

WINTER  
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# FRIENDS OF ROYAL LAKE

NEWSLETTER

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## WHAT WE ARE ABOUT by Sarah Lennon

Friends of Royal Lake (FORL) is an informal group of like-minded individuals that works to help preserve, protect, and improve Royal Lake and its surrounding parkland.

Our “Friends” group works with the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) to support, enhance and advocate for specific parks and lake projects that are most important to the FORL community.

Our voice is more strongly heard when we come together as a community and we pool our energy and expertise.

(cont'd)

Lennon, cont'd

As an example, FORL recently developed a Master Plan for Royal Lake, which morphed into the Community Vision Plan. Because **we as a community** identified the greatest needs, we obtained FCPA support to repair, with the help of an Eagle Scout project, some very steep parts of the trail around Royal Lake (near Royal Lake Park/Lakeview Swim Club) as a first project.

Over the course of the next year, FORL plans to work with the FCPA to identify, categorize, and prioritize the needs of Royal Lake and surrounding parkland and develop a variety of projects to meet those needs. FORL looks to expand its active membership to include more residents from the communities surrounding Royal Lake. For more information email Sarah Lennon at [parks@kpwca.org](mailto:parks@kpwca.org) or Paul Gross, President of FORL, at [friendsofroyallake@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofroyallake@gmail.com)



Volunteers dig in on a project made possible with FCPA support

## MEETING AHEAD

**Friends of Royal Lake Community Meeting**

**February 20,  
(2/27 snowdate)**

**7:00-8:30pm**

**Laurel Ridge Elementary School  
CSS Program  
multipurpose room....**

**WE NEED YOU!**

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# FORL LEADERSHIP TEAM



PAUL GROSS is a co-founder and President of FORL. He advocates for the community with the FCPA and water management leadership. He is retired from both the USAF and as a management consultant. Paul loves to golf and volunteers at Twin Lakes golf course. His life revolves around his grandchildren and church.



SARAH LENNON is a co-founder and Vice-President of FORL. She is Chair of the Parks and Lakes Committee for the KPW Civic Association. In her “other” life, she heads the office for International Nuclear Cooperation at the Dept. of Energy. Sarah travels extensively; she speaks Russian, French, Swedish, and Spanish.



ANTHONY VELLUCCI is a resident of KPW; he served as Civic Assn. president for five years. He was on the Board of the Braddock District Park Authority and continues to be responsible for park authority projects in the District. Tony has founded and developed “Friends” groups across the region; he serves as an advisor to FORL.



FRANK CUMBERLAND and his family have lived in Kings Park West for 21 years. He retired from the US Air Force, and currently serves as Secretary on the KPW Civic Association Board of Directors. He maintains a record of FORL business. His goal is to keep our lake and woods as natural and beautiful as possible.



SUZANNE DOHERTY represents the Lakepointe Community on the Team and is the Editor of this newly launched FORL newsletter. Suzanne is a retired clinical psychologist who has developed a second career in garden design and installation. Travel is her passion...and she gets to Ireland as often as possible.



ANDY KARP has walked on the Royal Lake circuit trail at least five thousand times over the past 20 years! His FORL focus is on trail maintenance. Andy retired from a career as an engineer working on drinking water projects in more than 30 developing countries, including living 14 years in Latin America.



MARYANNE BOYER is a site leader for the FCPA Invasive Management Program and was recently awarded the Ellen Doyle Park Award for her dedicated work on behalf of our Lake parks. MaryAnne is a retired 4th grade teacher. She is an avid hiker, bird watcher, and enjoys doing arts and crafts. (Cont'd)



TOM MCCOOK, a retired Navy guy, is a new member of the FORL team who enjoys volunteering to support the community projects. Tom leads the Road Raiders team (see more info below) in cleaning up common areas in the community. Tom thoroughly enjoys the trails, streams, and lake in our great Royal Lake parks,



SHELLY TUCKER supports FORL out of her passion to share with her kids the value of growing up near a county park, while modeling taking care of our natural resources and teaching the importance of volunteering in the community. She also thinks the free summer concerts an absolute treasure!



SARAH FRANCIA is a Foreign Service Officer who chose Northern Virginia as her family base and, happily, ended up living in KPW. Since retiring she has quietly worked in volunteer positions including with FORL to support this beautiful neighborhood which has given her so much pleasure.



GREG SYKES works in the environmental and molecular biology fields. Around Royal Lake, he is one of the Invasive Management Area (IMA) site leaders, directing volunteers to restore the natural habitat and eradicate non-native invasive plants from the park. As an advisor to FORL, Greg provides guidance for a healthy ecology.



## FORL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ROAD RAIDERS meets on the second Saturday each month at 7.30-8AM (only); the next dates are Feb.9 and March 9; for more information contact Tom McCook: [trmccook@gmail.com](mailto:trmccook@gmail.com)



INVASIVE MANAGEMENT WORKDAYS are posted on the FCPA Website Calendar. Check the site for workdays coming up in the next few weeks. (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks>)

Community service opportunities!!!



ROYAL LAKE PARKS' SPRING CLEANUP: April 27 (tentative)



Watch for a FUTURE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST: details TBA

## **VOLUNTEERS WORK ON THE ROYAL LAKE TRAIL**

**by Andy Karp  
karpandy7@gmail.com**

**Last Fall, an intrepid team of 12 volunteers, organized by Paul Gross and Sarah Lennon, worked to improve an area notoriously prone to flooding near the pedestrian bridge that goes over Rabbit Branch not far from Lakeside Park's parking lot.**

**Rain made it difficult to walk the trail by anyone unprepared to wade through water and mud. Some volunteers formed a wheelbarrow brigade to move the crushed stone to the maintenance site; others spread the material across the trail and ensured the grade of the trail would facilitate drainage.**

**Three weeks after this work was completed, a heavy rain caused the Rabbit Branch to overflow this section of trail. Since the trail is now higher with a drainage canal to take water away from this area, water did not collect and the trail dried out sooner than it did prior to this project.**



**The work of this small group of dedicated volunteers to repair this section of the trail will benefit the hundreds of people who use the loop trail throughout the year. Friends of Royal Lake extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to all the volunteers who helped make this project a success!**



**FORL is planning a series of trail maintenance days in 2019 to address other parts of the trail requiring maintenance. Keep an eye on this newsletter and on the Kings Park West newsletter for more information about these events. We hope to see even more volunteers taking part!**

# WHAT THE BEAVERS ARE UP TO AT ROYAL LAKE



Looks alarming but....



Still a Friend.....

## NATURALIST GREG SYKES EXPLAINS:

The beavers at Royal Lake prefer to establish their lodge near one of the two main tributaries. Since settling by Shane's Creek, the beaver activity is obvious, especially gnawed trees and shrubs by the shore and boat ramp's hillside. This sort of tree felling is perfectly normal in riparian habitats. Filling their ecological niche, the beaver help to create healthy transition zones between wetlands and forests.

Since humans purged many beavers from this area long ago, some people today do not know how the land/water interfaces should actually look. Many transitional woody trees such as Silky Dogwood, River Birch, Sycamore and Black Willow thrive under the beavers' pruning. An opened canopy enables marsh plants to flourish.

Sometimes people feel inclined to prevent beavers' activity but the best policy is to let these animals freely interact with their environment. They also help control non-native invasive species on the management target list!

Many folks already enjoy the transformations brought by North America's largest rodent.

For more information, read "A Tribute to Beavers" on Greg's website:

[http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eco-articles/12c\\_2008-12.pdf](http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eco-articles/12c_2008-12.pdf).

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Comments? Suggestions?  
Ideas?

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