



# FRIENDS *of* LONG BRANCH STREAM VALLEY

Volume 2, Issue 1

September 2015

## *Letter from the President...*

Thank you for your support during our first year as a Friends group. Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley (FLBSV) has come a long way in a year! We are honored to have been chosen as The 2015 Best of Braddock Club/Organization Making a Difference in the Braddock District. We are coming up on our 3rd **Cleanup Day and Scavenger Hunt on September 19** and have had multiple trail improvement days. Overall, we have raised awareness for the importance of the trail and stream valley that runs through our communities. We still have lots of work and learning to do, but I believe we are heading in the right direction and making a positive impact.

During the September 19<sup>th</sup> Cleanup Day, volunteers are invited to enhance the trail and stream by collecting trash and participate in the Scavenger Hunt, where participants can earn prizes. (See pg2 for details) During past cleanups volunteers have removed trash, old tires, furniture, discarded-rusty swing sets and other items. Braddock District Supervisor John Cook came out to show his support for all of our hard work and the kids enjoyed their scavenger hunt prizes during our spring Cleanup. We hope to see you there on Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup>!



Trail Improvement has been a major focus of FLBSV. We have done a great deal to help with many of the wet spots and will continue this work throughout the trail. We are also working with the Park Authority to address concerns regarding the material that was spread during our last 2 phases. In our efforts, we hope to ensure the most appropriate material is used for all future trail improvement projects. We are also aware that there are areas of the trail that need significant repair and improvement and are working with the Park Authority to come up with a plan for those as well. Some of these projects require more coordination and funding than our group can tackle at this time. We are contacting the appropriate resources to rally financial and logistical support for these projects. We will keep you updated with all of these developments.

As many of you have heard, there is a Fairfax County Deer Management Program that runs from September 12, 2015 to February 20, 2016. Long Branch Stream Valley Park is a newly included area for the 2015-2016 season. (see pg 5 for details) FLBSV has requested that there be no hunting during our Cleanup Day on September 19 and the County has agreed to close off the park to hunters for that day for obvious safety reasons.

There is always so much to write about, but for the time being I will sign off now. If you have questions, concerns, feedback or just want to discuss a trail or park topic, please feel free to email or call me directly. It's been an interesting first year and I am looking forward to continuing many of our efforts and mission. Thanks again for your support.

*Chris Bauernshub*

President FLBSV

[chrisbauernshub@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbauernshub@gmail.com)

703-597-1701

### *In this issue:*

Letter from the President	p1
Cleanup Day and Scavenger Hunt	p2
Native Plant Sales & Invasive Species Update	p3
LBSV Contact Information	p3
Long Branch Falls Project Update	p4
Our Newsletter & Thanks	p4
Deer Management Program is in Full Swing	p5
Fairfax County Urban Foresters	
Seek Gypsy Moth Sightings	p6
Final 2015 Season Braddock Nights Performance	p7
Long Live the Monarch	p8&9



# Saturday September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## Event Information:

<b>8:30-9:00</b>	Meet at Canterbury Woods Pool for refreshments, instructions and supplies.
<b>9:00-11:30</b>	Cleanup
<b>11:30-12:00</b>	Return to CW Pool for photos and prizes.

Contact:

Chris Bauernshub (FLBSV President)  
[chrisbauernshub@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbauernshub@gmail.com); 703.597.1701

## UPCOMING DC AREA NATIVE PLANT SALES

If you are interested in stocking up your yard with native plants, here are a couple of great sales this fall:

### Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS) Native Plant Sale

Saturday Sept. 19, 2015 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Green Spring Garden’s, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, VA 22312 <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/>

### Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale

Saturday, Sept. 26, 2015 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at The Church of St. Clement, 1701 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria, VA 22302 <http://www.home.earthlink.net/~sknudsen/index.html>

### Earth Sangha’s Fall Open House and Plant Sale

Sunday Sept. 27, 2015, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at The Wild Plant Nursery, Cloud Dr, Springfield, VA 22150 <http://www.earthsangha.org/#!wpc1drm>

