

The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

FALL 2016



FODM Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, November 16, at 7:30 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

2017 Quarterly Meetings
 February 26 at 2 p.m. (note Sunday afternoon), May 10, September 13, November 15.
 Area Audubon Christmas Bird Counts: December 17, DC Count, January 2, Ft. Belvoir Count, see www.nvabc.org.

CONTENTS

NPS Honors FODM	2
FODMer Honored	2
President's Message	3
FODMers Celebrate	4
Photo Gallery	5
Fishing Line Danger	7
Multi-sensory Walk	8

We Can Support Dyke Marsh at Home

Eight Success Stories

Everything's connected. Birds, insects and other wildlife move about the landscape and are part of larger ecosystems. What we do in our gardens, on other properties, in commercial areas and elsewhere can support Dyke Marsh. How? We can practice what is called by some, "conservation landscaping." We can create habitat in a flower pot, in our backyard or across acres and acres, habitats that support wildlife.

On November 16, FODMers will see "Hometown Habitat, Stories of Bringing Nature Home," an eight-part, 90-minute documentary by Catherine Zimmerman that features several "habitat heroes" who share their commitment to conservation landscaping. The film tells success stories that help people understand how to restore and incorporate nature into every landscape and redefine our relationship with nature. Their stories cover topics like ecosystem services, nature's resiliency, water conservation, ecoart and environmental activism. They are stories of hope.



American bumblebee on a purple coneflower. Photo by Glenda Booth

The film's narrative thread is provided by renowned entomologist Dr. Douglas Tallamy whose research, books and lectures about non-native plants sound the alarm about habitat and species loss. In his book, *Bringing Nature Home*, he wrote, "We can no longer hope to coexist with other animals if we continue to wage war on their homes and food supplies."

MEETING (continued on page 2)

Why Are National Parks Important?

As the National Park Service's centennial comes to a close, we can reflect on why national parks matter, in the words of others:

"We are in the forever business." -- Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior

Our national parks are "America's best idea." (subtitle of a film by Ken Burns, "The National Parks," 2009

"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value." -- President Theodore Roosevelt, 1907

"Regardless of ethnicity, social status

or level of wealth, Americans appreciate the beauty of grand landscapes. Our national parks provide the opportunity for all

to experience that beauty as equals . . . These are our American cathedrals." -- Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director, National Park Service.



A beautiful summer Dyke Marsh landscape. Photo by Glenda Booth

FODMer Honored

Congratulations to FODM member E. Hunt Burke on receiving an award, the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's 2016 Business Leader of the Year. Hunt is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Burke and Herbert Bank, a member of the fifth generation of his family to manage Virginia's oldest bank. He has made and is making many civic contributions to the Northern Virginia community, including support for the Friends of Dyke Marsh.



E. Hunt Burke

Dyke Marsh Restoration Update

We had hoped to have National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Corps of Engineers (COE) officials update us on Dyke Marsh's restoration at our November 16 meeting, but we have to postpone this talk to 2017. In the meantime, NPS and COE officials are preparing the design and engineering documents for the promontory and other features of the project.



MEETING (continued from page 1)

You can learn more online here: <http://themedowproject.com/>.

This free, public program is cosponsored by Plant No-Va Natives and the George Washington Parkway Trust and will be at 7:30 p.m. at the Huntley Meadows Park Norma Hoffman Visitor Center. If you use a GPS device to find the park, do not use the park's name. Enter the park's address, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, Virginia 22306.

NPS Gives FODM an Award

The National Park Service (NPS) gave the Friends of Dyke Marsh an award for outstanding volunteerism and partnership on August 25, 2016. Alexcy Romero, Superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), presented the award, a wooden plaque in the shape of the NPS arrowhead symbol, to FODM President Glenda Booth at Fort Hunt Park during an employee recognition event.



Blanca Alvarez Stransky, Parkway Deputy Superintendent, Glenda Booth, Alex Romero, Parkway Superintendent. Photo by Mark Maloy

FODM displayed the award at the National Park Service/George Washington Memorial Parkway's 100th anniversary celebration in Glen Echo Park on August 27, 2016. Kamari Allen, Centennial Volunteer Ambassador, and Laura Grantier, a NPS volunteer, helped at FODM's table (photo, left).



