

The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

WINTER 2017



FODM Quarterly Meeting

Sunday, February 26, at 2:00 p.m., Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane., Alexandria, VA 22306. Phone 703 765-3645. Meeting is free and all are welcome.

Calendar of Events

April 8, 10 a.m. - annual Potomac River watershed cleanup;
April 22, 10 a.m. - Raptor Rapture in Belle Haven Park.

2017 Quarterly Meetings

February 26 at 2 p.m. (note Sunday afternoon), May 10, September 13, November 15.

CONTENTS

Electronic Marsh Wren	2
FODM Ann. Meeting	2
President's Message	3
Long-time Alexandrian	4
Trees Cut in DMWP	5
Plants of Dyke Marsh	6
Dominion's Oil Spill	8

Saving Secretive Birds

Some marsh birds live in dense vegetation, making them difficult for people to detect, birds like the king rail, Virginia rail, sora, least bittern and American bittern. Wetland-dependent, marsh birds have adaptations like cryptically-colored plumage that helps them be secretive. Sadly, many species of marsh birds are in decline and are designated in need of conservation in most states. Because they are hard to find and observe, there is relatively sparse information available on their ecology. You can learn all about these birds at our February 26 meeting.

Patrice Nielson, a University of Maryland Ph. D. candidate and Northern Virginia resident, surveyed for secretive species at 51 points in 25 marshes in the Washington, D.C., area in 2013, 2014 and 2015. She collected data on marsh area, buffer width, vegetation/water interspersion, vegetation characteristics, amount of flooding and invertebrate abundance at each point. She modeled the presence of secretive marsh birds as a function of hab-



A least bittern lurks in dense vegetation in Dyke Marsh. Photo by Ed Eder

itat characteristics. Among many findings, she found that secretive marsh birds were using both restored and natural marshes, marshes with and without invasive plant species and marshes with a variety of dominant vegetation species.

Ms. Nielson will give a presentation on secretive marsh birds and how we can improve their habitat on February 26 at 2 p.m. at the Sherwood Regional Library,

MEETING (continued on page 2)

FODM Urges County to Stop Pesticide Spraying

FODM Board member Katherine Wychulis gave a video presentation to the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council on January 11, 2017. She urged the county to —

- stop broadcast spraying of a pesticide, Btk, to destroy the caterpillar of native fall cankerworms (*Alsophila pometaria*);
- acknowledge the benefits to birds and other wildlife, especially birds migrating through Northern Virginia in the spring; and
- recognize the chemical's harm to non-target species like butterflies.

You can view her presentation online here: <https://vimeo.com/198235112> and



This common yellowthroat makes use of the fall cankerworm. Photo by Ed Eder

find more information at <http://audubonva.org/asnv-urges-stop-killing-caterpillars/?rq=cankerworm>.

Download the Electronic Marsh Wren

With this edition of The Marsh Wren we are sending the electronic version in a slightly different way. You should notice almost no difference, as you will still be provided a link to open the newsletter and will be able to save it to your computer. Instead of attaching the PDF file with the newsletter to the email, we are providing a link to download the file from our website. This will reduce the size of the email for those members who have email inbox space limitations. Send an email to info@fodm.org if you encounter any problems. If you currently receive a hard copy of the newsletter and would like to receive only the electronic version via email (to reduce our costs and environmental impact), send an email stating so to info@fodm.org. You can also use this email address to contact us for other reasons.



Thanks to Silent Auction Donors

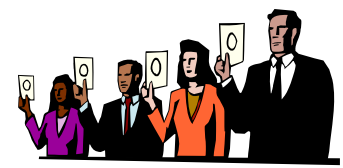
On October 2, 125 FODMers and friends celebrated FODM's 40th anniversary, the National Park Service's 100th and the start of the marsh's restoration. In our last issue, we recognized our financial and in-kind donors. We also very much appreciate everyone who donated goods or services to our silent auction: Robert Alvo, American Horticultural Society, Aquilano Salon, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, LL Bean Tysons Corner, Belle Haven Marina, Belle Haven Animal Medical Centre, Glenda Booth, Dennis Brack, Elinor Coleman Vintage Mirage, Paula Coupe, Cathleen Curtin, Marfe Delano, Ed and Myriam

DONORS (continued on page 7)

FODM Annual Meeting and Election

Send in Your Proxy

On February 26 at our annual meeting, we will elect officers and a Board of Directors, as required by our bylaws and articles of incorporation.



