

The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

SUMMER 2019



FODM Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, September 11, at **6:30 p.m.**, Huntley Meadows Park, Norma Hoffman Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306. Phone 703 768-2525. Free to all.

Calendar of Events

August 26 and September 9 - 9 a.m. Help control invasives in the native plant site. Sign up at info@fodm.org.

November 13. Biologist Sally Valdes will discuss wildlife ecology, habitat and threats, including climate change.

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The Songs of Insects

A Talk and a Walk

On September 11, FODM will host speaker Wil Hershberger, who will explore the world of singing insects with images and sound recordings. We will learn where to find them; how to identify them by looks and songs; how and why they sing and how we hear their songs.

In a change from our usual practice, we will hear Wil's talk at 7 p.m. and then take an "insect listening" walk led by Wil at 8 p.m. when insects are most active. He says he will "distill the cacophony of confusing insect songs into a delicate concert." We should hear fall field crickets, greater anglewing katydids, lesser anglewing katydids, Davis's tree crickets and two-spotted tree crickets, for example.

The schedule: **6:30 p.m., informal social; 7 p.m., insect talk; 8 p.m., insect walk.** We have to limit the number of people on the walk to 20 people. If you



Common meadow katydid. Photo by Wil Hershberger

wish to go on the insect walk at 8 p.m., please register in advance. The registrations will be on a first-come, first-served

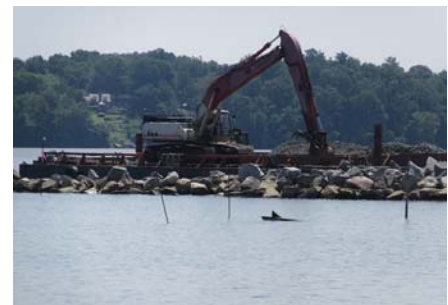
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Restoration Update

BY GLENDA BOOTH

The second phase of Dyke Marsh restoration will be underway within the next year. On May 28, 2019, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission unanimously approved an application from the National Park Service for a permit modification so that the National Park Service's contractor, Coastal Design and Construction, can move to the next phase of restoration.

Under the revised permit, the contractor will build a rock sill at the three-foot contour offshore of the southern marsh shoreline just north of the breakwater currently under construction. The sill will have gaps so that water and aquatic organisms will flush in and out



Equipment and crews have returned to finish the breakwater in the south marsh. Photo by Glenda Booth

with the tides. Because the sill will impact some submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), NPS is required to mitigate those

RESTORATION (continued on page 2)

Two FODMers Honored

Congratulations to Kurt Moser who received the Ellen Pickering Environmental Excellence Award from Alexandria's Environmental Policy Commission and Alexandria Renew Enterprises in April. Kurt, an ecologist and researcher, helped develop the city's Eco-City Charter and served on the city's Environmental Policy Commission. In 2016, he cofounded the Four Mile Run Conservancy Foundation, which has cosponsored several FODM programs.



Kurt Moser receives the Ellen Pickering Award. Photo courtesy of City of Alexandria.



Glenn Fatzinger has been recognized for his leadership and philanthropy.

And congratulations to Glenn Fatzinger who received the 2019 Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy for Virginia's Community Colleges in May. Glenn co-founded the Northern Virginia Community College Educational Foundation and endowed a nursing scholarship in honor of his wife, Harriet, who died in 2011. A Mount Vernon area resident, he serves on the Fairfax County History Commission.

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basis. Register by emailing info@fodm.org. Indicate that you wish to participate in the insect walk. We will let you know if you are among the first 20. If not, we will put you on a waiting list in case there are no-shows.

Hershberger is an avid naturalist, award-winning nature photographer, nature sound recordist and co-author of the book, *The Songs of Insects*. Wil and his wife, Donna, formed Nature Images and Sounds, LLC, and photograph everything from birds to bugs.

This free, public program will be at the Huntley Meadows Park, Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306. If you use a GPS device, be sure to enter the street address, not the park's name. The Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society is a cosponsor.

