

The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

SPRING 2010



The Friends of Dyke Marsh

FODM Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, May 19, 7:30 p.m., Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, Virginia 22306. 703-768-2525. Free to all.

Calendar of Events

Weed Warrior Training May 15 (p. 6), Plant Walk May 22 (p. 2), Breeding Bird Survey begins May 29 (p. 6), Quarterly meetings May 19, September 22 and November 17.

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The Restoration of Kenilworth Marsh

A Model for Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve?

On May 19, FODMers will hear Stephen Syphax, Chief, Resource Management Division, National Capital Parks-East, U. S. National Park Service (NPS), discuss restoration of the Kenilworth Marsh, a 77-acre freshwater tidal marsh on the Anacostia River in Washington, D. C. Mr. Syphax will also share information from other Anacostia River wetland restoration projects and will touch on the current "living shoreline" stabilization project in Piscataway Park.

Like many of the tidal wetlands in the Washington area, the Kenilworth Marsh was dredged by the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) in the 1930s. In the early 1990s, NPS worked with the D.C. government, the COE, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and others to reconstruct emergent marsh in sections of the wetland that had been dredged. Since 1993, NPS has been working with partner agencies, the Anacostia Watershed Society and other volunteers to monitor the wetland projects and to manage several challenges that impact the reconstructed wetlands, including fac-



17-acre section of Kenilworth Marsh where tidal wetlands were reconstructed in 1992-93. Various vegetation shown.

tors like resident Canada goose herbivores and invasive, non-native plants. The restoration of Kenilworth Marsh pioneered methods that have been useful to other wetland restoration projects.

Mr. Syphax will describe what was done at Kenilworth Marsh and the other Anacostia wetland projects, why, and some of the lessons learned. NPS is preparing a restoration and management plan for Dyke Marsh. Mr. Syphax's talk will provide valuable insights as the Park Ser-

(Continued on page 2)

Moran in Charge of Conservation Funding

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH

Northern Virginia's Eighth District Congressman Jim Moran has become chairman of the House of Representatives' Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies. This subcommittee writes the annual appropriations bill that provides funds for national parks, refuges, wilderness areas, environment protection, Chesapeake Bay, climate change programs and other activities. Congressman Moran is a strong supporter of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve and is seeking funds for the restora-



Congressman Moran spoke at FODM's celebration last fall. Photo by Ned Stone.

tion plan development. Dyke Marsh is in his Congressional District. Congratulations, Congressman Moran, and thank you for all of your tremendous support.

Book Review

Out in Front: Preparing the Way for JFK and LBJ
By Jeb Byrne (SUNY Press, Albany, New York, 2010)

Long-time member of the Friends and FODM past president Jeb Byrne has written an intimate and revealing portrait of his time as an “advance man” for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in the tumultuous sixties. The book proves that “the devil is in the details” as it walks us through the astounding complexity of arrangements for presidential appearances. In his running commentary, Jeb spares no one, including himself, as he recounts successes -- and their absence. The author’s work for JFK was all too brief. Jeb’s very first and only advance assignment for Kennedy was for the Fort Worth portion of the President’s trip to Texas on November 21 and 22, 1963. Jeb’s account places us in the President’s motorcade and on his podium, and we read it knowing what is to unfold later in that second day. The bulk of the book explores a part of Lyndon Baines Johnson’s world and his inimitable incarnation as president as Jeb prepares for LBJ’s appearances around the country. *Out in Front* is a glimpse of male-dominated political life in the sixties, its rich description making us both remember those times and also remark on events and attitudes that would not occur in today’s world. Jeb’s concluding reflections on our American political customs shape a fitting conclusion to a great read.

The book is available through Amazon and other major booksellers. -- Dorothy McManus

FODMer Wins Book Award

Marfè Ferguson Delano, an FODM member, was awarded the Newton Marasco Foundation’s Green Earth Book Award in April for *Earth in the Hot Seat: Bulletins from a Warming World*, her 2009 book on climate change published by National Geographic Children’s Books. More than 110 books were nominated. Judges said that her book is “a call-to-arms to help the Earth . . .” and “. . . explains the science of this global threat succinctly and visually.” Delano, the author of many children’s books, lives in the Mount Vernon area.

