



2022

Annual Report

Friends of Riverbend Park, Inc.

Executive Summary

The Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB) is a not-for-profit organization established in 1999 with the purpose of protecting, enhancing and preserving the physical, cultural and natural heritage of Riverbend Park by educating the public on environmental protection and raising funds to financially support the operations, programs and activities of the park.

FORB enjoyed an outstanding year in 2022, realizing over \$50,000 in income to support many projects and activities at the park. These included support of the summer camp interns, purchase of sixteen kayaks, park staff support for continuing education and supplies, major equipment and appliances for the new Maintenance Facility, and financial donations for the Riverbend Park Forest Preschool, Title I Schools field trip scholarships, the park's Environmental Student Leadership Initiative, and its annual Bluebell Festival.

Particularly noteworthy is the manner in which FORB's annual revenues, donations to the park, annual native plant sale orders, and memberships have grown over the past seven years. For example, total gross sales from its annual plant sale alone have tripled over this interval, and total financial support for Riverbend Park has doubled. FORB's complete financial details for 2022 are contained in this Annual Report.

Dedication

The 2022 Annual Report of the Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB) is dedicated to the memory of two friends of the Riverbend Park community who died during the year and who contributed much to the park for many years. Paul Gene Anderson (1943-2022) passed away on February 15, 2022 at Georgetown Hospital with his wife and long-time FORB Board Member, Eleanor Anderson, at his side. Paul was instrumental in the early formation and growth of FORB, serving as a Director and later as its second President in 2006 and 2007.



Paul Anderson



Nelda LaTeef

Nelda LaTeef (1958-2022) passed away on September 30, 2022 after a long and courageous fight against cancer. She and the entire LaTeef family loved Riverbend Park. Nelda would ride her bike to the park almost every day which gave her constant inspiration for her career as a writer and illustrator of children's books. Nelda's father has a memorial bench in Riverbend Park dedicated to his memory, and which is now dedicated to his daughter, Nelda's, as well.

Riverbend Park

Riverbend Park is a natural resources park first established in 1975 along the Potomac River in Great Falls, Virginia. It encompasses 412 acres of woodlands, trails, riverfront and wildlife in Fairfax County and is one of five natural resources parks within the county and the only one which is a riverfront park. The park is a great favorite of many in Fairfax County and beyond, and enjoys over 400,000 visitors per year. Riverbend Park is owned, operated and maintained by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), and is funded by both its own internally-generated revenue and by funding from the Park Authority. During 2022, the park had five full-time staff members and a number of part-time naturalists and maintenance employees. John Callow served as overall Riverbend Park Manager; Kylie Lee was its Visitor Services Manager; Jordan Libera held the position of Senior Interpreter and Programs Manager; Casey Pittrizzi was its Natural Resources Manager; and Matt McNeal was the Maintenance Crew Chief.

Friends of Riverbend Park, Inc.

The Friends of Riverbend Park, Inc. (FORB) is an independent, non-stock, non-profit corporation, established in the Commonwealth of Virginia on August 5, 1999, with the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and preserving the physical, cultural, and natural heritage of Riverbend Park by educating the public to the value of environmental protection generally and of the park's wildlife habitat specifically; providing volunteer services to the park; channeling donations to the park; providing citizen input to plans that may be proposed for the park; and performing any other activities or services necessary or convenient to carry out such purposes, to the extent permitted by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Friends of Riverbend Park maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fairfax County Park Authority and channels its contributions through the Fairfax County Park Foundation (FCPF) for the benefit of Riverbend Park.

Brief History of FORB

FORB was founded in 1999 by Catherine D. Mayes who also served as its first President. The following individuals have served as Presidents of FORB since its founding in 1999:

1999 – 2005	Cathy Mayes
2006 – 2007	Paul Anderson
2007 – 2012	Serena Wilson
2013 – 2016	Tim Hackman
2016 – 2023	Hugh Morrow



FORB's First President Cathy Mayes



FORB's Second President, Paul Anderson

Many persons have served on FORB's Board of Directors over the years since its founding, and have made major contributions to its growth and prosperity since 1999. Eleanor Anderson, for example, has managed FORB's Annual Plant Sale, at times almost single-handedly,

since 2001. John Hughes-Caley has been a FORB Director for over 20 years, and has served as Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer at various times. Tim Hackman has also served repeatedly, both as a FORB Director and as its President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.



