



THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 No. 10 October 2009

General Member- ship Meeting	"What's on Your Plate?"	Something New to Worry About	Bird Sleuths at New Quarter Park	Estuaries Day at York River State Park	Friday Frolics	Wetlands Ecol- ogy with Cohort IV
Page 3	Page 5	Page 6	Page 8	Pages 10-11	Pages 16-17	Page s 18-19

Message from the president

Can Members of the Historic Rivers Chapter Act as Advocates?

Lately, several members of our chapter have inquired as to whether the chapter can act as advocates for any particular cause or issue. According to Article III B of our bylaws, *"No part of the activities of the Chapter, nor those of any individual that belongs to any membership category of a Chapter, shall be devoted to advocacy, lobbying, political or private promotion of issues, agendas or businesses or personal endeavors through the use of the Master Naturalist name or by identifying one's self as a Virginia Master Naturalist."*

Here's what the VMN Volunteer Policy Handbook (2/26/2009) has to say about it:

*"The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a public service program operated by the State Program Sponsors to provide accurate, unbiased natural resources information. The Virginia Master Naturalist title **may not** be identified with any particular political viewpoint and **may not** be used by groups or individuals as they participate in political advocacy. The title is to be used **only** when doing unpaid volunteer work associated and approved by the pro-*

gram. Any implied commercial endorsement resulting from use of the VMN title is improper. Therefore, the title may not be used for commercial publicity or private business. Participating in a commercial activity, association with commercial products, or giving implied VMN endorsements to any product or place of business is a violation of VMN policies. VMNs may only identify themselves as such while volunteering in conjunction with official/approved VMN programs or activities, NOT for business or personal gain. VMN training and experience may be given as qualifications when seeking employment; however once employed, credentials may not be displayed by the VMN or the employer."

So... the answer is no, members of the chapter are not allowed to act as an advocate for any particular cause or issue.

We represent five state agencies: *Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)*, the *Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF)*, the *Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)*, the *Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF)* and the *Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH)*. When you read the paragraph above, it is obvious that the state considers us to be unpaid

CHAPTER

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Training Committee

Bruce Hill, Chair

Outreach/Publicity

Adrienne Frank, and Gary Driscole

Message from the president, continued from page 1

volunteers for all these agencies. However, what I liked most about the paragraph above is how it describes that we are a public service program to provide "**accurate, unbiased natural resources information.**" We accomplish this when we provide education and outreach to the community and when we put our training into practice on projects that benefit the state.

Thanks for the questions, and keep up the good work!

Regards,

Susan Powell, President

Historic Rivers Chapter

VA Master Naturalist Program

SAVE THE DATE!!!

December 9, 2009

Our General Membership meeting will be held at the Williamsburg-James City County Recreation Center on Longhill Road.

This will also be our holiday party—details to come.

Our very special guest speaker will be Michelle Prysby.

Time Sheets

Jeanette Navia asks that you continue to send in your time sheets using the same Word doc form as before. You do not need to include travel time for Advanced Training, but please do include hours for Volunteer Service. Travel time for volunteer service goes toward your milestone hours.

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 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.

Cohort IV Training Schedule through December

By Shirley Devan

Topic	Day of Week	Date	Time	F/T	C/ Rm	Adv Tr	Speaker	Category	Location
October-09									
Field Trip: Wetlands Ecology	1st Saturday	3-Oct-09	9 am - 4 pm	6			Hugh Beard & Charlie Dubay	Training [Field Trip]	York River State Park
Dendrology	1st Tuesday	6-Oct-09	6 pm to 9 pm		3.0		Stewart Ware	Training	Human Services Bldg.
Monthly Chapter Meeting	2nd Wednesday	14-Oct-09	6 pm to 9 pm			2.0	TBD	Monthly Meeting	Human Services Bldg.
Geology	3rd Tuesday	20-Oct-09	6 pm to 9 pm		3.0		Jerre Johnson	Training	Human Services Bldg.
Adv Training: Geology	4th Saturday	24-Oct-09	9 am to 3 pm			5.0	Jerre Johnson	Advanced Training [Field Trip]	
Halloween	5th Saturday	31-Oct-09							
November-09									
Indigenous Cultures of VA	1st Tuesday	3-Nov-09	6 pm to 9 pm		3.0		Aleck Loker	Training	Human Services Bldg.
Monthly Chapter Meeting	2nd Wednesday	11-Nov-09	6 pm to 9 pm			2.0	TBD	Monthly Meeting	Human Services Bldg.
Wildlife Mapping	2nd Saturday	14-Nov-09	9 am to 3 pm			6.0	HRC Staff	Advanced Training	Human Services Bldg.
Interpretive Skills and Field Methods	3rd Tuesday	17-Nov-09	6 pm to 9 pm		3.0		Steve Living	Training	Human Services Bldg.
Thanksgiving	4th Thursday	26-Nov-09							
December-09									
Entomology	1st Tuesday	1-Dec-09	6 pm to 9 pm		3.0		Barbara Abraham	Training	Human Services Bldg.
Annual Membership Meeting and Party	2nd Wednesday	9-Dec	6 pm to 9 pm			2.0	Michelle Prysby	Training	