Learn about DMWP’s Plants

Dr. Elizabeth Wells, a botany professor at George Washington University, will lead a plant walk in Dyke Marsh on May 22 at 10:30 a.m. Meet at the wooden bridge that goes through the marsh, just opposite Tulane Drive, south of the driving entrance to the preserve. Park on Tulane Drive and walk (carefully) across the parkway. Wear sun protection and come join us.

RESTORATION (Continued from page 1)

vice’s plans for Dyke Marsh’s restoration unfold.

The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and the Fairfax County Wetlands Board are cosponsors of this meeting to be held at 7:30 p.m., Huntley Meadows Park Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria VA 22306.

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Visit our website at

www.fodm.org

for more information about us, our programs and how you can join the FODM.

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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 editorial address above. Board members too, can receive mail at this address. Special thanks to Duncan Hobart for managing our website (www.fodm.org), and to Paula Sullivan and Ed Eder for their photography contributions to *The Marsh Wren* and website.



President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

Ah, spring. The mud-streaked leaves of the spatterdock are emerging from the muck and reaching for the sun as I write.

Turtles are abundant and so far, fortunately, we have not heard of any turtle poaching incidents.

Red-winged Blackbirds are trilling their kon-ka-reeeee every minute it seems. Migrant songbirds are returning and many animals are having and raising their young. We think there are nine Osprey nests in the marsh and Ospreys have commandeered the Bald Eagle nest of last year at the Belle Haven Golf Course. By early June, we hope to hear the songs of the Marsh Wren. As NPS Biologist Brent Steury wrote last year, "Writers insistent on describing the song have likened it to a dry, clattering sewing machine, a reedy, guttural rattle or a liquid gurgle, ending in a mechanical chatter." Whew! It's an exciting time in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.

One somber note: Black rat snakes have been spotted enjoying the spring sun. One was apparently beheaded and the remains hung on a tree near the "dogleg" of the Haul Road in early April. Please report any suspicious activity you observe to the U. S. Park Police, 202-619-7300.

Spring has attracted many human visitors to Dyke Marsh as well as you will read in other articles in this newsletter, from U. S. Senate staffers to Girl Scouts and Brownies. NPS Biologist Erik Oberg led an enlightening walk on April 10 and described some of the research underway to support the NPS restoration plan. Don't miss the plant walk on May 22, to be led by Dr. Elizabeth Wells, George Washington University Botany Professor. We can guarantee you'll get a real botanic education on this walk. And the continuing Sunday morning bird walks have produced lively reports of abundant avian activity. Thank you to everyone for sharing your time, knowledge and giving spirit.

On the good news front, FODM was chosen as the Organization of the Year by the Mount Vernon Council of Citizen Associations. More on that in the next newsletter. We are honored to receive this recognition.

As we reported earlier, two hunters were charged on January 1 with violating Virginia hunting regulations in and near DMWP. They went to court on February 24. One was fined \$100; one case was dismissed.

FODM will assist the National Park Service in bringing 600 intermediate school students to DMWP in early May. We continue to participate in the Belle Haven Watershed Advisory Group and will learn more later this year about county plans to address problems in the streams that flow into Dyke Marsh. We weighed in on threats to the Winkler Preserve and Mason Neck State Park. (See related article in this issue.) We have made several presentations on the preserve and FODM's efforts. If you know of a group that would like a power point presentation on DMWP

or to see *On the Edge*, our film about Dyke Marsh, let me know. We want to spread the good word.

This spring has seen a virtual influx of people helping in Dyke Marsh.

On April 10, 33 people helped clean up, removed over 36 bags of trash and raked the storm wash debris off the Haul Road trail. Thank you to Brownie Troop 1849 based at Waynewood Elementary School for helping. Have you noticed that the refrigerator is now gone from the island? Thank you, NPS.