RESTORATION (continued from page 1)

impacts by funding a submerged aquatic vegetation project at a cost of \$160,000 at an as yet undetermined location within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

NPS began marsh restoration work in 2018 by starting construction of a 1,500-foot breakwater in the south marsh. The breakwater is primarily composed of marine mattresses filled with stone and stacked on top with armor stone (large boulders). The contractor lowered mattresses from a barge to the river bottom, stacking them one on top of another. As of early August, the submerged portion of the breakwater is about 90 percent completed; the part visible at low tide is around one-third completed. Because of seasonal limitations in the permit, the contractor had to suspend work in early March but resumed in July.

The breakwater and the sill will be completed by January 2020. For more information on why Dyke Marsh is disappearing and the restoration project, visit our website.

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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).

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President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

There's been much excitement in Dyke Marsh since our spring newsletter, much of it posted on Facebook and our website. Ed Eder spotted a turkey foraging on the Haul Road on May 4. Laura Sebastianelli confirmed a breeding cooper's hawk and hooded mergansers in Dyke Marsh. Fred Atwood and his teen birders saw 12 American white pelicans on the Potomac River in June. During the epic July 8 downpour, a river otter scurried across Marina Road. And in July, Ed photographed Turk's cap lilies in the marsh, perhaps the few surviving ones.

Our native plant project faces challenges. We estimate that around 80 percent of the trees and plants that we put in in 2018 survived and thanks to Bob Veltkamp and Greg Nemetz and with NPS approval, we put up a sign explaining the project (see photo below). Preventing non-native, invasive plants from outcompeting and destroying natives is daunting (see article on page 8). This project is one small way we can help reverse several disturbing ecological trends, as well as restore some of what perhaps was once there before so much human disturbance occurred.

Diminishing Biodiversity

Studies this year have found that over 40 percent of the world's insects face possible extinction. "An insect apocalypse is our apocalypse" wrote Michael Engle in the March 3 *Washington Post*, explaining that "insects are interwoven into the fundamental functions of virtually every ecosystem." It's tough to garner public support for critters like roaches, mosquitoes and flies, but if we lose insects, we also risk losing plants, birds, mammals, freshwater fish and many other groups of wildlife. "Anything that jeopardizes insect success undermines our own," wrote Engle.



Thanks to Greg Nemetz and Bob Veltkamp, we now have a sign at our native plant site! Photo by Bob Veltkamp

"Human destruction of the living world is causing a 'frightening' number of plant extinctions," reported the

"The diversity of life forms, so numerous that we have yet to identify most of them, is the greatest wonder of this planet."

-- Edward O. Wilson, Biologist

Guardian, describing a Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, June study. These researchers found that at least 571 species have been destroyed since 1750 (but the true number is probably much higher), that the plant extinction rate is 500 times



One of the few surviving Turk's cap lilies remaining in Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Photo by Ed Eder

greater now than before the industrial revolution and that the number of plants that have vanished in the wild is more than twice the number of extinct birds, mammals and amphibians combined.

Finally, a United Nations March study sounded alarms about the dramatic decline in the world's biodiversity, reporting that more plants and animals are threatened with extinction now than ever before in human history. Climate change, development, habitat destruction, monocultures, pesticides, home "bug zappers," deforestation – all and other factors are to blame. "Nature is collapsing all around us," Andrew Wetzler, Natural Resources Defense Council, told the *Washington Post*.

While all of us have a role, in a densely-developed area like Northern Virginia, studies like these could be seen as a virtual indictment of long-standing, questionable land use policies that, when considering a building permit or development proposal, do not start with asking the question, what is there? Local governments and state law are focused on land use, how can humans use the land, not on how to have a sustainable human existence with nature on which human life depends. In fact, having fostered policies for decades that have degraded our air, water and biodiversity, some localities are now undertaking expensive, taxpayer-financed projects to address their mistakes. Elections, like Virginia's this year on November 5, offer us the opportunity to pose questions to candidates, educate them and elect conservation-minded officials, who can act, if they have the will.

