



THE NATURALIST

The monthly newsletter of the Historic Rivers Chapter
Virginia Master Naturalist Program

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 No. 3 March 2009

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Phenology – The Science of Biological Phenomena

Phenology is the study of the timing of recurring biological events, the interaction of biotic and abiotic forces that affect these events, and the interrelation among phases of the same or different species.

~ Brian P. Haggerty and Susan J. Mazer

From: *The Phenology Handbook: A guide to phenological monitoring for students, teachers, families, and nature enthusiasts.* University of California, Santa Barbara, 2008

Virginians are all familiar with the term seasonality. It is used to describe the schedule of events that occur throughout the year within the *nonliving* realm of the environment. However, there is a branch of biological/ecological sciences that deals with the changes that take place throughout the year within the *living* realm of the environment. It's called phenology, and it is used to describe the patterns of natural events such as life cycles, migration, and hibernation. Shifts in phenological events often indicate disturbances or environmental change.

Professional scientists across the nation are using phenology to detect and predict environmental change. Many have created phenology networks that are recruiting citizen scientists to observe and report on the timing of natural events in their backyards, school yards, urban parks, and wilderness areas. These phenology projects are simple, cost-effective ways to collect phenological data that will be instrumental in helping to detect and predict the types of changes that are taking place in the environment.

As Virginia Master Naturalists, we have an opportunity to participate in some of these phenological studies. One such study is **Project Budburst: A National Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists**. It involves collecting data on the timing of leafing and flowering of trees and flowers in our local area. To get involved, visit the Project Budburst website (www.budburst.org), register online, and follow the

directions to download the activity guide. The website and activity guide will provide instructions on how to collect data and how to enter these data online. Participants can choose to monitor trees and/or flowers from a list of plants provided by the website.

Another project that relies entirely on the involvement of citizen scientists is the **North American Bird Phenology Project**. This project is sponsored by the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. The Center is home to a collection of six-million Migration Observer Cards that were collected between 1881 and 1970. These Migration Observer Cards include data on the arrival and departure dates of migratory birds. The Research Center has scanned many of these cards onto their website, but is asking for volunteers to input the data from the cards into a modern computer database. This information will allow researchers to assess the distribution and migratory patterns and pathways of birds, and how these are changing. The website (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bpp/>) provides a 15-minute tutorial on how to read and enter these data. It's easy to do, and can be done whenever you have a few minutes to spare.

If you know of any other projects that involve collecting phenological data, please notify the Volunteer Service Project team so that we can all participate. These studies are in the interest of the public as well as to science.

Remember, the general membership meeting is on Wednesday, March 11th from 6 to 9 pm in the multi-purpose room of the Human Services Building. Our business meeting will begin at 6:00, followed by our program at 7:00 pm. This month's program will feature Chris Ludwig, a scientist with the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage. Chris will be speaking on "Virginia's Biodiversity and Its Conservation." We have invited the Virginia Native Plant Society and the Williamsburg Bird Club to attend.

See you at the March meeting!

Susan Powell, President
Historic Rivers Chapter
VA Master Naturalist Program

CHAPTER

OFFICERS 2009

Susan Powell, President

Shirley Devan, Vice President & Programs Chair

Angier Brock & Katie Schultz, Secretary

Jim Booth, Treasurer

Barbara Boyer, Newsletter Editor

Felice Bond, Historian

Alice Kopinitz, Host

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Bruce Hill, Training Chair

Susan Engle-Hill, Joanne Medina, Advanced Training

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Seig Kopinitz, Webmaster

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Advanced Training

Susie Engle-Hill, Co-Chair

Joanne Medina, Co-Chair

Training Committee

Bruce Hill, Chair

Outreach/Publicity

Adrienne Frank, and Gary Driscole

ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The VIRGINIA VERNAL POOLS PROGRAM, sponsored through the Department of Biology at Sweet Briar College in central Virginia is pleased to announce an offering of the SPRING POOLS INSTITUTE March 16-19, 2009

This advanced field workshop focuses on the ecological and conservation dynamics of vernal pools and related wetlands, with emphasis on their amphibian fauna and other distinctive biota. http://www.lynchburghbiz.com/virginiasvernalpools/spring_institute.htm

(Note: different contact info provided below)

Anne Arundel Bird Club and Quiet Waters Park Annual Heise Wildlife Lecture Thursday, March 12 at 8:00 p.m.--Blue Heron Center, Quiet Waters Park, Annapolis

Join hummingbird expert **Nancy L. Newfield** of New Orleans as she presents a fascinating photographic story detailing her more than 30 years of study and adventure in pursuit of the world's smallest birds. Nancy, co-author of *Hummingbird Gardens*, pioneered the practice of landscaping to provide natural food sources

This workshop will be based at Sweet Briar College (with classroom instruction and lodging/meals available on campus) and EXPLORE A WIDE VARIETY OF WETLAND environments throughout the Piedmont, Blue Ridge and Ridge & Valley regions of Virginia. http://www.sbc.edu/http://www.biology.sbc.edu/biophotos_spr08.html

This workshop is open to all natural resource professionals, naturalists, educators and enthusiasts of the subject. Space is limited to the FIRST 10 REGISTRANTS. Registration is required. Mike Hayslett at mhayslett@sb.edu or 434-381-6439

for hummers and thus learned the best ways to attract them to any garden. Nancy handles and bands nearly 500 hummers of as many as 9 species each winter as part of her study of hummingbird populations in southern Louisiana and has banded more than 18,000 hummingbirds of 15 species in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Arizona. She has authored four other books as well as more than 250 papers and articles. Nancy previously organized birding tours to Central and South America through her *HummerQwest*. She presents this amazing program of adventure in pursuit of the world's smallest birds.

