



Friends of Mason Neck State Park

September 2021 Newsletter

OWL MOON UNDER THE STARS!



SEPTEMBER 18, 7:00PM * (RAIN DATE OCT. 2ND)
MASON NECK STATE PARK - 7301 HIGH POINT ROAD, LORTON VA
NEW FOR 2021: FAMILY & SCOUTS DISCOUNT!

Imagine sitting under the stars as the evening skies grow dim. The sounds of the night erupt as the park's wildlife begin its nocturnal prowling. Listen for the call of a coyote or the hoot of a majestic owl.

Join us for a very special program – "A Year in the Life of an Owl", featuring Barred, Great Horned, Barn and Eastern Screech owls. Presented by the raptor rehabilitators and educators of Secret Garden Birds and Bees, this is a 'must see' presentation.

Here's your chance to come face to face with these magnificent raptors. Who wouldn't want a selfie with an owl? You're sure to enjoy this interesting and educational program.

Learn what these owls are doing from January through December. Follow them through courtship, nesting, raising young, fledging and finally sending the young off to their own territories.

Everyone's invited! Owl Moon is open to the public and is great for all ages.

Entrance to the park is free (no parking fee) after 6:30 pm.

\$10 - INDIVIDUAL \$20 - FAMILY \$30 - SCOUT TROOPS

BRING A BLANKET OR A CHAIR AND FIND A SPOT ON THE LAWN!

Register now [here](#).

Come to Park After Dark

6:30 – 8:30 PM, October 16, 2021



Have you ever experienced Mason Neck State Park after dark? You're invited to join the Park Staff and the Friends of Mason Neck State Park for a unique after-hours event. Children will enjoy an "Enchanted Forest" walk – an opportunity to meet the Park's wildlife inhabitants and learn about their lives in the Park. Teens and adults can take a "Lights Out in the Park" hike – an opportunity to experience the woods, perhaps hear owls calling and find how well our eyes and other senses adapt to the darkness. There will be hot cocoa, coffee, s'mores and maybe even a storyteller as people gather around the campfire.

There's no charge and no registration for this event.



Order a

Friends of Mason Neck State Park Calendar

The Friends of Mason Neck State Park are offering three unique wall calendars for 2022 showcasing the wildlife of Mason Neck State Park. You can choose a calendar with photos of bald eagles; a calendar of singing songbirds; or a calendar of butterflies. All the photos were taken in or near Mason Neck State Park and feature animals that live in the park.



The calendar will feature the photographs of the Friends' own Randy Streufert. Randy has written and provided the photos for the "Critters of the Month" articles in the Friends' newsletters of the last several months. He recently won the Grand Prize in the National Wildlife Federation's "Garden for Wildlife" photo contest and his photos have been featured in "Virginia Wildlife" magazine and other publications. You can order your calendars [here](#).

Critter of the Month Quiz

By Randy Streufert

Do you remember last month's Critter of the Month? It was the beaver. You can refresh your memory about beavers by reading the article in the [August newsletter](#). At the end of the article there was a quiz asking whether the subject of this photograph was a beaver or a muskrat:



If you chose muskrat, congratulations. Since the tail couldn't be seen, it was the muskrat's smaller and more pointed nose that distinguished it from a beaver – as seen below:



Please Help at the Shoreline Cleanup

9 am – Noon, Saturday September 25



Can you help keep Mason Neck State Park looking good? The Potomac and Occoquan Rivers bring trash of all kinds to the shores of the Park. The Friends of Mason Neck State Park will lead a cleanup of the shoreline starting at 9 AM on National Public Lands Day, Saturday, September 25. We'll have gloves, trash bags and a few "grabbers" to help you pick up the smaller stuff. Please bring waterproof shoes or boots. The tide will be high that morning, and you are almost certain to get wet.

For those who are experienced paddlers, we'll have canoes, paddles and life vests available so you can collect trash that is not accessible from the shore.

Thanks to the generosity of Prince William Marina, we'll have snacks available to keep your energy levels high while you clean up the park.



