

The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

WINTER 2016



FODM Quarterly Meeting

Sunday, February 28, at 2:00 p.m., **Sherwood Regional Library**, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306. Meeting is free, open to all.

Calendar of Events

February 27 -- 1 p.m., Do Trees Have Antifreeze? Pg. 7
 April 16 -- morning, Potomac River watershed cleanup.

April 23 -- 10 a.m., Raptor Rapture in Belle Haven Park.

2016 Member Meetings:
 February 28, May 11, September 14 and November 16.

CONTENTS

FODM Public Service	2
President's Message	3
Longhorned Beetles	4
DMWP Information	4
Profile of NPS Official	5
Plants of Dyke Marsh	6
Getting Outside	8

How Does Noise Affect Birds' Communications?

Join us on **Sunday, February 28, at 2 p.m. (winter time)** at the **Sherwood Regional Library** in the Mount Vernon area to hear a presentation by Dr. David Luther on the effects of noise on birds' communication, both from animals and human causes. Dr. Luther, a biology professor at George Mason University, researches ecology, evolution, conservation biology and animal behavior with an emphasis on animal communication, especially birds. One main theme of his research is the influence of background noise on avian behavior and evolution. Both biological and human-made noises affect acoustic communication. In particular, traffic noise is having large effects on the communication strategies of birds in urban areas. His talk will cover some bird species commonly seen at Dyke Marsh.

Dr. Luther has conducted research in North and South America. Many of his current studies are in the Washington, D.C., area, including Rock Creek Park and Fairfax County.

He received his Ph. D. from the University of North Carolina and his bachelor of science from the University of Oregon.



A male northern cardinal, common to Dyke Marsh. Photo by Ed Eder

The Virginia Society of Ornithology, the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, the Raptor Conservancy of Virginia, the Northern Virginia Bird Club, the D.C. Audubon Society and the Prince George's Audubon Society are cosponsoring this program.

The library is at **2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria 22306 (winter location)**, 1.5 miles from the GW Parkway and near U.S. 1. In case of inclement weather, check our Facebook page, the website of FODM (www.fodm.org) and Fairfax County (www.fairfaxcounty.gov).

Dyke Marsh Restoration Update

National Park Service (NPS) officials have signed an agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Baltimore District, to do field work and to prepare the design to restore Dyke Marsh. In the fall of 2015, the Corps did some soil borings and testing to determine soil strength for a structure to replicate the former promontory that was removed. They are doing what are called dilatometry and bathymetry tests to determine design options.

The draft schedule indicates that construction of the project could begin in 2017 and end by 2019, but officials caution, "It depends on funds." Their time-



Erosion continues as restoration tests and plans proceed. Photo by Ned Stone

line notes that 2035 is the year "the ecosystem would be entirely lost without

RESTORATION (continued on page 2)

FODM Members in Public Service Roles

Several FODMers have moved into larger public service roles recently. In November, voters elected FODMer Daniel G. Storck, to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to represent the Mount Vernon magisterial district, the district in which the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve is located. Dan previously served the district on the county school board.



Daniel G. Storck
Photo: Mt. Vernon
District, Fx. Cnty.

Voters chose Scott J. Cameron to serve on the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Board where he will work to elevate county attention to invasive species issues and prioritize water quality improvement projects in Mount Vernon-area watersheds. He is president of the Reduce Risks from Invasive Species Coalition.

Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed FODM President Glenda Booth to the Board of Directors of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. The Foundation manages the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, one function of which is to make matching grants to protect ecological, cultural or historical resources, including fish and wildlife habitat and natural areas.

Alexandria officials appointed Dixie Sommers and Jack Sullivan to Alexandria's Ad Hoc Combined Sewer System Plan Stakeholder Group. This committee is advising the city on a long-term control plan for the combined sewer system (CSO). During heavy rain, CSO systems can overflow and discharge untreated human and industrial waste directly into nearby waterbodies, like Hunting Creek and the Potomac River. The Friends of Dyke Marsh urged the city to upgrade their system and to keep untreated sewage out of the waterways.