Kamari Allen and Laura Grantier with the award at FODM's display table. Photo by Glenda Booth

Friends of Dyke Marsh Board of Directors

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

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

Editor:

Dorothy McManus

Assistant Editor:

T. D. Hobart

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

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

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



President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

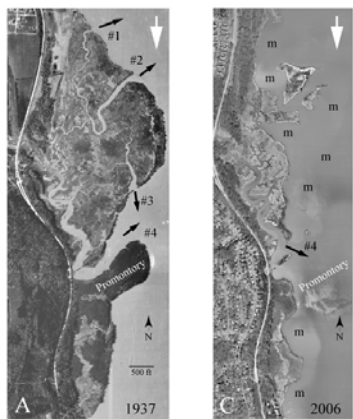
An Imperiled Wetland

We are indeed honored by the 125 FODM members and friends and 16 local, state and federal government officials who attended our October 2 anniversary celebration at the American Horticultural Society on the Potomac River. I used the opportunity to again urge the National Park Service and the U.S. Corps of Engineers to accelerate the marsh's restoration. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) concluded that Dyke Marsh will be gone by 2035 without action.

Here is a refresher on the marsh's status based on USGS's 2010 study, a 2013 update and a 2014 paper, titled "Interagency Partnership to Assess and Restore a Degraded Urban Riverine Wetland: Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, Virginia," authored by Brent W. Steury, Ronald J. Litwin, Erik T. Oberg, Joseph P. Smoot, Milan J. Pavich, Geoffrey Sanders and Vincent L. Santucci. Quotations are from the paper and are posted online here: <http://www.georgewright.org/312steury.pdf>.

Highlights:

- "Dyke Marsh is the last large remnant of a series of once extensive and numerous tidal freshwater marshes that were lost to expanding development of the Washington area."



Removal of the promontory (shown in left figure) has been a major factor in the erosion of Dyke Marsh. Photo by NPS

developed <1,000 years ago."

- In 1974, the wetland was 83 acres in size; in 2014, it was approximately 50 acres.

- Dredging or mining destabilized the marsh, "causing persistent erosion, shoreline retreat and tidal channel widening. . . ."

- In 2013, shoreline erosion occurred "at a rate of 6-8 feet per year just prior to 2010, and is increasing. . . . From 1976 to 2009, overall marsh acreage loss to erosion has in-

creased from 0.3 acres per year to over 1.2 acres per year, and also is increasing. . . ."

- Commercial dredging removed a forested promontory immediately south of the marsh. Eliminating the promontory,



Fallen trees along the shoreline are one indication of erosion. Photo by Glenda Booth

"exposed the marsh to wave energy generated by episodic cyclonic storms (tropical storms and hurricanes) tracking upriver from the south. Removal of the promontory "enabled greater potential wave energy to be expended directly against the marsh's southern shoreface."

- Pre-dredging, wave energy was partly dissipated by the Potomac River's shallow western river bottom south of the wetland. The marsh was dredged to depths of 30 feet below mean low water in formerly shallow areas and in emergent wetland. The shallow water and the promontory served as erosion buffers, "causing larger waves to crest and to shoal well before reaching the marsh shoreface."

- Non-storm conditions also contribute to continuing erosion. "Dredging altered the hydrology by destroying most of the tidal channel network that historically existed on the marsh. . . ." The tidal channel network "directed rising tides and their suspended sediments back into and onto the interior marsh surface through highly sinuous, dendritic and shallow tidal channels, dissipating that tidal energy, and consequently trapping that formerly suspended sediment onto the marsh surface with each successive tidal cycle." Currently, there is a "marsh-tide imbalance" and ". . . non-storm tidal energy is now slowly stripping sediment from the interior of the marsh and from its distributaries, rather than adding sediment, as would be predicted under undisturbed and balanced tidal marsh conditions."

- "The most desirable restoration scenario is to rebalance any natural depositional processes that enable Dyke Marsh to sustain itself in a resilient state," starting with replacement of the promontory.

- ". . . the remaining ~50 acres still provide valuable ecosystem services. . . ." including acting as a storm buffer and providing "green space."

- "Dyke Marsh is a . . . significant migratory resource (and urban corridor habitat) along the Atlantic Flyway in the Mid-Atlantic Region."

