



SUMMER 2021

Vol. 3, No.3

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2021 WINNERS**

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COLLABORATE TO
ENHANCE PARKS**

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WELCOME**

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OPPORTUNITIES
OPEN AGAIN**

NEWSLETTER



Photo by Suzie Xu

LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OFFER DIVERSE VIEWS OF ROYAL LAKE

The FORL leadership team extends a heartfelt THANK YOU to all the photographers (18!) who submitted their work for consideration in the first summer newsletter photo contest.

Judging an entry as “the best” in each category was very difficult. The photos submitted into the different entry categories reflect the diverse aspects of Royal Lake parks and provided an abundance of riches to challenge a discerning judging committee. (There were so many animal photos, we subdivided the animal entries into Bird and Non-Bird categories.)

In addition to the final “pick” of a winner in each category, several photos are deserving of an “honorable mention” and included in this issue of the newsletter. If yours was not among the photos chosen for this summer issue, please know your participation in the contest is deeply appreciated and we hope you will try again the next time!

Congratulations to the winners of the summer 2021 photo contest!

Suzie Xu (Scenic; photo above)

Angela Camp (Bird)

Grant McDonald (Animal Other than Bird)

Lourdes Rojas Alvarez (Plant)

Sarah M. Berry (People in the Park)

Catherine Grove (Art in Nature)

Cont'd

About the winner of the Scenic photo: “One early morning in spring, the misty sunrise reflected in the lake stopped me in my tracks. I was captivated by the reflection’s symmetry, the subtle colors of sunrise and mist, the silhouette of trees and the graceful sail of Canada geese...by the beauty and serenity of this sunrise.” Suzie Xu

Honorable Mention Scenic

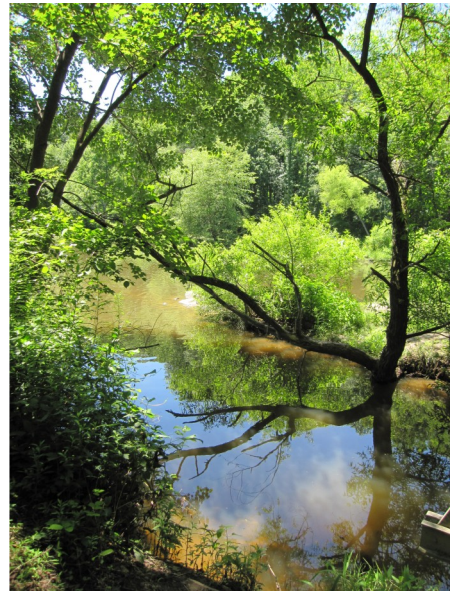


Photo by Eleanor Schenk

Winner of Plant Category



Photo by Lourdes Rojas Alvarez

Winner of People in the Park



Photo by Sarah M. Berry

“First snow’ captures my four-year-old son’s excitement and sense of wonder as he made the first tracks in the snow on the bridge near Lakeside Park in winter 2020.”
Sarah M. Berry

Honorable Mention



Photo by Jade Abuzaid

Lourdes is from Peru and was visiting Royal Lake which she loves. She snapped this photo on one of her walks around the lake.

Winner of the Bird Category



Photo by Angela Camp

"I was walking around Royal Lake by the large grassy hill when I saw the Green Heron obviously fishing but with his back to me. Right after he caught this little fish he turned around, almost like he was showing it to me." Angela Camp

Honorable Mention



Photo by Catherine Grove

Winner of Animal (Other than Bird) Category

Honorable Mention

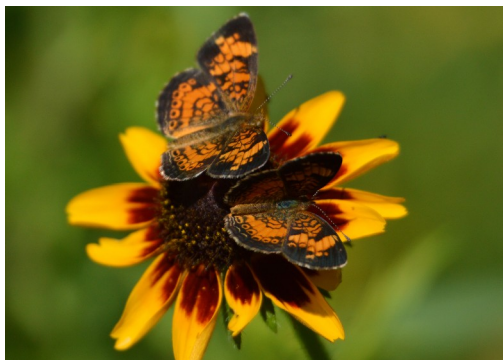


Photo by Stuart Chirtel



Photo by Grant McDonald

"As I arrived at the lake this particular morning, I came across this beaver crossing the stream. I sat and waited, taking many shots as it swam from bank to bank. I got many shots that day but this was my favorite." Grant McDonald

