

AGENDA

NOVA Parks Board Meeting

River View - Occoquan

Thursday, March 16, 2023 @ 7:30 pm

6:15 Tour of Suffragist Memorial

6:30 Buffet Dinner

7:30 Call to Order

Chair, Cate Magennis Wyatt

Roll Call

Amendments to the Agenda

Approval of Minutes

January 19, 2023 Board Meeting

7:40 Compensation Philosophy

Paul Gilbert & Danielle Endler

8:00 Proposed FY'2024 Annual Operating Budget

Kim McCleskey

8:30 Executive Director's Report

Paul Gilbert

Black History Month Event at Ball's Bluff with Loudoun NAACP

Partnership with Fairfax NAACP

NVTA grants for Dual Trails

Discussions with Town of Vienna on Dual Trails

8:45 Administrative Items

A. Treasurers Report

B. Award of contract for renovations to Bull Run Comfort Station #1

9:00 Adjourn

NOVA Parks
The Atrium at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens
9750 Meadowlark Gardens Ct.
Vienna, Virginia 22182

Board Meeting, January 19, 2023
7:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present:

Cate Magennis Wyatt, Chairman
Sean Kumar, Vice Chairman
James Bonfils
Jeffrey Tarbert
Mark Chandler
Michael Nardolilli
Patricia Harrison
Paul Baldino
Paul Ferguson
Stella Koch

Members Absent:

Scott Price

Staff Present:

Paul Gilbert, Executive Director
Mike DePue, Planning Administrator
Danielle Endler, HR Administrator
Kim McCleskey, Budget Administrator
Brian Nolan, Director of Planning & Development
Chris Pauley, Director of Operations
Blythe Russian, Park Operations Superintendent
Mark Whaley, Park Operations Superintendent
Lauren Weaver, Director of Finance
Kelly Gilfillen, Director of Marketing and Communications
Kiley Christian, Planning & Development Assistant
Ahn Phan, Community Engagement Manager

Guests Present:

Michael Lupton, Partner, Robinson, Farmer Cox Associates

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion made by Mr. Bonfils, seconded by Mr. Ferguson to approve the November 17, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

BOARD ELECTIONS:

Paul Ferguson spoke regarding Board Officer Elections and nominating committee. Mr. Ferguson spoke that NOVA Parks has a tradition that Board Members typically serve 3 years if able. In speaking with all Board Members, they wanted to convey their full support for the work being done.

Mr. Bonfils moved to nominate Ms. Magennis Wyatt; motion seconded by Mr. Ferguson.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Ferguson moved to nominate Mr. Kumar as Vice Chair; motion seconded by Mr. Tarbert.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Tarbert moved to nominate Mr. Baldino as Treasurer; motion seconded by Mr. Ferguson.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Baldino moved to nominate Mr. Tarbert for At-Large Member; motion seconded by Ms. Magennis Wyatt.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

MICHAEL LUPTON, PARTNER, ROBINSON, FARMER COX ASSOCIATES, PLLC:

Michael Lupton, Partner, Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates presented the FY22 NOVA Parks Audit Report. Mr. Lupton summarized the Audit Report is unmodified, with the financial statement disclosures neutral, consistent, and clear.

A motion was made by Mr. Baldino to accept the Auditor's report as presented; seconded by Mr. Tarbert.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

REPORT ON BULL RUN FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, MARK WHALEY, SUPERINTENDENT:

The festival was open this year from November 11, 2022 - January 8, 2023, with 58.5% of sales being online. There were a total of 59,768 vehicles through the light show. There is an encouragement to have customers purchase tickets online, in in order to control the traffic flow. There is a price difference when purchasing tickets at the gate vs. online. Mr. Whaley discussed looking ahead and ideas which include new displays with “wow” factor, new audiences for online ticketing, more impact in final half mile, and improving guest experience.

Admissions:	\$1,969,611
Village:	\$47,963
Vendors:	\$125,547
Gross Revenue:	\$2,143,121

REPORT ON MEADOWLARK’S WINTER WALK OF LIGHTS, BLYTHE RUSSIAN, SUPERINTENDENT:

The festival was open this year from November 11, 2022 - January 1, 2023, with multiple closures due to weather. There were multiple new light displays, including stomp pads. The firepit was brought back for marshmallow roasting, with alcohol and beverages with the addition of some food items this year for guests to enjoy while viewing the light displays. The bring your dog night was a huge hit again this year!

Ms. Russian discussed Meadowlark had 85,272 visitors to the Winter Walk of Lights this year. The online number of tickets purchased were 77,156 and there were 2,302 tickets purchased at the door, and 3,120 group tickets purchased.

For the 21-22 Season, Meadowlark had a total of 111,374 guests. The 11-year total for Meadowlark Winter Walk of Lights is: 751,386.

Admission:	\$1,382,666
Retail:	\$45,495
Food & Beverage	\$135,843
Alcohol	\$46,378
TOTAL	\$1,642,273

**REPORT ON ICE & LIGHTS THE WINTER VILLAGE AT CAMERON RUN, BLYTHE
RUSSIAN, SUPERINTENDENT:**

Ms. Russian reported The Ice & Lights Winter Village was open this year from November 18, 2022 - January 1, 2023, and the ice rink will re-open January 7 - February 26, 2023 for ice skating only on the weekends, weather permitting. There were multiple weather related closures this season, for both the light show and the ice rink.