"Congratulations to

Jim Booth

for reaching his advanced training and volunteer service goals. He has now achieved his certification!"

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

All meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members. Jeanette Navia reminds all to turn in their hours for February 2009. You can't get certified unless you send in your hours!

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Virginia Master Naturalist programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



Male American Wigeon—Craney Island—courtesy Felice Bond

Monitoring Birds At Craney Island, February 2009 By Shirley Devan

Ornithologist **Ruth Beck** has again enlisted members of Historic Rivers Chapter to assist her bird research and management project at Craney Island in 2009. Craney Island is an active dredge soil disposal site sitting in the Elizabeth River just off Portsmouth. It is managed by the Army Corps of Engineers and is filled with trucks delivering dirt and pushing it around. "If you build it, they will come" and this is certainly true for the birds that find Craney a wonderful site to feed and nest. Later in the spring and summer we will monitor nesting Least Terns and other nesting species.

On February 17 and 24, Master Naturalists and members of the Williamsburg Bird Club visited Craney to survey and count the birds on the island and in the James and Elizabeth River waters surrounding the island.

The morning of February 17 was cold and windy when 9 naturalists arrived at Craney. Ruth Beck, well on the road to recovery from Guillain-Barré syndrome, accompanied us and two cars connected by walkie-talkies set forth. Others in the party were **Alice** and **Seig Kopinitz**, **Sara Lewis**, **Felice Bond** and neighbor **Les Lawrence**, **Alex Minarik** and **Bill Williams** from the Williamsburg Bird Club. We tallied 46 species and our task included counting individual birds as well as identifying species. Ruth, Bill Williams, and Alex Minarik were a big help with these tasks. We all pitched in as we peered through spotting scopes at ducks on the river and shore birds in the impoundment cells. As we drove around the island, we called out over the walkie-talkies the individuals we spotted:

"There's a Bald Eagle. I hear a Carolina Wren. Oooooooo, a Northern Harrier. 10-4 good buddy!"



Seig Kopinitz and Felice Bond at Craney Island bird count



Patty Riddick, Sheila Kerr-Jones and Susie Engle-Hill braving the elements at Craney Island. Photo by Shirley Devan

Alex Minarik was the scribe. Highlights included 32 Horned Grebes and over 200 Ruddy Ducks in the river, 2 American Kestrels, and over 500 Dunlin in the impoundment cells. Bill Williams submitted all the numbers to eBird and Ruth will maintain the data for her annual report to the Army Corps of Engineers.

Five naturalists participated in the February 24 afternoon survey. The air temperature was colder but the wind was not as brisk. Ruth Beck was unable to join us for this trip. Participants were **Susan Engle-Hill**, **Patty Riddick**, **Sheila Kerr-Jones**, Alex Minarik and me. The tide was VERY low (new moon) and we got good looks at lots of Ring-billed Gulls, Herring Gulls, and American Wigeon in the shallow water near the road. Ruddy Ducks and Canvasbacks were quite a distance away. Horned Grebes were diving up and down as were the Red-throated Loons-- very difficult to keep in the scope. Because of construction and heavy truck traffic our access to the north side of the island was restricted. Highlights for the day were an Osprey, Bald Eagle, and large numbers of Northern Shovelers, American Wigeon, and Ruddy Ducks (over 500). Susie Engle-Hill was the scribe -- no small task when 4 people are calling out numbers! Many thanks to all. I entered the numbers into eBird. Total number of species was 34.

We managed to slip out just after 4 pm before being locked in. Yow, that was close! All in all, a great day of birding at Craney Island. We still haven't found the palm trees the pool bar!

MORE ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Climate Change in Virginia

Al Weed of Public Policy Virginia and Glen Besa of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club will address federal and state actions to reduce carbon emissions during a lecture/discussion scheduled for 7pm on Monday, February 9 at Andrews Hall 101 (at back of Phi Beta Kappa Hall, College of William and Mary), Jamestown Rd, Williamsburg. The public is invited to learn about expected federal and state legislation regarding climate change, prospects for a national renewable portfolio standard, possible tax incentives, public policies needed to support biomass energy economy in Virginia and how to engage the power industry in fighting global warming. The remaining two lecture/discussions will take place on March 2 and April 13. The series is sponsored by the Williamsburg Climate Action Network, the Student Environmental Action Coalition and the Program of Environmental Science and Policy at the College of William and Mary. More information at 757-253-8029 or www.williamsburgclimate.org.

