



## THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 No. 6 June 2010

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### Message from the president

#### Who Are We?

In preparation for developing a strategic plan for this Chapter, we need to define first who we are programmatically. At first glance that's simple enough as we are the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists. So, we are located demographically between the James River and the York River on the coastal plain of eastern Virginia.

Hence, the task is to define what we do and what we strive for knowing that we operate on the peninsula of Virginia. Our programs, activities, and the organizations with which we collaborate and partner contribute to spelling out who we are.

Our official partners and joint sponsors include the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, the Departments of Conservation and Recreation, Forestry, Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Museum of Natural History. They are all integral to the Chapter. Each of these agencies is a critical component when we define who we are.

Our collaborations with other relevant non-sponsoring organizations that technically are subsets of our program are equivalently important programmatically to the Chapter. These organizations include the Williamsburg Bird Club, John Clayton

Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, and the Master Gardeners' organization.

The level of training and its breadth that the Chapter provides annually to our cohort classes for new members is becoming recognized by other chapters as providing an excellent subject matter foundation for new members. The caliber of technical credentials we have available from our proximity to William and Mary and VIMS (Virginia Institute for Marine Sciences) helps us maintain this level of subject matter for our cohort classes.

Our citizen science activities as public service to the residents of the area are one of the most important things that the Chapter does. We cannot under estimate how many children and young adults our outreach programs enlighten. Continuing education and awareness programs focused on subject matter of environmental and ecological importance provide information to area residents while accomplishing name recognition for the Chapter. Our task is to advance the public's understanding of environmental concepts and issues. Is this a major focus for our Chapter?

The many projects that our members have ongoing demonstrate the talent, energy, and dedication

## CHAPTER OFFICERS 2010

*Bruce Hill, President*

*Ted Sargent, Vice President  
& Programs Chair*

*Patty Maloney and Lois Ull-  
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*Jim Booth, Treasurer*

*Barbara Boyer, Newsletter  
Editor*

*Felice Bond, Historian*

*Alice Kopinitz & Jeanette  
Navia, Host*

*Shirley Devan, Membership*

*Susan Powell, Volunteer Ser-  
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*Bruce Hill & Shirley Devan,  
Training Chair*

*Dave Youker, Advanced  
Training*

*Adrienne Frank & Gary  
Driscole, Outreach Commit-  
tee*

*Seig Kopinitz, Webmaster*

*Dean Shostak, Field Trip Co-  
ordinator*

*Patty Riddick, Member-at-  
Large*

*Evelyn Parker, Member-at-  
large*

## COMMITTEES

### *Volunteer Service Projects*

*Susan Powell, Chair*

### *Advanced Training*

*Dave Youker, Chair*

### *Training Committee*

*Bruce Hill & Shirley Devan, Chair*

### *Outreach/Publicity*

*Adrienne Frank, and Gary Driscole*

that exist in this Chapter. The vastness of these projects should be reflected in how we define the Chapter. Are the projects that we are doing the ones that are most essential to the future of our organization? Where we put our energies says a lot about who we are as a Chapter. For example, the Chapter's early work in wildlife mapping has grown into an expertise for which the Chapter is recognized and respected.

In 2009, the Chapter logged 2,812.5 volunteer, programmatic hours working on our many projects. Not only is this 1.35 man years of citizen environmental public service but the Chapter was designated as the top Chapter in the State for volunteer hours for 2009! These stewardship work areas are varied and broad; they include a Virginia frog and toad calling survey, butterfly counts, habitat restoration, and nest boxes to name a few. Our Chapter has set the bar high.

Are the members of the Chapter knowledgeable backyard ecologists? Does the Chapter have a good understanding of the ecology of the peninsula and know how it should be maintained and managed for sustainability? Do we have the vision and forward thinking to do natural resource management for long-term sustainability? Will our grandchildren be managing these ecological resources or doing restoration projects to remediate our actions and practices?

Are there major omissions in our Chapter's program? As citizen ecologists are we addressing the most important activities and projects? And, is our program balanced?

These are the questions we should ask to collectively define who we are as a Chapter. What are the activities that differentiate us from other relevant organizations? How do we define our program to ensure we are worthy stewards of peninsula natural resources?

Bruce F. Hill, President

Historic Rivers Chapter

Virginia Master Naturalists

### Notes from the Board

All meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members.

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## Membership and Timekeeping Information

By Shirley Devan

Many thanks to Jeanette Navia (most recent Membership Chair) and Patty Riddick (first Membership Chair) for all they did to keep us and our hours straight and organized. They did a great job despite the clunky Texas membership database. Both have my sincere and everlasting admiration and thanks.

With the approval of the Board, I took a big leap and left the Texas database behind. I have entered everyone's 2010 hours into an Excel spreadsheet. I can send you a PDF of your 2010 hours if you wish. Just drop me an email or call me. We still have 2007, 2008 and 2009 hours in our records -- nothing has been lost thanks to Patty and Jeanette.

At the May Board meeting, Michelle Prysby drove down from Charlottesville to demo an online membership database they at the state level VMN office are considering. Michelle asked our chapter if we would be a pilot chapter to test the software. At least one other chapter will also be a pilot test site. The Board agreed and in the coming months our 2010 data will be transferred to the pilot database. When Michelle gives us the word, our members can start entering their hours online.

**DO NOT WORRY** -- we'll have a training session at one of our meetings. Michelle asked our chapter because she feels that most of our chapter members will be willing to enter their hours online. If you prefer to continue to send me your hours in the Microsoft Word document, that will be OK too.

Until Michelle gives us the go-ahead, continue to send me your monthly volunteer and advanced training hours using the MS Word document. Or mail them to me via snail mail. Or give them to me at a meeting. I can handle just about any format.

