

# AUDUBON NATURALIST SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT: A YEAR IN REVIEW APRIL 1, 2013 - AUGUST 31, 2014 | CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE



# SEEDS *of* CHANGE

# STEMS OF TOMORROW





# BLOSSOM OUR COMMUNITY

# President's Report

Greetings! To all of our members and staff, first and foremost: thank you for everything that you have done for the Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS) over the past year. From renewing your memberships to shopping at the ANS store, from logging countless office hours to simply spreading the word about our good works on behalf of the environment. Your continued support helps define our organization and provides the foundation for all of our successes. I know that the rest of the Board of Directors join me in expressing our sincerest appreciation for all of the things that you do for the environment every day.

This has been the first year on the job for both Lisa Alexander, our Executive Director, and me. Looking back in review, I am gratified to report that Lisa and the Board have been able to work together to accomplish much. On a fundamental level we have continued to strengthen all of our internal systems, procedures and reporting mechanisms.

While none of these achievements have been glamorous, they have greatly improved the organization's efficiency and provided a common understanding of elements such as our improved financial health to all ANS stakeholders. This year Lisa refined the reporting tool for progress on the Strategic Plan, to better enable the Board's stewardship of our long-term goals.

At the board level, our vice-president Leslie Catherwood led us in reorganizing and re-energizing the committees that provide guidance on issues such as ANS's finances, programs, development efforts and internal governance. All of the board members now serve on at least two committees. This reorganization allowed for the cross-pollination of ideas and greatly improved oversight of ANS's many activities.

This year has also seen ANS begin to harvest the fruits of earlier labors and strategic decisions about how to best steward its assets, made during the tenure of my able predecessor Kathy Rushing. While President, Kathy oversaw the development of the ANS Strategic Plan which has continued to guide the staff's activities and sharpen the focus of the organization. In keeping with the Plan we transferred ownership of the Webb Sanctuary in Fairfax County, VA in January to the Northern Virginia



Regional Park Authority (now NOVA Parks), that will be better able to unlock the property's public-serving potential. Prior to doing so we furthered our own mission by putting a conservation easement restriction on development there. This action had the added benefit of allowing us to sell the resulting tax credits and make a substantial contribution to our investment reserves. We also benefited from the partnership that we established last year with NOVA Parks at the Rust Sanctuary. As we had forecast, relief from the operational burdens of the Rust Sanctuary has allowed us to concentrate on developing new environmental education and outreach activities in Virginia. An example of these is our successful Fresh Air Kids program, which is among the many accomplishments detailed in this report. Lastly, we have literally seen the results from earlier plantings with the maturation of our beautiful Blair Garden and meadow restoration projects at the Woodend Sanctuary. We gratefully acknowledge the donors who made these initiatives possible.

Over the past year you may have read more about our advocacy and educational efforts in the press. Our ability to garner this publicity arises directly from Lisa's decision last year to create a Communications Director position. We have been fortunate to benefit from the many talents of Kelli Holsendolph, who assumed this mantle last September. Kelli's communications savvy and media contacts were a significant part of the victorious Ten Mile Creek campaign, which was so professionally orchestrated by Conservation Director Diane Cameron and the chair of the Board's Conservation Committee, Mike Gravitz. All of the inhabitants of our region can be thankful for Mike, Diane and Kelli's tireless efforts, in which they were joined by so many of our own members and coalition partners.

Responding to threats to the environment such as over-development in the Ten Mile Creek watershed will always be part of the ANS mission. We were founded on principles of environmental advocacy and education that will continue to guide us in the future. As that future becomes the present, I am

happy to note that ANS is also evolving to embrace the new conditions that surround it. We are now using social media and other communications techniques to make our point of view more widely heard in every community in this area. These communications channels will additionally raise our visibility with the younger generation that will form ANS's next base.

Leveraging new technology has also allowed Lisa and staff to develop a smartphone water quality monitoring app that we hope will spread awareness of stream health to many new constituents.

With a firm grounding in our values, over the coming year I hope to be able to begin to build consensus around a vision of where ANS will want to position itself in the decades to come. There are so many opportunities for us to expand our capacities to advocate and educate on behalf of the environment! We will need to make thoughtful decisions about where to concentrate our efforts and how to continue to adapt to best fulfill our mission. I hope that you will help guide those decisions by continuing to give us your insight on initiatives such as master planning for the Woodend Sanctuary, the ANS brand and membership diversity. As members we should all take pride in everything ANS has accomplished to date, and inspiration from all that it will achieve in the future. Your continued support is vital to making those achievements a reality.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lee Babcock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal tail stroke extending to the right.

ANS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OFFICERS

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Babcock**  
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Timothy McTaggart

# SEEDS *of* CHANGE



At the end of September 2013, Neal Fitzpatrick retired as executive director of ANS. Neal had been a member of the ANS staff for 33 years, first as environmental education director, then as conservation director, and finally as executive director. Neal may be gone from the day-to-day, but not from the ANS community. In October 2013, Neal led ANS nature travelers to Panama and during summer camp 2014 he taught The River Starts Here camp.

The transition to new leadership at ANS was a natural one. The ANS Board of Directors named Deputy Director Lisa Alexander as the new executive director on October 19, 2013. Lisa was chosen after an exhaustive, six-month search. Competing against a large number of well-qualified candidates, Lisa with her clear vision for the future of ANS ultimately prevailed as the choice to lead ANS.



[Read "From bog to woods, Audubon's new director digs in." The Gazette's, 11/ 6/2013.](#)





# STEMS OF TOMORROW

In August of 2013, ANS developed and adopted a strategic plan to guide the organization over the next five years. A living document, the plan is guiding decision-making organization-wide and changing and evolving as objectives are met and new opportunities revealed. ANS is growing with its ambitious strategic plan, which provides the blueprint for a more diverse, influential and financially sustainable organization, and a better employer and sanctuary steward.

