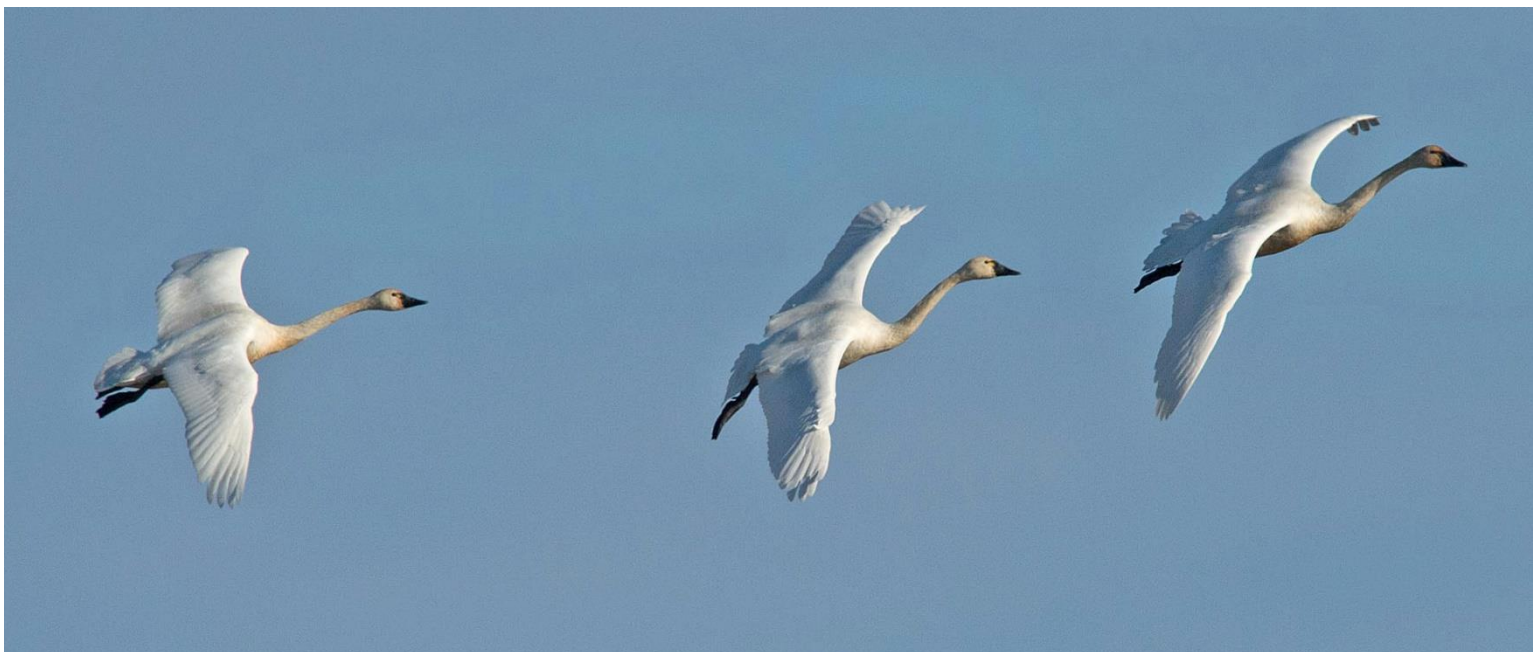




Friends of Mason Neck State Park November 2022 Newsletter

Join Us on December 4 for The Friends' Holiday Celebration: Swanfall All About Tundra Swans

