



The Naturalist

The monthly newsletter of the Historic Rivers Chapter
 Virginia Master Naturalist Program
<http://historicrivers.org>

A Monthly Newsletter

Volume 2 No. 11 November 2008

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President's Message

Of Gathering and Scattering

"For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together. For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad." - Edwin Way Teale

A few days ago, Angier Brock and I were talking about the upcoming national elections, the atrocious state of the economy, and various other trials and tribulations that make one depressed when she mentioned how uplifted she felt when she heard about the Bobwhite Quail Habitat Restoration Project at New Quarter Park. In the middle of all the disheartening news, she felt she could be hopeful about something.

On Saturday, October 25, a small band of Master Naturalists and members of both the Native Plant Society and the Williamsburg Bird Club gathered to scatter plants and seeds throughout this small plot of land that we hope will catch the fancy of Bobwhite Quail. (Read Shirley's article about the project.!)

This project is just one of many efforts of the Master Naturalists to foster stewardship of Virginia's natural resources.

The November Membership Meeting (November 12th) will give members a chance to gather and share a potluck dinner with their fellow members. Members of Cohort III will be treated to dinner by Cohorts I and II, a tradition that started last year for Cohort II.

The theme of the November Membership Meeting is "The Sounds of Nature." Seig Kopinitz, our webmaster, will present a short program about the physics of sound, and then we will "play" with animal sounds using some of his computer software. Next, we will discuss some of the technical gadgets that are available to help eavesdrop on various creatures, record their vocalizations, and aid in their identification.

The Multipurpose Room at the Human Services Building has been reserved from 5:00 to 9:00, and the business meeting will start around 6:00 pm. Dinner will be from 5:00 to about 7:00 or longer, but we will try to start the program around 7:00. As always, we can stay as long as anyone likes, or until 9:00 pm, whichever comes first. Anyone who attends the meeting will receive up

to two hours of advanced training. I hope everyone will be able to gather for our chapter meeting. See you at the November 12 meeting.

Susan Powell, President
 Historic Rivers Chapter
 VA Master Naturalist Program

November 12 Potluck Dinner and Chapter Meeting



Join us Wednesday, November 12 from 5 - 9 pm at the Human Services Building for "Sounds of Nature." You will earn two hours of "Advanced Training" when you participate in the Program.

From 5 - 7 pm, we'll share a potluck dinner and have a short Chapter Business Meeting (at 6 pm) to bring you up to date on the latest Chapter news and projects.

Cohorts I and II will treat Cohort III at the pot luck. Please RSVP to Jordan Westenhaver (jordancw@tni.net) and let her know what you will bring. We look forward to seeing everyone!

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- Susan Powell, President*
- Open, Vice President & Programs Chair*
- Linda Cole, Secretary*
- Judy Hansen, Treasurer*
- Shirley Devan, Newsletter Editor*
- Jordan Westenhaver, Historian*
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- Susan Powell, Training*
- Clyde Marsteller, Advanced Training*
- Alice & Seig Kopinitz, Outreach Committee*
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- Laurie Houghland*
- Jim Booth*

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- Clyde Marsteller, Chair*
- Joanne Medina*
- Susie Engle-Hill*

Training Committee

- Susan Powell, Chair*
- Bruce Hill*
- Angela Scott*
- Shirley Devan*
- Jordan Westenhaver*

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

All meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members. The next meeting is November 17 at 6:00 p.m. at the Williamsburg Regional Library, Scotland Street, Williamsburg.

Patty Riddick reminds all to turn in their hours for October 2008. You can't get certified unless you send in your hours! Send them to: pattyridnick@cox.net

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December 10 Annual Meeting and Graduation

Save this date because this is an important event in the life of our Chapter. We'll celebrate the graduation of Cohort III (Yea!!) and hold our Annual Election for our Board of Directors. Renaissance woman Teta Kain will be our guest speaker and we'll enjoy a buffet of hors d'oeuvres and desserts.

Date & Time: Wednesday, December 10, 2008, 5 - 9 pm

Location: Meeting Rooms A and B at Williamsburg Jame City County Community Center on Longhill Road (known as the Rec Center).

Fee: \$20 per person to cover catering. Bring a guest!

Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks! Save the date.

Cohort III Training Continues

All members are welcome to attend basic training sessions. Want a refresher on Ornithology or Ichthyology? You still have time. Training sessions are Thursday nights from 6 - 9 pm at the Human Services Building on Olde Towne Road. Here's the upcoming schedule and speakers:

November 6: Freshwater Ecology with Charlie Dubay. *NOTE:* This class will be in Charlie's classroom at Jamestown High School.

November 13: Ichthyology with Bob Greenlee, VA Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries.