A New Trust for the GW Parkway

Now in operation is the new Trust for the George Washington Memorial Parkway to "preserve the parks and memorials, enhance the visitor experience and build a community dedicated to conserving the park and memorials for future generations." Headed by FODMer Mari Lou Livingood, President, the Trust is working to generate private sector contributions for the parkway and NPS activities. At 7,300 acres and with 7.5 million visitors, the parkway is the fourth most visited park unit in the nation, says Mari Lou. She has identified four initial programs: STEM on the Potomac, Jones Point Park Activation, Youth Service Program and Arts Afire. Visit their website at <http://www.gwparkwaytrust.org/projects/> for more information.

RESTORATION (continued from page 1)

restoration," as U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scientists concluded in 2010.

The Corps has posted information here: <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/dykemarshrestoration.aspx>.

The NPS restoration plan, at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=20293>, has several elements. The first priority identified by the USGS is to replicate the promontory that the dredgers removed on the south end of the marsh. Based on comments from NPS and COE officials, we assume this will be the first priority. The former promontory protected the marsh and stemmed erosion from storms coming up the river, according to U.S. Geological Survey studies.

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust gave Betsy Martin and Paul Siegel an award in January for their community leadership in protecting the environment. Among other activities, they lead an annual trash cleanup on Little Hunting Creek.

Friends of Dyke Marsh Board of Directors

President - Glenda Booth	703-765-5233, GBooth123@aol.com
Vice President - Ned Stone	703-768-5441, nedstone@verizon.net
Secretary - Dorothy McManus (<i>Marsh Wren</i>)	703-960-3643, editor@fodm.org
Treasurer - Robert Smith	703-684-7041, rconwell@comcast.net
Ed Eder (Past President)	703-360-7994, nutmegz@mac.com
Kurt Gaskill (Bird Walks)	703-768-2172, KurtCapt87@verizon.net
Bob Veltkamp (Membership)	703-768-1650, rveltkamp@cox.net
John Perry	703-329-1646, johnperry@cox.net
Larry Cartwright (Breeding Bird Survey)	703-941-3142, prowarbler@verizon.net
Pat Salamone	703-329-1748, Patricia.p.salamone@gmail.com
Trudi Hahn	703-683-9009, trudihahn@gmail.com
Jessica Strother	703-309-7201, strotherjessie@yahoo.com
Katherine Wychulis	kewychulis@aol.com

The Marsh Wren is a quarterly publication of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, Inc., a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Letters and submissions to *The Marsh Wren* are welcome. Send them to the address above. Board members can also receive mail at this address. Special thanks to Duncan Hobart for managing our website (www.fodm.org).

Editor:

Dorothy McManus

Assistant Editor:

T. D. Hobart

Friends of Dyke Marsh
P.O. Box 7183
Alexandria, VA 22307
editor@fodm.org

Visit our website at
www.fodm.org
or on [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/fodm)

Copyright © 2016, The
Friends of Dyke Marsh, Inc.
All rights reserved.



President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

Winter is a time to study Dyke Marsh's "bones." The preserve exudes a stark beauty and gentle quiet. Winter is a time to savor the cool, crisp air and observe some of the more subtle, "finer points" of nature when the sun is low and human disturbances fewer.

Some birds feast on the red cedars' waxy blue berries. Last spring's bird nests stand out in the leafless shrubs and trees. Squirrel nests, leafy clumps above most predators' reach, await child rearing. Gnawed trees left precariously on hourglass bases by beavers and scratchy patches on tree bark from fall deer antler rub are more visible.



Shell fungi on trees stand out in winter. Photo by Glenda Booth

The contrasting, peeling bark of the sycamore especially stands out along with poison ivy's fuzzy, climbing vines. Beech trees' tawny brown leaves shiver in the wind, waiting to be nudged off by spring's new growth. Fungi poke out of tree bark like little elf shelves.