[See the strategic report click here](#)



# BLOSSOM OUR COMMUNITY

This year ANS made strategic changes designed to grow and expand its membership and broader community of supporters. ANS developed a new series of outreach events for new members to help them build stronger connections to our organization. Similarly, an ANS Membership Taskforce formed in June 2014, led by a member of the Board, to identify opportunities to diversify the membership and reach new audiences.

## Statement of Activities Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2014

### REVENUE

Membership Dues	\$ 245,626
Contributions	1,438,841
Education Programs	987,979
Sanctuary Shop	200,079
Investment Income	167,175
Rentals	619,248
Other	6,718
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,665,666</b>

**Change in Net Assets 433,260**

Release of Permanently Restricted  
Net Assets (196,010)

**Net Assets, Beginning of Year 4,544,332**

**Net Assets, End of Year \$ 4,781,582**

### EXPENSE

Conservation & Education Programs

Nature Sanctuaries	\$ 448,145
Publications	114,772
Education Programs	1,362,800
Conservation	434,282
Membership	163,322
Sanctuary Shop	114,811
Other	5,810

**Total Program Expense \$ 2,643,942**

Support Services

Fundraising	\$ 278,527
General and Administrative	309,937

**Total Support Services Expense \$ 588,464**

**Total Expense \$ 3,232,406**

## Statement of Financial Position Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2014

### ASSETS

#### Current Assets:

Cash	\$ 1,360,132
Receivables	218,663
Inventory	255,765
Prepaid Expenses	41,471

Total Current Assets	1,876,031
Property & Equipment (Net)	2,048,848
Investments at Market Value	\$ 2,036,575

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<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 5,961,454</b>
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### LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$ 65,853
Accrued Expenses	190,035
Deferred Revenue	923,984

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<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 1,179,872</b>
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### Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$ 3,164,155
Temporarily Restricted	897,703
Permanently Restricted	719,724

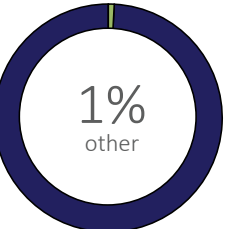
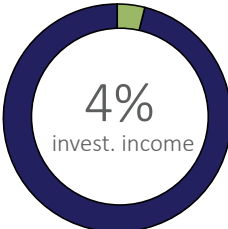
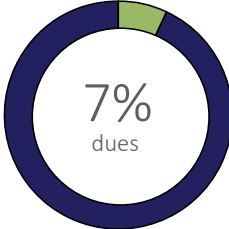
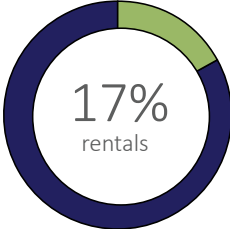
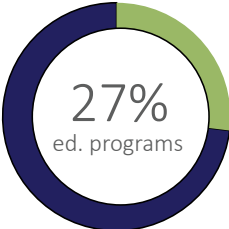
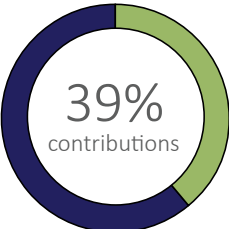
Total Net Assets	\$ 4,781,582
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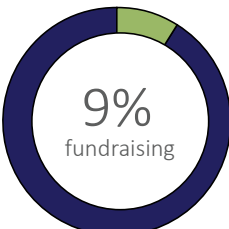
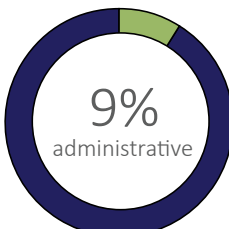
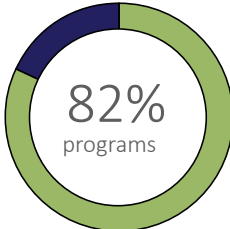
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 5,961,454</b>
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### FISCAL YEAR 2014 REVENUE

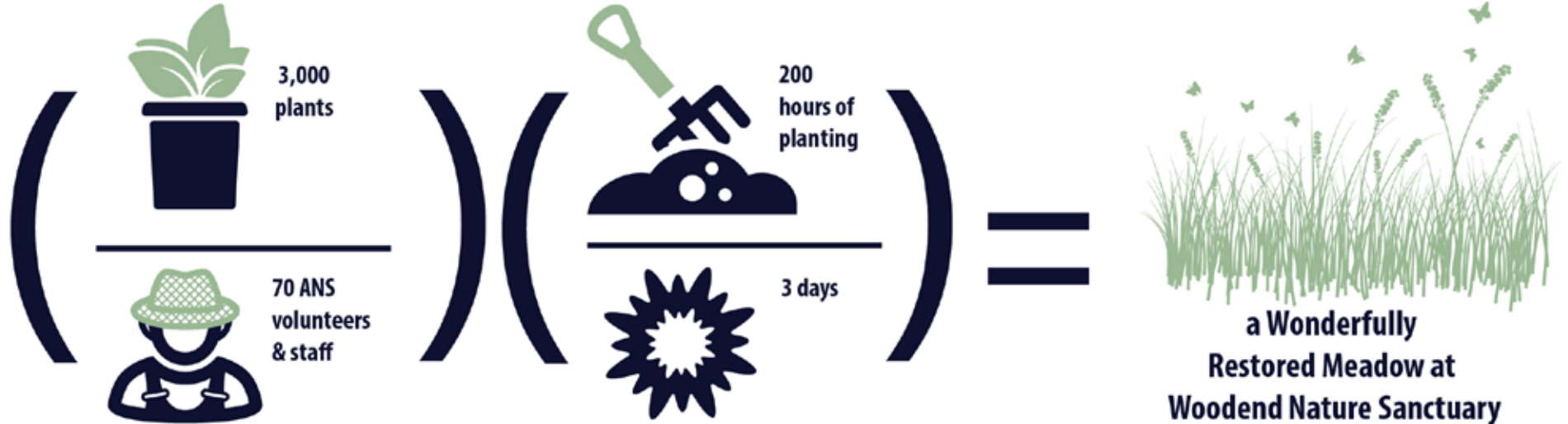


### FISCAL YEAR 2014 EXPENSE



# ANS BY THE NUMBERS

## MEADOW MATH





**ANS MEADOW MAKERS DIG IN!**



**27,561**

people participating in Environmental Education programs this year

**5,200**

students participated in hands-on GreenKids lessons



**2,317**

Camp Audubon campers in summers 2013 and 2014

**1,948**

messages sent to policymakers by ANS members and advocates (from February through July 2014) to Save Ten Mile Creek