Remember: for Volunteer Service projects, include your TIME (not miles) for round trip from home to the service location. Miles to and from Advanced Training are NOT necessary and are not counted.

As always, contact me if you have questions. Thanks for your good help!!

Shirley Devan, Membership Chair  
Historic Rivers Chapter  
Virginia Master Naturalist

## Save the date...

July 17, for our annual picnic - details coming soon!



**Lois Ullman completed requirements for certification as a Virginia Master Naturalist in April.**

**At the Board Meeting May 5, Michelle Prysby presented Lois with her volunteer pin and certificate.**

**Photo courtesy of Shirley Devan**





## Another fun Friday at York River State Park

By Shirley Devan

Lois Ullman and Mary Apperson at YRSP Friday, May 28. Our task this day was to "plant" a new hitching post near the "Friends" garden and then to "plant" a sign in the horse trailer parking lot that had mysteriously been pulled out of its original spot. We're not sure how far the horse got with it!. Lois, Mary, and I worked with shovels and posthole diggers to "plant" these two items for the horse-riding public at YRSP.

Picture courtesy of Shirley Devan

## Springtime Wildlife Mapping

By Larry Riddick

I don't know about you other backyard WildlifeMappers, but I have missed the variety of fauna that the warmer months will bring. All winter long it's been birds, birds, and more birds. I have absolutely nothing against birds, but as I look back over the last several monthly data collection sheets, the only non-avian entries are an occasional cottontail, the ubiquitous gray squirrels, and a bird feeder-raiding raccoon.

As I write this in the early days of April, however, things are already starting to look up. In the invertebrate category, I've spotted some cabbage white butterflies and one lone tiger swallowtail. Thanks perhaps to the Pawpaw trees in my yard, several zebra swallowtails have been flitting about. This year I'm going to try to learn the species of some of the dragonflies that stake out their territories around the water garden.

As for herps, frogs are beginning to show up (See "Ode to a Southern Leopard Frog" in this issue), and two five-lined skinks skittered across my deck the other day. I'm anxious to see if some of last year's critters will reappear – four box turtles, a couple of black rat snakes, and even an eastern king snake put in an appearance.

I know there are some mammals that I would just as soon avoid – pine voles come to mind. At times it's hard NOT to be a wildlife bigot.

Anyhow, I wish all of you registered mappers happy hunting and encourage all of you non-mappers to join the fun.

## New Quarter Park Teaching Garden

By Sara Lewis

The Teaching Garden at New Quarter Park is looking better and better! Originally planned by a chapter member who had to resign and subsequently taken over the next year by another member who had to resign, this volunteer service project has gotten off to a slow start. But now Jeanne and Mike Millin and I are trying to regroup and have come up with a list of priorities. If you are able to help with this project we'd love to see you on the team. We will be sending out emails to keep you up to date on future workdays.

Our first priority is to line the entire path with logs and fill in with mulch to make the trail more attractive and easier for individuals and groups to follow. Plan to help us with this task on our next workday, June 26, at 9:15. Regular workdays are on the fourth Saturday of each month following the Bird Walk.

Next, Jeanne has taken an inventory of plants mentioned on the 4 season signs and we would like to add and maintain more of these plants to fill in the woodland area as much as possible. The plants are: Spring - Golden Ragwort, Blue-eyed Grass, Eastern Columbine, May Apple, Wild Ginger, Jack in the Pulpit, Showy Orchis; Summer - Beech Drops, Crane-fly Orchid, Pawpaw, Cardinal Flower; Autumn - Beauty Berry, Cinnamon Fern, Hearts a Bustin', Jewelweed; Winter - Christmas Fern, American Holly, Black Needle Rush, Wool Grass, and Partridge Berry. The Virginia Native Plant Society donated leftovers from their recent sale to us and these were planted in late April. Dorothy Whitfield of the Bird Club donated many ferns which she and Shirley Devan planted in late May. Additional natives are welcome! If you have any of the target plants or other natives that you can donate, please let us know!

We have worked on the rain garden some to prevent further erosion. This is shaping

up nicely, but we would love to have someone with rain garden experience take on key responsibility for this aspect of the Teaching Garden and make it look wonderful!

Next, we would like to have someone who is familiar with the Standards of Learning come up with ways that teachers might use the Teaching Garden with their students. Is there a handout that we might develop or creative ways to engage students in the Teaching Garden? We are interested in your thoughts about using this area as an educational resource, so contact us with any comments or suggestions.

Finally, we would like to have someone draw a site plan that can be used in the SOL materials and in a brochure that would be available to park visitors.

Remember, our regular workday is the fourth Saturday at 9:15, following the Bird Walk. Other workdays during the week may be necessary from time to time for planting and maintenance. In September, we will attack the Japanese Stilt Grass to keep the invasive out of this area.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sara E. Lewis .

<http://saraelewis.blogspot.com>



Cynthia and Bob Long with Master Naturalists at the Teaching Garden planting natives donated by the Virginia Native Plant Society.

## Ode to a Southern Leopard Frog

by Larry Riddick,

with credit (or condolences) to Angier Brock for having revived  
my creative juices

It first appeared amongst the heat

Summer Two Thousand Nine.

With spotted skin and large webbed feet

Its presence was divine.

It dozed throughout the sunny day

Beside our little pond.

And then at dusk would steal away;

Of crickets it was fond.

As morning came it would return

To claim its usual spot;

And doze all day beside a fern

Or sunken flower pot.

As days grew short and summer waned

It soon became quite clear.

Long poolside naps were now distained

And hibernation near.

So then, where went our little frog

As ice began to grow?

Perhaps beneath a nearby log

Or in the pond below.

We often thought as New Year came,

Would frog survive the frost?