November 20: Ecological Concepts, Dr. Lou Verner, VA Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries

Members can pick up Volunteer Service Hours for coming early and staying to help pack up. We need at least one volunteer for each session above. Contact Shirley Devan at sedevan52@cox.net or 757-813-1322 if you can help.

The Greening of VIMS

Starts: November 11, 2008 at 10:00 AM

Location: McHugh Auditorium, Waterman's Hall

Event URL: <http://web.vims.edu/greenteam/greening.html>

Come hear LEED experts talk about the campus redevelopment plan and ways to make the campus more green. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the College of William & Mary have committed to sustainable redevelopment of both campuses. In an effort to encourage continued discussion on the 'greening' of VIMS & W&M, the Center for Coastal Resources Management has invited renowned experts in the field to discuss everything from energy efficiency tracking and interior building design to holistic campus planning. This is of particular importance to VIMS as the Institute looks toward the next generation of building construction. The purpose of the forum is to provide discussion of what is presently available in both technological advances and architectural design to inform early planning for building and campus renovation. In addition, speakers will discuss 'green' or sustainable designs that are cost effective upon implementation, cost effective in 3 to 5 years, or simply the 'right thing to do' based on overall college mission criteria. Invited speakers include the architect of the world-class US Fish & Wildlife National Conservation and Training Center in Shepardstown, WV; the director of climate-change services for a company designing high-performance buildings for Harvard, Yale, and Brown Universities as well as energy monitoring for the National Geographic Society; and the owner of one of the first sustainable buildings constructed in Virginia.

More Advanced Training Opportunities

Each Master Naturalist needs 8 hours of Advanced Training to become certified and then another 8 hours each year after that. Check out these opportunities and mark your calendars. If you discover an event that you believe would qualify as Advanced Training, send information to Clyde Marsteller, Chair of the Advanced Training Committee, clydecedm@aol.com

12th Annual Wings Over Water Festival. A Celebration of Wildlife & Wildlands in Eastern North Carolina

Date: Nov 4 - 9, 2008

Location: Outer Banks of North Carolina

The programs, field trips, and walks of this birding festival have been approved for advanced training. Numerous birding and natural history events spread over six days on the Outer Banks. Advanced registration and payment for each trip is required. For info: <http://www.wingsoverwater.org/>

Project Learning Tree ~ Virginia

Date: November 13, 2008

Location: Norfolk Botanical Garden, Norfolk

Project Learning Tree (PLT) is an international environmental education curriculum that uses the forest as a "window to the world." PLT materials bring the environment into the classroom and students into the environment. The program covers topics ranging from forests, wildlife, and water, to community planning, waste-management and energy. PLT, a program of the American Forest Foundation, is one of the most widely used environmental education programs in the United States and abroad. Through PLT, students across the nation have learned environmental content that correlates to national and state standards in science, social studies, language arts, math, and other subjects – and strengthened their critical thinking, team building, and problem solving skills. The 402-page PLT Activity Guide contains 96 hands-on activities for PreK-8, and is correlated to the Virginia Standards of Learning. Register by October 31st. Contact Holly Carson at 441-1347.

Land Use, Nitrogen, and Coastal Eutrophication: A Paleocological Perspective

Date and Time: November 14, 2008 at 3:00 PM

Location: McHugh Auditorium, Watermen's Hall, VIMS

Contact: Rochelle Seitz, 804-684-7698, seitz@vims.edu

Science lecture by visiting Professor Grace Brush of the Dept. of Geography and Environmental Engineering at Johns Hopkins University.

Watershed Biology by Dr. Randy Chambers

Date and Time: Thursday, November 20, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Williamsburg Library Theatre, 515 Scotland St., Williamsburg

Dr. Randy Chambers, Director of the Keck Environmental Field Laboratory at W&M, will discuss recent research in watershed biology at the November meeting of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society.

Dr. Chamber's research is focused on the environmental effects of pollution and invasive species on wetlands. Water quality studies will be the primary subject of his talk, including the work of his graduate students on monitoring stormwater retention ponds and the work of the College Creek Alliance—a volunteer citizen-student group that monitors water quality in ponds,

streams, and tidal creeks in Williamsburg and James City County.

Human Habitats: Becoming a Steward of Your Property

Date and Time: Monday, December 8, 2008, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Sponsored by the VA Dept of Forestry & the National Park Service

Location: University of Virginia, Zehmer Hall, 104 Midmont Lane, Charlottesville, VA 22904

Presented by Virginia Cooperative Extension & the Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee

Fee: \$20, includes lunch. Topics:

- How to Prepare to Be a Hero for Your Home
- Firewise Landscaping and Construction: Reducing your Risk of Wildfire
- The Three R's of Tree Selection: Right Tree, Right Place, & Right Function
- Coexisting with Wildlife
- Invasive Species: What to do about them and why
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Minimize Waste to Minimize Work

Please register by December 1, 2008 by returning the registration form with \$20 payment to the Charlottesville/ Albemarle Extension Office Albemarle/ Charlottesville Office, 460 Stagecoach Road, Charlottesville, VA 22902, If you have questions please call (434) 872-4580.

