

# The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

FALL 2011



## The Friends of Dyke Marsh

### FODM Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, November 16, at 7:30 p.m., Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306. Phone 703-768-2525. Free to all.

### Calendar of Events

October 16, Fall Colors Walk w/Pat Salamone 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.; October 22, Attack invasive plants 9 a.m. - 12 noon; Dyke Marsh on TV October 23, MPT, October 28, WETA.

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## Is Dyke Marsh Disappearing?

### USGS Scientists to Present Landmark Study

Dyke Marsh is "eroding rapidly," as much as six feet a year, concluded U.S. Geological Survey scientists in a landmark, 80-page study prepared for the National Park Service. The study "... revealed an accelerating rate of erosion and marsh loss at Dyke Marsh, which now appears to put at risk the short term survivability of this marsh. . . [italics ours]. The scientists wrote, "This freshwater tidal marsh has shifted from a semi-stable net depositional environment (1864-1937) into a strongly erosional one, during a time when it currently is in early-phase planning for comprehensive restoration." Authors attribute the "deconstruction" over the past 70 years to a combination of human and natural causes.

On November 16, study authors Ron Litwin and associates will present their findings to the Friends. The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park is a cosponsor of this program. Please attend and bring others to learn the fascinating natural history of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve and some of the options for addressing the problems outlined by USGS. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Huntley



Analysis of the Deconstruction of Dyke Marsh, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Virginia: Progression, Geologic and Manmade Causes, and Effective Restoration Scenarios



Open-File Report 2010-1269

U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey

This 80-page study concludes "rapid erosion." Cover photo courtesy USGS.

Meadows Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria 22306; telephone: **STUDY**, (Continued on page 2)

## Eagle Scouts Install New Benches at DMWP

### BY BEN LUCE

On September 17, Eagle Scout candidate Ben Luce of Boy Scout Troop 135 in Alexandria organized and oversaw the installation of four benches along the Haul Road trail. The project was completed in conjunction with the National Park Service as its sponsor, under the supervision of Erik Oberg.

Scouts began digging the two-foot deep bench support excavations at 9:00

a.m. with more than thirty volunteers present throughout the course of the day by 6:30 p.m. Three benches were installed along the trail and one bench was fastened to the wooden observation deck at the end of the trail. Additionally many invasive plants were cleared to create a vista of the marsh at the third bench location.

The installed benches remained taped off overnight as the concrete cured, and a small crew removed the bracing hardware

**BENCHES**, (Continued on page 5)

From THE POTOMAC RIVER BASIN, published in 1907, by Horatio N. Parker, Bailey Willis, R. H. Bolster, W. W. Ashe, and M. C. Marsh, from page 193:

"It should be remembered that someone always pays for water pollution. If the laws are such that they relieve one corporation of caring for the wastes it creates, it is likely that they entail great expense on another. Thus a railroad which is compelled to use polluted water in its locomotives will in consequence have many repairs to make, and the increased cost of mileage caused thereby will have to be borne by those who travel and transport goods over the road. Similarly, if one man is unmolested in turning the effluent from his mill into a stream, it may drive his neighbor downstream to drill deep wells in order to introduce a new water supply into his works. Instances of this sort of thing might be multiplied, but it is enough to recognize the fact that though a river basin may lie in several States, as does the Potomac, its people are more closely bound together by its waters than are the inhabitants of a single State by the arbitrary boundary lines established for them. The silver river threads are direct lines of communication between each individual and every other below him on the stream. The offenses that he commits against the water are paid for by his fellow countrymen in the basin, and the bill is large or small according to the gravity of the transgressions."

from Jim Cummins, The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin.

**STUDY**, (Continued from page 1)

703-768-2525.

As for the future, the study says that Dyke Marsh will continue to be "subjected to strong lateral shoreline erosion and stream piracy until (1) its former geological protections are restored by human intervention or (2) it is fully dismembered and eroded away by recurrent future storm activity (if left alone)." One option would be to build a wave break at the position of a former promontory that was removed by dredging and "an effective blockage of the deep scar channels that parallel the shoreline of the Dyke Marsh eastern boundary."

