

Volunteers Needed In Local Park Projects

By Greg Sykes (greg@grsykes.com)

In addition to the semi-annual park clean-ups at Royal Lake and its tributaries, volunteer opportunities are available throughout much of the year. Here are some activities sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA):

Invasive Management Area (IMA) <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/invasive-management-area>: Help remove specific, non-native invasive plants (e.g., [English ivy](#), [burning bush](#)) from parklands and restore the habitat by planting native species. Healthy volunteers 11-15 years old and must be accompanied by a parent; 16+ year-olds may attend solo.

Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/invasive-management-area/early-detection>: Some non-native invasive weeds (e.g., giant hogweed, [wavyleaf basketgrass](#)) have yet to entrench themselves in Fairfax County but devastated other parts of the U.S. where they already invaded. Volunteers inspect local parks and GPS-document any target species before the weeds spread. Patrollers must have basic plant identification knowledge; details will be provided at each patrol. Those wishing to lead EDRR surveys must attend an informational two-hour training session.

GeesePeace <http://geesepeace.org/>: Canada goose populations in Northern Virginia are high, especially since they should only be migrating through and not residing here. This program stabilizes goose populations using methods endorsed by the Humane Society. Activities depend on time of year. Adult volunteers are needed to:

- patrol parks for goose nests
- stand at strategic points around the lake with leashed dog(s) at a predetermined time/date
- take their dog on the lake with a kayak or jon boat at a predetermined time/date

To lead all of these programs at Royal Lake Park, Greg Sykes has received both specialized training and the required FCPA-issued permits. If you are interested in joining any of these programs, please contact him greg@grsykes.com.

Anyone can pick up trash at any time and properly dispose of it. However, some of it washes into Royal Lake where it may be hard to reach. If you are a healthy adult, would like to help clear lake garbage, and have a kayak, canoe, or jon boat, please send an e-mail to Greg Sykes asking to be on the "Kayak Clean-Up" distribution list—it's safer and more fun as a group activity.

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