Some of the new features were more photo ops, stomp lights, cabanas, individual fire pits, and additional lights throughout. Tickets were sold at the door and online. The January – February skating numbers are estimated.

Village Admissions:

16,704

Skating Admissions:

22 -23: 5,315

Jan-Feb 641

TOTAL 22,363

Village: \$180,088

Skating: \$49,209

Rentals: \$23,139

Retail: \$50,177

TOTAL: \$302,683

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – PAUL GILBERT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE:

Mr. Gilbert introduced Ahn Phan, Community Manager Nova Parks and discussed her role within NOVA Parks and her outreach projects.

Mr. Gilbert also discussed NOVA Parks presentation to two Arlington commissions on the Strategic Plan and on the Arlington W&OD Dual Trails. Mr. Gilbert also discussed the upcoming Black History Month Event at Balls Bluff.

Mr. Gilbert discussed an update on the personnel handbook which is being re-written by a contracted law firm that specializes in employment law.

Mr. Gilbert reported on a request for funds to develop educational videos related to the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial. Mr. Gilbert presented information, meeting minutes, and other materials pertaining to the donor's intent and terms and conditions for use and disbursement of Assets established by the former TPSMA Board prior to its dissolution. Mr. Gilbert shared that a survey of former TPSMA Board members resulted in 8 of 9 responses supporting the funds to remain in the Memorial Maintenance Fund.

A motion was made by Mr. Tarbert and seconded by Ms. Koch recommending the funds remain in the Memorial Maintenance Fund to be used in direct support of the NOVA Parks Turning Point Suffragist Memorial.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED with Mr. Ferguson momentarily unavailable during the vote. When Mr. Ferguson returned after the vote, he stated his support for the motion.

REPORT ON LIGHT SHOW MARKETING AND UPCOMING EFFORTS - KELLY, GILFILLEN DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Gilfillen discussed NOVA Parks new marketing approach shift to strategic planning based on revenue and participation goals, promotion analytics, market analysis and customer data. Ms Gilfillen also discussed the umbrella campaign for the light shows which used “Dive, Walk or Skate into the Holidays with NOVA Parks” and the social media correlation results and insights. Ms Gilfillen also discussed media coverage and additional visitor impacts.

Ms. Gilfillen summarized the data shown from the 2022 light show season has shown that using social media themes in posts on lower sales days, sending emails to customers mid-week at the end of November, using more digital ads throughout the season, increasing focus on gathering earned media, and leveraging relationships with schools and jurisdictions to amplify promotion all assist in continuous improvement.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

- A. Treasurer’s Report
- B. Bid Award – Algonkian Golf Course Renovations
- C. Bid Award – Brambleton Golf Course Renovations
- D. Bid Award – NOVA Parks Headquarters Lobby Renovations

A motion was by Mr. Nardolilli to adopt Administrative Items, seconded by Ms. Koch.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Nardolilli to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Koch.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul A. Gilbert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being the most prominent.

Paul A. Gilbert, Secretary

Approved by the Park Authority Board
on March 16, 2023

Paul A. Gilbert, Secretary

Cate Magennis Wyatt, Chairman

DATE: March 8, 2023
TO: NOVA Parks Board
FROM: Paul Gilbert
RE: Compensation Philosophy

The Board expressed an interest in adopting a compensation philosophy prior to any information from the compensation study that is being conducted currently. Below in bold is a draft philosophy that has been reviewed by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Personnel Handbook (Paul Baldino and Pat Harrison). At the heart of this policy is the desire to compensate our team members at between 95% to 110% of the market. The range is because we have many positions and we will never have all of them exactly at 100% of the market, which is always shifting. The draft philosophy deviates some from our member jurisdictions in that it includes not just the other local governments in the area, but the private sector. This is a reflection that some of our positions are comparable to public sector jobs and some are more represented in the private sector.

Of our jurisdictions, Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties all have philosophy statements, that are listed below. And Falls Church and Fairfax City do not have philosophy statements. Fairfax and Loudoun Counties both list a target compensation of 95% - 105%.

I think it is a good idea for our philosophy statement to be short, and not try to explain too much. We have policies related to how our grade-and-step system, bonus, leave and benefits work. Trying to restate any of that could lead to misinterpretation. It is also important to have the disclaimer that funding this goal is subject to budget considerations.

DRAFT NOVA PARKS COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY:

NOVA Parks's philosophy is to compensate team members at or above the median for the marketplace, subject to financial and market constraints and the team member's performance. When possible and merited by performance, the team member's total remuneration (salary, and incentive) should be from 95% to 110% of the market median for the Northern Virginia area. This recognizes NOVA Park's dependence on an entrepreneurial business model and the small size of the workforce relative to its larger competitors. Periodically, NOVA Parks will conduct a compensation study covering all or part of the workforce to determine the market median.

Market comparables will include similar positions in local governments in Northern Virginia and the private sector. Funding the compensation goals is subject to the annual financial performance of the agency and related budget considerations.

