

# The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

FALL 2017



## FODM Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, November 15, at 7:30 p.m., Huntley Meadows Park, Norma Hoffman Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306. Phone 703 768-2525. Free to all.

## Calendar of Events

**November 12 & 26** - Sun. bird walks moved to Huntley Meadows, So. Kings entrance.

**December 12** - Va. Marine Resources Comm., hearing.

**December 14, - January 5** - No FODM Sunday bird walks, for Christmas Bird Counts.

## An Ecological Study of Hunting Creek

Join the Friends of Dyke Marsh at 7:30 p.m. November 15 at Huntley Meadows Park to hear a presentation by Dr. Kim de Mutsert, Assistant Professor, George Mason University, on the health of Hunting Creek, especially the fish of this tributary of the Potomac River, just upstream of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Dr. de Mutsert studies fish ecology in estuarine and coastal ecosystems, including the effects of environmental factors and anthropogenic impacts on fish abundance, biomass, community structure and fisheries landings.

Hunting Creek is an embayment of the tidal Potomac River located just downstream of the city of Alexandria and the I-95/I-495 Woodrow Wilson Bridge. This embayment receives treated wastewater from the Alexandria Renew Enterprises wastewater treatment plant and inflow from Cameron Run, which drains most of the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church and much of eastern Fairfax County.



Hunting Creek flows into the Potomac River and despite this vegetation, is in poor condition. Photo by Glenda Booth

Beginning in 2013, George Mason University's Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center (PEREC), in collaboration with Alexandria Renew Enterprises (AlexRenew), initiated a program to monitor water quality and the biological communities in the Hunting Creek area. The study researches water quality, fish and benthic

**MEETING** (continued on page 2)

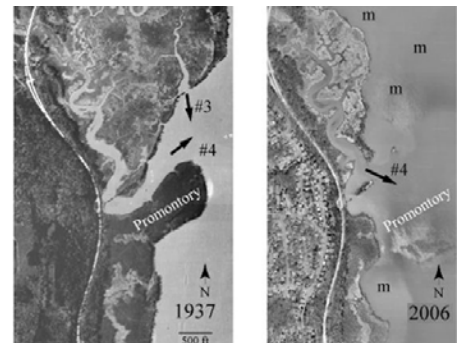
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## Exciting Progress on the Restoration of Dyke Marsh

**By Alexcy Romero, Superintendent, George Washington Memorial Pkwy.**

The Fairfax County Wetlands Board, at a September 12, 2017 public hearing, unanimously approved a joint permit application from the National Park Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a wetland restoration project at the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. This is part of a multi-step process required to obtain the federal, state and local permits for marsh enhancement and restoration activities. After hearing numerous public statements, mostly in favor of the project, the Board voted to approve the first phase of the application. This phase involves the construction of a 1,535-foot



The map shows the protective promontory of land now lost since the 1950s.

armor stone breakwater to replicate a promontory of land that existed prior to

**RESTORATION** (continued on page 2)

## In Memoriam - Bev Byrne

Beverly McKinley Byrne, a former president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, passed away on July 28, 2017, at age 90. Bev and her late husband, Jeb, both served as president of FODM. She was originally from Missouri and lived in the Mount Vernon community of Hollin Hills, where she and Jeb raised their three sons. She taught English and journalism in the Fairfax County public schools.

### MEETING (continued from page 1)

macroinvertebrate communities, anadromous fish usage of Hunting Creek and Cameron Run, *Escherichia coli* levels in Hunting Creek and tributaries and micropollutant levels in sediments and waters of Hunting Creek and Cameron Run.

The program, free to all, will start at 7:30 p.m. at the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center of Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria 22306. If you use a GPS device to find the park, enter the street address, not the park's name.

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, Potomac Riverkeeper and the Sierra Club, Mount Vernon Group are cosponsoring this meeting.

See also in this issue our article on the history and condition of Hunting Creek and Cameron Run.