Monday, April 13 Climate Change in Virginia: Part Three. A lecture/discussion at which Al Weed will present a vision for life in Virginia beyond fossil fuels. Also a discussion about changes to public policy needed to reach this bright future. 7pm at Andrews Hall 101 (at back of Phi Beta Kappa Hall, College of William and Mary), Jamestown Rd, Williamsburg. More info at 757-253-8029 or www.williamsburgclimate.org.

Backyard Habitat Day at the Williamsburg Farmer's Market: May 9, 2009

By Kathi Mestayer

Back by popular demand! We are planning to hold **Backyard Habitat Day** at the Williamsburg Farmer's Market on May 9, 2009. This event is already approved for Volunteer Service Hours, and we need more volunteers (a few have already signed up based on how much fun it was last year). We set up the tent(s) at 8 am or so, and break everything down at noon-ish, so we can clear out before the farmers/ vendors make their exits. This is a fun opportunity to talk with the general public about creating, enhancing and preserving habitat. We will be using the wonderful display materials that the committee made last year to illustrate habitat components and extremely cute critters (is there any other kind?). Please email me at kwren@widomaker.com if you are interested. We especially need a couple of people for logistics, to carry on Jordan's excellent work from last year. She knows what to do, and we need strong arms and some appropriate vehicles to get our tents and supplies to and from Merchant's Square. Come on down!

VIMS AFTER HOURS

After Hours Lecture: **Blue Crab Blues**

Starts: March 26, 2009 at 7:00 PM

Location: Watermen's Hall, McHugh Auditorium

Event URL: <http://tethys.vims.edu/events/registration.cfm>

Contact: 804-684-7846, programs@vims.edu

Full Description

Blue crabs, key players in the ecology, economy, and culture of Chesapeake Bay since the colonial era, are in trouble. Join VIMS researcher Jacques van Montfrans as he describes the life of blue crabs in the Bay, as well as current management issues surrounding the blue crab fishery in Virginia and Maryland. Register here (required).

After Hours Lecture: **Is our energy future blowing in the wind?**

Starts: April 30, 2009 at 7:00 PM

Location: Watermen's Hall, McHugh Auditorium

Event URL: <http://tethys.vims.edu/events/registration.cfm>

Contact: 804-684-7846, programs@vims.edu

VIMS alum Charles Natale explores the opportunities and challenges associated with development of wind energy off the East Coast.

Full Description

Join VIMS alumnus **Charles Natale** as he explores the environmental opportunities and regulatory challenges associated with development of offshore renewable wind energy projects along the US East Coast and in Virginia. Natale is President and CEO of ESS Group, Inc., one of the Northeast's largest environmental consulting and engineering companies. ESS has been actively involved in the siting, design, and permitting of the 420 MW Cape Wind project, the nation's first offshore wind farm, which will be located in Nantucket Sound, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. **Note that the programs are free but attendees must register in advance. Here is the link with the 2009 schedule:**

> <http://www.vims.edu/newsandevents/events/2009/index.php>

Nonnative Invasives Removal Day

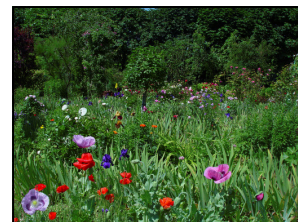
The Virginia Native Plant Society has declared May 2, 2009 as Nonnative Invasives Removal Day for Virginia. Our own John Clayton Chapter President, Helen Hamilton, Kathi Mestayer, and Angier Brock have had some discussions about activities for that day. They may include working with the National Parks Service (under Dorothy Geyer's guidance) to remove nonnative invasives from a site at Jamestown Island, plus other activities in selected areas (W&M campus, etc). We already have Volunteer Service Hour credits approved for MN work with Dorothy. If you are interested in planning and/or helping with this effort, please email Kathi(kwren@widomaker.com) and Angier (abrock@vcu.edu). Dorothy also has work days at other times under an ongoing effort to remove nonnative invasives from NPS land.

She is at Dorothy_Geyer@nps.gov.

Volunteer Service Projects

General Projects		
Prothonotary Warbler Nest Box Project	Shirley Devan	sedevan52@cox.net
Ellipse Garden: Botanical Demonstration and Education Project	Gary Driscole	Adrienne-gary@erols.com
Colonial National Historical Park Invasive Species Control and General Maintenance	Angier Brock	abrock@vcu.edu
Invasive Plant Removal at New Quarter Park	Jeanne Millin	scotfarquhar@cox.net
Diamondback Terrapin Fencing Project	Tim Christensen	mtnc066@msn.com
New Quarter Park Native Plant Teaching Trail	Laure Houghland	woowee@cox.net
Zoar State Forest Nature Trail	Sibyl Rose & Dave Milby	milby@dof.virginia.gov
Jamestown 4-H Center – Environmental Education Instructional Aide	Sara Lewis	saraclewis@cox.net
Trail Maintenance at York River State Park	Mary Apperson	mary.apperson@dcr.virginia.gov
Virginia Frog and Toad Calling Survey	Felice Bond	fbond203@cox.net
Craney Island Monitoring, Conservation and Management of Beach and Marsh Nesting Birds	Shirley Devan	sedevan52@cox.net
Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, South Island Bird Monitoring	Shirley Devan	sedevan52@cox.net
Bobwhite Quail Habitat Restoration Project	Shirley Devan	sedevan52@cox.net
Bird Counts		
Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory Big Sit Survey of Birds	Susan Powell	smapowell@cox.net
Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory Hawk Watch at College Creek	Susan Powell	smapowell@cox.net
Williamsburg Audubon Christmas Bird Count	Shirley Devan	sedevan52@cox.net
Tabb area of Newport News Audubon Christmas Bird Count	Tim Christensen	mtnc066@msn.com
Spring Bird Count Williamsburg	Shirley Devan	sedevan52@cox.net
Spring Bird Count Hampton Roads	Tim Christensen	mtnc066@msn.com