General Membership meeting

October Meeting—Wednesday, October 14, 2009

6:00 pm—9:00 pm

Our speaker for Oct. 14 is Lance Gardner. He will be talking about natural ways to repel insects in the garden and natural plantings. Biography: PhD student at VIMS working on innovative eelgrass restoration techniques; MS in Oceanography & Limnology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison; BS in Biology and Chemistry; He will be giving the talk as a Master Gardener currently with the Gloucester Master Gardener group.

November Meeting—Wednesday, November 11, 2009

6:00 pm—9:00 pm

Our speaker for Nov. 11 is Ben Owens, the nursery supervisor at the College of William and Mary.

Advanced Training Opportunities

Virginia Institute for Marine Science (VIMS)

Mad Lab:

Lurking in the Shadows

Thursday, Oct. 22nd , 6-8pm

Join us for the 3rd Annual Mad Lab (Thursday not Tuesday)! Visit this "spooky" lab and study animals that lurk in the shadows of Chesapeake Bay. Learn about gar, snapping turtles, oyster toadfish, and bowfins. There will be lots of spooky, hands-on, children's activities and a short "Bay Animals" talk by PhD student Pat McGrath. The lab will be in full Halloween décor. Children and adults are encouraged to enter the Mad Lab Costume Contest! These family-friendly labs are provided by the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve at VIMS. There is no charge, however registration is required due to limited space. Registration required; call 804-684-7878.

After Hours Lecture:

Is there oil on our horizon?

Thursday, Oct. 22nd, 7:00pm

Recent legislative and executive actions have opened the possibility of gas and oil drilling in Virginia's offshore waters. Join VIMS Professor Woody Hobbs as he describes the geologic likelihood of petroleum discovery on Virginia's continental shelf and potential environmental issues related to oil extraction and refining. Registration (required); call 804-684-7846. The After Hours Lecture Series is provided in part by CBNERR-VA and CCRM.

THE VIRGINIA LIVING MUSEUM

October 6

The Biology and Behavior of Bats

The bat is the only mammal that can truly fly. Found in many habitats on planet Earth, bats have unique adaptations including greatly enhanced senses for navigation and for locating and catching food. In addition to exploring these fascinating adaptations, we'll discuss the roles bats play in our daily lives, and the importance of bat conservation. Presented by Susan Summers, VLM Education Associate.

Ages: 16 and above.

Time: 6-8 p.m.

Cost: VLM members \$5, non-members \$7, active VLM volunteers free. Call 757-595-9135 to register.

November 10

Ice Age - The Real Story

Four times during its history, our earth has been plunged into the deep freeze. What caused these ice ages? Why did they end? What evidence did they leave behind? Join us as we create a tabletop ice sheet and watch it move, and examine the remains of strange and wonderful ice age critters. Could "Icehouse Earth" return? Presented by Betsy Wolin, VLM Education Associate.

Ages: 16 and above.

Time: 6-8 p.m.

Cost: VLM members \$5, non-members \$7, active VLM volunteers free. Call 757-595-9135 to register

Seafood Watch – What’s on Your Plate?