FORB's Third President, Serena Wilson



FORB's Fourth President, Tim Hackman

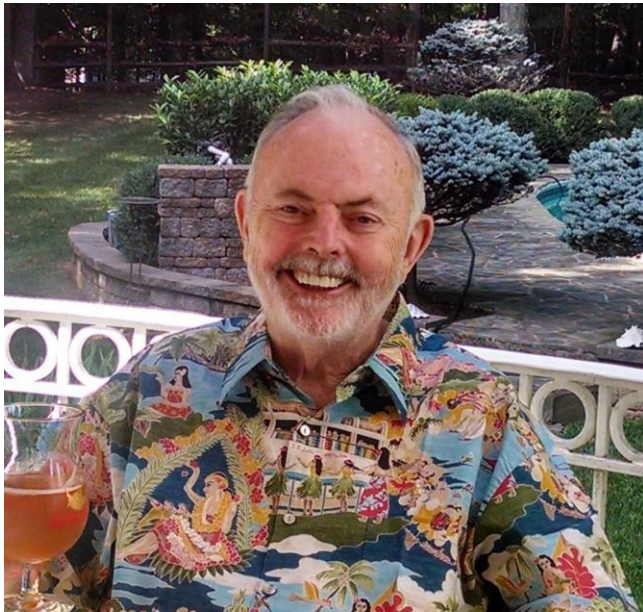
At present, FORB has ten Directors and four Officers – President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The FORB Board meets once a month, traditionally on the third Tuesday of the month. Its decisions are rendered by majority vote of the entire Board. FORB's annual budgets are based on the recommendations and requests from the Riverbend Park staff, and are directed only to the park's specific needs and programs. FORB is registered as a not-for-profit organization with the Internal Revenue Service (ID 54-1966322), the Virginia State Corporation Commission (ID 0525295-2), the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs (ID 54-1966322) and the Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services.

FORB's 2022 Officers and Directors

During 2022, FORB's Board of Directors and Officers were as follows:

Hugh Morrow, Director and President
Eleanor Anderson, Director and Vice-President
Susan Keating, Director and Secretary
Kevin Dillon, Director and Treasurer
Jack Bowles, Director
Cynthia Fisher, Director
Cindy Gersony, Director
Karen Hershey, Director
John Hughes-Caley, Director
Frank Zeng, Director
John Callow, Riverbend Park Manager, *ex-officio*

Terms of office for FORB Directors are for a three-year term and staggered so that normally only two or three Directors are elected or re-elected in any single calendar year. Officers are elected annually.



Hugh Morrow, FORB President



Eleanor Anderson, FORB Vice-President



Susan Keating, FORB Secretary



Kevin Dillon, FORB Treasurer

Director Cindy Gersony also acts as the Editor of FORB's quarterly newsletter, the *Riverbend Naturalist*. Director Frank Zeng is the Chairman of FORB's Subcommittee on Boy Scout and Girl Scout Programs as well as acting as the webmaster for the organization's website, www.forbpark.org. Director Eleanor Anderson has managed FORB's Annual Plant Sale for more than twenty years, and is now assisted by former FORB Director, Brenda Bohlke.

FORB-Supported Programs and Equipment at Riverbend Park

Over the past twenty-four years of its history, FORB has supported many programs and provided funds for a great deal of equipment, supplies and services to Riverbend Park. A few of these items include:

- Interns for Riverbend's Summer Camps
- Scholarships for Title I Schools Field Trips
- Purchase of a New Bass Fishing Boat
- \$15,000 Funding for a New Patrol and Rescue Boat
- \$7,636 to Purchase 16 New Kayaks for the 2023 Boating Season

