

# Thomas Jefferson Parkway Newsletter



Volume 1, Issue 2

SUMMER 2006

The Thomas Jefferson Parkway is a 189-acre linear park that protects the entrance corridor to Monticello along Route 53. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation constructed, owns, and manages this privately owned but public park, which includes the two-mile Saunders-Monticello Trail and Kemper Park, for visitors to Monticello and the citizens of Central Virginia.

## Bald Eagle Soars Through Kemper Park

This bald eagle, likely a resident of the nearby Rivanna River, visited the Thomas Jefferson Parkway last winter, when Monticello's Steve Gano photographed it near the Kemper Park pond.

Thomas Jefferson described the species (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) as "a free spirit, high-soaring and courageous." The only eagle species unique to North America, the bald eagle was designated the national emblem of the United States by the Second Continental

Congress in 1782. Their population has been estimated at 300,000 – 500,000 in the early 1700s.

The species, however, suffered from habitat loss, over-hunting, and near extinction from the effects of persistent pesticides. The use of DDT caused the thinning of eagle egg shells, which often broke during incubation. The bald eagle was declared an endangered species in 1967, when the population had



dropped to some 500 pairs. The eagle's status was upgraded to "threatened" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department in 1995, the population has since soared at least ten-fold, and a debate is currently swirling about "de-listing" its status.

Bald eagles usually reside along open bodies of water, where there are abundant supplies of fish and dead trees upon which to build their 5 to 10-foot-wide nests. This noble specimen was drawn to Kemper Park by a deer carcass,

but the species also feeds on small mammals. With a wing span of 6 to 8 feet, the bald eagle is one of the largest birds in North America. Living up to 40 years old, bald eagles fly at 30 mph and can dive up to 100 mph. The resurgence of the bald eagle, a symbol of national freedoms and an integral image of American culture, is a hopeful sign that man's degradation of the environment can be reversed.

### RANGERS PUT A FACE TO THE PARKWAY



**Howard Snoddy**

Parkway Rangers are often on duty during twilight hours and weekends to monitor Parkway trails, enforce rules and regulations, and perform routine maintenance. They are identified with name tags and, although usually found walking Saunders-Monticello Trail, they also can be reached by calling their cell phone at 531-5127.



**Patsy Reardon**

Patsy Reardon has been a PE teacher at nearby

Stone-Robinson Elementary School for 29 years. "I initially wanted to be a forestry major so I could be a park ranger, so this job fulfills a dream of mine! Being a park ranger requires one to have people skills. We need to welcome everyone and greet them with a smile. We have to tactfully deal with folks who ignore or don't see the signs about dog regulations. It is wonderful to watch the seasonal changes on the trail. I have met some great people on this trail and it means a great deal

to a lot of people."

Howard Snoddy was once a student of Patsy's at Stone-Robinson. He is a Business Coordinator at the UVa Transplant Center, ensuring that patients have insurance coverage for critical kidney, pancreas, or liver transplants. Howard has three young children, and is a board member of the Albemarle County Fair. Howard says, "I enjoy being outdoors and seeing the wildlife. I enjoy greeting people and seeing new faces. Mostly, I like the scenery and the fact this beauty is at my front door."

### Blue Ridge Overflow Parking Update

Plans for the Parkway Overflow Parking Lot are presently being reviewed by the planning staff of Albemarle County. The county requires approval of a special use permit for the 50-car lot, which will be across Route 53 from the Trailhead Parking Area on the Blue Ridge Hospital property. Our Site Plan will be reviewed by the Albemarle County Planning Commission, tentatively scheduled on June 13, then, hopefully, officially approved by the Board of Supervisors in July. Construction would begin later in the summer.

The lot, accessible by cars only from Route 20, will be sited in a lightly wooded

area some 200 yards from the pedestrian culvert under Route 53. Trail users will drive to this lot when the Trailhead lot is full; turning around in the current lot and returning to northbound Route 20, where the driveway entrance to the new lot will be located. The new lot will extend Saunders-Monticello Trail by about .3 mile.

The county approval process is a civics lesson. Our site plan involves review by countless agencies: Architectural Review Board, UVa's Real Estate Foundation, Virginia Department of Transportation, County Zoning staff, Police Department, Engineering and Erosion Control

*(Continued on page 4)*



**Osage Orange at Blue Ridge**

## Parkway Dog Rules, 101

No issue provides the emotional divide for park managers and park users like dogs. Managing rules for dogs on the Thomas Jefferson Parkway has been one of our most complex and frustrating mandates. Dogs are allowed on leashes in Kemper Park (on trail sections below the board-walk and pond) and along our new system of rustic trails. Dogs are prohibited from the boardwalk.

