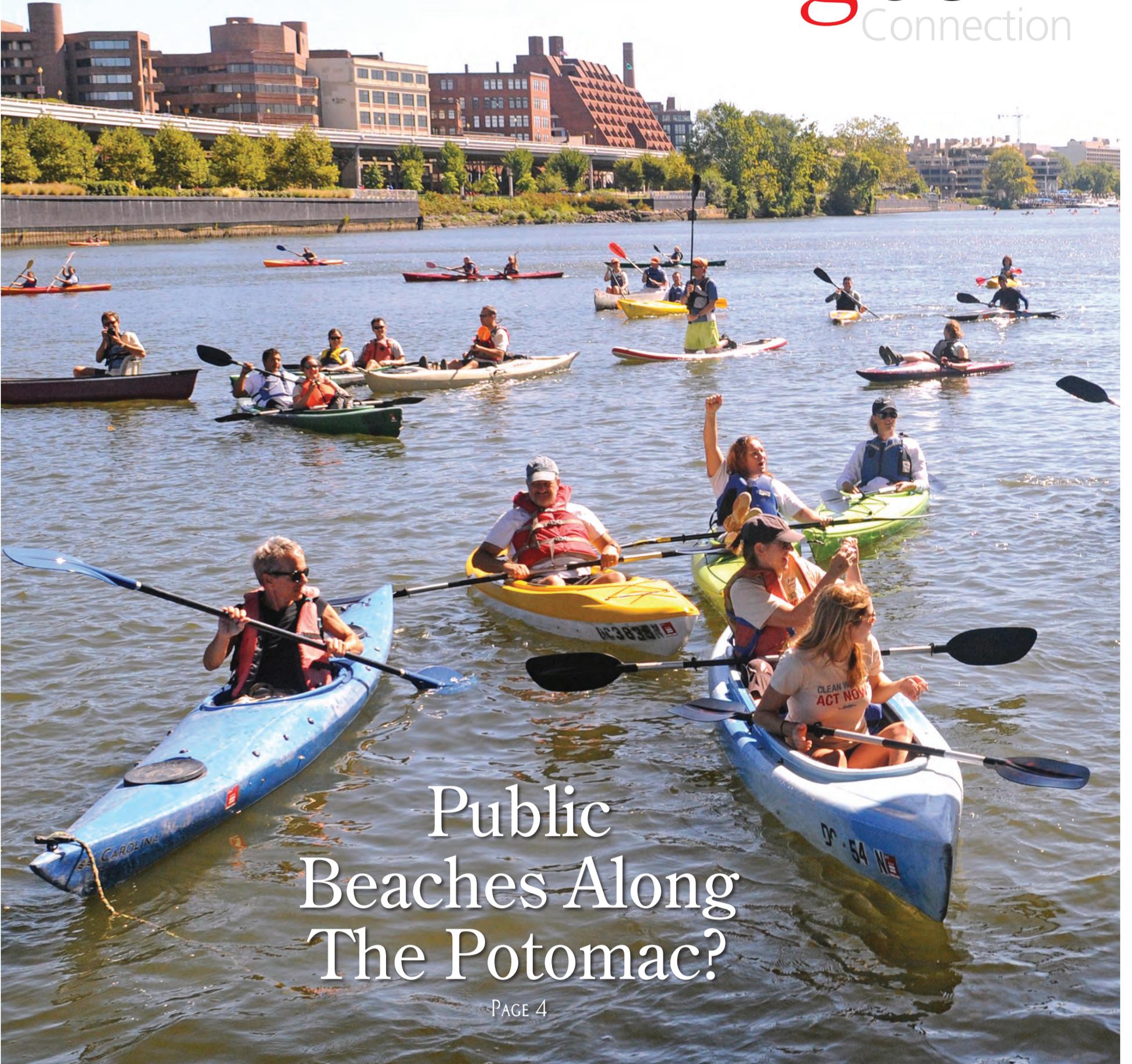


Group paddling  
at Key Bridge.