Purchase of Ten Mad River Canoes
Ongoing Support for Riverbend Park Forest Preschool Scholarships
Supplemental Funding for Staff Continuing Education
Visitor Center Tabletop Displays
Nature and Science Books for Children's Library
Water Quality Measuring Equipment
Support for Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Projects at Riverbend Park
Support for Educational Pavilion Dedication
Support for Riverbend Park Volunteers Luncheon
Support for Riverbend Park Staff Program Scheduling Software
Funding for Riverbend Park's Native American Festival
Funding for Riverbend Park's Bluebell Festival
Riverbend Park Telescope
Major Equipment for Riverbend Park Maintenance Facility
Portable Maintenance Tools and Equipment
Zoom Account for Virtual Conferencing
New Deck Furniture for the Visitor Center

A complete summary of the financial support provided to Riverbend Park by FORB from 2002 through 2022 is shown in the chart below. During the past twenty-four years, the Friends of Riverbend Park has contributed \$330,000 for the benefit of the park and its programs and activities. In FORB's early years (1999-2005), it made two large donations (\$11,000 each in 2002 and 2003) directly to the Fairfax County Park Authority in support of Riverbend Park, and large grants totaling \$22,856 to initiate the Riverbend Park Virginia Native American Festival. In subsequent years, FORB's support for various park needs, programs and services diversified as the park's visitors, programs and services increased substantially. FORB has made two significant expenditures for major park equipment, \$15,000 for a Bass Fishing Boat in 2015 and \$15,000 for a Patrol and Rescue Boat in 2021, as well as purchases of kayaks and canoes for Riverbend's boating programs. However, the lion's share of FORB support for Riverbend Park is to

underwrite the costs of the summer interns who help park staff run their summer camps which provide a major source of Riverbend Park's internally-generated income. FORB also supports park staff in continuing education, attending professional conferences, and purchasing supplies, equipment and computer software for staff usage. A recent and major area of FORB support at Riverbend Park is its Forest Preschool which is proving extremely popular and an excellent source of revenue for the park. Boy Scout, Girl Scout and Title I schools field trip scholarships are also beneficiaries of FORB support.

2022 Accomplishments of Friends of Riverbend Park

As the Covid-19 pandemic began to abate in the latter half of 2021 and into 2022, Riverbend Park's programs and activities resumed and have once again returned to normal levels. Although its Virginia Native American Festival was not held in September 2022, the park's Bluebell Festival did return in April 2022. The park's summer camps and full-scale boating rentals of kayaks and canoes also resumed in the summer of 2022. In addition, Riverbend Park initiated a now very-popular Riverbend Park Forest Preschool in the last quarter of 2021, aided by generous support from FORB. A major new Maintenance Facility was completed and opened in the spring of 2022, and a new Patrol and Rescue Boat added to the park's assets to replace the existing dysfunctional and irreparable one. For the calendar year 2022, FORB has made the following contributions to the programs, activities, assets and equipment of Riverbend Park:

- Donation of \$9,000 to support the Riverbend Park 2022 summer camps interns. Camps were fully subscribed in 2022.
- \$7,636 for the purchase of 12 single-seat and 4 tandem kayaks.
- Grants totaling \$5,572 to Riverbend Park staff to cover continuing education, computer software, luncheons for volunteers, a zoom virtual conferencing account, and animal care expenses.

SIGNIFICANT FORB EXPENDITURES ON BEHALF OF RIVERBEND PARK						
Category	2002-2005	2006-2009	2010-2013	2014-2017	2018-2022	TOTALS
Bluebell Festivals					\$1,700	\$1,700
Boats, Canoes and Kayaks				\$15,000	\$25,636	\$40,636
Environmental Education		\$2,700		\$8,200		\$10,900
Field Trip Scholarships			\$1,810	\$3,796	\$7,783	\$13,389
Forest Restoration Programs					\$5,500	\$5,500
Maintenance Equipment		\$2,485	\$10,465	\$3,777	\$1,624	\$18,351
Maintenance Facility				\$3,267	\$8,000	\$11,267
Miscellaneous Minor Events		\$1,616	\$600	\$250	\$825	\$3,291
Nature Center Expenditures			\$6,650			\$6,650
Riverbend Forest Preschool					\$6,474	\$6,474
Riverbend Park Signage		\$1,380			\$1,000	\$2,380
Riverbend Park Staff Support	\$22,000		\$500	\$1,650	\$12,972	\$37,122
Scout Projects			\$300	\$550	\$428	\$1,278
Summer Camps Interns		\$11,520	\$30,800	\$50,400	\$49,800	\$142,520
Virginia Native American Festivals	\$22,856				\$2,400	\$25,256
Visitor Center Expenditures				\$500	\$2,300	\$2,800
TOTALS	\$44,856	\$19,701	\$51,125	\$77,390	\$126,442	\$329,514