## Invasive Species Update

Wavyleaf basketgrass has returned to Long Branch Stream Valley Park with a vengeance! However, its plots are still controllable with your help. Jan Meyer will lead two basketgrass eradication workdays, Sept. 16 and 23 (Wednesdays), starting at 9:30 am. For more information about meeting places and other workday details or to RSVP, please contact her at [janmeyer2000@gmail.com](mailto:janmeyer2000@gmail.com). To learn about wavyleaf basketgrass—a serious emerging threat to local woodlands, check out [http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eco-articles/56\\_wlbg\\_alert-lbsvp.pdf](http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eco-articles/56_wlbg_alert-lbsvp.pdf)

### Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley Positions

*If you see an open position that you would be interested in, please email Chris at [chrisbauernshub@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbauernshub@gmail.com)*

#### Officers:

President	Chris Bauernshub
Vice President	Scott Thaxton
Secretary	Lisa Young

#### 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

Braddock District Representative to the Park Authority Board of Directors  
Members-at-Large

Tony Vellucci  
Jim Hawkins, Roger Hartman  
and Dave Rabadan

#### Community Leads:

Olde Forge/Surrey Square - Gary and Mimi Kraus  
Rutherford  
Long Branch - David Rabadan  
Bradfield  
Hidden Creek

Canterbury Woods  
Red Fox Forest - Lisa Young  
Stone Haven - Chris Bauernshub  
Little Run

## Long Branch Falls Project

In the last edition of this newsletter, we reported that the county had begun a project to stabilize the portion of Long Branch Stream that runs from King David Blvd. to Windflower Lane.

On August 20 a group of your neighbors met with Sajan Pokharel, the Fairfax County Project Manager for this project in the offices of Supervisor John Cook. Mr. Pokharel explained that portions of the streambed were severely eroded, causing downstream deposits of sediment and threatening the property of several homeowners. Mr. Pokharel is considering a number of options for stabilizing the streambed. The county expects to complete its analysis and a preliminary conceptual design this November. To this point, however, the county has only funded the project through the design phase, due next spring. If funding for doing the project is approved, then construction is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2016.



Mr. Pokharel asked that two people from the community act as liaisons between the county project team and the community. David Kepley (Kepley.david@gmail.com) and Bryan Campbell (campbelp@hotmail.com) volunteered to fill this role. So if you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact either one of us.

*David Kepley*

**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 comes 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 November 15<sup>th</sup> 2015 will be included in the December edition. Please send them to the editor, Allison Hagner at [friendslsv@gmail.com](mailto:friendslsv@gmail.com). We look forward to hearing from you! Thank you to all of our contributors: Chris Bauernshub, Rachel Griesmer-Zakhar, Allison Hagner, David Kepley, Greg Sykes, and Tony Vellucci.



## Deer Management Program Is In Full Swing

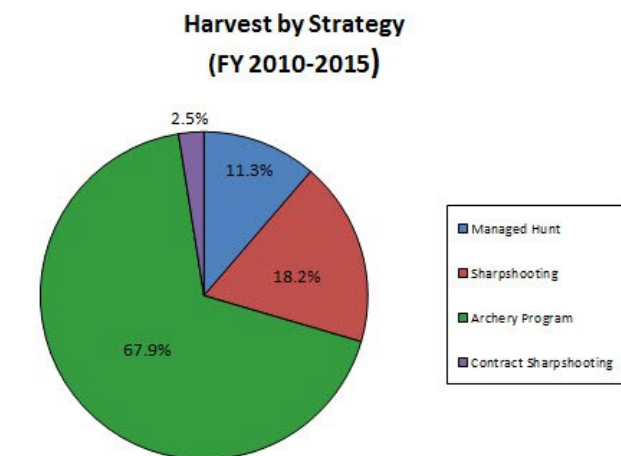
The Fairfax County Deer Management Program has come to the Long Branch Stream Valley Park! The Archery Program season began on September 12<sup>th</sup> and continues until February 20<sup>th</sup>. The Deer Management program began as a response to a fatal deer-vehicle collision in the county. According to the Fairfax County website, "The deer population in Fairfax County has grown to a level that poses safety and health hazards to our communities, and is not sustainable by the environment over time. An integrated deer management program is necessary for long-term reduction of deer-related conflicts in Fairfax County." The Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) works with the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority to make this program a success. There are three types of legal methods that the white tail deer population is controlled on Fairfax County property: archery program, public managed hunts, and sharpshooting.

