



Widewater State Park

101 Widewater State Park Rd,
Stafford, VA 22554
(540)288-1400 | widewater@dcrr.virginia.gov

Summer 2026 Newsletter

Red Eft Holly Marsh Trail

JUNE - AUGUST



Our Mission Statement

"The purpose of Widewater State Park is to provide premiere water and land based educational and outdoor recreational opportunities while protecting and interpreting the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources of the peninsula of land cradled between Aquia Creek and the Potomac River in Stafford County."

IN THIS ISSUE



I'm Just a Bill

See what has been going on at the park, important updates, and other highlights from the past few months.

[Read more](#)



Programs

Check out some of the education and recreation programs we are presenting this season!

[Read more](#)



Volunteering

Review the volunteer opportunities at Widewater and any special projects we currently have underway.

[Read more](#)





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I'm Just a Bill... and I Became a Law

VA Governor Spanberger Visits Widewater



Wednesday, May 6th, Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger visited Widewater State Park to partake in a bill-signing session.

Seven bipartisan bills were signed in the Visitor Center during the late-Spring meeting, all of which were focused around conserving and protecting Virginia's natural resources.

Others in attendance were Senator Jeremy McPike, Delegate Alfonso Lopez, Delegate Phil Hernandez, and Delegate Kathy Tran (among others).

You can read more about the bills passed here: [**Governor Spanberger**](#).

Volunteer Highlight

John Golmant

John started working in the Widewater native plant garden in September 2023. Weekly, he comes out to remove weeds, install new native plants, and consults with staff on the direction to go for education and maintenance of the garden.

Since he started volunteering, John has contributed 262 hours to the upkeep of the garden. His dedication as a volunteer and experience as a Virginia Master Gardener has proven invaluable to both staff and visitors alike.

Outside of his volunteer work at Widewater, John also maintains the native plant garden at the Beth Shalom Temple in Fredericksburg, and his own garden at home.





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Summer 2026 Programs



Junior Rangers

This summer the Junior Ranger program is exploring the outdoors through the elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. What will you discover?



Archery

Will you take up the bow and try your hand at the sport of archery? These programs are designed as introductory lessons for first time participants.



Kayaking

Every weekend this Summer there is a morning, evening, or Full Moon kayak tour offered at Widewater. Pick your fancy and come join us at Aquia Creek!



Astronomy

Enjoy an evening viewing the cosmos with your friends and family, using our Celestron telescope, while sitting by a campfire with some s'mores in hand.

Click the Widewater State Park web link to view all of the upcoming programs!

[Widewater State Park](#)



F.A.Q.'s

Is there an age limit for Junior Rangers?

6-10 years old, though you can talk to Chief Ranger Ellen Hillborn about other ages attending.

Are archery and kayak program registrations on Eventbrite?

No; this year, all paid-for programs require registration and payment to be made at the Visitor Center, either in-person or calling at (540)288-1400.

Registration for a program ended, can I still attend?

You can call the Visitor Center and speak to an interpretive ranger to see if there are openings available.

Can I bring my dog to astronomy?

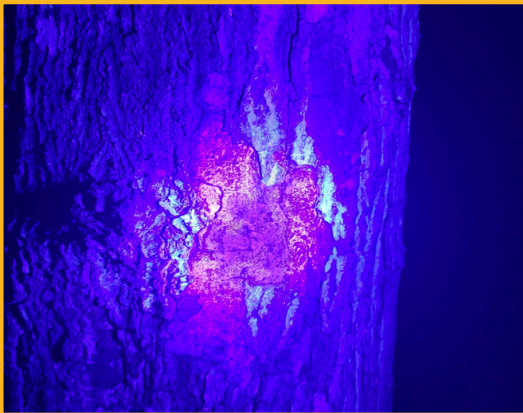
Yes! They must remain on leash at all times and be child, adult, pet, and wildlife friendly.



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Evening Program Highlights



Black Light Guided Hikes

From glowing blue lichen to fluorescent pink opossums, a black light can reveal much more than what meets the eye. Join our rangers as we use black light flashlights on a night hike along Holly Marsh trail.

[Read more](#)



Mothing Madness

This Moth Week, join us in discovering the many species of moths that call the night sky home! Moth week is a global citizen science event where people of all ages and backgrounds can help our scientists study moths all around the world. With a white sheet and black light, sit back and observe the many insects attracted to this shining beacon in the night.

[Read more](#)



Full Moon Hikes & Kayak Tours

Join our rangers after hours to view the Full Moon rise above the peninsula, and learn about the local wildlife that prowl around at night. You can either join us on a hike on Holly Marsh Trail or on a kayak tour on the Aquia Creek. Either program promises to be an illuminating event!