Winner of Art in the Park Category

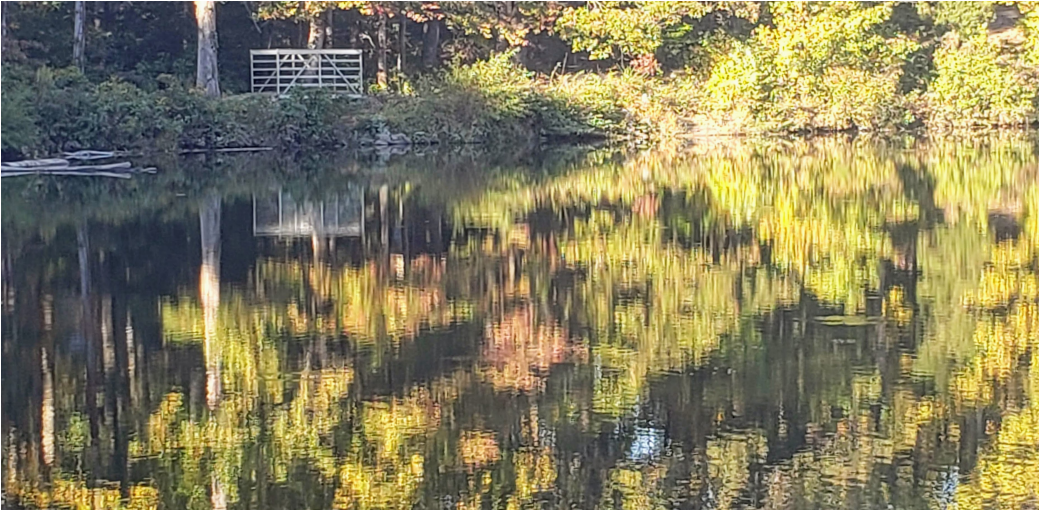


Photo by Catherine Grove

"I've lived by the lake since 2007 yet almost every time I run I find something that inspires me. Reflections especially grab my attention. They can change the ordinary into something fantastic. I go down the rabbit hole like Alice and hope to show others something new or what isn't obvious about the landscape they are seeing."

Catherine Grove

Other Photos that Caught Our Eyes



Photo by Donna Chittum

Honorable Mention



Photo by Stephen Harris

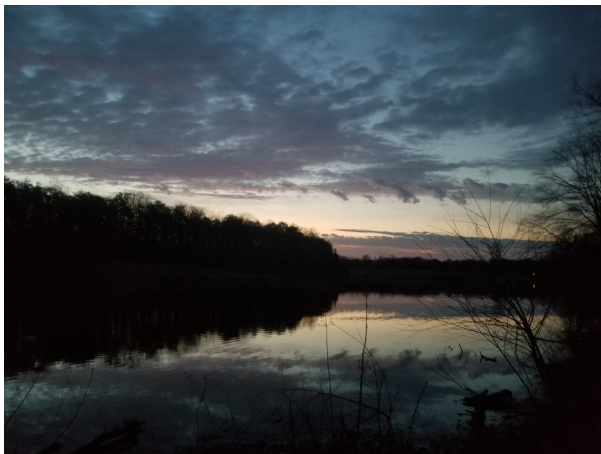


Photo by Tom McCook

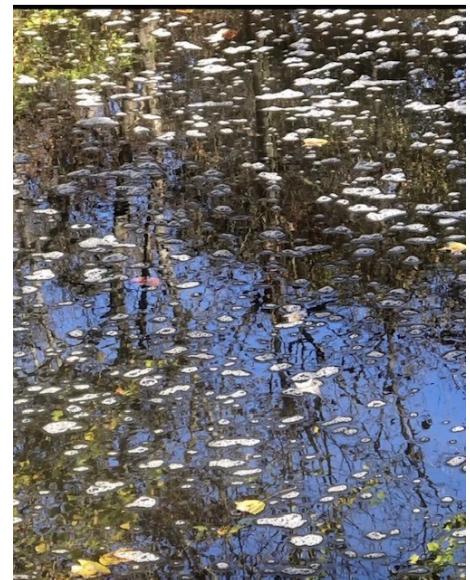


Photo by Suzie Xu

COLLABORATION OF COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS ENHANCES ROYAL LAKE PARK

By Emily Burton, MS4 Program Analyst,
Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

Folks who walk the trail around Royal Lake may have noticed the new plantings at the edge of the water near and around the boat landing at Royal Lake Park. This is the result of a unique collaboration among several state, county, and private organizations toward environmental restoration and preservation.

In 2019, Operation Stream Shield (OSS) was developed as a pilot program in the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) and became a permanent Program in Spring, 2020. The program includes a unique partnership with the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH) that benefits the environment and provides assistance for individuals experiencing homelessness. Volunteers from the Lamb Center in Fairfax contribute time and energy to OSS projects.

The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) is also very engaged in the program, most recently introducing Invasive Management Area Program (IMA) volunteers to OSS crews to assist with the removal of invasive plants throughout Fairfax County Park properties. This new level of community engagement harnesses the willingness and eagerness of the volunteers to teach and inspire the OSS crews about plant identification and care for native plants. The collaboration allows everyone to feel and see the impact of their work on the community in real time.

Kathy Frederick, Vegetation Management Ecologist with OSS, works with the clients to enhance stormwater project sites that are no longer under maintenance by a contractor. Recently, Kathy coordinated with the VA Department of Forestry to utilize the extra seedlings they had on hand from a tree sale. The seedlings were used to stabilize the ground at the edge of the boat ramp and picnic areas at Royal Lake Park.