But spring is on the way. Bald eagles are incubating eggs. In mid-January, we saw a pair on one of the marsh's nests and an occasional eagle near another nest, about which Larry Cartwright commented, "We have our first data input for the 2016 breeding bird survey!" Woodcocks, spotted in January, will do their spiraling, display flight. Fingers crossed for "our" Eastern screech owls' return. Ospreys will be back and skunk cabbage will emerge soon.

Amazing Volunteers

On January 18, 20 volunteers from the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust braved high-teens weather, cut invasive English ivy off trees and collected five bags of trash.

"Nothing was too small and nothing too great for . . . alert observation . . . web of a spider . . . evidence of the subsidence of a continent and the extinction of a myriad animals. . . . Personal danger and a hideous death were small things to him compared to a new beetle or an undescribed fly."

-- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, on Charles Darwin

A Thomas Jefferson High School student team created a video on Dyke Marsh restoration, "The Chumuppets," now on YouTube. See our website. Thank you, students.



Cattails' fuzzy seedheads have their own winter beauty. Photo by G. Booth

Many FODMers participated in the annual Christmas Bird Count and waterfowl count. Our invasive plants team is still whacking (contact nedstone@verizon.net). Loyal volunteers continue to lead walks; manage our beautiful website and member list; do graphics, budgeting, advocacy, tabling, writing, editing and much more.

No Marsh Wrens

As we reported previously, we saw no nesting marsh wrens in Dyke Marsh in 2015 for the first time ever, very disturbing news. We have partnered with Dr. David Luther, an ornithologist and professor at George Mason University (also our February 28 speaker), to try to identify factors associated with this unfortunate development.

A Busy Spring

We are planning several trainings: frog identification, iNaturalist and water sampling. National Park Service (NPS) staff will conduct an invasive plants training. On April 16, we'll clean up trash and on April 23, have our annual Raptor Rapture event. Later on, we hope to have a "cricket call" and moth night. Whew! Check our emails, Facebook page and website for updates.

Centennial

2016 marks the 100th anniversary of our national parks, 409 sites that attract more than 275 million visitors annually. Filmmaker Ken Burns said, "For the first time in human history, land was set aside, not for the rich, but for everyone and for all time." FODM will participate in the centennial's national bioblitz May 20-21 and document as many spider species as we can. You can learn more here: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/explorers/projects/bioblitz/>. See page 7 calendar for more details.

To celebrate 100 years of national parks, we hope to also celebrate Dyke Marsh's restoration soon.

Glenda C. Booth

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

The Longhorned Beetles of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve

BY BRENT STEURY, Biologist, National Park Service

The Cerambycidae, commonly known as longhorned beetles because of the length of their antennae, represent a large insect family of more than 20,000 described species, including 1,100 in North America north of Mexico and 344 in the northeastern United States. They occur on all continents except Antarctica. Larvae of most cerambycids bore into trunks or branches of dead or dying trees and feed on decaying plant tissues between the bark and sapwood or within the sapwood creating a characteristic maze of feeding chambers. Some larvae feed on branches, roots, stems, fruits, or seeds of herbaceous species of living plants. Adults of most species are large (up to 170 mm in length in some South American species) and can be easily observed in the field, but some are as small as 2 mm, such as *Cyrtinus pygmaeus* a species found at Dyke Marsh. Diurnal adults that feed on flower pollen are usually boldly colored and patterned, often with a bee-like golden-yellow pubescence. Nocturnal species are more likely glabrous and uniformly dark, while bicolored species (often black and red) are thought to mimic other beetles which are distasteful. Others have cryptic, bark-like coloration. Some longhorned beetles can stridulate by rubbing the pronotum against adjacent posterior body parts. Nearly all cerambycids have antennae that arise from protuberances between and often deeply dividing the eyes and have tarsi with four visible segments. Many features are sexually dimorphic.

A recently completed field survey of the longhorned beetles of national parks near Washington, D.C., documented 80 species (Steury and MacRae, 2014, *Banisteria* pp. 7-12). Dyke Marsh was included in this survey, from which 32 longhorned beetle species were collected, including 13 species that were found only at Dyke Marsh. The survey also documented twelve species new to Virginia based on previously published literature. Six of these new state records were found at Dyke Marsh. At right is a checklist of the longhorned beetles of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Species found only at Dyke Marsh during the recent survey are marked with an asterisks (*). Species documented for the first time in Virginia are marked with an exclamation point (!).



