



# Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley

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## Letter from the President...

Thank you to everyone that participated in our cleanup and trail maintenance days the last month or so. We have made great strides, but we still have plenty of work to do. If you have walked, run or biked the path in the last couple weeks, you have noticed that the Park Authority has dropped off some gravel so that we can fill in some of the low spots where water collects. We have had two weekends that we have been out on the trail moving and putting down gravel, but there is still more to do! If we can get a good showing one of these upcoming weekends, I think we can put a huge dent in the piles that are currently out there. Please email me directly at [chrisbauernshub@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbauernshub@gmail.com) if you're available the next couple weekends to come out on a Saturday.



Thanks again. Looking forward to our next event!  
Chris Bauernshub

## Spotlight: Cinderella Story at Olde Forge/Surrey Square

On May 9th, volunteers started a vegetation enhancement project in the Olde Forge / Surrey Square section of Long Branch Stream Valley Park, locally known as "the Cinderella Park." The park is within the Resource Protection Area and had a very old playground, which was largely removed. As part of a neighborhood project to install new playground equipment in a more suitable



location, the area will be left to revert back to natural conditions. Working with Erin Stockschaeder, Invasive Management Area (IMA) Coordinator, the Park Authority delivered about 50 native trees, shrubs, ferns, and herbaceous plants. Greg Sykes, IMA Volunteer



Coordinator for the Kings Park West neighborhood helped with the planning. A team of ten volunteers did the planting, and are also working to remove invasive species from the park. Volunteer efforts in the Cinderella Park are counting as "in-kind" contributions towards fundraising efforts and matching grants to build the new playground. For more information, contact Gary Krauss, IMA Volunteer

Coordinator for OF/SS ([garykrauss77@gmail.com](mailto:garykrauss77@gmail.com)).  
Gary Krauss

### In this issue:

Letter from the President	p1
Spotlight: Cinderella Story at Olde Forge/ Surrey Square	P1
Long Branch Falls Park- Stream Valley Restoration Project	p2
Friends of LBSV Positions	p2
Terrible Trash	p3&4
Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley Awarded A Coveted Best of Braddock Award	p5
Park Authority Kicks Off Lake Accotink Park Trail Improvements	p6
FCPD Proposes Three New Braddock District Parks For the FY 2016 County Deer Management Plan	p7
LBSV Contact Information	p7
Snake Season	p8
Our Newsletter & Thanks	p8

# Long Branch Falls Park - Stream Valley Restoration Project

On April 8, a team of Fairfax County officials visited the portion of Long Branch Stream that runs from King David Blvd. to Windflower Lane to scope out a proposed project involving Long Branch Valley Stream. In the words of the project proposal: The project will help to reduce sediment loads that could be transported to downstream portions of the watershed, . . . [and] also help protect private property located along King David Blvd. To achieve these goals, the team proposes to re-direct the stream away from existing homeowners properties. In a YouTube video( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPjzNXLbEp8&feature=youtu.be>), the project manager for the county said that he hopes to get funding for the project in the 2017-18 timeframe.



The county proposal indicated that they would be in contact with members of our community to seek our input. David Lawrence and I have been in conversation with the homeowners whose property is closest to the project, but would welcome the participation of anyone with an interest. Please contact either David Lawrence at [David.Lawrence@ofplaw.com](mailto:David.Lawrence@ofplaw.com) or David Kepley at [Kepley.david@gmail.com](mailto:Kepley.david@gmail.com) if you would like to be notified about the proposed project or would like to attend any meetings with the county. We can also email you a copy of the project proposal.  
*David Kepley*

## Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley Positions

*If you are interested in a position, please e-mail Chris Bauernshub at [chrisbauernshub@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbauernshub@gmail.com)*

### Officers:

President Chris Bauernshub  
Vice President Scott Thaxton  
Secretary Lisa Young

Braddock District Representative to the  
Park Authority Board of Directors Tony Vellucci

### Committees:

Invasive Management (interim) Bryan Campbell  
Trail Management Scott Thaxton  
Water Quality Management Joe Dicerbo  
Educational Awareness Lisa Young &  
Bryan Campbell  
Community Outreach Allison Hagner

### Community Leads:

Olde Forge/Surrey Square - Gary and Mimi Kraus  
Rutherford Canterbury Woods  
Long Branch - David Rabadan Red Fox Forest - Lisa Young  
Bradfield Stone Haven - Chris Bauernshub  
Hidden Creek Little Run