The proposed nominees, all of whom have agreed to serve, are as follows:

Glenda Booth, President; Ned Stone, Vice President; Dorothy McManus, Secretary; Pat Salamone, Treasurer; Andrew Arnold, Larry Cartwright, Trudi Bellardo Hahn, Patricia Salamone, Laura Sebastianelli, Jessica Strother, Bob Veltkamp, Katherine Ennis Wychulis. Ed Eder, Past President, and Alex Romero, Superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, are ex officio members. Other nominations can be considered at the meeting.

For FODM members, we have included in the paper copies of the Marsh Wren a proxy form for establishing a quorum and voting at the meeting if a member cannot attend. The form includes instructions for completing and returning it by February 19. For those who receive the newsletter by email, we will send you a separate email with the proxy and instructions. You can reply by email. Please help us establish a quorum by sending your proxy if you cannot attend.

MEETING (continued from page 1)

2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria (Mount Vernon area) 22306.

FODM is honored to have as cosponsors the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, the D.C. Audubon Society, the Prince George's (MD) Audubon Society, the Northern Virginia Bird Club and the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

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Dorothy McManus

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

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Katherine Wychulis

Board members can receive email at 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).



President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

After a year of ups and downs, nature is always a "picker-upper," even in winter. Winter waterfowl on the Potomac and in Dyke Marsh never cease to impress. Is there anything more beautiful than a Northern shoveler or the iridescent sheen of a common grackle? Nothing common about that! Bald eagles are building their nests and incubating eggs. Red foxes are mating. Wetland plants will rise from the muck and the skunk cabbage will emerge. Henry David Thoreau sang the praises of this intriguing plant: "If you are afflicted with melancholy at this season, go to the swamp and see the brave spears of skunk-cabbage buds already advanced toward a new year. . . See those green cabbage buds lifting the dry leaves in that watery and muddy place. There is no can't nor cant to them. They see over the brow of winter's hill. They see another summer ahead."

This winter had a few surprises. On December 27, an unseasonably warm day, an Eastern ratsnake (*Pantherophis alleghaniensis*)



This migrating female Wilson's warbler visited Dyke Marsh in early December. Photo by Ed Eder

slithered across the Haul Road. In early December, Ed Eder photographed a Wilson's warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*) and an orange-crowed warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*) in the preserve. Were these birds lag-

ging behind others heading south in their fall migration or over-wintering here? Observers also saw another rare winter visitor, a Baltimore oriole (*Icterus galbula*).

With the centennial year of the National Park Service behind us, we look forward to a re-invigorated cadre of national park supporters, both from the public and from our elected officials. The centennial brought a record number of visitors to our national parks. According to an unofficial count, through November the total was 309.7 million peo-

"When there is a conflict between conserving resources unimpaired for future generations and the use of those resources, conservation will be predominant." — Dick Kempthorne, Secretary, U. S. Department of Interior, June 19, 2006

ple, roughly 2.4 million above the 307.2 million total for all of 2015. We believe visitation in Dyke Marsh is climbing as well. Rising numbers of visitors put demands on the Park Service, at a time when NPS is facing a \$12 billion maintenance backlog. Let's hope the new Trump Administration and the new Congress step up to the challenge and give our national parks the support and dollars they deserve. Congressman Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), House of Representatives' Natural Resources Committee, said, "Essential to celebrating the centennial is also America's investment in its parks, a legacy that is 100 years and many of us, although we won't be around, would like to see that celebrated another 100 years from now with the proper direction and proper investment on the part of Congress."

As we go to press, we await news of a new director of the National Park Service, a political appointee. President Donald Trump has nominated Ryan Zinke as Secretary of Interior. Mr. Zinke has represented Montana in the U.S. House of Representatives and served on the Natural Resources Committee. He received a lifetime rating of three percent (out of 100) by the League of Conservation Voters. We hope he is a strong supporter of public lands and their preservation.



FODM had insecticide injected into pumpkin ash trees in Dyke Marsh. Photo by Robert Smith

For 2017, here is a partial FODM wish list:

- the actual start of restoration (Without action, Dyke Marsh will be gone by 2035);
- completion of the Mount Vernon Park stormwater outfall repair project by Fairfax County in April 2017, to stop sediment flowing into Dyke Marsh West;
- an analysis of the decline of the marsh wren and its disappearance in Dyke Marsh;
- survival of the remaining 10 of the 13 pumpkin ash trees we helped treat and funded;
- a more aggressive NPS attack on invasive plants in Dyke Marsh;
- more FODM members; and
- a supportive Trump Administration and Congress.