Winter Trees

Date: Sunday, December 14, 2008

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Historic Jamestowne Island

Helen Hamilton will lead a walk around Jamestown Island to look at trees in their winter condition. Meet at the entrance to the Historic Jamestowne Island Visitor Center. To register, call Helen at 564-4494.

Virginia 4-H Natural Resources Weekend for 4-H Members Ages 9-19 and 4-H Volunteers

Date: January 31 – February 1, 2009

Location: Holiday Lake 4-H Center, Appomattox, VA

Fee: \$50 per person which includes all meals, lodging, snacks & workshops

Mail registration to: VCE – Bath, P.O. Box 357, Warm Springs, VA 24484 Registration Deadline: January 16, 2009

Contact Jennifer Mercer at 540/245-5750 or by e-mail at jamercer@vt.edu

Natural Resources weekend is a great way to get folks interested in the 4-H natural resources competitive events such as Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP), Forestry Judging, Soils Judging, and Envirothon. It is also a great opportunity for 4-H agents to learn about all of the opportunities that the 4-H Natural Resources and Environmental Education committee offers for their 4-H members and volunteers. In addition, we will be offering a coaches training for any adult interested in starting a 4-H WHEP team.

Workshops: Wildlife ID & Tracks; Orienteering/ GPS; Critter Calling; Wildlife Anatomy & Dissection; Intro to Wildlife, Soils & Forestry Judging & Envirothon; Non-Game Species Mgmt; Watchable Wildlife; Collecting Wildlife Specimens; Natives vs. Exotics; Reptiles & Amphibians; Road Kill; Snakes; Sounds of the Night; Trapping; Wildlife Damage Mgmt; Identifying Wildlife Signs. Demonstrations: Taxidermy, Falconry. Evening Activities: Nature Crafts, Quiz Bowl, Night Hike, Snakes Alive!, and Wildlife Movie

Volunteer Service Projects

The following projects have been approved. Feel free to contact the "go to" person listed for each event and find out how you can join in and earn those hours. Meanwhile, if you have a service project that you think will fit with HRC VMN talents, contact Bruce Hill at euplotes@msn.com Chair of the Volunteer Service Committee.

Prothonotary Warbler Nest Box Project



Prothonotary Warbler. Photo by Barbara Houston

Ongoing. This is a joint project with Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory (CVWO) to provide boxes for species of "special concern." Our boxes will be part of network of nest boxes from Henrico County to Virginia Beach. We'll be supervised by and report our observations to Dr. Bob Reilly, VCU and CVWO.

The chapter needs to build approximately 20 nesting boxes March 1, 2009 and install them on poles in an appropriate environment by March 15, 2009. Then we'll need to monitor boxes for Prothonotary Warblers during spring and summer via canoes.

We need people with different skills: ability to build and install nest boxes to spec (we have plans and protocols); ability to maneuver a canoe and stand up in one to work -- you need a buddy; availability to check nest boxes weekly and record observations.

Contact Gary Hammer, ghammer@cnu.edu who is ready to build boxes.

Invasive Plant Removal at New Quarter Park

Ongoing as of now. Japanese stiltgrass is pervasive at New Quarter Park. Master Naturalists can go out to the park anytime to remove stiltgrass and any other invasives you can positively identify. The Park will supply plastic garbage bags. When you come out to work, stop by the office to say hi and get some bags from their supply room. Note that during the winter, the park is open Friday - Sunday. Contact Jeanne Millin, scotfarquhar@cox.net or Sara Lewis, saraelewis@cox.net to learn more.

Acorn Collecting

It's that time of the year again! The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) collects acorns to preserve native Virginia tree species. Growing Native is a year-round volunteer project that collects hardwood seeds and plants trees to help restore and protect rivers and streams in the Potomac River watershed.

Citizens can help preserve native Virginia tree species by collecting acorns and delivering them to the VDOF nurseries.

The Department of Forestry needs these acorns: Black Oak, Cherrybark Oak, Chestnut Oak, Chinese Chestnut, Northern Red Oak, Pin Oak, Southern Red Oak, Swamp Chestnut Oak, Swamp White Oak, White Oak, Willow Oak.

Check the web site for the specific "how-to" instructions (one of the most important rules is -- Do not combine acorns from different species of oaks in the same bag.)