## Terrible Trash

On April 11th, many park groups, scout troops, and caring individuals partook in the first Braddock District-wide watershed cleanup. Contents pulled at various localities included bottles, cans, all sorts of plastic objects, cigarette butts, drug paraphernalia, pressure-treated lumber, broken toys, car parts, and a slew of other objects. Some of the more curious items discovered by teams of Girl Scouts and industrious neighbors included a desk, a screen door, a bag of concrete, an arm chair and an oxygen tank! Collectively, the local volunteers filled and hauled 20 bags of trash plus four additional bags of recyclable materials out of the park along the entire length of the Long Branch Stream Valley. Some of the odder items recovered included a lawn chair, three tires, and even a swing set!



Figure 1. This image displays some of the volume and diversity of garbage pulled during the Braddock District Watershed Cleanup in the Rabbit Branch Watershed. Photo by Sarah Lennon.

Left in the parks over time, this unsightly garbage harms the environment and all living creatures around it. For example, small animals can climb into bottles, cannot get out, and die a slow death—these finds are both sad and totally gross. More often, containers trap water forming breeding pools for mosquitoes including the aggressive, non-native Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*). Glass shatters into sharp shards before grinding down to sand; metal rusts into jagged edges prior to corroding into dust. Some plastics break down into tinier pieces but not into constituent molecules or atoms—it still remains the same plastic chemical only smaller. Like other pollutants carried by water (e.g. oil leaks, lawn chemical runoff, dissolving pet waste), minute bits of plastic contaminate wide patches, from local plots to the oceans.

Looking at the waterway connections, the Long Branch Stream merges in to Accotink Creek, briefly widens into Lake Accotink, becomes Accotink Creek again, then flows into Accotink Bay, Gunston Cove, the Potomac River, the Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean. Once in the Atlantic, plastic flotsam from many sources congregates into

an area the size of Texas, known as a North Atlantic Trash Gyre or Vortex, where it harms marine life and sea birds. Sea animals cannot always tell the difference between nutritious food and small bits of trash that can kill them, which, in turn, may also affect the foods we eat!

For Girl Scout Troop #1558, this cleanup effort was the culmination of earning their Wonders of Water Journey badges; along this journey, they learned to Love Water, Save Water, Share (ways to protect) Water. These Brownies joined forces with the George Mason University (GMU) Green Patriots and went on campus to spread their message, raise awareness, and educate the GMU community. They found great receptiveness to the message, and a fair number of GMU students participated in the April cleanup, so we are hopeful that changes will (slowly) be seen.

## Terrible Trash (*cont.*)

Why wait for more watershed workdays to make both your local habitat and downstream areas a better, healthier place? First and foremost, properly disposing of trash in garbage cans or recycle bins is the best approach. Or as the Girl Scouts say, “**Don’t be lazy and don’t litter!**”

A huge “Thank You!” goes out to the individuals and families who remove refuse along the trails and shorelines whenever they walk around LBSV. We also thank everyone who picks up after their pets and throws the bag into a garbage receptacle. With summer vacation right around the corner, let’s make a pledge to take this same caring ethic with us as we go on vacations and help clear trash along a beach or other favorite hideaway! Those parks are equally grateful for the assistance. Plus, sharing this sense of community encourages others to care more about our environment. If everyone would find **just one other person who cares**, inspire and motivate him or her, it will make a world of difference!

*Sarah Lennon and Greg Sykes*

More to read at:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/plastic-not-so-fantastic/>  
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/03/100302-new-ocean-trash-garbage-patch/>  
<http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/north-atlantic-garbage-patch>  
<http://www.independent.com/news/2015/mar/02/crushing-problem-ocean-plastics/>



Figure 2. Both of these green heron (*Butorides virescens*) images were photographed along Fairfax County shores. After visiting a park, which image would you like to remember? By participating in watershed cleanup efforts, you can help bring us closer towards picture B. Photos by Greg Sykes.



## Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley Awarded A Coveted *Best of Braddock* Award

The Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley (FLBSV), less than a year old, has been awarded a 2015 Best of Braddock (BOB) award as the Club or Organization Making a Difference in the Braddock District.

The Friends group was formed in July 2014 and advocates for the residents of eight distinct communities in the Braddock District that border parkland along a 2.5 mile stretch of the Long Branch Stream; they include: Olde Forge / Surrey Square, Hidden Creek, Rutherford, Long Branch, Little Run, Bradfield, Red Fox Forest, Canterbury Woods and Stonehaven.