### RESTORATION (continued from page 1)

1950. This functioned to protect the marsh from northerly tracking storms and hurricanes.

Between 1940 and 1972, approximately 270 acres of original marsh were lost from mining activities. With the removal of the promontory in the 1950s and cessation of mining in the early 1970s, the marsh continued to lose acreage through storm events and other erosive forces. Approximately 50 acres of marsh remain today. The breakwater will protect this remaining marsh. In addition, the Board

## FODM President Glenda Booth Honored



Glenda Booth with her award. Photo by Fairfax County.

also approved the restoration of 5.45 acres of tidal marsh to replace a small portion of marsh acreage that has been lost to mining and erosion. On September 26, 2017, I signed the wetlands permit. On September 30, 2017, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, awarded a contract for the first phase of the restoration project. The \$10.12 million contract will construct a 1,500-foot jetty to stabilize the shoreline and protect the existing marsh. NPS anticipates that construction will begin in early 2018 after the final permits are in place. In 2018, NPS also anticipates awarding a second phase contract to reconstruct approximately five acres of marshland.

On October 17, Fairfax County awarded Glenda the 2017 Environmental Excellence Award for an Individual. The Board of Supervisors noted her leadership in many environmental challenges, including chairmanship of boards, tireless membership in key committees, articles in newspapers and other publications, and work on numerous bills as a career, legislative staffer in the U.S. Congress. Examples of Glenda's work: leading the Fairfax County Wetlands Board in adopting the first living shorelines policy in Virginia (preceding adoption of a similar state policy) and her years of effort in securing funding to restore Dyke Marsh. She "challenges all to use science-based evidence to justify programs" and "inspires excellence in all with whom she interacts, leading by example"-- as we in FODM know very well. Our congratulations, thanks and very best to Glenda.

## Friends of Dyke Marsh Board of Directors

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**Board members can receive email at [info@fodm.org](mailto:info@fodm.org).** *The Marsh Wren* is a quarterly publication of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Letters and submissions to *The Marsh Wren* are welcome. Send them to the address at left. Special thanks to Duncan Hobart for managing our website ([www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org)).

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## President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

Dyke Marsh restoration took two big steps forward in September. On September 12, the Fairfax County Wetlands Board approved the National Park Service's (NPS) permit application (see bottom of page 1). Several FODMers gave compelling, supportive testimony (see entire article page 5). On September 30, the Corps of Engineers awarded a \$10.12 million contract to build a 1,500-foot breakwater in the south marsh, the first step of restoration. NPS must get several other permits and the next hearing is December 12 in Newport News. Visit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission at [www.mrc.virginia.gov](http://www.mrc.virginia.gov) for more information.

Several times, since 1959, Congress has supported restoration and FODM has advocated for restoration since the organization's founding in 1976. Restoring Dyke Marsh has had broad community, government and national support. We hope that this process proceeds and that restoration will start soon. The U.S. Geological Survey predicts that Dyke Marsh will disappear by 2035 without action.

### You Can Help Restore Native Habitat

Don't be alarmed by the cleared area along the Haul Road. We are undertaking a demonstration project with



NPS to address the massive invasive plant infestation and we hope to plant some native plants in that area. Both sides of the Haul Road are overrun with invasives like porcelainberry vines, English ivy, Japanese stiltgrass and more. Our goal is to restore this section with native plants that support the birds, insects and wildlife with which

they co-evolved. We also hope that some native plants will naturally return. We will need volunteer and perhaps financial support for this project as we seek a nature preserve with more ecological integrity.

Thanks to Board members Trudi Hahn and Ned Stone and several NPSers, we received a \$2,000 grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation that will support part of this work, including three activities: (1) a workshop and site visit to introduce teachers to Dyke Marsh's challenges; (2) a field day for high school students to learn about possible archaeological sites and processes necessary to disturb soil; and (3) planting in the cleared area

described above. We hope this project will bring teachers and youngsters to Dyke Marsh, especially those who may have had little experience in the natural environment; stimulate an interest in science, conservation and stewardship of natural resources; and enhance understanding of how people impact their natural surroundings.

