



SMOKE'S CORNER

The NOVA Parks Roving Naturalist Newsletter

Introduction

Greetings! This is the first issue of Smoke's Corner, which will provide news about NOVA Parks programs, seasonal birdwatching tips, and the unique perspectives of our staff.

I am Matt Felperin, Roving Naturalist for NOVA Parks. I develop and lead environmental education and recreational programming, including guided hikes, paddle tours, live animal shows, photography workshops, and school programs. Most days, you'll find me at the Nature Center at Potomac Overlook Regional Park.

Smoke, an Eastern Screech-owl, is perhaps the most recognized animal ambassador for NOVA Parks! He resides at Potomac Overlook Regional Park, along with a Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Red-shouldered Hawk. Like our other birds of prey, Smoke was hit by a car and cannot survive on his own in the wild.

Visit Potomac Overlook to meet Smoke, gain insights into our birds of prey, and learn techniques for preventing injuries to wildlife.



Leading a school program

Naturalist Programs

Currently, NOVA Parks offers virtual programs and self-guided hikes. Contact us to learn about naturalist presentations, photography workshops, and other programs.

Winter Light Shows

Check out our amazing winter light displays at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, Bull Run Regional Park, & Cameron Run Regional Park.



Meadowlark Gardens Winter Walk of Lights

Sights and Sounds of Fall

September: This month featured warbler walks and kayak tours. Special outings included "Pohick Creek Explorer's Paddle" and "Search for the Elusive Sora."



Sora, a secretive marsh bird

October: The Black Birder's Walk at Upton Hill was incredible! Thanks to our many partners for making it possible. The Meteor Shower Watch Party at Goose Creek Bridge Historic Park was super cool, with hooting Barred & Great Horned Owls and serenading coyotes!



Black Birder's Walk at Upton Hill

November: Fall colors paddle tours and snake hike at Fountainhead, plus Webb Nature Sanctuary's first ever NOVA Parks guided hike!



Fall Colors Kayak Paddle

Seasonal BIRD WATCH



Northern Pintail

Winter is the best time to observe waterfowl. Look for Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Northern Shoveler, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Redhead, Mergansers, and Loons.

Be sure to bring binoculars and/or a spotting scope

POHICK BAY: The boat ramp area is excellent, or take a hike to Fisherman's Point! Also great for observing shockingly high numbers of Bald Eagles in February.

ALGONKIAN: The Woodlands Trail has many vantage points overlooking the Potomac River, Sanctuary Trail has a few impoundments that are worth looking over.

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