By Patty Riddick

For some time now I have been interested in articles put out by the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California concerning the sustainability of our world’s seafood. You might ask why we should be interested in California when we live in Virginia. Well, here’s the catch. If we don’t begin to make informed choices in our supermarkets and restaurants, we may lose much of the seafood we have come to love and enjoy. The Monterey Bay Aquarium is only one of many groups trying to protect and save this natural resource. An article appeared in *The Daily Press* in December of 2008 in which the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center addressed this very topic. It stated, “---according to fisheries experts, we’d better start making informed decisions about the fish we eat now if we want them to keep showing up for dinner in the future. That’s the aim of the Virginia Aquarium’s new Sensible Seafood program, which has enlisted local marine scientists, restaurateurs and seafood suppliers to help consumers understand the potential impact of their taste buds on the world’s fishery populations.”

To give you an example, consider everyone’s favorite, the shrimp. An aquarium staff member at the Virginia Living Museum told me that we should never eat or order imported shrimp from Asia as the harvesting processes are so horrendous there that every living thing in the surrounding habitat is annihilated as the shrimp are procured. Better to buy



Shrimp Become Aware

Shrimp trawl nets accidentally catch and kill more than 1.8 million tons of marine life each year. Shrimp farming overseas has destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres of mangroves. Try US shrimp instead. Visit www.seafoodwatch.org for more information about making ocean friendly seafood choices.

Monterey Bay Aquarium®SeafoodWatch

Patty Riddick says “Stay tuned for another Seafood Watch tip next month!”

and eat U.S. wild or farm-raised shrimp. To quote one example from the above mentioned *Daily Press* article, “The fisheries here are very well managed and regulated. In American shrimp fisheries, there’s 99 percent compliance with turtle-excluding devices.”

The Monterey Bay Aquarium and the Virginia Aquarium both put out pocket guides to help us in making our choices. I have on hand ample supplies of the Monterey Bay Seafood Watch Sustainable Seafood Guides for the Southeast 2009 which I am happy to share. You may also contact them at www.seafoodwatch.org. The Virginia Aquarium puts out a Sensible Seafood Pocket Guide that is much the same and you can contact them at www.virginiaaquarium.com, and then click on “Protect” and “Sensible Seafood.” Each guide folds into sections: “Best Choices”, “Good Alternatives”, and “Avoid,” and easily fits in your wallet or pocket. I personally love Orange Roughy and Grouper, but since learning more about this subject, I just do not order them or buy them. I am a shrimp lover too, but I pass on any selections labeled “imported.” I hope I am helping. My next step is to tell the restaurant owners that I am concerned with some of the offerings on their menu. Although this is not always an easy thing to do, we can all try to do better.



Something New to Worry About:

A Report from the Virginia Environmental Education Conference, September 9

By Sara E. Lewis

Since I've gotten "environmental religion" my family takes every opportunity to offer up a well-meaning tease about my occasional "The Sky Is Falling" proclamations. You may have seen me wearing my Tree Hugger tee shirt or carrying my Global Warming mug (add hot coffee and watch the polar ice melt). I must admit that I even poke fun at myself from time to time. So when I came home from the Virginia Environmental Education Conference at Hampton University and told my husband that we have something new to worry about, he laughed. "No really," I told him. "I learned about something new today: noctilucent clouds."

I had never heard about them before, so shared my new knowledge about this eerie phenomenon with my husband. In case you haven't heard about them, let me enlighten you (no pun intended). Noctilucent clouds are also known as polar mesospheric clouds or night-shining clouds. The clouds, located 50 miles up in the outer band of Earth's atmosphere, are illuminated as they reflect the sun's light peeking around our planet's edge. However, the illuminated mesospheric clouds can only be seen by Earthlings in deep twilight. They were most commonly observed in the summer months at latitudes between 50 and 70 degrees north and south of the equator.

Recently, the clouds have been observed between 40 and 50 degrees and sparked alarm in Northern Europe and the United States as observer took photos of the weird night-shine for publication in newspapers and blogs. If you were outdoors this summer looking for frogs or bats or other nocturnal critters and trained your eyes up, you may have gasped at the sight too. Where aliens flashing their lights, like deer spotters, on our planet?