<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/mgt/acorn-collect.shtml>

Walk and Talk at New Quarter Park -- Northern Bobwhite Habitat Restoration Project -- December 6, 10 am - 12 noon

The Northern Bobwhite Habitat Restoration Project will be the focus of the Park's monthly "Walk and Talk" program December 6. This project is a joint effort of the Historic Rivers Chapter, the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, and the Williamsburg Bird Club. Contact Shirley Devan at sedevan52@cox.net or 757-813-1322 to lend a hand in planning or on the day of the program.

School Tree Counting Project

Counting the number of trees that are within 100 feet of the school for all of the James City County Schools for Dr. Jeff Kirwin at VA Tech. Volunteers will:

1. Go to the school site and count, measure, and record the types of trees and saplings within 100 feet of the school building.
2. Report data back to Dr. Kirwin for loading into the school site web page.

Contact: Kari Abbott, bearsbaskets@cox.net

Location: James City County Schools

Time Frame: One time project. The project will take about 1/2 day for each school and there are 8.

New Quarter Park Native Plant Teaching Trail

Work continues at the Native Plant Teaching Trail at New Quarter Park. Contact Laurie Houghland at woowee@cox.net or call at 259-2169.

Trail and Garden Maintenance, York River State Park

This is an ongoing service project you can do anytime. Organized days are Tuesday mornings and Friday afternoons, but you can go out any time. Contact Mary Apperson at the Park, phone 566-3036 or at bmapp44@msn.com

Wildlife Mapping

York River State Park, Greensprings Trail, New Quarter Park, Freedom Park or your own backyard. Attend the October 8 Chapter Meeting to learn how this works. If you've completed the Wildlife Mapping Training program, visit already "mapped" areas regularly to record your wildlife observations. Contact Susan Powell, smapowell@cox.net, 757-564-4542

Bobwhite Quail Habitat Restoration Project

Enhance and restore habitat for Bobwhite Quail at New Quarter Park. This is a cooperative project with the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and the Williamsburg Bird Club. Project has been approved by York County Department of Parks and Recreation. Contact Shirley Devan, sedevan52@cox.net. 757-813-1322 if you can help out.

Here Are the Next Ten Tips for Conserving Water:

101. When you give your pet fresh water, don't throw the old water down the drain. Use it to water your trees or shrubs.
102. If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a houseplant instead.
103. To save water and time, consider washing your face or brushing your teeth while in the shower.
104. While staying in a hotel or even at home, consider reusing your towels.
105. When backwashing your pool, consider using the water on your landscaping.
106. For hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink of water and help eliminate water overflow.
107. Throw trimmings and peelings from fruits and vegetables into your yard compost to prevent using the garbage disposal.
108. When you have ice left in your cup from a take-out restaurant, don't throw it in the trash, dump it on a plant.
109. Have your plumber re-route your gray water to trees and gardens rather than letting it run into the sewer line. Check with your city codes, and if it isn't allowed in your area, start a movement to get that changed.
110. Keep a bucket in the shower to catch water as it warms up or runs. Use this water to flush toilets or water plants.
111. When you are washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.

<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/100ways/se.shtml>

Mt. Rogers Adventure and First Annual VMN State Conference

By Alice Kopinitz. Photos by Seig Kopinitz, Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Members

It was the first event of the first statewide meeting of the Virginia Master Naturalists. We had been looking forward to the exploration of Mt. Rogers (a place we had not been before). Since the trip began early on Friday morning, we used Thursday as our travel day to Wytheville. We took the scenic route across the state and enjoyed the color progression as we moved westward.

In direct contrast to the warm, sunny day on Thursday, Friday dawned chilly, drizzly and gray. As our fellow naturalists boarded the bus, everyone was anticipating a good trip. After all, we are naturalists and we weren't going to let a little thing like weather bother us.

After an hour or so ride, we arrived at Mt. Rogers and were met by our guides for the day. We were divided into groups determined by the distance we expected to cover in the time allowed.

The trail that we covered was rocky and leaf covered and wet. I was forced to watch my footing more than my surroundings. Every so often, I would take a break and just soak in the wonderful bucolic scene.

Our mission was to locate salamanders. There was much turning over of rocks and logs. Some folks were definitely more experienced at this and our guides were very good at identifying the critters. I did learn that you often

have to look at the belly of the beast to help with identification and plastic bags for temporary cages work really well.

Before stopping for lunch by a lovely waterfall and pool, we had found six different species of salamanders. What a treat to see these up close and personal. Seig. tried to get pictures and here are some of the results.



The official statewide Virginia Master Naturalist conference started on Friday afternoon after the optional field trip. There were representatives from many of the VMN chapters set up in a large meeting room. We very much enjoyed looking at the various displays and talking to our fellow naturalists. It seems that almost everyone there wanted to promote chapter interactions. It is amazing the number of different projects that chapters are involved in. Every chapter had some kind of display similar to ours set up and some even had things like invasive plants. Friday we visited and had dinner.