### Saving Trees, Fingers Crossed

There's also some cautious good news about our pumpkin ash project. Led by Robert Smith, we have worked with NPS/GWMP since 2015 to try to save some of the pumpkin ash trees (*Fraxinus profunda*) that are being killed by the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), an invasive insect. We treated 16 trees and this fall, all of the treated trees leafed out and all six of the female trees produced seeds. Most of the other ash trees near the treatment site are dead.



FODM is supporting work to treat and save 16 pumpkin ash trees (*Fraxinus profunda*) in Dyke Marsh. Photo: G. Booth

After we commented on the disturbing tree-cutting over the last year along the parkway, George Washington Parkway (GWMP) officials have instituted a new procedure to provide a natural resource management staffer to accompany a certified arborist to assess the health of trees that might pose safety risks. Also, at our urging, GWMP staff agreed to stop mowing vegetation along the Haul Road, especially the part east of the "dogleg" where we planted over 300 native plants and shrubs. Thank you, NPS!

Meanwhile, challenges loom. National parks are in tough competition for federal dollars and staff. Dyke Marsh restoration is not assured. Off-leash dogs are all too common. Non-native plants run rampant along both sides of the Haul Road trail, but hats off to those dedicated volunteers who try to "tame the beasts."

We will soldier on and continue to advocate for a healed, healthy Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Remember this sage advice from primatologist and anthropologist Jane Goodall: "The greatest danger to our future is apathy."

**Glenda C. Booth**

*Glenda C. Booth is the president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh and active in conservation issues in Virginia.*

# Hunting Creek, Its Health and History

BY GLENDA BOOTH

Our November 15 speaker (see page 1) will discuss her research in Hunting Creek. This article offers some background that she may not cover. Hunting Creek and Cameron Run are in Fairfax County's Cameron Run watershed.

## A Degraded System

According to the 2004 Fairfax County Cameron Run Watershed study, "... the Cameron Run watershed has substantially degraded biological and habitat integrity." These waters "are listed on the EPA list of impaired waters for acute ammonia and fecal coliform contamination. PCBs were found in fish tissues and prompted the Virginia Department of Health to issue a health advisory." County officials confirm that this is still the condition today. The plan cited as problems sedimentation, bank erosion, loss of stream habitat and life, loss of wetlands, inadequate buffers and stream channel alteration.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) 2014 report, reflecting data from 2007 through 2012, assesses Hunting Creek from Telegraph Road to the mouth of the embayment and reports that the creek is impaired for bacteria and PCBs in fish tissue. The Cameron Run segment "is considered to be fully supporting the recreation use" (not impaired for bacteria). DEQ has approved two TMDLs (pollution reduction targets and tools for meeting water quality standards) for these impairments.

## Birding Hotspot

Despite the creek's condition, E-bird calls the area a "birding hotspot." The Hunting Creek embayment is a favored stopover for fall migrating shorebirds and is a gull roosting site. A bald eagle pair has nested nearby for at least the past two years. Some species observed there are Wilson's storm petrel, band-rumped storm-petrel, common golden-eye and red-headed woodpecker. It is also the site of Virginia's first ever wintering yellow warbler and a location where often other unusual winter birds like Nashville warbler and Lincoln's sparrow are seen.



Migrating American avocets feeding on the Hunting Creek mudflats. Photo by Ed Eder

## A Little History

Hunting Creek was once navigable. "By 1900, Hunting Creek already had become unnavigable at ordinary stages by a rowboat," wrote Alexandrian Andrew Macdonald in 1994. In 1918, W. L. McAtee described the creek as filled with aquatic vegetation. The Cameron Run-Hunting Creek stream has been extensively altered over the years, including the expansion of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge which changed and destroyed many of the wetlands near the bridge and restored some. Macdonald observed, "Instead of adequately protecting the edges of this major watershed from development, we have chosen, in recent years, to ig-

nore its basic ecology and natural hydrology in favor of dredging, stream channelization and bank vegetation removal, reducing further its natural ability to control flooding and erosion."

