



The Oasis

The seasonal newsletter of Prince William Forest Park • Volume 1, Issue 9

Celebrating 70 Years of Public Service



On November 16th, 2006, Prince William Forest Park turned 70. There have been many changes in those 70 years. Prince William and Stafford Counties, once rural outposts, are now solidly fixed in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. The economic devastation of the Great Depression, which led to the creation of the park, has given way to the realization of the “American Dream” for many Americans. Ecologically, a once heavily farmed and deforested greenspace has now grown into a 15,000 natural oasis.

Park staff celebrated this anniversary with two programs. On Saturday, November 18th, park rangers and invited guest Kevin Munroe, Staff Naturalist for the Audubon at Home in Northern Virginia, hosted a nighttime “owl prowl.” Over 70 people attended the program, gathering in the visitor center for information on owl habitats and behaviors before heading out into the night air. The group started calling for owls in the Pine Grove Picnic Area before making the five mile trek to Oak Ridge Campground where the group heard a screech owl.

On Sunday, November 19th, park staff and the Friends of Prince William Forest Park met at the visitor center from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. for

a presentation by Ed Zahniser, senior writer/ editor for the National Park Service media services group. Mr. Zahniser presented “...in Wildness is the preservation of the World.” In this speech Mr. Zahniser explored Prince William Forest Park as a pocket of wildness in a heavily - developed world.

“What we are celebrating today is not just the 70 year history of the Prince William Forest Park,” said Mr. Zahniser, during the Novem-



Mr Zahniser during his speech at the park's 70th anniversary.

ber event. “What we also celebrate is the staff, the volunteers, the friends and the partners of Prince William Forest Park: past, present and future.” In addition to his work with the National Park Service, Ed is also a published author of poems and the son of Howard Zahniser (1906-1964), the primary author of and chief lobbyist for the 1964 Wilderness Act.

“What we also celebrate is the staff, volunteers, friends and partners of Prince William Forest Park...”

In honor of his father’s work, the Friends of Prince William Forest Park presented Mr. Zahniser with their Conservation Champion Award for 2006. After the presentation of the award, Superintendent Bob Hickman signed a “General Agreement” with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC). This agreement allows PATC to assist the park in trail building and maintenance. PATC, which has long been involved in the upkeep and care for the Appalachian Trail and various trails in Shenandoah National Park, will now seek out Northern Virginia volunteers looking to help out locally.

Remembering Michelle...

By Jim Pieper & Laura Lakeman, Resources Management Division

It is with great sadness that the staff of Prince William Forest Park learned of Michelle Gardner-Quinn's untimely and tragic death in Burlington, VT in October. The news of her death struck the Resource Management division especially hard. Michelle began work in late May 2006 as an intern with the Student Conservation Association (SCA). For 12 weeks Michelle worked with us every day.

She shared our desire to conserve & protect the environment and National Parks

She shared our desire to conserve and protect the environment and National Parks and was quickly absorbed into our National Park Service family. From day one it was evident to us that, for Michelle, protecting the environment was not just a cause but a lifestyle.

When Michelle joined our team in May, she had just returned from a study abroad program in South Africa where she helped investigate the impact of monoculture agro-industry on rural development and assisted research for community-based natural resource management at Kruger National Park. In previous years, she also participated in field studies in Costa Rica and Brazil.

Although conservation is often viewed as a "crisis" science, with both gloom and doom, Michelle found hope. As nature had inspired her, Michelle hoped to inspire others through her work and by example.

By joining the staff at Prince William Forest Park, Michelle demonstrated that local conservation is just as important to her as global conservation. She hiked throughout the park collecting hair and scat samples for a carnivore study; counted creepy-crawlies to assess streamwater quality; worked hard to begin the ecological restoration of the Taylor Farm area; hiked the park's stream



corridors to help assess erosion; and continued efforts to monitor the effect of deer browsing on park vegetation.