The FODM-NPS native plant restoration project and Dyke Marsh's restoration, while "big" projects for us, are tiny specks of progress, given the global challenges we face, but they are two small ways we can start locally to reverse these alarming trends. It's long past time for decision-makers to step up too.

Hope to see you soon in our favorite wetland preserve.

Glenda C. Booth

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

Virginia's Most Mysterious Birds

BY GLENDA BOOTH

This article is an edited excerpt from a January/February 2019 Virginia Wildlife magazine article.

Special Characteristics

Owls have several special features or adaptations. Their satellite-dish-shaped face funnels sound to their asymmetrical ears, positioned to help determine where sound is coming from. With supersensitive hearing, owls can hear prey rustling on the ground or a mouse digging under two feet of snow.

Unlike most birds with eyes on the sides of their heads, owls have large eyes that face forward, like human eyes, and eyesight probably ten times better than humans. Owls have nictitating membranes that help block dust. Most owls can turn their heads 270 degrees.



Barn owl showing its distinctive heart-shaped face. Photo by USFWS

Owls have comb-like, primary flight feathers on their large wings' leading edges enabling silent flight and stealthy approaches. Their sharp and curved talons are adapted to seize and squeeze prey. Their leg and foot bones are especially

stout for landing hard on prey.

An owl's beak curves downward, unlike most other raptors with protruding beaks. They prey on mice, shrews, voles and small birds. Adults eat their prey whole and regurgitate indigestibles, like bones and feathers, as a pellet. They can tear large prey apart, gulp down pieces and take pieces to nestlings.

At least three owl species are confirmed breeders in Dyke Marsh:

Great Horned Owl. Great horned owls have no horns, but with long feathered tufts on their heads, an intimidating stare, and hooting voice, this is the owl every schoolchild would likely draw if tasked. Among owls, they are big, at 22 inches in length and three pounds in weight.



Great Horned Owl. Photo by Glenda Booth

Considered to be widespread, great horned owls prefer undisturbed habitats and forests, but are also found in wetlands, forests, grasslands, backyards, cities, and other semi-open habitats. With excellent night vision, they are ace hunters and have been called "tigers of the sky." Their deadly grip can sever their prey's spine.

Barred Owl

Barred owls are known for their haunting night call, "who cooks for you, who cooks for you-all." Their name is from their "bars" or striped plumage.

Around 21 inches in length and weighing a little over a pound, they are one of the few owls that people see during the day, but generally, barred owls roost during the day and hunt at night. Highly adaptable to varied habitats, including mixed forests and disturbed areas, "Barred owls are the opportunists of the owl world," wrote Leigh Clavez in *The Hidden Lives of Owls*.

Eastern Screech-Owl. The eastern screech-owl is one of the most common owls seen in Virginia. They are 8.5 inches long and weigh around six ounces. Their plumage blends in with the tree bark of the holes and hollows where they spend much of the day. Some are reddish brown, while others are gray.

Pairing screech-owls sound like a horse whinnying. Their name comes from their screeching call. One expert, John Spahr, estimates that in Virginia around 60 percent are red and 40 percent gray.

Other Owls in Virginia:

Barn Owl. Barn owls have a distinctive, heart-shaped face earning this species the nickname, "monkey owl." They have a white underside, long legs, and several calls -- a bark, hiss, and click trill. They weigh about a pound and are 16 inches long.

Barn owls usually hunt over open fields at night. According to Cornell University's *All about Birds*, the barn owl's "ability to locate prey by sound alone is the best of any animal that has ever been tested." While some nest in natural cavities in hollow trees or in river banks, like those of the Rappahannock River's Fones Cliffs, Jeff Cooper, a biologist who specializes in raptor research, says that barn owls are almost solely dependent on artificial structures. These can include barns, abandoned buildings, church steeples, bridges, and tunnels. Because of their declining population, the state lists the barn owl as a tier III, Species of Greatest Conservation Need.