## Hunting Creek and Dyke Marsh

Historically, Hunting Creek "was a major source of mineral load found beneath the [Dyke] marsh," reported K.K. Engelhardt and others in Should We Restore Dyke Marsh, a 2004 report.

"Today, the creek has a reduced impact on Dyke Marsh because of human alterations of the environment and because upstream sediment loads have been deposited at the creek's confluence with the Potomac River."

Hunting Creek "

... was undoubtedly a dominant factor in the evolution of Dyke Marsh through its deposition of sediment and diversion of strong river currents away from the marsh," according to the "Assessment of Alternatives, Dyke Marsh," 1977. FODMer Dr. David Johnston, wrote in 1999, "The force of Hunting Creek has been muted lately as the confluence with the Potomac has been boxed in with the construction of the George Washington Memorial Highway, the Capital Beltway, Belle Haven Country Club and the Hunting Towers apartment complex."

Dr. Johnston continued: "Buildings and roads now sit on former wetlands and sewage effluent from the City of Alexandria and Fairfax County is discharged into its waters. . . . Nonetheless, one of the largest mudflat areas along the Potomac River is found in the Hunting Creek embayment. . . . These mudflats perform important ecological functions by providing foraging sites for migratory and resident birds, fisheries habitats and nurseries, nutrient assimilations, maintenance of water quality and floodflow attenuation. Mudflats contain nutrient rich sediments which support bacterial, phytoplankton and zooplankton communities. The presence of these communities is particularly important to the production of benthic invertebrates and subsequent richness of fisheries and migrating birds occurring in the region."

Kitty L. Roberts, Superintendent, George Washington Memorial Parkway, wrote to FODM on April 20, 1993, "The Hunting Creek embayment has been changed by extensive sediment deposition, primarily from Hunting Creek itself. In effect, the embayment has become a delta. This process, if it continues, will ultimately create the potential for increased emergent wetland species, while the open water shallows and submerged aquatic vegetation areas will be reduced. . . . Hunting Bay would provide an excellent complement to Dyke Marsh if managed as one unit." Editor's note: We are not aware that NPS has ever considered this.



Buildings and roads now sit on former wetlands around Hunting Creek. Photo by Glenda Booth

## Dyke Marsh Restoration, Permits under Consideration

On September 12, on a five to zero vote, the Fairfax County Wetlands Board approved a permit requested by the George Washington Memorial Parkway for the restoration of Dyke Marsh. On December 12 in Newport News, Virginia, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission will hold a hearing on a second permit for the part of the project in their jurisdiction, known generally as the subaqueous area.

The following are excerpts from testimony given by FODMers and others at the September 12 hearing:

*The basis of the current plan for restoration in Dyke Marsh is engineering studies conducted in 2010 and 2013 by a team of scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey led by Dr. Ronald Litwin. The 2013 study: "We ultimately conclude that Dyke Marsh is in its late stages of failure as a freshwater tidal marsh system. . . In the absence of human efforts to restore the equilibrium between marsh and tide, and equilibrium to the other natural forces acting on this*



The erosion and fragmentation of Dyke Marsh continues as restoration awaits. Photo by Ned Stone

*wetland, Dyke Marsh likely will continue to accelerate its degradation, erosion and fragmentation until it is gone. This likely will occur prior to 2035 AD." . . . Congress has affirmed [Dyke Marsh's] value many times. During the environ-*

*mental impact statement process, restoration was broadly supported by elected officials at all levels, by Fairfax County and the city of Alexandria, by many organizations and by countless individuals. The Friends of Dyke Marsh was founded in 1976 . . . we have advocated for restoration since our organization's origin." -- Ned Stone, FODM*