Alexandria:

The intent of the compensation philosophy is to maintain a competitive compensation program in order to attract, retain, and motivate qualified employees. To that end, the following principles govern compensation programs:

- Pay programs are intended to be competitive at a minimum with the average pay of comparator organizations in the primary labor market. The primary labor market is currently defined as the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William, Montgomery, and Prince George's.
- From time-to-time, the City may recommend that other comparators should be used (e.g., Commonwealth of Virginia, agencies of the Federal government, or private sector employers or industry groups) where information from the primary labor market is considered insufficient to attract/retain specific positions or classification groups.
- In all instances, for benchmark jobs, information for an assessment of pay competitiveness will be ascertained through reliably published compensation survey data.
- Every two years, the City will conduct a market study of benchmark positions to determine the organization's competitive posture, and propose a plan of action. The City will ensure benchmarking is in compliance with Collective Bargaining Agreements. The City may determine if a classification needs review in the interim.
- If an average salary falls below market averages to the extent that attracting and retaining qualified employees may be jeopardized, the City will propose action necessary to align the position or classification with the competitive marketplace for implementation in the next fiscal year or sooner, if financially feasible.

Arlington:

Arlington County recognizes our employees are the foundation of our success. This philosophy provides a broad framework to guide decisions that impact total compensation. We strive to offer a total compensation package that:

- Enables Arlington County to attract, recruit, develop, motivate, reward and retain a high caliber, diverse workforce;
- Provides employees with fair and competitive pay, benefits and retirement options throughout their tenure;
- Maintains a highly-valued benefits package where the costs of benefits are shared between the County and the employee.

TOTAL COMPENSATION PRINCIPLES

A. Provide salaries that are competitive in our target market. Our target market consists of those jurisdictions and organizations of similar size, service, and structure that are identified as our competitors for employee talent.

- For most positions, this includes Alexandria City, and Fairfax and Prince William Counties. Additional organizations that share our recruitment base may be factored into our target market as appropriate during the four or five-year job studies each position, to address recruitment and retention issues.

- The market position goal for the County is to:

- o Provide competitive annual merit increases which considers the annual Employment Cost Index in addition to comparators;

- o Benchmark pay range maximums at or above the average maximum of our comparators and adjust pay ranges as appropriate;

- o Assure pay range minimums for entry-level public safety positions lead among comparators

B. Provide employees with leave and/or disability benefits that assist in replacing a portion of income lost so that employees care for themselves and their family members during qualifying periods of illness or absence.

C. Provide a retirement program that encourages longevity and offers defined benefit, defined contribution, and deferred compensation options that will assist employees in achieving their individual retirement goals and retain employees.

D. Provide affordable healthcare that offers employees the ability to choose the option that best fits their needs.

E. Encourage, support and reward employees at all levels of the organization by offering learning and development opportunities to promote professional growth and monetary awards to recognize employee performance.

F. Enhance work-life balance through offerings such as: alternative work schedules, employee wellness programs and ancillary benefits.

G. Foster a positive work environment that provides meaningful work and encourages employee productivity, innovation, and creativity.

The Human Resources Department will develop operational policies to support the total compensation principles.

The total compensation package will be administered in a fiscally responsible manner. Benchmark job classes and benefits will be reviewed annually. When the County is unable to achieve the desired market position within the Board's budget guidelines, a multi-year plan will be developed to address future needs. Nothing in this statement should be construed as a guaranteed benefit.

Fairfax County:

The County will maintain a competitive level for compensation administration with at least the external salary range mid-point average of comparator organizations in

the local Washington DC area. Market ratio thresholds for all occupational groups will be 95 percent to 105 percent of the external salary range mid-point average of the surveyed class specifications.

Loudoun:

The Board seeks to deliver market competitive pay to the County's workforce. To that end, the Board has established the County's official compensation philosophy and approved the County's official comparator market. The compensation philosophy is intended to serve as general guidance to the County Administrator on the target market position for the County's compensation plan. The official comparator market represents a group of local government employers the County Administrator or designee is authorized to include in benchmark surveys to assess the County's actual market position. The Board retains the right to modify or eliminate the official compensation philosophy and official comparator market at any time.

The County's official comparator market is comprised of the counties of Arlington, Prince William, Fairfax, and the City of Alexandria. The Board's current official compensation philosophy sets a target market position for the County's compensation plan of 95% to 105% of the official comparator market. This target is purely an aspirational goal and achievement of this goal is subject to Board funding. The County Administrator or designee shall have the authority to set a specific target market range for individual positions or groups of positions within the County's overall target market position of 95% to 105% of the official comparator market.

The County Administrator or designee shall regularly benchmark the compensation plan to determine the County's actual market position. The compensation plan shall be benchmarked against the data reported on salary surveys and on websites of the official comparator market for benchmark positions; specifically, the average mid-points for comparable classified positions within the official comparator market.

At times, benchmarking against the County's official comparator market results in no data or insufficient data. In such cases, the County Administrator or designee is authorized to benchmark against and use data from public and private employers in the Washington, DC metropolitan statistical area as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

City of Fairfax and City of Falls Church do not have a stated Compensation Philosophy.