Barred Owl. Photo by Glenda Booth



Eastern Screech-Owl. Photo by Ed Eder

MYSTERIOUS BIRDS (continued on page 5)

A Message from the GWMP Superintendent, Charles Cuvelier

BY CHARLES CUVELIER

A special thanks to the Friends of Dyke Marsh for your ongoing efforts in supporting the park! The Raptor Rapture in April was a big success, which coincided with the kickoff for National Park Week and a fee-free day. The week was an opportunity for the National Park Service (NPS) to share its importance with the American people, our international visitors and the world, conveying the public stewardship responsibilities we have in preserving parks for future generations.

In late May, Brent Steury and I attended the Virginia Marine Resources Commission meeting. The NPS had a request to amend our permit associated with the Dyke Marsh restoration project. We are pleased to report that the request, which was bundled with a number of permit actions, received a passing vote by the Commission. Very soon, work will resume on the project.

My personal story of my introduction to the Park Service is linked to a high school trip to Montana and Wyoming. Imagine the opportunity to travel out west for several weeks as part of a hiking trip with a group called the Jacktown Packers. Mind you, we travelled in a yellow school bus, part of the adventure in and of itself. Preparation included local hikes, campouts and reading James Michener's *Centennial*. I was filled with romantic ideas of the American West. Conquering mountains in the Wind River Range and the Beartooth Mountains all became part of that adven-

ture. We stayed in Grand Teton National Park, a place I would return to for a summer job four years later. That summer job as an NPS ranger at the entrance station confirmed what had been planted in high school and a job became a career. Twenty-six years

later, I have the opportunity to serve as the Superintendent at the George Washington Memorial Parkway. It has been a great career and it is an honor to work with the GWMP staff and partners.

My first few months on the job have been spent understanding the park and grounding myself in the purpose the park was created by Congress. We have a rich legislative history that expresses the intent to preserve the Potomac River and places like Dyke Marsh; Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial; the Clara Barton National Historic Site and others. The George Washington Memorial Parkway is a unique design, that is, a roadway in a park, not a road in and of itself. In addition to gaining that understanding, I

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250 people attended our Raptor Rapture event in Belle Haven Park in April. Photo by G. Booth

MYSTERIOUS BIRDS (continued from page 4)

Short-eared Owl.

Short-eared owls are uncommon to rare in Virginia, but are known to breed here. They are most often seen outside the breeding season, in places like the University of Virginia's Blandy Experimental Farm in Boyce, in Tazewell, Culpeper and Orange Counties and in the DGIF's Saxis Wildlife Management Area, among others. Their small ear tufts are often invisible. Heavily streaked overall with a whitish face and yellow eyes outlined in black, they are 13-16 inches in length and seven to eight ounces in weight. They prefer open areas like marshes, meadows, and fields and hunt during daylight low over the ground.



Short-eared owl. Photo by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Svc.

Unanswered Questions

Several Virginians are studying the state's most elusive owls.

Northern Saw-whet Owls are Virginia's smallest breeding owl. At seven to eight inches in length and weigh-

ing two to five ounces, they have bright yellow eyes and a cat-like face. The male's shrill breeding call sounds like sharpening a saw blade on a whetstone, hence their name. They are highly nocturnal and masters at avoiding notice.

The northern saw-whet is one of the most understudied birds in the state, says Dr. Ashley Peele, Coordinator of Virginia's second Breeding Bird Atlas. Jay Martin of the Blue Ridge Discovery Center concurs: "Not a lot is known about it in this range, this far south." Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan lists them as a tier I Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

To better understand this little gnome of a bird, several Virginians are banding saw-whets. These biologists are analyzing migration timing, differences in magnitude of flights among years, and differences in timing and movement among age and sex classes. "The exciting part is that there are a lot more owls around that we thought," says Clair Mellinger, retired biology professor.