Save these dates in 2017: April 8, annual trash clean-up; April 22, 10 a.m., Raptor Rapture.

Glenda C. Booth

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

Long-time New Alexandria Resident Recalls Another Era

Reprinted from *The Mount Vernon Voice*, Vol. 15 No. 11, March 16, 2016, by permission

BY GLENDA BOOTH

"I've hung around the river my whole life," says John Andrews, 83. His family moved to New Alexandria in northern Mount Vernon in 1933. His father built their home on H Street and the Belle Haven Marina. Belle Haven Park was a trailer park. Along the Mount Vernon Parkway, completed in 1932, mules pulled mowing machines and commuters waited in wooden bus shelters. Hunting Creek and Dyke Marsh were the backdrop for various nefarious activities and home to some irreverent oddballs living in makeshift houseboats. It was another era.

Andrews, a River Towers resident, was born 1932 in the old Alexandria Hospital, son of Thomas and Gladys Andrews. He has fond memories of his first few decades in the New Alexandria-Belle View-Dyke Marsh area.

Hunting Creek

Hunting Creek once had acres of marshes and mudflats where around 20 "arks" were moored on both the Fairfax County and Alexandria shorelines. People heated these homes with wood and coal stoves and paid no taxes. "They were a scruffy, rough bunch," Andrews said, and during



South Dyke Marsh was once full of intrigue, rumor and an informal marina also called an "ark."

Prohibition, "some hauled alcohol across the river from Maryland. They were the libertarians of their time. Wives would shoot their husbands. They settled own disputes. There wasn't much law." The arks were largely gone by

1957 with the widening of U.S. 1 and construction of the Beltway.

The city of Alexandria used one Hunting Creek site near Telegraph Road as a dump. Andrews watched fire crackling in the dump every Sunday until the late 1930s. "No one worried about the environment," he commented.

In one section of Hunting Creek, as many as 300 people ice skated on a winter Sunday afternoon in the 1940s and early 1950s, Andrews remembers. Hunting Bay was five to six feet deep at low tide.

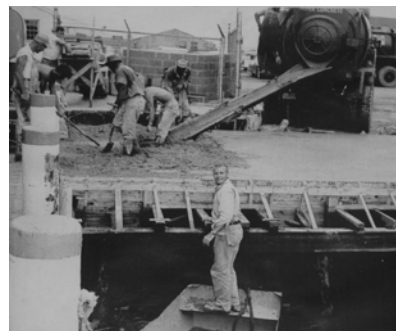
Belle Haven Golf Course

Much of today's Belle Haven Golf Course was marshland. In 1960s, Beltway builders, using a hydraulic dredge, pumped out marsh muck and created the land that became part of the golf course. "That's how they got nine holes," he chuckled.

New Alexandria and River Towers

Andrews recalls catching snakes in the marshes of today's New Alexandria community, where a 125-foot-wide wetland meandered through before the area was filled in the

1940s. Today's 11th Street was "swampy, trashy." The land where Belle View and River Towers condominiums now sit was once mostly marsh, low land two to three feet above sea level. "River Towers was built on 80-foot pilings because of the swampy land," he said. Developers brought in thousands of truck loads of dirt to build the Belle View complex.



A young John Andrews working for his father Thomas's pile-driving business which built the marina in 1948.

Belle Haven Marina

The Park Service hired John's father, Thomas, who ran a pile-driving business, to build a marina of about 50 slips in 1948 and John helped. "We dug dirt out of the river with cranes in what was all marsh," excavating the area behind today's marina office. Some of the dredge material went to today's Belle Haven picnic area. The company built the marina's entry road, boat ramp, docks and seawall and put in electricity. "The boat ramp cost \$40 for the cement," he added. In the NPS permit, Thomas Andrews agreed to return the area to marsh if the marina ever closed. John eventually sold the business.

Anchored near today's boat ramp was a "gambling boat," the steel ribs of which poke out of the water today at low tide. "Nobody worried about anything legal," Andrews quipped. "My dad saw the local sheriff get his payoff every Friday night from the bootleggers down there."