The National Park Service is preparing a draft Dyke Marsh Wetland Restoration and Long Term Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other state and federal partners. Brent Steury, Natural Resources Program Manager for the George Washington Memorial Parkway, will attend the meeting on November 16 and briefly explain the National Park Service's plans in response to the USGS study.

The USGS study is posted at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2010/1269/>. The lead authors are Ronald J. Litwin, Joseph P. Smoot and Milan J. Pavich, with NPS and local academic coauthors.

Mark your calendar now for this very important Friends meeting. You can help determine the future of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.

## Friends of Dyke Marsh Board of Directors

<b>President</b> - Glenda Booth .....	703-765-5233, GBooth123@aol.com
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<b>Secretary</b> - Dorothy McManus ( <i>Marsh Wren</i> ).....	703-960-3643, editor@fodm.org
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Barry Murphy .....	703-836-0888, proudhouse@mac.com
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Pat Salamone .....	703-329-1748, salamone@mitre.org
<b>Advisory Board:</b>	
Jeb Byrne (At-Large) .....	703-768-8224, jebbyrne@earthlink.net
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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](http://www.fodm.org)), and to Paula Sullivan and Ed Eder for their photography contributions to *The Marsh Wren* and website.

### 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](http://www.fodm.org)**

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

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## President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

Late summer brought a rare 5.9 earthquake, Hurricane Irene and five days of heavy rain from Tropical Storm Lee. As far as we know, none of these weather events caused major damage in Dyke Marsh, but as Dottie Marshall told FODM in June, "Every hurricane has a big impact on Dyke Marsh." Marshall is the Superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway for the U.S. National Park Service.

As we previously reported, a U.S. Geological Service study has concluded that strong storms are major contributors to the wetland's erosion. Between 1937 and 2009, as many as 24 tropical storms or hurricanes (winds over 39 mph and 74 mph, respectively) may have affected Dyke Marsh. USGS scientists found, "... storm waves driven northward up the Potomac River valley, from tropical storms and hurricanes in the summer and nor'easters in the winter, were the primary agents of marsh erosion." Our November 16 USGS speakers will give a not-to-be-missed presentation on this important study.

In our ongoing effort to minimize adverse environmental impacts on Dyke Marsh's boundaries, FODM is partnering with Belle View Elementary School's teachers, administrators and parents who are working to create an outdoor classroom to consist of wetlands, a meadow and a forest. Their goal is improve students' scientific literacy and community stewardship, among other goals. They need around \$4,000 and volunteer labor so I hope you can help either with a donation or time.

As for the fauna of our favorite wetland, a paddle with Chris Hobson, the biologist conducting a dragonfly and damselfly survey in Dyke Marsh, opened my eyes to these beautiful and agile aerialists. They flitted, zoomed, patrolled and procreated. Hobson called the abundance "amazing" and observed, "There's a whole lot of reproduction going on out here!" You can read about our survey here <http://bellehaven.patch.com/articles/dragonflies-and-damselflies-abound-in-dyke-marsh> and look forward to his presentation to FODM in the coming months.

Looking toward winter, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released preliminary statistics on breeding ducks and reported that total duck populations are estimated at 45.6 million breeding ducks on the surveyed area, an 11 percent increase over last year's estimate of 40.9 million birds and is 35 percent above the 1955-2010 long-term average. We will no doubt see some of them visiting and wintering in Dyke Marsh.

### Thank You NPS and Volunteers

We had several volunteer efforts this summer and fall. Be sure to read our article on the Eagle Scouts' bench project (see page 1). Thank you, Ben Luce and your colleagues for your excellent work and for four new places to sit, observe and ponder.

Erik Oberg, National Park Service biologist, led a September 17 cleanup and a September 25 invasive plant attack along the parkway. Thank you, Erik, and volunteers.

A big thank you to our Sunday morning bird walk leaders organized by Kurt Gaskill. Our knowledgeable guides engage walkers and offer interesting information about the birds and other natural resources of Dyke Marsh.

