

## HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER -- VMN MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES September, 2009

The September meeting of the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists was held in the Human Services Building, 5249 Olde Towne Road, Williamsburg, Virginia, on Wednesday, September 9, 2009. The meeting was called to order shortly after 6:00 PM by Susan Powell, Chapter President, who welcomed everyone, especially the members of the new Cohort IV, which began training on Tuesday, August 25. As a result of having completed the "Risk Management" training, the sixteen new members in that cohort are, Susan said, "good to go" and are free to start working on projects as soon as they wish.

Susan made the following additional announcements:

- **Board Meetings:** The most recent Board meeting was Wednesday, August 5. The next Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 7, beginning at 6PM. Board meetings are open to all chapter members.
- **Meeting Minutes:** The minutes for the July General Membership Meetings will be posted on the website soon. Additionally, the minutes for the August Board meeting also will be posted on the website once they are approved by the Board.
- **Merchandise:** Members who have completed training and who have not received a Virginia Master Naturalist logo patch should see Shirley Devan. All members receive their first patch for free. Additional patches can be purchased for \$2 each. In order to wear the official VMN logo on items of clothing, you must first complete the basic training program. Shirley also has several official HRVMN shirts (in medium and large) on hand for members who have completed the training and wish to purchase one. Other sizes can be ordered.
- **MN Statewide Volunteer Training and Conference in Leesburg October 31-November 1.** According to the VMN website, the 2009 conference will be held in Leesburg, Virginia, with field trips into the surrounding area. The host chapter is the Banshee Reeks Chapter, which trains and meets at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. Urban ecology will be one of several conference themes, with a classroom session on conducting environmental education programs in an urban setting and a field session on urban watershed issues.
  - The goals for the Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Volunteer Training and Conference are (1) to provide a venue for VMN volunteers to share ideas and learn from each other, (2) to provide high-quality advanced training, (3) to provide an opportunity for volunteers to learn about a region of Virginia that may be different from their home community, and (4) to provide a place and time to recognize and reward volunteers for their efforts.

- This is the second statewide gathering of VMN chapters. The hope is to hold them annually, if there is enough chapter support to do so. Susan and others who attended last year's conference in Wytheville, Virginia found the meetings very worthwhile. A common theme that emerged from them was the desire of various Chapters to work with each other.
  - A block of rooms has been reserved at group rate at the conference venue, the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center in Leesburg, VA. The rooms are \$99 per night and include a full hot breakfast buffet each morning in the hotel's breakfast room. All of the rooms have either one king- or two queen-size beds, and all are furnished with coffee makers, microwaves, refrigerators, and safes. You must make your reservations by Wednesday, September 30 to be sure that you can get a room at the group rate.
  - Everyone is invited to attend, regardless of whether you have completed training. If you interested in carpooling to the conference, please contact Susan Powell (smapowell@cox.net) or call 564-4542.
  - Help Wanted for the Share Fair. Each chapter has been invited to bring a tabletop display to show everyone what the chapter has been doing in 2009. This is an opportunity to share curriculum materials, service project successes, creative marketing ideas, and whatever else the chapter would like to show off! Please contact Susan Powell (smapowell@cox.net) or call 564-4542 if you would like to participate in the Share Fair. You don't have to attend the conference to help with the Share Fair display. You will receive volunteer service hours for helping with the display.
  - Our very own Clyde Marsteller will present "A Zoo in my Luggage" at one of the sessions and could also use some assistant "zookeeper" help.
- **Project Tool Box.** The Project Tool Box Committee (Felice Bond and Larry and Patty Riddick) has purchased field guides and other books for our project toolbox using the \$75 Amazon gift certificate we received last year at the VMN conference for having the second highest number of volunteer hours. These materials are available for use by all members. Please contact Felice Bond if you would like to use any of these materials for displays or programs. Felice reports that the new books are *Mammals of Virginia*, *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide*, *Amphibians and Reptiles of DELMARVA*, *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*, *Butterflies Through Binoculars: The East*, and *Field Guide to Insects and Spiders of North America*.
    - Also, Felice passed around a sturgeon scale that was found on the field trip to VCU's Rice Center and that she has added to the Tool Box. She suggests that as members contribute artifacts to the Tool Box, they also include a brief write up identifying the object, saying when and where it was found, and giving any other pertinent information. She further suggests that we begin cataloging the items already in our chapter Tool Box. Barbara Boyer has experience doing that from her work at the Virginia Living Museum, and she has enthusiastically offered to help with the cataloging.

- **First Aid Kits.** Susan reminds us that we now have two first aid kits available. You can make arrangements with her ([smapowell@cox.net](mailto:smapowell@cox.net) or 757-564-4542) if you would like to sign one out. If possible, please make sure to take one along when you are volunteering for a service project. We also have a book of emergency contact forms that can go along on service projects.

Susan then invited news and announcements from various Committee Chairs who were seated around the table. .