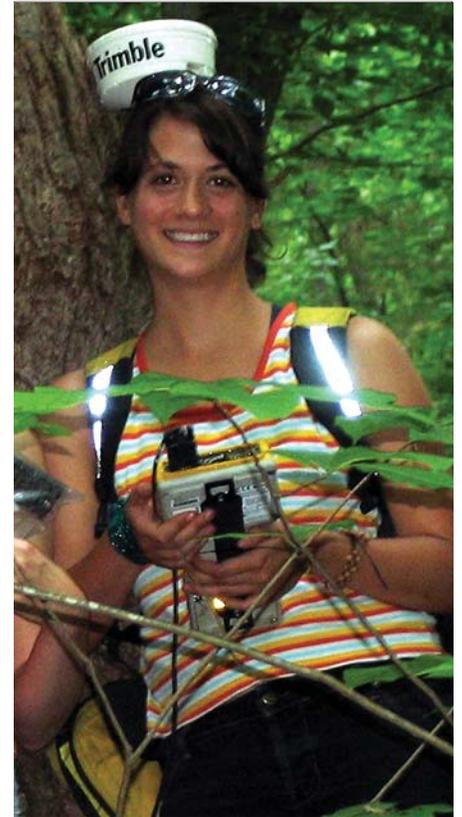
Her warmth and passion were evident to all who met her.

Michelle also exhibited great dedication by meeting an ornithologist before dawn (quite a feat for a college student!) to help with the annual breeding bird survey. Although she found fieldwork to be exhausting and sometimes frustrating, she remained an eager and inquisitive student. Her warmth and passion was evident to all who met her.

By the end of the summer Michelle was enthusiastic about starting her upcoming semester at the University of Vermont- Burlington and applying her recent experiences to undergraduate study. Now, looking back, we will remember Michelle's smile, her laugh, her silliness, and her propensity to put hot sauce on every vegan meal!



Michelle in the field. Photo courtesy: NPS.



Michelle, outfitted with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) gear, ready for a day in the field. Photo courtesy: NPS.

She was serious about conservation, but worked with a sense of humor.

Dedicated and inspired, she spoke of an early appreciation for nature and a lifestyle that minimized her footprint upon the earth. Michelle wished to educate and encourage others to experience the world as she did, rather than criticize those who did not embrace her beliefs. In her mind, conservation was not possible without community stewardship and participation.

Thank you Michelle -for your spirit and warmth, and for all that you taught us. We will miss you, and mourn not only your loss, but the loss of your promising future.

We will continue our efforts toward our shared vision - to conserve and restore the balance of nature, and hope one day to meet your expectations.

Updates and Highlights...

Formerly Used Defense Sites

From 1942-1945, Prince William Forest Park was closed to the public and used by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) as a training area for intelligence agents. Paramilitary training included firearms familiarization with rifles, sub-machine guns, mortar guns, mortars, rockets, grenades, military demolition, and explosives.

While this makes for interesting history, it also raises concerns. Through a program called Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS), the National Park Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality coordinated efforts to perform a field inspection and investigation of the park for unexploded ordnances and any lingering hazards.

The site inspection was conducted this year to inventory and identify any potential risks and determine any critical removals within the park. Coordination and communication efforts are underway between the agencies and local neighbors in order to complete a final report.

Business Plan

Last summer, Prince William Forest Park welcomed two business students as part of the Business Plan Initiative (BPI), a joint undertaking of the NPS and the Student Conservation Association. This initiative, now in its ninth year, brings graduate students in Business, Environmental Studies, and Public Policy to selected national parks to conduct a careful analysis of park historical trends, current operations, and future direction. The plan highlights recent notable successes for Prince William Forest Park and many ongoing challenges. Since 2000, park management has been increasingly successful in securing funding for needed

projects, including the recent waterline replacement, dam maintenance, and land acquisition within the park authorized boundary. However, the results also show that the current budget of \$2.85 million is \$1.5 million short of the amount needed to consistently fulfill all aspects of the park mission.

Of the strategies presented in the plan several have already moved forward including: helping to grow the membership of the Friends of Prince William Forest Park, bicycle rentals for Travel Trailer Village, and improvements in the cabin camp fee schedule and operations. Together with other recent efforts, the business plan will help to map the financial future for Prince William Forest Park.

Rehabilitating the Camp 4 Dam

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) entered into an Interagency Agreement with the NPS in 2005 for Reclamation to conduct investigations, design and construction management services for the repairs and modifications to Camp 4 Dam and Lake, within Prince William Forest Park. As of November, 2006, the work was completed and deemed a success.