Butterfly Counts		
Chippokes Plantation State Park	Alice & Seig Kopinitz	askop4@cox.net
Eastern Shore Wildlife Refuge	Alice & Seig Kopinitz	askop4@cox.net
Great Dismal Swamp Butterfly Count	Alice & Seig Kopinitz	askop4@cox.net
Butterfly Survey at Nansemond National Wildlife Refuge	Shirley Devan	sedevan52@cox.net
Wildlife Mapping		
Williamsburg Winery	Susan Powell	smapowell@cox.net
York River State Park	Mary Apperson	mary.apperson@dcr.virginia.gov
Greensprings Trail	Susan Powell	smapowell@cox.net
Grafton Ponds	Larry & Patty Riddick	larryriddick@cox.net pattyriddick@cox.net
Bassett Trace Nature Trail	Cherie Aukland	Aukland.c@cox.net
New Quarter Park	Susan Powell	smapowell@cox.net
Freedom Park	Susan Powell	smapowell@cox.net



Master Gardeners' Habitat Class

By Kathi Mestayer

On Saturday, Feb 7, we held a class for Master Gardeners (MGs) who wanted to learn more about habitat and how it relates to their work. The half-day class was taught by **Stephen Living**, a DGIF Watchable Wildlife Specialist, and our own **Susan Powell**, with lovely assistants **Joanne Medina** and **Kathi Mestayer**. We had almost 30 MG participants, who were very interested and asked lots of questions about ecology, ecosystems, food chains and energy transfer (Susan's milieu) and the "how to" of creating optimal habitat (Stephen's). It was quite exciting to make a connection with our colleagues in the MGs and learn about what interests them (types of mulch, for one thing). We hope we get opportunities to continue to work together.

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER PROGRAMS

"Virginia's Biodiversity and Its Conservation"

Sponsored by: Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalists

Wednesday, March 11, 2009, 7 – 9 pm Location: Multi-purpose Room, Human Services Building, 5249 Olde Towne Road, Williamsburg

Virginia enjoys an extremely high biotic diversity and numerous conservation efforts are underway. This program will focus on biodiversity and its conservation with a strong Virginia emphasis.

Speaker: **Chris Ludwig** has been with the Division of Natural Heritage within the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation since 1988. Since 1998, he has served as the Chief Biologist, directing a team of botanists, zoologists, and ecologists in their quest to identify all of the rare species populations and significant natural communities in Virginia. In 2001 he co-founded the Flora of Virginia Foundation, formed to produce the first modern manual to the vascular Flora of Virginia.

"The State of Recycling -- Locally and Globally"

Sponsored by: Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalists

Wednesday, April 8, 2009, 7 – 9 pm Location: Multi-purpose Room, Human Services Building, 5249 Olde Towne Road, Williamsburg

The world of recycling beyond the weekly pickup at your curbside has changed dramatically in the last year. Join us to learn about the local and global recycling environment from the Executive Director of the VPPSA, the folks who pick up your recycle bin every week.

Speaker: **Steve Geissler**, Executive Director, Virginia Peninsula Public Service Authority [VPPSA].

ONGOING HRC PROJECTS

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT at HAMPTON ROADS BRIDGE TUNNEL

SOUTH ISLAND: This is an approved Volunteer Service Project for Historic Rivers Chapter members. **Ruth Beck** is requesting your help during the week of **March 16-20, 2009** to provide volunteers to assist with this long term conservation project. If interested please email Ruth Beck at rabeck@hughes.net or call at 757-870-0318. Departure time: 8 am from Colony Square Shopping Center. Arrive back in Williamsburg approximately 3 pm
Task: Carry out approved management and conservation action plans under the supervision of Ruth Beck, Professor Emeritus of Biology at W&M. Activities for the week will include preparation for the placement of coated fencing on site to prevent newly

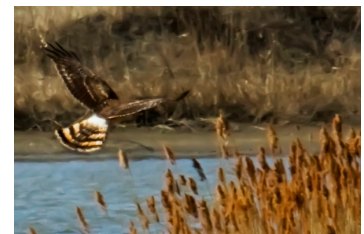
hatched young common terns, royal terns and black skimmer chicks from running into the road.

