

# The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

SUMMER 2010



## The Friends of Dyke Marsh

### FODM Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, September 22, 7:30 p.m., Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, VA 22306. Ph. 703-768-2525. Free to all.

### Calendar of Events

Fall Colors Walk with Dr. Ed Smith of the National Zoo, October 23 (see p. 4); Quarterly meeting November 17 with Georgetown's Dr. Edd Barrows on arthropods.

## CONTENTS

Students Visit DMWP	2
President's Message	3
Protecting the Future	4
Profile of NPS Official	5
Senate Honors DMWP	5
Gulf Oil Spill: Act Now	6
DMWP's Varied Plants	8

## Community Actions Impact Chesapeake

### What Happens in Dyke Marsh Doesn't Stay in Dyke Marsh

The Friends of Dyke Marsh will feature "native son" Chris Miller, President of the Piedmont Environmental Council, at the September 22 meeting. The Mount Vernon Group of the Sierra Club has agreed to cosponsor the meeting.

Miller will discuss how what we do in our community impacts Dyke Marsh, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay and how the preservation and restoration of Dyke Marsh affect the larger environment. The Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay have consistently received grades of C or D for their health.

Tidal wetlands, like Dyke Marsh, can be important natural "filters" that remove pollutants, but since they are at the end of streams flowing from the land, they can also become catch basins for anything that runs off from the land, from polluted-laden stormwater to plastic bottles to tires.

Experts say that sprawl, suburban development and road building have dumped sediment into Hunting Creek and other tributaries of the Potomac. Runoff from ever-expanding impervious surfaces, from parking lots to McMansion roofs, is the fastest-growing water quality problem in the region.



Fallen trees and industrial debris, outer island Dyke Marsh. Photo by Ned Stone.

Chris Miller will discuss how stronger land use policies and other actions can help clean up the Potomac and the Bay and how the Friends of Dyke Marsh can play a role.

The Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve is part of the mosaic of the larger ecosystem and conservationists are key to a healthy environment. "The benefits of individual conservation efforts in the absence of better land use plans at a regional scale, will be overwhelmed by the direct and indirect consequences of sprawling land use patterns," says Miller, who grew up in the Mount Vernon area.

## Marsh Wren to Go Electronic in 2011



### BY DOROTHY MCMANUS, EDITOR

Starting early next year, the eMarsh Wren will arrive by email from editor@fodm.org as a PDF attachment. This environmentally responsible step will reduce our carbon footprint, including production and transportation burdens. It will save trees. It will also save postage and printing costs, to be applied to other activities in support of the DMWP.

We will email the Wren to all members of the Friends for whom we have

email addresses, unless we hear from you to the contrary. We will send you an email of this notice; if it reaches you at an address that you don't want us to use, let us know of another address. If you have a new email address, let us know. **If you would prefer to continue to receive a paper *Marsh Wren*, let us know and we will send it by U.S. Mail.**

How to contact us: send us an email to editor@fodm.org or write to us at Friends of Dyke Marsh, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, VA 22307.

## Science Students Visit DMWP



Station 4. Photo by Robert Smith.

On May 4, 5 and 6, 600 students from Carl Sandburg Intermediate School, led by science teacher Kate Williams, visited the preserve to learn about wetlands and water quality. National Park Service staffers set up four

stations: marsh wildlife, trash, water testing and invasive species. When the students visited the invasive plants station, they whacked down bush honeysuckle and given the numbers of students, made great progress in attacking this invasive plant which is very common, too common, along the Haul Road. FODMer Ned Stone gave presentations on trash, its prevalence and impact on the preserve. At the water quality station, students did some water testing.

The Friends of Dyke Marsh thank the National Park Service officials and the following members and friends for helping: Bob Bernier, Dan Borges, Henry Brooks, Doug Burnette, Lewis Cabe, Mary Chambliss, Bill Cleveland, Mary Jo Detweiler, Carole Harman, Muriel Lipp, Sally Macklin, Mada McGill, Louise Potter, John Scales, Chuck Schoon, Robert Smith, Marta Vastagh and Diana Weil.