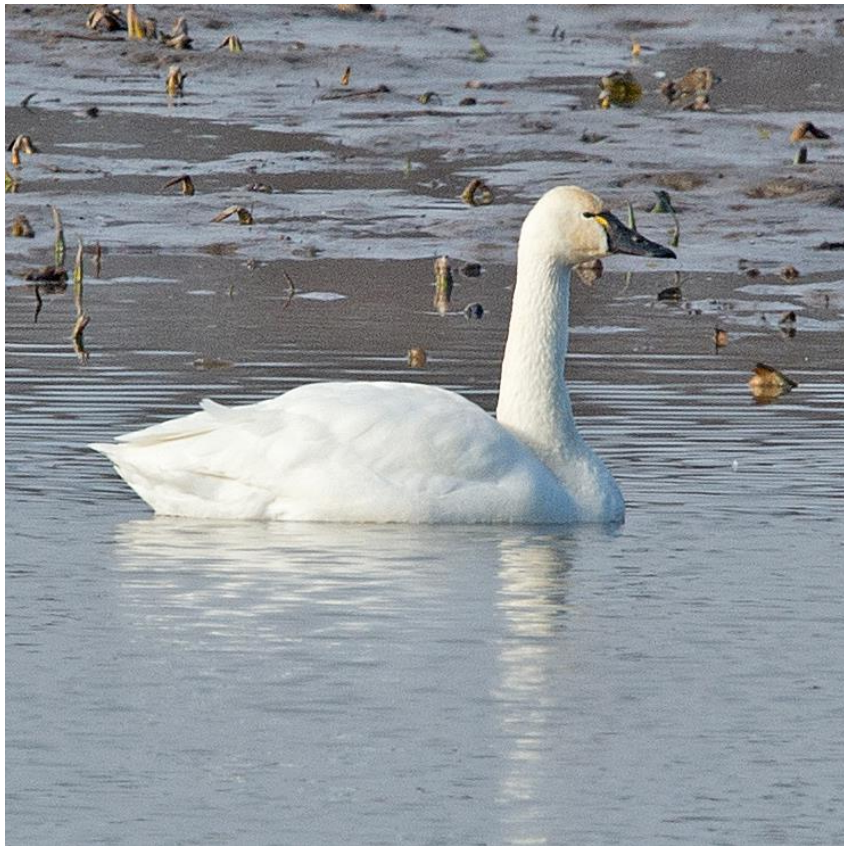


Tundra Swans return to the Great Marsh on Mason Neck each fall, migrating from eastern Alaska and the Canadian Arctic. You can learn all about them at the Friends of Mason Neck State Park's annual Swanfall holiday celebration in the Ann Mason Room of Gunston Hall on December 4.

We'll start at 2 PM with a great buffet of hors d'oeuvres and desserts.



At 3 PM Dr. Tom Wood, ornithologist and Associate Professor of Integrative and Interdisciplinary Studies at George Mason University, will present a program on Tundra Swans. You'll learn about their lives, their long migration from Alaska and northern Canada to the coastal mid-Atlantic, as well as their close relationship to other swans.



Swanfall is open to everyone. Members and one guest can register for \$15 apiece. Nonmembers can register for \$20. You can register [here](#). Gunston Hall is located at 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton VA.

Children and Adults Enjoyed Park After Dark

As the evening light slowly faded away, dozens of people had a unique opportunity to experience Mason Neck State Park in the dark. Visitors learned about some of the animals who are active after nightfall and had an opportunity to learn what owls eat.



They also learned how our senses of touch, smell and hearing help us learn about things around us in the dark.