A deteriorating, four-masted schooner named the Cumberland Queen, was part of the marina's landscape in the 1930s, John recalled. It listed starboard and had trees growing out of it. Built in Nova Scotia in 1919, the 179-foot ship hauled cargo to and from foreign ports before "settling" on the Potomac shoreline. "By late 1931, the schooner had become part of the Alexandria waterfront and owed by the Roberts Paving Company which planned to use her as a sand and gravel storage barge," wrote Robert J. Burgess in a 1972 Alexandria Gazette article. In the midst of an expansion of the marina in 1972, Burgess reported, "Today, as the derricks pull her apart to make room at the marina for more boat slips, one is reminded of her voyages to England half a century ago where she drew favorable comments in shipping circles relative to her handsome appearance." Andrews's memory of the Cumberland Queen is not so grand. "She was a ghost ship, used as a breakwater."

Dyke Marsh

Andrews had many boyhood Dyke Marsh adventures.

MOUNT VERNON (continued on page 5)

NPS Contractor Cut Down Trees in DMWP

In late October and early November, a George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) contractor, under the supervision of a GWMP arborist, cut down 70 trees in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, generally in the area across from the Tulane Drive exit. Many FODMers and others expressed their concerns about this massive change in habitat and its impact on birds, wildlife and the wetland's stability and ecological health.

We were particularly disturbed by the felling of three tagged pumpkin ash trees (*Fraxinus profunda*) that we paid to treat for the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*).



Many large trees were cut. Photo by Robert Smith

GWMP had put fencing around the base of the trees to prevent beavers from chewing them down. Several FODMers observed that the treated trees were fully leafed out this past spring. In cooperation with GWMP, FODM paid for the treatment of 13 pumpkin ash trees in 2015 and 2016, and the collection of 10,000 seeds from 25 trees in an effort to save and replace trees threatened by the emerald ash borer. GWMP staff estimated that there are or were at least 1,000 pumpkin ash trees in the marsh.

GWMP Superintendent Alex Romero invited FODM to meet with him on December 5 to discuss this activity and their rationale. Superintendent Alex Romero has provided the following comments to FODMers:

"Recently, the George Washington Memorial Parkway has begun a hazardous tree removal project along the parkway and parks in Virginia, the District of Columbia and Maryland. A certified arborist deems a tree as hazardous if two conditions exist: if the tree has a defect which may result in the tree falling and if the tree is close to a target (a road, building or trail). As part of the Parkway's hazardous tree removal project, the park is working with our tree crew and with contracted tree companies to ensure that visitors have a safe experience in the park.

"Trees in non-maintained areas do not pose a threat and will be left to fall on their own to provide additional habitat for our wildlife. Our primary concern is visitor safety when identifying and removing hazardous trees.

"Visitors will notice the large impact of this project. It stretches from one end of the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the other and includes Belle Haven Park, Mount



Belle Haven Marina tree. Photo by Robert Smith

TREES (continued on page 7)

MOUNT VERNON (continued from page 4)

"It was like the Everglades, pretty scary," he recalled. Some locals called Dyke Marsh "Hell Hole," a name that appears on 19th century maps. He would start in the morning in a rowboat with a five-gallon empty can as his lifesaver and paddle through thick vegetation. The marsh teemed with snakes, some four to five inches thick, fish and waterfowl. He often caught muskrats and turtles. "Turtle soup was a delicacy," he noted. Waterfowl hunting fed people in the 1930s, he said. "Those were desperate times."

South Dyke Marsh was full of intrigue and rumor, Andrews offered. Cigarette Dodson lived in an "informal marina," also called an ark, in the embayment which some now call Pipeline Bay, across from the Dyke Overlook just north of Morningside Lane. Today, the pulloff also known as Cigarette



The Cumberland Queen had been part of the Belle Haven Marina landscape since the 1930's. Derricks long ago pulled it apart to make room for more boat slips.



Belle Haven Marina as it was in the 1950s.

Turnaround, in honor of Dodson. Dodson fished, trapped, rented out duck blinds and was a rumored bootlegger during Prohibition. Around 1956, NPS evicted Dodson to promote the commemorative nature of the parkway as directed by Congress. Local gossips claimed that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt met his girlfriend at the overlook, Andrews mused.

On growing up on H Street, John reminisced: "There was no noise from cars or airplanes. It was quiet and peaceful. In mid-March, on the first warm spring day, there was a crescendo of frogs singing, wonderful sounds, that said, 'Spring is here. I'm glad to be alive.' It makes me sad not hear them any more. They were all over whole place. It was unbelievable. I loved that. Spring was coming."

Photos courtesy of John Andrews.