# The Arlington Connection



## Public Beaches Along The Potomac?

PAGE 4

## \$80M from NVTa for Ballston Metro Entrance

PAGE 3

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CALENDAR, PAGE 7

POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER NETWORK BOOTH "PADDLING AT KEY BRIDGE"

JULY 27 - AUGUST 2, 2022

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## "FLOURISHING AFTER 55"

55+ Programs are in person at 55+ Centers, unless otherwise noted. A 55+ Pass is required to participate (starting at a \$20 annual fee). To join or register, go to registration.arlingtonva.us or call 703-228-4747.

### AUGUST PROGRAMS

Registration open for 2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics, Sept. 10-24. Register online at www.nvso.us, \$20 for unlimited events. Go to website for events, rules, eligibility, photos, past results. For information, email nvso1982@gmail.com.

Preparing 2023 spring gardens, Monday, Aug. 1, 11:30 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Learn from expert gardener Pete Jones. Registration # 914401-07.

Current events discussion about local and world news, informal, volunteer led, Monday, Aug. 1, 10 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914402-15.

Folk music sing-along, Monday, Aug. 1, 1:30 p.m., Madison Community Center. Drop-in.

Jeopardy, America's favorite quiz game, Monday, Aug. 1, 2 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Adding protein to desserts, vegan cooking demonstration, Tuesday, Aug. 2, 6:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914501-10.

Ukulele class to learn basic strumming, Tuesday, Aug. 2, 4:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914304-03. Limited ukuleles or bring your own.

Aging skin, explore myths with doctor from Arlington Dermatology, Wednesday, Aug. 3,

10 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914500-12.

Opera appreciation group to hear musical selections and professional commentary on "Don Giovanni" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914300-05.

From the closet to the runway, fashion show of rarely worn outfits, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 5 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 914890-02.

Records and root beer floats, listen to favorite music on vinyl, Thursday, Aug. 4, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Bring records to share. Registration # 914890-03.

Brain health, tips to keep brain sharp, Thursday, Aug. 4, 11 a.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Presented by Kay Yong, Insight Memory Care Center. Registration # 914500-09.

Edgar Allan Poe's haunting afterlife, explore the ghost stories that inspired his writing, Thursday, Aug. 4, 1:30 p.m. Virtual. Registration # 914400-03.

Documentary discussion, "A Closer Look at the Life of Princess Diana" (2020), Friday, Aug. 5, 1:30 p.m. Virtual. Please watch documentary prior to discussion; link will be provided. Registration # 914402-03.

Crafting connections with Lubber Run preschoolers, Friday, Aug. 5, 11 a.m. Supplies provided. Registration # 914310-02.

55+ Travel will visit the National Portrait Gallery and its "Block by Block: Naming Washington" and Watergate: Portraiture and Intrigue"

SEE FLOURISHING, PAGE 7

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# NEWS

## Arlington County Lands \$80 Million

### NVTA Invests \$625 Million FY2022-27; Six Year Program Adopted.

By MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

With the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) unanimous vote on June 14 to adopt the \$624,882,714 FY2022-2027 Six Year Program, Arlington County, will receive \$80 million in approved infrastructure project funds for the Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance. The funding for the expansion of the Ballston-MU Metrorail Station will build upon a previous request to NVTA, awarded in 2016 for design. The June 14 award is a component of the construction funding plan. The updated cost estimate for the Ballston West Entrance is \$140 million, a \$10 million increase over the 2019 cost estimate, according to Arlington County in its funding application to NVTA.

Arlington County's approved Board Agenda Item at its Oct. 16, 2021 meeting regarding its application to NVTA for the FY2022- 2027 SYP stated, "The project provides a second entrance to the station at North Fairfax Drive and North Vermont Street. This is almost a quarter of a mile west of the existing entrance, greatly expanding multimodal access to the station and providing greater capacity to and efficiency for Metrorail." The project will include two street-level elevators, stairs connecting to an underground passageway, and a new mezzanine with stairs and elevators to the train platform.