And grace our little pond the same

As last year, or be lost.

And then came March to calm our fear.

Our friend, it did survive

Perhaps to stay another year

To brighten up our lives.

On warmer days it had resumed

Its place of days gone by.

We didn't know that trouble loomed,

I speak now with a sigh.

Our little friend just disappeared.

One day he wasn't there.

We knew not why, but what we feared

With you I now will share.

The very day our leopard left

Young bullfrog came around.

Is that the reason we're bereft?

The proposition's sound.

With sadness I do tell this tale,

As I lay pen to rest.

I promise not to weep and wail.

We have a new frog guest.



Photos courtesy of Larry Riddick

## Missing in Action



## The Culprit?

### Children's Workshops at The Williamsburg Botanical Garden and 4-H Summer Camp

*By Linda C. Miller*

Linda Miller taught her first children's workshop at *The Williamsburg Botanical Garden* on Saturday, May 22 -- a perfect place to learn about botanical art. Under the wonderful *green* pavilion, five young artists created two pieces of art drawing from *live* specimens that they personally selected from the garden.

"This was a special day for me. Last year I drafted a project plan as part of our Cohort IV Training and the project was approved. I now have supplies on hand to offer workshops at other area venues too," remarks Linda. "I would also like to thank Barbara Dunbar and Linda Cole, VMN Historic River chapter members and Angela Cingale of The Williamsburg Botanical Garden for volunteering their time that afternoon."

The next workshop at *The Williamsburg Botanical Garden* is Saturday, September 11, 2010.

Linda will also be volunteering her time at the *York County 4-H Summer Camp* the first week in August (Jamestown location, off Greensprings Road). There will be two children's workshops on two different days, with dates to follow. Thank you Larry Riddick for getting us together!

Photo Courtesy of  
Linda Miller



# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

## ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Date	Title	Location	Time	Remarks/Contact
<b>June</b>				
1 Jun	Something Is Killing Our Bats - And It's In Virginia!	Virginia Living Museum	1800-1930	<a href="http://www.thevlm.org">www.thevlm.org</a>
5 Jun	Terps Walk & Talk	New Qtr Park	1000-1200	Led by Randy Chambers
6 Jun	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
9 Jun	HRCVMN General Meeting	Human Resources Bldg	1900-2000	
12 Jun	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan
17 Jun	Wildlife Habitat "Train-the-Trainer"	Arlington County Park Operations Bldg (northern VA)	0815-1600	Deadline: 10 Jun POC: Carol.Heiser@dgif.virginia.gov call Sabrina Dohm at (540) 347-2334 or email sdohm@pecva.org before June 12
19 Jun	Tour of Wildlife-Friendly Farms and Fields	Rappahannock Library	0900-1500	
20 Jun	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
23 Jun	Wildlife Habitat "Train-the-Trainer"	Tuckahoe Branch Library in Henrico County (Richmond)	0900-1630	Deadline: 15 Jun POC: Carol.Heiser@dgif.virginia.gov
26 Jun	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0700-1000	Shirley Devan
<b>July</b>				
4 Jul	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
10 Jul	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan
15 Jul	Planting Wild - Healthier Plants, Critters, and People	Yorktown Public Library	1900-2100	<a href="http://www.claytonvnps.org">http://www.claytonvnps.org</a>
18 Jul	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
24 Jul	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0700-1000	Shirley Devan



## Training Opportunities from Virginia Institute for Marine Science

### Sharks!

**Starts:** August 26, 2010 at 7:00 PM

**Location:** McHugh Auditorium, Waterman's Hall

**Event URL:** <http://www.vims.edu/public/register/index.php>

**Contact:** 804-684-7846, [programs@vims.edu](mailto:programs@vims.edu)

Join VIMS professor Tracey Sutton as he explores the natural history of sharks and the management status of selected shark populations around the world.

Reservations to this free public lecture series are required due to limited space. Please [register online](#) or call 804-684-7846 for further information.

## Training Opportunities from the Virginia Living Museum

### **July 17, 2010 - Safari!!!**

#### **Butterflies of the Blue Ridge Mountains**



#### **Activity Level 2**

Join the Virginia Living Museum for our 18th annual Butterfly Watch to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Be a part of this nationwide activity as we collect and release, watch, count and identify butterflies while also enjoying the insects and flowers along the wondrous Blue Ridge Parkway. This trip is a great way to share nature with your family.

Age: 16+ (8-15 with an adult)

Time: 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Cost: \$35 VLM members; \$50 non-members

### **August 3, 2010**

#### **Underground Treasures - Virginia's Rocks and Minerals**

Below the surface throughout Virginia lies an amazing variety of rock and mineral resources. In this hands-on workshop, we'll use simple field and lab techniques to learn to identify native VA rocks and minerals ores, encounter some minerals with unusual properties, and show examples of some surprising commercial uses for these resources.

Presented by: Jim Drummond, VLM Education Associate

Ages 18+

Time: 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$5 Members; \$7 Non-Members. Active volunteers are free.

## Native Plant Walk—May 29, 2010

By Shirley Devan

Five Master Naturalists from the Historic Rivers Chapter participated in the native plant walk sponsored by the John Clayton Chapter of the VA Native Plant Society May 29 at Newport News Park. Alice and Seig Kopinitz, Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscole, and Shirley Devan joined members of the native plant society for a wonderful morning in the park.

Phil Merritt led the group of 12 down the trail to the Swamp Bridge. Phil pointed out numerous native plants along the way: partridgeberry, spotted wintergreen, duckweed (not native), skullcap, rattlesnake weed, swamp dogwood, plus many others. The Master Naturalists among us were in our usual mode -- DISTRACTED by such wonders as Prothonotary Warblers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Orchard Orioles, a Green Frog, 2 Painted Turtles, a Ribbon Snake, a fresh Luna Moth.





