



Friends of Little Hunting Creek Newsletter

SAVE THE DATE! 2016 CLEANUP is April 16.

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF LITTLE HUNTING CREEK

To join or renew your membership, send in application form on last page of this newsletter. (Note that junior members age 12 to 18 are eligible.)

2015 CREEK CLEANUP REPORT

On April 11, the weather was fine and trash was plentiful: 171 volunteers working from boats and on foot collected 445 bags of trash and recyclables, 35½ tires, 5½ shopping carts, and much more: a rifle, 7 unopened bottles of eggnog, a Romney for President sign, a mannequin, a window frame, sweatpants, carpeting, construction materials, 2 bathtubs, 2 bikes, several cans of paint, a large bag of dirty diapers, a car muffler, a gutter pipe, a picnic table, a rubber duck, and more. Volunteers hauled out an estimated 4,000 pounds of trash and litter (not including tires) at 16 locations along the creek.

The effort was part of the Potomac Watershed Cleanup sponsored annually by Alice Ferguson Foundation. See www.folhc.org for more pictures.

2015 ANNUAL MEETING, April 18

Officers and Board of Directors

The following officers and members of the Board were elected by the members present:

- President, Betsy Martin
- Vice President, Mort Isler
- Secretary, Celia Boertlein
- Treasurer, Paul Siegel
- At-large members of the Board: Bryan Birch, Kim Larkin, Greg Crider.

Cleanup Champions

The following awards were given to recognize the recipients' contributions and efforts.

TRASHMASTER OF LITTLE HUNTING CREEK: TOM FAHY, for Sustained, Superlative, Solo Effort over many years of cleanups.



In the past 5 years, Tom almost singlehandedly (well, Karen helped) hauled out 185 bags of trash and recyclables on the Wagon Wheel Oxbow, in Riverside Estates.

TRASH-TALKING LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR: SCOTT SUROVELL for heroic efforts to clean up the creek, and introduce legislation to keep shopping carts out of the creek.



The Friends thank all of the Suro-Vols, who year after year throw themselves into the effort to clean up the trashiest stretch of stream in Fairfax County.

MOST IMPRESSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD EFFORT: RIVERSIDE ESTATES RESIDENTS, including Scott Cameron, the Davises, the Joyces, the Reileys, Mort Isler, Tom Fahy, and 58 volunteers and site leaders who hauled out 142 bags and 8½ tires.

BEST NEW NEIGHBORHOOD CLEANUP EFFORT: GREG CRIDER AND WILLIAMSBURG MANOR RESIDENTS, for successfully launching an "army" and a "navy" of cleaner-uppers into uncharted trash territory on the North Branch of Little Hunting Creek.

THE NOT-SO-COVETED LITTLE HUNTING CREEK IMMERSION AWARD: DAKOTA HUNT, for going overboard while picking up trash from a canoe at the Brady Street Reach.

THE PADDLE HARDER AWARD: TOM EARLEY AND SKIP JONES, for paddling to the rescue of volunteers working on the marsh at the Brady Street Reach.

These volunteers are just a few of the trash magnates (or is that trash magnets?) involved in our cleanup. In addition to those named above, thanks to

- Stalwart site leaders who organized cleanup activities in Gum Springs (Bryan Birch), Stratford Landing (Paul Siegel, Roberta Cullen, and Beate Whitesell), and Janna Lee Avenue Bridge, Creekside Village, and Mount Vernon Plaza (Nadine Slocum).
- Quentin Marovelli and the county workers, who, as always, collected all that trash promptly on Monday morning.

ANNUAL MEETING'S POTLUCK DOOR PRIZE. The winner of this year's drawing was cleanup volunteer and junior member Trey Wheeler. The prize in this first-ever drawing was a trip with John Odenkirk, fish biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and world expert on Snakehead demography, on the electro-fishing boat used to count snakehead fish. Trey's report on the trip follows.