A Rare Visitor

At the Blandy Experimental Farm in 2015, Judy Masi heard some "little birds going crazy," says her husband, Dr. David Carr, Blandy Director. Carr soon learned that the birds were aroused by an unexpected visitor, a **long-eared owl**. "It is extremely rare to find this bird in Virginia," explains Carr. "We're at southern limit of where it winters in the East. It is an extremely secretive bird, highly nocturnal,

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Meet the Plants of Dyke Marsh: Virginia Creeper

BY PATRICIA P. SALAMONE

Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) is a vigorous woody deciduous vine in the grape family (*Vitaceae*). It can be either climbing or trailing and can grow up to 40 feet long. It climbs by means of tendrils with cup-like adhesive tips that fasten onto whatever it's climbing; this means it is less damaging to surfaces than vines that climb by means of penetrating rootlets.

Virginia creeper has compound leaves with five leaflets. The leaflets range in size from 2-6 inches and have coarsely toothed margins. The leaflets are red when they first emerge but turn green as they mature. In the early fall the leaves turn a brilliant garnet red, providing some of our earliest fall color; it's not unusual to see a still-green tree with a cloud of red Virginia creeper covering its trunk and dangling from its branches, almost like tree jewelry.



The Virginia creeper's fall foliage is a brilliant garnet red. Photo by Glenda Booth

The clusters of small greenish white flowers appear in late spring. They are followed in early fall by loose clusters of small bluish-black fruits. These berries are highly toxic to humans but are safely eaten by birds (especially songbirds) and other wildlife. Both the red fall foliage and the fruits' magenta stems can help to draw birds' attention

to these berries. The plant has other benefits to wildlife as well: the leaves and stems are also eaten by wildlife, and the thick foliage provides cover for birds and small mammals.

Virginia creeper is sometimes confused with poison ivy, but it can be distinguished from poison ivy by the fact that its leaves grow in groups of five rather than three. (Hence the specific epithet "quinquefolia.") Still, some caution is warranted: Virginia creeper's sap can cause skin irritation in some people.

Virginia creeper is native to all of the eastern and central U.S. and Canada, as far west as the Great Plains and Texas. But, as its common name suggests, it is particularly associated with the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In fact, it appears on the state seal, which was designed in July 1776 by Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, George Wythe, and Robert Carter Nicholas. The obverse of the seal, which also appears on the state flag, features a blue-gowned figure personifying civic virtue resting on her spear. A purple-robed figure representing the vanquished Tyranny lies under her foot, his crown having fallen to the ground; above this image is the word "Virginia" and below is the motto "Sic Semper Tyrannis." And surrounding the whole thing is an ornamental border of Virginia creeper.



The small bluish-black fruits of the Virginia creeper attracts birds. Credit: George H. Brusco, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflwr, Ctr.



The Virginia creeper in flower. Photo by R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Trying to Save Pumpkin Ash Trees

On May 29, under the guidance of FODMer Robert Smith, Bartlett Tree Experts employees treated 18 pumpkin ash trees (*Fraxinus profunda*) in Dyke Marsh, our effort to try to prevent the trees from dying because of the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) infestation. In general, the trees we have treated seem to be doing well, but time will tell. There are many untreated, dead ash trees in the marsh.



Tyler Hunt and Robert Smith treating an ash tree. Credit E. Stockdale

FODM started this project in 2015 and it will last 20 years. We will treat the trees every other year. This project is possible because of several generous gifts from FODM member Norm Farrell.

MYSTERIOUS BIRDS (continued from page 5)

and picks roosts hard to find."

Long-eared owls are around 14 inches in length and weigh from seven to 15 ounces. Their populations have fallen an estimated 91 percent in North America since 1970, reports Partners in Flight.

Resources

The Global Owl Project, www.biologicaldiversity.org
Owl Research Institute, www.owlresearchinstitute.org/
Project OwlNet, <http://www.projectowl.net.org/>
All about Birdhouses, www.nestwatch.org
Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas, <http://amjv.org/vabba/getting-involved/>

Storm Fells Iconic Tree

On July 17, 2019, during an early evening storm, the beautiful Eastern cottonwood tree on Dyke Island, came down. "This tree was one of the most loved bald eagle perches in the George Washington Memorial Parkway park," said Brent Steury, National Park Service Natural Resources Program manager for the Parkway. FODMers have also seen peregrine falcons, Baltimore orioles and other birds using the tree to rest and nest. "The island will never be the same," Steury commented. Ned Stone photographed the fallen tree.