*. . . a key benefit of marsh and wetland restoration—a larger, restored marsh can serve as a natural defense against storms and flooding. Storms and floods account for almost ¾ of weather-related disasters and they are becoming more common and more costly, from about 200 events worldwide in 1980 to over 600 last year. . . . Since colonial times, the contiguous United States has lost more than half of its wetlands. . . restoration of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve will be an important step to improving the natural defenses, resiliency, beauty, and quality of life in our area. -- Katherine Wychulis, FODM*

*In 2003 Hurricane Isabel produced a tidal surge of 9.6 feet that resulted in severe flooding which impacted the areas of New Alexandria, Belle Haven and Huntington. . . . The calculated 2 percent annual chance of flooding in these areas is likely to increase with sea level rise and climate change. . . . Given this year's catastrophic cyclone related damage in the south and southeast, the awareness of the*

*buffering effect of wetlands on storm damage should be considered. At the time of Isabel's impact on the flooded Fairfax communities Dyke Marsh was only a remnant of its prior extension. The proposal to restore the promontory and initiate partial restoration makes sense to attenuate potential damage from coastal storms as well as to conserve a valuable ecosystem. -- Ed Eder, FODM*



Restoration could attenuate marsh damage like from Hurricane Isabel. Photo: D. McManus

*I would like to speak to the human side of this permit application . . . we live in a large, heavily-developed metropolitan area. Dyke Marsh is a tranquil refuge from this environment, and many of us use it for relaxation, recreation, and enjoyment. . . . We also appreciate the scientific research conducted in Dyke Marsh and the many educational opportunities for children and adults alike to expand and deepen their understanding of the great outdoors—and in particular this rare freshwater tidal wetland. -- Trudi Hahn, FODM*

*I am a long time resident of that portion of Fairfax County that includes Dyke Marsh and currently reside immediately south of the marsh along the waterfront. . . Having watched the erosion and habitat loss that has occurred in the marsh over the last 30 years, I enthusiastically support the proposed Dyke Restoration Project. . . I understand that commercial dredging and excavations in the past have caused much of the erosion; this is thus a man-made problem. . . it is time to act . . . the benefits to all Fairfax County residents and to our environment are inestimable.-- Arina van Breda*

*The Wellington Civic Association community is a neighborhood of over 475 homes located on the southern end of the Dyke Marsh. . . We fully support the Dyke Marsh complete restoration and we understand that the funds are limited and this full restoration project is to be done in phases.-Ed Alzona, President, Wellington Civic Association*

*Resolution provision 4 of 12. . . Whereas, dredging removed a southern promontory that protected the marsh from tropical storms, hurricanes, and nor'easters driven up the Potomac River valley, leaving the marsh and adjacent neighborhoods potentially vulnerable to flooding and erosion from storms from the south and storms of increasing intensity . . . Therefore, be it resolved, the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) supports full restoration as noted in our 2013 Resolution . . . -- Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations*

# Meet the Plants of Dyke Marsh — Honey Locust

BY PATRICIA P. SALAMONE

You can't miss the thorns of the honey locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). They can be up to 3 inches long, are needle-sharp, and appear in fierce-looking clusters on the trunk and branches. Even tiny seedlings sport inch-long thorns, though they are softer and greener than the mature thorns. The thorns harden and turn red as they age, then become grey and brittle when mature. The thorns are said to have evolved to protect the trees from large browsing animals during the Ice Age.

The genus name *Gleditsia* honors Johann Gottlieb Gleditsch, an 18th century German physician, botanist, and correspondent of Carl Linnaeus. *Triacanthos* ("tri" meaning three and "acantha" from the Greek for thorn) refers to the fact that the thorns can be either solitary or three-branched.



Cluster of honey locust thorns:  
Photo by Glenda Booth

The honey locust is a medium-sized tree (typically 60-80 feet tall) in the bean family (*Fabaceae*). The

USDA plants database map shows it as native to most of the continental U.S., except for Oregon and Washington, though other sources describe a more limited native range. Its natural habitat is moist woods, bottomlands, and stream banks, as well as drier upland sites. Its wetland indicator status is facultative (FAC) in the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain region, meaning that it is comfortable in both wetland and non-wetland settings.