**887**

new members joined ANS community this year

**720**

hours of volunteer service to ANS from 18 Maryland Master Naturalist Volunteers







**365**

Woodend Nature Sanctuary  
survey responses

**213**

third through fifth grade  
students connected to nature  
through ANS Unplug and Play  
Afterschool Nature Clubs



**193**

ANS volunteers regularly  
monitor water quality in  
the region

**70**

families in Audubon Nature  
Preschool



**53**

Teen Naturalists in Training

**30**

organizations joined  
ANS in coalition to  
Save Ten Mile Creek



**22**

preschoolers and their parents or caregiv-  
ers participated in Fresh Air Kids at Rust  
Sanctuary

# CONSERVATION & ADVOCACY

The cornerstone of ANS conservation advocacy is protecting clean water and the centerpiece is our Water Quality Monitoring program—one of the largest and longest-running citizen science programs in the country. ANS works to protect our region's local streams and watersheds.

## Strategic Goal

Educate and mobilize citizens of the DC metro region to restore and protect their local watersheds.

### Objective One

Ten Mile Creek Campaign: Protect Montgomery's last, best creek by advocating for and leveraging science-based requirements in a Limited Clarksburg Master Plan Amendment.

### Objective Two

Stream Restoration and Protection: Engage, train, equip and mobilize citizens of all ages in the DC metro region to monitor local water quality and protect and restore local streams.

### Objective Three

Watershed Protection and Restoration: Advocate for full implementation of regional county watershed protection and restoration plans.

### Objective Four

Woodend Watershed Restoration: Transform Woodend Sanctuary into the DC region's flagship educational center that demonstrates, teaches and champions citizen engagement in urban watershed restoration and protection.



## ANS Leads the Fight to Save Ten Mile Creek

This year, the campaign to Save Ten Mile Creek had the motto: Go! Fight! Win! ANS convened a diverse and determined Save Ten Mile Creek Coalition that grew to 30 organizations, including representation from labor, Latino, Jewish, Muslim groups and others. Together, coalition partners and advocates celebrated victory for Ten Mile Creek. And, before the ink dried on the Montgomery County Council Resolution on Ten Mile Creek, ANS fought back efforts to chip away at the hard-won protections. This August, ANS passed the torch and celebrated the next chapter with the launch of the new Friends of Ten Mile Creek group.



*“Through our concerted advocacy, we won strong protections for Ten Mile Creek in the April 1 master plan Resolution. Now, we will need to work through the Friends of Ten Mile Creek to watchdog the implementation, site plan by site plan.”*

*Diane Cameron, ANS Conservation Director*

# HOW WE SAVED TEN MILE CREEK



## 2012

ANS partners with Montgomery Countryside Alliance to convince the Montgomery County Planning Board and Montgomery County Council to prepare a Limited Master Plan Amendment for Ten Mile Creek

## May 2013

ANS leads the formation of the Save Ten Mile Creek Coalition to protect the creek and the DC metro region's emergency drinking water supply at Little Seneca Reservoir

## June & July 2013

The Save Ten Mile Creek Coalition rallies in front of the Planning Board three times to push for the greatest protections for Ten Mile Creek

## September 2013

The Planning Board holds public hearings on the draft Limited Master Plan Amendment for Ten Mile Creek. The Save Ten Mile Creek Coalition provides a broad array of impassioned testimony during those public hearings.

## October 24, 2013

The Planning Board votes to approve a pro-development option that would jeopardize Ten Mile Creek and threaten the region's drinking water supply for 4.3 million people.

## December 2013

Nearly 80 people (the maximum allowed) delivered heartfelt testimony, overwhelmingly in favor of protecting Ten Mile Creek during two nights of County Council public hearings.

## January 9, 2014

Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett sends a letter to ANS Conservation Director Diane Cameron promising the county will forgo any further development on two county-owned parcels of land in the Ten Mile Creek watershed.

## April 1, 2014

The Montgomery County Council unanimously approves a Limited Master Plan Amendment for Ten Mile Creek that limits pavement to 6% in the most sensitive areas, mandates open space, provides 200-foot buffers for wetlands, streams and groundwater springs and advances a 65% forest cover goal for the entire watershed.

A victory for Ten Mile Creek!

## January & February 2014

The County Council holds 7 worksessions on the plan.

## January 27, 2014

The Save Ten Mile Creek Coalition rallies on the front steps of the Montgomery County Council office building and delivers 1,000 letters from residents urging the Council to fully protect Ten Mile Creek.

## May 15, 2014

ANS hosts the Ten Mile Creek Celebration at its Woodend headquarters with nearly 75 coalition members and advocates. The celebration was an opportunity to honor their efforts. Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett, Councilmembers Roger Berliner, Marc Elrich and Hans Riemer also attend the celebration.

## August 3, 2014

Launch party for the Friends of Ten Mile Creek. ANS Water Quality Monitor and Advocate of the Year Tenley Wurglitz is selected president.





**THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!**

# ANS Gets Smart about Water Quality Monitoring

Thanks to the generosity of a long-standing supporter, ANS developed the Creek Critters smart phone app this year.

The app is designed to get people out into their local waterways. It shows users how to catch and identify small organisms that live in freshwater streams. These benthic macroinvertebrates, or creek critters, serve as indicators of stream health.

