



# THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 No. 4 April 2011

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## CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME COHORT V



Not Pictured: Lauralyn Copeland

## Chapter Board of Directors 2011

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## President's Message

### Challenge - 2011

Spring has finally arrived, and although we Master Naturalists never let cold and rainy weather slow us down (including purchasing wardrobe accessories to keep us warm and dry), now is the time we really get busy. We have many projects available to us, and no matter what your inclinations and preferences are, you can find something that will interest you. The success of the Chapter, and of the Master Naturalists organization in general, depends on the participation of its members. As the new season begins, I challenge all of you to reinvest yourselves in the chapter – find something that interests you – and just do it! I especially encourage members from Cohorts I, II & III who may have not been as active as you were once were to step up and get excited again. Take a member of a later cohort under your wing – share your experience and expertise with him or her! I challenge you all to make time this year to get involved again, and just have fun!

As part of this challenge, I would like to suggest that you to try a different type of activity. Go out of your comfort zone. If you hesitate to volunteer for a project that involves public speaking or manning a booth at a public event, try it. You may find it is a lot more fun than you would think. If you have passed by the “get down and dirty” projects, try one and see if you don’t have a great time. If you find that is still not your favorite thing to do – at least you enjoyed a new experience and provided much needed assistance!

Our chapter is very fortunate to have a large number of active, thriving volunteers. If you have a question about a project, or wonder what would be expected of you – just ask! Someone will be happy to introduce you to his or her favorite projects and who knows, it could become one of your favorites, too.

Challenge yourself! Make 2011 the year that you branch out into different activities. You will wonder why you waited so long!

Barbara Boyer (Cohort III)  
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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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.



## ***Congratulations!***

*Award Photos taken by Felice Bond at the Annual  
Historic Rivers Chapter Party, March 9, 2011*



**Susan Powell is the first Master Naturalist in the State of Virginia to reach 2,500 Hours!!!**



**Members Reaching Milestone Hours—Gary Driscole, Adrienne Frank, Felice Bond, Les Lawrence, Alice Kopinitz, Susan Powell and Seig Kopinitz.**

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

## Advanced Training Opportunities - April 2011

Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole

Date(s)	Name	Location	Time	Notes
2 April	Doug Tallamy Speaker at the Northern Neck Garden Seminar	White Stone, VA	8:30-3:30	See <a href="http://www.claytonvnps.org">www.claytonvnps.org</a> or call 804-580-5694
3	Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC) Activity	Newport News Park	7-10 am	Facilitator Jane Frigo
8	Project Learning Tree	Williamsburg Lodge 310 South England Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185		Register by March 24 \$20 – Write checks to “Virginia Forestry Association.”  Call Ellen Powell at 434-220-9083 or email <a href="mailto:ellen.powell@dof.virginia.gov">ellen.powell@dof.virginia.gov</a>
9	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC)	New Quarter Park	8-10 am	Shirley Devan
12		Ernie Morgan Center, Norfolk	9 am-4 pm	Contact Katelin at <a href="mailto:teachwetlands@wetland.org">teachwetlands@wetland.org</a> , 410-745-9620
16	HRBC Field Trip	Blackwater Ecological Preserve	8 am-Noon	Dave Youker
16	WBC Field Trip			Shirley Devan
16	W Botanic Gardens	Ellipse Garden, Freedom Park	10-00-11:30 am	Barb Dunbar
17	HRBC	Newport News Park	7-10 am	Jane Frigo
19	VA Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) – Aquaculture with Dan Sennett and Montessori students raising plants and animals.	Catlett-Burress Research and Education Lab  1375 Greate Road Gloucester Point VA	6 pm	call 804-684-7878 for additional information or register on-line at <a href="http://events.wm.edu/vims/2011">http://events.wm.edu/vims/2011</a>
20	VIMS - YORK RIVER RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM	McHugh Auditorium  VIMS - Watermens Hall  1375 Greate Road Gloucester Point VA	8-6 pm	<a href="mailto:syerdle@vims.edu">syerdle@vims.edu</a> , Sandra Erdle 804-684-7144  <a href="http://events.wm.edu/vims/2011">http://events.wm.edu/vims/2011</a>
23	WBC	New Quarter Park	7-9 am	Shirley Devan
23	Wildflower Walk in Dragon Run	Rt 610 King & Queen County	9:30 am	Contact Mary Berg 804-693-3568
30	Walk with Phillip Merritt	John Tyler Hywy & Venture Lane – Near Five Forks	10 am	Register <a href="mailto:vpnsfieldtrips@gmail.com">vpnsfieldtrips@gmail.com</a> or call 259-0386