Meet the Plants of Dyke Marsh — Eastern Red Cedar

BY PATRICIA P. SALAMONE

The eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana* L.) is the most widely distributed conifer in eastern North America, native to 37 states. Its native range extends from Florida to Canada and from the east coast to Texas and the Dakotas. Botanically, it isn't actually a cedar (as you know, you can't always trust common names); it is in the cypress family (*Cupressaceae*).

It is considered a "pioneer species," one of the first trees to repopulate cleared, eroded, or otherwise disturbed land. It prefers open, sunny habitats like woodland edges and openings, meadows, pastures, and savannahs. Its wetland indicator status is FACU (facultative upland) in the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain region.

It is slow growing and can, under favorable conditions, be a relatively long-lived tree. However, because of its thin bark and low branches, it is vulnerable to fire. And, like other pioneer species, it can be "shaded out" as part of natural succession. For example, the Cedar Trail at Huntley Meadows Park was named for this tree, but now few of them remain; they have been succeeded by other trees.

The eastern red cedar is a small to medium-sized evergreen tree, typically 30-40 feet tall. Its mature form is variable, but it is typically shaped like a pyramid or column. The bark is reddish brown to grayish, thin and "shreddy." The fragrant foliage is scale-like and can be gray-green, blue-green, or just plain green. Younger trees, or new growth on older trees, can sometimes have longer, more needle-like leaves.

The eastern red cedar is dioecious, producing male and female flowers on separate trees. The small, cone-like flowers bloom in spring (March to May) and the pollen from the male cones is dispersed by the wind to pollinate the female flowers. The female cones, which ripen in September and October, look like berries: round, about ¼ inch in diameter, blue or bluish-purple, and silvery from their waxy coating. There are typically one or two tiny seeds per cone.

These "berries" are very popular with wildlife, most notably the cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*), which actually takes its



Peeling bark of *Juniperus virginiana*. Photo by Peggy Romph, Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center



Foliage of *Juniperus virginiana*. Photo by Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center

name from its fondness for the fruits of the eastern red cedar. Numerous other birds and mammals also eat these fruit, which helps in spreading the seeds.

Eastern red cedars also provide protective and nesting cover. According to the USDA plant guide (https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_juvi.pdf), the eastern red cedar is a favorite nesting site for chipping sparrows, robins, song sparrows, and mockingbirds. Many other birds, including juncos, myrtle warblers, and sparrows of various kinds use the dense foliage as roosting cover. This shelter is especially valuable in winter.

The eastern red cedar also provides food for the caterpillars of the olive hairstreak butterfly (*Callophrys gryneus*). A large number of other types of insects also feed on the eastern red cedar.

Many ethnobotanic uses of the plant by Native Americans have been documented. It has been used to make incense for purification and other rituals, and teas made from the berries, roots, and/or branches have been used for various medicinal purposes. (I don't recommend trying it, though; the leaves and fruits contain toxic volatile oils.) The eastern red cedar was first observed by European settlers at Roanoke Island in 1564. Both Native Americans and European settlers have found the durable, aromatic wood of the eastern red cedar useful for a variety of purposes, including fences and furniture.

The eastern red cedar is an attractive tree and is very useful to both wildlife and humans. However, sometimes the tree's enthusiasm for taking over ecologically disturbed areas can become too much of a good thing (especially when fire suppression limits the checks on its spread). To read about one such case, check out the following link:

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/visit/family-of-attractions/shaw-nature-reserve/conservation-at-shaw-nature-reserve/habitat-restoration.aspx>

The article describes ecological restoration efforts at the Shaw Nature Reserve (a division of the Missouri Botanical Garden) in Gray Summit, Missouri. When I lived in the St Louis area the Shaw Nature Reserve was one of my favorite places to visit for its great diversity of habitats and plant life, and I still remember seeing benches that had been crafted from the wood of red cedars that had been thinned.

The tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is neither a tulip (you knew that!) nor a poplar; in fact, it is in the Magnolia family. But it is a beautiful tree well worthy of notice in all seasons.

The genus name *Liriodendron* comes from the Greek, meaning "lily tree." The specific name *tulipifera* means "tulip-bearing."



Cedar waxwing eating eastern red cedar fruits at Dyke Marsh. Photo by Ed Eder

TREES (continued from page 5)

Vernon Trail, Gravelly Point, Columbia Island Marina, Clara Barton Parkway, Memorial Circle, Dyke Marsh, Arlington House, Turkey Run Park and Fort Hunt Park. Additionally, there are many locations along the north and southbound roadway, including the median near Daingerfield Island, near Memorial Bridge and along Spout Run Parkway. This work will continue until March 2017.