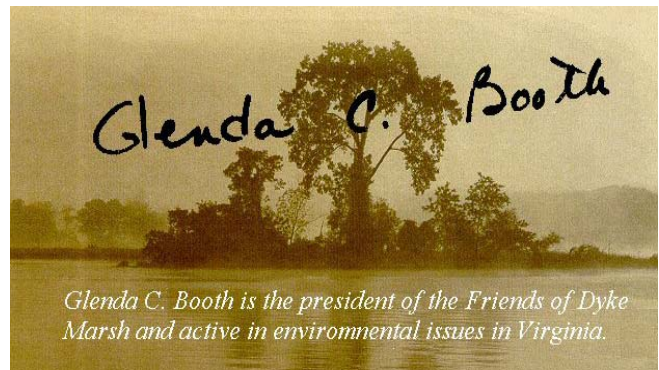
For the entire George Washington Parkway cleanup on April 10, NPS clocked 1,074 volunteer hours that provided \$22,392.90 in cost benefit to the agency. NPS assigns a value of \$20.85 to each volunteer hour.

Several U. S. Senators have been struggling recently to develop a new clean energy bill to address climate change, an effort to get a filibuster-proof bill through the Senate. (The House of Representatives passed a bill last year.)

The National Parks and Conservation Association testified in the Senate last fall that national parks are seeing increasing temperatures, drought, fires and flooding. In some areas, insect pests are thriving because of warmer winters and drought-stressed trees. They told Congress, "Keeping rivers, forests, deserts, alpine regions, wetlands and other natural systems healthy helps maintain \$730 billion in economic activity generated by outdoor recreation, allows us as a nation to support nearly 6.5 million related jobs – one in 20 across the U.S. economy. This activity also generates \$88 billion in state and federal tax revenue. National parks themselves generate at a minimum, more than four dollars in value for every tax dollar invested and support \$13.3 billion in local, private sector activity and more than a quarter of a million private sector jobs. Visit www.npca.org.

FODMers may wish to share your views with our Members of Congress on climate change and national parks funding. To find and contact your federal legislator, visit www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

Please share your suggestions on how we can make our Friends group even stronger. I look forward to seeing you in our favorite tidal wetland soon.



Rare Sedge Discovered in Dyke Marsh

BY BRENT STEURY

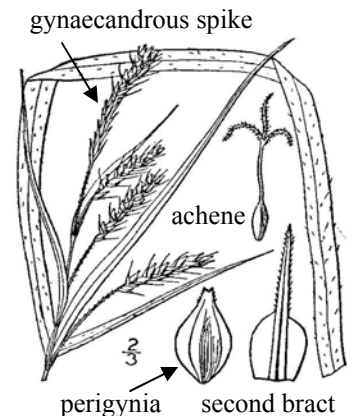
Sedges represent the largest family of plants (Cyperaceae) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A total of 19 genera occur within this family in Virginia, but only seven of these (Bolboschoenus, Carex, Cyperus, Eleocharis, Kyllinga, Schoenoplectus, and Scirpus) are found in Dyke Marsh. Statewide, the genus Carex is by far the largest, with 172 species documented from the Commonwealth. One of these carices, *Carex davisii* (Davis' sedge), was recently added to the flora of the Commonwealth in 2003 when it was discovered by National Park Service (NPS) staff in Fairfax County at Great Falls Park (the find was documented by the botanical journal *Castanea* in Volume 69, pages 241-242). Three years later it was found by Smithsonian Institution Botanist Mark Strong, at Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary. Then in May, 2008, it was found at a third site by NPS staff at Dyke Marsh. All three occurrences known from Virginia are on lands managed by the NPS, indicating the importance of refugia for the proliferation of rare species. The Dyke Marsh site is the southernmost occurrence known on the East Coast of the United States.