## Naturalist Biography—Stephen Jay Gould

A five-year-old boy walks into the American Museum of Natural History in New York, but a five-year-old paleontologist walks out. Most children are fascinated by dinosaurs, but Stephen Jay Gould was so captivated by his first glimpse of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* at this museum that he declared that very day that he would become a paleontologist when he grew up. And, so he did. He became the most notable paleontologist the world has ever known. Gould's accomplishments include the publication of twenty books and hundreds of articles, co-development of the punctuated theory of equilibrium, and spokesman for the theory of evolution.

Gould received his undergraduate degree from Antioch College in 1963 and then went on to Columbia to pursue his doctorate. He conducted his doctorate research on the variation and evolution of a Bermudian land snail. These studies led to his interest in non-selectionist factors in evolution. He was awarded his Ph.D. in paleontology in 1967 and became a professor at Harvard the same year, where he would remain until his death in 2002.

In 1972, Gould, along with Niles Eldredge, formulated the theory of punctuated evolution, which became his most prominent accomplishment. This theory postulated that speciation occurs in relatively rapid "bursts" followed by periods of stability rather than slowly, over time as suggested by Darwin. Although Gould was a supporter of Darwin's theories, he disagreed with Darwin's views on the rate of speciation. Gould argued that it was time to accept that the bursts of speciation illustrated by the fossil record were actually reflective of life's history and not just there because the record is incomplete, like Darwin argued. The punctuated equilibrium theory of evolution was controversial at first, but by the 1980's it was widely accepted by most paleontologists.

Gould was also known for speaking out for evolution and against creationism. He wanted others to understand that evolution is a "fact" and the theory of evolution, how it occurs, is a theory. His main arguments for evolution were three-fold. One, there is undeniable evidence of evolution within species, illustrated by the diversity of dog breeds and antibiotic resistance. Second, he noted the imperfections in species and the similarities in morphology among organisms. He once wrote, "Why should a rat run, a bat fly, a porpoise swim, and I type this essay with the structures built of the same bones, unless we inherited them from a common ancestor? An engineer, starting from scratch, could design better limbs in each case." Finally he noted that there are numerous transitional species in the fossil record, illustrating the route from one species to another. Gould believed that the evolution of man was improbable. That without specific events occurring at just the right time, man would not have evolved.

Evolution and creationism were among Gould's favorite subjects of debate, but the issue that captivated him the most was the teaching of evolution in schools. Gould became frustrated in high school by the way evolution was portrayed in the textbooks. He believed that even though the Scopes trial was seen as a success by some, it was a defeat to him since textbook companies chose to de-emphasize evolution after the trial. He believed more time should be given to the subject of evolution in the classroom.

The aspect of Gould's career which made him so well-known in the non-academic world was his ability to communicate science to anyone. He wrote over twenty books and hundreds of scientific articles on numerous subjects. He was able to explain complex scientific ideas to non-academics, and, therefore, he gained a wide audience. This allowed Gould to educate way beyond the realms of his classroom.

(Continued on Page 6)

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Gould passed away in 2002 from cancer. Just before his death he published his final book, Magnum Opus, The Structure of Evolutionary Theory. He was a paleontologist with a passion for evolutionary theory. In his book, The Panda's Thumb, he tells how he once thought all paleontologists did was dig up bones and put them together. Then he discovered evolutionary theory and this "propelled" him throughout his career. Gould postulated theories, wrote books and articles, and fought for the teaching of evolution and it all started with a trip to a museum.

Information for this paper was retrieved from the following websites:

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/gouldsj.html>

<http://www.stephenjaygould.org/>

*Prepared by Renee Hirsch, Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalists, Cohort IV*

*January 2010*



JCC Going Green ?