Due to Reclamation's expertise and oversight of the Department of the Interior Maintenance, Operations, and Safety of Dams work, NPS has regularly used Reclamation's services and advice in maintaining NPS dams. The 13-foot high, earthen Camp 4 Dam is located in the northeast portion of the park on Quantico Creek. The dam has been overtopped by flood flows in the past, which have resulted in erosion on the crest of the dam and downstream.



Rehabilitating the Camp 4 Dam. Photo courtesy: NPS.

The project rehabilitated the existing access road from Cabin Camp 4 (Unit C) to the dam. It also removed approximately 25,000 cubic yards of sediment from the lake bottom and disposed of the non-toxic sediment in a safe manner.

When the lake was dredged, a dredging disturbance limit was confined to the center area of the lake so that a 30-foot buffer zone is maintained between the shoreline/highwater mark and the dredging area for all the area outside the designated swimming area.



Dredging Camp 4 Lake. Photo courtesy: NPS.

This buffer is designed to protect established wetland vegetation and wildlife habitat associated with the lake. Visitors can once again enjoy the lake at Cabin Camp 4.



The rehabilitated dam and lake at Camp 4. Photo courtesy: NPS.

Let's Talk Turkey

During the next few months, it will be easy to let the bare trees and cold weather discourage you from venturing out. But at Prince William Forest Park autumn and winter are perfect times for wildlife sightings.

One frequent sighting during this time of year may inspire memories of Thanksgiving – the wild turkey. The farm-raised turkey on your grocery store shelves is the same species as the wild turkey. However, anyone who has ever eaten a wild turkey will tell you that it tastes remarkably different than the farm-raised variety.

Wild turkeys are omnivorous -feeding on both meat and vegetation. Their favorite foods include acorns, seeds, some leaves, salamanders, worms, snails, and insects.

These turkey delicacies abound in Prince William Forest Park, making wild turkey sightings one of our most frequent wildlife sightings.

Though this icon of America's favorite holiday can have up to 6,000 feathers on its body and fly over 50 mph, you will most likely see this bird lazily crossing a road in a small flock. Also, a male wild turkey, called a "Tom," can have up to 5 hens in its breeding area. The "tom" provides no parental care of the juvenile turkeys.

Perhaps this is not the most ideal icon for our national holiday. Does 21st century America want a more lean and mean holiday symbol?

Benjamin Franklin would disagree with any turkey nay-sayers. He thought the wild turkey should be our national bird instead of the Bald Eagle.

And why not? Anyone who has seen the male bird fan his tail feathers in search of a female would not deny its beauty. It is native to North America, but was exported to Europe by explorers in the early 1500s.



A "tom" turkey walks through Prince William Forest Park. Photo courtesy: NPS.

They were so successfully domesticated in Europe that English colonists brought them back with them when they settled on the Atlantic Coast. And so, instead of the goose or roast, Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Prince William Forest Park is an oasis of natural beauty and human history located only 35 miles south of Washington, D.C. This 15,000 piedmont forest is crisscrossed by 37 miles of hiking trails, 21 miles of bicycle accessible trails, and countless miles of the meandering Quantico Creek.

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Triangle, VA 22172

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www.nps.gov/prwi

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Shopping at the Park...

The Eastern National bookstore at Prince William Forest Park is stocked with new items. At last, the Prince William Forest Park hiking medallion has arrived! This medallion, which sells for \$3.95, attaches to hiking sticks. Many parks and historic sites across the country have hiking medallions - making it the perfect gift for the collector. For \$24.00, you can also purchase a German Chestnut hiking stick. Also new this season is the CCC patch. This patch celebrates Prince William Forest Park's history as a Civilian Conservation Corps site from 1935-1942.

