



# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

December 2025 Edition



[HICKORYFARMS.ORG](http://HICKORYFARMS.ORG) P.O. BOX 2239, FAIRFAX VA 22031

## **HFCA BOARD & VOLUNTEERS**

President: Steve Kubrak

Vice President: Telah Jackson

Secretary: Clair Hill

Treasurer: Judy Deng

Assistant Treasurer: Vacant

Common Areas: Melissa Stark

Webmaster: Bryan Crabtree

Neighborhood Watch Coordinator:  
Allie Shaw

At Large: Pam Barrett, Charles Chu, and  
Tad Weed

Architectural Reviews: Louis Eswood,  
Keith Ferguson, Donna Garfield, Josef  
Gasimov, Edmond Kiechlin, and Bob  
Sottile

Common Areas Committee: Bob and Judy  
Cosgriff, Rich Dudley, Larry Rogers, Melissa  
and Jarrett Stark

Neighborhood Block Reps: Jim Bever,  
Alyssa Eswood, Ellen Head, Lee Sottile,  
and Jen Spencer

Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Maloney

Social Committee: Laura Bucher and  
Juliette Giordano

## **IN THIS EDITION**

Greetings from the Hickory Farms President	2
Hickory Farms Annual Assessment Due Jan 31	3
Rabbit Run Restoration Project Update	4
Neighborhood Holiday Lights Contest	5
The Birds of Hickory Farms	6
Neighborhood Watch Update	7
Ask HFCA – Your Questions, Answered!	7
Did You Know? + Share Your News & Updates	7
Student Yellow Pages	8
Join our Listserv	8
HFCA Board Meeting Notice	8
Newsletter Item Deadline and Distribution	8



---

## **HOW TO CONTACT ...**

Board of Directors: [hfca@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:hfca@hickoryfarms.org)

Architectural Control Committee: [acc@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:acc@hickoryfarms.org)

Treasurer: [treasurer@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:treasurer@hickoryfarms.org)

Common Areas: [commonareas@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:commonareas@hickoryfarms.org)

Webmaster: [webmaster@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:webmaster@hickoryfarms.org)

Newsletter: [newsletter@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:newsletter@hickoryfarms.org)

---

## **GREETINGS FROM THE HICKORY FARMS PRESIDENT**

Greetings Neighbors!

As I sit down to write this, the trees are mostly bare, the sunsets come earlier, and more of us are trading porch time for warm lights in our living rooms.

This in-between stretch, after Thanksgiving but before the winter holidays, always feels like a good time to take stock. We have had another full year together as a community. New neighbors have moved in, long-time residents have hit milestones, kids have grown what feels like a foot, and many of us have weathered our own personal ups and downs. Through all of it, the simple, steady fact of living on these same streets together matters more than it sometimes gets credit for.

I want to offer a sincere thank you to everyone who has helped keep Hickory Farms running this year. The neighbors who wave to kids at the bus stop. The folks who bring in a trash can for someone who is away. The people who pick up a bit of litter on their walk, or check on an elderly neighbor during a storm. None of those things show up in a budget or a set of bylaws, yet they are exactly what makes a place feel like home instead of just a collection of houses.

As we head into the season of lights and gatherings—whether you celebrate Christmas, Yule, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's, or simply enjoy the quiet and the extra time off—I hope you find a few moments of real rest. My wish for all of us is simple: warm homes, good conversations, and the feeling that the people who live around us see us and care that we are here.

Looking ahead to the new year, there will be plenty of chances to stay involved and connected, from casual get-togethers to the behind-the-scenes work that keeps our neighborhood functioning. If you have been thinking about getting a little more involved, keep an eye on future newsletters and emails. There is always room at the table for one more voice and one more pair of hands.

For now, I hope you can enjoy this in-between time. Take a walk on a crisp afternoon, wave to a neighbor you do not know well yet or simply enjoy the way our community looks as more windows start to glow in the early evening.

On behalf of the Board, I wish you a peaceful end to the year and a bright start to the next one.