Photo by Shirley Devan



## Reminders from the Membership Chair

By Shirley Devan, Membership Chair

Michelle Prysby wrote to me last week: “I often use the HRC’s section of the VMN-VMS [membership database] when I’m testing something out in terms of running reports, etc., since you all have the most data in there.”

Congratulations! Almost all HRC members are using the online database to record their Advanced Training hours and Volunteer Service hours.

Please keep in mind that I am available to answer questions about login process, hours, project codes, etc. I hope you feel comfortable contacting me. I am able to “trigger the system” to send you a reminder login web address if you’ve lost your bookmark.

Remember:

- The web site is: <https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org>
- The Upper Left corner is really important real estate on the main page.
- You can “**Edit Your Profile,**” “**Add Hours,**” and “**View Your Hours.**”
- You can **change your password** if you click on “Edit Your Profile” and even add a photo of yourself (or your favorite fauna). Remember to “Save” your changes at the bottom of the screen.
- You can **correct or delete an entry** you made earlier. Click on “View Your Hours” and then click on the “problem” entry. When the screen comes up, make the changes and then “Save Hours” or “Delete Hours” (which deletes the record).
- When you record Advanced Training hours, enter the # of hours in the box next to “**Continuing Education.**”

Those who attended the Annual Meeting March 9 should record an hour of Advanced Training for the presentation we enjoyed by Dr. Bruce Wielicki from NASA.

You can record Volunteer Service Hours if you attend the business portion of our monthly Chapter Membership meetings (usually from 6 – 7 pm) on second Wednesdays. Record your time on Project “A1a – Participation in Board or Committee meetings.”

You can record Volunteer Service Hours if you write an article for the monthly HRC newsletter. Record your time on Project “A1c – Chapter Newsletter”

Keep up the good work. Let me know if you have questions – 757-813-1322 or [sedevan52@cox.net](mailto:sedevan52@cox.net)

