

Fairfax County Park Authority Restoration sites in need of support

Frying Pan Farm Park

Frying Pan Farm Park is in Herndon, VA. The park is 135 acres in size, including 70 acres of undeveloped natural area. Frying Pan contains nature trails and a working farm and is one of the most popular and highly visited parks in Fairfax County. Frying Pan is also home to a Northern Hardpan Basic Oak-Hickory Forest, a rare forest type that only occurs on fertile, shrink-swell clay soils. A forest restoration project began in 2019 and aims to restore 16 acres of degraded forest to high-quality oak-hickory forest. Restoration methods include thinning unhealthy and undesirable tree species, removing invasive plants, deer exclusion fencing, and planting native oak seedlings. Frying Pan Farm Park needs funding for ongoing tree protection measures and invasive vine control from species such as porcelain berry and English ivy.

Elklick Preserve

Elklick Preserve is a 1,400-acre park in Centreville, VA. The park contains a mosaic of young Virginia pine forest, mature oak-hickory forest, and grassland. Elklick Preserve is home to one of Virginia's highest-quality examples of a Northern Hardpan Basic Oak-Hickory Forest, a rare forest type that occurs only on fertile, shrink-swell clay soils. A forest restoration project began in 2017 and aims to restore 23 acres of degraded forest to high-quality Northern Hardpan Basic Oak-Hickory Forest. Restoration methods include thinning Virginia pine, removing invasive plants, planting native oak and hickory seedlings, and deer exclusion fencing. As this project approaches completion, you can support the trees at this site through funding for the continued maintenance of tree planting protection measures and invasive vine removal.

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park is a 650-acre, resource-based park in Chantilly, VA. The park is divided in two parts by Route 28. The west side of the park is developed as a recreational area with forest remnants surrounding athletic fields. The core of the park, east of Route 28, is mainly forested with a mosaic of relatively young forests. Forest fragmentation, a high deer population, and non-native invasive species infestations have degraded many acres of forest in the park. A forest restoration is underway to create Acidic Oak Hickory forest and related forest types where the existing unhealthy forest will lead to further degradation and forest loss. Restoration activities include deer exclusion, silvicultural treatments, control of invasive species, and increasing native plant biodiversity by planting and seeding. The existing forest stands and restoration plots are still under threat from invasive vines such as English ivy and porcelain berry which threaten the longterm viability at tree plantings at this site.

Fitzhugh Park

Fitzhugh Park is 10-acre forested park within a heavily urbanized area in Annandale, VA. Most of the park is forested, dominated by species typical of mixed-mesic forests such as tulip poplar, American beech, white oak, and red oak. Forest fragmentation, urban stormwater runoff, deer overabundance, invasive species and illegal trash dumping have degraded several acres of the park's forest. A restoration project began in 2017 and aimed to restore Fitzhugh Park's degraded forest and meadow. Upon project completion in 2020, significant ecological improvements had been made. Invasive species were removed throughout the forest restoration area and replaced with oak trees and a variety of native shrubs, which will ensure that the forest remains healthy and productive for years to come. Support this reforestation is still needed to protect the site's trees from invasive vines such as porcelain berry and English ivy. Funding for the upkeep and maintenance for tree protection tubes is also needed.

Green Spring Gardens

Green Spring Gardens is a 31 acre park in Lincolnia, VA that contains a variety of gardens, horticultural displays, and natural areas. Green Spring is home to an extremely rare Northern Coastal Plain Terrace Gravel Bog. These bogs, characterized by gravelly substrate and an abundance of sweetbay magnolia, exist along the fall line of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain. Urbanization and other land use changes have all but eliminated these bogs from the landscape. The bog at Green Spring Gardens is one of the very few remaining, and it is threatened by erosion from stormwater runoff and non-native invasive plant species. This restoration project began in 2021, and aims to remove invasive species, promote native biodiversity through natural regeneration, and prevent negative impacts of erosion. Protect the sweetbay magnolia and other trees onsite through funding ongoing invasive plant and longterm herbivory controls.

Old Colchester

Old Colchester Park and Preserve is a 140-acre park near the mouth of the Occoquan River in Lorton, VA. The park is primarily forested with a patchwork of upland forest, floodplain forest, depression swamps, and seepage swamps. Management goals for the site include restoration of degraded upland forest, protection of high-quality forested wetlands, and restoration of hydrology in degraded rare wetlands. Restoration methods include removing invasive species, planting native trees, seeding native grasses and wildflowers, prescribed fire, and plugging human-made drainage ditches to restore proper hydrology. Trees on this site are under threat from many species of invasive vines and funding for longterm tree protection maintenance is greatly needed for the reforestation.

Huntley Meadows

Huntley Meadows Park contains over 1500 acres of natural area including a large wetland ecosystem that was restored in 2014. A new project started in 2021 on a much smaller scale to restore hydrology in drained forested wetlands in the interior of the park. Human-made drainage ditches lowered the water table in these forests and facilitated agriculture and other uses. As a result, a matrix of rare wetland forests were reduced in size and some were lost all

together. When agriculture and other uses were abandoned, the vegetation that returned was adapted for dryer conditions and became badly invaded with non-native invasive plants. The rare wetland forests are called Coastal Plain Upland Depression Swamps, and occur on isolated land depressions over clay soils that hold water for extended periods of time each year. Plugging these ditches with soil will raise the water table to simulate natural conditions and will shift the vegetation back towards a more natural condition. Support the trees in the rare habitat and throughout Huntley Meadows by funding efforts to control invasive plants such as English ivy that threaten the success of the site's trees.

Laurel Hill Park

Laurel Hill Park is a 1,200-acre park complex in a medium-density residential area in Lorton, VA. Forested areas are at the northern part of the park, while the southern part is primarily recently abandoned agricultural land, much of which was part of the Lorton Prison system before the Park Authority acquired the land. The majority of the park is characterized by undeveloped open space, in most cases overgrown by non-native invasive plants. A forest restoration project began in 2019 at a site on abandoned agricultural land that was overgrown by kudzu, mugwort, and other invasive species. The goal of the restoration is to eliminate invasive species from the site and establish a healthy Piedmont acidic oak-hickory forest. Support the forest restoration through funding removal of invasive vines such as kudzu and supporting longterm protection measures for tree plantings.

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