



# THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 No. 4 April 2009

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### The Historic Rivers Chapter Virginia Master Naturalists: Building a Well-Trained Corps of Volunteers

Michelle Prysby, the state coordinator for the Virginia Master Naturalist program, is one busy woman! I discovered this when I entered the search terms “citizen science” into Google and found several references to the Virginia Master Naturalist program and Michelle Prysby. One search result in particular caught my eye. It was a link to the Ecological Society of America (ESA), an organization of over 10,000 scientists who conduct research, educate, and use ecological science to address a multitude of environmental issues. Each year, the ESA has an annual meeting which includes workshops, poster sessions, and symposia. At the 93<sup>rd</sup> ESA Annual Meeting in 2008, Michelle was one of the presenters for a symposium called “Citizen Science in Ecology: The Intersection of Research and Education.” She spoke about the Virginia Master Naturalist Program and explained how the members typically complete a rigorous training course that prepares them for participation in projects such as water quality monitoring, studies of birds, amphibians, and rare plant populations, biological inventories, and other experimental studies.

She informed the scientists that Master Naturalists are a ready corps of volunteers who are well-trained in basic research skills and who can participate in both local and larger scale citizen science projects. She encouraged them to consider partnering with Master Naturalist programs as these high quality volunteers could be an asset to many of their projects.

Finding Michelle’s summary of the program and all it has to offer was useful and timely because the volunteer service project, membership, and outreach committees are working together to revise and streamline the volunteer service projects proposal and speaker engagement forms as well as the timesheets. Nobody likes paperwork. It’s hard to create a form that is at once easy to complete but still captures all the information we are required to report back to the state.

Continued on page 2

## 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*

*Jeanette Navia, Membership*

*Bruce Hill, Volunteer Service Projects*

*Bruce Hill, Training Chair*

*Susan Engle-Hill, Joanne Medina, Advanced Training*

*Adrienne Frank & Gary Driscole, Outreach Committee*

*Seig Kopinitz, Webmaster*

*Dave Youker, Member-at-Large*

*Mike Powell, Member-at-Large*

## COMMITTEES

### *Volunteer Service Projects*

*Bruce Hill, Chair*

### *Advanced Training*

*Susie Engle-Hill, Co-Chair*

*Joanne Medina, Co-Chair*

### *Training Committee*

*Bruce Hill, Chair*

### *Outreach/Publicity*

*Adrienne Frank, and Gary Driscole*

Message from the president, continued from page 1

While working on our revisions, we have needed to consider Michelle's words to these scientists as well as the goals of our chapter. How will our chapter communicate to these scientists and the community that we are ready and willing to participate in their projects? Certainly, Michelle is spreading the word. I would encourage each of us to take a moment and consider how we participate and contribute to the various projects we are involved in. We should consider the impact we make when we provide education and outreach to the public. We should take note of the contributions we are making when we collect data for scientific studies. What we do makes a difference and will likely become even more important in light of the recent global economic slump.

It's not particularly fun to write a summary of an event, but I encourage everyone to try. We will be sending out the newly revised forms soon, and we ask that you take a look at them and provide feedback to the committees. We value your suggestions.

Here's the link to the summary of Michelle's presentation to ESA. <http://eco.confex.com/eco/2008/techprogram/P9577.HTM>

The link below is to the article "Biodiversity Inventories and Beyond: Bringing Scientists and Communities Together at an Environmental Education Center" by Michelle Prysby. Although this article is not about the Master Naturalist program, she does discuss the role of citizen scientists relative to the needs of a particular community.

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitolkit/conference/proceeding-pdfs/Prysby%202007%20CS%20Conference.pdf>

See you at the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting!

Susan Powell, President

Historic Rivers Chapter

VA Master Naturalist Program

## 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 April 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.

## STATEWIDE INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL DAY—MAY 2

Mark your calendars! **May 2** is statewide Invasive Plant Removal Day! Here in the Williamsburg area, we will be partnering with the National Park Service to remove invasives at the entrance to Jamestown Island. The area was once a 4-H camp, and became a jungle of wisteria and bamboo. The NPS Invasive Species Control "SWAT" team has visited the area for the past 4 summers, and a path has now been cleared, where the native perennials and ferns are emerging. BUT the privet and wisteria and English ivy are coming back! We will be pulling privet, ivy, honeysuckle, and wisteria.

