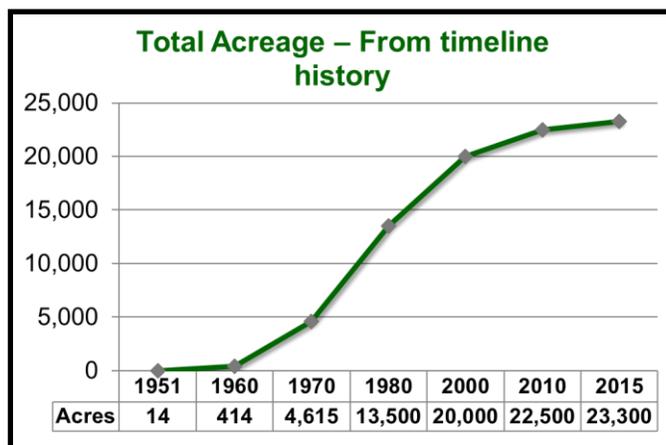


Preserving Open Space and Our Environment

The stewardship of natural resources and protection of open space is central to the Fairfax County Park Authority's mission. A 2015 survey identified preserving open space and environment as the most important activity undertaken by the Park Authority. In fact, 60% of the recent Needs Assessment Survey respondents ranked the preservation of open space and the protection of the environment as vital to the future of Fairfax County.

- Fairfax County owns 23,346 acres of parkland
- 70% of land holdings are natural and forested areas
- Volunteers are making a difference working as citizen stewards. In 2015, 1,823 volunteers, as part of the Invasive Management Area Volunteer Program, removed 1,315 trash bags full of invasive plants from our parks.
- Extensive greenways protect our water resources and stream valley access to 324 miles of multi-modal trails that span the community. At the heart of this trail network is the 41-mile Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail. Trails continue to be a key component of the park system.
- Stewardship education has created a new generation of young people eager to help sustain the natural world. In FY2015, 247,000 participants attended stewardship education programs and classes with the Park Authority. Over the years, the Park Authority has developed strong ties and partnerships with Fairfax County Public Schools, local and national environmental organizations, as well as Friends groups.



##

Improving Residents' Health and Wellness

The scientific evidence is mounting that effective parks and recreational systems are building healthier communities. In fact, top health agencies across the country, including U.S. Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, validate that park systems offer a critical solution for our nation's health problems – particularly with the obesity epidemic.

How Your Parks Help You

Locally there is very good news. 91% of Fairfax County residents live within a quarter mile of a public park.

Did you know? Children living within a half mile of a public park are more likely to have higher levels of physical activity which combats obesity and poor health.

There are 324 miles of trails in the Fairfax County Park Authority system. Walking and biking on a regular basis improves health. 84% of local residents believe we need walking and biking trails in our community.

Did you know? People who live near trails are 50% more likely to meet physical activity guidelines.

Staying fit and active is essential to good health and our expanded fitness centers are very popular! In FY2015, 1,817,882 users worked out at our nine RECenters.

Did you know? More than one-third of U.S. adults (34.9% or 78.6 million) are obese. According to the Center for Disease Control, exercise can improve your health by significantly lowering the chance of heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

98.9% of Fairfax County residents have access to exercise opportunities according to the Healthy Communities Institute.

##

Creating Places People Want to Be

The link between the high quality of life for Fairfax County residents, and our robust park system is undeniable. The 2015 Needs Assessment Survey found that 90% of respondents believe that parks make Fairfax County a more desirable place to live. FCPA provides open access to parks for county residents and visitors, acquires new parkland, manages the development of parks, and provides equipment and grounds maintenance at all parks and park facilities

352 planning and capital projects were completed in FY15

FCPA provides grounds management for 426 parks including athletic fields, playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts, and infrastructure plus over 324 miles of trails.

An FY2015 expansion of the Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole in Lake Fairfax Park opened to record breaking crowds eager to enjoy the \$5.5 million capital project improvements. The expansion provides new amenities geared to teens, greater local employment opportunities and fee-based revenues to the park system.

In 2014, FCPA completed major renovations and expansions of two RECenters, Oak Marr and Spring Hill. Fitness centers, an indoor track, improved locker rooms, new class space and LEED building standards are hallmarks of the projects.

More than a quarter million athletes flock to local athletic fields for soccer, cricket, football, softball and baseball each year. Sully Highlands Park, a 17-acre sports complex in western Fairfax, was recently constructed through partnerships with the Chantilly Youth Association and Fairfax County Government.