With gratitude,

Steve Kubrak  
President, Hickory Farms Community Association  
[president@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:president@hickoryfarms.org)

## **HICKORY FARMS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT DUE JANUARY 31, 2026**

By Judy Deng, HFCA Treasurer

This year's assessment is **\$300.00** and is due no later than **January 31, 2026**. Pay electronically or pay by mail.

Payment details are as follows:

- Ensure payment reaches HFCA Treasurer no later than January 31, 2026.
- **PAY ELECTRONICALLY:**
  - You may pay by e-check or credit card at: <https://hickoryfarmshfca.cheddarup.com>  
Cheddar Up is a secure digital payment method that is integrated with our MoneyMinder web-based accounting software
    - No fee for e-checks. E-check is an ACH debit from a payer's bank account, which involves payers entering their bank account and routing numbers.
    - Credit card payments will include an additional processing fee.



- **PAY BY MAIL:**
  - Mail your check or money order to:  
**Hickory Farms Community Association**  
**P.O. Box 2239**  
**Fairfax VA 22031**
  - Ensure the property address is written on your check or money order.
- Moved? New homeowner? Email owner's name, address, and telephone number to [secretary@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:secretary@hickoryfarms.org), who maintains Hickory Farms records.
- Help us stay in touch by joining the HFCA email list (listserv) at <https://hickoryfarms.org/hickory-farms-listserv> This is a private list for HFCA only.
- **THANK YOU!** Your assessment payments help keep our community beautiful and safe.
- Questions? Contact [Treasurer@Hickoryfarms.org](mailto:Treasurer@Hickoryfarms.org)

Hickory Farms Community Association Bylaws Article VII, Section 2(c) governs annual assessments. Assessment payments are the responsibility of the property owner. Payments that are not postmarked or in the physical possession of the Treasurer by February 7, 2026 are late and the homeowner will be charged an additional \$50. Payments received after that date that do not include the additional \$50 charge (total payment of \$350.00) will be returned to the homeowner for non-payment. On March 1, 2026, delinquent accounts will be turned over to the Association's attorney for collection. At that point, the amount owed by the delinquent homeowner will be \$350.00 plus all associated attorney fees and could include significant court costs if HFCA files a lawsuit. These procedures are in accord with the Hickory Farms Community Association Bylaws, which have no provision for waiver.



## **RABBIT RUN REMEDIATION PROJECT UPDATE**

By Bob Cosgriff  
HFCA Rabbit Run Remediation Project Coordinator

An important step in Fairfax County's Rabbit Run Restoration Project occurred on 31 October-1 November when soil samples were gathered from nine previously marked locations along the west (Cotton Farm Road) side of Rabbit Run. Core samples were extracted, and the depth of bedrock was determined to assist the design team in its task of figuring out the best way to modify the stream to ensure that it meets the requirements of minimizing sedimentation transport downstream by slowing water velocity and restoring the natural flood plain. Design could take up to 12 months, after which the contract approval phase begins and then construction. Best estimate now is mid-2027 for work to begin. The community will be involved at the 30%, 60%, and 90% design review stages so that we can see how the plan progresses and provide input as warranted. The attached photos show the drill rig in action.



In discussing Rabbit Run, we use the abbreviation "RPA" which stands for "Resource Protection Area." Since perhaps not everyone knows just what this term means and why it's important, here is a quick overview derived Fairfax County from a pamphlet published by the Land Development Services office. RPAs, (also known as 'riparian buffers') are "regulated corridors of environmentally sensitive land adjacent to water bodies such as streams, rivers, and shorelines. In their natural conditions, RPAs protect water quality, filter pollutants out of stormwater runoff, reduce the volume of stormwater runoff, prevent

-4-

erosion, and perform other biological and ecological functions.” Rabbit Run, by virtue of its classification as a “perennial stream,” is an RPA, one of several lying within the larger Pohick Creek watershed that empties into the Potomac River and thence into the Chesapeake Bay.

It is important to note that “development, uses, and activities within RPAs are regulated under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 118 of the Code of the County of Fairfax,” which was enacted in 1993 pursuant to the Commonwealth of Virginia’s 1988 Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (Title 62.1 of the Code of Virginia). In practical terms, “no development, land disturbance, nor vegetation removal is allowed within 100 feet of a water body without prior approval from Land Development Services. Vegetative removal includes dead, dying, or diseased trees and shrubs, noxious weeds, or invasive species. Clear-cutting of vegetation is not permitted nor is the removal of vegetation to create lawns.”