*“We look forward to working with Audubon Naturalist Society on a project that will get more community members interested and involved in the health of Rock Creek. We are excited to help break barriers of stream exploration and monitoring by making it as easy as an application on our smartphones.”*

*Matthew Fleischer, Executive Director, Rock Creek Conservancy*

ANS completed several field tests of the Creek Critters app, first a paper prototype in May 2013, a field test with the Android version October 2013 and a joint field demonstration with Rock Creek Conservancy, of both the Android and iOS versions, July 2014.

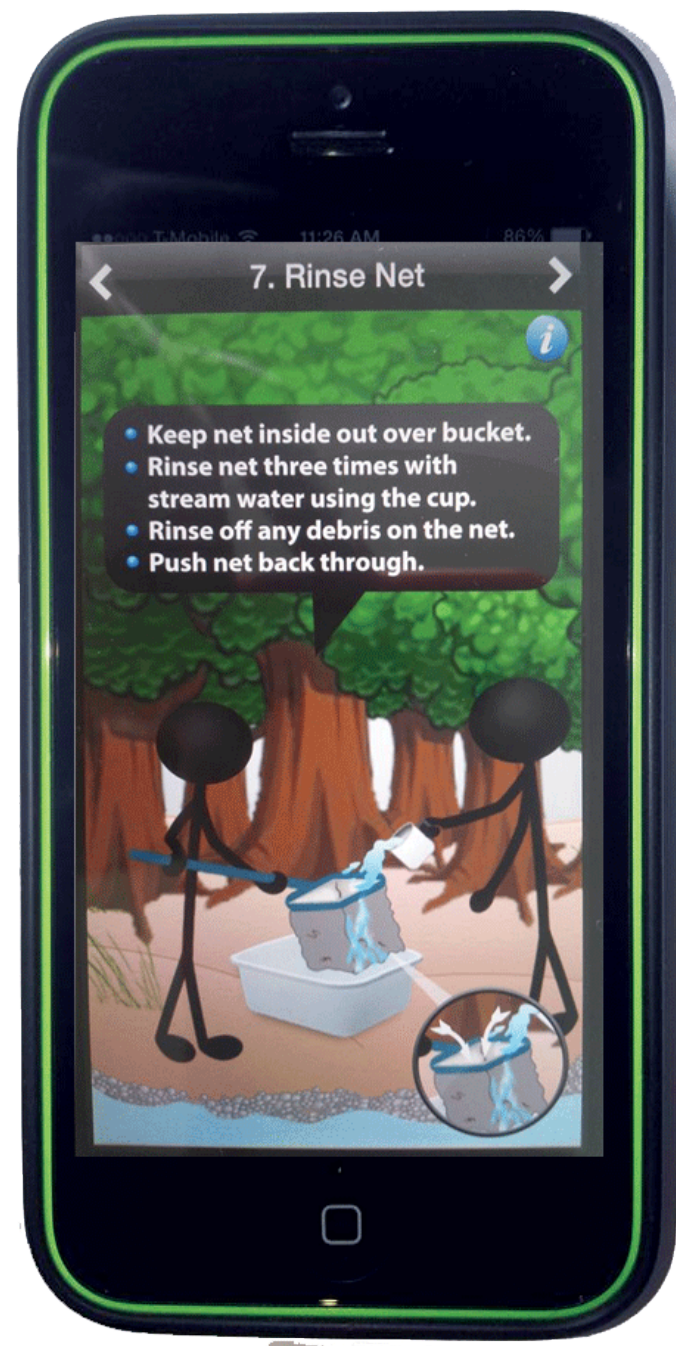
Since the early 1990s, ANS has operated a Water Quality Monitoring program throughout Montgomery County and in parts of DC. It is one of the largest and longest-running citizen science programs in the country. Under Cathy Wiss’ leadership the program continues to grow. This year, ANS added four new sites and gained 25 more volunteer water quality monitors. This year, more than 193 ANS volunteers gathered data on the water quality of 29 local streams in the DC metro region. This data strengthens ANS’s advocacy for local streams and watersheds.

*“We’re harnessing smartphone technology to get people involved in protecting their local streams.”*

*Lisa Alexander, ANS Executive Director*

Although not as thoroughly trained (yet!) as the ANS volunteer water quality monitors, a new crop of citizen scientists are getting involved through the new Creek Critters app. ANS will continue to offer its water quality classes to these and interested others.

**Special Thanks to our Conservation and Advocacy Program Supporters** Cornell Douglas Foundation, Keith Campbell Foundation, Marpat Foundation, Patagonia, Prince Charitable Trusts, Summit Fund of Washington, Wallace Genetic Foundation, and restricted gifts from individual donors.



# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

**ANS environmental education programs provide nature education for all. We teach children, families and adults about the natural world and natural history and inspire the next generation of nature stewards by providing hands-on learning opportunities in nature.**

## Strategic Goal

Increase environmental awareness and understanding throughout the DC metro region by delivering inspiring nature education programs that nurture a lifetime of outdoor discovery, exploration and stewardship.

### Objective One

Expand and diversify participants in ANS' environmental education programs to widen the community of people who treasure the natural world and work to preserve it.

### Objective Two

Enhance and improve nature education opportunities for children outside of school from early childhood to age eighteen to grow the next generation of environmental stewards.

### Objective Three

Expand environmental education offerings to ensure that children in DC metro area schools engage in meaningful environmental pre-K through high school.

### Objective Four

Expand the community of DC area adults who engage with and care for the natural world by delivering the region's highest quality nature experiences for lifelong learners.

### Objective Five

Maximize ANS staff capacity to deliver top-tier environmental education programs.







## ANS Launches New Unplug and Play Afterschool Nature Clubs

In summer 2013, ANS received a grant award from the Montgomery County Council to run afterschool nature programs at four Title 1 schools in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) system. These free afterschool nature clubs first met in the fall of 2013—at Glen Haven Elementary School, Rolling Terrace Elementary School, Captain James E. Daly Elementary School and Gaithersburg Elementary School.