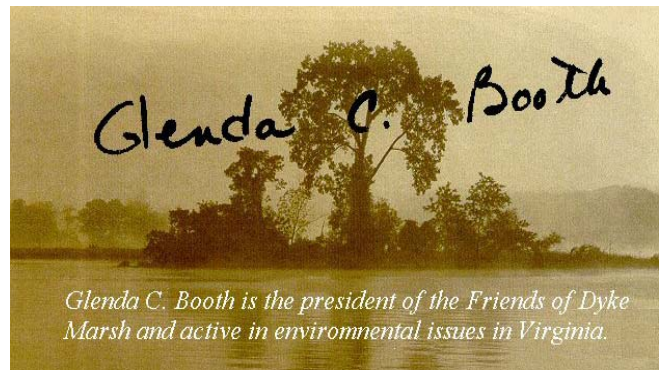
Our faithful weed warrior team, led by Ned Stone, continues to whack at invasive plants. Please volunteer a few hours. The native plants we put in between the "dog leg" and the boardwalk are making quite a difference and demonstrate how a little bit of volunteer work can produce rewarding results and a healthier environment. Volunteers are all the more important given the NPS's annual operating deficit of nearly \$800 million and a \$7.9 billion maintenance backlog, estimates the National Parks and Conservation Association.

### Invasive Catfish

On the troubling news front, fishery managers say that the non-native blue catfish is "exploding" in the Potomac River, reports the September *Bay Journal*. This fish, introduced in the 1980s, can weigh over 100 pounds and can impact native species like shad, river herring, striped bass and American eels, says the article. And remember, the non-native snakehead fish is "here to stay," according to John Odenkirk from Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The snakehead has made itself at home in the waters of the Potomac, Dyke Marsh, Pohick Bay and Little Hunting and Dogue Creeks, Odenkirk maintains.



Smiling crew of bamboo warriors standing in front of their achievement, 25 September. Photo by Erik Oberg.



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

# Future of the Potomac River Basin Interstate Commission in Doubt

BY GLENDA BOOTH

Governor Bob McDonnell is proposing that Virginia stop paying \$150,000 in dues to the 70-year-old, multi-state Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. According to press reports, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has prepared legislation to withdraw from the compact, if funds are cut.

Virginia Commissioner and FODM member Rob Hartwell, who was appointed by McDonnell (see article below), told the Washington Times, "They're basically shooting themselves in the foot by eliminating their funding. Virginia has a significant budget surplus, so why are you eliminating a successful commission that is an interstate, federal compact on the future of the nation's capital's river? It doesn't make a lot of sense, and I don't think there's been much thought put into this."

Mount Vernon-area Delegate Scott Surovell (D-44) cited the report earlier this year that downgraded the river's grade from a C to a D, saying the commission is central to maintaining the health of the river and the Chesapeake Bay. "Having to manage an ecosystem like that requires interjurisdictional cooperation and coordination," he told the Times. "One state cannot dictate to another what that state's going to do. That's why you've got to have an interstate compact."

FODMers will recall that a ICPRB biologist Jim Cum-

mins spoke at our spring members' meeting on the commission's work to restore the American shad to the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers.

The Commission was formed in 1940 by individual jurisdiction statutes and an act of Congress and manages cooperative efforts to protect and preserve the waters and related natural resources of the watershed. Virginia has the largest population and land area of the jurisdictions, which include Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, Virginia, and West Virginia. Commission staff assist all the jurisdictions with science-based and objective research, building partnerships, and leveraging federal state, and private resources to address problems.

In addition to the shad project, the commission conducts bacteria studies for Potomac tributaries like Hunting Creek and Cameron Run and does water quality analyses, for example. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.potomacriver.org/cms/>.



Potomac tributaries like Hunting Creek are also studied.

## FODMer Is Appointed to Commission

Congratulations to FODM life member Robert Hartwell who was appointed by Governor Bob McDonnell to the multistate Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. (See article above.)

A Fairfax County resident, Rob worked for several members of Congress, chaired the Coalition for Fundamental Tax Reform, and since 2001, has served as President of Hartwell Capitol Consulting, a lobbying and business development firm. He has conducted business in the U.S. and in Israel, Europe and Asia. He is an expert on health care, tax and defense policy and the U.S. Congress.