For a sedge, *Carex davisii* is rather obvious looking (get ready for a quick lesson in sedge terminology here). The tallest plants can reach three feet and have the unique combination of two to four drooping gynaeandrous (a flower spike with both staminate and pistillate flowers in which the staminate flowers are all below the pistillate

flowers) spikes (elongate inflorescences with sessile or subsessile perigynia. A perigynium is a special bract that encloses the seed, called an achene in sedges) which turn dull orange to yellow at maturity. Each perigynium is subtended by a second, long awned, bract. The leaves are approximately one-quarter of an inch wide, hairy beneath, and purple at the base where they are enclosed in hairy sheaths.

Carex davisii is not the only rare sedge found in Dyke Marsh. The river bull-rush, *Bulboschoenus fluviatilis*, is listed as Threatened in Virginia and has been documented from only five Virginia Counties, but it comprises one of the dominant species in Dyke Marsh, along with the narrow-leaved cattail (*Typha angustifolia*).

Brent Steury is the NPS's Natural Resources Program Manager for the George Washington Memorial Parkway.



Carex davisii - Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern U. S., Canada, and the British Possessions*. Vol. 1:408.

Volunteers Assist NPS in Restoring Native Plants at Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve

On April 16, six volunteers and three NPS staffers planted approximately 40 native plants between the "dogleg" of the Haul Road and the boardwalk. This is the focal area where NPS and volunteers have removed invasive plants this past winter and spring. Most of the invasive bush or amur honeysuckle has been whacked and views of the wetland are more open.

With guidance from NPS, volunteers planted the following species: buttonbush, spicebush, elderberry, sycamore, red maple and silver maple. These will provide forage material and nesting habitat for native birds and other animals. Native shrubs generally have higher protein content than non-natives. Barry Stahl, George Washington Memorial Parkway Horticulturalist, joined the group, along with NPSers Erik Oberg and Kevin Hull.

On April 2, 16 Arlington master naturalists and six members of Americorps visited the preserve. NPS biologist

Erik Oberg gave an informative walking tour and then everyone went to work on bush honeysuckle. Erik explained that areas where the "weed whackers" have been working may look a bit desolate, but he does expect native plants to return. It may take two to three years for the pioneer species to emerge from the seed bank.

At one point along the Haul Road, Oberg explained how multiflora rose had in effect smothered and killed trees in an area that had been continuous forest from the Haul Road west to the bike path. "Once established, it's very hard to control," he said. Lesser celandine is a "new arrival" in DMWP. This plant, with a bright yellow flower, floats readily, forms a mat and outcompetes the spring ephemerals. NPS is treating it.

NPS will have three youth crews out this summer doing invasive plant control, trail work and planting native plants.

Thank you, NPS.



NPS Horticulturalist Barry Stahl instructs volunteers on planting buttonbush while NPS Ranger Erik Oberg looks on. Photo by T.D. Hobart.

Mason Neck State Park and Winkler Preserve Spared

BY GLENDA BOOTH

Two of our “sister” protected lands in northern Virginia had victories this spring. In his proposed budget, Governor Bob McDonnell asked the state legislature to “defund” and close Mason Neck State Park. The legislature disagreed and the park will not close it now. Mason Neck State Park and the adjacent Mason Neck Wildlife Refuge together comprise one of the largest protected areas in northern Virginia.

The Virginia Department of Transportation proposed to build a road and 34-foot exit ramp through the 44-acre Winkler Preserve next to the Mark Center and I-395 in Alexandria. Thanks to vigorous grass roots advocacy efforts, VDOT has now dropped the proposal. VDOT attributed their decision in part to strong public opposition to infringing on the preserve.

The ramp and road would have taken 30 percent of the nature preserve through condemnation. FODM provided comments at VDOT’s public meeting and urged elected officials to oppose VDOT’s plans. Conservationists argued that Winkler is a natural park in a densely-developed city, one of the largest forested parks in the city. The proposal would have reduced what is a naturally rich outdoor classroom and science lab for 12,000 students who have few comparable places to go in the city. The Winkler Preserve has forests, meadows, walking trails and a pond. A former pig farm and dump site, the land was donated by the Winkler family in 1979 and endowed as a nature preserve. Some trees are over 100 years old. Over 700,000 native plants have been planted.