Glenda C. Booth

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

FODMers Celebrate with Friends and Supporters

BY GLENDA BOOTH

On a beautiful, balmy Sunday afternoon, October 2, 125 FODMers and friends celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS) and the start of Dyke Marsh's restoration.

President Glenda Booth recounted the longstanding, consistent Congressional support for restoration, including the 1959 legislation that added the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve to the national park system. That law, P.L. 86-41, clearly stated Congress's purpose for the preserve: "so that fish and wildlife development and their preservation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount."

She shared a message from former Michigan Congressman John Dingell, who was instrumental in the passage of the 1959 bill: "Congratulations to the Friends of Dyke Marsh on your 40th anniversary. I am sorry that I could not be with you today to celebrate this important milestone. Forty years ago, we came together to set aside this land for future generations to enjoy and our dream has been realized thanks to your hard work. Your dedication to conservation and preservation is admirable and worthy of our praise. Best of luck in the future and please keep up the good work."

She also recognized Chris Risley from Toronto, Canada, son of an FODM founder Ed Risley and Cynthia. About Ed, Glenda quoted one of his friends who said, "His gentle but persuasive enthusiasm was contagious."

Virginia eighth district Congressman Don Beyer, citing biologist E.O. Wilson, who proposes that half the planet be set aside for biodiversity, said, "E.O. Wilson would be pleased. This restoration of Dyke Marsh is a great start!" Referring to entrepreneur Elon Musk, who proposes to colonize Mars in 2020, in part because of how much damage humans are doing to this planet, Congressman Beyer said, "We need to save this planet instead!"

Introducing former Virginia eighth district Congressman Jim Moran, Congressman Beyer said, that without Congressman Moran's "backroom machinations," there would be no Dyke Marsh restoration, applauding the \$24.9 million grant in 2013 from the U.S. Department of Interior for the marsh's restoration. Congressman Moran told the group, "Dyke Marsh would not have been preserved if the people of the community hadn't acted and brought the problem to the attention of Congressman Dingell and others. It would have been gone long ago if the dredging had continued. Dyke Marsh is unique and preserving it makes this a better



Guests enjoyed a cake recognizing the anniversaries. Photo by G. Booth



Friends of Dyke Marsh President Glenda Booth spoke to the many friends and supporters who came to celebrate the 40th anniversary of FODM and the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. Photo by Ned Stone

community now and for generations to come."

State legislators presented FODM with a resolution passed by the Virginia General Assembly in its 2016 session commending the organization for its stewardship.

Glenda presented to Alex Romero, George Washington Memorial Parkway Superintendent, and Michael Bean, Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, a photograph of a marsh wren, and explained that FODM surveyors did not observe any marsh wrens in the breeding bird surveys in 2015 and 2016, for the first time ever. She stressed that restoration could create and expand habitat for this bird and other wildlife. Superintendent Romero commended "all the passion for this amazing resource" and congratulated FODM for 40 years of "successful stewardship, advocacy and education." He cited three major NPS milestones for Dyke Marsh restoration in 2016: completing the environmental impact statement in June; signing an agreement on restoration design with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in July; and a September 29 "Rapid Review Team"



Glenda Booth presented a photo of a marsh wren to Alexy Romero and Michael Bean. Photo by Ned Stone

celebrated FODM for 40 years of "successful stewardship, advocacy and education." He cited three major NPS milestones for Dyke Marsh restoration in 2016: completing the environmental impact statement in June; signing an agreement on restoration design with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in July; and a September 29 "Rapid Review Team"

CELEBRATION (continued on page 6)



40th Anniversary Photo Gallery

Pictured clockwise: Guests enjoyed a buffet and submitted bids at a silent auction of 120 items and services. Congressman Don Beyer (D-8) and former Congressman James Moran were among the many officials who attended the celebration. State legislators presented FODM a resolution honoring FODM's stewardship. Left to right: Del. Mark Levine (D-45), Del. Mark Sickles (D-43), Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30), Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) and Del. Paul Krizek (D-44). The Northern Virginia Mountain Dulcimers provided the music. Guests enjoyed the gardens and refreshments on the lawn.