This statewide effort was initiated by Fairfax County Master Naturalists - our local chapter is joining the effort. The Virginia Native Plant Society has endorsed the project, as has the members of our local John Clayton Chapter.

Park at Powhatan Creek Overlook, and meet at Jamestown Settlement by 1:00 pm, bring cutting and pruning tools, and protective clothing -- bees and poison ivy may be encountered.



Yes, but how invasive could they really be? Bartlett Pear trees behind Williamsburg Crossing Shopping Center, visible from Rte 199. A virtual monoculture; thousands of them, many not visible from the road.

Photo courtesy of Kathi Meystayer

### Native Plant Sale

Saturday, April 25, 12 noon - 4:00 pm  
Plant Sale:

John Clayton Chapter and the James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners will sell native and ornamental plants including flowers, ferns, vegetables, herbs, shrubs, small trees, and house plants. Seeds, gardening supplies and blue bird houses will also be sold.

Please, no early birds - the doors open to the public at 12 noon!  
Cash and checks only.

Location: Williamsburg Community Building, 401 N. Boundary St. (across from the Williamsburg Regional Library). The parking garage next to the Community Bldg. offers free parking.

"It looked so *cute* when we brought it home from the nursery!"



## MORE ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### Climate Change in Virginia

#### 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](http://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 noonish, 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](mailto: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!

Violet Tailed Sylph from Ecuador  
Courtesy of Felice Bond

### VIMS AFTER HOURS

#### 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](mailto: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>



## Volunteer Service Projects

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

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

### Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists Cabin Fever at New Quarter Park



## HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER PROGRAMS

### "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].

### 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](mailto:sedevan52@cox.net). 757-813-1322 or Bill Williams, the Count Coordinator, [jwwil2@wm.edu](mailto:jwwil2@wm.edu)

### Hampton Roads Spring Bird Count -- April 25, 2009

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). Contact Tim Christensen for details.

On Saturday, May 2, 2009 the Claytor Nature Study Center will host May Day 2009. This event is an effort to bring together diverse friends from around the region to both revel and reflect in the beautiful natural surroundings of the Claytor Nature Study Center of Lynchburg College. Events will be scheduled throughout the day and night for particular audiences, and you may find yourself inclined to participate in any or all of them.

**Specific to the CVEEA**, we invite you to **lunch which you will share with local K-12 teachers and pre-service teachers** (they meet for their own professional development in the morning), and then **please stay for an environmental educator networking meeting**.

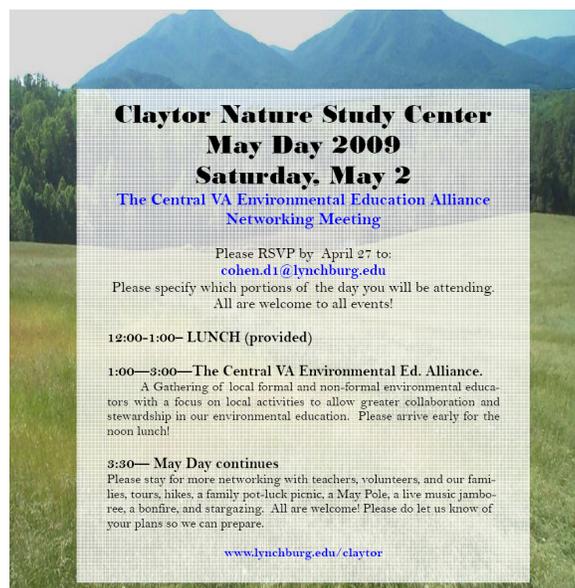
Following the CVEEA meeting we will continue May Day 2009 with a Volunteer Appreciation Family Pot Luck with fun activities into the evening. If you have never volunteered at the Claytor Center come anyway and bring your family and a dish to share! You'll depart wanting to come back again and again! Please RSVP for any or all events by April 27, 2009 to:

Dan Cohen, Education Coordinator  
Claytor Nature Study Center of Lynchburg College  
[Cohen.d1@lynchburg.edu](mailto:Cohen.d1@lynchburg.edu)