Organization Reports Frogs at Risk



The Green Tree Frog is one of many DMWP species. Photo by Ed Eder.

An organization called Save the Frogs, headquartered in Manassas, Virginia, reports that “frogs are the most threatened group of animals on Earth.”

Frogs have been around for around 250 million years and are found on every continent except

Antarctica. In Fairfax County, there are at least 14 species of native frogs and toads, such as spring peepers, bullfrogs, green frogs and American toads, according to Susan Jewell, writing in the April South County Chronicle newspaper. The following frogs and toads have been identified in DWMP: American toad, Fowler's toad, N. Cricket frog, Green treefrog, E. Gray treefrog, Spring peeper, Green frog, Bullfrog, Pickerel frog and S. Leopard frog.

Frogs are bio-indicators. Their permeable skin can absorb toxic chemicals. “The health of frogs is thought to be indicative of the health of the biosphere as a whole,” says the Save the Frogs Web site.

Among the threats to frogs are habitat destruction, infectious diseases, pollution, pesticides, climate change, invasive species and over-harvesting for the pet and food trades. The United States is the second largest importer of frog legs after France and consumption of frog legs is rising. Imports of frog legs to the U. S. tripled from 1995 to 2005, says Save the Frogs. California became the first state to ban the importation of frogs when a new law became effective this year.

Climate change could adversely affect frogs. Some

areas could become drier if greenhouse gas emissions are not curtailed. In temperate regions, pond-breeding species need water bodies that do not dry up before tadpoles can metamorphose. Save the Frogs says that though national parks and other protected areas are important to frogs’ survival, more must be done. Advocates suggest several ways to help frogs:

- Do not use pesticides.
- Do not buy frog legs in restaurants or stores.
- Try to avoid driving on wet spring nights when amphibians are crossing low-lying roads to get to breeding ponds.

To learn more about frogs and how to save them, visit www.savethefrogs.com.

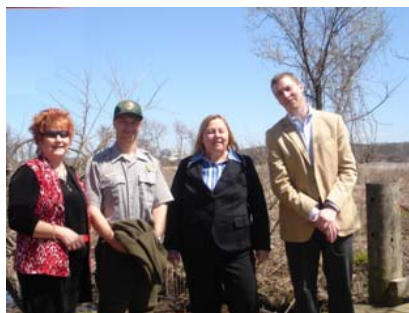
Researchers Working in Dyke Marsh

If you see someone walking through Dyke Marsh this spring and summer puzzling over high-tech surveying equipment, laboring under a load of heavy soil cores and equipment, or staring intently at vegetation and marsh surfaces, it is likely that you are seeing researchers from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and two teachers from Fort Hill High School in Cumberland, Maryland, and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia, hard at work. The researchers and teachers are starting National Science Foundation sponsored research to forecast the impact of sea level rise on freshwater marsh diversity, sediment deposition and erosion, and, hence, the maintenance of complex and self-sustaining marsh surfaces. The project integrates remote sensing and highly accurate measurements of marsh surface elevations; extensive field observations on the interactions between marsh elevation, sediment dynamics and marsh vegetation; and vegetation modeling. The goal is to understand fundamental processes that drive the existence of marshes, information that is critical for managing and restoring the emergent marsh at Dyke Marsh. -- *Dr. Katia Engelhardt, Assistant Professor, University of Maryland.*

Senator Webb's Staffers Visit DMWP

On March 31, Trevor Dean, Legislative Assistant for Environmental Policy, and Gwen Sigda, Northern Virginia Director, visited the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.

Dottie Marshall, George Washington Memorial Parkway Superintendent, and Brent Steury, Natural Resource Manager, represented the National Park Service. FODM and NPS introduced them to the preserve and discussed restoration options and threats to DMWP. Dottie Marshall wrote afterward, "When I left Dyke Marsh today, I was so grateful to be there. I am also thankful that we have the Friends of Dyke Marsh as civilian stewards of this amazing resource. Please know how much I



Gwen Sigda (l), and Trevor Dean (r), with Brent Steury and Dottie Marshall (ctr). Photo by Glenda Booth.

appreciate the efforts of your organization to assist us in the preservation, protection and maintenance of this area along with your guidance and support in its restoration."