Williamsburg Spring Bird Count April 26, 2009

Sponsored by Williamsburg Bird Club. Join experienced birders to survey a sector in the Williamsburg area. There are eight sectors in the Williamsburg Count and all need additional eyes and ears. Contact Shirley Devan, sedevan52@cox.net. 757-813-1322 or Bill Williams, the Count Coordinator, jwwil2@wm.edu

Hampton Roads Spring Bird Count -- Date TBA

The Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC) will conduct the Spring Bird Count for its respective 13 sectors (areas of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson and York County). More info coming in next newsletter.



Male Harrier—courtesy of Felice Bond



**Got Cabin Fever?
We've Got the Cure!**
Join us March 29, 10-1
for Cabin Fever Sunday!

March 2009

7 - Walk & Talk, Steve Living,
Natural History, 10 a.m.-noon

14 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

15 - Disc Golf Tournament, call
John Roy, 757-564-9486. Course
open to public.

21 - Relay for Life Dog Walk, contact Robyn
Sulanowski, RSulanowski@aol.com

28 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

28 - Great Atlantic Rescue Dog Training, 8:30 a.m.

29 - 2nd Annual Cabin Fever Sunday, 10 a.m. -
1 p.m., call 890-3513
to exhibit

Shelter & Fire Circle
Reservations
• \$50 & \$25
• Call 890-3513

Winter Hours thru May 1:
Fri 10 a.m. to Dusk
Sat & Sun 8 a.m. to Dusk.
Park opened for special events.
Mon-Thurs users: Port-A-Johns available.

Directions
• Exit Col Pkwy at Queen's Lake, turn right.
Turn on Lakeshead Dr., follow signs to Park.
• From Peninsula: Exit I-64 at Rt. 199 toward
Jamestown. Exit Rt. 143W. Right on Peaninan
Rd., left on Hubbard Ln. Right on Lakeshead





**Booths,
Races,
Demos**



Upcoming events:

April 2009	28 - Into the Woods! Trees
4 - Walk & Talk, Bill Wil- liams, Migratory Birds, 10 a.m.-noon	2 - Walk & Talk, Vicki Shufer, Edible Flowers
4 - Stargazing, 8-10 p.m.	2 - Disc Golf B Tier Tournament (Course closed to general public.)
5 - Disc Golf B Tier Tournament (Course closed to general public.)	2 - Tournament, North American Chapter, British Long Bow Society
11 - Colonial Road Run- ners 5K Run, 1K Fun Run/ Walk	2 - Tentative: Stargazing, 8:30-10:30 p.m.
11 - Bird Walk (meet in overflow parking lot), 8-10 a.m.	2 - Disc Golf Tournament
14 - Into the Woods! Trails, After-School Eco- Program, 3:45-5:30 p.m. 6-wks, \$30	5 - Into the Woods! Conservation
18 - BYOK! 9 a.m.-noon	9 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.
21 - Into the Woods! Birds	12 - Into the Woods! Watershed
25 - Bark in the Park	16 - BYOK! 9 a.m.-noon
25 - Bird Walk (meet in overflow lot), 7-9 a.m.	19 - Into the Woods! Kayaking
	23 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

More information at: www.meetup.com/NewQuarterPark . www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec
New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., 757-220-3653 . York Co Parks & Rec, 757-890-3500

FIELD SKETCHING

with
Lara Call Gastinger

Saturday, April 4 &
Sunday, April 5, 2009



Join internationally renowned botanical illustrator Lara Call Gastinger for two days of observing, sketching, and painting wildflowers and Piedmont landscapes at Flower Camp near Howardsville, Virginia. During this workshop, Lara will help students learn how to render natural phenomena more accurately, how to turn even a quick sketch into a valuable botanical record, and how to depict plants (including trees) in ways that include both near and far views. As a trained botanist as well as illustrator of the *Flora of Virginia*, Lara will help participants identify phenomena unique to the first week of April. Enrollment limited to 12 participants. Students with some previous drawing or painting experience benefit most from this workshop.

Tuition of \$350 includes three meals (lunch Saturday through brunch Sunday) and one nights lodging. "Campsers" wishing to arrive Friday night may do so for an additional \$100 which includes lodging and dinner Friday night, and a light breakfast Saturday morning. Workshop chef: Erin Bishop

To register, send a \$50 deposit or full payment to Flower Camp, c/o Nancy R. Hugo, Director, 11208 Gwathmey Church Road, Ashland, VA 23005. For more information, visit www.flowercamp.org or contact Nancy Ross Hugo at nancy@flowercamp.org or 804-798-6364.

COMMUNITY BASED HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS

Community Based Habitat restoration projects
Request for Proposals for Community-Based Habitat Restoration Projects through the **National Association of Counties/NOAA Restoration Center Partnership**

The National Association of Counties (NACo), in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Community-Based Restoration Program (CRP), is pleased to announce the third year of funding for the Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative (CCRI). The initiative provides financial assistance on a competitive basis to innovative, high quality county-led or county-supported projects. *Projects must occur within a NACo member county, and be supported by the chief county elected official.