MaryAnne Boyer works with OSS volunteer to plant native species at water's edge.



OSS volunteers get ready to plant!

Kathy Frederick and IMA Volunteer, MaryAnne Boyer, led OSS volunteer crews in planting river birch, redbuds, pin oaks, silky willows, and black willows. All native plants, they will support the animals both in and out of the water, as well as pollinators that we rely on. The pin oaks by themselves support more than 500 types of pollinators by providing shelter, food and habitat. The project, therefore, served a dual purpose in stabilizing the land at water's edge and in providing support to native wildlife.

For more information about the program, please email DPWESSTW-OSS@fairfaxcounty.gov, or call 703-324-5500, TTY 711. To report a litter problem spot, please email DPWESSWMPTrashmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Anglers Are Welcome If Fishing Responsibly

By Lynn Cline

Royal Lake is a recreational lake and stormwater control basin that serves many interests. It is used for exercise, concerts, picnics, boating, viewing wildlife, and fishing. These activities are all compatible if everyone follows the environmental rule of “leave no trace.”

Unfortunately, those of us who walk around the lake often see fishing line discarded along the shore or left hanging from tree limbs. Plastic bobbers and plastic bait containers are also discarded along the shore. These items pollute our environment and can be dangerous to wildlife.



Photo by Laura Maupin

Spring, especially, is a time when visitors love to see ducklings and goslings roving around the lake with their ever vigilant parents as seen in the photo on the left.

This year at least one gosling died after being entangled in fishing gear. (See photo on left.) Two others were found entwined and had to have fishing line removed from around their legs. The line had already cut a groove in one gosling's leg. (See photo below.) These graphic pictures show the unfortunate consequence of unthinking behavior on wildlife.



It's not just birds affected by careless discarding of fishing tackle. There have been incidents of turtles ensnared in fishing line. This spring, a dog even swallowed a hook with rancid bait and line. Fortunately, the owner was able to remove the line quickly and the dog is fine. Entanglement can prevent a bird from swimming or flying. If wrapped around a bird's or turtle's beak or neck, it can prevent the animal from eating. In addition,



Good samaritan rescues gosling from fishing line injury.

small pieces of plastic from lures may look like food to wildlife and can cause problems when ingested.

Royal Lake welcomes anglers to the park, but if you come to fish, please remove all the items you brought with you. The wildlife, our environment, and other visitors will benefit from this simple act of following the admonition: “leave no trace.”

TRAIL MAINTENANCE WORK-DAY SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 21

The workday held in May was a roaring success with more than forty people showing up to help transport and spread crushed stone over sections of trail that are prone to becoming muddy or where tree roots protrude across the trail. The next maintenance workday is scheduled for Saturday, August 21 from 8 to 11am.

Community volunteers, supervised by the FORL team, are needed to do this sort of trail maintenance because the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) only has enough staff to deal with major trail work, such as replacement of deteriorating bridges. FCPA provides the needed materials and approves all trail work projects before the FORL commits to them.

We will meet on the side trail that connects the parking lot of the Lakeside Swim Club to the trail that goes around the lake. You can participate for all or any part of the three-hour work period. All age groups are welcome. If you have shovels, rakes, tampers, and (*especially*) wheelbarrows, please bring them. Otherwise, just bring yourself! It's always a pleasure to be out with neighbors working to improve the trail around our beautiful lake.

Starting up again: ROAD RAIDERS!!!

Beginning in September, the monthly gathering of folks to clean up targeted areas in the community will be back in business. The revised schedule is:

- September 19: 8-8:30am. Robinson HS area.
- October 11: 8-10am. Shanes Creek/Roberts Rd.
- November 2: 8-10am. Shanes Creek/Gainsborough
- December 11: 8-8:30am. Crooked Creek Park.

Tom McCook hopes to see the "regulars" back to help and welcomes newcomers to these community clean up events. For more information contact Tom at trmccook@gmail.com.

CONCERT SERIES "BRADDOCK NIGHTS" BACK THIS SUMMER

The local community has, for many years, enjoyed "Arts in the Parks" sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Authority. Last summer, the music concerts were canceled due to Covid-19.

This summer of 2021, the music is back in the parks, including on **Friday nights at 7:30** at our own Royal Lake Park! The concerts offer an exciting variety of musical genres from jazz to zydeco to bluegrass to rock.

For a schedule of performances visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances



Intrepid volunteer on the last spring clean up crew. The next FORL sponsored clean up day will be in September.

**Remember to check out the FORL website
<http://www.friendsofroyallake.org/> for the latest information
about upcoming events and to view back issues of the newsletter!**



Photo by Grant McDonald

EDITOR: Suzanne Doherty

COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS? IDEAS?

Contact Suzanne at
jewelboxgardensbysuzanne@gmail.com