In recent years, the requests for accommodations from customers with disabilities has doubled. Adaptive programming includes aquatics, kayaking and other activities, as well as fully-accessible playgrounds at Clemyjontri Park, Chessie's Big Backyard and Our Special Harbor spray ground. An accessible tree house graces Lee District Family Recreation Area.

##

Collaborating for Stronger Communities

Expanding community engagement opportunities and partnerships are the hallmarks of a successful park system in today's ever-changing world. For the Fairfax County Park Authority, this has translated into collaboration and support for the Fairfax County Park Foundation, the nurturing of a transparent, community-centric park planning process, the strengthening and expansion of outreach to diverse cultural communities through our performance series as well as work with volunteers, Friends groups, non-profits and other public agencies.

Utilizing new technology has allowed new engagement with the community at-large through social media, blogs, web-based and mobile, as well as crowdsourcing and mass emails. In FY 2015, the Park Authority website had 37,649,958 page views, 3,956,524 of them were on mobile devices.

In Fiscal Year 2015, volunteers provided 180,642 hours of service to the Park Authority valued at \$4.2 million dollars according to IndependentSector.org

The Fairfax County Park Foundation transferred \$681,562 to the Park Authority in FY2015 in support of a variety of programs such as camp scholarships, free summer concerts, trail improvement and open space acquisition and class scholarships for low income residents.

168 culturally diverse performances and five drive in movies, part of the free summer entertainment series drew 50,278 concertgoers this past summer. A survey of attendees found 90% satisfaction rate of the programs. Most concertgoers attended three to five performances during the summer with 17% of attendees going to ten or more concerts during the season.

The Park Authority witnessed significant growth in Friends groups affiliated with

park sites or activities. These park advocates provide funding for items not tax supported, volunteer support and vital advocacy efforts. Currently there are over two dozen recognized organizations.

Farmers markets are a popular and healthful partnership that brings local produce to the community. Eleven markets are flourishing and during FY2015 four markets, supported by partnerships and grants, participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program known as SNAP, geared towards making markets accessible to low-income families.

The Park Authority and Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) worked collaboratively to improve streams and water quality in Fairfax County. In FY2015 eight projects on park property were completed valued at roughly \$5 million. An additional five projects are currently under construction, valued at approximately \$13 million.

Mastenbrook grants tallied more than \$85,159 last year as the Park Authority worked collaboratively with community groups on nine projects. There were also 122 full and partial (combined) adopt a field and 38 adopt a park agreements in place saving the agency and taxpayers millions in maintenance costs.

##

Making Fairfax County a More Desirable Place to Live

A robust park system and trail network appeals to all those seeking an active lifestyle, natural and historic places and high quality of life.

More than 17 million visitors enjoyed Fairfax County Parks in the past fiscal year.

93% (374,690 households) of Fairfax residents consider parks extremely or very important to quality of life.

Parks enhance real estate values. When located near parks, home values generally demand a premium. National data shows that homes near parks can sell up to \$2,262 more than homes not near parks.

America's local and regional public park agencies generated nearly \$140 billion in economic activity and supported almost one million jobs from their operations and capital spending alone in 2013.

FCPA provided 1,655 summer camp sessions delivered at 59 different locations. Registrations agency-wide for summer camps totaled 26,261, up 20% over the previous year. The number of individual campers served during the summer of 2015 was 12,680, averaging two sessions per person.

##

Protecting and Interpreting Our History

In support of its mission to protect and maintain the county's heritage, the Fairfax County Park Authority manages and preserves historic sites, provides cultural programming and interpretation, and oversees the county's archeology program.

The numbers speak for themselves:

- Over **3.5 million** artifacts
- **10,000** museum collections
- **8** historic sites on the National Register
- **34** historic sites on the county inventory
- Accreditation by the Alliance of American Museums
- **7,625** Fairfax County Public School students toured park historic sites in FY15.

Work to initiate a Resident Curator Program began in earnest in 2014. The program is designed to preserve and protect historic properties by offering long-term leases to qualified tenants who agree to rehabilitate and maintain these historic resources. The benefits include protection of historic sites and private sector funding for needed restoration and maintenance of historic buildings.

In FY 2015, the Park Authority completed needed restoration work at Colvin Run Mill. Two grinding stones brought the historic site to full operational capacity for the first time in decades. Funding was provided in part through a Partners in Preservation grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.