

Riverbend Naturalist

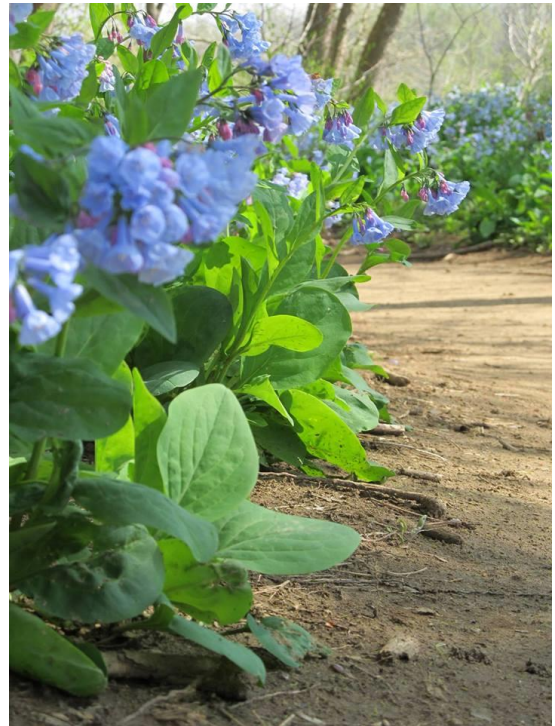
Spring 2019



Riverbend Naturalist is the newsletter from the Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB). Riverbend Park is located at 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls VA 22066. Phone: 703-759-9018

Bluebells at the Bend Festival on Saturday, April 6th

One of the largest reasons that Riverbend Park is beloved by so many visitors is its carpet of Virginia Bluebells (*MERTENSIA virginica*) that graces the Potomac River's floodplain every spring, normally peaking from the first to the third week of April. To celebrate this rite of spring, Riverbend Park holds its *Bluebells at the Bend* Festival every year at the Visitors' Center to usher out the end of winter and the renewal of life at the park. This year's celebration is scheduled for Saturday, April 6th from 10 AM to 3 PM. In addition to strolling through seemingly endless paths surrounded by the light blue blossoms, there will be a wide variety of events and entertainment (face painting, a moon bounce, live music and crafts) as well as food vendors available and suitable for the entire family. You may also purchase Virginia Bluebells from our nursery (not from the park) at FORB's booth at the Bluebell Festival.



Registration online in advance is \$7 per person through April 5th and \$9 per person at the gate which opens at 10 AM. Further information and advance registration may be secured by calling the Visitors' Center at (703)759-9018 or registering online at Riverbend Park's website:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park>

Further information is also available on Riverbend Park's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2228065440591123/>

Please visit the Friends of Riverbend Park's Facebook page for park news:

<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Riverbend-Park-1860876507539239/>

Friends of Riverbend Park may also be found on Instagram at:

<https://instagram.com/p/BuuaOgnFySE/>



Native Plant Sale on Saturday, May 4th, 8 AM – 11 AM

FORB is holding its annual Native Plant Sale this year at Riverbend Park's newly-opened **Outdoor Classroom and Picnic Shelter** on Potomac Hills Street. The sale will not be held at the Great Falls Grange as it has been in previous years. Over 500 plants representing 35 species of native plants and ferns will be available, ranging from the always-popular Virginia Bluebells to Lady Ferns and Eastern Wood Ferns, several varieties of Phlox, Cardinal Flowers, Asters, Butterfly Weed and many others. Over 700 plants have already been pre-ordered from 42 Riverbend Park friends, and a high demand and large turnout is expected at the May 4th sale. In previous years, the entire stock has been sold out as early as 10 AM, so we always advise plant buyers to arrive early to get the best selections. Ample parking will be available at the Outdoor Classroom and Picnic Shelter. Payments may be made by cash, check or credit card.



FORB's Native Plant Sale is the perfect opportunity to bring the park right into your own garden or back yard. These plants thrive naturally in this area, help fight invasive plant species, attract hummingbirds and butterflies, and are a joy to behold from early spring through fall. Most importantly, the Native Plant Sale is FORB's largest single fundraiser of the year. The net proceeds from your native plant purchase go directly to the support of Riverbend Park.

A complete list of the plants available with their prices (most at \$8 or \$9), light and soil conditions for growth, and tolerance for deer and drought will be provided or may be viewed on FORB's website, www.forb.wildapricot.org/Native-Plant-Sale. FORB plant experts will also be on hand to answer your questions and help with your selections. So come early (8 AM) on Saturday, May 4th to Riverbend Park's Outdoor Classroom for the Friends of Riverbend Park's annual Native Plant Sale.