Electro-fishing boat on Little Hunting Creek



ELECTRO-FISHING BOAT RIDE ON LITTLE HUNTING CREEK by Trey Wheeler

As the winner of the 2015 FOLHC annual potluck prize, I went on a boat ride with Mr. John Odenkirk of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) and his team. The purpose was to observe a 'count' of snakehead and largemouth bass fish in Little Hunting Creek. The men who were doing this used electro-shock to briefly stun the fish to catch them. When the "fish shocker" was on, the men who were fishing had to stand on a rubber mat so they wouldn't get shocked.

After raising the fish to the surface, they were measured, tagged and released without harm. All of the information was documented as we went along. This is the third year of this study of the numbers of snakehead fish in the Potomac watershed.

The tags for the snakeheads were orange-red and the tags for the large mouthed bass were yellow. The tags had phone numbers and instructions that told what to do if you caught one. The snakehead tags said, "Reward ph 1-800-448-8322 Remove Tag, Report LOC & Kill Fish."

Snakehead fish tag



We saw at least 25 species of fish on the creek. The biggest one, a snakehead, was about 11 pounds and extremely slimy! I also learned that you can eat the snakeheads and they are

delicious. They're nicknamed "Pork of the Potomac!" It was fun watching all the fish and seeing how big they were. I also saw a couple of osprey nests. On the day I went out, the creek looked pretty clean overall except for a few plastic bottles. I'm glad our cleanups are helping the environment.

MORE CLEANUPS! Brownie troop 4649 from Stratford Landing Elementary picked up trash and litter at the Janna Lee Avenue bridge on Oct. 18. Thank you co-leader Jessica Kidwell and girls!

Troop 4649



STEWARDSHIP DAY. Last Martin Luther King Day (Jan. 19, 2015) volunteers cut and cleared ivy and other invasives at the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust property on Stockton Parkway. Thanks to all who participated!

BIRDS ON LITTLE HUNTING CREEK *by Claire Kluskens*

Little Hunting Creek is a magnet for birds since they love and need water just as much as people do.

The tidal marshy portions of the lower creek attract ducks and geese, herons and egrets, gulls and terns, blackbirds, warblers, orioles, to name a few. Shorebirds such as Killdeer also visit at low tide during migration. The narrow upstream forested portions provide the opportunity for a quick drink of water.

During the last 10 years, volunteers have counted birds 863 times along the Stockton Parkway portion of Little Hunting Creek for eBird, a citizen science project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. During that time, 118 species have been seen or heard. The eBird project draws upon the knowledge and availability of birdwatchers, since professional scientists cannot be everywhere all the time. Yes, you can contribute data to eBird, and help advance scientific understanding of bird migration, threats to bird species survival, and more!

Here's the list of species reported on Stockton Parkway:

Ducks and Swimming Birds: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American Coot.

Wading Birds: American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs.

Birds of Prey: Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Mississippi Kite, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl.

Gulls and Terns: Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Least Tern, Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern.

Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

Common Nighthawk.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Belted Kingfisher.

Woodpeckers: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker.

Flycatchers: Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird.

Vireos: White-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo.

Crows and Jays: Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow.

Swallows and swifts: Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Chimney Swift.

Chickadees, Nuthatches, and Wrens: Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren.

Gnatcatchers and Kinglets: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Thrushes and mimic thrushes: Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird.

European Starling.

Cedar Waxwing.

Wood Warblers: Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Sparrows: Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee.

Cardinals: Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting.

Blackbirds: Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole.

Finches: House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch.

House Sparrow.

If you're interested in observing birds and participating in the eBird citizen science project, visit www.eBird.org. You can learn more about identifying birds and recognizing their songs at www.allaboutbirds.org. And, if you are interested in creating bird habitat and attracting birds to your own back yard, check out the Audubon at Home program at www.audubonva.org.

Goldfinch



To join or renew your membership, please fill out this application and mail it with a check for the annual dues (made out to FOLHC) to FOLHC Treasurer, 8707 Stockton Parkway, Alexandria VA 22308.

Friends of Little Hunting Creek



www.folhc.org

Friends of Little Hunting Creek Application for membership

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: _____

Alternate Phone number: _____

Send email to: _____

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

(The Bylaws are found here: www.friendsoflittlehuntingcreek.org/images2014/folhcbylaws.pdf)

(Signed) _____

Date: _____