[Read more](#)





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Volunteer Categories



Natural Resource Management

Invasive species removal, shoreline cleanups, native plant garden upkeep, and BioBlitz surveys are just some of the volunteer opportunities at Widewater State Park. Whether you are an animal or plant person, there is plenty to be done to protect our natural resources.

Left: Clean the Bay Day 2026 crew with half their haul. They cleaned up an estimated 120lbs from the Potomac shoreline!

Trail Maintenance

If there is one thing parks always need assistance with year-round, it's trail building and maintenance. Corridor pruning, litter cleanup, and erosion mitigation are just a few of the tasks we could use a helping hand (or two) with so our trails remain safe and accessible.

Right: Volunteers assist park staff with removing fallen trees and brush from the under-construction Beaver Dam Trail.



Educational Programming

Come teach visitors about our migratory birds, show new fishermen your special casting trick, guide an evening firefly hike, or showcase your fire-building skills to a Scout group. No matter your passion, you can share it with the guests at the park!

Left: Crow's Nest volunteer Sophia Lynn teaches children about the Chesapeake Bay watershed using an interactive map game.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Shelter Beautification

If you have experience in masonry work, we could really use your help! Our four shelters are long overdue for their pillar bases to have decorative stonework applied to them.



We have the materials, but could use extra hands and know-how. Pictured is one pillar base that has been completed.

Native Plant Garden

A labor of love and the elements, our native plant garden has begun to take on a more distinctive personality thanks to our Master Gardeners and Naturalists who come out and tend the garden beds. If you like gardening, or teaching about gardening, this volunteer opportunity can be the perfect fit for you!





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Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

July 11th, 10am - 12pm : Rain Barrel Maintenance

July 17th, 9pm - 11pm : Astronomy Assistant

July 19th, 8am - 10am : Morning Kayak Tour

July 20th/ 24th, 8pm - 10:30pm : Mothing Monitor

July 25th, 9am - 12pm : Waterway Cleanups

July 25th, 5pm - 7pm : Full Moon Kayak Tour

August 8th, 6pm - 8pm : Twilight Kayak Tour

August 14th, 8pm - 10pm : Astronomy Assistant

August 15th/22nd/29th, 9am - 12pm: Japanese Stilt Grass Removal



Mothing Monitor



Come help monitor for moths at our two mothing events during National Moth Week!

Date(s): July 20th & 24th
Time: 8pm - 10:30pm

Read about the event [here](#).

Waterway Cleanups

Help clean up the Aquia Creek while paddling from a kayak!

Date: Saturday, July 25th
Time: 9am - 12pm

Register for the cleanup on their [website here](#).



Registration

A complete list of Summer 2026 volunteer opportunities are outlined in the registration form.

Click on the link below, or scan the QR code, to access the Summer 2026 Volunteer registration form.

[Widewater State Park Volunteer Opportunity Sign-Ups](#)





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Interested in Volunteering for Virginia State Parks?

Step 1 : Make a VSP Volunteer Account

Go to the [Virginia State Parks Volunteer web page](#) and click "Apply Now" to access the volunteer application. Make sure to fill out every section! Once it has been submitted, an email will be sent to your parks' Volunteer Coordinator to let them know about your application.

You can also find out about volunteer opportunities on this page and read about the benefits that come with being a VSP volunteer.



Step 2 : Attend a Volunteer Orientation

Every park is different, and not all have Volunteer Orientations. At Widewater, our volunteer orientation is monthly on **every second Sunday at 2pm in the Visitor Center**. July 12th and August 9th will be our next couple of orientations. If you haven't been to an orientation, you are encouraged to attend one, even if you have already begun volunteering!

Step 3 : Submit Your Background Check

At orientation, you will be given a paper background check to fill out and return to your Volunteer Coordinator at the meeting. If you are not able to make a meeting, you will also receive a welcome email after submitting your application with the background check attached as a PDF for you to fill out and return via email. It is important that your signature on the background check is done with a blue or black pen as **digital signatures are not accepted!**

Step 4 : Volunteer!

Once your background check comes back as approved, you are ready to volunteer at any Virginia State Park! Check in with your Volunteer Coordinator, on the park program page, and in this newsletter for current volunteer opportunities at Widewater State Park.



Meet Your Volunteer Coordinator

Ellen Hillborn
Chief Ranger of Visitor Experience
Widewater State Park
(540)288-1400
ellen.hillborn@dcr.virginia.gov