Blue Phlox



Tiger Swallowtail on a Day Lily

Outdoor Classroom / Picnic Shelter Dedication and Opening Ceremony – 27 April 2019 at 10:00 AM



Riverbend Park's new Outdoor Classroom and Picnic Shelter on Potomac Hills Street is nearing completion, and will be officially dedicated and opened on Saturday, April 27, 2019 at 10: 00 AM. Fairfax County Park Authority Board Member for the Dranesville District, Tim Hackman, will preside at the ceremonies, while Supervisor John Foust and FORB President Hugh Morrow will add remarks on the occasion of the opening of this significant new structure for Riverbend Park.

The Outdoor Classroom and Picnic Shelter is an attractive and spacious facility for conducting Riverbend's many camps and events, including FORB's Native Plant Sale which will be held there on Saturday, May 4, 2019 beginning at 8:00 AM. The shelter will also be available for rentals to private parties and will hold 120 standing and 48 sitting attendees. It is expected to see considerable service for field trips for school children, and greatly increase the park's ability to carry out large programs in an attractive setting surrounded by the forest. Parking is provided for about 20 cars and a school bus. A trail is also planned to connect the Outdoor Classroom directly with the areas around the Visitors' Center.

Senior Interpreter Position Filled at Riverbend Park

Congratulations to **Jordan Libera** who has just been named as the new Senior Interpreter and Programs Manager for Riverbend Park. In his new position, he will manage all of the park's interpretive programming including the increasingly important school field trips, scout programs and summer camps.

Jordan's experience at Riverbend Park began in 2012 when he was selected to be a FORB-supported Summer camp intern. After his summer internship, he was hired as a fishing instructor and interpretive naturalist. In 2015, Jordan became the Recreation Program Manager, responsible for managing all recreational programs at the park. He has earned many professional certifications in kayaking and canoeing, and is also a Certified Interpretive Guide with the National Association for Interpretation (NAI).



One of Jordan's greatest accomplishments at Riverbend was the establishment of adapted outdoor recreation programs. He collaborated with FCPA Park Services and Leisure Services to create a kayaking program for teens with disabilities. This program has now expanded to include both outdoor recreation classes and camps for kids, teens and young adults with disabilities. The program has been so successful that Jordan was awarded the FCPA Trailblazer Award.



Jordan's experience in leading the park's interpretive programs and managing its recreation programs, his collaborative skills, and his familiarity with the park give him the background necessary to take the lead and carry out all programming at Riverbend Park into the future. His creativity and drive make him a truly valuable leader at Riverbend Park.

All the Members of the Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB) join with the staff at Riverbend Park in congratulating Jordan on this well-deserved promotion. Good luck in your new position.

Congratulations, Jordan Libera!

Progress Towards a New Maintenance Building

Riverbend Park is a large, over 400-acres, natural resources park. For many years, it has not had an adequate and dedicated maintenance facility to accommodate the responsibility of caring for and maintaining such a huge area. The need for such a facility was clearly recognized and established as a priority in the Fairfax County Park Authority's 2013 Master Plan for Riverbend Park.

“The new park maintenance facility will provide much needed space with areas for carpentry, display creation, large paint booth, mechanical maintenance with at least four truck size bays, equipment storage for hand tools, tractor, two trucks, gators, rescue boat, trail maintenance equipment, gas powered equipment, stock storage, and facility yard. Staff office space should also be included. A separate material/chemical storage area shall also be provided. Design of the maintenance facility shall consider applicable and feasible green building techniques to the greatest extent possible, including solar power. As an interim measure, temporary sheds may be used for equipment storage.”
(2013 Riverbend Park Master Plan)

FORB was effective in advocating inclusion of funds for a new maintenance building in the 2016 park bond issue. The Fairfax County Park Authority had originally planned to start the initial or Scope phase of this project in July 2020, but that date has now been moved forward to March 2019 in its five year Capital Improvement Plan, more than a year ahead of schedule. This means that the originally announced date of December 2022 for completion of construction will now be moved

ahead to October 2021. Preliminary considerations envision a 40' x 50' building with a design that complements the new Outdoor Classroom and Picnic Shelter located directly across Potomac Hills Street.

Calendar of Coming Events at Riverbend Park

- Saturday, April 6th (10 AM – 3 PM) – Bluebells at the Bend Festival
- Saturday, April 27th (10 AM) – Dedication of Outdoor Classroom
- Saturday, May 4th (8 AM – 11 AM) – FORB Native Plant Sale

Friends of Riverbend Park Contact Information

- Website: www.forb.wildapricot.org
- Mailing Address: Post Office Box 1481
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