## Ned Stone, Our New Vice-President

The FODM Board of Directors has approved Ned Stone as Vice-President of the Friends of Dyke Marsh. Ned lives in the Mount Vernon area and is a real devotee of the preserve.

He is frequently spotted in his red and yellow kayak collecting trash of all sizes and hauling it to shore. Ned also is a dedicated "weed whacker," working to control non-native plants. In June, Ned collected larvae of the *Galerucella nymphaeae*, the beetles that have been eating the spatterdock leaves, and delivered them to NPS for identification (see article p. 6). Congratulations Ned!



## Generous Donor Remembers FODM

The Friends of Dyke Marsh received a generous contribution from Monique Price in memory of her husband, James B. Price, a long-time member of FODM. Mrs. Price enclosed a note with donation. In part, it read: "Living in Alexandria, we enjoyed memorable outings along the Potomac. One scene I cannot forget was the beautiful herons in the marsh."

### Editor:

Dorothy McManus

### Assistant Editor:

T. D. Hobart

### Editorial address:

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

Visit our website at

**www.fodm.org**

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

Copyright © 2010, The Friends of Dyke Marsh, Inc. All rights reserved.

Printed on recycled paper



## Friends of Dyke Marsh Board of Directors

<b>President</b> - Glenda Booth .....	703-765-5233, GBooth123@aol.com
<b>Vice President</b> - Ned Stone .....	703-768-5441, nedstone@verizon.net
<b>Secretary</b> - Dorothy McManus ( <i>Marsh Wren</i> )..	703-960-3643, dorothymcmanus@msn.com
<b>Treasurer</b> - Robert Smith .....	703-684-7041, rconwell@comcast.net
Ed Eder (Past President) .....	703-360-7994, nutmegz@mac.com
Kurt Gaskill (Field Trips) .....	703-768-2172, KurtCapt87@verizon.net
Frank McKenna .....	703-768-6083, francis_mckenna@hotmail.com
Barbara Perry (Membership) .....	703-765-8159, barbaraperry@hotmail.com
Mary-Carroll Potter (Programs) .....	703-768-6590, marycarrollpotter@verizon.net
John Perry .....	703-329-1646, johnperry@cox.net
Barry Murphy .....	703-836-0888, proudhouse@mac.com
Bridget Wells .....	703-660-9303, bbeyhan@hotmail.com
Mary Jo Detweiler .....	703-765-8087, mjdetweiler@cox.net

### Advisory Board:

Jeb Byrne (At-Large) .....	703-768-8224, jebbyrne@earthlink.net
Larry Cartwright (Breeding Bird Survey) .....	703-941-3142, prowarbler@verizon.net
David W. Johnston (Environmental Biology Cnslt.)	703-425-2530, fordeboids@verizon.net
Ed Risley (Founding Member, Chair Emeritus) .....	703-379-1159
Sandy Spencer (Research) .....	804-333-1470, Sandy_Spencer@fws.gov

*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

The historic and seemingly unending oil gushing from a malfunctioning well in the Gulf inspires us to be ever-vigilant stewards of our natural resources.

We are honored that the U. S. Senate on May 7 passed S. Res. 297, introduced by Senators Jim Webb and Mark Warner, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the law designating DMWP as part of the national park system. The House approved the companion bill last year.

Other FODM news: Dr. Elizabeth Wells' informative plant walk in May attracted a big crowd. (See article p. 8). Thank you, Dr. Wells. In addition to the Sunday bird walks, we hope to have at least two nature walks a year and Pat Salamone is organizing them. Send us your ideas.

On a June 18 paddle, the pickerel weed sparkled purple throughout the wetland and the Ospreys were calling and clasping fish in their claws in flight, aerodynamically correct, of course, with the fish's head first. The Red-winged Blackbirds were konkareeing and the Marsh Wrens were squeaking from the cattails. Sunning turtles took quick dunks as we neared. Ducklings paddled closely after moms.