434-661-8361 (cell) 540-587-6782 (office)

**Dr. Greg Eaton, Director**  
Claytor Nature Study Center Lynchburg College 1501 Lakeside Drive  
Lynchburg, VA 24501 434-544-8360 (office) 434-661-8360 (cell)  
540-587-6740 (CNSC phone) [eaton.g@lynchburg.edu](mailto:eaton.g@lynchburg.edu)  
[www.lynchburg.edu/claytor](http://www.lynchburg.edu/claytor)

## FARTHER AFIELD



**Claytor Nature Study Center  
May Day 2009  
Saturday, May 2**  
The Central VA Environmental Education Alliance  
Networking Meeting

Please RSVP by April 27 to:  
[cohen.d1@lynchburg.edu](mailto:cohen.d1@lynchburg.edu)  
Please specify which portions of the day you will be attending.  
All are welcome to all events!

12:00-1:00— LUNCH (provided)

1:00—3:00—The Central VA Environmental Ed. Alliance.  
A Gathering of local formal and non-formal environmental educators with a focus on local activities to allow greater collaboration and stewardship in our environmental education. Please arrive early for the noon lunch!

3:30— May Day continues  
Please stay for more networking with teachers, volunteers, and our families, tours, hikes, a family pot-luck picnic, a May Pole, a live music jambo-ree, a bonfire, and stargazing. All are welcome! Please do let us know of your plans so we can prepare.

[www.lynchburg.edu/claytor](http://www.lynchburg.edu/claytor)

## Warbler Nesting Project

Nesting boxes for birds are being built and installed in locations across eastern Virginia in an effort to increase the population of song birds such as prothonotary warblers. With guidance from Dr. Bob Reilly of Virginia Commonwealth University, Master Naturalists are building, placing, and monitoring boxes in several nearby locations.

Prothonotary warblers (4 3/4" in size) have golden yellow heads and blue-gray wings. The box size is smaller than a bluebird house, it is attached to a 10 foot pole, and placed above water in a swamp or along a river bank. Once the boxes are installed, the nests will be monitored primarily using boats. In early summer when the babies fledge, the boxes can be emptied of nest material to encourage a second brood.

The Historic Rivers Master Naturalist chapter, along with the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, and the Friends of Dragon Run are helping to sponsor this voluntary service project. Pictured here is Gary Driscoll who is representing all three organizations.



Christmas Tree Frog  
Photo Courtesy of Felice Bond



## 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) <<http://www.naco.org/ccri>> Applicants may contact Carrie Clingan, NACo at 202-942-4246, [cclingan@naco.org](mailto:cclingan@naco.org) or [ccri@naco.org](mailto:ccri@naco.org) <<mailto:ccri@naco.org>> and Melanie Gange, NOAA, [Melanie.Gange@noaa.gov](mailto: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

## 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) <<http://www.plt.org/>> **Participants are also expected to co-lead a PLT workshop within 18 months of completing Facilitator Training.**

## Native Plant Society Walks—Approved for Advanced Training

### Saturday, April 4 10 am - Wildflower Walk in Downtown Williamsburg.

Expect to see flowering trees and perennials such as dogwood, golden ragwort, silverbell, fothergilla, pawpaw, sweetshrub, red buckeye and redbud during a walk along fairly flat sidewalks and paved paths. This 1 ½ mile walk is sponsored by the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. Meet at the intersection of Prince George Street and North Henry Street near the downtown parking garage. Please register by calling (757)604-1026 or emailing [claytonsnatives@yahoo.com](mailto:claytonsnatives@yahoo.com). More info at [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org) <<http://www.claytonvnps.org/>>