Photos by Ned Stone and T.D. Hobart





The André Bleumel Meadow at River Farm with AHS headquarters. Photo by G. Booth

or recognize its value and fragility. It's not Yellowstone, it's not the Grand Canyon, but it is our little slice of wilderness right here in suburbia. When restored, it could be our Everglades." She contended that with the enthusiastic support evidenced by the event's attendance, restoration can happen.

The celebration was held at the American Horticultural Society's headquarters on the Potomac River in the Mount Vernon area. The Northern Virginia Mountain Dulcimers provided music.

Other officials who attended the celebration:

- From the U.S. Geolog-

presentation, precursor to the "Design Advisory Board," required for projects costing over \$1 million.

In closing, Glenda noted that NPS preserves the most beautiful, treasured and historic places, in the words of NPS Director John Jarvis, "our American cathedrals." She added, "In some ways, Dyke Marsh is hidden. Thousands drive through it and do not realize they are in a national park, that the marsh is there



Officials included Karen Corbett-Sanders and Del. Paul Krizek (D-44). Photo by Ned Stone

ical Survey, William Lellis, Deputy Associate Director, Ecosystems, and Ron Litwin, lead scientist for the 2010 study that explains that Dyke Marsh will be gone by 2035 and why

- Colonel Edward P. Chamberlayne, District Engineer, Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

• State Legislators: From the Virginia Senate, Scott A. Surovell and Adam Ebbin; from the House of Delegates, Paul Krizek, Mark Levine and Mark Sickles

• Local Elected Officials: Allison Silberberg, Mayor of Alexandria; Supervisor Daniel Storck, Mount Vernon Member, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; Karen Corbett-Sanders, Mount Vernon Member, Fairfax County School Board; and Scott Cameron, Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District

FODM extends our appreciation to the National Park Service's maintenance team, our many sponsors and the 30 volunteers listed below who made the October 2 celebration a big success.



The American Horticultural Society's headquarters at River Farm, site of the celebration. Photo by T.D. Hobart



Mayor Allison Silberberg (right) and NPS Superintendent Alexcy Romero attended the event. Photo by Ned Stone

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Art League of Alexandria
Belle Haven Animal Medical Centre
Belle View Safeway
Belmont Bay Farms
Burke & Herbert Bank
Del Ray Pizza
A Delicate Balance,
Michael D. Decker
DiMuro Ginsburg, PC
Dishes of India
Don Beyer Volvo
Fox Run Nurseries
Tom and Kathy Galliot
Steven and Kathy Hantzis
Rob Hartwell, in memory of
Elizabeth Hartwell
Hollin Hall Automotive
Hollin Hall Safeway
195 Business Parks
Management II, LLC

Jack Taylor's Alexandria Toyota
Bill and Anita Kerr
La Madeleine
Minuteman Press
Barry Murphy
Northern Virginia Mountain Dulcimers
Patterson Real Estate Group
TTR/Sothebys International Realty
Pinto Contractors
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Primo Family Restaurant
The Reiley Group, ReMax Allegiance
Annelise Smith, Long & Foster
Robert J. Surovell
UnWined
The Virginia Florist
Rex and Susan Wagner
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley and
Walsh, PC
Katherine Ward, Long & Foster
Wetland Studies and Solutions

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Trudi Hahn, Chair
Eldon Boes
Glenda Booth
Scott Cameron
Joe Canny
Marie Canny
Larry Cartwright
Ann Colaneri
Greg Crider
Duncan Hobart
Jim Hutzler
Susan Koscis
Susan Lindner
Virginia Martin
Patty McCarthy
Brian McAlevy

Mary McAlevy
Dorothy McManus
Greg Nemetz
Alyssa Pease
Barbara Perry
John Perry
Pat Salamone
Bettina Schroeder
Robert Smith
Ned Stone
Jessie Strother
Mara Surovell
Bob Veltkamp
Katya Wanzer
Katherine Wychulis
Mark Wychulis

Fishing Line Poses Danger

Fishing line snagged in trees, especially along the shoreline, poses a real danger to birds because they can easily become entangled what is usually thin, clear, nylon or monofilament lines.