He has also served on Virginia's juvenile gang task force and its project exile board. Rob was a Fairfax County Planning Commissioner-at-Large and is past president of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Foundation.

Rob's mother, Elizabeth Hartwell, known as the "eagle lady," is credited with many years of advocacy that protected thousands of acres of Mason Neck from development. The Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge, created in 1969, is named for her and was the first national wildlife refuge established for protecting the then endangered bird.



Robert Hartwell at E. Hartwell Mason Neck NWR.

## Upcoming Elections; Dyke Marsh's Legislative Representation Doubled

The Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve doubled its voting power in the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate this year, because of the decennial redistricting. The state legislature drew new district lines, putting the northern part of the preserve in the 45th delegate district, a seat now held by Del. David Englin and the southern part in the 44th delegate district, a seat now held by Del. Scott Surovell. The dividing line is in the area of Morningside Lane and extends east.

In terms of the state Senate district, all but the southern tip of Dyke Marsh is in the 30th district, a seat now held by Sen. Patsy Ticer who is retiring. The southern part is in the 36th district, a seat now held by Sen. Toddy Puller. To see maps, visit [http://www.vpap.org/updates/redistricting\\_maps?election\\_seat\\_id=5](http://www.vpap.org/updates/redistricting_maps?election_seat_id=5).

Virginians will elect all state legislators on November 8. To learn about candidates, find out what's on your ballot and to locate your polling place, visit the Virginia Board of Elections website at <https://www.voterinfo.sbe.virginia.gov/PublicSite/Public/FT2/PublicLookup.aspx?Link=Registrationx>.

The Virginia General Assembly considers many measures affecting our natural resources. To learn about the environmental records and ratings of state legislators, look at the legislative conservation scorecard prepared by the Virginia League of Conservation Voters at <http://valcv.org>.

## Profile of a National Park Service Official - Lee Werst

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

We welcome Mr. Lee Werst as the new permanent, full-time Chief Ranger for George Washington Memorial Parkway. Lee's last post was as Chief of Interpretation at Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York. He is a veteran National Park Service manager and supervisor with more than twenty-four years of service.

Lee Werst has been a National Park Service professional for twenty four years. He began his career as a seasonal park ranger at Gettysburg National Military Park in 1988, while completing his Masters Degree in History at East Stroudsburg University. Werst went on from Gettysburg to serve as an interpretive ranger at Independence and Colonial National Historical Parks. He moved into park management as a supervisory ranger at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. and Carlsbad Caverns National Park in New Mexico before becoming Chief of Interpretation at Timpanogas Cave National Monument in Utah. Werst



Mr. Lee Werst, the new Chief Ranger for George Washington Memorial Parkway.. Photo courtesy NPS.

served as the Chief of Interpretation at Women's Rights National Historical Park from May 2006 to his present post at the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

### Fort Hunt Park – What's Its Future?

The National Park Service (NPS) has published a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) presenting four options for redesigning Fort Hunt Park to enhance the preservation and interpretation of its rich history. Fort Hunt is a 105-acre "sister" park to Dyke Marsh on the west side of the George Washington Memorial Parkway two miles north of Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens.

The EA has four alternatives, including a "no action" alternative (A). Three of the options (B, C and D) would remove all of the current picnic pavilions, a restroom and recreation fields and would all add a visitor center and an interpretive trail. These three plans would also realign existing roads and bicycle trails and remove some of the trees.



All pavilions would be removed under most options considered.

Among other uses, the park was the site of homes for some of George Washington's slaves, a Spanish-American war fort, an ROTC training camp and a secret World War II spy interrogation camp. The assessment describes impacts on natural resources like soils, vegetation, wildlife and its habitat, including impacts on bald eagles.

You can send written comments before November 5. The EA/AoE is available electronically here: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/forhunt>. Comments may also be mailed to Superintendent, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Turkey Run Park, McLean, Virginia 22101. Mailed comments must be postmarked by November 5th.

### BENCHES, (Continued from page 1)



the following Sunday. Just twenty-four hours after installation, visitors were already using the new benches.