### Sunday, April 12 1:30 pm - Native Plant Walk along Nolan Trail at the Mariner's Museum.

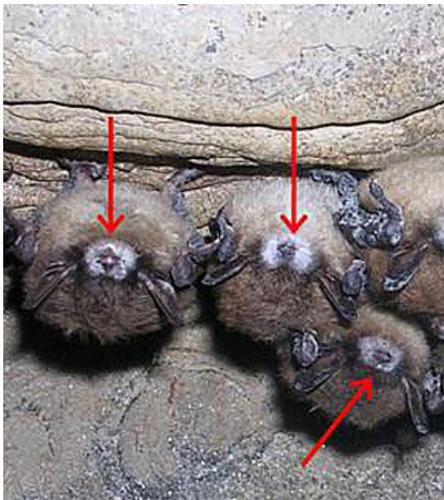
Come take a walk on the wooded path along Lake Maury. Join members of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant as they look for flowering dogwood and redbud, fleabane, heartleaf and other spring perennials. The walk will be about 1 1/2 miles, with a few small hills. Meet in the parking lot next to the Mariner's Museum at the end of J. Clyde Morris Blvd. in Newport News. Please register by calling (757)604-1026 or emailing [claytonsnatives@yahoo.com](mailto:claytonsnatives@yahoo.com). More info at [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org) <<http://www.claytonvnps.org/>>

### Wednesday, April 15 1 pm - Native Plant Walk at Grafton Ponds Natural Area Preserve.

Grafton Ponds represents Virginia's best remaining example of a coastal plain pond complex. The many ponds here were formed by dissolution of the underlying calcareous marine deposits of the Yorktown Formation. This wetland complex supports several rare plants and animals for Virginia including Harper's fimbriatilis, pond spice, Cuthbert turtlehead, Mabee's salamander and barking treefrog. Spring beauty, Jack-in-the-pulpit and more expected to be in bloom. This 2 ½ mile, off-trail walk will be led by Rebecca Wilson of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Space is limited so call (757)604-1026 or email [claytonsnatives@yahoo.com](mailto:claytonsnatives@yahoo.com) to register and get directions. More info at [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org) <<http://www.claytonvnps.org/>>

### Sunday, April 26 1:30 pm - Wildflower Walk at Matteson trail.

Join members of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society for a walk around the edge of the Hamptons Golf Course on a trail named for chapter member Tess Matteson. Mayapple, black locust, bluets, blue-eyed grass and shagbark hickory are expected to be in bloom on this easy 1 1/2 mile walk along a level asphalt path. Meet in the parking lot of the Sentara Health and Fitness Center. To get to the trail take I-64, to the East Hampton Roads Center Parkway exit. After about .8 miles, turn left on to Magruder Blvd. and prepare for a quick left turn onto Butler Farm Road. Make the first right turn into the fitness center parking lot. Please register by calling (757)604-1026 or emailing [claytonsnatives@yahoo.com](mailto:claytonsnatives@yahoo.com). More info at [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org) <<http://www.claytonvnps.org/>> .



**Warning—Bats in trouble!!**

**The Virginia Cave Board and Natural Heritage Karst Program are asking for a moratorium (a voluntary ban) on all underground caving activity in Virginia until April 15, 2009, because of the potential spread of White Nose Syndrome in bats.** A new statement will be issued on or before that time. Please note that at that time, we may ask to further extend the moratorium.

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) is a condition that has resulted in the deaths of hundreds-of-thousands of bats in the northeastern United States since 2006. This winter, cases of White Nose Syndrome (WNS) have been confirmed in Pendleton County, West Virginia. In February, surveys of significant bat and recreational caves in adjacent Highland and Bath counties in Virginia discovered what appears to be WNS in Breathing Cave in Bath County, located near the Highland County border. There is mounting evidence that humans may play a significant role in transmitting biological agent(s) responsible for WNS in bats.

To learn more about WNS, go to [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov) and click at top of page on "VDGIF Investigating Cases..."

## 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.**

#### **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)

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Our hardworking volunteers!!

Are we having fun yet?

## Participants in HRBT project

23 – 25 March 2009

### Monday, March 23, 2009:

Ruth Beck, Project Leader

Alex Minarik, Williamsburg Bird Club

Brian Taber, Williamsburg Bird Club & CVWO

Shirley Devan, Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalist

Sheila Kerr-Jones, Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalist

Carissa Smith, VA Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries

### Tuesday, March 24, 2009:

Ruth Beck, Project Leader

Brian Taber, Williamsburg Bird Club & CVWO

Shirley Devan, Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalist

Charlotte Boudreau, Peninsula Chapter, VA Master Naturalist

Ruth Boettcher, VA Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries

### Wednesday, March 25, 2009:

Ruth Beck, Project Leader

Brian Taber, Williamsburg Bird Club & CVWO

Shirley Devan, Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalist

Ruth Boettcher, VA Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries

Carissa Smith, VA Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries

Photos courtesy of Shirley Devan



Sheila Kerr-Jones, dressed appropriately!



