



OLD-GROWTH FOREST NETWORK

"Connecting people with nature by creating a national network of protected, mature, native forests."

June 9, 2022

Monticello Park to be celebrated as a Community Forest by the Old-Growth Forest Network

On June 9, 2022 at 11:00 am, Monticello Park will be dedicated as a Community Forest by the Old-Growth Forest Network (OGFN). The dedication will occur at the Beverley Drive entrance to Monticello Park when a dedication plaque will be delivered to Rod Simmons, City of Alexandria's Natural Resource Manager and Dept. RPCA.

The Community Forest Network celebrates the importance of small urban and suburban forests as community assets and encourages their permanent protection. Community forests can be places for recreation and wildlife habitat, while also providing ecosystem services like water and air purification, flood prevention, and surface temperature reduction. Monticello Park will be the 40th dedicated Community Forest in the United States within the Old-Growth Forest Network.

Monticello Park, at approximately seven acres, contains old-age trees that comprise an Evergreen Oak-Heath Forest, Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest, and Woodland Seep. The north-facing slopes and stream bank on the east side of the stream are vegetated with old-age chestnut and northern red oaks. The Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest on the west side of the stream is comprised of tulip tree, white and northern red oaks, and a diversity of other native hardwoods.

The park is widely known largely for its exceptional diversity of birds, native plants, and other wildlife and is known as one of a few remaining shelters in the City of Alexandria for small migratory birds. A significant warbler population arrives at the park each spring, attracting many birders. Migratory birds are likely drawn by the old-age tree canopy, a lush understory containing many shrubs and wildflowers, and significant geological features including a shallow stream. This forest is a part of the homelands of the Piscataway people(s) who established permanent villages and a sophisticated agriculture system by the 16th century in the region.

Rod Simmons, City of Alexandria Natural Resource Manager noted, "Monticello Park serves as a refuge for many species that are increasingly rare in the D.C. region and it is by far the most diverse forest community remaining in eastern Alexandria. It is an excellent example of what the pre-settlement forests and natural landscape of Alexandria looked like."

The mission of the Old-Growth Forest Network (OGFN) is to connect people with nature by creating a national network of protected, mature, publicly accessible, native forests. OGFN aims to preserve at least one forest in every county in the United States that can sustain a forest, estimated to be 2,370 out of a total of 3,140 counties. The Network of Forest now numbers at 158 in 23 states, which are searchable by state on its webpage.

OGFN identifies forests for both its Community Forest Network and Old-Growth Forest Network, ensures their protection from logging, and informs people of the forest locations. OGFN also educates about the ecological and human wellness benefits of old-growth forests, and speaks out regarding immediate threats to specific ancient forests.



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Brian Kane said, “We could not do this work without the research and dedication of our nation-wide network of volunteers and forest preservationists. St. Stephen’s & St. Agnes School student Tate Commission stepped up to the plate and identified and researched this park for OGFN and really moved this nomination into forward motion! Tate’s nomination was one of the most complete and detailed that we have ever received in the mid-Atlantic!”

“The Old-Growth Forest Network grows from a network of dedicated forest preservationists and we are looking at ten more dedications in the East Coast by the end of the summer, thanks to our volunteers,” he added. Interested volunteers are welcome to contact OGFN through its website: www.oldgrowthforest.net.

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[More details on the dedication can be found at OGFN Website at Current Events](#)