Hugh Beard holding a Black Rat Snake we found on the Bird Walk at NQP this morning, May 8.

Shirley Devan

Below: Eastern Fence Lizard found at WISC

Shirley Devan



## Wildlife Mapping at Grafton Ponds

April, 2010

Photos courtesy of Dean Shostak

Here are a couple of pictures. The worm snake is with my daughter Josie Shostak. The marbled salamander was found by her twin sister, Patricia.



David Douglas (1799 - 1834)

Intrepid Plant Hunter in the Golden Age of Exploration

David Douglas was a man destined from birth to be one of the greatest natural historians in a golden age of exploration. A prolific botanist and dendrologist, he was also an accomplished gardener, mountaineer, and surveyor. Born on the eve of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he would perfectly embody the spirit of the quintessential naturalist – explorer. Douglas possessed a capacity for extreme physical endurance, boundless courage, a relentless spirit, insatiable curiosity, and a discriminating botanical eye – qualities that would serve him well during three expeditions to North America. He also cherished a lifelong love and respect for the natural world and openness for encountering new cultures and customs. Perhaps one of the man's most admirable qualities was his remarkable perseverance and determination to pursue his goal, in spite of repeated episodes of remarkable misfortune.

Initially, David Douglas might have seemed an unlikely candidate for his later scientific accomplishments. Born in the small Scottish village of Scone on June 25, 1799, the stonemason's son was an unwilling student. The eight-mile walk to the schoolhouse afforded so many distractions to the budding young naturalist, he was rarely found within its oppressive walls. By the age of ten he was apprenticed to the head gardener at the estate of the Earl of Mansfield. Here he proved to be a quick study, under the strict tutorage of William Beattie who admired the youngster's facility to learn. Douglas attended classes in Perth to enhance his understanding of the scientific aspects of plant cultivation and by the age of 18 he was qualified to be head gardener at the estate of Sir Robert Preston in Valleyfield, Fife. This was an auspicious move, as Sir Robert was a collector of rare and exotic plant species and had a fine botanical library, which he generously shared with Douglas. The young man voraciously read the fascinating volumes, and regularly trekked some 30-40 miles by foot to attend botanical lectures at the University of Glasgow. This was to lead to his next position at the newly established Glasgow Botanical Gardens, where he encountered Professor William Jackson Hooker, an eminent Professor of Botany who was to become a life-long mentor, advisor, and friend. Hooker recognized the young man's character and educational attributes were ideally suited to the task of botanical exploration. In 1821 Hooker introduced Douglas to the fine art of pressing and drying plants on a field trip to the Scottish Highlands. By 1823 the professor determined his protégé was ready for greater endeavors and provided a letter of introduction to the Horticultural Society in London. The recently founded organization was particularly interested in obtaining the seeds of fruit trees and other species of economic value. This was a way for young men who showed promise to move ahead in their field and Douglas enthusiastically accepted the challenge. In June 1823 the twenty four year old departed for New York and then Canada. In September had his first encounter with misfortune. While clamoring up a tree in search of mistletoe, his guide took off with the young botanist's boat, money, field guides, and textbook. Furious but undaunted, he continued botanizing and returned to Britain in December with many new specimens.

A second expedition was planned, this time to the Pacific Coast of North America. In July of 1824 Douglas set off aboard the *William and Ann* stopping briefly in Brazil and the Galapagos Islands where he marveled at the remarkable species before reaching his destination, Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River in April 1825. At this time fewer than 400 Europeans inhabited the vast tract of land Douglas was to cover during his travels and the Hudson Bay Company controlled all of the transportation routes.

Douglas proved skilled in diplomacy and pragmatism in dealing with local native tribes he encountered (who they called "The Grass Man"). Although he had good relations with the Hudson Bay Company's men, tough French-Canadian natives known as *voyagers*, he disdained the company's policy of total destruction of the beaver and the introduction of alcohol as a bargaining tool with the native tribes.

Douglas appeared to take the almost unimaginable hardships of his profession with ease, sometimes so exhausted that crawled into camp on all fours at the end of a grueling day of plant collecting. He frequently dressed in rags, saving space for his equipment and specimens. On one occasion, near Spokane, Washington, he floated naked across the ice-melt engorged Barriere River carrying his precious carefully pressed seeds on his stomach in an attempt to preserve them.

Douglas's years in the north had resulted in severe visual defect in his right eye and crippling bouts of rheumatism and he

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

was not yet 30 years old. Nevertheless, he collected some 210 new species, and returned to London in October 1827. He established a record for species introduced by one individual, and was acclaimed for his efforts and awarded honorary memberships to the Linnean, Zoological and Geological Societies. However, he found it difficult to adjust to life in London and sought solace with his old friend Hooker, who in turn ensured Douglas received credit for his discoveries by publishing *Flora boreali americana*, largely a catalog of his North American collections.

By the summer of 1829, wanderlust had set in and Douglas set off on a third Horticultural Society expedition to the Pacific Northwest with a new traveling companion, a terrier named Billy. After landing at Fort Vancouver he headed south to California where he collected the majestic Sequoia, Monterey pines, and California Poppy. By 1832 he had amassed more than 500 new species, many destined to become important garden trees, shrubs, and herbs. But tragedy struck on June 13 when his canoe capsized. Many of his possessions, including his diary and over 400 species of seeds were lost. He barely escaped with his life, as he and his dog were swept downstream for almost two hours.

By now, his eyesight was deteriorating badly, blind in the right eye and with extremely blurred vision in the left. He could barely see well enough to pen letters to Hooker, who was by now the only beneficiary of his collecting, as he had severed ties with the Horticultural Society after a dispute involving the resignation of his mentor Sabine. In addition, he suffered from increasingly debilitating episodes of rheumatism.