The FY2022-2027 SYP NVTA Staff Recommendations by Keith Jasper, Principal, Transportation Planning and Programming, noted that the "Long Term Benefit" requirement "explicitly" affected the Ballston-MU West Metrorail Station Entrance. Such led to the recommendation for full funding. Other factors included in the recommendation of funding for the project were "overwhelming public support, strong TransAction project rating, and modal/geographic balance," according to the NVTA staff recommendations.

Funding for the Ballston West Entrance  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



**Phyllis J. Randall,**  
NVTA chair and  
chair of the Loudoun  
County Board  
of Supervisors

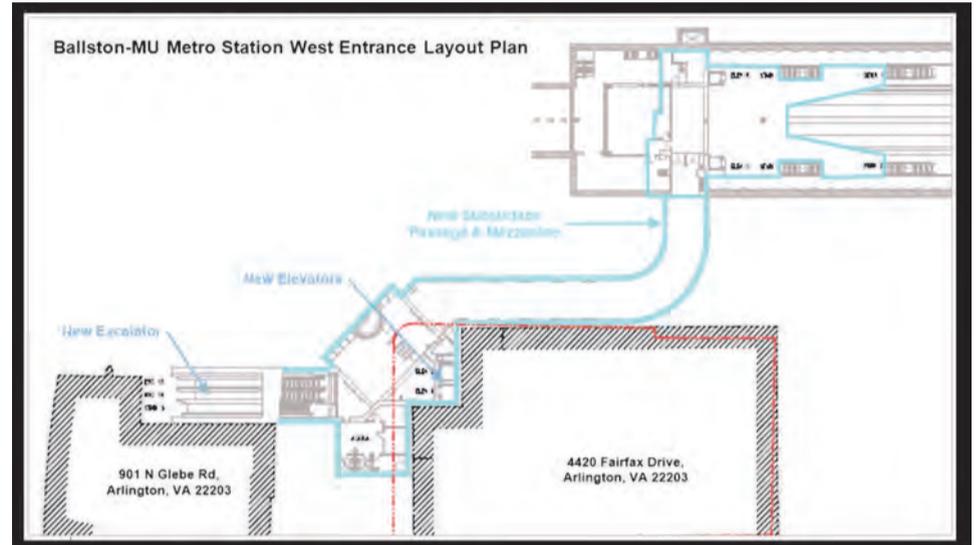


**Monica Backmon,**  
chief executive  
officer of NVTA

SCREENSHOTS



North Vermont Street and Fairfax Drive, Arlington (Source: Google Maps)



Location of Arlington's pending Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance project awarded \$80 million by NVTA through its \$625 Million FY2022-2027 Six Year Program.

#### Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

#### FY2022-2027 Six Year Program: Adopted by the Authority

7/14/2022

Jurisdiction	Application ID	Project Title	Requested Amount	Approved Amount
Arlington County	ARL-021	Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance*	\$ 80,000,000	\$ 80,000,000
Fairfax County	FFX-126	Fairfax County Parkway Widening: Nomes Court to Route 123*	\$ 108,000,000	\$ 108,000,000
Fairfax County	FFX-124	8 New Battery Electric Buses - Fairfax Connector Buses for Tysons to Franconia Service	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000
Fairfax County	FFX-131	Richmond Highway Widening From Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway/Jeff Todd Way to Sherwood Hall Lane*	\$ 60,207,038	\$ 60,207,038
Fairfax County	FFX-128	Richmond Highway (Route 1) BRT*	\$ 80,000,000	\$ 80,000,000
Fairfax County	FFX-121	Soapstone Drive Extension: Sunset Hills Road to Sunrise Valley Drive*	\$ 73,793,037	\$ 73,793,037
Fairfax County	FFX-125	Seven Corners Ring Road Improvements: Arlington Boulevard (Route 50) Westbound Ramp to Castle Place/Sleepy Hollow Road	\$ 94,800,000	\$ 4,200,000
Loudoun County	LDN-023	Route 7 Corridor ITS Implementation Program	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,500,000
Loudoun County	LDN-025	Route 9 Improvements: Route 9 to Dulles Greenway	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 20,000,000
Loudoun County	LDN-024	Ryan Road Widening (Phase 2): Evergreen Mills Road to Beaverdam Drive	\$ 16,000,000	\$ 16,000,000
Loudoun County	LDN-028	Loudoun County Parkway Interchange at US 50*	\$ 35,250,000	\$ 35,250,000
Prince William County	PWC-028	University Boulevard Extension: Devlin Road to Wellington Road	\$ 53,000,000	\$ 53,000,000
Prince William County	PWC-036	Old Bridge Road Widening: Colby Drive to Minnieville Road	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 25,000,000
Prince William County	PWC-027	Van Buren Road North Extension: Route 234 to Cardinal Drive	\$ 80,000,000	\$ 8,000,000
Prince William County	PWC-030	Route 1 at Route 123 Interchange	\$ 61,200,000	\$ 3,000,000
City of Alexandria	ALX-018	West End Transitway Phase 1b: South Van Dorn Street and Bridge Design*	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
City of Alexandria	ALX-020	Alexandria Bike and Pedestrian Trails Construction and Reconstruction: Holmes Run Trail - Dora Kelly Fair-weather Crossing Bridge	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
City of Falls Church	CFC-008	North Washington Street Multimodal Improvements Project: Great Falls Street to Gresham Place	\$ 22,500,000	\$ 22,500,000
City of Manassas	MAN-002	Liberia Avenue 3rd Lane Eastbound: Route 28 to Euclid Avenue	\$ 8,851,639	\$ 8,851,639
Town of Herndon	HND-005	Herndon Parkway Improvements at Worldgate Drive Extension	\$ 4,581,000	\$ 4,581,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 845,682,714</b>	<b>\$ 624,882,714</b>
<b>NVTA-approved Regional Revenue</b>				<b>\$ 626,290,870</b>
<b>Unprogrammed</b>				<b>\$ 1,408,156</b>

NVTA approved funding amounts for candidate applications from eight jurisdictions.

is supported not only by regional funds from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority but state funding and private developer contributions. The County Board approved local funds for the project, and the county is seeking additional state and regional funding to fund the project fully.

NVTA received 26 FY2022-2026 SYP transportation candidate projects, from which they adopted 20 multimodal transportation projects for full or partial funding. Of the other 19 awarded projects, six are in Fairfax County; one in the Town of Herndon;

one in the City of Falls Church; two in the City of Alexandria; four in Loudoun County; four in Prince William County; and one in the City of Manassas. Arlington County's Ballston-MU Metro Rail Station West Entrance is one of NVTA's three largest funding projects at \$80 million, tied for second place with Fairfax County's Richmond Highway Route 1 BRT (bus rapid transit). Fairfax County's \$108 million for the Fairfax County Parkway Widening topped all projects.

NVTA adopted the FY2022-2027 SYP, allocating nearly \$625 million for the projects

by a vote of its members that was both unanimous and nonpartisan. "That is just a very impressive thing to be able to do in this day and age," said Phyllis J. Randall, NVTA chair and Loudoun County chair (D-At-Large), who spoke at a press conference Friday morning, July 15.

During the press conference, Monica Brockman, chief executive officer of NVTA, said that NVTA is in its sixth funding program. The passage of HB 2313 is the transportation funding bill. "We are looking at slightly over \$3 billion (\$3.12) in regional multimodal congestion relief solutions right here in Northern Virginia."