On Saturday and Sunday there were a number of parallel talks and many of them included field trips. All of the Historic Rivers group went on a field trip sponsored by our host chapter Beagle Ridge. We went to (you guessed it) Beagle Ridge. There we were led by a very interesting naturalist named Mike Hayslett. We saw many of the Red-Spotted Newts as well as a Short-Winged Blister Beetle.

The Beagle Ridge chapter did a wonderful job of hosting the event. They provided a large conference center that we had all to ourselves. The chapter often has their meetings at a Herb farm on Beagle Ridge which we visited after the field trip. On the way back to the conference center we were treated to a stop at a "remarkable" black locust tree (a state champion) in the center of Wytheville.



HRC members at first state Virginia Master Naturalist Conference: Left to right: Susan Powell, Alice Kopinitz, Patty Riddick, Seig Kopinitz, Larry Riddick.

Saturday evening we had more chapter discussions, a very nice dinner and a guest speaker who discussed the importance of controlling light from our cities.

The first Statewide VMN conference was a tremendous success and we hope to attend many more in the coming years.

Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival: A Bird & Butterfly Bonanza, September 18- 21, 2008

by Susie Engle-Hill, Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Member

The Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival is packed full of interesting field trips, workshops, demonstrations, static displays, and nature-minded camaraderie. The organizers offer a variety of opportunities to learn more about the special creatures of the area, locals and migrants. Communities over an hour's drive from each other participated including Kiptopeke, Onancock, Willis Wharf, and Chincoteague. There was even special controlled access to Fisherman's Island, part of the wildlife refuge which is off limits to the general public. Several enterprising captains offered boat trips through marsh, bay, or barrier islands, but most were cancelled because excessively turbulent winds. Several private properties of considerable acreage were also opened for guided hikes.

The keynote speaker for this year was the handsome, humorous author, Pete Dunne. His keynote address was an interesting countdown of the 25 Things That Changed Birding Forever. He also graciously autographed books and led workshops during the festival. In his workshop, The Art of P-ishing, he delivered practical, "hands-on" information about calling birds down into view. An array of at least six mouth/hand noises were demonstrated and practiced with the audience, who were then cautioned NOT to P-ish: a) during breeding, b) during hawk migration, c) on really cold nights.

Several members of the Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists attended including: Susan Powell, Shirley Devan, Jeanette Navia, Gary Driscoll, Adrienne Frank, Alice & Seig Kopinitz, & Susie Engle-Hill. The butterflies, birds, dragonflies, wildflowers, habitats of marsh-bay-ocean-forest-field, sunsets and starry nights will not soon be forgotten. Save the date for this annual event by marking your calendar now for the autumn 2009 festival!

With Apologies to Lewis Carroll -- Clyde Marsteller's "Tenner" List of Lepidoptera

The time has come to talk of so many things. Of butterflies and moths and bee's wax. Of skunk cabbages and Fairy Rings and why the sea is salty and whether Ants have wings.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the new members of Cohort III on Thursday night. It brought to mind the old adage that there are no strangers, only friends you haven't met.

As my new friends have probably surmised one of my passions is Arthropods (particularly insects).

I am scheduled January 14 to be a guest speaker to our Chapter monthly meeting and you will get to see my biggest interest "A Zoo In My Luggage" and meet a lot of live critters up front and personal.

Judy Hansen of Cohort One had suggested we start a "Tenner" program where we learn the top ten animals, plants etc in our area. With her permission I would like to suggest the following *Lepidoptera*:

1. Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus* (our State Insect)
2. Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*
3. Black Swallowtail, *Papilio polyxenes*
4. Zebra Swallowtail, *Eurytides marcellus*
5. Spicebush Swallowtail, *Papilio troilus*
6. Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta* (Shirley Devan's favorite)
7. Question Mark, *Polygonia interrogationis*
8. Cloudless Sulfur, *Phobebis catullus*
9. Cabbage White, *Pieris rapae*
10. Common Buckeye, *Junonia coenia*

I have examples of all ten mounted and will try and remember to bring them along on "Zoo" night in January.

Susie Engle-Hill's "Tenner" Group of Native Trees

1. Loblolly Pine, *Pinus taeda*
2. Sweet Gum, *Liquidambar styraciflua*
3. Yellow or Tulip Poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera*
4. White Oak, *Quercus alba*
5. Water Oak, *Quercus nigra*
6. Live Oak, *Quercus virginiana*
7. Bald Cypress, *Taxodium distichum*
8. River Birch, *Betula nigra*
9. Dogwood, *Cornus florida*
10. American Holly, *Ilex opaca* (see photo below)
11. Virginia Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*

Oops! I gave 11....you can choose just 10. This is fun!