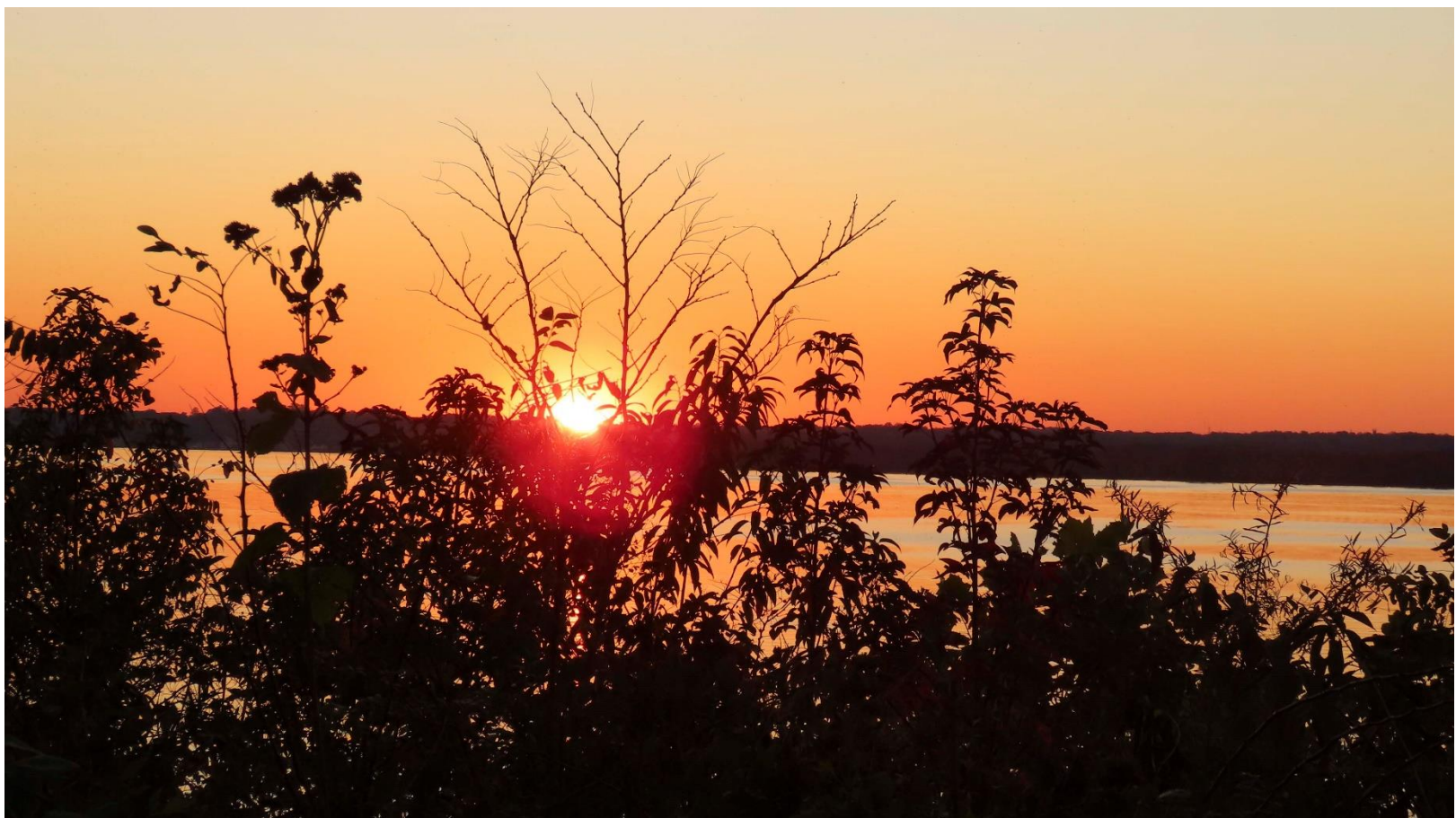


Photos by Randy Streufert

Costumed characters explained about their lives in the park, and of course everyone enjoyed an opportunity to make s'mores at the campfire.



As the sun set, visitors were able to take "no-lights" walks in the dark as they listened for the call of a barred owl and the other sounds of the night. A few lucky visitors saw bats flitting overhead and even saw glow worms, the larvae of fireflies, along the path.



Friends Board Members Joined a Search for Mason Neck's Historical Shad Fishery



Shad were an important part of the economy along the Potomac River from colonial times until the early 20th century. Local fisheries netted more than 22 million pounds of shad during their 6-week migration up the Potomac River in the 1900s. Last month, several members of the Board of the Friends of Mason Neck State Park joined Jim Cummins, a biologist who helped spearhead the restoration of shad in the Potomac, to look for the location of the shad fishery on Mason Neck. The site once included a brick building and a boiler for a steam-powered engine to power the equipment to draw in a miles-long fishing net.



The expedition located the old fishery, marked by bricks, fire brick from the boiler enclosure and metal pieces of the equipment.

The Friends Supported the Annual Tour de Mount Vernon

The Tour de Mount Vernon is a fun ride through the southern and central portions of the Mount Vernon District, including an optional ride through Mason Neck State Park. The Friends of Mason Neck State Park supported the ride with a refreshment station at the road to enter the park.



November Programs at Mason Neck State Park



Mason Neck State Park will host lots of programs and events this month, led by the Park's excellent, trained interpreters and volunteer paddling trip guides. 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's activities and enable us to fund events such as the Eagle Festival each May, 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 [Become a member of the Friends of Mason Neck State Park](#). You can also donate to the Friends [here](#).