NVTA is a regional governmental entity of 17 members established to plan, prioritize, and fund regional transportation programs. The program funds what the Authority has deemed the most important transportation projects to relieve congestion to cost and improve the quality of life for Northern Virginians. The program focuses on geographic and modal balance.

NVTA funds pedestrian and bicycle modes only if they lead to a more extensive transport system. "If there is a bike path that leads you to the metro, then that is something we will look at. But for NVTA overall, our first goal is to do congestion relief," Randall said.

NVTA's next Call for Regional Transportation Projects is anticipated for May 2023. Subscribe to NVTA's newsletters at TheNoVa-Authority.org

# The Potomac River Is Healing, but Problems Remain

River groups hope to open beaches for swimming along the Potomac.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH  
THE CONNECTION

While the Potomac River is no longer “a national disgrace,” as then-President Lyndon Johnson decried in 1965, it still faces challenges, two river stewards told a July 20 gathering of 40 at Alexandria’s Athenaeum.

The river’s water quality grade rose from a D in 2010 to a B- in 2020, reported Hedrick Belin, President of the Potomac Conservancy, adding, “There is still work to do.”

Nancy Stoner, President of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRK) credited the 1972 federal Clean Water Act for much of the river’s improving health and commended Alexandria for being on schedule to meet the 2025 deadline for the \$454.4 million River Renew project, an initiative designed to keep 140 million gallons of untreated sewage out of waterways each year.

**Challenges Loom**

Despite some advances, “There is one glaring red mark,” Belin warned, stream-side trees. “In fact, forested buffers, as we call them, received a flat-out F in our report card,” he cautioned.

Trees, shrubs and other plants near waterways help filter out pollution, stabilize stream banks and keep streams and rivers cool in hot weather. Without riverside vegetation, silt, sediment, trash and other pollutants flow into rivers during rain storms.

“Currently there is a real supply chain issue around having enough trees to plant,” Belin said, offering two solutions. The Conservancy helped persuade the Maryland General Assembly to finance the planting of five million trees over the next 10 years and to require that at least 10 percent or half a million trees be planted in underserved communities.

This fall, the Conservancy will launch “Tomorrow’s Trees,” a program that will organize acorn and other hardwood seed collection that will then go to tree nurseries, providing what Belin called, “much needed stock. Today’s seeds will become tomorrow’s trees.”

At 18 sites, Potomac Riverkeeper volunteers monitor turbidity, pH, temperature and E. coli bacteria weekly from May to September by taking samples and analyzing them in their floating lab, the Sea Dog. Among other sites, the group collects samples at Oronoco Bay, Belle Haven Marina, Little Hunting Creek, Pohick Bay and National Harbor. Their online Swim Guide reports results for E. coli bacteria. The July 20, 2022, report found, for example, that the water at the marina “meets water quality standards,” but water quality at Little Hunting Creek, “failed to meet water quality standards.”

Showing a 1918 photo of swimmers on a three-tiered platform in Washington’s Tidal Basin, Stoner said that the network wants to make the river swimmable and to create public swimming beaches. The group’s website says that “the water is sometimes still too polluted for safe recreational use,” but asserts that some areas are “often clean enough to swim at public access points such as the Tidal Basin, Hains Point and Fletcher’s Cove.” They are advocating repeal of the District of Columbia’s swimming ban imposed in 1971.



Hedrick Belin, President of the Potomac Conservancy and Nancy Stoner, President of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network speak at the Athenaeum in Alexandria on July 20.



An Alexandria wastewater official explains the River-Renew project to keep untreated sewage out of area waterways.



On July 14, AlexRenew introduced the public to the German-made tunnel boring machine which they named “Hazel.”



A forum on the health of the Potomac River at the Athenaeum in Alexandria on July 20.



On July 14, Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson christened Hazel by breaking a bottle of treated wastewater on the machine.



Paddlers on the Potomac River



Group paddling at Key Bridge.