The award nomination identified several significant accomplishments including: two Accotink Watershed CleanUps - conducted along with FLBSV's two sister organizations, Friends of Accotink Creek (FACC) and Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP) - held on October 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 and April 11<sup>th</sup> 2015; two Trail Maintenance Days to repair trail sections that needed rehabilitation due to extensive erosion; and the publication of a quarterly newsletter. FLBSV now works very closely with the Fairfax County Park Authority Area Maintenance personnel, and is establishing close ties with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES).

The nomination recognized the contributions of Chris Bauernshub (President), Scott Thaxton (Vice President) Jim Hawkins (Treasurer), Bryan Campbell and Lisa Young (Educational Outreach), Allison Hagner (Community Outreach), Bryan Young (Student Liaison), and Roger Hartman and David Rabadan (Stream Valley Cleanup Coordinators).

Further the nomination noted: "While FLBSV already has an impressive list of accomplishments this past year, its greatest achievement and accomplishment has been its ability to bring residents together from the eight distinct communities in the Braddock District that border the Long Branch Stream, and engage them in taking a watershed vice an individual park perspective. The Friends group has not only built greater community bonds, but it has raised awareness of the importance of the watershed to each of the communities."

Nominations are evaluated by volunteers from the Braddock District Council of Community Associations who work very closely with Braddock District Supervisor John Cook's staff. This year, the BOB awards will be presented at the Braddock District Council's Annual Picnic, which will be held Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, at the Braddock District Supervisor's Office, Kings Park Library Meeting Room, 9002 Burke Lake Road. Additional information will be provided via the Braddock Beacon. To subscribe to the Braddock Beacon, send an email to Braddock BOS Email [Braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov).

*Toni Vellucci*



All of the participants of the FLBSV CleanUp on April 11 just before the trash collection began. A beautiful day to pick up trash!

## Park Authority Kicks Off Lake Accotink Park Trail Improvements

On Tuesday May 12th at Kings Park Elementary School, Fairfax County Park Authority representatives from the Planning & Development Division held a "Pardon Our Dust" meeting to alert the public that work would soon be starting on Lake Accotink Park trail improvements.



The Park Authority will begin construction of a project to be completed in three phases, each taking about one to two months for completion. The project encompasses (1) repairing and paving approximately 5,500 linear feet of the Cross County Trail with asphalt and/or concrete, (2) replacing bridges and (3) relocating the trail away from Accotink Stream. The contractor, Accubid Construction Services, Inc., will be mobilizing on site **on or about May 25, 2015**.

At the meeting, Liz Cronauer, FCPA Trail Program Manager, went over the history of the project and its funding, the reasons and need for paving, and a description of scope of the work. She said the Park Authority is going to attempt to phase the project so that some portions of the trail will remain open even though people will have to look out for occasional construction traffic.

Residents were informed that each phase will last 1 to 2 months, depending upon the weather, and that FCPA will post signs as best they can at the adjacent trail heads to warn people that there will be construction activity.

The total construction will take approximately four to six months, depending upon the weather. Residents should expect occasional construction traffic with equipment and materials through the Ravensworth subdivision and construction equipment on the trail during the construction period. As a safety precaution, sections of the trail will be intermittently closed to users during the project and signs will be posted at adjacent trail heads accordingly.

For more information contact Project Manager [Elizabeth Cronauer](mailto:Elizabeth.Cronauer@fairfaxcounty.gov) at [Elizabeth.Cronauer@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Cronauer@fairfaxcounty.gov) or by phone at [703-324-8629](tel:703-324-8629). More information is posted at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/>

*Tony Vellucci*





## FCPD Proposes Three New Braddock District Parks For the FY 2016 County Deer Management Plan

The Fairfax County Police Department, Animal Control Division, manages the Fairfax County Deer Management Program. The Park Authority has been participating in the program since its inception in 1998. The program has grown to include approximately 50% of parkland and three treatment methods which include: archery hunting, managed shotgun hunts, and sharpshooting.

Archery is the primary deer management tool used in Fairfax County to help manage high density deer herds.

Archery has been shown to be a safe and effective deer management tool to control deer populations on public lands in Fairfax County and other high-density jurisdictions. Qualified bow-hunters with superior skill, ethics, and experience are able to efficiently and discreetly hunt deer in areas where firearm use is restricted or prohibited, or not an effective or sustainable deer management tool. Authorized archery hunting activity in Fairfax County Park Authority and Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority properties is closely monitored by the Fairfax County Police Department with the assistance from the Park Authorities. Since Virginia began tracking hunting injuries in 1959, no bystanders have been injured by an archer hunting deer anywhere in the Commonwealth.