The normally resilient Douglas was truly broken in body and spirit, and abandoned his plan for an overland route to Europe in favor a sea voyage via Hawaii, then known as the Sandwich Islands. Once on the Islands, he regrouped and delighted in the pleasant climate and bountiful flora. Sadly, Hawaii was to be the final destination for the intrepid botanist-explorer. On July 12, 1834 his mangled body was discovered at the bottom of a pit designed to trap native cattle. There has been much speculation that his death was the result of murder as the owner of the pit, an escaped English convict named Ned Gurney, stated he was the last person to see Douglas alive. A pouch of money was apparently missing from his body, although his terrier Billy was found guarding his master's other possessions nearby on the trail.

Douglas' death at the age of 35 was a terrible shock to those expatriates in the Islands who had befriended the genial and tenacious botanist. It resonated back in Scotland with his colleagues and especially the man who had so influenced his career, Sir William Hooker, who announced, "Douglas name and virtues will long live in the recollection of his friends."

In a career that spanned barely a decade, David Douglas had succeeded in collecting hundreds of species and successfully introducing some 240 species into cultivation in Britain. His introductions included many fast-growing species including the Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Sugar Pine (*Pinus lambertiana*), Noble Fir (*Abies procera*), and his namesake, the Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*).

In addition his collections of garden shrubs and herbs include the Flowering current (*Ribes sanguineum*), Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*), Peony (*Paeoni brownii*), delphinium (*Delphinium cardinale*), honeysuckle (*Lonicura ciliosa*) and eighteen varieties of lupine, including an unusual fragrant yellow variety.

He was a pioneer explorer and mountain climber, on several occasions possibly the first outsider to ascend a peak on the North American continent. Half a century before John Muir set sail for California and inspired a fledgling environmental movement in Yosemite, Douglas marveled at the wonders of the American West and questioned the destructive policies of the Hudson Bay Company and its devastating effect on the native beaver population and its habitat.

In one of his last journal entries, Douglas refers to his ascent of the 13,513-foot high volcano Mauna Loa. He describes the "inexpressible delight" he experiences on that occasion. It is a fitting conclusion to an extraordinarily eventful and productive life that he spent his final days roaming his beloved mountains searching for the next treasured specimen.

Sources include: [Seeds of Blood and Beauty](#) and [Scottish Plant Explorers](#), by Ann Lindsay; [Flower Hunters](#), by Mary and John Gribbin; [Botanical Riches: Stories of Botanical Exploration](#) by Richard Aitken, and [Plant Hunters](#) by Charles Lyte.

Prepared by Christina Woodson Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalist

## Walks on the Wild Side

Great things come in small packages. This is what we learned about wildflowers this spring. We had decided to focus on plants and especially wildflowers this spring. We spent a few days in the Virginia Mountains, went on a Wildflower Safari with the Virginia Living Museum, and hiked on many Native Plant Society walks with our local John Clayton Chapter. We saw many beautiful wildflowers, but the orchids were the stars, and so this report will focus on wild orchids in Virginia.

At the start of this adventure, we thought of wildflowers as those colorful patches that one sees in open fields, like the Blue Bonnets in Texas, but all of our wildflower walks focused on small glorious blooms in the woods. To really appreciate the plants beauty, you have to get up-close or take a close-up photo, but the rewards are spectacular. Since March we have seen five native orchids in bloom and are waiting for two more to flower.

Orchids are monocots and most of the more than 25,000 species are found in the tropics. The orchids found in Virginia are generally small and found in the leaf litter in woods. The Flora of Virginia lists 21 genera in the family Orchidaceae and 59 species. The natives are not so easy to see. They require specific habitat and often blend in well with their surroundings. Some are quite small and require sharp eyes and perseverance to find. And sometimes it is a happy accident to happen upon such a lovely specimen.



The first orchid that we saw in March is this Pink Lady's Slipper *Cypripedium acaule* found by Les Lawrence at the New Kent Forestry Center during a pre-walk for a children's event. These orchids are also found locally and require something specific in the soil in order to survive.



This Showy Orchid *Galearis spectabilis* was found on the Blue Ridge Parkway during a Virginia Living Museum Wildflower Safari.



We found many Putty Root Orchids *Aplectrum hyemale* on walks with Mary Hyde Byrd in Gloucester Co, and at Freedom Park on a walk with Donna Ware. These orchids lose their leaves before they bloom, and that makes them difficult to spot.



These Southern Twayblade Orchids *Listera australis* were also found at Freedom Park on a walk with Donna Ware. As you might guess, these treats need to be worked for. They are not found on the path and it is best to go with someone who knows them. These Southern Twayblade Orchids *Listera australis* were also found at Freedom Park on a walk with Donna Ware. As you might guess, these treats need to be worked for. They are not found on the path and it is best to go with someone who knows them. These Southern Twayblade Orchids *Listera australis* were also found at Freedom Park on a walk with Donna Ware. As you might guess, these treats need to be worked for. They are not found on the path and it is best to go with someone who knows them.



The Green Adder's Mouth Orchid *Malaxis unifolia* is very small and easy to miss. Again found at Freedom Park on the same walk with Donna Ware. The Green Adder's Mouth Orchid *Malaxis unifolia* is very small and easy to miss. Again found at Freedom Park on the same walk with Donna Ware. Two other orchids that can be found in our area have yet to bloom. They are the Downy Rattlesnake Plantain *Goodyera pubescens* and the Crane-fly Orchid *Tipularia discolor* so get out there and *WALK ON THE WILD SIDE* (or better yet, go on a Native Plant Society Walk.)