**FY 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET
MARCH 2023
SUMMARY**

- Total Budget (General & Enterprise Funds) of \$36,764,418 which is an 8.5% increase compared to the FY 2023 Budget.
- Appropriations from the Jurisdictions will be at 11.9% of total revenue.
 - The per capita rate is \$2.19 in FY 2024.
 - The increase in appropriations revenue for FY 2024 is \$300,582, or 7.4%.
- Overall personnel costs are budgeted to increase by 8.3%. The recruitment and retention of personnel is a major focus of the budget. Salary and benefit expenses include the following:
 - Part Time Rates – Adjusted to bring all positions to at least \$13 an hour, which is \$1 an hour higher than the \$12 Virginia minimum wage that took effect this January.
 - New FT Positions
 - General Fund - No new positions for FY 24
 - Enterprise Fund
 - Algonkian Woodlands – Events Coordinator
 - This is the only event facility without a full-time events coordinator position and this position is needed with the increase in events at this facility. Part-time hours will be reduced with the addition of this position.
 - Cameron Run – Crew Leader
 - Hours for part-time will be significantly reduced with the inclusion of this new full-time position.
 - New Roving Naturalist position is included part-time at 1,200 hours per year
 - This position is directly tied to the Strategic Plan goal to expand program offerings and provide educational and outreach opportunities related to natural resource conservation.
 - 6.6% Market Rate Adjustment
 - Inclusion of a Compensation Funding Initiatives account with \$210,000 to help address competitive compensation and the results of the Compensation Study.
 - Annual step-increases for eligible full-time employees
 - A retirement rate contribution of 21% is included in the budget. This is based on an estimated actuarial contribution rate of 20.8%. The final actuarial rate will not be released until May, so there may be an adjustment in the final FY 24 Budget. The current rate included in the FY 23 Budget is 20%.
 - Employer share of health insurance is budgeted for a 9% increase in calendar year 2024. This is based on anticipated trends and the most recent estimates from our health insurance companies
 - Inclusion of a Compensation Funding Initiatives account with \$210,000 to help address competitive compensation and the results of the Compensation Study.
- Maintenance costs are budgeted to increase by 7.7% overall. This increase is a combination of inflation-based increases and additional maintenance needs.
- The Enterprise Fund is budgeted to fully cover the debt service costs for Occoquan and Climb Upton in FY 2024. Prior to FY 2023, transfers were budgeted from the Capital Fund and Restricted License Fee Fund to help cover these debt service costs.

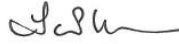
- A contingency of \$150,000 is included in the General Fund budget. The contingency serves as the first line of defense during unanticipated situations. This provides an additional buffer and will be used before considering the use of reserve funds.
- There is \$65,000 budgeted for Strategic Plan Initiatives. This provides funding to help realize initial goals of the Strategic Plan.
- It is estimated that Designated Set Aside reserves will be at \$3.5 million, or 10% of proposed revenue, excluding transfers, based on the Proposed FY 2024 Budget. Our financial policies state that these reserves should be between 8 and 15% of revenue for the upcoming budget year. A Strategic Opportunity Reserve was established in 2021 and it is currently funded at a level of \$2.3 million.
- For summary information on revenues, please refer to the Executive Summary section of the budget document, starting on page A-20 (Budget-In-Brief) and the Revenue Summary starting on page A-32.

NOVA Parks
5400 Ox Road
Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039

March 8, 2023

To: Paul Baldino, Treasurer

From: Lauren Weaver, Director of Finance



Subject: Status of Funds

NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

NVRPA Checking (SunTrust Bank)	1,327,069.30
Credit Card Receivable Account (SunTrust Bank)	2,471,445.51
Carlyle House Garden Guild Savings (Burke and Herbert)	1,851.65
Carlyle House Docents Savings (Burke & Herbert)	1,417.98
FSA - SunTrust - Flexible Spending Account	27,830.78
Imprest Fund - Special Event Center at Bull Run (BB&T)	10,416.73
Imprest Fund - Meadowlark Light Show (BB&T)	7,779.82
Local Government Investment Pool - NVRPA - Capital Fund	16,511,030.09
TD Ameritrade- Capital Fund	2,173,187.18
Local Government Investment Pool - Deirdre J. Turnage Endowment Fund	121,596.99
Local Government Investment Pool - Daman Account	447,747.83
Local Government Investment Pool - Designated Set Aside - General Fund	488,675.85
Local Government Investment Pool - Designated Set Aside & Strategic Opportunity - Enterprise Fund	5,424,757.52
Designated Set Aside Sub-Total (RESERVES)	<u>5,913,433.37</u>
LGIP Month of Feb Effective Yield 4.806%	

TOTAL NVRPA CASH	<u><u>29,014,807.23</u></u>
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LOAN PROCEEDS

VRA Resources from Construction Loan for Upton Hill -Par	-
VRA Resources from Construction Loan for Upton Hill -Net Premium	233,092.97
VRA Resources from Construction Loan for Occoquan -Par	-
VRA Resources from Construction Loan for Occoquan -Net Premium	<u>827,882.65</u>
	<u><u>1,060,975.62</u></u>

RESERVE

Local Government Investment Pool - Stribling Debt Service Reserve Fund	130,126.97
	<u><u>130,126.97</u></u>

TEMPLE HALL FARM

Temple Hall Endowment TD Ameritrade	-
TOTAL TEMPLE HALL CASH	<u><u>-</u></u>

RESTRICTED FUND

Local Government Investment Pool - Restricted Account	133,814.89
TD Ameritrade- Restricted Fund	1,797,173.77
(W&OD Friends portion of this balance = \$14,390.38)	
(Wetlands Mitigation Fund portion of this balance = \$65,515.27)	
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUND CASH	<u><u>1,930,988.66</u></u>

CARLYLE HOUSE FRIENDS

Local Government Investment Pool - Carlyle House Friends	358,154.69
TOTAL CARLYLE FRIENDS CASH	<u><u>358,154.69</u></u>

Since the last Status of Funds report submitted to you on January 11, 2023 the following major deposits were collected:

Checks			
1/3/23	Crown Atlantic	Yearly W&OD use fee	195,563.91
1/3/23	T-Mobile	Use fee	35,021.16
1/3/23	AT&T	Quarterly fiberoptic fee	152,106.00
1/20/23	Robert Santone	Rent	11,277.24
2/13/23	Comcast	W&OD Rent	30,820.00
2/13/23	Dominion Energy	Non-reoccurring license fee	68,062.00
2/14/23	City of Falls Church	Bond refund	22,994.73
 ACH's Received			
1/7/23 to 3/1/23	Eventbrite	Online light show ticket sales	\$218,394.38

TOTAL	\$	734,239.42
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ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM

Award of Construction Contract – Bull Run Regional Park Comfort Station #1 Renovations

Staff recently solicited bids for improvements to the Bull Run Regional Park Comfort Station. The proposed work includes interior and exterior renovations to the campground restroom facility to improve its appearance and functionality for campers.

The following bid was received for this work on March 1, 2023:

FHP Tectonics Corp	\$153,678.26
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This proposal was solicited via a Virginia Department of General Services (VA DGS) Job Order Contract for construction services. The Job Order Contract (JOC) was competitively bid by VA DGS and we are riding their contract in accordance with all terms and conditions established with the JOC. Staff developed the scope of work in coordination with the contractor and consultant. After thorough evaluation, staff have concluded that the contractor's proposal is fair and reasonable.

The FY2023 Capital Budget includes \$180,000 to complete this project.

RECOMMENDATION: That staff be authorized to award a contract in the amount of \$153,678.26 to FHP Tectonics Corp for the Bull Run Regional Park Comfort Station Renovations, and the Executive Director be authorized to execute the contract and approve contractor payments.



**Great Employees Delivering
Memorable Experiences!
Monthly Report | March 2023**



ABOUT NOVA PARKS

In the late 1950's, the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission and a group of citizens from several local jurisdictions came together to protect Northern Virginia's rich heritage of woods, meadows, lakes and streams from the threat of suburban sprawl. These citizens, working with their local governments--Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Falls Church--organized under the Virginia Park Authorities Act in 1959 as the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA). They came together to plan, acquire develop and operate a system of regional parks for all Northern Virginians to enjoy.

Today, NOVA Parks (as the organization came to be known in 2014) represents three counties and three cities -- Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Falls Church and the City of Fairfax. NOVA Parks staff, volunteer board members appointed from each jurisdiction and many friends of the regional parks working together have preserved over 12,000 acres of rolling and wooded Virginia countryside for you and created a priceless legacy for future generations.

Through your regional parks, NOVA Parks provides almost two million citizens with some of the finest recreational facilities in the country. By pooling their funds, these local governments find that each dollar they contribute to NOVA Parks is multiplied by contributions from other member jurisdictions and sometimes augmented even more by state and federal grants and private donations. Being a member of NOVA Parks is a good economic investment.

From a wavepool to nature trails, from golfing to boating, there's a regional park that is just right for you. Come for the day, a weekend or a week. The NOVA Parks are yours to enjoy!

MONTHLY UPDATES FROM:

Paul Gilbert, Executive Director
Kelly Gilfillen, Marketing and Communications Director
Chris Pauley, Operations Director
Blythe Russian, Park Operations Superintendent
Mark Whaley, Park Operations Superintendent
Dennis Charlton, Food and Beverage Manager

Aldie Mill, Mt. Zion, and Gilbert's Corner	Tracy Gillespie, Site Manager
Algonkian	Reid Nebergall, Park Manager
Ball's Bluff	Ben Bilko, Park Manager
Blue Ridge	Kevin Casalenuovo, Park Manager
Brambleton	Dustin Betthausen, Park Manager
Bull Run	Eric Ferguson, Park Manager
Bull Run Marina	Kate Irwin, Park Manager
Bull Run Shooting Center	Laurelyn Rawson, Park Manager
Cameron Run	Paul Price, Park Manager
Carlyle House	Rebecca Super, Historic Site Manager
Fountainhead	Kate Irwin, Park Manager
Meadowlark Atrium	Wayne Hager, Atrium Facilities Manager
Meadowlark Botanical Gardens	Jeff Hill, Botanical Gardens Manager
Occoquan	Ryan Corder, Park Manager
The River View at Occoquan	Ryan Corder, Park Manager
Piscataway Crossing	Ben Bilko, Park Manager
Pohick Bay Park	Brad Jackson, Park Manager
Pohick Bay Golf Course	Jon Mendez, Assistant Park Manager
Potomac Overlook	Rachel Doody, Park Manager
Reservoir Park at Beaverdam	Dustin Betthausen, Park Manager
Rust Manor	Alexandra Gordon, Facility and Event Sales Manager
Sandy Run	Kate Irwin, Park Manager
Springdale	Ben Bilko, Park Manager
Temple Hall	Ben Bilko, Park Manager
Upton Hill	Evan McGurrin, Park Manager
Winkler Botanical Preserve	Rachel Doody, Park Manager
W&OD Trail	Kevin Casalenuovo, Park Manager