This spring, there were 13 Osprey nests, one Bald Eagle nest and at least six breeding Least Bitterns. Larry Cartwright reported that there were at least three active Marsh Wren nests. Fishing guide Charlie Taylor wrote in June, "Catfish are thick around the Woodrow Wilson bridge pilings. White and yellow perch are still being caught throughout the river. Most of the yellow perch are being taken from the grass beds. . ."

**Life abounds:** One of nature's most amazing phenomena, bird migration, will soon again mesmerize us. Dr. Edd Barrows, our November speaker, has said that in September we should keep a lookout for these arthropods: ants, aphids, bees, beetles, centipedes, flower flies, isopods, midges, millipedes, spiders, wasps, including Clouded Sulphur Butterfly, Dancing White Butterfly, Eastern-tailed Blue Butterfly, European Earwig, Gold-green Sweat Bee, False Honey Ant, Monarch Butterfly, Spotted Cucumber Beetle, Variegated Asian Ladybird Beetle and Wandering Bumble Bee.

**A Few Somber Notes:** Ned Stone found a dead Great Blue Heron dangling from a tree caught in fish line on the shoreline north of the Belle Haven picnic area in June.

The Potomac River earned a "C" grade from the University of Maryland, a slight improvement from the C-minus last year.

A June 30 study reported that rising water temperatures are likely to be killing fish in the Potomac. Several hundred dead Channel Catfish were found between the Harpers

Ferry, West Virginia, area and Great Falls, probably having succumbed to a bacterial disease brought on by a rapid increase in water temperature, low oxygen levels and natural environmental stresses at end of their spawning season, said Chris Luckett, a Maryland environmental official. Report fish kills to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, 540-899-4169 or the Maryland Department of the Environment, 877-224-7229.

**Beltway Construction Woes:** The Friends of Accotink Creek have documented sediment control failures from the Beltway/I-495 construction, sending pollution into the Accotink Creek watershed. View pictures here: <http://hku60.smugmug.com/Lands-and-W>. They filed a lawsuit against Fluor-Lane, the construction company. Their lawsuit was pre-empted by a lawsuit filed by Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli and was settled.

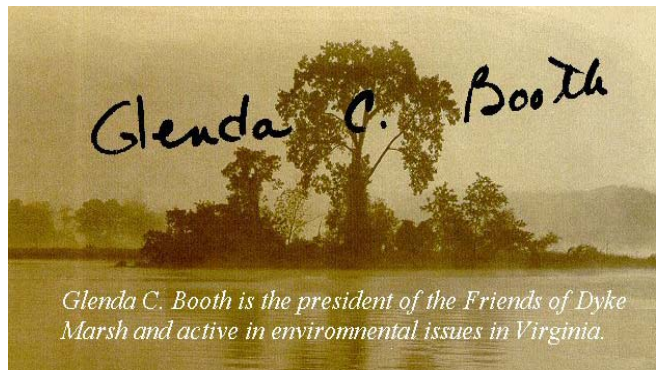
Advocates want to strengthen the settlement, arguing for example, that a penalty of \$66,450 does not reflect the fact that the site has failed to comply with the law for almost two years. They are also asking for independent inspections and a significant contribution from Fluor-Lane for mitigation. FODM urged a stronger settlement.

**President Obama Seeks Your Views:** President Barack Obama in April said that "we are losing touch with too many of the places and proud traditions that

have helped to make America special." He seeks to reconnect Americans to our natural resources and to create corridors and connectivity across natural, historic and cultural resources, using "science-based management practices to restore and protect our lands and waters for future generations." He has invited comments on his White House Initiative on America's Great Outdoors at this website <http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/>. I attended a meeting with Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and other federal officials on June 25. Secretary Salazar will submit a report to the president by November 15, 2010.



Osprey feeding its chick near the marina. Photo by Allan Claybon.