If you want to see more, larger photos of these orchids and many of the other wildflowers we saw, visit our Flickr site at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/askop/>

By Seig and Alice Kopinitz



## Bobwhite Habitat at New Quarter Park

By Sara Lewis

Cynthia Long of the Virginia Native Plant Society has been hard at work on the Bobwhite Habitat this year. Unfortunately, fescue grass is dominating the meadow.

Working with York County and VDGIF, she and others have made the decision to kill the grass with an herbicide. Jim Orband is recommending an herbicide that will kill the grass without destroying the hundreds of broad-leaved perennials that Cynthia and her husband, Bob, along with many volunteers have been planting and maintaining since the fall of 2008. When the herbicide has killed the grass, we will be looking for volunteers to once again help with replanting to establish the habitat.

Cynthia and Bob Long extend their thanks to all for their hard work and encouragement of this project.



Cynthia and Sara at the Bobwhite Habitat

## Emerging Contaminants in our Wastewater

By Kathi Meystayer

I went to a presentation by Deborah L. Debiase, VaDEQ's State Coordinator of Industrial Pretreatment. She spoke about "emerging contaminants" (like estrogenic compounds) in our wastewater. Some interesting facts:

- recent data from Boulder, CO show that one species of fish was about 50/50 male/female upstream of the wastewater plant, but 90% female downstream. The phenomenon was attributed to human estrogenic compounds in the wastewater stream, which we do not yet know how to treat.
- data from NW Ontario (Kidd et. al.) showed that very low levels of synthetic estrogen caused a collapse of the minnow population in a small lake, followed by a collapse of the entire food web the following year.
- it's best to dispose of unused pharmaceutical materials by crushing/mixing them with other materials to make them unrecoverable/unrecognizable and throwing them in the garbage. Of course, they then end up in the landfill, but there's a much greater delay in their entering wastewater plants as leachate, giving us a little time to figure out how to treat them.

She recommended visiting a few interesting sites:

1. <http://storyofstuff.org/bottledwater/> The Story of Stuff site has animated videos on the life-cycle impacts of products like bottled water and electronics. Very entertaining and interesting.
2. <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/> Environmental Health News is a site you can subscribe to for free (or just check out). Warning: it's kind of a buzzkill.

Did you know rice in China is commonly contaminated with mercury?

3. <http://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5140/t/5201/signUp.jsp?key=763> Health Care without Harm site talks about minimizing the use of materials like phthalates in the health care system.

## Chickahominy Kick-Off

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By Patty Maloney

The newly formed *Friends of the Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area* is hosting a "Chickahominy Kick-Off" event in Charles City county on **Saturday, June 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (rain or shine)**. If you enjoy spending time outdoors and meeting great people, come by and help out with three new projects that will improve wildlife habitat and increase everyone's enjoyment of the Management Area. Volunteers are needed to install wood duck boxes, mark access trails, and create a new planting around the main entrance. (Children under 18 must be supervised by a parent at all times.) A grilled lunch will be part of the schedule. Don't miss this chance to learn more about the Friends group! Advance registration is preferred; please call Darlene Lyons at 804-829-6580 by June 4 to register. (If you miss registration and come on June 12, you'll be assigned to a project with the most need.)

The volunteers will meet at the Manager's Residence of the Chickahominy WMA, 12510 Eagle's Nest Road, Charles City, VA. This is a 30-40 minute drive from Williamsburg. Take Route 5, John Tyler Memorial Highway west toward Richmond. After crossing the Chickahominy River, go 3-4 miles and turn right on Route 623, Wilcox Neck Road. (There is a Sub Shop on the corner of Route 5 and Route 623.) Go 4 miles and turn right on Eagle's Nest Road and then continue 2.7 miles to the residence.

This is an approved service project.

Thanks

Patty Maloney

PS: There is a boat ramp at the site...so bring your boat, kayak, canoe...and make a day of it!

### IMPORTANT HEALTH MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE PRYSBY

Dear VMN Coordinators—

Now is the time when ticks are out and about, and that's a real safety concern for our volunteers given the amount of time you all spend outdoors. We have had more than one Virginia Master Naturalist diagnosed with Lyme disease. There are several other tick-borne disease that occur in Virginia as well. Please share the following safety information with your chapter members and also ask them to be aware of ticks as a safety hazard when they are conducting hikes and other outdoor programs for the general public. This is very important safety information, so please think of numerous ways you can make sure people are aware of the risks and proper procedures. You might consider including a brief discussion of the topic at a chapter meeting, including materials in your basic training notebook, and putting it in your chapter newsletter, as well as emailing it to members.

I strongly urge all VMN volunteers to learn about the ticks that carry disease, how to identify them, and what the symptoms of tick-borne diseases are. Here is a good brochure from the Virginia Department of Health.

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/DEE/vectorborne/documents/Tick%20Brochure.pdf>

The brochure discusses a number of preventative measures one can take, but one of the most important things our volunteers and program participants can do is to check themselves thoroughly for ticks and immediately remove any they find. The brochure discusses proper techniques for tick removal. Something the brochure does not mention is that ticks might be hanging out in your clothes, just waiting to crawl out of your laundry basket later, so it is a good idea to search one's clothes as well as one's self and/or put field clothes directly into the washing machine.

Remember, when you are leading a group on a hike or other outdoor program, keeping folks safe is part of your task. So, be sure to inform participants about the possibility of ticks and remind them at the end of the program to check themselves and their clothes for ticks.

For you "lifelong learners" in the bunch, here is a link to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site on tick-borne diseases: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tick-borne/>. There you will find lots of additional information.