Great blue heron hanged by fishing line. Photo by Ned Stone

This year we know of at least three unfortunate incidents in “our” part of the Potomac River. In September 2016, an osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) died snagged in a tree along the Potomac shoreline. On April 18, 2016, FODMer Eldon Boes, a Porto Vecchio resident, reported that the female osprey using the nesting platform on condo property died after she entangled her primary flight feathers in fishing line. Eldon removed the fishing line from the nest. In June 2016, Ed Eder photographed a tree swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) with its feet entangled in fishing line which, as Ed posted on Facebook, “upset the delicate balance of food delivery.” In 2010, FODMer Ned Stone photographed a great blue heron (*Ardea Herodias*) ensnared, basically “hanged,” by fishing line caught in a tree near the river.

Sunday Morning Bird Walks

Bird walks are held Sunday mornings, all seasons. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and all are welcome to join us.

Welcome New FODM Members

We welcome to the Friends of Dyke Marsh our **new members** Dick Bauder, Laurie Blackburn, The Cooper Family, Karen Deans, Tami Davis Entabi, Judy Harris, Virginia Martin, Susan Moore and Alexandra Moskaluk.

And we welcome our new **Life Member** Susan Craig and our conversion to **Life Membership** Nicholas Kuttner.

Fortunately, the Belle Haven Marina has a fishing line disposal container. Many people in the fishing community use it.



Fishing line container

Chris Hunt of Trout Unlimited offers this guidance: “We urge all anglers to retrieve fishing line that becomes caught in branches or rocks to avoid the potential for fish and wildlife entanglements. Also, we urge all anglers to collect even the smallest pieces of line (like the little tags are clipped off near the hook) to avoid any unnecessary messes or pollution. In addition, we ask anglers . . . to pitch in and clean up after those who failed to do so. The bottom line is, as anglers, we owe it to those who come after us to pack out what we pack in, and be Good Samaritans of the resource by demonstrating by example what it means to a true angler. That means you're as much a conservationist as you are a fisherman. Unless we nurture our fisheries and keep them clean, we're not leaving behind the same opportunities for the next generation of anglers who will hopefully follow in our footsteps.”

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

FODM Membership - Dues and Contributions

Support the Friends of Dyke Marsh by becoming a member or renewing your membership. Benefits include the Friends’ quarterly publication, *The Marsh Wren*; quarterly membership meetings with knowledgeable speakers; Sunday morning bird walks and notification of activities in and around the marsh. Most importantly, your membership lends your voice in support of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve and our efforts to advocate for full restoration of the marsh. We encourage you to save paper (trees) and mailing costs by becoming a member or renewing your membership online at www.fodm.org. Just click on the “Join” or “Donate” button on our membership page to make your tax-deductible contribution by credit card or from your bank account securely through PayPal. For help, info@fodm.org. If you prefer, you can send a check, payable to FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, Virginia 22307. The annual dues are \$15.00 per household, \$250.00 for life membership for an individual. You will receive a separate notice by mail or by email when your renewal is due. Thank you for your support of FODM.

DUES AMOUNT..... \$ _____
 ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION..... \$ _____
 TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED..... \$ _____
 NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____
 TELEPHONE NUMBER _____
 EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Please address any questions or comments about *The Marsh Wren* to Dorothy McManus and about membership to Bob Veltkamp. You may contact them by mail at FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, Virginia 22307 -7183, by telephone or by email (see page 2).

Multi-sensory Walk in Dyke Marsh

BY RACHEL LEQUIRE, Centennial Coordinator, George Washington Memorial Parkway

You don't need sight to have vision and enjoy the parks! George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) rangers, with help from FODMers Jessie Strother and Ned Stone, led a multi-sensory nature walk in Dyke Marsh on September 24 for low-vision and blind people. The 15 participants walked along the Haul Road trail and felt tree bark,



Park Ranger Rachel Lequire led 15 participants on a multi-sensory walk. Photo by Mary Bielamowicz

snake skins and animal pelts and asked many questions. Leaders helped the group identify birds, like bluejays, by their calls and described the scenery. The walkers got close to a great blue heron and heard its "takeoff." It was a beautiful experience for all as we exercised our capacity to engage all of our senses to experience the beauty and wonder of nature. "The participants absolutely loved the experience, the interaction and enjoying nature," Jessie commented. FODM has urged GWMP to continue these walks.



Ranger Mireya Pasa helped participants experience the feel of animal pelts. Photo by Rachel Lequire

**The
Marsh Wren**

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