Cyrtinus pygmaeus, a two millimeter longhorned beetle documented from Dyke Marsh. The species was previously unknown from Virginia. Image by Ashley Bradford

Longhorned Beetles of the DMWP

<i>Analeptura lineola</i>	! <i>Molorchus bimaculatus</i>
<i>Anelaphus parallelus</i>	<i>Neoclytus acuminatus</i>
<i>Anelaphus villosus</i>	*! <i>Neoclytus caprea</i>
<i>Astylopsis sexguttata</i>	<i>Oberea perspicillata</i>
<i>Bellamira scalaris</i>	*! <i>Obrium maculatum</i>
! <i>Clytus ruricola</i>	<i>Orthosoma brunneum</i>
* <i>Curius dentatus</i>	! <i>Phymatodes amoenus</i>
*! <i>Cyrtinus pygmaeus</i>	<i>Psenocerus supernotatus</i>
<i>Cyrtophorus verrucosus</i>	* <i>Purpuricenus humeralis</i>
* <i>Dectes texanus</i>	* <i>Strangalia acuminata</i>
<i>Elaphidion mucronatum</i>	<i>Strangalia luteicornis</i>
* <i>Euderces pini</i>	* <i>Styloleptus biustus</i>
* <i>Euderces reichei</i>	* <i>Tessaropa tenuipes</i>
<i>Hippopsis lemniscata</i>	* <i>Tilloclytus geminatus</i>
<i>Hyperplatys aspersa</i>	<i>Typocerus velutinus</i>
* <i>Judolia cordifera</i>	<i>Xylotrechus colonus</i>

Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve: Some Key Sources of Information

WEB LOCATIONS

Friends of Dyke Marsh, www.fodm.org, website of FODM, a conservation organization founded in 1976. Information sources on more specific topics are noted in particular articles throughout our website

George Washington Memorial Parkway, U.S. National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/gwmp/planyourvisit/placestogo.htm>

Dyke Marsh Wetland Restoration and Long-Term Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/dykemarshfeis>

U.S. Geological Survey, 2010 Study, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2010/1269/>. *Analysis of the Deconstruction of Dyke Marsh, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Virginia: Progression, Geologic and Manmade Causes, and Effective Restoration Scenarios*. By Ronald J. Litwin, Joseph P. Smoot, Milan J. Pavich, Helaine W. Markewich, Erik Oberg, Ben Helwig, Brent Steury, Vincent L. Santucci, Nancy J. Durika, Nancy B. Rybicki, Katharina M. Engelhardt, Geoffrey Sanders, Stacey Verardo, Andrew J. Elmore, and Joseph Gilmer

U.S. Geological Survey, 2013 Update, <http://>

INFORMATION (Continued on page 5)

Profile of a National Park Service Official -- Colin Davis

This is one of a series of profiles that FODM publishes introducing readers to some of the U. S. National Park Service officials with whom we work.

Welcome to Colin Davis, biologist, the new Natural Resource Specialist for the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). Colin comes to GWMP from Everglades National Park where he served as the Biological Science Technician. He replaces Erik Oberg who now works in Yellowstone National Park. Colin's new responsibilities include managing GWMP's science and research permitting system and the integrated pest management system. He will make addressing exotic and invasive species a priority and he is the NPS volunteer contact.

"I am extremely excited to be the new biologist at the parkway," Colin said. "There are so many incredibly diverse resources, both natural and cultural, and I'm very proud to have been selected to help protect them now and in the future. The volunteers at GWMP have amazed me in such a short amount of time with the time and effort I witness them putting in. I will do everything I can to help facilitate all of our volunteers' work. It truly is a team effort."

At Everglades, his second post with the National Park Service (NPS), Colin's responsibilities included managing the day-to-day field operations of a 6,700-acre wetland mitigation project, the only project of its kind in NPS. He was

also involved with wildland firefighting, capturing pythons and driving airboats. Prior to the Everglades, Colin did exotic plant management in Great Plains parks, including Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Devil's Tower, Wind Cave and Theodore Roosevelt.