## Preparing for a “Walk in the Forest” at New Kent Forestry Center

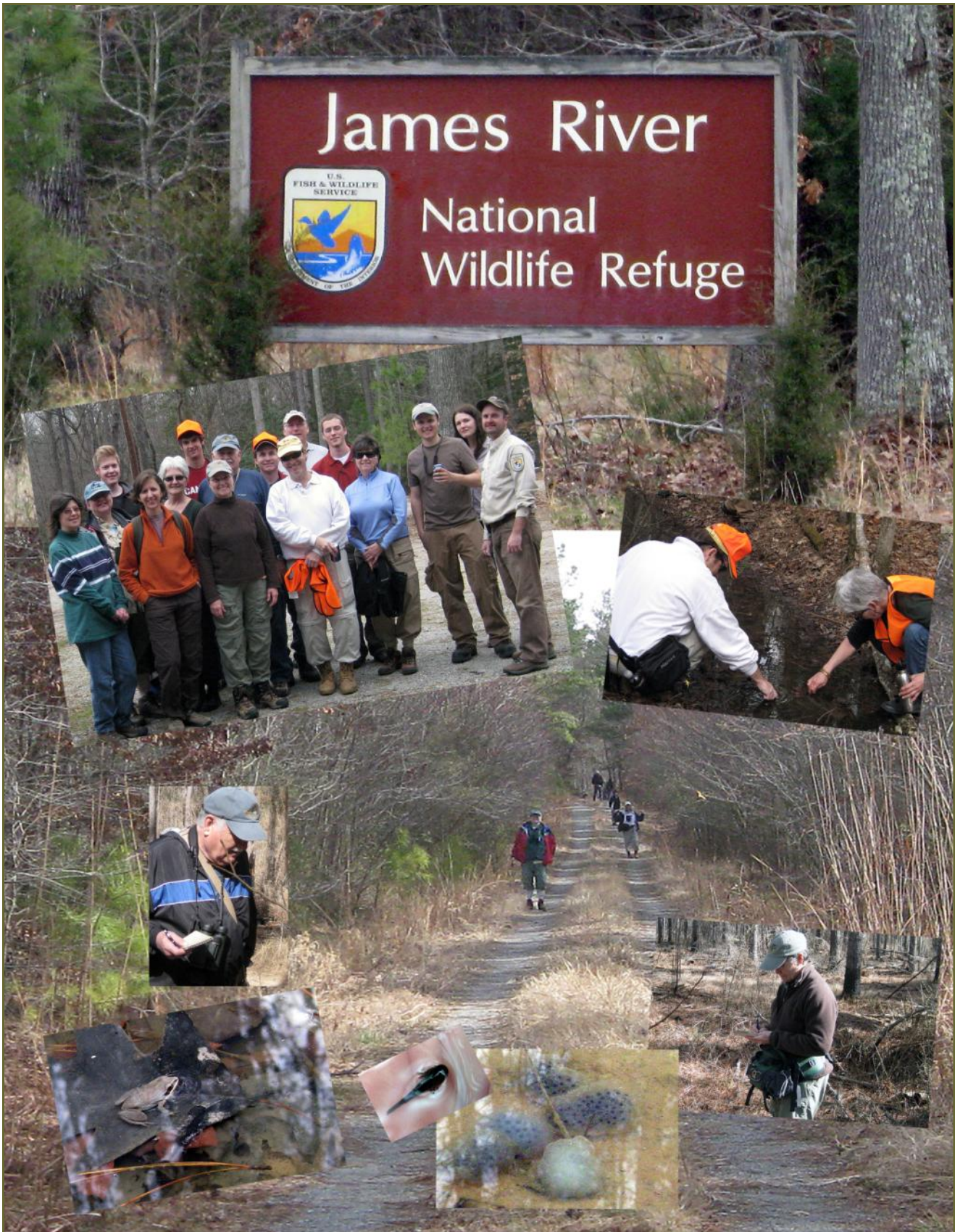
By Christina Woodson and Sibyl Rose

Question: How many Historic Rivers Master Naturalists does it take to construct a whimsical shelter in the woods? Answer: Just two! Sibyl Rose and Christina Woodson were the intrepid builders during preparations for the [Walk in the Forest](#) event sponsored by the Rappahannock Chapter of the [Society of American Foresters](#) at New Kent Forestry Center on March 19th. In addition to this DOF-sanctioned construction project, we assisted Lisa Deaton by marking the new Cactus Trail, hanging hammocks, cleaning exhibit areas and setting up displays. (A trail named "Cactus" in New Kent County, you may ask? It's true! This beautiful new trail, created by a group of [Boy Scouts](#), has a few stands of [prickly pear cactus](#) at the end, along with some wonderful views of nesting ospreys on the edge of the Chickahominy River). Highlights of the afternoon included glimpses of some of the forest's permanent residents along the Squirrel Trail including a young black rat snake, American toad and a spider laying in wait in its burrow.



Sibyl returned to the Center on Saturday and helped distribute seedlings provided by the Society of American Foresters. While educating the public in selecting the “right tree for the right place”, she herself learned more about trees, wood ducks and forest products. For example, bald cypress thrives in a moist location, while white oak likes full sun, and persimmons are capable of self-pollination, but prefer to have a buddy around. It is always fun to assist Lisa with any of her projects and she is very grateful for our help. She reported that 250-300 enthusiastic participants enjoyed their “Walk in the Forest”.





Photomontage above created by Felice Bond. Article on James River National Wildlife Refuge written by Linda Cole follows on pages 10 to 12.



# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

On Saturday, March 5, 2011, members of Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalists, joined with sister chapters, Riverine and Pocahontas, to survey vernal pools at the James River Natural Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Prince George, Virginia. Led by Anne Wright of Virginia Commonwealth University and Cyrus Brame of US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Felice Bond, Linda Cole, Les Lawrence, and Dean Shostak walked through areas of the refuge that are scheduled to be logged in the near future to identify vernal pool locations. The USFWS will use that data to implement best management practices (BMP) during logging to help offset impacts to amphibian populations. All stages of salamander metamorphosis - egg, larval, and adult – were observed during the survey.

Of the 49 known salamanders in Virginia the following have been documented in Prince George county according to the Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia (1999): marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*), dwarf waterdog (*Necturus punctatus*), red-spotted newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*), Atlantic Coast slimy salamander (*Plethodon chlorobryonis*), Eastern red-backed salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*), mud salamander (*Pseudotriton montanus*), and many-lined salamander (*Stereochilus marginatus*). More recent surveys in 2010 by the Virginia Herpetological Society (VHS) also identified two-toed amphium (*Amphium means*) and Eastern lesser siren (*Siren intermedia*) in the county. Marbled salamander larvae were observed co-located with newt eggs in one drainage ditch.