*When asked about their favorite club memories, student responded “everything,” “learning about animals and petting a snake,” and “when we saw Boris the Tortoise.” Students in the Glen Haven Elementary School Unplug and Play Afterschool Club*

The clubs met once a week for six weeks for one to two hours right in the elementary schools. Designed around nature play, students spent time outdoors investigating the natural world and playing games. There were also hands-on learning and science opportunities. ANS was also able to provide a free snack to the participating students.

Thanks to this generous grant funding, ANS was able to connect 213 third through fifth grade students this year to the wonderful world of outdoor exploration. This support helped bridge the gap for children who might otherwise miss enrichment opportunities because the fees are outside of reach for their families.

### **Special Thanks to our Environmental Education Supporters**

Chesapeake Bay Trust, City of Gaithersburg, Community Foundation for Northern Virginia, Lazar Foundation, Live It Learn It, Montgomery County Council, Stone & Holt Weeks Foundation, and restricted gifts from individual donors.

# I'd Rather be at Camp Audubon



ANS's Camp Audubon has been going strong for 35 years. ANS offers more than 60 specialty camps each summer. We enjoyed 2,317 campers in summers 2013 and 2014. We continued our popular Teen Naturalist Training (TNT) Program, launched in 2012. Over the course of both summers, 53 teens entering ninth and tenth grades learned what it takes to be an ANS naturalist while volunteering in the summer camp program and earning Student Service Learning (SSL) hours.

*"I saw fox tracks, right down there. Then we went to the den on a hike. It was pretty good."*  
Addison, 7, 2014 summer camper

*On the ANS summer camp counselors, "They seem like mystical figures with never-ending powers."*  
Catherine, 12, ANS summer camper since first grade

*"I love connecting kids with the natural world and make them feel part of it. It's a rewarding and awesome experience."*  
Tessa "Willow" Crosby, 2014 summer camp counselor, American University student

[Watch Now](#)





## NoVA's Mommy Bloggers Help ANS Launch Fresh Air Kids at Rust Nature Sanctuary

In March 2014, ANS launched a brand new preschool program for children ages 5 and younger with their parents or caregivers called Fresh Air Kids at Rust Nature Sanctuary. But before we went public, we tested it out with some influential mommy bloggers in Northern Virginia and their little ones.

The bloggers stamped the program mommy-approved and demand necessitated adding a second class to the spring series. In all we served, 22 preschoolers and their parents or caregivers through Fresh Air Kids at Rust this year.

*"We were honored to take place in an exclusive preview of the Fresh Air Kids class today at Rust Nature Sanctuary in Leesburg, VA. The fun class included animal interactions, finding tracks in nature, reading a book about animal movements, and a wonderful discovery hike through the sanctuary." Micaela Williamson, Blogger, "Fresh Air Kids at Rust Nature Sanctuary, Leesburg," Kid Trips*

*"On Tuesday we were invited to a preview of the Fresh Air Kids Program at the Rust Nature Sanctuary in Leesburg, VA. . . . Susanne from the Audubon Naturalist Society was nice enough to give myself and my boys a preview of what the Fresh Air Kids Program is all about."*

*Kamber Petty, Blogger, "Rust Nature Sanctuary & Manor House in Leesburg, VA!"*

*NoVA Outdoors*

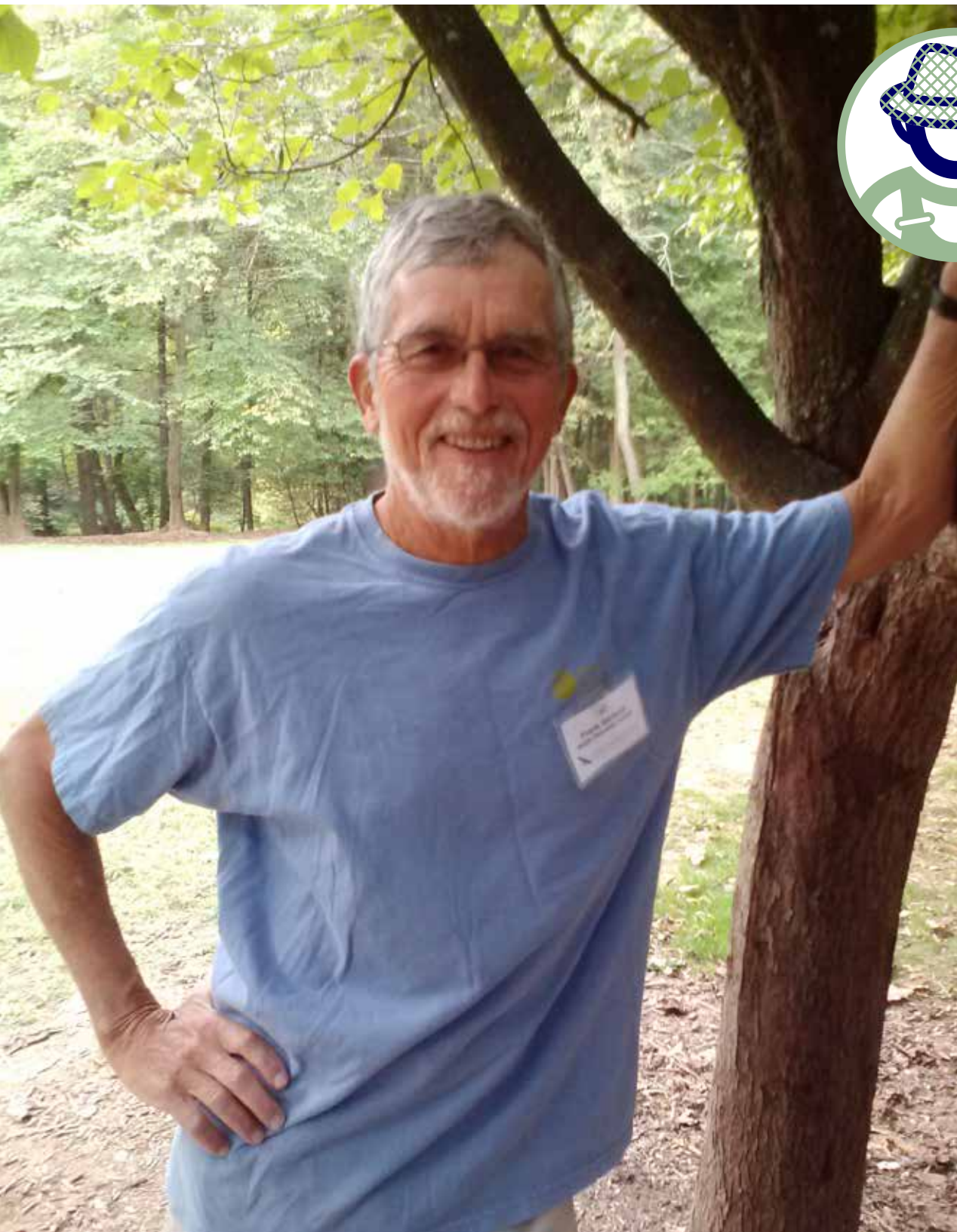
## Weekend Walks in the Woods: ANS Offers New FREE Family Program at Woodend