# Within and Outside of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve: Part One

BY J. GLENN EUGSTER

Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve inspires us to learn about the nature of this special place, its ecological functions, public uses and challenges. Our knowledge motivates us to help sustain the preserve to provide ecologic and human services. Our interest may be demonstrated by donations of time and money, documenting plants and animals of the area or participating in government studies and decision-making for the preserve. Today it is not enough to merely appreciate nature; we have to actively work to protect it.

Dyke Marsh, which is managed by the National Park Service, has a boundary, but the mere physical boundaries of the wildlife preserve do not guarantee the protection of its special qualities. As we have learned more about the preserve, we understand that it is part of a connected and interdependent system of lands, wetlands and waters -- a green infrastructure. Dyke Marsh is influenced by other areas and activities within the watersheds it is a part of. What happens in these other places can help or hinder protection and management efforts. Run-off and sediment from Beltway construction, for example, can end up in the wetland.

Although progress is being made to protect the preserve, much of the green infrastructure system it is a part of is being destroyed or impaired. As the natural resources of the surrounding watershed are developed, the green infrastructure is being undervalued. In the greater Washington, D.C. area, since the 1950s, threats to natural areas and open space have been identified as important public concerns. Various government and private sector reports estimate that the greater Washington, D.C., area loses from 29 to 100 acres of green space each day to other land uses. Over this same period, open space loss has continued to far outpace protection efforts.

One of the first examples of protection efforts occurred in 1901 when some of the leaders of the greater Washington, D.C., area took action to protect natural assets through implementation of the 1901 McMillan Report. More work followed with the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act. These efforts recognized that the greater Washington area, as the nation's capital and home to the federal government, should have a system of interconnecting public parklands for the beatification, recreation and protection of the Potomac River and its tributaries. These actions shaped the initial green infrastructure for the greater Washington area and serve as testimony and inspiration for current and future actions.

Today, the National Park Service views Dyke Marsh as "a national treasure, a natural oasis surrounded by a bustling urban environment." Saving the area will require managing within the preserve boundary as well as having some say about what goes on outside the area. Congressman Jim Moran (D-VA, 8), with bipartisan support, and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior Ken Salazar have

ideas for how all levels of the government and the private sector can work together to cooperatively protect the ecosystems and green infrastructure that Dyke Marsh and other green spaces depend upon. Part two of this article will highlight what they propose and what you can do to help.

J. Glenn Eugster is a board member of the America the Beautiful Fund and Seminary Hill Association. He has worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, various state, regional and local governments and the private sector. His experience includes park and green infrastructure work with the President's Council on Sustainable Development, Chesapeake Bay Program, Center for Urban Ecology, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the City of Alexandria, Virginia. He is trained in ornamental horticulture, landscape architecture and ecological planning. He and his wife Deborah live in Alexandria.



The author, J. Glenn Eugster at the White House.

## Fall Colors Walk Set For October 23rd

Please join us on Saturday, October 23rd, for a walk to enjoy the fall colors and observe the wildlife at Dyke Marsh. The walk is being co-sponsored by the Friends of Dyke Marsh and the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. It is free and open to all, rain or shine.



Dyke Marsh showing a beautiful array of fall colors. Photo by T.D. Hobart.

We are very fortunate to have Ed Smith as our walk leader. Ed works as a biologist in the Amazonia Department of the Smithsonian National Zoo, focusing on amphibian conservation and husbandry, and a few weeks each year also find him taking groups to Central and South America as a Smithsonian Journeys Study Tour Leader. A lecturer for Smithsonian Associates and an instructor for Smithsonian Scholars in Schools programs, Ed enjoys teaching elementary, lay, collegiate, and professional audiences alike. When not in a lab, aquarium, conservatory, or classroom he'd rather be outdoors gardening, birding, botanizing, or searching for amphibians and reptiles.

We plan to meet at 10 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area, and hope you will join us!