This is the first year that the LBSV will be included in the Archery Program. The archers that are allowed to harvest in the LBSV have had a background check, applied with the appropriate licenses, safety training and qualified with three out of three arrows in a 7-inch target at 25 yards. The deadline for the archers was back on July 5<sup>th</sup> and all Archers in the program were notified on July 20<sup>th</sup> that they were selected. All harvest attempts are to be from tree stands. Ground blinds are not permitted. All archers are required to have with them: Virginia Hunting license, Virginia Big Game license, a Virginia Archery License, **Archery Group ID & lanyard** and Archery Vehicle Parking Pass. Hunting is allowed during the season, September 12<sup>th</sup>-February 20<sup>th</sup>, Monday through Saturdays with authorized hours beginning 30 minutes prior to sunrise, throughout the day, and ending 30 minutes past sunset. No hunting is allowed on Sundays.

The public managed hunts are held on specific dates, November 19 and 24<sup>th</sup>, January 14<sup>th</sup> and February 25<sup>th</sup>, at Sully Woodlands. Applications are accepted through October 1<sup>st</sup> with qualifications in October. The sharpshooting program is only for special-trained officers of the FCPD. The sharpshooting program is conducted at night using night-vision equipment, thermal imaging and many safety precautions, including staff in parking lots and at trail heads to inform patrons of the event and prevent access. The parks involved in the sharpshooting program are: Annandale Park, Chapel Road Park, Frying Pan Farm Park, Green Spring Gardens Park, Grist Mill Park. The harvests made by the sharpshooters go to [Hunters for the Hungry](#), a 501(c) (3) charity that provides donated venison to people in need.

Last year there were 916 deer that were harvested in the archery program throughout Fairfax County, 33 of which were in the Lake Accotink Cluster. The LBSV is in the Lake Accotink Cluster. A total of 1122 harvests were made during last year's season. Since 2010, the archer program has made over 67% of the harvest.

If you are headed to LBSV Park, there are several things to remember. Hunting is not permitted within 100 ft. of a property line or 50 ft. of an established trail. Additionally, there are several areas of the park that are excluded from the program. There will be no hunting in the middle portion of the park, from Guinea Road to Woodland Way. Rutherford Park and the trails leading away from it, all the way west to Olley Lane, are also not involved in the program. Hunting is permitted in the eastern most portion, west of the Canterbury Woods Park to Woodland Way, and the western most section, from Little Run Estates up to Olde Creek Elementary School. A detailed searchable map can be found at county's website at: <http://arcg.is/1KCtmuV>. The last



Source: Fairfax County Deer Management Program website (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/wildlife/deer-management/>)

thing to remember is that this program is to decrease the health and safety hazards that the deer pose to the residents of Fairfax County.

*Allison Hagner*

## Fairfax County Urban Foresters Seek Gypsy Moth Sightings

Volunteers are needed to assist the Urban Forest Management Division to monitor gypsy moth egg masses and report their findings to the Forest Pest Branch.

Homeowners, scouts, individuals, club members and others are welcome to participate by sending sighting information. The online reporting form (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/gypsy-moth-form.htm>) requests the location of the egg masses, the volunteer's name, email and telephone number.

The gypsy moth (a non-native, invasive caterpillar) has caused millions of dollars in damage since its introduction to Massachusetts in the late 1860s. High populations of caterpillars may defoliate trees, causing stress that may lead to tree death. Urban foresters



Figure 1. Gypsy moth caterpillars defoliating a tree.

conduct annual monitoring surveys for gypsy moth egg masses during the summer and fall to predict potential defoliation events the following spring.

Volunteer participation in sighting and reporting egg masses is important to the success of the program.

Female gypsy moths begin to lay their eggs in mid-July and persist until April-May when eggs hatch. Egg masses are tan in color and may be seen on trunks and upper branches of trees or in sheltered areas such as under the eaves of houses or in wood piles.

More information and a video about gypsy moths:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/gypsyffx.htm>.

A Slideshare presentation about gypsy moth management:

[http://www.slideshare.net/fairfaxcounty/gypsy-moth-volunteers-needed-to-assist-](http://www.slideshare.net/fairfaxcounty/gypsy-moth-volunteers-needed-to-assist-urban-forestry-june-2015)

[urban-forestry-june-2015](http://www.slideshare.net/fairfaxcounty/gypsy-moth-volunteers-needed-to-assist-urban-forestry-june-2015).

The US Forest Service provides this information about gypsy moths:

<http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/gm/index.shtml>. Volunteers may contact the Urban Forest Management Division by telephone at 703-324-5304, TTY 711 or by email: [Pestmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Pestmail@fairfaxcounty.gov).