In 2009, the initiative will provide \$350,000 in grants to improve stream, river, estuarine, and other important marine habitats. Priority areas for CCRI are coastal restoration and the removal of fish passage barriers in coastal streams and rivers. Grants will range from \$50,000

to \$100,000 based upon need. The grant application must be submitted online at the website below.

Proposal Deadline *April 6, 2009*
More Information

To access the full RFP and application instructions visit* National Association of Counties*: www.naco.org/ccri <<http://www.naco.org/ccri>> Applicants may contact Carrie Clingan, NACo at 202-942-4246, cclingan@naco.org or ccri@naco.org <<mailto:ccri@naco.org>> and Melanie Gange, NOAA, Melanie.Gange@noaa.gov <<mailto:Melanie.Gange@noaa.gov>> with questions regarding potential proposals.

May Louise Sligh
York/Rappahannock Watershed Field Coordinator University of Mary Washington Earth & Environmental Sciences VA Department of Conservation & Recreation Tappahannock Regional Office/ P.O. Box 1425 Tappahannock, VA 22560 804/443-1494
watershed address: Hoskins Creek-Rappahannock River-Chesapeake Bay

Master Gardeners' Habitat Class

By Kathi Mestayer

On Saturday, Feb 7, we held a class for Master Gardeners (MGs) who wanted to learn more about habitat and how it relates to their work. The half-day class was taught by **Stephen Living**, a DGIF Watchable Wildlife Specialist, and our own **Susan Powell**, with lovely assistants **Joanne Medina** and **Kathi Mestayer**. We had almost 30 MG participants, who were very interested and asked lots of questions about ecology, ecosystems, food chains and energy transfer (Susan's milieu) and the "how to" of creating optimal habitat (Stephen's). It was quite exciting to make a connection with our colleagues in the MGs and learn about what interests them (types of mulch, for one thing). We hope we get opportunities to continue to work together.

VA Project Learning Tree

Postponed—another chance to register!

Due to inclement weather, we had to postpone the February **Virginia Project Learning Tree Facilitator Training** until May 20-21. It will still take place at the New Kent Forestry Center near Providence Forge, Virginia. Please forward the attached application to anyone you know who is interested in becoming a Project Learning Tree Facilitator. The prerequisite is participation in a PLT PreK-8 Workshop prior to the Facilitator Training. Current workshops are posted on the Calendar of Events at www.plt.org <<http://www.plt.org/>

Participants are also expected to co-lead a PLT workshop within 18 months of completing Facilitator Training.

Beware Berries

By Clyde Marsteller

There is an interesting feature in Backyard Living called Backyard Blunders which I always read and laugh at those poor souls misfortunes.

Last Thursday I drove Ellie to her hair dresser appointment (she is recuperating nicely from her eye surgery but has not yet got her depth perception back). I noticed that the hairdresser's office back up to an abandoned lot with an overgrown chain link fence separating the properties. I wandered over to see what I could spot in the tangle of shrubs, vines and weeds. I noticed several clumps of dark berries hanging down in the mix. I thought it might be interesting to collect some and take them home to see what they would grow into. Maybe they would be food for my wildlife. I broke off several clumps and put them into an ubiquitous plastic bag caught in the fence. The berries looked hauntingly familiar. Once home I put them on my work table in the garage and promptly forgot about them. Saturday morning I woke up with an itchy rash on both hands. You guessed it the berries were Poison Ivy! Ramblin' (& itching Clyde)



Habitat or an ugly tree with holes...you decide
Courtesy of Kathi Mestayer

News from the Virginia Native Plant Society

March 19: 7 pm. John Clayton Chapter meeting at York County Library on Route 17 in Yorktown. Workshop on the Origins and Meaning of Botanical Names of Native Plants. Leaders will be **Lee Bristow** and **Donna Ware**.

For more information go to

> <http://www.claytonvnps.org/index.htm>

All of the local and state events sponsored by the VA Native Plant Society are approved for Advanced Training. The local chapter is the John Clayton Chapter.



Courtesy Shirley Devan

The Prothonotary Warbler Box Service Project



Courtesy Felice Bond

Members of the HRC VMN group hard at work constructing new homes for Warblers (left); A hot market for condos (above)

VIRGINIA LIVING MUSEUM ADULT SCIENCE SEMINARS FOR 2009

Seminars take place at the museum. All seminars start at 6:00 p.m. and last about 1 ½ hours unless otherwise noted. **To register, call 757 595-9135 M-F, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

March 3 Surviving in Early Virginia

Virginia's early settlers developed new skills and refined old ones to take advantage of the abundant natural resources around them. In this hands-on workshop focusing on the environment of early Virginia you'll learn to make rope, identify wild mammal skulls, cut log 'cookies', meet a live new world animal and more while working with natural resources and practicing some of the skills that were once needed for survival.

Presented by: Rock Moeslein, VLM Assistant Education Director

(limited to 30 participants)

April 7 Gotta Go! Gotta Go!

Why do animals migrate? What clues tell them when to leave and when to return? How do they know where to go and what challenges do they face in getting there? We'll discuss some of the fascinating information researchers are discovering about the mystery of animal navigation over great distances. Take away some simple but effective ways that you can help protect migratory species.

