop litter. We also commented on VDOT's plans to widen Route 1, with possible impacts on Little Hunting Creek. (FOLHC's testimony is at <http://www.friendsoflittlehuntingcreek.org/news/advocacy.htm>.) Before taking public positions, FOLHC invites comments and input from its dues-paying members. If you'd like to weigh in on creek-related issues, consider joining FOLHC—at \$5 a year, it's a bargain! See the membership application on the back.

VOLUNTEERS PULL INVASIVES AT NVCT SITE

On Dec. 16, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust staff and friends turned out to pull invasive vines and plants along the little trail recently constructed by Kim Larkin and Rentz Hilyer at the NVCT site on Stockton Parkway. Thanks to Paul Siegel, Rentz Hilyer, Kim Larkin, Betsy Martin, Heather Athey, Ned Stone, Mark Salinsky, Daniel Saltzberg, Alan Rowsome, Richie Rowsome, and Katy Wiedenfeller for pulling English ivy and Wintercreeper and yanking privet and multiflora rose.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS— *by Claire Kluskens*

Before 1900, hunters engaged in a Christmas holiday tradition of competing to see who could shoot the most birds and wild game.

Beginning on Christmas Day 1900—118 years ago—ornithologist Frank M. Chapman proposed a new holiday tradition: a Christmas Bird Census that would count birds during the holidays instead of shooting them. Over the years, the idea gained in popularity.

The Fort Hunt (Area) Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 31, 2017, a cold but not too dreadful day. The Fort Hunt Sector had 18 participants who gave 46.75 hours of service. They collectively saw 57 species and 4,781 individual birds. (110 species were seen in the full count circle).

The species seen in the Little Hunting Creek area are: Canada Goose, Tundra Swan, American Black Duck, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-

crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Eastern Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

Canada Geese (1,262), American Robins (870), European Starlings (657), and Common Merganser (242) had the highest counts.

The Christmas Bird Count is a serious citizen science project that enables scientists and policy makers to make rational and effective choices that save bird populations from extinction. Here's an article on its importance: http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2016/01/audubon_society_s_christmas_bird_count_shows_how_humans_can_beat_computers.html

Do you need to be a bird expert to participate? NO! Beginners and people who don't know anything at all about birds are placed on a team with experienced birders who will share their knowledge. In addition to people who visited parks in our area, several people watched birds at their yards or bird feeders from inside their warm and comfortable houses!

This year's FOLHC participants in the Fort Hunt Sector were Glenda Booth, Dixie Hougen, Claire Kluskens, Lauren Lyles, and Betsy Martin.

Next winter, please consider spending either a few minutes watching your bird feeder (or yard) or a few hours in the company of knowledgeable birders. Email Claire Kluskens, Fort Hunt Sector Leader, at birdlady2011@icloud.com to sign up.



OWL ALERT: Please also contact Claire Kluskens if you learn of Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, or Screech Owl nests in the vicinity. This is year 3 of the 5 year Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas and it's harder to confirm breeding of nocturnal species like owls than of diurnal species.

**Friends of Little Hunting Creek
2018 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

The Friends of Little Hunting Creek is formed exclusively for charitable, scientific and educational purposes. "More specifically, the purpose...is to encourage the preservation of open space, restoration of riparian habitat, improvement in water quality in the Little Hunting Creek watershed, and to promote stewardship and opportunities for recreational enjoyment of Little Hunting Creek by nearby neighbors and the public. The Friends of Little Hunting Creek seeks to improve nearby neighborhoods by organizing and conducting community cleanups of trash and litter on the creek, by educating citizens about stewardship and litter prevention, and by promoting community access to the creek for recreation and respite."
-Articles of Incorporation.

Name: _____

Class of membership:

Junior (age between 12 and 18) ____ -- non-voting member, annual dues \$1.00

Class I (age 18 or over) ____ -- voting member, annual dues \$5.00

Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Phone number: _____

Send email to: _____

"I agree to abide by the By-Laws of the Friends of Little Hunting Creek, Inc."

(Bylaws are found at www.friendsoflittlehuntingcreek.org/images2015/folhcbylaws-revised.pdf)

(Signed) _____

Date: _____

Mail with your check to: Treasurer, Friends of Little Hunting Creek, 8707 Stockton Pkwy, Alexandria, 22308.