An Update from the Executive Director



Paul Gilbert, Executive Director

- For Black History Month, we dedicated a sign at Ball's Bluff Battlefield that told the story of Lewis A. Bell, the first Black combatant of the Civil War. This was done in partnership with the Loudoun Branch of the NAACP. Loudoun County Chair Phyllis Randall and other local officials spoke along with Cate Magennis Wyatt. The event was covered by [The Washington Post](#), [WUSA-9](#), [Loudoun Now](#), [Loudoun Times](#), [Blue Ridge Leader & Loudoun Today](#) and [WTOP](#).
- We met with NVTa and Arlington staff to discuss the grant administration for the Dual Trails planning grant.
- We explored numerous archeological sites in the Wolf Run Shoals area, including an area that might be another enslaved cemetery. Further research on this site will be done.
- Paul McCray and I met with Pulte Homes and Henry Harris to discuss the interpretation of historical and natural sites on the land that will be donated to NOVA Parks later this year.
- I met with Consul General Kwon from the Korean Embassy, Jeung Hwa Elmejjad-Yi, and others to discuss the Korean Bell Garden.
- Anh Phan and I met with Michelle Leete, President of the NAACP Fairfax Branch, about various partnerships associated with the strategic goals of NOVA Parks.
- Kelly Gilfillen arranged for Tommy McFly with NBC-4 to cover the reopening of Climb Upton.
- This week Fairfax County will celebrate the groundbreaking of the new W&OD Bridge over Wiehle Avenue.
- Brian Nolan celebrated his 10th anniversary.

Kelly Gilfillen, Marketing and Communications Director

- Working with Graphic Designer Cat Harris to develop Environmental Interpretive Series [webpage](#) and sign design guidelines to create visual connection between interpretive signs in parks and cross-promote parks to similar audiences. New Virginia Bluebells and Spring Wildflowers signs will be installed at Bull Run prior to start of peak bluebells season.
- Developed and began executing Climb UPTon Communication Plan for 2023 season. Based on available data from 2022, 2023 plan will focus on use of short videos on website, social media, and digital ads, along with media relations, to target various audiences in the Metropolitan Washington region.
- The “Share the Love” pet supply donation drive at Ice Skating at Cameron Run garnered media coverage by [Northern Virginia Magazine](#), [The Zebra](#), and [The Connection Newspapers](#).
- The execution of Summer Nature Camp rebranding and Communication Plan proved to be successful with highest first-day sales to date and 2 of 3 locations nearly sold out. Second phase communication efforts to raise awareness about the return of Camp Winkler are underway.

An Update from the Operations Team

Chris Pauley, Operations Director

- Conducted interviews for a number of open full-time positions.
- Working closely with the Budget team to finalize the proposed FY24 operating budget.
- Attended the Ball’s Bluff sign unveiling for the Lewis A. Bell display.
- Preparing terms and a potential contract for a new vendor to begin programming at Hemlock.
- Reviewing communication plans developed for a number of upcoming operations.
- Working closely with the new Central Maintenance Administrator on goals and maintenance operations.

Blythe Russian, Park Operations Superintendent

- Continue to work with potential program partner for Hemlock Overlook on an agreement for service.
- Worked with Marketing on communications plans for summer camps, Climb UPTon, and Ice Skating.
- Ice Skating at Cameron Run season ended on February 26. This year, we focused on group outings and birthdays and have laid the groundwork for next year.
- Attended the Mentor Program kickoff meeting at The Atrium at Meadowlark.
- Attended the annual Rowing Safety Meeting for scholastic teams that practice and race at Sandy Run and Bull Run Marina. Park Manager Kate Irwin did a great job of facilitating the well-attended meeting.
- Attended an event management software training to streamline processes and create consistency between sites.
- Conducted interviews for The River View Hospitality and Event Sales Manager position.
- Held a “mini manager’s meeting” with the nine Park Managers to discuss what we love, want, and need from our jobs. We also reviewed procedures and answered frequently asked questions. It was great to sit down with our talented, passionate staff and learn what we have in common, and how we are different.

Mark Whaley, Park Operations Superintendent

- Participated in Festival of Lights after action meeting to talk about areas of success and where we want to improve in 2023.
- Attended the Mentor Program kickoff meeting at The Atrium at Meadowlark.
- Met with a potential candidate to be a Resident Curator at Mt. Defiance.
- Attended the Friend's of Balls Bluff Remembrance Dinner.
- Met with Loudoun Water about the construction of the new pump station at the Two Creeks property along the W&OD Trail in Ashburn.
- Participated in meeting to discuss Dominion Power projects planned for the W&OD this spring. These will include several detours that we have used in the past.
- Attended Aquatics and Golf committee meetings.

Dennis Charlton, Food & Beverage

- Provided tastings for upcoming weddings.
- Worked with Brickmakers Café staff to update the menu.
- Receiving bids for services including contract event staff and beverages.
- Provided support to event site open houses.



Aldie Mill, Mt. Zion, and Gilbert's Corner – Tracy Gillespie, Site Manager

- Aldie Mill partnered with Loudoun County Public Library to present a first-person program by Elizabeth Monroe, wife of our 5th president and neighbor of mill founder Charles Fenton Mercer. Forty-three people were in attendance.
- Staff from Visit Loudoun brought representatives of the Virginia Film Office in Richmond to Aldie Mill to check out its potential as a filming site.
- Preparations continue to get a resident curator chosen and living in the house at Mt. Defiance.
- I met with three volunteers to plan upcoming projects at Aldie Mill, Gilbert's Corner, and Goose Creek Bridge.

