

AUGUST 2021

# CONSERVANCY FIELD NOTES

## Updates from Resident Board of Trustees



Willowsford Neighbors,

We hope this finds you well and healthy as we hit the home stretch of summer.

A special greeting to all of our new Willowsford neighbors (either through new construction or resale) – welcome!

We held a Conservancy Board of Trustees meeting July 27 and we wanted to share some of the highlights below, as well as other items of interest.

Regards,

- Chase Rowan, President
- Claudette Papathanasopoulos, Vice President
- Greg Licamele, Secretary
- Karyn Moreland, Treasurer
- Jake Virag, Trustee



## SEARCHING FOR A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In our May update, we shared the news that the Willowsford developer ended founder control of the Conservancy, so it is now governed by the Board of Trustees noted above (along with two-non residents, Mark Trostle, who has led Willowsford development, and Avi Sareen, a terrific environmental consultant).

Our goal is to govern the Conservancy from our perspective as residents and offer our professional expertise we bring in service to all you and our natural neighbors flying, crawling or otherwise moving around Conservancy land. Our Conservancy staff manages all the day-to-day operations - from the Farm to trails to habitat to administrative aspects.

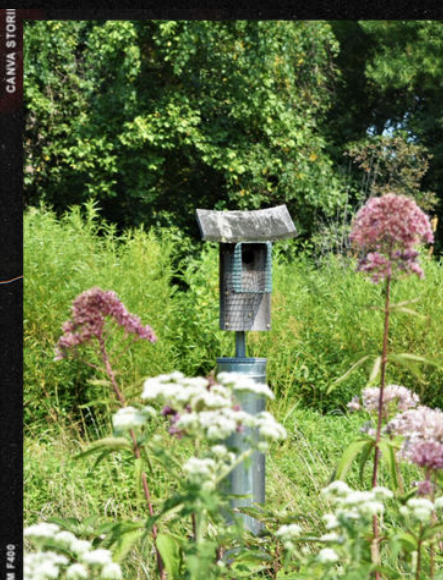
The staff is led by an executive director and the Conservancy has only had one person in that position since the beginning - Iris Gestram.

Many of you have likely met or encountered Iris in a variety of ways, events and communications through the years. She has led the Conservancy from its start-up roots to the stable organization it is today. Iris recently informed the Board that she will be departing as executive director in October and moving to Pennsylvania for personal reasons. We can't thank Iris enough for her leadership and stewardship of our unique Conservancy and we wish her the best as she transitions to another chapter.

To that end, we as a Board are now charged with hiring a new executive director. Residents are not eligible to apply, but if you know someone in the conservation/environment space who would make a solid candidate, please share the position announcement:

<https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/2661275626/>

We will keep you updated on progress. Feel free to reach out to Chase with any questions or comments: [crowan@willowsfordconservancy.org](mailto:crowan@willowsfordconservancy.org)





## STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

At our July meeting, we approved moving forward with some of the first steps of a strategic planning/visioning process. The Conservancy and Farm are at a crossroads after 10 years of start-up and establishment. As a community, we're nearing final build out in 2022, so we want to engage in a conversation about the Conservancy over the next three to five years. And with the executive director change noted above, this process takes on even more importance to help frame resident voices, opinions and ideas for us as a new Board and the incoming executive director.



Called, "Planting the Future," this outreach will begin with a survey in a few weeks. It'll include several key visioning questions for you to share your hopes, dreams and ideas, as well as areas that need improvement. The survey will also feature a section to provide insight on some specific areas. Look for the survey in the coming weeks and please share your thoughts.



## UPDATED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

As always, we invite you to view the many financial documents that exist on the Conservancy website, including the updates we reviewed at the July meeting. The latest financial statements are on the Conservancy website in the Document Center. Highlights include investments in the developer-funded endowment performed well in 2020, more income than expected in Farm CSA revenue so far this year, and in total, Conservancy spending is under budget this fiscal year, primarily due to Farm staff turnover. As we reported in May, an independent audit recently concluded that yielded no significant issues or areas of concern.



## RESIDENT TRAIL VOLUNTEER GROUP

Land Stewardship Manager Taryn McFarland met with several residents interested in organizing a resident trail volunteer group. Volunteers will aid Conservancy staff in trail projects, help monitor trail conditions, volunteer with basic trail maintenance and serve as community advocates for our great trails. If you're interested in joining, email [info@willowsfordconservancy.org](mailto:info@willowsfordconservancy.org).

The mission of the Conservancy is to protect, maintain and promote the viable, long-term use of the land, integrating farming, recreation, conservation and education to enhance the quality of life for the residents of Willowsford and the greater community.



## INSIDE LOOK AT REPAIRING A TRAIL

The Wetlands Way trail in The Greens recently underwent renovation and repair of some bridge walkways. Take a tour with Taryn in this video to see how the bridges were repaired and learn more about constructing bridges in wetland areas.

WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYcv6apdh2g>



## TWO PROJECT UPDATES

Board and staff discussed several key ongoing and planned projects, including:

- Dominion Power recently completed its pipeline project planting in The Grant. Conservancy staff is monitoring the trees Dominion paid to plant as part of this project through Conservancy land. To date, 17 percent of the trees have died, which is within acceptable rates. If that number increases to 25 percent, then staff will alert Dominion per the terms of the agreement.
- As a Board, we approved Conservancy staff proceeding with NOVEC on NOVEC's \$150,000 planned tree planting and buffer project in The Grange near a proposed substation. Residents of this area have been working closely with the HOA board and staff, as well as Loudoun County officials regarding the placement of this project, but we as a Conservancy Board have the immediate responsibility to proceed with NOVEC to ensure we can extract this agreement from NOVEC now as this project winds its way through public hearings.



## STREAM SURVEYS

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy will be visiting our various streams to monitor water quality in our open spaces. It's envisioned that this will evolve into an opportunity for Willowsford residents to be trained as stream monitors so we can even better gauge the health of our local ecosystem. More details to follow.



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## SAVE THE DATE!

We have several key events on the horizon that we invite you to participate in! **Check [www.willowsfordconservancy.org](http://www.willowsfordconservancy.org) for more details and registration.**

- **Annual Community Bonfire and Camp Over, Sept. 11:** One of the Conservancy's most popular events is back after a COVID-19 pause last year. Registration and fee includes BBQ, beverages and dessert, as well as smores and live music. Join us at Hidden Meadow Event Field in The Greens. If you'd like to camp overnight, you're more than welcome to pitch those tents. Nearly 200 of the 300 registration slots have been claimed already, so sign up soon!
- **Evening Farm Tour and Social, Aug. 19 and Sept. 16:** Join Farmer Andy and the team for a tour of the Farm in The Grange followed by a social gathering at the Farm Stand.
- **Celebrating 10 Years of Willowsford Farm, TBD:** Yes, that's right, the Farm was established in 2011, so after a decade's worth of tomatoes, lettuce, sweat and toil, we'll celebrate the first 10 years this fall. Details to follow.



## NEXT BOARD MEETING

Our next Board meeting is scheduled for Sept. 28, 5:30 p.m. at The Boat House.