More Important Visitors to DMWP

Eight girls and two mothers from Girls Scout Troop 6974 visited the preserve on February 20 as part of their work to earn their All about Birds badge. The organizer, Christine Li, emailed: "Thank you and your friends so much for coming out on Saturday to teach our troop so much about birds. It was so amazing to see the bald eagle through the spotting scope and to associate birds with their calls. I was surprised about the impacts of the invasive plants, and I'll remove some in the future."

On April 14, a group of students from Burgundy Farm Country Day School picked up trash in DMWP. A group of Arlington master naturalists whacked a "ton" of bush honeysuckle along the Haul Road on April 2.

On May 4, 5 and 6, 600 students from Carl Sandburg Intermediate School plan to visit the preserve to do water sampling and testing and study macro-invertebrates and other water-related subjects. Around 15 FODMers plan to help the NPS staffers.



Girl Scout troop 6974 visit on the boardwalk with NPS staff and snow underfoot. Photo by Ned Stone.

EPA to Test Endocrine Disruptors

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency announced they will begin screening potentially hormone-disrupting chemicals in drinking water. A survey of fish in the Potomac River by the U. S. Geological Survey found intersex in 80 percent of male bass examined and detectable levels of at least one endocrine-disrupting compound in all fish surveyed. Endocrine disruptors mimic hormones and

can cause male fish to exhibit female characteristics. In December 2009, Virginia Congressman Jim Moran introduced the Endocrine Disruption Act (H.R. 4190), directing the National Institutes for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to research the effects of chemicals on the human endocrine system. Check the Potomac Conservancy's Web site at www.potomac.org for more details.

Weed Warrior Training

Who: Presented by The Nature Conservancy and the National Park Service, GWMP. **What:** One-Day Weed Warrior training for current and future George Washington Memorial Parkway volunteers. **Why:** Learn to identify the six most troublesome exotic invasive plant species and how to control them. **Where:** 700 George Washington Memorial Parkway, McLean, VA 22101, Turkey Run headquarters conference room. **When:** May 15, 9:00am-4:00pm, includes classroom and field training sessions. **What to bring:** All training materials, gloves, and tools will be provided. Bring a sack lunch, dress for the weather, and wear sturdy walking shoes. RSVP by May 10 to: Erik Oberg Natural Resource Mgmt. Specialist GWMP 703 289-2542 office, 202 439-7328 cell, 703 289-2546 fax.

2010 Breeding Bird Survey

The 2010 Breeding Bird Survey will be starting Memorial Day weekend May 29-31 and concludes Independence day weekend July 3-5. There are land and canoe routes available. Contact Larry Cartwright at 703 941-3142 (eve) or prowarbler@verizon.net.



SCIENCE (Continued from page 8)

cle on planting natives on page 4 of this newsletter.)

The very destructive Emerald Ash Borer, transported in firewood, has been found in Fairfax County. It may affect the green and pumpkin ash trees on the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Bathymetric work is ongoing in DMWP to determine erosion patterns. Nine white poles mark sediment elevation tables or SETs that have measured sediment elevation since 2006. Sediments are accreting at three to five millimeters per year.

The environmental impact statement/restoration plan will take into account natural subsidence of the land and sea level rise.

Volunteer and Have Fun Too

There are several opportunities to volunteer, enhance the integrity of the preserve and learn more about Dyke Marsh.

Identify Insects: NPS seeks volunteers to work at their Turkey Run headquarters to identify, sort, label and preserve insect specimens collected at DMWP by Dr. Edd



Newly planted native button-bush. Photo by Ned Stone.

Barrows, Georgetown University, since 1998. If you can help, contact Erik Oberg, Erik_Oberg@nps.gov or 703-289-2542. Dr. Barrows will speak to the Friends about his work at our November 17, 2010, FODM quarterly membership meeting.