At the Center for Atmospheric Sciences at Hampton University, Dr. James M. Russell and Dr. M. Patrick McCormick have been watching the outer atmospheric light show for some time. They delivered an

opening plenary session lecture at the VEE Conference about the Center they founded at HU following careers at nearby NASA. They knew their work was not done. The night-shining clouds were first reported in the late-nineteenth century after the volcanic eruption on the Indonesian island of Krakatoa. Daytime observations of the clouds were made by a satellite in 1969. Regular space-based observations began in 1982. Greater frequency and observations with the naked eye at lower latitudes have occurred since then. The photo included with this article is from a NASA press release and shows one of the first ground sightings of noctilucent clouds in the 2007 season. It was taken by Veres Viktor of Budapest, Hungary on June 15, 2007.

In their second career lives, Russell and McCormick are working with students to launch the Aeronomy of Ice in the Mesosphere (AIM) spacecraft, the first satellite able to determine the properties of the distant yet increasingly present ethereal bodies. They are collecting data on the mysterious ice clouds that dot the edge of space to help us understand why the clouds, once viewed exclusively over the Polar Regions, are now lighting up the night at lower latitudes.

The clouds form at the poles, the coldest part of the Earth's atmosphere, in the summer season. In the northern hemisphere they begin appearing in mid-May and last through mid-August, and in the southern hemisphere they begin in mid-November and last through mid-March. The seasonal lifecycle of noctilucent clouds is controlled by complex interactions between temperature, water vapor, solar activity, atmospheric chemistry and small particles on which the cloud crystals form. Human-induced factors like carbon dioxide, methane, and other gases that cause warming in the lower atmosphere also cause cooling and more water vapor in the mesosphere, resulting in the increase in upper atmosphere cloud formation. The satellite will simultaneously measure air pressure and temperature, moisture content and cloud dimensions, providing data needed to determine the role of

polar mesospheric clouds as important indicators of the planet's changing climate.

For now, program scientists quoted in a NASA press release say, "These clouds are indicators of conditions in the upper reaches of the Earth's atmosphere, and are an important link in the chain of processes that result in the deposition of solar energy into Earth's atmosphere. AIM will provide an understanding of how and why these clouds form, an important contribution toward the NASA goals of understanding the fundamental physical processes of our space environment and how the habitability of planets is affected by the interaction of planetary magnetic fields and atmospheres with solar variability."

Note: Noctilucent clouds should not be confused with the Aurora Borealis, which occurs even farther up, in

the ionosphere. The Northern Lights (and Southern



Lights) result from the collision of charged particles from the Sun that swirl in solar winds and take quantum leaps when excited by the Earth's magnetism ... or something like that.

Noctilucent clouds

Advanced Training Opportunity and Environmental Education

Project WILD

November 4th, 9am-4pm, Virginia Zoo www.projectwild.org This program emphasizes wildlife because of its intrinsic and ecological values, as well as its importance as a basis for teaching how ecosystems function. The Project WILD K-12 Curriculum and Activity Guide focuses on wildlife and habitat. Each is organized in topic units and instructors may use one or many Project WILD activities or the entire set of activities to serve effectively as the basis for a course of study. The workshop is free; registration required by October 21st to Holly Carson at holly.carson@norfolk.gov or 441-1347

AN INVITATION TO VISIT GRAFTON PONDS NATURAL AREA PRESERVE

Earn service hours! Get outside and enjoy fall with your fellow Master Naturalists! Join Patty and Larry Riddick on Saturday, 17 October, from 10:00 a.m. until approximately 12 noon for a Walkabout at Grafton Ponds. We'll be walking on paths in a wooded area for two to three miles to get acquainted with an area the Chapter has approved as a Wildlife Mapping Volunteer Service Project site. It is suggested you bring insect repellent and wear long pants, plus, you might want to bring your camera and or binoculars. Anyone interested in participating, or if you have any questions, please call or email Patty Riddick at 757-868-7663, pattyridnick@cox.net. Hope to see you there!

Directions and Parking: From Route 17 turn onto Siege Lane which is directly across from York H.S. Follow Siege Lane until you reach Yorktown Elementary School on your left and turn into the parking lot. We will meet there and walk into the Grafton Ponds area together. You may park in the school parking lot or in front of the school along the street, but please do not park elsewhere on Siege Lane.



Virginia Master Naturalist Mike Millin discussing his trip to Costa Rica and the Panama Canal during the September general membership meeting.