- **Programs Committee.** Chair Shirley Devan thanked Pam Camblin for helping schedule speakers for our September and October meetings. Tonight's speaker is Mike Millin. On October 14, the speaker will be Lance Gardner, a Master Gardener and VIMS graduate student who will discuss gardening ideas. On November 11, the speaker will be Ben Owen, Nursery Supervisor for William & Mary. And on December 9, we will have our annual holiday get together with Michelle Prysby speaking to us about Citizen Science.
- **Treasurer.** Jim Booth announced that we are solvent and invited submission of receipts from anyone who has incurred expenses on behalf of the HRVMN. Susan reminded us that in August, the Board had approved paying the \$25 registration fee for up to eight of our members interested in attending an Environmental Education Conference sponsored by Virginia Naturally on September 9 and 10. Sara Lewis, Sheila Kerr-Jones, and Barb Dunbar attended; each has offered to bring back reports to us at future meetings.
- **Historian.** Felice Bond reported that being historian involves more than keeping clippings. Much of her work involves keeping records of our various meetings, training programs, and various documents. Records from the first three cohorts are in scrapbooks, but from here on out, records will be kept digitally.
- **Basic Training –Membership.** Jeanette Navia reminded us to turn in our timesheets. She specifically asked that we NOT do as some reportedly have done in the past: turn in a year's worth of timesheets in December! Also, Pam Camblin has joined the Membership Committee and is helping to input members' hours into the timesheets.
- **Advanced Training.** Dave Youker and Susie Engle-Hill said to check emails as well as the most recent chapter newsletter. Opportunities abound!
- **Newsletter.** Barbara Boyer continued her call for articles and photos for the upcoming issues of the newsletter: [cboyer12@cox.net](mailto:cboyer12@cox.net) or [bwboye@wm.edu](mailto:bwboye@wm.edu) .
- **Outreach/Publicity.** Adrienne Frank was able to get a photo of our new Cohort IV into the *Virginia Gazette* – and all of them were present for the photo.
- **Cohort IV.** Shirley reported that materials for Cohort IV are being posted at <https://www.getdropbox.com/home#/> . We have a chapter email address and password. With that information, all HRVMN members can access all of the pertinent materials. If you missed the meeting and want the email address and password, contact Shirley.

- **Webmaster.** Seig Kopinitz reports that Cohort IV is now on the website. In addition, general meeting minutes are posted there under the “Members” button, which is also password protected. Contact Seig if you need the password.
- **Host.** Alice Kopinitz treated us to more of her delicious cookies (chocolate chip and sugar) – and another fun raffle opportunity. She reported that we have reserved the Rec Center, Rooms A & B, again this year for our December holiday dinner and meeting. There is a 100-person maximum for that space. She would like help making decisions about that event. Please contact her if you have ideas about caterers or want to help her with the planning.
- **Volunteer Service Projects.** In the absence of Bruce Hill, Susan noted several upcoming service opportunities:
  - **New Quarter Park Invasive Plant Control** - Jeanne Millin and Sara Lewis. This is an on-going project the fourth Saturday of each month, beginning about 9:15 or immediately after the 7-9AM Williamsburg Bird Walk. Focus will be on loop 1 at the Teaching Garden which credits the Master Naturalists for its tending (see below).
  - **New Quarter Park Teaching Garden** - Sara Lewis. This project is in need of someone to arrange plantings to help erosion control where the slope is washing out. The project was begun by an HR Virginia Master Naturalist who had to give it up because of her schedule, and NQP is interested in continuing to partner with us. According to Jeanne, the garden has nice signage saying that it is maintained by the HRVMN. NQP will help with costs. Some native plants from other parts of the park (where they are at risk because of being too close to trails, etc.) can be moved here.

- **BirdSleuth.** Mike Millin, Jeanne Millin, Sara Lewis, Sheila Kerr-Jones. BirdSleuth is a curriculum put out by Cornell University for young people (its website is [www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/)). New Quarter Park has bought the Cornell teaching kit, which is designed to be a long-term program. On September 12, Mike will present the Week 1 part at NQP. The bus of young people will arrive about 7:50 so the program can begin at 8. Mike needs adults to help out. Week 1 includes silhouette identification of broad groups – owls, gulls, and so forth. Week 2 will include identification of the different parts of a bird and how to use field guides. After working with the first group, they will know more about scheduling others.
- **Estuaries Day** - Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscole, Angela Scott. Adrienne reported having quite a few volunteers for this years Estuaries Day but added that schedules need firming up. She will get the display and Tool Kit from Dave. She also wants a hands-on activity for the day and plans to contact Barb Dunbar. That report led to a brief discussion about Project Learning Tree as another potential resource for hands-on activities. Both Barb Dunbar and Hugh Beard are trainers; some members expressed interest in also wanting to learn to be teachers of that curriculum. Mike M. will be using it with the youth at Bruton Parish, and will do one unit with adults, too.
- **Water Stewardship Project** - Krystal Coxon gave a short presentation about this as a possible project for our Chapter. It involves neighborhood teams working together on an exciting program about water stewardship. The neighborhood teams are guided in their work by a Coach and Team Leader. If this is a project we are interested in, Krystal can train us to be Coaches and/or Team Leaders. Sure enough, several of our members indicated an interest in this program, and Krystal will move forward with setting up some training dates. Stay tuned! Susan will bring a copy of the booklet that accompanies the program to the next Board meeting so that those present can peruse it. (Remember that all chapter members are invited to be at Board meetings.)

## **OTHER ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Adrienne reminded us about the **Dragon Run Walk with Donna Ware** this coming Saturday. Contact Adrienne if you want to go, and plan to meet at the Food Lion in Saluda at 9AM for this wonderful trip to the middle of a cypress-tupelo swamp. See the newsletter for more information.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 for a ten-minute break before our being treated to photos and interesting information from the trip Mike and Jeanne Millin took to Costa

Rica earlier this year. Just prior to the meeting, Alice held the raffle, and Lois Ulman won the prize: a bookmark.

Respectfully submitted, with particular thanks to Felice, Jeanette, and Shirley for their keen eyes and the corrections they suggested to the draft of these minutes,

Angier Brock, Secretary