

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Arlington County Civic Federation

Arlington, Virginia

95th Year

The Civic Voice of Arlington

Friends of the Gulf Branch Nature Center

April 8, 2011

Friends of Gulf Branch Nature Center is a relatively new organization on the Arlington County civic landscape. It was founded in 2009 in response to the County Manager's budget proposal to not only close Gulf Branch Nature Center, but to also demolish the historic structure. The organization succeeded in rallying public support to "save" Gulf Branch and successfully presented a check for \$10,000 to the County Board in December 2009 to complement the County's allocation for Gulf Branch. This action demonstrated the community's commitment to keep the Nature Center open and avoided the destruction of the Nature Center, Arlington County's first nature center, established in 1964.

Leveraging the successes of 2009, in 2010 the Friends of Gulf Branch Nature Center increased their fundraising by promoting birthday programs and sponsoring special events such as a 4 and 8 K marathon at Potomac Overlook that supported both nature centers. As a demonstration of the community's commitment to keep Gulf Branch open on weekends, the Friends of Gulf Branch Nature Center agreed to fund the Nature Center on weekends at a cost in excess of \$7,000, ensuring that weekend hours of the Nature Center would not be eliminated, or that Gulf Branch personnel resources would be transferred to other areas of Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources as initially proposed by the County Manager.

And, the Friends are not resting on their laurels. A new home for Mr. Owl is being built adjacent to the Nature Center's terrace, at a cost in excess of \$5,000, to assist the County in providing enhancements for the Nature Center.

The Arlington County Civic Federation presents this Certificate of Appreciation to the Friends of Gulf Branch Nature Center to recognize its determination to meet the County's challenge of support for the nature and then going beyond that challenge to demonstrate that the Gulf Branch Nature Center is a unique Arlington gem whose mission is much broader than being a Park and Recreation "profit center."