- A donation of \$8,000 to purchase major equipment and appliances for the new Maintenance Facility.
- A donation of \$3,000 in the 4th Quarter of 2021 and another \$3,000 in the 1st Quarter of 2022 for the Forest Preschool startup.
- \$900 support for Title I School (Lorton VA ES) field trip.
- \$1,000 donation to support Riverbend Park Bluebell Festival.
- \$1,000 donation to support park’s Environmental Student Leadership Initiative.
- Resumption of the *Riverbend Naturalist* newsletter, FORB’s Annual Plant Sale, and the *Bluebells and Bald Eagles* event.

Friends of Riverbend Park’s Income and Expenses

The Friends of Riverbend Park’s financial results for the past seven years are summarized in the table below.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
2016	\$31,105	\$28,211
2017	\$34,672	\$30,778
2018	\$35,567	\$38,627
2019	\$28,853	\$34,160
2020	\$36,831	\$10,625
2021	\$53,110	\$48,606
2022	\$51,666	\$48,393

Income - FORB’s income for the calendar year 2022 continued at the high level it enjoyed in 2021, exceeding \$50,000 for the second year in a row. The high income levels in 2021 and 2022, combined with the very low expenditures during the peak Covid-19 year of 2020, left FORB with substantial bank balances at the end of both 2020 and 2021. Thus, FORB was able to increase its expenditures on behalf of Riverbend Park

in 2021 and 2022 to historically high levels, approximately \$48,000 in both years.

Income in 2022 was excellent due to a very successful annual plant sale, high general donations (approximately \$14,000), three substantial grants (Munson Foundation, Women’s Club of Great Falls, and Ken and Barbara Chen), as well as solid membership dues, donation box receipts, and donations to the Paul Anderson Memorial Fund. Membership dues for both existing members and new members continued at levels similar to those in previous years. Donation boxes receipts were slightly lower than the historical highs of \$5,000 of the pre-Covid years.

FORB’s specific sources of income may be broken down as follows:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Membership Dues	\$ 2,375	\$ 5,975	\$ 5,650
Native Plant Sale	\$ 8,393	\$15,916	\$18,688
Donation Boxes	\$ 3,612	\$ 3,793	\$ 3,507
General Donations	\$ 9,160	\$14,496	\$13,669
Foundation Grants	\$12,000	\$12,500	\$ 7,500
FORB-Logo Sales	\$ 1,120	\$ 120	\$ 20

FORB was able to realize high income from the Native Plant Sale due to high online sales for both a record numbers of plant buyers and total plants sold. FORB’s Annual Plant Sale is particularly remarkable for the manner in which it has grown over the past six years, due mostly to the introduction of online pre-orders in 2017, the tireless leadership and organizational efforts of Eleanor Anderson, and the offering of an increasing number and variety of available species from which to choose. FORB has also now coordinated its Annual Plant Sale with the Riverbend Park Bluebell Festival during which Virginia Bluebells are sold on the deck of the Visitor Center. Bluebell plants are also offered for

sale at the Women’s Club of Great Falls’ *Bluebells and Bald Eagles* event in early April. As a result, the number of buyers pre-ordering plants online has increased from 21 in 2018 to 112 in 2022, a fivefold increase over the space of five years

A summary of the growth of FORB’s Annual Plant Sale for the past five years is shown below:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Gross Sales</u>	<u>Total Preorders</u>	<u>Total Plants</u>
2018	\$7,554	21	487
2019	\$9,209	42	697
2020	\$8,393	63	837
2021	\$15,916	79	1,238
2022	\$19,403	112	1,667