HFCA has an established process for homeowners whose property (in whole or in part) lies within the Rabbit Run RPA. Melissa Stark, Common Areas Coordinator, is in charge of ensuring that requests for removal of trees or other vegetation are promptly and correctly forwarded to the County. Violations of the County’s Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance can result in stiff penalties up to \$5,000 per day. Homeowners can check whether their property lies within the Rabbit Run RPA by going to this website: [fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/rpa](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/rpa). Specific tree issues involving the Rabbit Run RPA should be addressed to [melissa.hfca@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.hfca@gmail.com)

Our stewardship of Rabbit Run will ensure that it remains a healthy natural environment for all residents to enjoy now and well into the future.

---

## **NEIGHBORHOOD HOLIDAY LIGHTS CONTEST!**

Hi neighbors,

It’s that festive time of year again! We’re excited to announce our Neighborhood Holiday Lights Contest and hope you’ll join in to make our community sparkle.



How it works:

- Voting is open now through December 22 with the google form at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfsnN6wszVYoc2ggXKdDBxwT\\_30ZrNbSDszo2FNCpq2mqYAAA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfsnN6wszVYoc2ggXKdDBxwT_30ZrNbSDszo2FNCpq2mqYAAA/viewform)
- Categories:
  - Holiday Heavyweight: Biggest and most extravagant display
  - Most Holiday Spirit: Brings joy to kids young and old
  - Most Colorful: Best use of colored lights
  - Most Classic: Best use of white lights, Williamsburg theme, other traditional themes
- Winners will be announced on December 24th

We can’t wait to see the magic our neighborhood creates!

Happy Holidays!

Laura Bucher and Juliette Giordano

## **THE BIRDS OF HICKORY FARMS**

By Bob Cosgriff

In the September newsletter, I reported on mortality of eggs and hatchlings, assessing that the weather was the most likely cause. This seems to be supported by the statewide results as detailed in the following excerpt from the Fall Virginia Bluebird Society newsletter where the State Coordinator wrote:

“Many of you reported that you had fewer chicks fledge this year than is typical. This happened all over the state. We had dry weather last year, and it seems the same circumstances contributed to this year’s problems. First, we had a wet spring, which led to some mortality because the chicks were not getting warm enough. Then we had a hot dry summer. The plants did not get enough water to flourish, and those that survived were not as succulent and nutritious as they usually are. This led to fewer caterpillars and other insect larvae with lower nutrients. The poor parents were flying in hot weather and may not have made as many trips. In addition, the inside of a nest box may be 10 to 20 degrees warmer than the outside temperature, much like a car overheats. In some cases it was just too much for the babies.”

Another thing that many birders in online forums are stating now is that they are not seeing the same amount of activity at backyard feeders as in the past. Anecdotally, we can say the same thing. So far this year, we are not seeing the number of different species or the same level of feeding as in the last few falls. What we set out for the birds is lasting much longer than usual before we have to refill our feeders. Various reasons have been put forward on these sites. One that makes sense is that there is still an abundance of natural food (seeds, nuts, berries, fruits) available so birds are not compelled to come to feeders which only supplement, but do not replace natural food sources. It is also possible that a dearth of insects during the breeding season suppressed the number of birds that survived until the fall. We will keep you posted as fall transitions to winter. My instinct is that by mid-December, activity will return to normal levels for the winter.

One person said it was due to an increase in the number of feral and free-roaming domestic cats. While it is true that cats are the #1 cause of songbird deaths, there is no evidence that the number of feral cats has increased; in fact, many jurisdictions have passed laws forbidding the feeding of feral cats and/or have active programs to remove them permanently. So I am discounting this for a valid reason for this year’s widespread apparent reduction in feeder activity. I tend to go along with another commenter who said to be patient and they will show up when the natural food availability drops off as winter approaches. That said, we have documented two of our favorite “winter” birds, White-throated Sparrow (WTSP) on 30 October (earliest arrival date by two days) and Northern “Slate-colored” Junco on 11 November (not the earliest (11/5) or the latest (11/14 fall arrival, but pretty much right on time) which appeared along with the cold snap on Veterans Day. These two birds were our co-Bird of the Month last month.