Of the 25 species of frogs and toads in Virginia, the following have been documented in the Atlas including: Eastern cricket frog (*Acris crepitans*), coastal plain cricket frog (*Acris gryllus*), Fowler's toad (*Anaxyrus fowleri*), Eastern narrow-mouthed toad (*Gastrophryne carolinensis*), Cope's gray treefrog (*Hyla chrysoscelis*), Brimley's chorus frog (*Pseudacris brimleyi*), Northern spring peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*), Southeastern chorus frog (*Pseudacris feriarum*), American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeiana*), Southern green frog (*Lithobates clamitans*), Southern leopard frog (*Lithobates sphenoccephala*), and Eastern spadefoot (*Scaphiopus holbrookii*). The VHS survey also identified Eastern American toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*), Southern toad (*Anaxyrus terrestris*), green treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*) and upland chorus frog (*Pseudacris feriarum*) in the county. Spring peepers and chorus frogs were heard and Felice photographed green, cricket, and chorus frogs.

The refuge encompasses 4,200 acres of forest and wetland habitats along the James River bordered by Powell's Creek to the west and the historic Flowerdew Hundred Plantation to the east. The Nature Conservancy purchased 3,538 acres of land in May 1988 to ensure that continued use of the land by bald eagles would not be jeopardized. The USFWS purchased the land from the Nature Conservancy in March 1991 under the authority of the Endangered Species Act. A 613-acre parcel known as Maycocks Point was purchased and added to the refuge in 1992 to further protect bald eagle habitat, including a major bald eagle feeding roost. The refuge is a part of the Eastern Virginia Rivers NWR Complex that includes the Rappahannock River Valley NWR, Presquile NWR, and Plum Tree Island NWR.

The refuge was created in 1991 to protect nesting and roosting habitat for the then threatened American bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Each summer, up to 2,000 bald eagles migrate north from southern breeding grounds to the Chesapeake Bay Region, a phenomenon unknown in other parts of the country. More than 230 individual eagles, the highest density on the James River, roost on refuge lands. On June 28, 2007, the US Department of the Interior (DOI) delisted the American bald eagle from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. However, this

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

member of the Accipitridae family (includes hawks, kites, and old-world vultures) still is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

A secondary objective is to provide an opportunity to view wildlife in its natural environment, so that the public may better appreciate the refuge's role in conservation of wildlife resources. Breeding bird surveys, begun in 2000, have found an interesting assemblage of warblers and other songbirds. Among them are hooded warbler (*Wilsonia citrine*), pine warbler (*Dendroica pinus*), prothonotary warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*), Acadian flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*), red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), and ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*). Aside from eagles and songbirds, hawks and owls nest and hunt on the refuge. Populations of American wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) also enjoy the thick forest cover and hilly terrain of the James River Valley. Water birds (herons, egrets, ospreys, ducks, and geese) make use of the tidal waters that define a portion of the refuge boundary. Alewives (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), American Shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), blueback herrings (*Alosa aestivalis*), American gizzard shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*), hickory shad (*Alosa mediocris*), and striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) find ideal spawning and nursing sites in this part of the James River watershed. Mammals observed on the refuge include beaver (*Castor canadensis*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus spp*), gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). The only mammals observed were deer.

The refuge is rich in upland hardwood forest species such as elm, gum, and oak. Softwood loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) remains in large tracts as a result of previous land uses. Plant species of particular importance include prairie senna (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), sensitive joint vetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*), and Long's bittercress (*Cardamine longii*). All three plants are globally rare and are candidates for listing as endangered species. Forest management is the single most important issue facing the refuge today. Intensive management of the forest is required to maintain existing roosting sites and to create additional nesting and roosting areas. Long term management strategies, such as pine forest thinning and prescribed burning, will sustain the value of refuge forests.