## National Pollinator Week at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve



Photo: Ron Circe

**Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**

**Banshee Reeks  
Nature Preserve  
21085 The Woods Road  
Leesburg, VA 20175  
[www.bansheereeks.org](http://www.bansheereeks.org)**

Take guided Butterfly, Wildflower, and Family Nature Hikes. Children will also be able to do pollinator activities with Virginia Master Naturalists.



See Loudoun Beekeepers Association information about Apiaries and Local Honey.



Learn about Pollinator Gardens, Virginia Native Plants, and attracting Butterflies and Hummingbirds to your backyard.



Find out about the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Annual Butterfly Count.



See a demonstration of the Banshee Reeks Bee Survey and find out how the preserve is contributing to an international project in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey.



Drinks and Snacks will be available for purchase, and feel free to bring lunch to eat at the picnic area.

### Participation and Support from:



For more  
information call  
703-669-0316.

For National  
Pollinator Week  
information visit  
[www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)

Photo: Ron Circe

## Baby Bluebirds Born to Adoptive Parents

Sara Lewis

Several Master Naturalist have experienced the pleasure and pain of new parenthood with me at New Quarter Park this spring as we've watched adopted Bluebird Boxes. Adoptive parents have checked for nests, recorded clutch initiation dates, seen newly hatched bluebirds, watched them grow and fledge, and then clean out their boxes for the next brood.

At Box #1, Dean Shostak had two birds laying eggs in a nest over a several week period. We know there were two different birds because some eggs were unpigmented (white instead of blue). Unfortunately, after waiting and waiting, the eggs never hatched and Dean has cleaned the house and hopes new bluebirds will find it.

At Nancy Norton's Box #2, things progressed in a more orderly fashion and over the course of a month, mid-April to mid-May, she watched the progression from nest to nestlings to fledglings. Five new bluebirds were welcomed to the world. I took a photo of one of the parents perched on the box and we could see the color bands that Allyson Jackson, our William and Mary grad student advisor, had put on fledglings last year. See looked in her database and found that the female parent was a bird that fledged from Box #1 on July 6, 2009.

Shirley Devan has looked in Box #3 to find it empty for more than a month! But her patience has paid off. "When I checked my Box #3 earlier this week (Monday, Memorial Day), the bluebirds had started a nest finally. A few pine needles purposefully placed! I'm hoping they continue."

Box #4 is set back from the road and was among the first to be inhabited by a bluebird pair. Evelyn Parker's eggs were among the first to appear and five birds fledged from the box. Likewise, at Box #5, Renee Hirsh watched the progress of 5 healthy fledglings.

Lois Ullman was among the most enthusiastic of our adopters. Like Shirley, she's been checking and checking, but Box #6 is still empty.

Gary Hammer at Box #7, Jeanette Navia at Box #8, and Susie Engle at Box #9 watched the progress of three more successful nests that produced 5 new bluebirds each. No second nests have appeared as of press time.

Jeanette had an interesting occurrence at her box. "My five blue bird babies fledged sometime between May 20-24<sup>th</sup> ... Then the adult male was found dead in the box. It had bands, so I checked these (the numbers were very small and the dead bird was very smelly, so it took a while, and a strong constitution). I sent the numbers to Allyson. She said that same bird had fledged the year before -- from the same box! I think that's pretty cool." Jeanette cleaned out her box but was concerned, so "... when I asked about the smell of death in the box, Allyson said that the birds had very little if any sense of smell, and that she had known of one female sometime in the past who was nesting on top of the body of a dead male. Kind of gross, but very interesting."

I've been watching Boxes #9, 11, and 12. I had a chickadee nest with 5 speckled eggs in #9, but the parents and the eggs were forcefully evicted by a bluebird pair. Bluebirds are higher in the "pecking order" than chickadees, according to Allyson. Although they got a late start, five bluebird nestlings had just hatched when I checked on June 3. Box #11 progressed along the same lines as the successful nests mentioned above. In Box #12, a clutch of 5 eggs wasn't being brooded so another bluebird built a nest on top and the second group fledged on June 1. When I cleaned out the box, the earlier unhatched eggs were still there. I broke the eggs because I was curious. Had the brooding of the nest on top caused the birds in these eggs to mature? But no, the eggs were still yolky inside.

Last but not least, Ted Sargent is looking in on Box #13. His brood was the only clutch of 6 eggs and they progressed normally and fledged a couple of weeks ago. I peeked in his box when at New Quarter on June 3 and there was a new nest with 4 eggs!

In case you we're counting as you read, that makes 46 new bluebirds that Master Naturalists have welcomed to the world since beginning this project in April. Bluebirds have up to three clutches of eggs per season. Tune in next newsletter for a progress report on the second nests for our Adopters.

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Sara E. Lewis



Birds in Bluebird Box #12 at 16 days old! Fifteen days is the usually time for nestlings to fledge. These birds fledged the next day.

Welcome to the world, Bluebird Box #12 nestlings!

All photos courtesy of Sara Lewis

*Linda C. Miller*

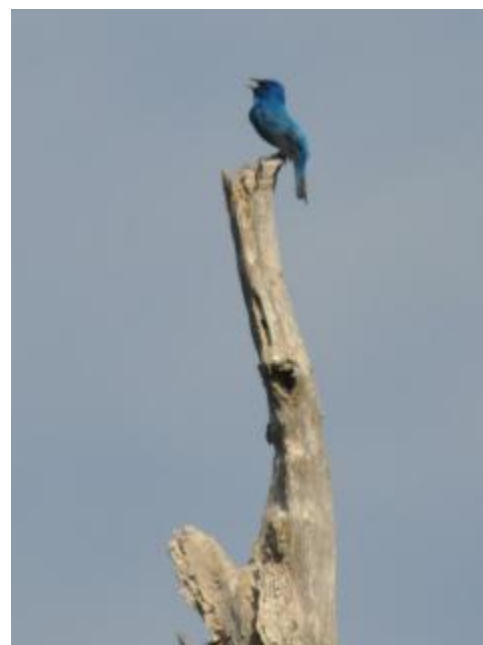
*Botanical Art Today*

"Losing Paradise? Endangered Plants Here and Around the World", ASBA's first national traveling exhibition is headed to the New York Botanical Garden. Please join us! If you can't make it to the opening on May 6th or to New York during the exhibition which runs there through July 25th you can enjoy it "virtually". Visit [www.asbalosingparadise.blogspot.com](http://www.asbalosingparadise.blogspot.com), a blog site dedicated to "Losing Paradise?"