Algonkian – Reid Nebergall, Park Manager

- Staff completed pre-season repairs to park shelters, including new roofing.
- Completed repair or replacement of all foot bridges in Seneca Regional Park.
- Staff are planning several invasive species removal projects and native plantings for the Spring season.
- Waterpark hiring is in full swing, with 20 lifeguards already hired for the summer season.
- Staff met with multiple vendors to discuss new merchandise for Spring.
- Conducted pre-season meeting with crew team leadership in preparation for their seasonal dock installation and season kick-off.



Ball's Bluff – Ben Bilko, Park Manager

- Park stays popular with local users.
- A new interpretive panel was installed highlighting the Lewis A. Bell story at Ball's Bluff.
- The parking lot and driveway at Jackson House have been re-graveled.
- Staff and Friend's group worked to beautify the park prior to the Bell sign dedication on February 18.
- The Friends Remembrance Dinner hosted Sunday, February 26 had a great turnout.

Blue Ridge – Kevin Casalenuovo, Park Manager

- Group camping is now open.



Brambleton – Dustin Betthauser, Park Manager

- February weather was very favorable for golfers. By mid-month, we had already surpassed the revenue generated for the entire month of February 2022.
- Team has been working to complete league agreements and scheduling for 2023.
- Yearly calendar of events has been completed for 2023 to include summer camps, family play days, and tournament offerings.
- Planning and scheduling of Swing Into Spring Promotions is complete, and is expected to grow the App user database.
- Staff conducted interviews for the Park Specialist at Brambleton Golf Course.

Bull Run – Eric Ferguson, Park Manager

- Work continues on Light Show take down.
- Attending job fairs to hire summer employees.
- Interviews were held for Special Events Manager. Michael McMillon was selected and began working at Bull Run on February 27.
- NOVEC has begun installing all new underground lines in the park and replacing all transformers.

Bull Run Marina – Kate Irwin, Park Manager

- An Eagle Scout is working on an invasive species removal project.
- The right-side dock at the launch ramp was replaced with a new dock.

Bull Run Shooting Center – Laurelyn Rawson, Park Manager

- Participated in an online class through NRPA called “Transforming your Agency with on the Ground Innovation” and gained some great ideas.
- The 20 shooter Winter 5-Stand League, which was the largest group to date, has ended.
- Spring Wobble and Trap Leagues will start in a few weeks.
- The first 2023 National Sporting Clays Association tournament took place. Park Specialist and target setter Rich Kolodzinski developed some creative target presentations.
- Corporate Groups, Scouts and Bachelor parties have been booking late Winter and Spring dates. Most March weekends are filled with Boy Scouts taking part in either private Learn to Shoot Safety classes or shooting for their Merit Badges.
- In the last month, we hosted 3 Bachelor Parties, small corporate groups and one large Corporate outing for 50 participants.





Cameron Run – Paul Price, Park Manager

- Construction continues on the Play Pool. New coping stones have been installed.
- School Spirit Days and group/birthday parties were the focus of promotions for Ice Skating at Cameron Run, which was open weekends and holidays in January and February.
- 2023 Waterpark planning is in full swing with staff conducting job fairs and getting facilities ready for opening.
- Batting cages and mini golf open for the season on March 11.

Carlyle House – Rebecca Super, Historic Site Manager

- Thirty volunteers completed their docent refresher course. The feedback from volunteers was overwhelmingly positive, in that it served as a way for new docents to meet more of their fellow volunteers.
- School fieldtrip season has resumed for the spring.
- Staff served as judges for the local middle school history day.
- Garden volunteers have returned to work for the 2023 season.

Fountainhead – Kate Irwin, Park Manager

- Site Supervisor compiled all site policies and procedures into one cumulative Fountainhead Standard Operating Procedure guide.
- Park Manager held monthly goal progress meetings with full time team.
- The first staff orientation and training session was held on February 25.

Meadowlark Atrium – Wayne Hager, Atrium Facilities Manager

- In January 2023, the Atrium hosted 8 private events, all of which were catered by Great Blue Heron Catering.
- Participated in the Wedding Show at Eagle Bank Arena on January 15.
- Enjoyed hosting the NOVA Parks Board Meeting on January 19.



Meadowlark Botanical Gardens – Jeff Hill, Botanical Gardens Manager

- Registration for Camp Grow opened in early February and nearly filled within hours.
- Maintenance Supervisor, Chris Liebermann, attended the Transworld Tradeshow in St. Louis to gain ideas to strengthen Winter Walk of Lights.
- Successfully hired a full time Maintenance member, Taryn Ramer, who previously worked seasonally at Cameron Run Regional Park.
- Attended Managers Meeting with Operations Superintendent.
- Seasonal gardeners have returned and begun work in preparation for the 2023 season.
- Additional local vendors are being sourced for gift shop offerings.
- I met with two Eagle Scouts for project proposals.



Occoquan – Ryan Corder, Park Manager

- A new batting cage net was installed.
- Hiring is underway for part-time staff for the upcoming Marina season.
- Park Manager met with the Suffragist Memorial Docent coordinator Pat Wirth to plan for the upcoming tour season at the Memorial.

The River View at Occoquan – Ryan Corder, Park Manager

- Working on bids for several maintenance projects for the building.
- Hosted 1 wedding, 2 tastings, 1 stylized shoot, and 3 social events.
- Tours and booking future events remain busy.

Piscataway Crossing – Ben Bilko, Park Manager

- Working with Audubon Society of Northern Virginia to install a barn owl box in a silo at the park.
- An Agricultural Lease has been renewed.