“Unfortunately, during this hazardous tree removal three pumpkin ash trees in Dyke Marsh were mistakenly removed. They were wrongly identified as hazardous. Thanks to the commitment of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, these trees were inoculated from the emerald ash borer (EAB), an invasive insect that will have devastating impacts on the canopy. Over 16 percent of all the mature trees along the George Washington Memorial Parkway are ash. With a mortality rate of 100 percent, EAB's impacts will be long lasting. The Park’s Natural Resource Management staff is working with partners, stakeholders and local jurisdictions on projects to replace lost trees and to identify locations and plants to replace those lost due to hazardous removal.

“We realize the landscape is changing and the tree canopy will look different in the coming months, but we want to make sure that we provide a safe experience to everyone who comes to enjoy our public lands!”

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 our **new members** Mrs. Catharine Bontrager, Ed Leary and Candy Butler, Ethan Eddy, Denise Elaine Freeland, George Hastings, Antonio Martinez and Cynthia Howl, Susan Kofler, Stacy Langsdale and Wyatt Williams.

And we welcome our new **Life Member** Jodi Terhorst and a conversion to **Life Membership** Hon. Henry S. Brooks.

DONORS (continued from page 2)

Eder, Dotty Feldman, Nancy Ford-Kohne, Friends of Dyke Marsh, Gold's Gym, Trudi Hahn, John Hiller, Hollin Hall Village Hardware, Home Depot, Elizabeth and Don Ketz-Robinson, Joan Klein, Barbara Kirkland, Claire Kluskens, Chris Lederman, Bruno Mahlmann, Dorothy McManus, National Park Service, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Nature by Design, One Good Tern, Orvis of Arlington, Leslie Overstreet, River Bend Bistro, Riley Creative, Sale by Gale, Gale Curcio, Claire Shea, Paul Siegel, Jennifer Smith, Dixie Sommers, Paula Sullivan, Spokes, Claire Surovell, Trader Joe's and Washington Area Bicyclists Association.

OIL SPILL (continued from page 8)

worked closely with the lead federal agency to the response (USCG) and focused efforts in the area that was directly impacted.”

Officials reported that at least 29 birds died after oil coated their feathers. Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research cleaned and banded 21 Canada geese and FODMers helped release them back to the Potomac River on February 22. See www.fodm.org for more information and photos.

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..... \$ _____

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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).

Dominion Power's Oil Spill

On February 3, 2016, a concerned advocate photographed what appeared to be an oil sheen along the shoreline in and near the Belle Haven Marina. Another person photographed a sheen at 7831 Southdown Road, almost a mile south of Dyke Marsh.

Space limitations prevent recounting the full story here (see our website), but in short, after our inquiries and basic "bird-dogging," we learned that Dominion Power was responsible for a January 24 discharge of around 13,500 gallons mineral oil from its Arlington-Crystal City transformer station. Dominion accepted responsibility on February 12.

Dominion told several state legislators that the company paid \$4.2 million for "response, remediation and restoration in Arlington" incurred by various entities. As we go to press, we await a report on natural resources damages, their costs and how Dominion will respond. It is unclear whether (1) there was any damage in Dyke Marsh and (2) if so, how it was determined. DEQ officials emailed, "Although initial reports of the spill indicated the sheen reached the Wilson Bridge, sheening from the spill event may have also occurred further downstream. There may also be smaller sources (e.g. marinas, boat traffic, outfalls, etc.) that contribute to sheening in the area. Ongoing investigation and assessment of the spill will attempt to characterize the nature and extent of the spill for natural resource damage."

George Washington Parkway Superintendent Alex Romero emailed this information.

"The NPS has been working closely as part of the trustees group for the Dominion

Power mineral oil spill that occurred in February 2016. At the time of the spill, the primary area impacted was Roaches Run and the area of the Potomac River adjacent to Gravelly Point. Reports at the time indicated the oil sheen traveled as far south as the Dyke Marsh area. However, the NPS and larger response team did not identify impacts to Dyke Marsh at that time of the incident (done visually). Direct impacts were identified at Roaches Run only as the largest bulk of mineral oil was found in this location. There were specific impacts tied to numerous cases of animal mortality. NPS staff



Canada geese were returned to the Potomac river. Photo by T.D. Hobart

OIL SPILL (continued on page 7)



The Friends of Dyke Marsh
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