Photos courtesy of Gary Driscole

Bird Sleuth Program at New Quarter Park September 11, 2009



Above: Two very interested “sleuths”

Left: Virginia Master Naturalist Sheila Kerr-Jones overseeing sleuthing events

Below left: Virginia Master Naturalists

Mike Millen and Sarah Lewis

Photos courtesy of Lester Lawrence
(Cohort IV)

The Virginia Native Plant Society had its Annual Meeting this past weekend near Roanoke. Attendance was well over 100 (did I hear 130?! I drove out with a new VNPS member, and ran into several others from the Clayton Chapter. The weather was dreadful, but in perfect VNPS/Master Naturalist style, we didn't let it keep us indoors.

A highlight, however, was the (indoors) keynote speaker on Saturday night, Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home* (and U. of Md. professor in his spare time). If you don't have this book, get it now. It's out in paperback. I have bought four copies so far and only kept two; one went to Hugh Beard (environmental sciences high school teacher), one to Carol Heiser at DGIF. Hugh said it was mind-blowing.

Doug spoke eloquently about the problems in modern society and their impacts on the environment. At one point, he summed it up by saying that most of us feel that "Nature is well and happy someplace else." While we, in contrast, are well and happy in the center of our "sterilized" lawns and (mostly nonnative) landscapes.

I'll just summarize a few of his best (IMHO) points:

1. In healthy ecosystems, there is a lot of redundancy; niches and positions in the food web are covered by more than one species or organism. However, with the lower biodiversity of most of our suburbs and developed areas, the redundancy is lost; when one species or niche disappears, the whole food web crashes.

2. Where there is more plant diversity there is more animal diversity. Biodiversity is an essential, non-renewable resource.

3. There is such a thing as "functional extinction" when population numbers of a particular plant/animal in an area get so low that they are not able to perform their function in the food web/ecosystem. If one were to claim that because there are no documented examples of extinctions due to nonnative invasives, that claim would be not only largely irrelevant, but also wrong (Tallamy says that there are, indeed such examples on islands). So there.

4. Only native plants are part of the food web. He defines "native" as being an organism that shares an evolutionary history with the species in a given area. For example, many caterpillars can only survive and reproduce in the presence of three or fewer plant types! That's because those caterpillars have co-evolved in the presence of a specific plant to be able to digest its leaves despite the defensive toxins that the plant has developed to protect itself!

5. When we buy and plant nonnatives, we are depriving wildlife of food; a "pest-resistant" plant is a food-free plant. For example, the "butterfly bush" only supports ONE species of butterfly. Sure, more species feed on the nectar, but when it comes time to reproduce and make more butterflies, the butterfly bush is virtually useless. Oaks, on the other hand, support over 500 species of butterflies.

Continued on Page 16



Estuaries Day At York River State Park September 26, 2009



Working hard - Three planners for the annual meeting.



Eating brownies – Alice made brownies for the workers at Estuaries Day, especially good for motivating Cohort IV to come back again.

For the third year, the VMN Historic Rivers Chapter participated in Estuaries Day - a special event day held annually at York River State Park to “celebrate our estuaries and tidal rivers.” We joined a variety of other exhibitors, including the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS); Jerre Johnson (retired William & Mary Professor Emeritus of Geology) with his fossils; and York River State Park archeology display and “Critter Corner.” Canoe and kayak rides, hay rides, seining activities, ranger-led hikes, and other fun family activities rounded out the day.

Our booth spanned three tables and contained an educational and fun activity, specimens for participants to identify, information about the Master Naturalist program, and a few give-aways. Patty Riddick gathered and sorted the toolkit and helped to set up the display including the two newly revamped boards with laminated photos with thanks to Felice Bond. Angela Scott gathered and posted wild flowers and plants and found an expert or two to name them all. Gary Driscole brought a prothonotary warbler box and nest and talked about his monitoring project. However, the highlight of our display was a “phytoplankton” water activity that children and adults enjoyed, thanks to Barb Dunbar.

I would like to thank all of those from Cohorts I through IV who contributed time and expertise at our display: Patty Riddick, Barbara Boyer, Angela Scott, Alice Kopinitz, Jeff Miller, Dean Shostak, Steven David, Ted Sargent, and Les Lawrence.