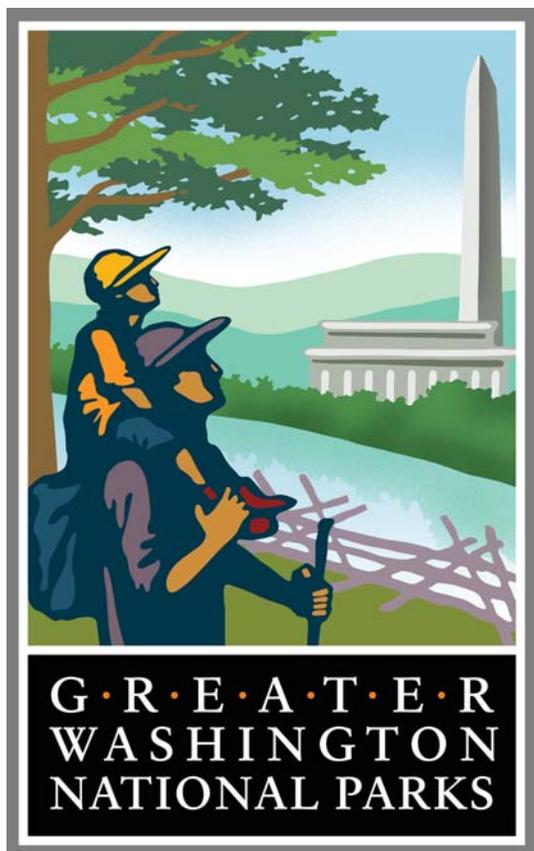


The new Prince William Forest Park hiking medallion. Photo courtesy: NPS.

Perhaps the greatest benefit you can receive from the Eastern National bookstore is the knowledge that a portion of the proceeds from the bookstore go to support park interpretation and education activities.



Support Your Greater Washington National Parks



Did you know that each day Greater Washington area residents can:

- enjoy more than 88,000 acres of parkland
- hike, bike, and jog on 717 miles of trails
- fish, kayak, and sail on 250 miles of riverfront
- tent or cabin camp on over 43,000 acres of forested lands
- discover over 152 statues
- explore 18 Civil War forts, 4 Civil War Battlefields and more than 3,000 historic structures
- enjoy special events and concert choices at world famous venues such as Ford's Theatre, Carter Barron Amphitheater, and the National Mall
- and visit a President's Park?

As a resident of or visitor to greater Washington, you have access to an extraordinary number and variety of national parks. Few metropolitan regions claim as many national parks within a two-hour drive or a ride on a bike, train, or bus - or a 15-minute walk. The Greater Washington National Parks add to the quality of life here.

The wide diversity of parks in and around the Nation's Capital makes greater Washington an attractive, inviting and enriching place to live and visit. For residents and visitors, Greater Washington National Parks become part of life-long memories.

Throughout the region, individuals and organization are creating and nurturing partnerships to ensure these special places have a healthy future. You can become a part of this tradition, helping to sustain the Greater Washington National Parks for future generations. For more information on the Greater Washington National Parks Fund, visit www.gwnpf.org.

Why host?

First, let's begin with a different question - what is hosting?

Hosting is the commitment of 32 voluntary work hours/week at one of the park's many cabin camps, campgrounds, or visitor facilities. In exchange for this dedicated service, hosts receive free housing in one of the park's housing units, or free hook-ups for their recreational have family in the area or enjoy being close to Washington, DC.

Hosting opportunities in the park are year round and include the following:

Visitor Center Host:
Help introduce visitors to Prince William Forest Park.

Cabin Camp Host:
Check visitors into and out of the historic cabin camps and perform light maintenance.

Oak Ridge Campground:
Aid visitors checking into and out of their campsites and perform light maintenance.

For more information, visit our website at www.nps.gov/prwi.



Reader's Voice!

Art and I became Volunteers in Parks (VIPs) at Prince William Forest Park in 1991. The beauty of the park, history of the cabin camps and friendliness of the park employees kept us coming back for 9 years. Our duties as campground hosts enabled us to assist many visitors and educate them to the wonders of the park. It was a time I will never forget.

Karen English

Make your voice heard!

Share your experiences in Prince William Forest Park in the Reader's Corner. Photographs and recollections can be e-mailed to Laura_Cohen@nps.gov or mailed to the park at

18100 Park Headquarters Rd.
Triangle, Virginia 22172

Where are they now?

Occasionally, employees pass through Prince William Forest Park on their way to bigger and better things. We felt it important to highlight one former employee of Prince William Forest Park that is making a special contribution elsewhere in the world.

I was a Law Enforcement Park Ranger at Prince William Forest Park from 2002 - 2004. In addition to my regular law enforcement duties, I was also Physical Fitness Coordinator, a Rangers-Against-Drugs Instructor, and the head (and lone member) of the park's bike patrol. It was a privilege to work with the crew at Prince William Forest Park. Between the staff, rangers, campground hosts, and visitors, I have a collection of memories that I will not soon forget.



