



Friends of Mason Neck State Park

November 2021 Newsletter

Swanfall is Back!

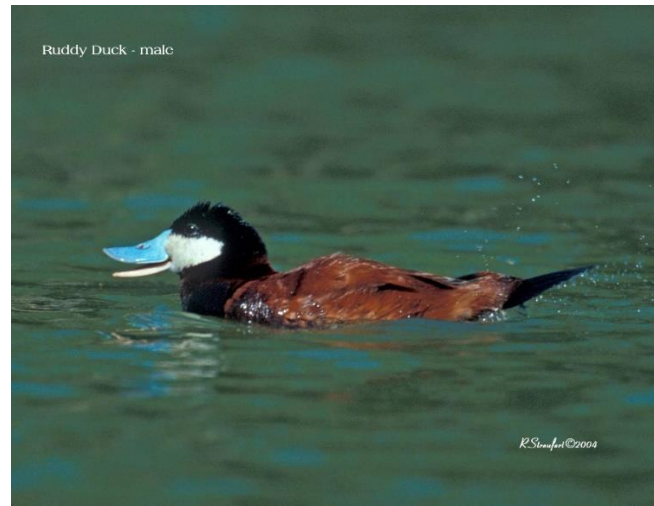
The Friends are delighted to announce the return of our traditional holiday program – Swanfall.

We're doing things a little differently this year. As much as we enjoy welcoming you to the Jammes House, we felt that its limited space would not be comfortable in today's climate. Instead, we're holding Swanfall in the Ann Mason Room of Gunston Hall, a wonderful facility surrounded by 550 acres of beautiful, historic grounds right here on Mason Neck. Designed to accommodate 125 seated guests, the room should provide ample space for everyone to feel comfortable with their personal social distancing needs.

We'll start with a great buffet at 2 PM.



At 3 PM, We'll enjoy "Wintering Waterbirds of the Potomac River."



A wide diversity of geese, ducks and other waterbirds spend the winter in Northern Virginia. Mason Neck, including both the state park and the wildlife refuge, play an important part in sustaining them through the winter. We'll learn about the lives of the birds, citizen science studies, and the conservation needs of birds and people along the river.

Our presenter is Greg Butcher, the Migratory Species Coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service International Programs.



Greg is a PhD. ornithologist who has worked for the National Audubon Society, American Birding Association Partners in Flight, Birders World Magazine and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. He is also Vice President of Audubon Society of Northern Virginia. Greg is a recognized public speaker and interpreter for bird conservation and ecology worldwide.

You can enjoy Swanfall for only \$15 per person, but it's open only to members of the Friends of Mason Neck State Park. Each member can register one guest. You can register for Swanfall [here](#). If you're not a member you can join the Friends for as little as \$20 per year [here](#).

Order Mason Neck State Park 2022 Calendars Now!

Get a unique holiday gift for family and friends while supporting the Friends of Mason Neck State Park. The calendars come in three different versions:



Singing Songbirds



Bald Eagles



Butterflies

All three versions depict species seen in Mason Neck State Park.

The photographs were taken by the Friends' own Randy Streufert, who recently won the 2020 Grand Prize in the National Wildlife Federation's "Garden for Wildlife" photo contest and whose photos have been featured in "Virginia Wildlife" magazine and other publications.

The calendars are available only by prepaid orders and can be ordered until **November 15**. We'll mail them to you in time for you to use them as holiday gifts. The price is \$25.00 per calendar. You can order your calendars [here](#).

Bald Eagle Rescued Near Mason Neck State Park

Mason Neck State Park Assistant Manager Taylore Willis, Friends of Mason Neck State Park President Hillary Clawson and her husband Kem, and members from the Raptor Conservancy rescued an injured bald eagle on October 4. A guest called the previous night to inform the park staff that an eagle was hurt on a shoreline near the park. Park staff realized that the only way to access it would be from the waters of Occoquan Bay and asked the Clawsons if they would be willing to use their boat to help rescue the bird.



With Kem as Captain, Hillary as Co-Captain, and the eagle rescue team aboard, they were able to find the injured eagle just past Sandy Point and safely capture it.



The rescue team took the eagle to the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center in Boyce, VA to receive supportive care and diagnostic tests.



Park After Dark was a Smashing Success!

Rainy weather gave way to a breezy but dry evening as dozens of people turned out for the Park's annual Park After Dark event.

Adults and children alike gathered around the campfire to make s'mores, while hot apple cider kept everyone warm.



Children enjoyed walks through the Enchanted Forest, where they met a frog, a raccoon, an owl, a fox and a bald eagle, who talked about their lives in the park. The Friends donned animal costumes and provided other support for the event.



Adults and teens experienced the park at night on “no lights” hikes on the park’s trails. Park after Dark is just one of the many events at the Park for which the Friends provide financial support and donate their volunteer time.

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's activities and enable us to fund special events such as our Owl Moon evening each fall and the annual Swanfall Holiday Program each December.

If you aren't a member, or your membership has lapsed, you can become a member at [Join the Friends of Mason Neck State Park](#).

You can also donate to the Friends [here](#).