## Profile of a National Park Service Official - Brent Steury

*This is the first of periodic profiles that FODM will publish introducing readers to some of the U. S. National Park Service officials with whom we work.*

**BY GLENDA BOOTH**

Brent Steury is the Supervisory Biologist, Natural Resources Program Manager for the National Park Service, George Washington Memorial Parkway, which manages the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Brent has worked for NPS for 15 years. He started his career as the biologist for NPS's National Capital Parks-East, a unit of 13 park areas in Maryland and the District of Columbia, including Piscataway Park, Fort Washington, Fort Foote, Fort Dupont, Greenbelt Park and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, where he served for eight years. Brent graduated in 1986 from the University of South Carolina at Columbia with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. In addition to his federal service, Brent has worked as a bioinventory biologist in Noel Kempff Mercado National Park, Santa Cruz, Bolivia; as a Fisheries Biologist in Dutch Harbor, Aleutian Islands, Alaska; as a Peace Corps Volunteer with the Parks and Wildlife Program in Livingston, Guatemala; as an Interpretive Naturalist for the Indiana State Parks; and as the Director of Environmental Education for the Bloomington, Indiana, Parks and Recreation Department.

For the last nineteen years, Brent's research has focused on the distribution of threatened and endangered vascular plants of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain. In conjunction with his research, Brent has authored 14 papers and numerous technical reports documenting more than twenty vascular plant records that were new to the floras of Maryland, Virginia, or the District of Columbia. In addition to his plant publications he has authored papers on moths, bees, frogs and turtles. His current research interests include land snails as indicators of habitat integrity in National Park Service sites near Washington, D.C., and a compilation of a

complete flora for the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Brent is also the NPS technical representative to the Department of the Interior's 2010 State of the Birds Report which will focus on assessing the health of bird

populations on federal lands. Brent continues working to fulfill the Congressional mandate to restore Dyke Marsh, to the extent possible, to its pre-dredging 1930's configuration. Brent was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico and raised in Bluffton, Indiana. He is only one generation removed from a long Amish lineage. He lives with his wife, Judy, and children, Ian (age six) and Hannah Mei (age three), in the Mount Vernon area of Fairfax County, just a few miles south of Dyke Marsh.

"My family and I thoroughly enjoy every visit to the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. It is a true treasure trove of biological diversity, undoubtedly with many secrets yet to be discovered. I greatly appreciate the help of the Friends of Dyke Marsh for their efforts to educate the public about this national treasure. Their help in protecting the marsh from non-native plant species and poachers and their support of our efforts to restore Dyke Marsh has been a wonderful partnership" said Brent.



Biologist Brent Steury has worked for the National Park Service for 15 years.

### U.S. Senate Recognizes Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve

The U. S. Senate on May 7 unanimously approved a resolution, S. Res. 297, introduced by Virginia Senators Jim Webb and Mark Warner, that commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. The House of Representatives passed a comparable bill, H. Res. 701, introduced by Congressman Jim Moran, on October 7, 2009.

In announcing the Senate's approval, Senator Webb said, "I am pleased my resolution honoring the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve passed today in the Senate. Continued preservation of the Commonwealth's natural landmarks is important for future generations."

In 1959, Congress passed and the president signed the bill putting the preserve into the National Park Service system. The legislation became Public Law 86-41 and directed the Secretary of Interior to administer the law "so that fish

and wildlife development and their preservation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount . . . ."

We have presented photographs of the preserve, taken by several of our members, to our two senators and to Congressman Jim Moran (D-VA-8), Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11) and Congressman John Dingell (D-MI-15). Congressman Dingell, currently the longest-serving member of the House of Representatives, authored the bill in 1959 and attended the FODM celebration on October 4, 2009, along with Congressman Moran and several other local and state elected officials.

The Friends of Dyke Marsh sends our deep appreciation to our U. S. senators and the congressmen for their support. To read the bills on-line, visit <http://thomas.loc.gov> and enter the bill number.

## Gulf Oil Spill: How We Can Reduce Oil Use

The unprecedented BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in April reinforces the need for all of us to reduce our use of petroleum-based fuels that contribute to global warming. Here are several ways:

Drive less. Carpool. Take public transit. Visit [www.wmata.com/](http://www.wmata.com/). The Metro Trip Planner can help you plan trips on the subway and local buses.