MESSAGE (continued from page 5)

have been getting out to nearly every location within the park, including on a boat into the marsh. I have been trying to observe and listen to our partners, our staff, our local governments, our elected officials and our NPS leaders. This information is immensely important for context and decision-making associated with a number of contemporary issues. It is also helpful as we manage the park, decide how best to use staff time and talent, allocate our finite resources and identify where we prioritize our work.

A few park updates to share. We are seeking ideas

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

FODM welcomes our **new members** Chad Breckinridge, Juan Gonzalez, Zoran Jakovac, Alexander Ritsch, Cathy Rubino, Gary G. Russell, Nate Sibley, David B. Torrey and Paul Zucker. And a big welcome to our newest conversion to **Life Membership** Catherine M. Mackenzie.

from the public on future use of the Claude Moore farm area at Turkey Run. From the PEPC website (<https://parkplanningnps.gov>), you can learn more and provide your thoughts. We are also embarking on a traffic study for the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, colloquially known as the South Parkway. Glenda Booth is on our email and distribution list as part of our stakeholder community for both projects. We held a public meeting in July. We are working on replacing bridges on the Mount Vernon trail. Staff have provided an update on those efforts separately.

We have welcomed ten new employees to the park since January and continue to announce a number of jobs for vacant positions. Employees come and go for personal and professional reasons, but I have discovered that their time here has enabled them to be better resource stewards for the park and the Park Service. Blanca Stransky has moved from the park to Pinnacles National Park, California, as the Superintendent. Simone Monteleone has moved from our Resource Management Division Chief to a position in the Southeast Region supporting hurricane recovery efforts. Dave Gadsby is serving as the acting Resource Management Chief as we recruit to fill her vacancy. While we are sad to see them depart, we benefit from their work contributions today and into the future. I look forward to sharing more park news in the future.

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. Just click on the "Join" or "Donate" button on our membership page at www.fodm.org 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 notice by mail or by email when your renewal is due. A financial statement is available upon written request from the Virginia Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs. Thank you for your support of FODM.

DUES AMOUNT..... \$ _____
 ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION..... \$ _____
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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).

The Native Plant Project

BY GLENDA BOOTH

In 2018, FODMers and National Park Service staff cleared about half an acre on the west side of the Haul Road trail and planted over 3,500 native trees and plants. Non-native or invasive plants are well established and rampant along both sides of the trail. Why is this a problem?

Invasive plants displace native plants. University of Delaware entomologist Douglas Tallamy offers this in his book, *Bringing Nature Home*: “When a plant is transported to an area of the world that contains plants, animals and diseases with which it has never before interacted, the co-evolutionary constraints that kept it in check at home are gone, as are the ecological links that made that plant a contributing member of its ecosystem.” By favoring native plants, we can restore and sustain biodiversity, strengthen the resource base for wildlife and for people and create a healthier environment. Our natural assets are our life support system.

Tallamy calls on us to recreate nature. He wrote, “We have allowed alien plants to replace natives all over the country. Our native animals and plants cannot adapt to this gross and completely unnatural manipulation of their environment in time to negate the consequences. Their only hope for a sustainable future is for us to intervene to right

the wrongs that we have perpetrated. In order to let nature take its course, we must first recreate nature.”

The challenge now for our native plant area is to control invasive plants until the native plants are well established. We have had some dedicated volunteers since

May diligently pulling invasives like mile-a-minute and stiltgrass. On July 8, our volunteers were caught in a severe downpour, a pounding deluge coming down at 3.3 inches in an hour, the highest hourly precipitation output in Washington’s recorded history! Despite the torrent, our drenched stalwarts collected four bags of invasive plants! Hats off to all! Sign up at info@fodm.org.

You can also recreate nature in your yard. For tips, visit Plant NOVA Natives at www.plantnovanative.org and the Virginia Native Plant Society at www.vnps.org.



Blue and yellow flags mark the spot of over 3,500 native plants. Photo by Glenda Booth.

**The
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