Presented by: Judy Molnar, VLM Education Associate

(limited to 30 participants)

May 5 Diversity of Fishes

The diversity and specialization of fishes around the world is astounding. The Amazon boasts more species than any other freshwater system, from the familiar, to the bizarre and even the dangerous. We will take a look at many interesting species and their roles in this unique ecosystem, consider

conservation concerns, and learn how hobbyists and professional aquaria may help and/or hinder the survival of fish species.

Presented by: Chris Crippen, VLM Aquarium Curator

(limited to 30 participants)

June 2 The Secret Life of Flowering Plants

Millions of gardeners enjoy the colors and scents of their favorite flowers but rarely pause to consider the vital role that flowering plants play in nature. This workshop features a close-up investigation of the intricate structure and function of leaves, stems and root structures. We will also investigate the codependence of flowering plants and their animal pollinators and look at the significant economic impact of pollination.

Presented by: Chris Lewis, VLM Education Director

(limited to 25 participants)

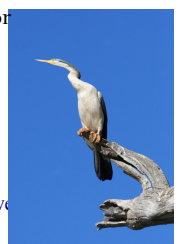
July – No seminar

August 4 Living Green House and Garden

From solar panels to geothermal heating units, from Styrofoam walls to high performance windows find out how you can make choices within your home that can help improve the environment. This workshop includes a special inside look at the Museum's 'Living Green' House which showcases environmentally friendly home design and construction options. Outside the 'Green' house, learn Earth-friendly garden tips in the surrounding Conservation Garden.

Presented by: Fred Farris, VLM Deputy Director

(limited to 20 participants)



A DAY IN THE FOREST

Adrienne Frank and Susan Powell
Historic Rivers Master Naturalists

Longleaf pines are of historical and ecological significance.

In 1607 when Captain John Smith arrived at Jamestown Island, he wrote of seeing long-leaf pine trees. Today, only a handful of native Longleaf pine trees can be found in Virginia. Not



since the 1600s have there been Longleaf pines along the James River near Williamsburg.

Historically, Longleaf pines have been a very valuable source of super-strong wood for sailing ship masts. In colonial days, they were marked for the King, identifying the best trees to be used by the British Army and not the settlers. Large timbers were commonly used to build large buildings. For example, the Sears

Tower in Chicago was originally built with Longleaf pine. A hundred years later, old trees have been recovered from the bottom of the James River to be used for construction and wood working.

Longleaf pines are fast growing and can be very tall and straight. They have a needle 8-18 inches in length with a pine cone 10 inches top to bottom. They can grow in a variety of types of soil including poor sandy soil and they are resistant to most insects and diseases. A handful of Longleaf pines in southeastern Virginia are 150 years old.



Forester, Bill Apperson, explained to the Historic Rivers Master Naturalists how American Chestnut and Longleaf pine trees are being restored to the landscape of the Williamsburg area. On Saturday, February 7, 2009, the group participated in a workshop at the New Kent Forestry Center to learn about research and growing methods to propagate and plant Virginia

native trees. Forester, Bill Apperson, explained to the Historic Rivers Master Naturalists how American Chestnut and Longleaf pine trees are being restored to the landscape of the Williamsburg area. On Saturday, February 7, 2009, the group participated in a workshop at the New Kent Forestry Center to learn about research and growing methods to propagate and plant Virginia native trees

Stewardship

By Clyde Marsteller

I would like to comment on the place of Stewardship in relation to our world, its natural resources and the precious life it supports. My Zoo presentation emphasizes this concept to our children using the awesome animals that share our living space. I came across this letter supposedly from Chief Seattle of the Duwamish Tribe that lived on our Northwest Pacific Coast. He was a deeply religious and far seeing man,. If only we would heed his words:

"The President in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. But how can you buy or sell the sky? the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know the sap which courses through the trees as we know the blood that courses through our veins. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the dew in the meadow, the body heat of the pony, and man all belong to the same family.

The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you our land, you must remember that it is sacred. Each glossy reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells of

events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. So you must give the rivers the kindness that you would give any brother.

If we sell you our land, remember that the air is precious to us that the air shares its spirit with all the life that it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also received his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.

Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth.

This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself

One thing we know: our God is also your God. The earth is precious to him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator.

Your destiny is a mystery to us. What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of many men and the view of the ripe hills is blotted with talking wires? Where will the thicket be? Gone! Where will the eagle be? Gone! And what is to say goodbye to the swift pony and then hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

When the last red man has vanished with this wilderness, and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, will these shores and forests still be here? Will there be any of the spirit of my people left?

We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So, if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it, as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you receive it. Preserve

the land for all children, and love it, as God loves us.

As we are part of the land, you too are part of the land. This earth is precious to us. It is also precious to you.

One thing we know - there is only one God. No man, be he Red man or White man, can be apart. We ARE all brothers after all.



A happy resident of the traveling zoo

"If all the beasts were gone, man would die of a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected."