The scouts hope that the benches will not only serve the practical purpose of providing places to sit along the trail, but additionally, of creating more awareness of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. They hope that the benches will make the area more visitor-friendly, which will in turn draw more visitors, and ultimately result in greater support for the preservation and restoration of Dyke Marsh. Photo Ned Stone.



## FODM Partners with Belle View Elementary School

FODM has partnered with the Belle View Elementary School, the Belle View Parent-Teacher Association and the National Park Service on the school's project to create an outdoor K-6 science classroom, wetland and other habitats on school grounds. The outdoor classroom wetland/meadow project will be consistent with Virginia science standards and will include teacher professional development and community stewardship. The staff and parents invite FODMers to join the faculty and students for the planting on October 18, 19 and 22, throughout the school day and Saturday after 9 a.m. Bring your gardening



One of several birds houses included in the habitat. Photo by T.D. Hobart.

tools and get in on the fun! And FODMers are invited to the ribbon-cutting ceremony at 3:00 p.m. November 10 at the school.

The school has already made a great start planting native plants and putting up Bluebird, Purple Martin and bat houses. They also have other bird houses and a frequent Red-tailed Hawk visiting the southern edge of the school grounds next to Westgrove Park. An enthusiastic group of teachers, the administration and PTA hope to add an amphitheater, a wetland, a rock pile, planting beds and other natural features. They are raising funds for the project. To help, contact Carolyn Bush at the school, [cabush@fcps.edu](mailto:cabush@fcps.edu).

## Park Supporters Recognized

The nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association recently recognized 57 senators and 179 representatives for their voting record in the 111th Congress with a Friend of the National Parks Award.

"These honored members of Congress have demonstrated a solid commitment to preserving our national parks for future generations to enjoy," said NPCA President Tom Kiernan. The awards are based on votes in 2009 and 2010. To learn more, visit the website at: [http://www.npca.org/media\\_center/press\\_releases/2011/members-of-congress-saluted.html](http://www.npca.org/media_center/press_releases/2011/members-of-congress-saluted.html).

In Virginia's delegation, the following received awards: Senators Jim Webb (D) and Mark Warner (D); Congressmen James Moran (D-8), Gerry Connolly (D-11) and Robert Scott (3-D).

Congressman Moran visited the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve on September 10 and expressed his support for restoring the wetland. Congressman Moran is on the appropriations subcommittee funding the National Park Service.



Congressman Jim Moran visits Dyke Marsh with FODM President Glenda Booth and Vice President Ned Stone.

## What Will Happen in Richmond?

Learn all about the Virginia General Assembly and how to influence state policy at the December 3 Virginia Conservation Network's annual legislative workshop in the state capitol in Richmond. Morning sessions will be issues presentations. Afternoon sessions will focus on advocacy. Up to 150 conservation leaders and activists attend this annual preview of the coming General Assembly session. Attendees will get breakfast and a copy of the 2011 Conservation Briefing Book. FODM is a member of the Virginia Conservation Network. If anyone plans to go, please contact Glenda Booth at [gbooth123@aol.com](mailto:gbooth123@aol.com) or 703-765-5233.

The Fall Migration: "Propelled by an ancient faith deep within their genes, billions of birds hurdle the globe each season . . . They are not residents of any single place but of the whole and their continued survival rests almost entirely within our hands." -- Scott Weidensaul, "Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds"

## Bees Are Important

FODMers learned all about bees at the quarterly meeting on September 14 from a lively presentation by Alonso Abugatas, park naturalist at Arlington's Long Branch Nature Center. Describing bee behavior, he said, "Bees are the best pollinators." You can read an article with more details on his "bee aware" talk here: <http://bellehaven.patch.com/articles/bees-are-critical-to-environmental-health>.

Sandburg Middle School students Jacob and Cecelia Brower led the program by describing their science project in which they built bee nests and collected data on solitary bees. They are family members of FODM.

## Dyke Marsh on WETA October 28

In our last issue, we reported that the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve would be featured in a new Public Broadcasting Series titled *This American Land* and that it would be broadcast on WHUT Channel 32 this fall.

WETA Channel 26 has let us know that WETA will again air the segment on Dyke Marsh on October 28 at 10:30 p.m. Because many people in northern Virginia do not get Channel 32, Congressman Jim Moran (D-8) wrote WETA and asked them to broadcast the Dyke Marsh program.