Expenses - A comparison of FORB’s expenses for 2021 and 2022 may be summarized as follows:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Administrative	\$3,669	\$2,860
Virginia Taxes and Fees	\$1,040	\$1,114
Native Plant Sale Stock	\$4,865	\$6,029
Insurance	\$1,129	\$1,135
Riverbend Park Support	\$36,762	\$37,432
Eagle Scout Project Support	\$ 233	\$ 0
Village of Great Falls Support	\$ 405	\$ 215

Administrative expenses include FORB’s Post Office box fee, the Wild Apricot website subscription, office supplies, and PayPal and Square Register transaction fees. Administrative fees were higher in 2021 and will be higher again in 2023 because FORB pays its Wild Apricot database fee in those odd years to take advantage of a lower yearly rate when renewals are done on a biennial basis. Virginia sales taxes

and the cost of the native plant stock were high in both 2021 and 2022 due to the great success of the Native Plant Sales and the large numbers of plants sold. Major expenses in 2022 on behalf of Riverbend Park included \$9,000 for the summer camps interns, \$8,000 for equipment and appliances for the new Maintenance Facility, \$7,736 for 16 new single-seat and tandem kayaks, \$5,572 for Riverbend Park staff support, and \$3,474 for the Riverbend Park Forest Preschool. Smaller donations of \$1,000 to support the park's Bluebell Festival and \$900 for Title I schools field trip scholarships were also made during the year.

FORB Membership

The Wild Apricot database which FORB utilizes does not maintain historical data on the number of paid-up FORB Members. FORB's plan with Wild Apricot does maintain a limit of 500 "contacts" which includes Members, Annual Plant Sale buyers, and other interested parties who have been included from time to time to receive news and announcements such as FORB's periodic newsletter, *The Riverbend Naturalist*. Unfortunately, because of the 500 contacts limit under our present plan, it has been necessary to archive old contacts or individuals who have not been active in FORB or contributed in the past five years. This system, however, may eliminate some individuals who are still very interested in the park and its activities.

FORB has now begun to maintain separate listings of its Annual Plant Sale buyers and to archive them in the regular Wild Apricot database in order to maintain sufficient space for active, dues-paying Members. Many plant buyers are also active FORB Members and these individuals will not be archived and will still receive all Members' mailings. The problem is that the great success of FORB's Annual Plant Sale is now straining the resources of its present database plan. The next level of "contacts" in the Wild Apricot system increases from 500 to 2000, but is

a prohibitively expensive plan. As it is, even the 500-contacts plan presently in place will increase in cost in 2023 from \$2,244 to \$2,856 for a two-year subscription (July 2023 – June 2025).

Ideally, FORB should have a database which separates Members into their specific categories, maintains information on membership dues renewal dates, and sends out renewal notices in anticipation of their renewal date. It should also have separate lists of all Native Plant Buyers and even separate them by the year in which they participated in the Annual Plant Sale.

Future Needs of Riverbend Park

The Conceptual Development Plan of Riverbend Park's April 2013 Revision of its Master Plan includes a number of eventual developments. These are:

- Improvement of Vehicular Entrances and Exits, Traffic Circulation and Parking Facilities
- Trail Network and Park Access
- Waterfront Activity Area and Visitor Center
- Interpretive Center
- Maintenance Facility
- Picnic Areas
- Picnic Shelters and Outdoor Classrooms
- Educational Pavilion
- Meadow Interpretive Area and Nature Watching Tower

FORB, along with the Riverbend Park staff, has been actively encouraging the ongoing fulfillment of the Riverbend Park Master Plan for many years. In 2019, the Educational Pavilion / Outdoor Classroom was completed, and, in 2022, the Maintenance Facility was finished, and is now in operation. At the present time, the Riverbend Park staff is

conducting an interpretive plan review of the park's growth and needs for the future. This review will determine, to a large extent, how practicable and warranted are some of the measures proposed in the 2013 Master Plan.

The community's population, the number of Riverbend Park's visitors, and the demands placed on the park and its staff will only increase in future years. FORB continues to advocate the development of a comprehensive plan for Riverbend Park that considers all these factors and determines how the park will be managed in the future, how it might become more self-sustaining, what part FORB might play in helping the park be more self-sustaining, and, most importantly, how Riverbend Park can be maintained as a natural resources refuge in the face of increasing visitors and demands.