The compound leaves are pinnate (feather-like) and are typically 5 to 8 inches long with 15-30 small ovate or elliptical leaflets. The small greenish flowers appear in 2 to 3 inch long hanging clusters (racemes) in May and June. They are not at all showy, but are very fragrant.

## A Little Legislative History

Why did Congress add the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve to the National Park System in 1959? That law, P.L. 86-41, clearly stated Congress's purpose: ". . . so that fish and wildlife development and their preservation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount."

Former U.S. Congressman John Dingell, one of the authors of the 1959 legislation stated during the debate, that Dyke Marsh should be restored: "We expect that the Secretary will provide for the deposition of the silt from the dredging operations in such a way as to encourage the restoration of the marsh at the earliest possible moment . . . to rebuild the area by siltation and in all other necessary and proper ways."

In 2013, Cong. Dingell wrote FODM: "I am most

The long, flat, twisted seedpods develop in late summer and early fall, turning from reddish green to purplish brown as they mature and persisting into winter. The pods contain a number of shiny oval-shaped brown seeds as well as the sweet, honey-like pulp that gives the plant its common name. Native Americans in what is now the southeastern US used the pulp from the pods, dried and ground, as a sweetener.



Honey locust leaves and seed pods. Photo: Sally and Andy Wasowski, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

For obvious reasons, the thorn-bearing honey locust isn't popular for landscaping. There is, however, a thornless form: *Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis*, where *inermis* means "unarmed." The thornless versions, which are occasionally found in the wild and are also available as nursery plants, are widely used, and allow homeowners and park visitors to enjoy the tree's graceful, open-crowned shape, golden fall foliage, and filtered shade without the fear of being stabbed.

Despite the thorns, the tree has significant value to wildlife. Many animals eat the seed pods, and the flowers are very attractive to pollinating insects. It can produce dense thickets that provide excellent cover. It also serves as a host plant for the caterpillars of the silver-spotted skipper (*Epargyreus clarus*).

To me, the honey locust tree always looks like something out of a fairy tale. In Charles Perrault's "The Beauty in the sleeping Wood," a young princess pricks her finger on a spindle and falls into a hundred-year sleep. To protect her, "there grew up all round the park so vast a quantity of trees big and small, with interlacing brambles and thorns, that neither man nor beast could penetrate them." The honey locust would have fit right in.

pleased with what we see with Dyke Marsh. It is a treasure that I recall with great pride . . . it will need protection against erosion and other threats. I am happy to be of help here."

On September 30, before our 2016 anniversary event, he wrote us:

"Congratulations to the Friends of Dyke Marsh on your 40th anniversary. I am sorry that I could not be with you today to celebrate this important milestone. Forty years ago, we came together to set aside this land for future gener-



The United States Capitol

**HISTORY** (continued on page 7)

## Help With the Christmas Bird Count

Help FODMers document the birds in Dyke Marsh on December 16. The count is part of what is called the District of Columbia Christmas Bird Count. To sign up, contact Larry Cartwright at pro-warbler@verizon.net or call 703-941-3142 or Carol Hayes at the Audubon Naturalist Society at Carol.Hayes@anshome.org or call 301-652-9188 x10. Volunteers will work on teams that will count all the birds that they can find in their assigned areas. The Christmas Bird Count began in 1900 as an alternative to the holiday sport of shooting birds. The data is used to analyze trends and the health of the environment. Bird counts are highly variable, affected by factors like weather, vegetation, time of day, pets, human activity and the observers' limitations.



FODMers Ed Eder, Dorothy McManus and Larry Meade survey for birds. Photo: G. Booth

### HISTORY (continued from page 6)

ations to enjoy and our dream has been realized thanks to your hard work. Your dedication to conservation and preservation is admirable and worthy of our praise. Best of luck in the future and please keep up the good work."