The Parkway boardwalk was built to traverse the mountainous route to Monticello with the least impact upon the old-growth forest and steep slopes. It was designed for mixed use: its gentle grade makes it handicapped ac-

cessible and the side rails were designed for pedestrian safety but also to satisfy the code for bicyclists. The narrowness of the boardwalk, 10 feet, is so confined that we feel there is not enough



room for leashed dogs, bicyclists, runners, and baby carriages to safely coexist. For a bicyclist or a

runner pushing a baby jogger, trying to pass, or simply confronting, a leashed dog along the confined boardwalk is a frightening experience.

We feel the current rules mandating leashes and prohibiting dogs from the boardwalk are both fair and inclusive for the Thomas Jefferson Parkway community. Our enforcement over the years has been, at times, inconsistent, but we're determined to regulate the dog rule so that Saunders-Monticello Trail can be enjoyed by all users. We urge dog walkers to use the Pond Walk, as well as our recently opened rustic trails that explore the fields of nearby Secluded Farm.

## Rustic Trails Offer New Hiking Alternatives

Many Parkway users have discovered the numerous rustic trails that Parkway staff have cleared and opened over the last two years. Dog walkers and other Parkway trail hounds are welcome to walk these trails as a hiking supplement to Saunders-Monticello Trail.

Two of these trails end at the Carter Overlook. One leaves the main trail near the pond, hooks below the lowest section of boardwalk, and follows the creek uphill to a pleasant clearing above the Overlook. A highlight of this walk is a modest but pretty cascade about 100 yards up the

hill. A more recently-cleared rustic trail takes off from Saunders-Monticello Trail just above a rock outcrop at the second bend from the trailhead, follows a mostly-dry gully uphill, and then curves through a young forest to the Carter Overlook Trail.

This Spring, Parkway Manager Jason Stevens, assisted by volunteers from the APO service fraternity at the University of Virginia, opened trails into Secluded Farm, a 100-acre property to the south of Kemper Park which Monticello leases from the Albemarle County Soil and Water Conservation District. Two miles of mowed paths wind through Secluded Farm's

natural grasslands, and the path is suited for trail runners and dog walkers. Secluded Farm was originally deeded by Clara and John A. Smart to the Albemarle County Soil and Water Conservation District under the stipulation that it be maintained in a state of nature. To reach Secluded farm's trails, take the right-hand trail from the Trailhead Parking Lot. Soon after passing the tiny wetland/pond, look to your right for a mowed path. Follow this path uphill. Please stay on these mowed paths, and respect the property and privacy of the residents of Secluded Farm.

# THE THOMAS JEFFERSON PARKWAY NEWSLETTER

Thomas Jefferson  
Foundation, Inc  
Post Office Box 316  
Charlottesville, VA 22902  
Phone: (434) 984-9877  
[www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org)  
[parkway@monticello.org](mailto:parkway@monticello.org)

Monticello



## Receive the Parkway Newsletter Electronically

Please send your e-mail address to [parkway@monticello.org](mailto:parkway@monticello.org), or call 984-9877, and we'll send you the newsletter, as well as other news of Monticello upcoming events.

The purpose of the Thomas Jefferson Parkway Newsletter is to clarify rules and regulations, bring visitors up to date on new initiatives, interpret the natural and cultural history of the Parkway, establish the connection between the Parkway and both Thomas Jefferson and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, and develop a community of Parkway visitors for a future "Friends" group of supporters.

## OVERFLOW PARKING UPDATE (cont.)

staff, Virginia Department of Historical Resources, and the Albemarle County Water Resources staff. Experience with this process has shown the dire need for both persistence and patience.

Although the transition to the overflow lot might be awkward for Parkway visitors accustomed to parking in the Trailhead Lot, the adjacent spillover lots, or along Route 53, the Blue Ridge Overflow Lot is the only legitimate solution to our parking problem. Bonuses include more comfortable parking, a longer trail, and a majestic Osage Orange tree that will grace the lower edge of the new lot.

## UPCOMING PARKWAY EVENTS

**PARKWAY NATURE WALKS @ 9:30am on June 3rd, July 1st and Aug 5th. Call 984-9822 to register. Cost: Free**

**HISTORY OF TJ PARKWAY @ 9:30am, July 8th. Call 984-9822 to register. Cost: \$10**

**VIRGINIA NATIVE FRUITS @ 9:30am, Aug 19th. Call 984-9822 to register. Cost: \$10**