Rachel Griesmer-Zakhar



Figure 2. Gypsy moth egg masses are tan in color and may be seen on the trunks and upper branches of trees. They are approximately the size of a half dollar.



Figure 4. Actual size of gypsy moth egg masses.



Figure 3. Female adult gypsy moth laying eggs.

## Final 2015 Season Braddock Nights Performance - A Memorable Event



The group Rhodes Tavern Troubadours treated over 300 patrons to a memorable performance at the last Braddock Nights performance for the 2015 Summer Concert Series on August 28<sup>th</sup> at Royal Lake Park highlighted by a rendition of Johnny Cash's

Folsom Prison mixed with The Who's Pinball Wizard from the musical Tommy.

During an intermission, recently retired Fairfax County Park Authority employee Sousan Frankenberger was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Supervisor John Cook recognizing her efforts over the last 15 years in bringing quality performers to the Summer Concert Series, not only for the Braddock District, but for all of Fairfax County.

And after the performance patrons were treated to a raffle, a campfire and a couple of visitors from Hidden Ponds Nature Center. Mike McCaffrey, Manager of the Hidden Ponds Nature Center attended to the campfire and supervised high school-aged Hidden Ponds volunteers who provided wildlife presentations and permitted patrons the opportunity to handle local snakes and turtles.

The snakes were an instant hit for kids of all ages. One of the snakes was Oreo, a black rat snake, who was a star performer last year also. The black rat snake is the largest snake in Virginia, growing up to eight feet long, and can be found in forests, fields, marshes, and farmland. In the

Spring and Fall, they are very active during the day; in the Summer they are more active at night. (Source: FCPS: [http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/black\\_rat\\_snake.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/black_rat_snake.htm)) Information on the black rat snake and other Virginia snakes, including those that are venomous, is available at the Virginia Herpetological Society's website: [http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/reptiles/snakes/snakes\\_of\\_virginia.htm](http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/reptiles/snakes/snakes_of_virginia.htm).

Braddock Nights is a part of the Park Authority's Summer Concert Series, sponsored by Braddock District Supervisor John Cook, the Fairfax County Park Authority, the Fairfax County Park Foundation, and generous donors. Performances are held each Friday night at both Lake Accotink Park and Royal Lake Park. Events such as Braddock Nights are important to building community, and improving the quality of life for Fairfax County residents.



The Hidden Ponds Nature Center is located at 8511 Greeley Blvd, in Springfield. It features exhibits and live displays which orient patrons to the park and the natural world of Fairfax County. In addition, the center has a small sales area featuring books and other items for the nature enthusiast and nature study areas for group visitors. Complementing the nature center are stream side and woodland walking trails, a self-guided nature trail and a one-acre pond.

Lastly, campfires in Fairfax County parks are only allowed in designated areas, or when attended by Park Authority employees. Violations may be cited as a Class IV misdemeanor.

See you next year at the 2016 Braddock Nights Summer Concert Series starting in June 2016.

*Tony Vellucci*

## Long Live the Monarch

The recent, steep dive in monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) populations received quite a bit of attention. This article examines the big picture about this species' decline and how Northern Virginia residents can help the charismatic yet imperiled insect.

The monarch undergoes a complete metamorphosis: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (chrysalis), and adult (butterfly). Given the caterpillars' voracious appetite exclusively for milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.), the female butterfly lays a single egg (instead of an egg cluster) on the leaf before taking flight to lay again. Few herbivores tolerate the milkweed's bitter poisons, yet the monarch evolved a way around these chemical defenses. The caterpillar stores noxious milkweed chemicals into adulthood; the butterfly's vibrant orange and black wing coloration warns potential predators of a bad taste. Whereas people have seen monarchs across several continents and Pacific islands, some of these sightings were likely windswept individuals or deliberate introductions; Australia imported monarchs to control milkweed after American gold miners brought the seeds over in pillow stuffing. Most of the monarchs have multiple summertime generations living in the lower 48 states and southern Canada. The late summer brood migrates to winter destinations: the smaller western populations gather in California and the eastern monarchs congregate in Mexican forests. The migratory broods travel along land routes—the few entering Florida do not cross the Gulf of Mexico. They also survive several months longer than the ones spending their entire life at a single locality earlier in the year.