Pine forest accounts for approximately 65% (2740 acres) of the total area of the refuge. Thinning of these overstocked pine stands and burning of the understory will improve habitat for migratory birds and reduce the potential for wild fire. Investigations into the range and habitat requirements of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker suggest a high probability of reintroduction due to these forest management activities. A forestry BMP for the conservation of amphibians such as the salamander is to minimize clearing within 100-1000 feet of vernal pools with an average of 500 feet to allow for breeding ranges. Amphibian range is species-dependent. Tracks left by logging equipment easily can become ideal habitat but become death traps if those same tracks are re-used by off-road vehicles.

National priorities have resulted in declining federal discretionary funding for the USFWS and other DOI agencies. This decline is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, and USFWS must make financial and human resource changes to manage effectively in this situation. Due to declining budgets and increased operating costs, the USFWS has designated numerous refuges as unstaffed satellite refuges. Timber sales will be based on current market value. Funds generated by the sale of timber will be deposited into the Refuge Revenue Sharing Account with sufficient funds from the sale retained by the refuge to purchase supplies, materials and labor necessary to address any impacts resulting from thinning operations. Citizen science provided by Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers continue to provide invaluable service to federal and state agencies conservation efforts based on sound science.



# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Continued from Page 11

Article by Linda Cole

Photographs accompanying this article were provided by Felice Bond.

<http://www.baldeagleinfo.com/>

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/jamesriver/index.html>

<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/>

<http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/county/county-herps.htm>

## *James City County Recreation Expo Volunteers*

*February 26, 2011*



*Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole*



*Mike and Jeanne Millin*



*Clyde Marsteller and Gary Driscole*



*Adrienne Frank, Christina Woodson,  
Jeanette Navia and Bill O'Connell*

## What's Happening With Those Vernal Pools?

You know the song, "Please release me, let me go" ... well, that about sums up how the Vernal Pool teams are feeling about now. We REALLY want to go visit the vernal pools that we found in January and February. Are the salamanders there? Other critters?

We have our hip waders, we have water-testing kits and we know how to use them. We have nets for dipping and meter sticks for measuring. We have specific photo assignments, but we do not have permission from the property owners.

The county employees have been very helpful as we try to locate landowners based on the GPS coordinates we have provided.

And so we wait. Maybe there will be some positive news next week.

*Article submitted by Alice Kopinitz*

*Photos submitted by Felice Bond*



Vernal Pool group meeting with Marsha Bishop, Sussex County employee, in the Land and Maps Room at the Sussex County Courthouse.

Pictured left to right: Felice Bond, Marsha Bishop, Seig Kopinitz, Alice Kopinitz, and Shirley Devan.





Above: Checking the maps at Sussex County Courthouse.

Below: Locating and verifying vernal pools in Sussex County.







March 10, 2011

Here is a message from Dr. Bruce Wielicki, our presenter at the HRC Annual Meeting, March 9, 2011. He sent the following notes in response to my request for the information he indicated he was willing to share with the group. Actually he sent three emails and I have combined his text into one document.

Shirley Devan

\*\*\*\*\*

“Thanks for the opportunity and for the very entertaining introduction: it was great. I also want to thank your group for its great dedication and spirit. It’s heartening to see enlightened members of the public so actively working to understand the world around them.

I took a quick look at the Tree book last night: wonderful, and thanks for that and the cup as well.

I have included the document on the energy savings I have done myself: its not a polished document but I hope it helps. That document was written in August 2010 and hasn't been updated, but my actual energy savings since then through Feb 2011 are very close to those predicted in the figures. The car savings analysis has to be modified for whatever your own prediction of fuel prices is, but the basic ideas are there.

If people want books on climate change I recommend:

- a) "Storms of my Grandchildren" by Jim Hansen. A primer on the overall climate change issue from science to what we should do. Jim Hansen is a NASA climate scientist and has been very active since the late 1980s.
- b) "The Long Thaw" by David Archer. This tells the climate story from the perspective of a geologist at very long time scales: 1000s to 100 million years from ice sheet cores and ocean sediment cores.
- c) "Merchants of Doubt" by Oreskes and Conway. This tells the story of why you should be suspicious of much of what you see on nice web sites that are produced with political objectives in mind, not climate science: but they purport to be very scientific and "look" very scientific. This is a lesson book for all topics on the Internet and how we all need to become more intelligent consumers of information.
- d) The IPCC Policymakers Documents are short (20 page) summaries of the best world wisdom as of 2007 on climate science, economics, and technology solutions (3 reports).