ANS was able to launch Weekend Walks in the Woods this year thanks in large part to the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Beth Armitage, ANS 2013-2014 Chesapeake Conservation Corps Volunteer, was instrumental in establishing this new free family program at Woodend Nature Sanctuary. The first Weekend Walk was held Saturday, April 5, 2014 with nearly 50 attending. Family members of all ages have been heading to Woodend on the first Saturday of the month for the one hour hike with a natural history theme. We also have our Master Naturalist Volunteers to thank for keeping the program running.

*Chloe, 6, said she liked finding the frogs in the pond the best. Her mother Laura enjoyed being out in the woods on a beautiful morning. Weekend Walks in the Woods participants*





## Master Naturalist Volunteers: Meet Frank Sanford

*“Growing up in St. Louis, I had two grandfathers who loved to fish and introduced me to the outdoors. The interest continued to grow and when I ended up in Maryland in the early ‘70’s, I completed a Master of Arts in teaching. Although I spent my 42 years of teaching in a variety of roles – classroom teacher, reading specialist etc; my true love was always science. Luckily I was able to complete my last six years as a science teacher at Sheridan School for K–5. My recent retirement, June of this year, has afforded me the chance to follow my many outdoor pursuits –biking, fishing, hiking, swimming, and kayaking.” Frank Sanford, ANS Master Naturalist Volunteer*

Frank Sanford completed ANS’s 2013 Maryland Master Naturalist Volunteer training program. The program, in its third year at ANS in 2013, attracts people from various backgrounds who are interested in learning about the ecology, flora, and fauna of Maryland and the natural history of Maryland’s Piedmont region. The training program includes hands-on field work and Volunteer Master Naturalists give 40 hours of volunteer time back to ANS.

One of the ways Sanford chose to give back was by leading Weekend Walks in the Woods. Others in the 2013 Master Naturalist Volunteer class have chipped in, in various ways. For instance, Julie Bloss Kelsey, a freelance writer with a background in biology and environmental science, kept content fresh in the kiosks around Woodend with Naturalist Notes. Chris Ley wrote and edited the quarterly volunteer enewsletter, AV(ia)N. Chris has been an avid birder for more than 30 years. Darlene Robbins was active with the ANS Sanctuary Committee to help reimagine Woodend. Darlene’s passion and interest in sustainable landscape practices adds great value.



## Master Naturalist Volunteers

Standing: Nancy Voit, Frank Sanford, Darlene Robbins, Sylvia Diss, Joyce Bailey, Donald Dittberner, Rich Griffin, Bob Hirshon, Chris Ley, Heleny Cook, Julie Bloss Kelsey. Kneeling: Susan Dunnell, Susan Schober, Rosewitha Augusta, Adriana Delgado, Suzanne Shewtz Missing from photo: Colette Cowey, Ramona Winkelbauer



# GreenKids Creates Green Culture Change in Schools

This past school year (2013-14), ANS welcomed eight new Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and two new Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) into the GreenKids network. GreenKids, a completely grant-funded program of ANS, provides participating schools with two years of free resources and field experiences to foster environmental literacy. Central to the program is helping schools earn Maryland Green School and Virginia Naturally certifications. During the 2013-14 school year, seven GreenKids schools earned the Maryland Green School certification for the first time; eight GreenKids alumni schools passed the recertification and one earned their second recertification. Five schools in Loudoun County were Virginia Naturally recertified in September 2013.

GreenKids lessons include composting, stream science, pollution prevention and others. One of the most transformative lessons for GreenKids students is delivered through Salad Science. Thanks to the generous support of Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Whole Foods Market Montgomery County for making this video production possible.

*“The wealth of resources and ideas ANS offers to schools through the GreenKids program is wonderful. I really like when ANS brings ideas to the school and have experts come in and model the lesson. That kind of support is not the kind you get from most groups who say they want to work with schools—it’s really valuable.”*  
*Sandra Cornell, Sixth Grade Science Teacher, North Chevy Chase Elementary School*

## Special Thanks to our GreenKids supporters

Howard Hughes Medical Institute, KBR Foundation, Loudoun County Public Schools, Mead Family Foundation, Minerva Foundation, Montgomery County Public Schools, PNC Foundation, Silver Spring International Middle School, Rust Family Foundation, Virginia Environmental Endowment, Wallace Genetic Foundation, Whole Foods Market, and restricted gifts from individual donors.