Volunteers Needed For the Lorton Community Action Center Family Day 11 AM – 7 PM September 25

Mason Neck State Park will host families from the Lorton Community Action Center on Saturday, September 25. The [Lorton Community Action Center](#) (LCAC) seeks to provide low-income individuals, senior citizens, and families residing in Fort Belvoir, Lorton, Newington and other portions of southeast Fairfax County with access to basic needs and the opportunity to empower themselves through LCAC's self-sufficiency programs.

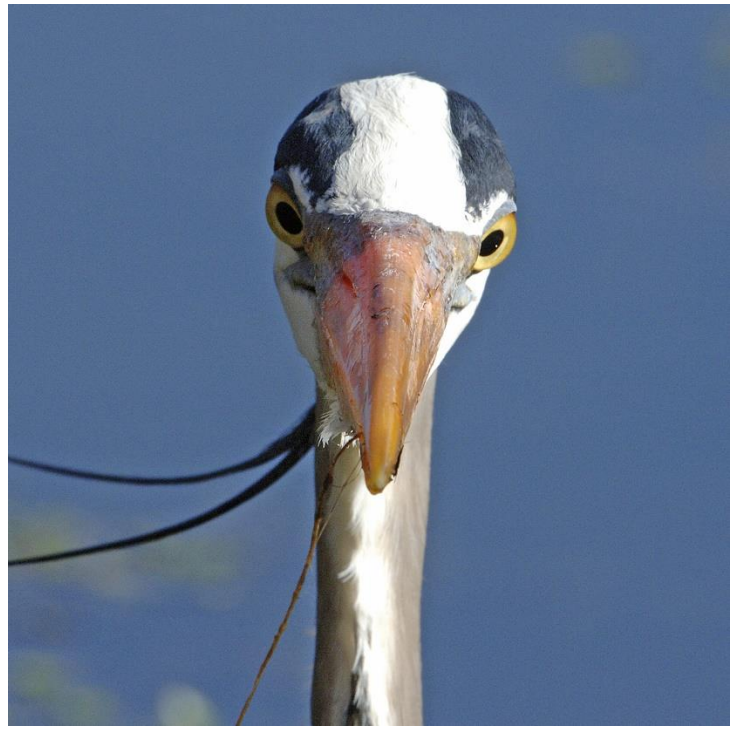
There will be a BBQ picnic lunch, nature programs, lawn games, kayak trips and a campfire. You can see the Park's brochure [here](#).



The Park Staff is looking for volunteers to help with the day's events. Can you help cook from 10:30 to 2, or help clean up from 2 to 3:30? Can you help lead family kayak trips during the day? Please call the Park and offer to volunteer at 703-339-2385.

Let Us Know if You're Interested in a Class on Nature Photography!

During our recent annual meeting, a member asked whether the Friends would hold a class on nature photography. If there is sufficient interest, the Friends will be happy to do so. Randy Streufert will lead the class. Randy was the grand prize winner in the 2019 National Wildlife Federation's *Gardening for Wildlife Photography* contest and has had three of his photographs on the cover of *Virginia Wildlife* magazine. Randy takes most of the photos on our web page and in our newsletter, and a few of his photos are on display at the park Visitor Center.



The photography class would likely be a single day event lasting two or three hours, held outside at the park on a Saturday.

If you would like the Friends to plan a nature photography class, please send an email to: Friendsofmasonneckstatepark@gmail.com. If there's enough interest, we'll schedule a class and advertise it in the October newsletter.

Mason Neck State Park Staff Offered Children's Programs at Lorton Community Action Center

Every Tuesday in August, Mason Neck State Park's Interpretive team held a program for children at the Lorton Community Action Center. Park Staff conducted the programs to give kids information and experience with nature while their parents picked up food, clothes and school supplies from the center.



The first Tuesday program featured furs and skulls, as Staff taught about adaptations and features of animals that live in the Park. The next week, Staff introduced the youth to the habitats and common animals that survive in them, and each child got to watercolor a habitat of their choosing.



In subsequent weeks, staff provided field guides that taught the children how to identify birds, insects and plants around the center. At the end of each program the children received a prize, including bubbles, nature tattoos or stickers, sunglasses, coloring books and more.

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 also enable us to fund special events such as our Owl Moon evening each fall and the annual Swanfall Holiday Program at the Jammes House each December. We've had to replace our in-person activities with virtual programs for the past few months, but we'll return to in-person events soon.

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](#).