American Holly, *Ilex opaca* Photo by Philip Merritt

Jordan Westenhaver's "Tenner" List of Native Vines

Oh, what tangled stems we find
When we plant a native vine!

I really like vines a lot. I think it's because their determination to grow is so noticeable. Here are the top ten in my habitat:

1. Virginia Creeper, *Parthenocissis quinquefolia*
2. Crossvine, *Bignonia capreolata*
3. Trumpet Vine, *Campsis radicans*
4. Coral Honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*
5. Virgin's Bower, *Clematis virginiana*
6. American Bittersweet, *Celastrus scandens*
7. Passionflower, *Passiflora incarnata*
8. Pipevine, *Aristolochia macrophylla*
9. Carolina Jasmine, *Gelsemium sempervirens*
10. Atlantic Wisteria, *Wisteria frutescens*

"Tenner" Least Wanted Nonnative Invasives for Our Area

From Kathy Mestayer with suggestions from Felice Bond, Jordan Westenhaver, Susie Engle-Hill, Clyde Marsteller, and Helen Hamilton of the VA Native Plant Society.

1. English Ivy (because it is still sold in nurseries and promoted by Va Tech as a good slope stabilizer, which it is not)
2. Chinese wisteria (once you learn to i.d. this stuff it is everywhere ... everywhere.)
3. Japanese stiltgrass
4. Bradford/Callery pear (again, still sold and popular with the nursery industry. City of Newport News' Planning Dept will not approve a site plan with Bradford Pears on it (neither will several counties in N. Va.), and Prince George's County, MD has deposed it as the official county tree)
5. Privet
6. Tree of heaven (ailanthus)
7. Japanese Honeysuckle
8. Oriental bittersweet
9. Autumn Olive
10. Bamboo

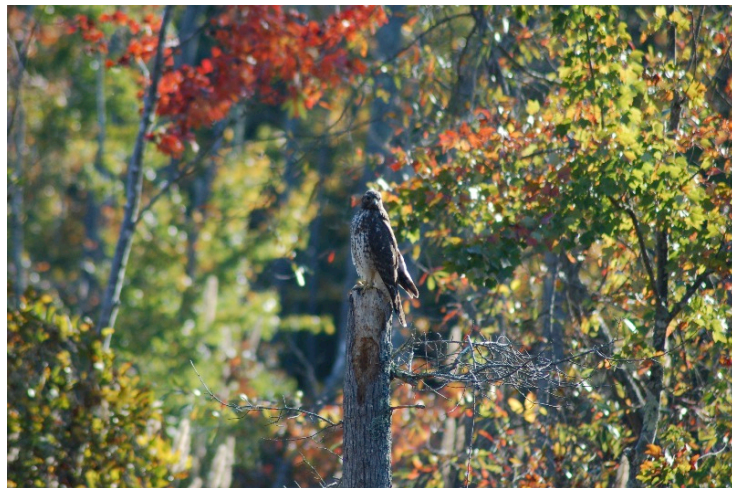
Walk & Talk with Land Conservancy October 26

The Williamsburg Land Conservancy asked our Historic Rivers Chapter to lead the public around the Greensprings Trail Sunday afternoon, October 26.

Twelve HRC Master Naturalists volunteered: Cherie Aukland, Jim Booth, Julie Breeden, Shirley Devan, Alice Kopinitz, Seig Kopinitz, Sara Lewis, Jeanette Navia, Susan Powell, and Margaret Ware.

Everyone enjoyed a spectacular fall afternoon. Approximately 30 people from the community arrived between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. for the three scheduled walks. Four Master Naturalists led each group along the pre-planned route where the groups enjoyed short talks by community experts: Alain Outlaw, archaeologist, Jerre Johnson, geologist, Bill Williams, ornithologist, Pat Groeninger, Williamsburg Land Conservancy, and Helen Hamilton, VA Native Plant Society.

Nature put on quite a show for one group: a Barred Owl flew across the path and a Brown Watersnake perched in the sun near a bridge. Deer also sunned themselves in the swamp.



A Red-tailed Hawk perched in the swamp. Photo By Sara Lewis



Volunteers prepare to set out on the trail. Left to right: Cherie Aukland, Seig Kopinitz, Margaret Ware, Alice Kopinitz, Jeanette Navia with husband Keith, Susan Powell, Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscoll. Photo by Jim Booth

Bobwhite Habitat Restoration Project

By Shirley Devan, Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Member

With five powerful local community groups, success was certain!

In the winter of 2008,, four organizations committed to managing a meadow at New Quarter Park to create favorable habitat for Bobwhite Quail, a species whose numbers are rapidly declining because of habitat loss.

The Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists, the Williamsburg Bird Club, the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, and York County's New Quarter Park teamed up to help create habitat specifically for the Bobwhite Quail at New Quarter Park where they have been observed each of the last two years.