## ANS Casts Wider Net with Adult Programs

New this year, ANS moved its adult programs to online registration. Starting in June 2014, nature enthusiasts from across the region could register online for the first time for ANS's adult programs.

Similarly, to attract wider regional interest and thanks to ANS Web Volunteer Karen Wilhem, ANS added a map of destinations for adult programs to [anshome.org](http://anshome.org). The map shows potential participants at a glance the breadth of ANS forays annually.

Click the map below to see it live.





# SANCTUARIES

Our 40 acre Woodend Nature Sanctuary, ANS headquarters in Chevy Chase, is a jewel inside the beltway. The 68 acre Rust Nature Sanctuary in Leesburg, a partnership for ANS with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, offers a retreat from the hustle and bustle of Northern Virginia life

## Strategic Goal

Transform ANS Nature Sanctuaries into flagship nature destinations that showcase nature interpretation, habitat restoration and environmental best practices in a welcoming, safe, comfortable, and educational environment for people at every stage of life.

### Objective One

Transform our nature sanctuaries into a dynamic model for nature education and interpretation for visitors of all ages.

### Objective Two

Renovate and develop sanctuary buildings and infrastructure to showcase environmental best practices and create a highly productive workplace.

### Objective Three

Restore Woodend Sanctuary habitats to increase species diversity and model best practices.

# ANS Prepares to Transform Woodend

In June 2014, an ad hoc committee of the ANS Board of Directors formed the Sanctuary Master Plan Committee. The group's goal is to deliver a visionary Sanctuary Master Plan that identifies needs and opportunities for transforming Woodend Nature Sanctuary into a unique, premier environmental learning and events destination in the DC metro region. One of the committee's first tasks was to collect feedback about Woodend from ANS members, neighbors, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders. A short survey was disseminated in August.



## Woodend Survey Responses



*"There is so much potential to be a haven for families with young children! Please make improvements so it is more of a destination. An outdoor play space with parking and bathrooms is brilliant. Access to trails that would have signage would be perfect. Make them stroller friendly please!"*



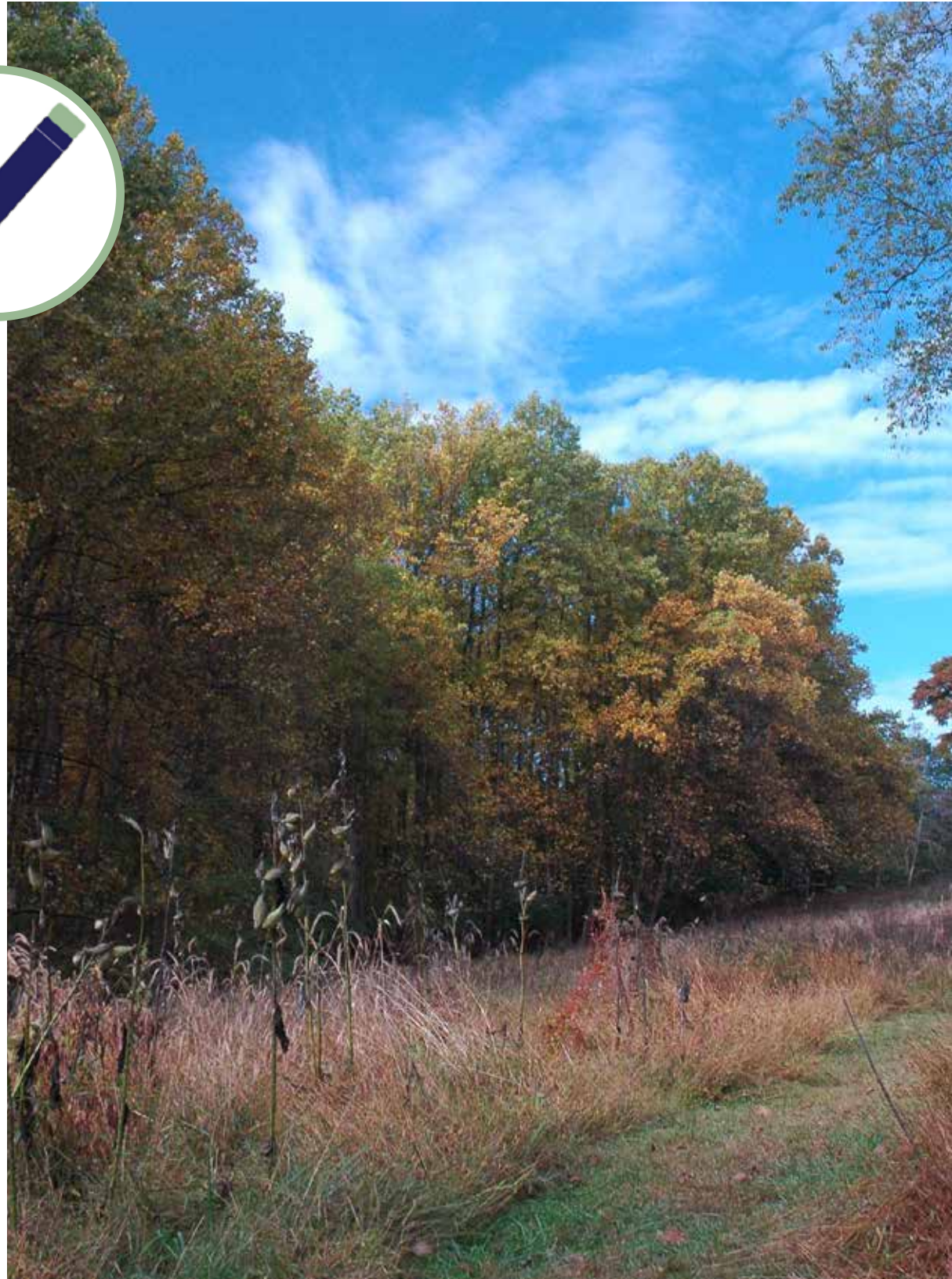
*"I love visiting Woodend, (in part because we were married there :) but it's not that close to where we live, so often forget to use it as a destination for weekend hikes."*