Submitted by Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole

Pictures courtesy of Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole



Baby snapping turtle – found on the shore line of the York River

Photo: Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole



Above: Beautyberry *Callicarpa dichotoma*
Below: Hearts a'burstin' or *Eunoymous americanus*
Photos courtesy of Jeff Miller (Cohort IV)



Historic Rivers Chapter's display booth at Estuaries Day—September 26, 2009
Photo: Jeff Miller



Fourplay From the Eastern Shore Birding Festival

Caption by Larry Riddick Photo by Seig Kopinitz



October Events at New Quarter Park



October

3 - Walk & Talk, Jerre Johnson, Va. Coastal Plain Geology, 1-3 p.m.

3 - One Last Time! Moonlight & Music, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

3 - Mountain Bike Clinic, ages 8 & up, 9 a.m.-Noon. Register: janetmz@cox.net.
 ⇨

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

10 - Mountain Bike Clinic, kids 8 & up, 9 a.m.-Noon.

11 - New Acoustic Music Festival. \$12 in advance, \$15 at gate, 12 & under free. www.myspace.com/NAMfest, 1 p.m.-Dusk. ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨

17 - Last BYOK of 2009!, 9 a.m.-Noon

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

24 - Teaching Garden Workday, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Shelter & Fire Circle Reservations: \$50 & \$25; Call 890-3513
 Disc Golf: Daily \$3, Annual \$25; Sales & Rentals

Directions

- Exit Col Pkwy at Queen's Lake, turn right. Turn on Lakeshead Dr. (Look for sign.)
- From Peninsula: Exit I-64 at Rt. 199 toward Jamestown. Exit Rt. 143W. Right on Peniman Rd., left on Hubbard Ln. Right on Lakeshead Rd., follow to Park.







Upcoming events:

Mountain Bike Clinic
 For kids ages 8 & up, Steve Nevins & Janet Zwirner, 9 a.m.-Noon. Parents may attend with kids! Helmets required. Register with name, age, phone number, & riding experience to janetmz@cox.net.



November

7 - Walk & Talk, Clyde Marsteller, Insects, 10 a.m.-Noon

7 - Fall Colors Disc Golf Tournament, Intermediate & below, Registration 8 a.m., Start 10 a.m.

8 - Fall Colors Disc Golf Tournament, Advanced & Open, Registration 8 a.m., Start 10 a.m.

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


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

28 - Teaching Garden Workday, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

December

5 - Walk & Talk, Holiday Flora, Libbey Oliver, 10 a.m.-Noon

New Acoustic Music Festival
 Celebrate American Roots Music! Nora Jane Struthers, The Honey Dewdrops, Tripping Lily, The Gurleys, & The Demijohns. \$12 in advance, \$15 at the gate, children 12 & under free. Tickets at The Corner Pocket, Squires, New Quarter Park, & online (www.myspace.com/NAMfest). See website for schedule, rain contingency, etc. 1 p.m.-Dusk.



More Information at: www.meetup.com/NewQuarterPark & www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec
 New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., 757-220-3653 (after November 1 - 757-890-5840) . York Co Parks & Rec, 757-890-3500

Congratulations!



Jim Booth completed forty hours of class study, eight hours of advanced training and forty hours of volunteer service to complete certification to become a Virginia Master Naturalist in the Historic Rivers Chapter. Awarding his certificate is Jeanette Navia, Membership Chair.

Fourteen Master Naturalists from the first cohort of the Historic Rivers chapter have re-certified for a second full year of service. Pictured are Alice Kopinitz, Seig Kopinitz, Shirley Devan, Clyde Marsteller, Susan Powell, Gary Hammer, Felice Bond, Sheila Kerr-Jones. Not pictured: Tim Christensen, Kari Abbott, Angela Scott, Patricia Riddick, Larry Riddick, and Linda Cole. In addition, pins for 250 hours of service were awarded to Patty Riddick, Alice Kopinitz, Seig Kopinitz; for 500 hours of service to Shirley Devan; and for 1000 hours of service to Susan Powell and Kari Abbott.

Pictures courtesy Gary Driscole

Friday Frolics at York River State Park



Mary Apperson, Les Lawrence and Lois Ullman clearing deadwood from the trails.

Photo: Felice Bond

**You, too, can have this much fun!
Join the group on Fridays at the
York River State Park.**

Earn volunteer service hours, enjoy one of the most beautiful places in the world, and have fun all at the same time!