Historic photo from the Tidal Basin

Basin, Stoner said that the network wants to make the river swimmable and to create public swimming beaches. The group’s website says that “the water is sometimes still too polluted for safe recreational use,” but asserts that some areas are “often clean enough to swim at public access points such as the Tidal Basin, Hains Point and Fletcher’s

Cove.” They are advocating repeal of the District of Columbia’s swimming ban imposed in 1971.

She showed a slide identifying six possible sites for swimming beaches in the Washington region. In Virginia, possible sites are Jones Point Park, an area just north of Belle Haven Park and Gravelly Point Park. Site se-

Potential Beach and Potomac Swimming areas in the DC region



Map of potential public beaches

lection criteria include good water quality and publicly-owned lands, Stoner said in a follow-up call. The PRK released a swimmable Potomac report on July 23.

**Will We Swim in “Bathwater”?**

Both speakers cited a warming planet as a serious threat. Rising temperatures make

water warmer, Stoner said, and warmer waters hold less dissolved oxygen which can harm fish and other aquatic species.

Belin also said that the warming atmosphere is bringing more extreme weather and flooding to the region. More severe storms dump more sediment and pollution into rivers. Droughts are becoming longer. A

Conservancy 2021 report titled “Rising to the Challenge” examines what the warming climate means for the Potomac and the Washington, D.C., area.

The report says, “Washington, D.C., is coming off its hottest decade on record (2011-2019) and temperature rises have been observed in every state within the Potomac River watershed.” The study predicted that by 2080, “the number of days when the heat index tops 95 degrees Fahrenheit in the nation’s capital may double by mid-century and triple by 2080.”

During a July 2019 heat wave, “the Potomac River felt like bath water,” said the report, with a record water temperature of 94

degrees Fahrenheit at Little Falls.

Belin also said that the Potomac “has risen almost a foot in the last century, and it’s expected to rise another three feet by 2080.”

The Conservancy has enlisted the University of Maryland’s Dr. Sacoby Wilson to help address environmental justice concerns, Belin said. Wilson has written that racially-discriminatory housing practices, called “redlining,” have resulted in lower-income communities having fewer ecological amenities like tree canopy and green spaces, and more impervious surfaces which absorb and re-release heat. One study found an eight-degree temperature difference between redlined versus non-redlined areas.

Stoner urged cooperation. “We’re proud of what we’ve accomplished and if we continue to work together, we’ll have a cleaner river that everyone can enjoy,” she said.

The event also featured an art show titled “Potomac River Life” with 40 local artists participating and proceeds going to the artists and the Riverkeeper organization. The exhibit catalog is here: <https://www.nvfaa.org/potomac-river-life-catalog>.

Information:  
Potomac Conservancy, [www.potomac.org](http://www.potomac.org);  
[www.swimguide.org](http://www.swimguide.org)  
Potomac Riverkeeper Network, <https://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/>

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**Legals**

Dish Wireless proposes to collocate wireless communications antennas at a top height of 105 and 115 feet on a 115-foot building rooftop at the approx. vicinity of 1020 North Quincy Street, Arlington, Arlington County, VA 22201. Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to: Trileaf Corp, Hannah, h.powell@trileaf.com, 1515 Des Peres Road, Suite 200, St. Louis, MO 63131, 314-997-6111.

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**Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

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**Senior Living**, fourth week of every month.

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**CALENDAR**

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**Let us know about an upcoming event**

[connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar)

# CALENDAR

## CHECK OUT THESE PLANT CLINICS

The Arlington Central Library Plant Clinic is open from 6:00-7:45 p.m. every Wednesday through September 28 and is located in the East Lobby of the Library, 1015 N. Quincy St. The Arlington Farmers Market Plant Clinic, open Saturday mornings from 7:45-11:15 a.m., operating through September 24, is located at N. 14th St. and N. Courthouse Rd. The Del Ray Farmers Market Plant Clinic, located at 203 E. Oxford Ave., Alexandria is open on Saturdays from 8:30-11:15 a.m., and will operate through September 24. The Alexandria Old Town Farmers Market Plant Clinic, located at 301 King St., Alexandria, operates on Saturdays from 7:00 - 9:30 a.m., through September 24. The Small Space Garden Plant Clinic, located at the back of the Fairlington Community Center at 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, is open on Sundays from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., coinciding with the Fairlington Farmers Market.