We spent several months researching the project, talking to experts, talking to each other, communicating between our organizations, and planning, planning, planning.

When September arrived, volunteers from all groups sprung into action. Milestone events came one right after the other, thanks to the coordination and assistance of Molly Nealer, Sara Lewis, and Joanne Chapman at York County Parks and Recreation.

September 12, Bob and Cynthia Long (from the Bird Club and the VA Native Plant Society) and I measured the meadow and decided that we would work on about half of the meadow this year and the rest next year. The meadow totaled about two acres.

October 7, York County staff plowed meadow. On October 15 a critical meeting took place at NQP with Joanne Chapman, York County Parks and Recreation, and Brian Noyes and Jim Wallace of Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District, the 5th critical organization to join our team. Also in attendance were representatives from the sponsoring organizations: Susan Powell of Virginia Master Naturalists, Helen Hamilton from VA Native Plant Society, Shirley Devan and Cynthia and Bob Long of Williamsburg Bird Club, and Sara Lewis and Molly Nealer from New Quarter Park. Brian Noyes and Jim Wallace, based on their experience in planting for Bobwhite Quail on the Peninsula, provided excellent advice about what to plant and how they would go about it. They volunteered their services and the group graciously accepted their offer! They even provided the seed.

The afternoon of October 23 Brian Noyes and Jim Wallace, the Soil & Water Conservation team, arrived at the Park and mechanically spread the seeds of Partridge Pea, Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*, and *Coreopsis tinctoria*.

But the planting was not done! Cynthia Long and Jan Newton of the Virginia Native Plant Society had seeds from 35 native plants they had been saving for this project. Our work day, October 25 – two days after the mechanical planting -- threatened rain. But 20 volunteers arrived about 9:30 am in gardening attire to spread the seeds. A gentle rain followed our efforts.

Cynthia Long summed up the morning: "We are destined to succeed! I will be watching it closely, and continue to augment the plantings. I think we have tapped into a great group of people who are working together."

Next summer the meadow will be beautiful and home to Bobwhite Quail (we hope) plus providing food and cover for numerous other bird and insect species. Many thanks to all the volunteers who worked over the past year to realize this project. The HRC volunteers who helped Saturday, October 25: Alice and Seig Kopinitz, Al Brassel, Sara Lewis, Angier Brock, Barbara Boyer, Susan Powell, Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscoll, and Shirley Devan.

Many thanks to all who have helped in 2008.

Biography: Mary Oliver

[Editor's Note: In the coming months I will try to include excerpts from the naturalists biographies submitted by Cohort III. Here is the first, written by Angier Brock, of poet/naturalist Mary Oliver.]

By Angier Brock, Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Member

Mary Oliver is today's best-selling living American poet. Though she probably would not consider herself a naturalist in the strictest sense of the word, Oliver is celebrated for her writing about nature. The poet Maxine Kumin has called her an "indefatigable guide to the natural world," saying that she is a "patroller of wetlands in the same way that Thoreau was an inspector of snowstorms. She is without vanity or pretense in her celebrations of the lives of mussels, hermit crabs, hummingbirds and other creatures, including a few select people."

Reviewer Jeanne Lohmann has said that Oliver's work "honors the rich diversity of the world.... Her attention is focused, precise, contemplative. She learns, and well, from an immense variety of creatures, trees, plants, the ponds."

Not all of her reviewers exult over Oliver's work, however. Robert Phillips complains that she is "long on praise for the physical world, short on humanity," adding that Oliver might be just the writer for those who "like to read almost exclusively about the sun, flowers, beans, arrowheads, lilies, crickets, goldenrod, blacksnakes, hawks, geese, bears, Luna, deer, wrens, and pine-woods."

I do like to read about those things, and I cast her in the role of "naturalist" precisely because of the intense and focused attention she gives them. Take for example this section of "A Summer Day," where she watches a grasshopper:

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean –

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away....

In such passages, by letting me look with her through her own long and lavish gaze, she teaches me a way of being fully present to the natural world. I am an unabashed Oliver fan!

According to the book's jacket, the poems included in *Red Bird* continue to "overflow with her keen observation of the natural world and her gratitude for its gifts...." But these poems also strike a new note as "the poet's attention turns with ferocity to the degradation of the Earth and the denigration of the peoples of the world by those who love power." One of the most explicit of those poems is "Of the Empire," in which Oliver writes,

We will be known as a culture that feared death
and adored power, that tried to vanquish insecurity
for the few and cared little for the penury of the
many. We will be known as a culture that taught
and rewarded the amassing of things, that spoke
little if at all about the quality of life for
people (other people), for dogs, for rivers....