Contact Mary Apperson or Shirley Devan for more details!

Continued on Page 16



UNDERSTANDING WATERSHEDS

WHY WE NEED TO PROTECT THEM

When: Saturday, OCTOBER 10, 2009
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Where: JCWRC Rooms A and B, Longhill Road

Protecting JCC Natural Legacy

Paul Sturm, Director, Center for Watershed Protection

Buffet Lunch Break

How Effective is Our Water Management?

Dr. Jerre Johnson, Geologist

What You Can Do in Your Back Yard

Linda Lucas & Art Gustafson, Master Gardeners

Question/Answer Session

Moderator: Michael Woolson

Sponsored by the Friends of Powhatan Creek, the Historic Route 5 Association and the James City County Concerned Citizens (J4C). Free and open to the public; reservations not required. Contact Barbara Gustafson @ Barbara-sg@cox.net or Sarah Kadec @ skadec@verizon.net for additional information.

Cohort IV Going Strong!

Cohort IV is about 1/3 of the way through their Basic Training. They've got Biology Basics, Risk Management, Habitats, Plant Biology, and Dendrology under their belts plus they spent a wonderful day at York River State Park learning about Wetlands from Hugh Beard and Charlie Dubai.

Coming up in October and November are:

Geology with Dr. Jerre Johnson, October 20 in the Multipurpose Room and the Geology Field Trip Saturday October 24. If you want to join us for the field trip, let me know and I'll pass along the logistics.

Indigenous Coastal Plain Cultures with Aleck Loker, November 3 in the Multipurpose Room.

Interpretive Skills and Field Methods with Stephen Living, November 17, in the Multipurpose Room.

Entomology with Dr. Barbara Abraham, December 1 in the Multipurpose Room. Citizen Science with Michelle Prysby, December 9 at the Community Center on Longhill Road. This will also be the Holiday Party. Stay tuned for more info from the Party committee.

Then we take a holiday break and resume January 5 with Herpetology and Tim Christensen and Ornithology with Bill Williams, January 19. Cohort IV is scheduled to graduate March 10, 2010.

All members of the Historic Rivers Chapter are welcome to attend any program. Classes start at 6 pm. You get Advanced Training hours for your attendance! We hope you'll come by and meet members of Cohort IV. They love learning about the natural world (just like everyone else in the Chapter) and they are a great addition to our "tribe." See you soon I hope.



Left to right: Bruce Stewart, Dean Shostak, Les Lawrence, Rhonda DeChirico, Jeff Miller, Paula Reichart, Ted Sargent, Christina Woodson, Ken Thompson, Linda Miller, Patty Maloney, Steven David, Nancy Norton, Renee Hirsch, Don Shepler, Lois Ullman.

More fun at Friday Frolics—York River State Park



You just never know who you are going to meet at the York River State Park!

Fence Lizard

Photo: Shirley Devan

Above Right:

Helping park staff move a large tent, about 20 x 40 2, helping spread gravel on trail in park.

Above Left:

Group of 2 helping to reassemble the tent: Lois Ullman and Seig Kopinitz

Photo: Shirley Devan



Group of 7 "under the tent" are (left to right): Seig Kopinitz, Mary Apperson, Alice Kopinitz, Shirley Devan, Lois Ullman, Les Lawrence, Gary Hammer.

Photo: Shirley Devan

Notes from the Virginia Native Plant Society Annual Meeting by Kathi Mestayer

Continued from Page 9

6. Moving up the food chain, this matters because birds need insects (incl. caterpillars) to feed their young.

They cannot raise their nestlings on seeds and nectar.

The protein in insects is very high quality and absolutely essential for baby birds. So, says Tallamy, without (native) insect host plants, "we feed the birds all winter and then starve them in the summer."

7. In general, woody plants support far more biodiversity than herbaceous plants. But both are necessary for habitat.

8. Regarding nonnative invasives: Japanese honeysuckle, for example, was used in landscaping for 80 years before it started to become invasive. It's not known how/why that happened, but it means that we can't know in advance if something will eventually cause problems.

9. Finally, in answering my last-minute question, Tallamy confirmed that the notion of "keystone" species is of only limited usefulness in protecting habitat/food

webs. "Anything can be a keystone species in the right circumstances."