Colin was born and raised near Chicago. He says he "escaped to Wisconsin" where he received his undergraduate degree in ecological restoration from Northland College in 2010 and his master's degree in recreation and park administration from Western Illinois University in 2011. He also helped build mountain bike trails through the Ottawa National Forest.

Outside of work, Colin enjoys time outdoors kayaking, biking, diving, hiking and visiting national parks. He has two Maine coon cats named Lewis and Clark. Welcome!



Colin Davis is the new Natural Resource Specialist for the G. W. Memorial Parkway. Photo by NPS

INFORMATION (Continued from page 4)

link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs13157-013-0461-6#page-1

Interagency Partnership to Assess and Restore a Degraded Urban Riverine Wetland: Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, Virginia, <http://www.georgewright.org/312steury.pdf>, by Brent W. Steury, Ronald J. Litwin, Erik T. Oberg, Joseph P. Smoot, Milan J. Pavich, Geoffrey Sanders and Vincent L. Santucci

Research Supporting Evaluation and Restoration of Dyke Marsh, by Katharina A. M. Engelhardt, Andrew J. Elmore and Kristine N. Hopfensperger, Appalachian Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, August 31, 2007 <http://www.umces.edu/al/project/dyke-marsh-restoration>

Biodiversity Database of the Washington, D.C. Area, biodiversity.georgetown.edu, Georgetown University Laboratory of Entomology and Biodiversity, Dr. Edd Barrows, e.g., Information Sheet, Arthropods of DMWP

FODM MATERIALS

Except as noted, all can be downloaded from the website FODM.org or can be obtained in single hard copy by contacting Glenda Booth at gbooth123@aol.com or 703-765-5233 or writing to G. Booth, FODM, P.O.Box 7183, Alexandria VA 22307.

The Dyke Marsh Preserve Ecosystem, by David W.

Johnston. Summary of studies and reports addressing Dyke Marsh, printed in the *Virginia Journal of Science*, Volume 51, Number 4, Winter 2000. This study was commissioned by FODM. Limited hard copies only, available for \$10.

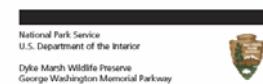
What Can I See in the Fall? What Can I See in the Winter? What Can I see in the Summer? What Can I see in the Spring? Seasonal brochures developed in partnership with the National Park Service. Available also in box attached to the bulletin board at Dyke Marsh's Haul Road.

Hey Kids! Look for These in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Flyer for children. Available also in box at the bulletin board at Dyke Marsh's Haul Road.

Why Is Dyke Marsh Significant? One-pager explaining why Dyke Marsh is important locally and nationally.

The Accelerating Erosion of Dyke Marsh. Four-page brochure explaining why Dyke Marsh is disappearing and why it should be restored.

Bird Checklist for the George Washington Memori-



Friends of Dyke Marsh



Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve
What Can I See in the Spring?
A Few Examples



Habitat

In the swamp forest, one of several habitats in the preserve, the woods are wet as the ground thaws and woodland plants emerge.

INFORMATION (Continued on page 6)

Meet the Plants of Dyke Marsh -- Smooth Alder

BY PATRICIA P. SALAMONE

I've always been charmed by the miniature "pine cones" produced by the smooth alder. Apparently I'm not the only one; these little cones are available from a number of vendors on Etsy.com for use in various crafts. I prefer them on the plant, though.

Smooth alder, *Alnus serrulata*, is a large, thicket-forming shrub or small tree (up to 15 or 20 feet) that is native to the eastern US and Canada. It is the only alder native to the southeastern United States. Other common names include tag alder, hazel alder, and black alder. It is in the birch family (*Betulaceae*).



Smooth alder catkins with mature fruiting cones. Photo by Paul Cox, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflwr. Ctr.