Congressman Dingell served in the House of Representatives from 1955 to 2015, longest Congressional tenure in U.S. history in either chamber representing the 16th Congressional District of Michigan.

U.S. Park Police, Emergency Number: 202-610-7500

## Welcome New FODM Members

We welcome our **new members** Jennifer Conger, Cheryl P. Coogan, Jim Coyne, Barbara R. Davis, Amy Garcia, Charles G. Jackson, Susan Kuhbach, Barbara Liggett, Maida Helen Loescher, Alice Reid and Bill Richardson.

And we welcome our new **Life Member** William J. Henry and conversion to **Life Membership** Howard Bergman.

## Dyke Marsh Bird Data on eBird

### By Dixie Sommers

Our Sunday morning bird walk leaders are now posting observations from the walks in eBird, creating a continuing electronic record of birds identified at Dyke Marsh. FODM is also using eBird to store and manage data from the Dyke Marsh Breeding Bird Survey.



Male scarlet tanager. Photo by Ed Eder

eBird is an online checklist program provided by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

eBird is widely used by birders to create and store their checklists. With tens of thousands of users, it has become a major database on the abundance and distribution of bird species and how these change over time. These citizen science data are used for scientific research, such as understanding the impact of climate change on birds. Visit [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org).

### Sunday Morning Bird Walks

Bird walks are held Sunday mornings. See calendar page 1 for details. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and all are welcome to join us.

## FODM Membership - Dues and Contributions

Support the Friends of Dyke Marsh by becoming a member or renewing your membership. Benefits include the Friends' quarterly publication, *The Marsh Wren*; quarterly membership meetings with knowledgeable speakers; Sunday morning bird walks and notification of activities in and around the marsh. Most importantly, your membership lends your voice in support of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve and our efforts to advocate for full restoration of the marsh. Just click on the "Join" or "Donate" button on our membership page at [www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org) to make your tax-deductible contribution by credit card or from your bank account securely through PayPal. For help, [info@fodm.org](mailto:info@fodm.org). If you prefer, you can send a check, payable to FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, Virginia 22307. The annual dues are \$15.00 per household, \$250.00 for life membership for an individual. You will receive a notice by mail or by email when your renewal is due. A financial statement is available upon written request from the Virginia Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs. Thank you for your support of FODM.

DUES AMOUNT..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Please address any questions or comments about *The Marsh Wren* to Dorothy McManus and about membership to Bob Veltkamp. You may contact them by mail at FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, Virginia 22307 -7183, by telephone or by email (see page 2).

# New Plant Found in Dyke Marsh

BY ED EDER

Several people observed brown-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia triloba*) this summer, 2017, along the Haul Road. It appears to be a new species of *Rudbeckia* for Dyke Marsh and this is the first photographic record of the species on George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) properties. The plant was last observed in GWMP in Great Falls Park in 1919.

The brown-eyed Susan has alternate lanceolate or ovate leaves, reddish hairy stems and characteristic tri-lobed leaves near the bottom of the plant. Each upper stem has one or two flower heads which bloom from middle to late summer. The flower rays are bright yellow and oblong.

A number of pollinators use the plant, including solitary bees, carpenter bees, halictid bees, wasps, beesflies, butterflies and the goldenrod soldier beetle.

*Rudbeckia triloba* is an annual or biennial species. It is uncer-

tain how it arrived in Dyke Marsh. Habitats where it has been found include areas with a history of disturbance, such as roadsides, railroad edges, vacant lots and abandoned fields. The existing population is small and close to the marsh. Observers have seen only two plants. “. . . so, being a short-lived species, their persistence seems questionable in Dyke Marsh,” commented Brent Steury GWMP’s Natural Resources Program Manager. To see the plant’s range in Virginia, visit the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora - <http://www.vaplantatlas.org/index.php?do=plant&plant=2246>.



Brown-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia triloba*)  
Photos contributed by Ed Eder



The brown-eyed Susan has tri-lobed leaves near the bottom of the plant.

**The  
Marsh Wren**

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