*"Restoring the native woodland understory and controlling the deer population (both of those do not lend themselves to simple fixes)"*



*"Woodend is wonderful! It's such a relaxing, warm, inviting place to take classes!"*



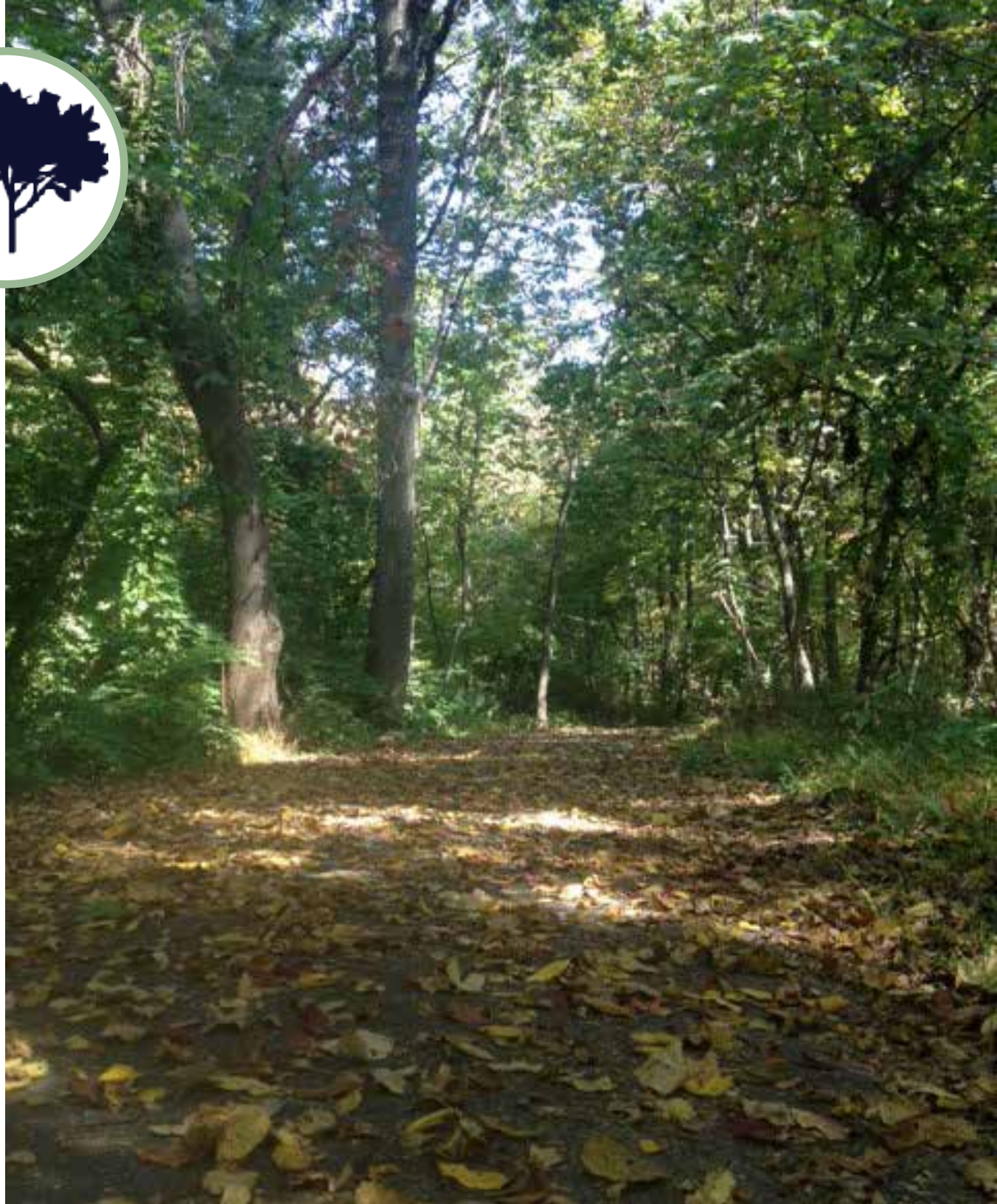


## ANS Volunteers Restore Meadow at Woodend

This year and with the help of volunteers and the support of a generous donor, ANS began restoring a large section of its meadow near the Woodend Sanctuary entrance on Jones Mill Road. The goal was to provide habitat for a greater diversity of species. Meadow restoration specialist Larry Weaner identified plants appropriate to the upland, lowland, and shaded areas of the meadow, mixing in a large portion of deer-resistant species. From late summer to early fall 2013, ANS volunteers and staff prepared the site: moving fauna to safety, raking, mowing, removing existing invasive plants and sowing a temporary grass cover. In October 2013, a team of some 70 volunteers and staff set out and dug in 3,000 plants and reseeded with native sedges and forbs.

## **ANS Forms New Partnership with NOVA Parks at Rust Nature Sanctuary**

In May 2013, the ANS Board of Directors ratified a 40-year-lease agreement with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (now NOVA Parks)—a new partnership for ANS at Rust Nature Sanctuary, in Leesburg, Virginia. Under the terms of the lease, NOVA Parks maintains the building and grounds of Rust and ANS retains office and classroom space for environmental education programming. A win-win for both NOVA Parks and ANS, this partnership has been several years in the making. NOVA Parks now hosts events at and provides property maintenance for the beautiful Rust Nature Sanctuary. ANS will protect Rust in perpetuity as a nature preserve in Northern Virginia and is now focused on providing mission-related, quality environmental education programs at Rust.



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April 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014

ANS offers sincere thanks to the following individuals, families, foundations, businesses, and organizations that supported ANS during our last fiscal year. Although we do not have space to acknowledge everyone, we are extremely grateful for and appreciate the generosity of each supporter.

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