Monarchs flourished for many centuries. Their population withstood the natural tolls taken by isolated severe weather events, disease, and predation. Now, however, their numbers crashed to around 10 to 20 percent of the population's peak size two decades ago. Causes contributing to this decline include:

- **Milkweed eradication:** To expand croplands, many farmers, especially in the Midwest, cleared plots filled with common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), the top host plant for monarch caterpillars.
- **Habitat loss:** In addition to larvae losing milkweed, migrating adults find fewer overwintering places due to illegal logging in Mexican forests.
- **Overabundant pesticide use:** From farmers spraying crops against pests to homeowners or their contractors chemically bombing their yards against mosquitoes and other insects, these toxins inevitably poison the environment and harm non-target organisms, such as monarchs.
- **Climate change:** A rapidly shifting climate affects plant germination, growth, bloom times, and even geographic range. Botanical changes impact the organisms dependent upon that flora.
- **The wrong plants:** In creating monarch-enticing gardens, well-intentioned folks in southern states use exotic plant species which live long after the native flora dies back for the year. These plants, especially the Mexican milkweed (*A. curassavica*, aka scarlet milkweed, a tropical, tender perennial), stall monarch migration and the now residential monarchs harbor a protozoan infection. The weakened insects are not culled by migratory stress and healthy ones fail to fly to disease-free areas.

While the Midwest holds most of North America's monarchs, Northern Virginia residents can take steps to both help the resident butterflies and provide safe passage for the ones passing through this area. First, consider eliminating outdoor pesticide treatment. Nectar-sipping insects cannot survive if their floral food source is poisoned.



Figure 1. Several days after the female monarch lays the egg (A), the larva emerges. In less than two weeks, the caterpillar (B) fattens up 2,000 times its hatch weight. Images are at different scales, all taken in Fairfax, VA, native gardens.



Second, create a garden that satisfies all stages of the monarch’s lifecycle. The key ingredient: *local* milkweed species. Volunteers transformed an Invasive Management Area (IMA) site at Mason District Park from a non-native weedy patch into a milkweed-rich monarch waystation. While common milkweed tends to be a bit aggressive for residential properties less than an acre, other species perfectly fit into any sunny suburban garden; see Table 1 for suggestions.

**Table 1. These locally native *Asclepias* species are ideal in Northern Virginian suburban gardens. The top of the list contains species that are easier to grow and more commercially available than the ones at the end.**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Flower Color	Comments
Swamp Milkweed	<i>A. incarnate</i>	Pink, sometimes white	Prefers moist, rich soil but thrives in most garden settings.
Purple Milkweed	<i>A. purpurascens</i>	Purplish-maroon	Rare in Northern Virginia due to habitat loss, a healthy population grows in Huntley Meadows Park.
Butterfly-Weed	<i>A. tuberosa</i>	Brilliant orange	Dramatic garden addition needing well-drained soil. <u>This plant is not the non-native invasive butterfly bush (<i>Buddleja davidii</i>)!</u>
Whorled Milkweed	<i>A. verticillata</i>	White	Extremely thin leaves. Tolerates dry conditions but should be watered periodically during extended droughts.
White Milkweed	<i>A. variegata</i>	White	Semi-shade species growing on forest edges.
Red Milkweed	<i>A. rubra</i>	Deep pink	Deep pink flowers; needs constantly moist soil—not drought tolerant.



Figure 2. A monarch butterfly pollinates swamp milkweed flowers. In the upper left are two swamp milkweed beetles mating.

Since monarch larvae can strip a single plant bare, there should be at least 20 *Asclepias* specimens (the more, the merrier) in a cluster so the caterpillars can move to neighboring milkweeds. Count on other specialized insects, most notably the swamp milkweed beetle (*Labidomera clivicollis*), biting a large chunk out of the milkweed foliage. Try planting three or more different milkweed species. Avoid the Mexican or scarlet milkweed; in northern latitudes, it is one of the last milkweeds to die back in autumn. Not only do monarch adults sip nectar from milkweeds and other flowers, but different butterfly species will also drink from milkweed blossoms. Keep other native plants preferred by pollinators, too; here is a good plant list to get you started: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/infosheets/butterfliesandmoths.pdf>.

For further information: [http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eeco-articles/60\\_2015-08.pdf](http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eeco-articles/60_2015-08.pdf)

Greg Sykes ([greg@grsykes.com](mailto:greg@grsykes.com))