## NOW THRU SEPTEMBER

Witness the Changing of the Guard. At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington. From April-September, the ceremony occurs every 30 minutes, on the hour and half-hour. For more information, visit: <https://arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Changing-of-the-Guard>

## SATURDAY/JULY 30

Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show. 7:30 p.m. at Highline RxR, 2010 Crystal Drive, Arlington. The Capital City Showcase, the variety show that features the DMV's best performing artists and hosted by Christian Hunt, returns with its new one-of-a-kind blend of entertainment: The Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show. Bring a team or fly solo and win prizes by dropping knowledge in a trivia competition, then duking it out in a karaoke battle.

## "FLOURISHING AFTER 55"

FROM PAGE 2

exhibits, Friday, Aug. 5. Cost \$9 (Arlington resident), \$10 (non-resident). Registration # 902208-01.

Diabetes discussion group, share knowledge and experiences, Monday, Aug. 8, 3 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Yarn crafters make hand knit and crocheted items for Arlington charities, Monday, Aug. 8, 10 a.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Instruction available. Drop-in.

Absolute beginner pickleball, Monday, Aug. 8, 10 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Chess players, all levels, Monday, Aug. 8, 9:30 a.m., Madison Community Center. Meet chess Master Macon Shibut. Drop-in.

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) may help with sleep and mood changes through triggers like repetitive movements or sounds, Tuesday, Aug. 9, 6:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914500-21.

Scrabble, friendly games, Wednesday, Aug. 10, 1 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center and Friday, Aug. 12, 10 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Practice for Senior Olympics. Drop-in.

History roundtable group to discuss the impact of the 18th and 19th centuries, Wednesday, Aug. 10, 11:15 a.m. Virtual. Registration # 914402-12.

The study of words, phrases, expressions, history

July's headliner is the hilarious Haywood Turnipseed, Jr.

## SUNDAY/JULY 31

Composting with Kids! It's the Rot Thing to Do! 10:30 a.m. At Fairlington Small Space Garden, 3308 S Stafford St., Arlington. Kids will learn composting basics by creating a Soilarium. Captain Compost, the superhero of soil will be there to "cook" some fun for your garden. Ages 5-10. Limited to 15 kids due to space constraints. First come/first served.

## SUNDAY/JULY 31

Summer Festival on the Lawn. 5 p.m. At St. George's Episcopal Church, 915 N Oakland St., Arlington. Featuring the 9th Street Chamber Music. The Summer Festival on the Lawn's stage will rotate performances by various ensembles from 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. In addition, there will be food and drink (including adult beverages) available for purchase and a raffle drawing of prizes from local businesses. Visit [9thstreetchambermusic.com](http://9thstreetchambermusic.com).

## TUESDAY/AUG. 2

Energy Master Informational Happy Hour Mixer. 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. At Rocklands BBQ and Grilling Company, 3471 Washington Blvd., Arlington. Everyone is welcome. Learn about the Energy Masters program and talk with Energy Masters. The program is recruiting its 2022-2023 class now and space is limited. For more information, visit [ecoactionarlington.org/energy](http://ecoactionarlington.org/energy).

## FRIDAY/AUG. 19

LESSON ZERO. 9:30-12:30 p.m. The Celtic House presents the music of Oasis recording artist LESSON ZERO for a free show at 2500 Columbia Pike, Arlington. For additional information, see: [www.youtube.com/lessonzero](http://www.youtube.com/lessonzero) and [www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero](http://www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero)

of English language, Wednesday, Aug. 10, 10:30 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914402-24 or virtual, registration # 914402-25.