Toward the end of spring, 2004, I decided to join the Army. I enjoyed serving the American people as a Park Ranger, but wanted to take things in a different direction. Joining the Army was something I hadn't been able to get completely out of my system since high school and I decided the time was finally right for me to do it.

After completing Basic Combat Training, Officer Candidate School, and Military Police Officer Basic Course - which took 10 months, I went to my first duty station at Fort Drum, NY in September 2005. I deployed to Afghanistan in December 2005 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with the 91st Military Police Battalion. In April of 2006, I switched theaters and was assigned to the 511th Military Police Company in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Platoon Leader.



My primary mission in Iraq is to train Iraqi Police.

Take Care,

*George Rabtzow Jr.
Second Lieutenant, US Army
Platoon Leader*

Retiring the National Parks Pass

On January 1st, 2007, Prince William Forest Park and other units of the National Park Service retired the National Park Pass and began selling a new interagency recreation pass that was authorized by the Congress in 2004. This new pass, the "America the Beautiful - National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass" combines the benefits of existing recreation passes from five federal agencies into one comprehensive pass.

The new pass covers recreation opportunities on public lands managed by the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation, and by the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service.

The new program replaces the Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and the Golden Access Passports as well as the National Parks Pass. Existing passes will remain valid until expired, lost or stolen. 100 percent of the revenue derived from passes sold at federal recreation sites will directly benefit the selling agency and no less than 80 percent of the revenue will remain at the site where the pass was sold.

The four different passes in the new interagency program are:

- 1) a new annual interagency pass costing \$80;
- 2) a \$10 lifetime senior pass for U.S. citizens 62 or over;
- 3) a free lifetime access pass for citizens with permanent disabilities; and

- 4) a new, free annual volunteer pass for volunteers acquiring 500 hours of service on a cumulative basis. The new interagency pass is good at vehicle-based entry sites for all occupants in a single, non-commercial vehicle.



The new "America the Beautiful - National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass."



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Prince William Forest Park
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Make Time for Fitness in the New Year

Prince William Forest Park is a great place to take time for fitness in the winter. Experts recommend exercising just 20-30 minutes, 3 times a week to help become more physically fit and wintertime is no exception.

Though gyms might be tempting, why not take a leisurely walk along one of our many hiking trails? The trails here wind through 37 miles of piedmont forest and vary in length from less than a mile to over nine miles. During the winter months the park offers cross-country skiing and snowshoeing – another great form of exercise. If bicycling is your pleasure, ride on one of the many miles of paved and gravel scenic roads.

With each of these winter fitness opportunities you can also take time to enjoy the scenic views of the park landscape, catch a glimpse of wildlife, or listen to songbirds. You may even find that exercise becomes more enjoyable in nature's setting?

Fitting fitness into a too-busy schedule is always a challenge. Making time for fitness means setting priorities and sneaking extra activities into your daily routine.

If you are beginning a fitness program for the first time, start small. Even five minutes of movement here and there adds up to a more active lifestyle. To activate some of your daily routine you may want to try some of these tips:

- take the stairs when possible,
- park your car a little farther than you usually do,
- hand deliver messages at work rather than using e-mail or picking up the phone, and
- walk at lunch time or instead of a coffee break.

With a little bit of creativity you can find dozens of ways to increase the amount of movement in your daily routines. Whether you already have a fitness regimen in place or if you are just starting out, we invite you to Prince William Forest Park, a place where history and nature unite.

There is no time like the present to do something good for your self. Health is one of our most precious gifts. Staying fit is one way to protect this gift. What have you got to lose?

The Oasis, the official seasonal newsletter of Prince William Forest Park, is released in spring, summer, fall and winter.

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Prince William Forest Park
c/o The Oasis
18100 Park Headquarters Road
Triangle, VA 22172-1644

Or call:

703-221-7181

Prince William Forest Park Information Directory

General Park Information **703-221-7181**

Visitor Center - Open daily 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Camping **703-221-7181**

Including individual, group and backcountry.

Cabin Camps **703-221-5843**

Including group cabins and individual rentals.

Travel Trailer Village **800-737-5730**

Camping area off Route 234 with full hook-ups.

Ranger-led Programs **703-221-7181**

Including regularly scheduled, special request and education programs.

Volunteering in the Park **703-221-7181**

Learn how you can help.

Official Park Website **www.nps.gov/prwi**

For the latest information about the park, surf this way.