Ruth Beck, Project Leader and Brian Tabor



Mike and Susan Powell at New Quarter Park for Cabin Fever

Photo courtesy of 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.**

. 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 Millslagle – On the Bluebird Trail

Take a look inside the bluebird boxes at New Quarter Park with Gregory Millslagle, who installed and has been tending to the boxes at New Quarter Park for many years. Millslagle 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](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](http://www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec/parks/new_quarter/1nqp_info.htm)



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](http://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!

## 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 yeild 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](mailto:adrienne-gary@erols.com) or 757-566-4009.

**American chestnut ready to reign again March 16, 2009 BY MORGAN SIMMONS | SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE**

After decades of selective breeding and countless hours of fieldwork, researchers believe they have developed an American chestnut tree that is ready to reclaim the Appalachian forests.

The first batch of these blight-resistant chestnut seedlings arrived recently at a greenhouse on the agricultural campus of the University of Tennessee, where workers trimmed the roots and identified each tree with a numbered tag. The trees -- 1,200 in all -- were planted in three Southern national forests as a groundbreaking experiment to determine if decades of cross-breeding have produced a chestnut tree that is blight-resistant yet retains the superior timber qualities of the American chestnut tree.

"This is the very first planting of the final generation and the culmination of a lot of hard work," said Scott Schlarbaum, forest geneticist with the UT Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries. The trees were grown in a Georgia nursery in cooperation with the American Chestnut Foundation, an organization dedicated to restoring the American chestnut. The American chestnut accounted for 25 percent of all the trees in the Appalachian mountains until a blight virtually eliminated them between 1904 and 1950.

Today, the airborne bark fungus still survives and kills virtually all American chestnuts by the time they've reached 20 feet in height. For more than 30 years, the American Chestnut Foundation has been crossing Chinese chestnuts, which are naturally resistant to the blight, with American chestnuts to produce a super hybrid that can be reintroduced in the wild. Only American chestnuts that demonstrate natural blight resistance qualify for the breeding program, and scientists have been careful to breed trees from local environments.

Of the 1,200-year-old chestnut seedlings brought to the UT greenhouse, 500 were the blight-resistant hybrids. The remaining trees were either pure American chestnut, pure Chinese chestnut or hybrid trees from an in-

termediate back-cross generation. Earlier this year, the 4-foot-tall seedlings were planted on national forest lands throughout the Southern Appalachian region. In the coming years, researchers will regularly monitor the trees for blight resistance, mortality and growth characteristics. Stacy Clark, research forester for the Forest Service's Southern Research Station, said American chestnuts were renowned for their straight-grained wood and rapid growth rate. "We want these trees to be blight-resistant, but also competitive," Clark said. "They're going out into the forest where they'll have to grow quickly to get above the deer browse, and compete with species like yellow poplar and red maple." The goal of the American Chestnut Foundation was to breed a blight-resistant tree that is genetically 94 percent American chestnut. The foundation chose the Southern Appalachians as the proving ground for the final generation of seedlings because the region was once a stronghold for the American chestnut.



Clark, who leads the study for the U.S. Forest Service, said she is especially excited about two milestones in the trees' development: the fourth year of growth, which will reveal if the trees have held their own against competing species; and years 10 through 20,

when American chestnuts normally succumb to the blight. "If the trees are blight-resistant, we'll definitely know by that time," Clark said. The chestnut blight robbed the Eastern forest of its undisputed champion. American chestnuts routinely grew 4 feet across and 120 feet high, and lived for centuries. The nuts were an important food source for a wide range of wildlife, and the rot-resistant wood was a prized building material. Clark said that if the final generation of crossbred chestnuts survives in the national forests, this will raise great hopes about other species, like hemlocks and ash trees, that are being destroyed by nonnative pests. "If we can restore this tree to its natural habitat, it will be the greatest success story in natural resource conservation," Clark said.

Submitted by Kathi Mestayer