Combine your driving errands to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Hold meetings and other activities near public transit.

Stop using plastic bottles. The Pacific Institute says that the equivalent of 17 million barrels of oil are used to make them. Nearly 90 percent are not recycled but go to landfills where it takes thousands of years for them to decompose.

Stop using plastic bags. The Sierra Club reports that Americans use 100 billion plastic shopping bags a year, made from around 12 million barrels of oil. They are slow to biodegrade and many end up in trees and waterways and threaten wildlife.

For some excellent factual information on what the Gulf oil spill might mean for Virginia, visit this website, Virginia Institute for Marine Science, [http://www.vims.edu/features/research/gulf\\_spill\\_faqs.php#chesapeake](http://www.vims.edu/features/research/gulf_spill_faqs.php#chesapeake)

National Park Service staffers are part of the federal response to the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon

drilling rig. For example, the National Park Service deployed incident management personnel from across the country to prepare for and respond to oil impacts. NPSers assessed and cleaned up oil impacts and protected critical natural and cultural resources, including wildlife, birds, and historic structures. A number of national parks in the Gulf area are home to many amazing animals, habitats and cultural resources. Some of the parks' resources that could be affected by the oil spill include:

- Seagrass beds, important nursery habitat for sea turtles, young fish, crabs, shrimp, and many other crustaceans. Oil will kill seagrasses on contact and this community is slow to recover, says NPS.

- Salt marshes, occurring in back bays, provide a buffer that protects the mainland during storms. They also offer foraging sites for birds. If oil kills these plants in the marsh, the soil will destabilize and erode.

- Mangroves, similar to salt marshes in that they provide a buffer between the sea and the mainland, as well as providing wildlife habitat.

If you'd like to donate to animal rescue efforts, here are two ways:

The National Audubon Society, [www.audubonaction.org/site/PageServer?pagename==aa\\_HowtoHelp](http://www.audubonaction.org/site/PageServer?pagename==aa_HowtoHelp).

Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research at [tristatebird.org/dwh/help](http://tristatebird.org/dwh/help).

## Brown Spatterdock Observed in Dyke Marsh

Several people noticed that some of the spatterdock in Dyke Marsh turned brown in June. Ned Stone collected some "bugs" from the leaves and Brent Steury, a National Park Service biologist, provided us this explanation: "The critters eating the spatterdock leaves are the larvae of *Galerucella nymphaeae*. It is a Palearctic species considered native to our area by some taxonomists and a likely pollinator of spatterdock. The populations of *Galerucella nymphaeae* seem exceptionally high this year for some unknown reason." The NPS thanks the Friends of Dyke Marsh for the observations. NPS

entered this information into the George Washington Memorial Parkway animals database with due credit given. The Friends thank Robbie McNeil, Ned and Brent for their help and vigilance.



Insect larvae eating spatterdock leaves. Photo by Ned Stone.

## An Unwelcome Fish

Unfortunately, the snakehead fish is here to stay, says John Odenkirk a wildlife official with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). He and others are tracking the snakehead in a 50-mile stretch of the Potomac River and its tributaries to document its distribution. At this website, you can learn more and watch a four-minute video of Odenkirk catching snakeheads in Dogue Creek near U. S. 1: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/snakehead-faq.asp>

The snakehead is from Asia. Wildlife officials believe that all too often people buy non-native animals as pets and then discard them outdoors. Non-native plants and animals can alter an ecosystem and out-compete natives.

DGIF asks all anglers who catch one to not release it but to kill it immediately and report the catch to either the Virginia DGIF or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The Virginia agency's toll-free line is 800-770-4951.

## FODM Is Recognized

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizen Associations on May 1 selected the Friends of Dyke Marsh as the Organization of the Year at their annual gala. Glenda Booth and Ned Stone represented the Friends.