The genus name *Alnus* is the Latin name for alder. The specific epithet *serrulata* refers to the finely-toothed leaf margins. Smooth alder likes to be near water; it is found along stream banks, swamp borders, pond margins, and riversides and in wet meadows and bogs. Its wetland status is facultative wetland (FACW) in the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain region and obligate (OBL) in the Eastern Mountains and Piedmont region. (OBL status means that a plant is almost always a hydrophyte, rarely occurring in uplands; FACW status means that a plant is usually a hydrophyte but is occasionally found in uplands. A hydrophyte is a plant that grows either in waterlogged soil or partly or wholly submerged in water.)

The bark is smooth, shiny, and brownish gray. The twigs are reddish-brown.

Smooth alder is deciduous. Its leaves, typically 2 – 4 inches long, are dark green, with paler green undersides that

are finely hairy. In fall they turn yellow or reddish yellow. The leaves are simple (not compound), alternate along the stem, elliptic or obovate (ovate, or egg-shaped, with narrower end at the base), with serrate (finely toothed) margins. The leaves have conspicuous pinnate (feather-like) veining.

The flowers are birch-like catkins that appear in March to April, before the leaves emerge. The flowers are monoecious (separate male and female flowers on the same plant). The male catkins are yellowish-green, about 2 inches long, and grow in drooping clusters near the branch tips; the female catkins are red, about ¼ inch long, and grow in upright cluster at the twig tips.



Male and female catkins. Photo by Stefan Bloodworth, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

The female flowers are wind-pollinated. They develop into fruiting cones about ½ to 1 inch long which mature to dark brown in the fall and persist into the winter. The seeds (nuts) borne in this cone are very small and light (400,000 seeds per pound) and are eaten by birds.

Smooth alder is well suited for use in streambank stabilization and wetland restoration because of its flexible stems and fibrous root system. Its ability to fix nitrogen in the soil (by the activity of nitrogen-fixing bacteria located in root nodules) makes it a useful pioneer plant in reclamation projects. According to the USDA plant fact sheet, smooth alder is also a critical cover component of woodcock habitat.

References

USDA plants database: <http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=alse2>.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Native Plant Information Network (NPIN): http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=ALSE2.

INFORMATION (Continued from page 5)

al Parkway. Developed with the National Park Service. Comprehensive list of known bird species on the GWMP.

Undoing Decades of Damage at Dyke Marsh. Reprint of a July 2, 2013 *Washington Post* article by Patterson Clark, describing the dredging that undermined the marsh and major elements of the restoration plan.

Chronology: Dyke Marsh through the Years Compiled by the Friends of Dyke Marsh, this chronology of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve notes human activity in the Marsh since about the early 19th Century.

The Marsh Wren. FODM's quarterly newsletter. Cur-

rent issues are sent to members. Most back issues are available since the 1970's, downloadable from 2008. Limited numbers of earlier newsletters are available in hard copy.

"The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way. Some see nature all ridicule and deformity. . . and some scarce see nature at all. But to the eyes of the man of imagination, nature is imagination itself." – William Blake, November 2015

The Sounds of Dyke Marsh

From bullfrogs to great horned owls to beavers chewing, Dyke Marsh abounds in sounds. Thanks to FODMer Laura Sebastianelli, a talented naturalist and audio recordist, you can sharpen your auditory skills and hear 35 sounds of Dyke Marsh at <https://soundcloud.com/wildaroundus/sets/sounds-of-greater-dyke-marsh>. You'll find the sounds of katydids, cicadas, toads, tundra swans, killdeer, red foxes and more. Thank you, Laura.



An American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*). Photo by Laura Sebastianelli

Do Trees Have Antifreeze? -- Feb. 27

Please join FODMers on a winter walk to learn some winter tree biology, how trees survive in winter and forested wetland characteristics. Led by FODMer Jessica Strother, the walk will be from 1 to 3 p.m. Meet at the Haul Road entrance.



Sunday Morning Bird Walks

Bird walks are held Sunday mornings, all seasons. 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.