To foster a high level of respect among park users and archers, Fairfax County sets high standards for archer

skills and behavior. Archer groups participating in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program must demonstrate that they both enforce and maintain written Standard Operating Procedures, which can be found at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/wildlife/archery/individual-archer-standards.htm>.

Last season 568 volunteers participated in the archery program donating 31,329 hunt hours, for an average of 55 hours per volunteer. These volunteers were organized into 24 hunt clusters and were individually qualified to participate by the Fairfax County Police Department. Fairfax County insures these volunteers under its general liability policy. An additional 145 volunteers signed up to participate but did not log any hours.



*Photo taken in the LBSV by David Kepley*

This year FCPD has proposed 22 new parks be considered for addition to the Fairfax County FY-2016 Deer Management Plan archery program, and three parks be considered for addition to the sharpshooting program. Of the 22 new parks being considered as potential harvest sites, three are in the Braddock District. One park - Long Branch Stream Valley Park is in the Accotink Watershed, and the other two parks - Crooked Creek Park and Kings Park West Park are in the Pohick Watershed.

This fiscal year's deer hunting season is anticipated to run from September 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 to February 20<sup>th</sup> 2016. More information on the Deer Management Program is available at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/wildlife/deer-management/>. Also see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/board/boardarchives.htm> and click on the Resource Management Committee package dated May 27<sup>th</sup> 2015.

*Tony Vellucci*

## Snake Season in Fairfax County

Recently, a Mason District resident was bitten by a northern copperhead snake while watering plants in her yard, necessitating immediate medical attention. Now that the summer is upon us, you may come across, or have already come across several snakes – especially if you hike or jog on the trail around the Long Branch Stream Valley.

Most snakes in Virginia are harmless to humans and are necessary to help keep the rodent population in check. In fact, of the thirty-four snake species known to live in the state, only three are venomous. Of the three snakes, only one can be found in Northern Virginia, the northern copperhead. The other two, the eastern cottonmouth and the timber rattlesnake, are found in other parts of the state. Typically, reports of snake bites (and sightings) do not peak until between August and October when baby copperheads are hatching.



*Northern Copperhead*

Sightings of snakes in and around Long Branch Stream Valley have included the northern water snake, the queen snake, the black rat and eastern rat snakes, and milk snakes. Of these, the eastern rat snake is the only 6+ foot snake found in Virginia. Most often snakes hide under rocks or logs or in holes along the water's edge as they either wait for prey, or rest to digest the prey they just consumed. If you come across a snake, the best thing to do is to just let it be, and allow it to naturally play its part in the eco-system.

The Virginia Herpetological Society (VHS) notes that about 8,000 people report venomous snake bites each year in the US and of that number, only about 5-10 die. The number of bites may be conservative though because of underreporting. In contrast, 15,000 to 20,000 die every year from the side effects of aspirin. Venomous snake bites are medical emergencies, and they can be deadly if not treated quickly.

Sometimes a snake bite is a “dry bite,” meaning no venom is injected, noted Lucy Gallimore, a naturalist at the [Hidden Oaks Nature Center](#) in Annandale, but the victim wouldn't know whether they've been subjected to a “dry bite” or “wet bite.” Getting a snakebite victim to an emergency room as quickly as possible is the very best treatment.

For more information not only about snakes, but also frogs and toads, other lizards, and turtles, visit the Virginia Herpetological Society website at <http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/>

The site provides a wealth of information about reptiles, such as their appearance and distribution in the state. It also contains a listing of “do's and don'ts” in the event of a venomous snake bite.

*Tony Vellucci*

**Our Newsletter** The Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley Newsletter is distributed to members and the civic associations at Olde Forge / Surrey Square, Rutherford, Hidden Creek, Little Run, Long Branch, Bradfield, Red Fox Forest, Canterbury Woods and Stonehaven. It will come out quarterly, in March, June, September and December. We would love your submissions - photos, comments and articles about the stream valley. Send them our way. Submissions received by August 15<sup>th</sup> 2015 will be included in the September edition. Please send them to Allison Hagner at [friendslsv@gmail.com](mailto:friendslsv@gmail.com). Look forward to hearing from you!