Attack Invasives; Plant Natives: FODM needs many volunteers to help with invasives, usually on Friday mornings. Please contact Ned Stone at nedstone@verizon.net or 703-768-5441. You can see good evidence of the Weed Whackers work from the “dogleg” to the boardwalk where most of the bush honeysuckle is gone and young native plants have found a home.

Help in the Nursery: The National Park Service seeks volunteers to work in their greenhouse and tree nursery on Daingerfield Island, just south of National Airport. Volunteers pot up seedlings and stake saplings, for example. Contact Barry Stahl, Horticulturalist, George Washington Memorial Parkway, 703-557-8986 or email to Barry_Stahl@nps.gov.

New Members Continue to Join FODM

Please welcome our three new Life Members:

★ Ruth Barriere ★ Hunt Burke ★ Brenda Leslie ★
 And our new annual FODM members Linda & Fred Brown, Glenn Christianson, Suzanne Davis, Ann Greer, Gloria Hafer, Carole Harman, Susan Koscis, Philip Lewis, Jonathan Mills & Jennifer Beidel, James Morrison, Becky Ralston. Is it time to renew your membership in FODM? If your *Marsh Wren* mailing label says 09 or earlier to the right of your name, renew NOW, so you'll be up-to-date and continuing to support The Friends of Dyke Marsh.

U. S. Park Police, Emergency Number: 202-619-7300

Sunday Morning Bird Walks



Bird walks are held every Sunday morning, all year. 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. Photo by Ed Eder.

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 Dyke Marsh, our local natural treasure. To renew your membership, please send your tax-deductible contribution, 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. Additional contributions are most welcome. The mailing label on this *Marsh Wren* indicates membership status. **If the date indicated is 08 or 09, time to send in your renewal dues. For those with 08, renewal should be for 2 years (2009 and 2010) or \$30. If the number is 09, a \$15 renewal keeps you up-to-date.** If your label says 10, you're good for the current year. Finally, if the number is over 10 or if the label shows a *, thanks for your continuing support of the work of FODM.

DUES AMOUNT..... \$ _____
 ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION..... \$ _____
 TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED..... \$ _____

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP ____
 TELEPHONE NUMBER _____
 EMAIL ADDRESS _____

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

The Science Behind Restoration of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve

On April 10, NPS Biologist Erik Oberg led an informative walk and described some of the scientific work underway in preparation for the restoration plan. NPS and other state and federal agencies earlier determined that the restoration of Dyke Marsh is “feasible” and “desirable.” The plan will probably include a number of alternatives, as part of the environmental impact statement process.

Here are a few highlights from Oberg’s talk:

Restoration requires good science and good partners. Dyke Marsh has both. “Dyke Marsh is one of the best studied pieces of real estate in the National Park Service system,” said Oberg, “but we still have a lot to learn.”

A new mammal has been documented in Dyke Marsh – the otter. One was seen on the boardwalk on March 20.

Approximately half of Dyke Marsh was mined for sand and gravel. A “thumb” of land or promontory on the south

end was one of the first parts removed. At the end of the boardwalk, there are holes up to 30 feet deep.

Ron Litwin of the U. S. Geological Survey is studying the paleo-pollens of the preserve deposited over thousands of years. He may conclude that the marsh in the northern end is not as old as others have said. Previous estimates prepared in the 1960s put the age at 5,000 years.

At the Hunting Creek outlet, sediments are accreting and we are seeing new vegetation becoming established. (This is outside the NPS boundaries, but part of the DMWP ecosystem.)

The Haul Road has interrupted the natural tidal processes. Erosion is threatening the

road. “Dramatic forces are at work,” said Oberg.

NPS collected seeds from DMWP and is growing high marsh plants in their nursery, including elderberry, spicebush, ironweed, mallow and buttonbush. (See related arti-

(continued on page 6)



Small green flags mark newly restored plants like this silver maple tree. Photo by T.D. Hobart.

The Marsh Wren

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