



May 2023 Newsletter

Come to the 25th Annual Eagle Festival Saturday, May 13, 10 AM to 6 PM



Come to Mason Neck State Park on Saturday May 13 for the Eagle Festival -- a day filled with special presentations, shows, and interactive exhibits by environmental organizations. **Parking and admission are free!**

Secret Garden Birds and Bees, a long-time park favorite, will have two programs with live raptors. There will also be puppet shows for young and old.



Janice the Griot, an accomplished and award-winning storyteller, will enchant audiences with her folk tales and other stories.



It wouldn't be an Eagle Festival without eagles. Visitors can watch an eagle cam showing live views of a nest with two eaglets on the big screen TV in the Visitor Center, and someone will be on hand to tell you all about Bald Eagles.



For those who love birds, there will be two guided bird walks – one at 8:15 and one at 9 AM – led by experienced members of the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia. The walks are limited to 15 people. You can register for the bird walks [here](#).

Costumed characters will entertain you and your children, and conservation partners from all over Northern Virginia will have interactive exhibits for you to explore.



If the weather is good, you can try out a canoe, a kayak and maybe even a stand-up paddleboard at the cartop boat launch.



Two bands provide musical accompaniment to your day – the Difficult Run String Band; and Joe Chiocca and John David Coppola.



Food vendors will also be on hand to provide empanadas, ice cream, vegetarian delights and the standard hot dogs, hamburgers, fries, and other fair food.

You won't want to miss Eagle Fest! Join us on Saturday, May 13, 10 AM to 6 PM for a fun-filled and informative day! You can see a schedule of the live events and a map of the exhibitors [here](#).

Wanted: Volunteers for the Eagle Festival

The Eagle Festival is a wonderful opportunity to highlight all that Mason Neck State Park has to offer, but it can't happen without a lot of volunteers. The park needs people to help with parking, greet guests, coordinate with exhibitors, dress up as costumed characters and more. Can you help out for a couple of hours either before or after you enjoy the festival? You can learn what volunteer positions are available and sign up for them [here](#).

Information on Trail Accessibility added to the Friends' Website



The Friends are continuing to make Mason Neck State Park more accessible to mobility-impaired visitors. We have added a tab to our

website that enables viewers to learn about the accessibility at the park. The website provides a link to a crowd-sourced map with detailed information on the accessibility of trails throughout the United States, including several trails in the park. The link to the Accessibility tab on our website is [here](#).

It's Time to Start Snapping Photos for the 2023 “Picture the Park’s Magic” Photography Contest



The Friends of Mason Neck State Park are holding a photography contest again this year. We aren't accepting submissions yet, but now is the time to get out to the park to start snapping photos. We will be looking for images that capture the magic of the park. This year there will be a 1st prize winner (\$200) for youth (ages under 18), a 1st prize winner (\$200) for adults (ages 18 and up), and a grand prize winner (\$300).

Each photographer must submit at least one image of Park Staff in Action – an image showing uniformed Mason Neck State Park staff interacting with the public, performing park maintenance, or other official duties - for any of their photos to be considered. Photographers may also submit images of Flora and Fauna – images taken in the park of native plants and animals; and Aquatic Activities – images showing people enjoying Belmont Bay or Kane’s Creek in kayaks, canoes, or other non-powered watercraft. Each photographer will be limited to three images in total for their submission.



All images must have been taken inside the boundaries of the park or within 100 yards of the shore, any time in 2022 or 2023.

Photographers may submit their photos any time from July 1 through September 15, 2023. Additional details on image format, maximum file size limit, and accompanying submission forms will be announced in the coming weeks.

2022 Picture the Magic Contest Winners



Grand Prize – “Kayaking Kane’s Creek” by Donna Cline



1st Place Youth – “Brothers” by Madelyn Lessard



1st Prize Adult – “Juvenile Bald Eagle” by Angela Cam

Friends of Mason Neck State Park Receive Community Service Award



Photo: Terry Head

The South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce has awarded the 2023 Outstanding Community Service Award to The Friends of Mason Neck State Park. Casey Whitmarsh, the Chair of the South Fairfax Chamber, presented the award to Hillary Clawson, the Friends' President, along with a check for \$100. The Chamber presented the award to honor the Friends' efforts to conserve, enhance, and interpret Mason Neck State Park's natural, educational, recreational, cultural, and historic resources.

May Programs at Mason Neck State Park



Photo: Randy Streufert

Each month, the park staff offers multiple programs on the park's wildlife and nature. You can find the calendar of events on the Park's [website](#). Just scroll down until you see the list of upcoming events and click on "More events at this park."

Please Help Us Support Mason Neck State Park!



If you are already a member of the Friends of Mason Neck State Park,
Thank You! Your membership dues and donations help us to support the
Park, including funding initiatives that improve the accessibility of the park.

If you aren't a member, or your membership has lapsed, you can join the
Friends [here](#). You can also donate to the Friends [here](#).