Chief Seattle

The Traveling Zoo visits the Newport News City Schools

Clyde Marsteller took his traveling zoo to McIntosh Elementary School on February 19, 2009. He visited Mrs. Hager's fourth grade class of 17 children and five adults. Sheile Kerr-Jones and Shirley Devan were the Zoo Crew! Clyde states that "of the over thousand children I have talked to and shown the Zoo, I have no fear of the future."



Clyde Marsteller and Shelia Kerr-Jones at McIntosh Elementary School presenting *The Zoo in My Luggage* program. Shelia Kerr-Jones and Shirley Devan were Clyde's assistants. Photo by Shirley Devan

Walk and Talk

New Quarter Park hosts a “Walk and Talk” on the first Saturday of each month. Here is a list of the upcoming topics.

March 7 – Steve Living – New Quarter’s Natural History

Join Watchable Wildlife Biologist Steve Living of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries on a walk along the hiking trails at New Quarter to learn more about the park’s natural history. Discover tracks and trails as well as other evidence of wildlife in the park’s varied habitats. Learn how to look and listen for birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, and more.

April 4 – Bill Williams – Watching for Migratory Birds

Learn more about the birds that stop by Williamsburg on their flight along the East Coast each spring in search of food and nesting locations. Well-known Williamsburg birder and educator Bill Williams will inspire you to get excited about our tiny feathered friends and learn to identify them by field marks and calls. See osprey as they settle in for the summer on Queens Creek and learn to listen for and spot songbirds that are just passing through.

May 2 – Vicki Shufer – Edible Flowers

Look for new blooms on the forest floor with naturalist and author Vicki Shufer. The Virginia Beach wild foods expert will lead walk and talk participants along the park’s trails on a foraging excursion to see and learn how to identify native and edible plants.

June 6 – Gregory Millsagle – On the Bluebird Trail

Take a look inside the bluebird boxes at New Quarter Park with Gregory Millsagle, who installed and has been tending to the boxes at New Quarter Park for many years. Millsagle is the owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited store in the Village Shops at Kiln Creek.

July 4 – No Walk and Talk

August 1 – Katie Sanford – Environmental Education: James versus York River Habitat

Discover York River habitat features and learn how they differ from those on the James River, about ten miles away. Sanford is the environmental educator at Jamestown 4-H Center who teaches children to appreciate the turtles, snakes, fish, and other creatures that inhabit the swamp, river, and educational center on Greensprings Road in Jamestown.

September 5 – Helen Hamilton Growing a Beautiful Bobwhite Habitat

October 3 – Jerre Johnson – It’s All Downhill from Here: New Quarter’s Geology

November 7 – Clyde Marsteller – What’s Crawling Under that Log?

December 5 – Flora and Fauna of the Holiday Season

http://www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec/parks/new_quarter/1nqp_info.htm

For more information on upcoming events at

New Quarter Park, check out

www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec/parks/new_quarter/1nqp_info.htm

Spring Native Plant Walk May 9, 2009

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Join botanist **Donna Ware** on a Spring Native Plant and Wildflower walk on May 9 on the Dragon Run property. Spend several hours walking slowly near the Dragon Run cypress swamp, and through mature pine forest, mature hardwood forest, young (12-year) pine, and an area that was clear-cut two years ago. The variation in habitat should yield a wide range of plants. Bring water and a picnic lunch. Meet at the Food Lion on Route 17 in Saluda at 9:00 a.m. to car pool to the site. Registration is limited to 25 participants. Email Adrienne Frank to register at adrienne-gary@erols.com or 757-566-4009.



College Creek
Hawkwatch
Williamsburg
VA
February 2009
through May
2009

The College Creek Hawkwatch is now underway on the Colonial Parkway along the James River about 3 miles from Williamsburg. This is an approved Volunteer Service Project for Historic Rivers Chapter members.

The experts are out there DAILY, weather permitting, from about 10 am- 1 pm, and welcome helpers/volunteers! You can drop by on your lunch hour.

Here’s the official information from Brian Taber:

The 13th consecutive late winter/spring season of the College Creek Hawkwatch is underway. It’s the only regular Virginia hawkwatch at this season. Birds are counted as they cross the river headed north. Results will be posted on the Hawkcount.org website of the Hawk Migration Association of North America, which can also be accessed through the Observatory’s links page on the website at www.cvwo.org.

Regular postings will again be made to the VA List Serve throughout the season. Photos and postings will also be made on the General Blog at the Observatory’s website. Today, February 10, 2009, Tom Armour, Arun Bose, Bill Williams and I conducted the hawkwatch and saw 11 Turkey Vultures and 1 Bald Eagle crossing the river from about 10:00 to noon. In addition to the usual waterfowl on the river, there were a few Tree Swallows and Brown Pelicans and 2 rather early Fish Crows. Temperatures in Williamsburg reached 70, though by the cold water it was windy and much chillier.

College Creek Hawkwatch is a program of Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory and is located on the Colonial Parkway, on the shore of the James River, about 3 miles south-east of Williamsburg. The hawkwatch operates with volunteers daily, weather permitting, from mid- February through May. Flights are generally mid-morning to early afternoon as the warming air provides lift. Visitors and helpers are always welcome!