Welcome New FODM Members

We welcome to the Friends of Dyke Marsh our **new members**: Ryan Dreelin, Ethan Eddy, Joel Goldman, Elizabeth Halford, Dr. Daniel and Ann Horowitz, Claire Kluskens, Jamie Lessard, Jenna McAlister, Dr. Kate and Joe Morganti, Robert Hanson Rasch, David B. Rosen, Susan Samuels, Rodney and Rebecca Sobin, Margaret Stevens & Richard Shaffer and Elliott Watts. And a special welcome to new **Life Member** Ms. Christine M. Freidel. Thank you for your support.

Calendar of Events

- **February 27**, 1 p.m., Do Trees Have Antifreeze?, a winter walk led by Jessica Strother. See details at left this page.
- **February 28, 2 p.m.**, FODM Winter Quarterly Meeting.
- **April 16**, morning, Potomac River watershed trash cleanup
- **April 23**, 10 a.m., Raptor Rapture in Belle Haven Park with the Raptor Conservancy of Virginia
- **May 11**, 7:30 p.m., Virginia's Wildflowers. Speakers are Alan Ford and Laura Beatty, Potowmack Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society
- **May 20-21**, BioBlitz, (an intense and rapid period of surveying and recording, by scientists and volunteers, all living organisms in a designated area and in a short time period. Dyke Marsh's Bioblitz will focus on spiders.
- **May 28 to July 4**, DMWP 2016 Breeding Bird Survey

We will also be hosting trainings in frog identification (March), iNaturalist and water sampling (April); "moth night" (July); a walk on World Listening Day (July 16) and a "cricket call" (August 19). Also watch for a frogwalk and bat event. Check our emails, website and Facebook for updates.

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

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. We encourage you to save paper (trees) and mailing costs by becoming a member or renewing your membership online at www.fodm.org. Just click on the "Join" or "Donate" button on our membership page to make your tax-deductible contribution by credit card or from your bank account securely through PayPal. For help, 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 separate notice by mail or by email when your renewal is due. Thank you for your support 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 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).

Getting Outside Is Good for Your Health

BY GLENDA BOOTH

This is an excerpt from an article by FODM President Glenda Booth titled "Ways to Watch Wildlife in Washington," that was in the May 2015 Greater Washington Beacon newspaper published here with permission.

Some doctors today prescribe nature, promoting nature's regenerative powers to improve mood, ease anxiety and relieve stress, not to mention keep people moving (See www.natureprescriptions.org). Some call it "ecotherapy."



North American River Otter crossing the ice just south of the observation deck at Dyke Marsh. Photo by Ed Eder

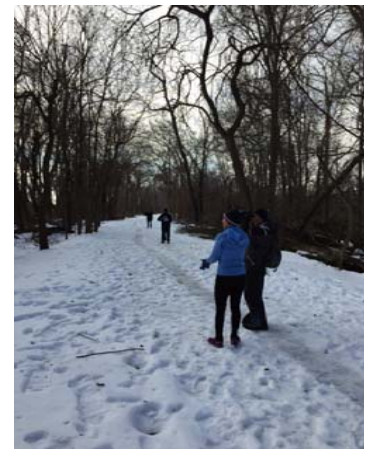
Dr. Daphne Miller writes, ". . . exposure to green space can affect our health just as much as other lifestyle factors traditionally covered in a medical visit."

In the movie, "Wild," the main character, portrayed by Reese Witherspoon, takes a three-month hike on

the Pacific Crest Trail, a film based on Cheryl Strayed's book. Strayed told the Smithsonian magazine, "In nature there is constant evidence of destruction and rejuvenation. It's proof that we're all part of the web of living things that's greater than our own small lives. People feel a sense of belonging, rather than isolation."

Carl Kikuchi, president of the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia concurs: "I don't think people always realize that there is an essential part of their makeup that needs that connection to the natural world. You can't get this by staying indoors all the time."

Nature no doubt does contribute to our well-being and health. After all, if you are feeling low, do you seek comfort in an asphalt parking lot?



A walk after January's blizzard. Photo by Dorothy McManus

**The
Marsh Wren**

The Friends of Dyke Marsh
P.O. Box 7183
Alexandria, VA 22307-7183