In other news, neighbor Rob Smelik (Farm House Lane) reported seeing two adult Bald Eagles land in a tree in the woods in the lower common area behind his house about 3 p.m. on 27 October. The birds flew off before he could get a photograph but he did get a good look at them. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> Bald Eagle sighting for Hickory Farms since December, 2012, and only the second one where the birds actually landed in Hickory Farms. Although there are many year-round resident eagles in this area, I suspect these might have been migratory birds.

Also, Rich Dudley (Farm House Lane) sighted two small kettles of Broad-winged Hawks over the upper commons on 28 October. This is late for this migratory hawk species to be passing through Virginia, but birds can always surprise us with their behavior so please check back for the January newsletter to see what the birds of Hickory Farms are up to. In the meantime, best wishes for the upcoming holiday season.

---

## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH UPDATE**

Our Neighborhood Watch continues to expand, and our Spring schedule is officially set! If you've been thinking about joining, now is the perfect time. With only a once-every-few-months commitment, it's an easy and meaningful way for your family to contribute to a safer neighborhood. Reach out today at [neighborhoodwatch@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@hickoryfarms.org). Thank you, Neighbors!

---

## **ASK HFCA — YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED!**

Welcome to **Ask HFCA**, our new monthly column where we answer your most common neighborhood questions!

Have something you've always wondered about Hickory Farms? Email us at [newsletter@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:newsletter@hickoryfarms.org), and we'll feature it in a future issue.

---

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Did you know our **Hickory Farms website** is full of helpful information just for you? You can find:

- Details on upcoming **Board meetings and community events**
- The latest **HFCA newsletters and announcements**
- **Architectural guidelines**, forms, and HOA documents
- Contact info for **Board members and committees**

Take a look at [www.hickoryfarms.org](http://www.hickoryfarms.org) — it's the best way to stay connected and up to date on all things Hickory Farms!

---

## **SHARE YOUR NEWS & UPDATES!**

Do you have a story, project update, great photo, or helpful tip you'd like to share with your neighbors? We'd love to include it in an upcoming issue of the **Hickory Farms Newsletter**!

Send your articles, announcements, or fun neighborhood updates to [newsletter@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:newsletter@hickoryfarms.org). Submissions are due by the **25th of each month** for the following month's issue. Let's keep our newsletter neighborly, informative, and fun — together!

### **STUDENT YELLOW PAGES**

Lily Bucher  
Kiera Stark  
Cedar Batz

[Lrbucher4@gmail.com](mailto:Lrbucher4@gmail.com)  
[commonareas@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:commonareas@hickoryfarms.org)  
571-398-1467



Babysitting/mother's helper, pet sitting  
Pet sitting  
Dog walking, dog sitting

If you offer services such as those listed above, or others such as tutoring, etc., and wish to be included in future listings, please email the Newsletter Editor at [newsletter@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:newsletter@hickoryfarms.org).

### **JOIN OUR LISTSERV!**

Don't miss any news! There's no better way to stay in touch than through our Hickory Farms email listserv. Visit <https://hickoryfarms.org/>, click "Email Listserv" in the "For Residents" menu and follow the instructions.

### **HFCA BOARD MEETING NOTICE**

HFCA Board Meetings are held via Microsoft Teams. Unless otherwise notified or due to an unforeseen change, HFCA Board Meetings will be held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.

For further information, contact any HFCA Board Member or [hfca@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:hfca@hickoryfarms.org).

### **NEWSLETTER ITEM DEADLINE AND DISTRIBUTION NOTICE**

Newsletter items are due the 25th of the month, for the next month's issue. Please send submissions to [newsletter@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:newsletter@hickoryfarms.org).

Newsletters will be distributed via paper copy to residents' homes and can also be accessed via our Hickory Farms website, <https://hickoryfarms.org/>. If you would like to opt out of receiving the paper copy and would like to receive it digitally, please email us at [hfca@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:hfca@hickoryfarms.org).