Summer garden talk with a Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener, what to plant for fall blooms, how to treat plant problems, Wednesday, Aug. 10, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 914401-08.

"Love, Sex and Marriage in the Civil War," author Chuck Mills will discuss the mores of the time, Thursday, Aug. 11, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. View presenter on screen at the center, registration # 914400-16 or Zoom at home, registration # 914400-17.

Movie enthusiasts to discuss, "Munich: The Edge of War" (2021), Thursday, Aug. 11, 3 p.m. Virtual. Watch movie on Netflix or Tubi prior to meeting. Registration # 914402-06.

Introduction to line dancing, basic steps, Friday, Aug. 12, 10:15 a.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Drop-in

Ice Cream Social in the Park, live music, visit with 55+ friends, Friday, Aug. 12, 1 p.m., Virginia Highlands Park, 1600 S. Hayes Street. Bring a chair or blanket. Registration # 914899-02.

Registration open for 2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics, Sept. 10-24. Register online at [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us), \$20 for unlimited events. Go to website for events, rules, eligibility, photos, past results. For information, email [nvso1982@gmail.com](mailto:nvso1982@gmail.com).

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## No Guessing



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I'm having a difficult time this week finding a topic to write about. I don't think it's writer's block, although after nearly 25 years a of publishing columns, I imagine it's possible. No, the problem is that the topic I want to write about weekly, whether it's cancer related or not, is what I feel. And this week, what I feel, I can't write about out of respect for the subject. I just can't discuss it publicly. I can only deal with it privately. If it were about me/my health, I'd feel free to elaborate. But it's not. And so, writing about what I couldn't write about seemed like a compromise of sorts. Given the intensity of my feelings right now, it would be impossible for me to write about anything else other than what I'm not writing about. I hope you all understand. If not, see this space in the future for an update. I'll try to be more clear next time.

Not that you all read my column for breaking news or Jack Anderson-type muckraking, but I know you expect honesty. And in this column, I am being honest. I just can't talk about what I'm not being honest about. I can only admit to remaining silent, on the advice of counsel you might say, and try to write between the lines in a way that communicates to you regular readers the weight I'm carrying. Though I am not alone in this burden, I can only mention, indirectly, how it's affecting me.

My late father used to say about me that I have broad shoulders, that I can take it. Well, the subject that I'm not talking about this week will definitely test my father's very reassuring assertion about his baby son. And in an odd way, though his statement goes back more than 20 years (he's been deceased since Dec. '06 and suffered his first stroke approximately 18 months prior), it's helpful to repeat it to myself and to write about it as well. Because what it is I'm not writing about is the fear of the unknown.

The unknown to which I vaguely refer is future feelings. I'm not exactly worried per se, as I've held up pretty well over these last 13 and a half years of being a cancer patient, and one who might have been misdiagnosed at that; and previous to my diagnosis, having both my parents die within two years of one another. Still, life goes on and it has gone on so I'd like to believe it will continue to go on even if this worst-case scenario plays out and reaches its ultimate end.

I remember when my father, the first of my parents to die, finally succumbed to his illness/age (he was 87). I was nervous and afraid how I'd respond, how I'd live my life without one of the most important influences in it. I survived it. But I think I survived it because my mother (another major influence in my life) was still alive, as she was for another two years until she succumbed to her illness/age (she was 86). However, when she died, my brother Richard I became orphans, as it were. That feeling of finality, the end of an era, both parents being deceased, never quite leaves you. There's always a missing piece, but it is sort of the natural progression of things, so over time, at least for my brother and I, you find a place for your grief and eventually wonderful memories come flooding back and you smile when you think of them.

Well, I'm trying to smile now. That's all I'm not going to say.

*Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.*

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