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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Glebe House Grounds Open to the Public – Celebrating 11 Years of Preservation

Arlington, VA — The grounds of the Glebe House, the historic Octagon-shaped landmark that has been witness to much of Arlington’s long history, will be open to the public on Saturday, March 28, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This year marks eleven years of preservation under a conservation easement held by the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT). The Arlington Historical Society, which was founded at the Glebe House in 1956, will co-host and offer guided tours of the grounds.

The annual opening of the grounds to the public offers a unique opportunity to explore a preserved historic property and learn about the importance of protecting Arlington’s history and cultural heritage. NVCT’s mission is to protect Northern Virginia’s unique history, culture, and landscapes, and preserving the Glebe House was a natural extension of that commitment. Partnering with the Arlington Historical Society for this event reflects a shared dedication to stewardship, education, and public engagement.

“We are very excited to give Arlington residents the chance to see Glebe House and learn its story,” said Alan Rowsome, NVCT’s Executive Director. “Our mission includes the preservation of many important natural and cultural sites across the region, and this open house represents a wonderful opportunity to share a special place with the community”

“The Glebe House is one of Arlington’s most historic sites,” says Peter Vaselopulos, president of the Arlington Historical Society. “We are pleased to partner with the Trust and further our mission of education and public engagement about Arlington’s history.”

Public outreach has always been a central goal of preserving the Glebe House. For that reason, the conservation easement requires that the Grantor open the property grounds to the public for at least four hours each year. NVCT and the Arlington Historical Society are pleased to welcome the community to this historic site and hope visitors leave with a deeper appreciation for the importance of protecting Virginia’s irreplaceable historic landmarks.

About Glebe House

The original Glebe House, constructed in 1775, took its name from the 500-acre “glebe,” land reserved for the rector of the Anglican Fairfax Parish, which encompassed Christ Church in Alexandria and the Falls Church. The agricultural use of the glebe generated revenue for the rector to support the local parishes of the then official church of the Virginia colony.

Glebe House was destroyed by fire in 1808 and rebuilt in 1820. The house’s most identifiable feature, the octagonal wing, was added around 1850. The residence has served as home for several distinguished Arlingtonians, including Rev. Bryan Fairfax (the 8th Lord Fairfax); John Peter Van Ness, Mayor of Washington (when Arlington was part of the capital city); Clark Mills, the sculptor of the sequestration statutes of Andrew Jackson in Lafayette Square and George Washington in Washington Circle; and Caleb Cushing, a Massachusetts Congressman who also served as U.S. Attorney General and the first U.S. Minister to China.

About the preservation of Glebe House

Virginia State Senator Frank Ball resided at Glebe House until 1984, when it was purchased by Preston Caruthers, who renovated the property and donated it to the National Genealogical Society. In 2004, NVCT worked with the Genealogical Society on the property’s long-term preservation and locating a new, preservation-minded owner and steward, Jonathan Ortman. A year later, the house was placed under a permanent conservation easement held by NVCT.

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that protects a structure’s historic exterior and requires a property owner to make a preserved site available to the public on a regular basis.

About Arlington Historical Society

The Society is a nonprofit educational organization that conducts research to preserve and disseminate knowledge relating to the history, archaeology, material culture, geography, and socio-economic development of Arlington County. The Society provides historic resources for the

community, including two historic properties and their artifact collection; original historical research and publications; the discovery, collection, preservation, and exhibition of artifacts; and the presentation and dissemination of knowledge on the local history of Arlington County free to the public.

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About Northern Virginia Conservation Trust

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust was founded in 1994 and is a regional non-profit land trust that works to preserve the land and natural resources of Northern Virginia. Located in Annandale, Virginia, we have protected close to 9,000 acres of land that serves 3 million residents in Northern Virginia. We work with landowners to keep their land thriving and abundant with life, both for them and the nearby nature of Northern Virginia. We strive to make these conservation opportunities and knowledge accessible to all community members by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in everything we do.

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