In an hour-long presentation, he gave us more information (and ammunition, frankly) than we could really take in. The room was so quiet you could've heard a pin drop. He ended with several slides about how we need to take these messages to our suburban environments and turn them back into places that we share with nature and wildlife. A suggestion was to take 50 percent of the lawn acreage of every yard and plant it with natives (and do a good job if possible; leaf litter, variety of plants, habitat elements, etc). Connect the yards with hedgerows and contiguous planted areas. It won't obviate the habitat fragmentation/edge impacts, but it could be a huge improvement over what we have now. And conserve a heck of a lot of water in the bargain. And provide living outdoor spaces for us and our children.

Amen.



WETLANDS ECOLOGY WITH COHORT IV

On Wednesday the weather forecast was for 60% chance of rain on Saturday for Cohort IV's Wetlands Ecology field day at York River State Park. But Saturday dawned clear and the day was perfect for an outdoor learning experience by the York River.



Charlie Dubay on the beach at York River State park

Photo: Shirley Devan

Hugh Beard and Charlie Dubay, our instructors from James City County high schools, set out to teach Cohort IV how to identify wetlands and what functions wetlands serve. First we had to describe what relationship a doll crib, a sponge, a box of cereal, a box of detergent, and a coffee filter had to a wetland. Hugh described that wetlands are determined by the presence of water at or near the surface for part of the year; the presence of soils which are formed under wet conditions; and by the plants that are adapted to wet conditions. Our task this day was to experience all of these!



Red Eft—York River State Park

Photo: Shirley Devan



Box Turtle—York River State Park Photo: Shirley Devan

We walked out to the top of Taskinas Creek and identified trees in the uplands, on the slope, and in the wetlands. Both Hugh and Charlie were great at describing the trees and plants and giving individual attention to our questions and pointing out unusual trees and the difference between our flowering dogwood and our swamp (or silky) dogwood, which is an obligate wetland species.

Then we grabbed the soil sample tools and descended down to the boardwalk area in Taskinas Creek to look at soil (not dirt!!). We compared the soil to the wetland soil chart and used flags to set the boundary of the wetland. Hugh spotted a red eft, which will grow up to be a red spotted salamander -- an unusual find for this area. A good size box turtle marched off to get out of our way but still allowed a few photos.

Lunch turned out to be "free" courtesy of a church group meeting at shelter #3. Through Mary Apperson, they invited us over to enjoy barbecue, hamburgers, hot dogs, cole slaw, potato salad and all the fixings. By the way, the Master Naturalist volunteers on Friday had helped move and set up one of the tents they were using.

After lunch we ventured down to the beach where the tide was retreating to give us enough room to work the dip nets and seine nets. Hugh donned his swim suit and Rhonda DeChirico donned her waders to pull the seine through the shallow water. They pulled up sea-squirts, bay anchovies, comb jellies, blue crabs (small ones), silversides fish, and periwinkle snails.

Then off to the marsh where we experienced that "giant sucking sound" as our boots sank into the mud along the entry path. The marsh was very spongy. Soon the fiddler crabs started emerging from the salt meadow hay. The group collected plant samples and identified the spartina genus plus the marsh elder, the swamp aster, and the marsh orach. Several Great Blue Herons squawked while we admired the marsh "close up and personal." The light breeze kept the mosquitoes away and all agreed that a pleasant day was had by all. We are so grateful to Hugh Beard for designing the day for us and bringing a van full of resource materials, including the doll crib! Charlie Dubay was encyclopedic as he readily identified just about every plant we quizzed him about -- give both the English and Latin name! Being out in the field with Hugh and Charlie is a treat and not soon forgotten.

Thanks also to the members of Cohort IV for their enthusiasm and energy. Thanks also to York River State Park, Mary Apperson, and the rest of their busy staff who provided seining equipment and kept all the groups at the park happy on Saturday. A memorable day out in the field.

Below: Hugh Beard and members of Cohort IV discussing soil sampling

Shirley Devan



Stephen David, Charlie Dubay, Hugh Beard, Bruce Stewart.

Photo courtesy of Shirley Devan

Right:
Rhonda Dechirico preparing for seining
Below Right:
Rhonda, Renee Hirsch,
and Christina Woodson
in the marsh

Photo: Shirley Devan.