It is Oliver's images of the natural world, distilled into words, that lead me to call her a naturalist – and that make me want to be a naturalist, too. I

would like to see as closely and precisely as she does, and to name what I see with the clarity and precision that are her trademark.

Take, for example, "Black Swallowtail," another poem from *Red Bird*, and one that is short enough to include here in its entirety, letting Mary Oliver herself have the last word:

The caterpillar,
 interesting but not exactly lovely,
 humped along among the parsley leaves
 eating, always eating. Then
 one night it was gone and in its place
 a small green confinement hung by two silk threads
 on a parsley stem. I think it took nothing with it
 except faith, and patience. And then one morning
 it expressed itself into the most beautiful being.



Sweet Gum, *Liquidambar styraciflua*. Photo by Philip Merritt

Walden – Then and Now

By Shirley Devan, *Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Member*

Many of us remember Henry David Thoreau from high school English class. Nineteenth century writer, lived in a cabin at Walden in what state? ... maybe Massachusetts? Wrote *Walden* and some other stuff ... Civil Disobedience, maybe? Was good buddies with Ralph Waldo Emerson? Weren't they called Romantics? Or was it Romanticists? Why is it their names are most often spoken as three words – Henry David Thoreau? When was the last time you heard him called Henry Thoreau? Who knew he was a naturalist? Scientists at Boston University and Harvard are learning that he was a very good naturalist and botanist.

Researchers have been using Thoreau's notes from the mid 19th century to determine how climate change has affected common plants around Concord, Massachusetts where Thoreau lived at Walden Pond. For about 7 years, Thoreau meticulously recorded the plants around his home for a book he was planning on the seasons.

In an article in the October 28, 2008 edition of the *New York Times*, "Thoreau is Rediscovered as a Climatologist," author Cornelia Dean describes the work of researchers at Boston University and Harvard who "are using those notes to discern patterns of plant abundance and decline in Concord — and by extension, New England — and to link those patterns to changing climate."

"From 1851 through 1858, Thoreau tracked the first flowerings of perhaps 500 species, Dr. Richard Primack said. "He knew what he was doing, and he did it really systematically.'" Richard B. Primack, is a conservation biologist at Boston University. He and Abraham J. Miller-Rushing, then his graduate student, published their findings this year in the journal *Ecology*. They have been working with Charles C. Davis, an evolutionary biologist at Harvard, and two of his graduate students.

Their findings? They will sound familiar to Master Naturalists.

- "On average, common species are flowering seven days earlier than they did in Thoreau's day."
- They "determined that 27 percent of the species documented by Thoreau have vanished from Concord and 36 percent are present in such small numbers that they probably will not survive for long."
- "Of the 21 species of orchids Thoreau observed in Concord, the researchers could only find 7."

They are getting assistance from other amateur naturalists and botanists who have lived in the region in the last 100 years. "They looked at contributions by members of area plant, insect and bird clubs and the work of additional participants in Concord's long line of passionate amateur naturalists, some of whose records are preserved in the Free Public Library" in Concord.

One such naturalist was Alfred Hosmer, who knew Thoreau when he (Alfred) was a boy.

"According to Dr. Primack, Hosmer spent '15 years (1888 – 1902) walking around Concord for several hours a day several times a week' making notes about plants. 'He never wrote about why he was doing this,' Dr. Primack said, 'but he had known Thoreau when he was a boy. Hosmer was one of the first people who said Thoreau was a genius and not just a nut.'" Hosmer, a storekeeper, recorded his observations in a storekeeper's ledger book in predictably precise storekeeper's script, inventorying irises and orchids as if they were on his store's shelves.

The modern-day scientists and botanists encountered several problems. Thoreau's handwriting was terrible. Fortunately, Hosmer's was very legible and meticulous. Another more serious problem: Thoreau called some plants by different names than did Alfred Hosmer. They struggled to figure out the differences and similarities.

Thoreau's, Hosmer's and others notes over the past 150 years have led scientists to expand their research to encompass the rich data the amateurs collected. For example, "there is growing evidence that as birds change their migration patterns in response to climate change, they may no longer be in sync with the insect species they feed on."

Their studies of Thoreau's and Hosmer's field notes have led the scientists to go back to other naturalists' notes – the records of the Concord area's Nuttall Ornithological Society, for example – to compare Thoreau's notes on birds to more recent bird observations.

"The scientists say their research demonstrates the importance of simply watching the landscape and recording what occurs in it. And it demonstrates the importance of old records and natural history collections, Dr. Davis said."

Naturalists – NOTE! It's really important to "simply watch the landscape and record what occurs." And use your best handwriting even if you're planning to enter it in your computer!

[All information and quotes came from the article: "Thoreau is Rediscovered as a Climatologist," by Cornelia Dean, *New York Times*, October 27, 2008

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/28/science/earth/28wald.html?em>