Virginia Senator Toddy Puller and Delegate Scott Surovell presented a commendation to the Friends from the Virginia General Assembly, recognizing this honor and congratulating us.

## Virginians to Vote Nov. 2nd

Virginians will elect all members of the U. S. House of Representatives on November 2. For information on filed candidates and deadlines, visit [http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Election\\_Information/Election\\_Calendar\\_Schedule.htm](http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Election_Information/Election_Calendar_Schedule.htm). To volunteer to help the candidate of your choice, Google his or her name to find the campaign office. To learn about the 2009 environmental record of the current U. S. Congress, visit <http://www.lcv.org/scorecard/>.

## Come Whack With Us

Please join the Friends of Dyke Marsh on the first Friday of every month, from 10 a. m. to 12 noon, and help control invasive plants like bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard and English ivy. It's good exercise and a great way to be outside and to restore the biological integrity of our favorite wetland.



NPS workers remove brush piles from "weed whacking" along Haul Road. Photo by Ned Stone.

The "weed whacking" project is now headed by Amanda Chidsey, NPS Biological Science Technician. You can reach her at [Amanda\\_Chidsey@nps.gov](mailto:Amanda_Chidsey@nps.gov) or 703-289-2545. Welcome, Amanda. The FODM contact is Ned Stone, [nedstone@verizon.net](mailto:nedstone@verizon.net) or 703-768-5441.

FODMers, NPSers and volunteers have made great progress this year, especially between the "dogleg" on the Haul Road and the observation deck. With guidance from NPS, FODMers planted several native species including 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. Non-native plants, like English ivy, can outcompete and virtually destroy native plants.

FODM thanks the Student Conservation Association for their work in the preserve this spring and summer.

## FODM Membership Continues to Grow

Please welcome our new Life Members:

★ Cynthia & Paul Wackerbarth ★

And extend a big welcome to our new annual FODM members Helen Abadzi, Mary Chambliss, Aldis & Susan Lapins, Tom & Edith Nardone, Barry Sperling, Julia Trotter & Jim Fortmuller, and Christopher Wolfson. 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. Thank you!

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).



## Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve's Plants, Varied and Interesting

Dr. Elizabeth Wells, a George Washington University botany professor, led 20 FODMers on a plant walk on the two wooden bridges that cross the wetland near Tulane Drive on May 22. Here are a few highlights from her fact-filled talk:

Tidal freshwater marshes like Dyke Marsh are rare.

There are two species of swamp dogwoods present.

A native multiflora rose has a red stem and flowers in June. Cardinal flowers bloom in August and September.

The arrow arum is in the same family as the Jack-in-the-Pulpit.

Dodder parasitizes jewelweed.

The spice bush, a common wetland plant, has a wonderful fragrance.

The only native honeysuckle has a red flower.

The ground nut has purple flowers and beans or legumes in mid-summer. Native Americans ate the roots of the ground nut and the roots of duck potato weed.



Poison ivy is rich in lipids and good for migrating birds.

Other plants observed include elderberry, buttonbush, alder, native clematis, grapes, holly, blue flag and tearthumb. Tearthumb is useful in treating poison ivy rashes.

The native holly has red berries and some call it winterberry.

Yellow pond lily or spatterdock has a yellow golf-ball-sized, round flower. This plant is very tolerant of high water.

Wild rice is a true grass with cylindrical stems and can be eight feet tall. Wild rice is an annual and needs to regeminate each year in an open spot. Animals like muskrats may clear spots for rice to grow.

The cattails of DMWP are 5,000 years old. The cattail has both a male and female flower. The brown "hotdog bun" that most identify with cattails is the male flower; below it is the similarly-shaped female flower which is green.

The shiny spots in the water that look like oil are actually naturally-occurring bacteria that attach to the surface.

Early colonists collected marsh iron in America and smelted it. Iron is common in marshes and accumulates slowly.

Be on the lookout for the ash borer in the preserve's ash trees. They make a hole shaped like the letter D.

**The  
Marsh Wren**

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