Pohick Bay Park – Brad Jackson, Park Manager

- Maintenance crew continued with winter projects in preparation for the 2023 season including building an enclosure for park dumpsters, installing a new hot water heater in the camp store and comfort station 3, among many other tasks.
- Charles Dunn was promoted to the position of Maintenance Supervisor and started working at Pohick Bay at the end of February. Charlie previously served as Crew Leader at Sandy Run/Fountainhead.
- Staff is hiring for the season ahead as the Marina opens in April and Waterpark opens in May.
- Assistant Park Manager Cameron Cardinal and I met with various local Mason Neck State Park staff to take part in planning for the annual Eagle Fest located at their park.
- Park trails are being inspected for downed trees and various trail repairs in need.

Pohick Bay Golf Course – Jon Mendez, Park Manager

- Met with Operations in January to review budget for FY24.
- Pohick Bay Golf Course Manager met with golf app company, Gallus Golf, to discuss marketing strategies for the 2023 season.
- Grounds crew continued to remove dead fall from the course and refurbished the on-course amenities.



Potomac Overlook – Rachel Doody, Park Manager

- Summer Camp registration opened on Friday, February 10 with a BANG! After the first 7 hours of opening registration, Camp Overlook had 305 of 375 spaces filled, making it an 80% fill with four months until the start of camp!
- Potomac Overlook staff virtually attended the 2023 Virginia Forest Health Conference hosted by the National Capital Partnership for Invasive Species Management which covered many different topics including Spotted Lanternflies, Bioherbicide for Tree of Heaven, Habitat Prioritization, and Reporting Early Phase Invaders.
- Staff attended this year's first Camps and Programs Committee meeting at Winkler Botanical Preserve. The group discussed upcoming spring programming, including Spring Egg Scavenger Hunts, Earth Day Events, summer camp sales and marketing, and continued work on a Nature- and History-based programs interpretation training video for future volunteers and seasonal staff.
- The Roving Naturalist offered opportunities to attend the Comet Capers program at Goose Creek for the green ZTF comet which had not passed the earth in the last 50,000 years and is predicted to never pass by again.
- Winter Naturalist programs in February at Meadowlark included Winter Birds in the Garden and Birds of a Feather.
- The Roving Naturalist assisted with the first in-school traveling Raptors of the Potomac program to Tuckahoe Elementary School since 2020.

Reservoir Park at Beaverdam – Dustin Betthausen, Park Manager

- Water access remains closed as park construction continues.

Rust Manor – Alexandra Gordon, Facility and Event Sales Manager

- The hospitality suites are being renovated before spring wedding season.
- More than 70 tickets have been reserved for the Open House on March 29, which will be highlighted on social media outlets in the upcoming weeks.
- Staff are teaming up with vendors for a large, styled shoot to highlight Rust Manor. Photos will be taken of the parlor with a holiday theme and the tent for two updated wedding themes.

Sandy Run – Kate Irwin, Park Manager

- The Annual Coaches Safety Meeting was held on February 16 at The River View at Occoquan.
- George Mason Women's Team and Crew Club have begun practices for the season. High School practices began February 20.
- Virginia Scholastic Rowing Association has started installing the racecourse for the season.
- Crew Leader Charlie Dunn has been promoted to the Maintenance Supervisor at Pohick Bay.

Springdale – Ben Bilko, Park Manager

- An Agricultural Lease has been created.

Temple Hall – Ben Bilko, Park Manager

- Fall Festival concession's area renovation is underway. Staff has removed the old sheds and concessions trailer.
- Sheep and goats have all had their new babies and are doing well.
- Staff has been working on equestrian trail maintenance and removing hanging limbs.
- We have met with Legacy Farms to discuss this year's garden and programs.
- The Agricultural Lease has been renewed.



Upton Hill – Evan McGurrin, Park Manager

- High Ropes Specialist Josh Sturms attended the Association for Challenge Course Technology conference and expo.
- Spring Park operations are nearly fully staffed, with a focus on summer hiring.
- Attended a Volunteer Thank you event organized by Arlington County to express our gratitude for the work of Upton Hill volunteers and Arlington Regional Master Naturalists.
- Met with representatives from the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, along with NOVA Parks Community Engagement Manager to discuss beginning their “Stretch Our Parks” Initiative.

Winkler Botanical Preserve – Rachel Doody, Park Manager

- Camp Winkler saw its first summer camp registration opening day in nine years! The summer schedule includes full and half day nature-based camps for campers ages 5-11.
- Winkler staff are deep into annual trail work including mulching, bridge repairs, and many other trail maintenance projects.



W&OD Trail – Kevin Casalenuovo, Park Manager

- Actively collaborating with a contractor on pavement work including Purcellville, 2 areas near Ivandale, 2 spots near Hamilton Station, 1 spot near Broad Run, 1 spot near Isaac Newton, and shoulder/ditch line work near Lawson Road.
- Added advanced warning signs to Falls Church.
- Collaborating with the Friends Group on a safety campaign for the Spring.
- A focus this off-season has been repairing gravel sections of the horse trail.
- Working with Dominion on bamboo removal at Hunter Mill RD, and in Leesburg
- Working with Dominion on updating “detours” that will occur 3/20 to 3/24 (Pacific Blvd-Smith Switch)
- Finalizing adopt-a-trail program with updated signage and adding new adopters to ensure prompt attention to litter.
- Collaborating with master naturalist on an area near Cedar Lane to remove invasives and add plantings.
- Worked with Shreve Crest HOA on invasive removal project.