There you'll find information about the exhibition, the venues and about the accompanying catalog edited by Carol Woodin, Director of Exhibitions for the ASBA. Be sure to subscribe to "email updates". Simply enter your email address in the form in the righthand column of the site and every few days (only when new content is posted to the site) you will receive an email showing one of the exquisite paintings from the exhibition with an excerpt from the catalog telling a bit of the fascinating story behind each of these vulnerable plants and the artists who depicted them.

Many new connections have been established among the artists and members of the scientific and conservation communities as a result of collaborations on works included in the show. Links to websites of the artists and the many organizations who supported them and whose ongoing research and conservation efforts are aimed at understanding, protecting, and saving these susceptible plants are included in the excerpts you'll receive. Archives of each blog post will be maintained on the site throughout the exhibition's tour ending later this year at the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Please forward this to anyone you know who has an interest in botanical art, art, gardening, nature or conservation. **If you have any questions or comments about the blog or would like to get involved with promoting this or other exhibitions and projects of the ASBA, please contact Jody Williams, ASBA Publicity Committee Chair at [botanicalartstl@att.net](mailto:botanicalartstl@att.net).**



Great-crested Flycatcher and Indigo Bunting, photos by Linda C. Miller

While Linda and Jeff Miller were wildlife mapping this month on the Greenspring Trail, two beauties stopped by, off the marsh bridge. The male Indigo Bunting sang for at least ten minutes after having his bath!



**Summer hours!**  
**Open daily from 8 a.m. until dusk**

## June 2010

- 5 - EVMA Group Ride & Meeting, 9 a.m.
- 5 - Walk & Talk: Diamond-backed Terrapins, Randy Chambers, William & Mary Keck Environmental Lab Director
- 5 - Chesapeake Experience Evening/Sunset Paddle, \$50/person. To register [www.chesapeakeexperience.org](http://www.chesapeakeexperience.org) or call 890-0502.
- 6 - Disc Golf Tournament



- 12 - WBC Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.
- 12 - Chesapeake Experience Mini Kayak Camp (9:30am – 3:30pm) ages 6-8; \$55/person. To register [www.chesapeakeexperience.org](http://www.chesapeakeexperience.org) or call 890-0502.
- 19 - BYOK! 9 a.m.-noon
- 25 - Moonlight and Music Jam, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 26 - WBC Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.
- 26 - Master Naturalists Teaching Garden Workday, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 28-July 5 - Cub Scout Day Camp



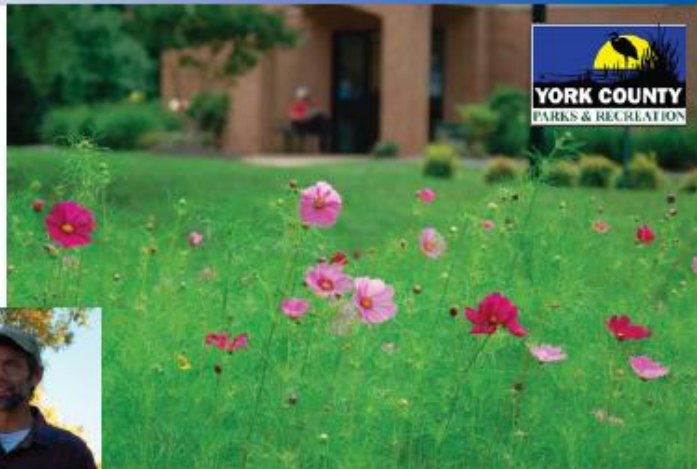
## July 2010

- June 28-July 5 - Cub Scout Day Camp
- 3 - EVMA Group Ride & Meeting, 9 a.m.
- 5-9 - Chesapeake Experience Kayak Camp (9am – 4pm) M-F; ages 8-12; \$210/person. Visit [www.chesapeakeexperience.org](http://www.chesapeakeexperience.org) or call 890-0502.



### 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 Penniman Rd., left on Hubbard Ln. Right on Lakeshead Rd., follow to Park.



### More Upcoming Events

- 10 - WBC Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.
- 10 - Chesapeake Experience Evening/Sunset Paddle, \$50/person. To register [www.chesapeakeexperience.org](http://www.chesapeakeexperience.org) or call 890-0502.
- 17 - BYOK! 9 a.m.-noon.
- 24 - WBC Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.
- 24 - Master Naturalists Teaching Garden Workday, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 25 - Disc Golf Tournament
- 25 - Moonlight and Music Jam, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 31 - Hampton Roads Adventure Orienteering Challenge. More info at [www.hradventure.com](http://www.hradventure.com).



### August 2010

- 7 - EVMA Group Ride & Meeting, 9 a.m.
- 7 - Walk & Talk: Butterflies, Barb Dunbar, Va Master Gardener & Naturalist



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

More Information at [www.yorkcounty.gov](http://www.yorkcounty.gov), go to Parks and Recreation  
New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., 757-890-5840 (Friday-Sunday) . York Co Parks & Rec, 757-890-3500 (Monday-Friday)