On August 30, WETA responded: “. . . we plan to air the entire series on WETA-HD starting in November on Friday afternoons. The specific episode to which you refer in your letter – the one that focuses on the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve in Northern Virginia – will indeed be of particular interest to the WETA viewing area and we thank you for bringing this to our attention. Because of the local connection, we will plan to air that episode on both WETA-26 and WETA-HD in October . . . . All confirmed dates/times will be carried in our monthly WETA Magazine, as well as noted on our website, [www.weta.org](http://www.weta.org).” Thank you WHUT, WETA and Congressman Moran. It will also be on MPT Channel 22 on October 23. FODM hopes to show the program at one of our quarterly meetings soon.

### 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.

## FODM's New Email and Online Systems

You may have noticed changes in our emails as we modernize our membership systems. We are using Emma, an online communications tool, to maintain our records and send emails, now coming to you from [friends-of-dyke-marsh@cox.net](mailto:friends-of-dyke-marsh@cox.net). Soon new members will be able to join online on our website and all will be able to renew or donate online with the option to pay by credit card. New Membership Chair Bob Veltkamp welcomes your comments.

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

## FODM Welcomes New Members

Please join us in welcoming our new annual members Anne Fafara, Diane Hauslein, John Luce, and Trudy McBride. Thank you to all who donated above your dues.

## Calendar Of Events

- October 16**, Sunday, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Fall Colors Walk  
With FODM - Meet at entrance to Haul Road.
- October 22**, 9 a.m. to 12 noon - Attack Invasive Plants  
Help volunteer to remove exotic and invasive plants in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Please contact Ned Stone at [nedstone@verizon.net](mailto:nedstone@verizon.net) or 703 768-5441.
- October 23**, 11:30 a.m., Dyke Marsh on TV  
MPT Channel 22, *This American Land*
- October 28**, 10:30 p.m., Dyke Marsh on TV  
WETA Channel 26, *This American Land*
- November 16**, 7:30 p.m. - FODM Fall Quarterly Meeting  
Membership meeting, open to all, at the Huntley Meadows Park Visitors Center. (See article page 1).

## 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. 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. If you receive the paper copy of *The Marsh Wren* and you are not current on your dues, a second mailing label with notice that you are overdue is included near your mailing address label. Those who receive *The Marsh Wren* by email will receive this notice in their email. Thank you for your continuing support of FODM.

DUES AMOUNT..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
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 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).

## What's Happening in DMWP this Fall and Winter?

### **In the animal world --**

*October* – Eagles that nested in the north arrive to winter in the area.

*November* – Raptors like Cooper's Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks and others, pass through, going south.

*December* – Diving ducks add to the winter waterfowl population. Eagles may start their courtship, a very early sign of the spring to come. Steam may be rising from beaver lodges, a sign of occupancy.



Raptors, like this Cooper's Hawk, pass through. Photo by Ed Eder.

### **In the plant world, by Dr. Elizabeth Wells --**

In late October and throughout November, leaves will begin to turn color. Ash will develop a golden-purple color, sweet gum will become dark purple and red maple will turn either yellow with touches of red or solid red.

Swamp rose hips will turn red, and viburnum fruits will turn dark blue or black. One species of swamp dogwood will develop dark blue fruits and the other will develop whitish fruits. Porcelain berry fruits will turn brilliant blue then purple.

Marsh mallow capsules will open, drop their seeds, and remain as empty capsules all winter. Button bush round clusters of fruits will slowly fall to pieces, releasing their fruits to the water below. Wild rice will drop their mature grains and cattails will begin to release their small



This Red Maple is turning yellow and solid red. Photo by T.D. Hobart.

fruits with tufts of hairs into the wind.

Trumpet vine stopped flowering in September, and is now bearing their large curved green capsules.

By December, most of the herbs will become brown and die to the ground. Some of their dead stems and leaves will remain through the winter until storms and ice break them up. The shrubs and trees will drop their remaining leaves and remain as woody skeletons through the winter.

**The  
Marsh Wren**

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