Next update ~ 2013. This is still the best single "wisdom" of the world scientific opinion.

- e) The best web site to go to for real time discussion in a serious blog written by climate scientists and commenting on whatever hot topic of the day is going on:

"[www.realclimate.org](http://www.realclimate.org)"

- f) One of the best web sites for a primer on climate change and its science can be found at the National Academy of Sciences web site: <http://www.koshland-science-museum.org/exhibitgcc/index.jsp>

This is the science museum of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. So you will get a pretty straight story.

One final suggestion. If you are familiar with TED talks: I did give an 18 minute TED talk at the Ferguson Center last

November. It’s on climate change and you can view it on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjwlkCT3HUK&p=9D5893159145F866>

It talks about climate change from a very broad level (very different than the lecture I gave your group) but does include the challenges of getting accurate information on climate change that I talked about, as well as the challenge of making accurate decisions about climate change policy.

Hope this all helps. Cheers.

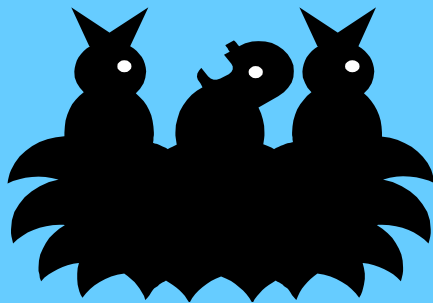
Bruce

## Volunteers Needed for Spring Bird Counts

Saturday, April 30: Hampton Roads Bird Count. Contact Phyllis Roth; her email is [pjssr@cox.net](mailto:pjssr@cox.net)

Sunday, May 1: Williamsburg Bird Club. Contact Bill Williams; his email is [jwwil2@wm.edu](mailto:jwwil2@wm.edu)

If you can help part or all day, please contact Phyllis or Bill. These are approved Citizen Science Projects for Historic Rivers Chapter Master Naturalists.



## **Volunteer Opportunity!**

Pam Camblin has established an “Ecology Club” at Poquoson Elementary School!

The Poquoson Elementary School Ecology Club will meet from 3:00-4:30 on the following Thursdays-April 21, May 5 & 19, June 2. There are 18 students total in grades 3-5.

The Club is sponsored by Desiree Flynn, Special Education teacher; Julie Dashley, Spanish teacher; and Pam Camblin. Poquoson Elementary School is at 1033 Poquoson Avenue, Poquoson 23662. The Club had 75 students apply causing a lottery to be held to fill 20 available slots.

If interested in helping Pam, please contact Pam Camblin at: [gkcamblin@verizon.net](mailto:gkcamblin@verizon.net) or 8680317.



## WARNING!!!!!!!!!!

Zooming up Route 13 to Pocomoke City in the back of an ambulance, was not how I'd planned to spend my weekend in Chincoteague. How the heck did this happen? One minute I was enjoying a roast beef sandwich, and the next minute my tongue is swelling, breathing is difficult and I'm a giant **HIVE !!!**

Lots of Benadryl and steroids at the ER and I was back in Chincoteague to see the Snow Geese. Although, still puzzled as to what had caused the anaphylactic reaction.

Upon returning to Williamsburg I went to see an allergist, who did testing for what I was sure was an allergy to garlic.

At my next appointment to find out the results of the tests, she informed me I was allergic to BEEF!!

What ??? My middle name is T-Bone, are you saying No More BEEF??! She then asked if I had a tick bite in the last year. I told her I had 4 during the spring and summer. She then went on to explain that a study has revealed adults who have had tick bites are developing reactions (sometimes severe) to Beef.

([www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/19/AR2009101902874.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/19/AR2009101902874.html))

So a warning to my BEEF loving Master Naturalists. Beware the tick bite, and if you should have a reaction, get to the ER as fast as you can.

Nancy Norton

**"MY TONGUE  
IS SWELLING,  
BREATHING IS  
DIFFICULT AND  
I'M A GIANT  
HIVE !!!"**

## Williamsburg Bird Club Events

Submitted by Shirley Devan

At the April meeting, Sergio Harding will present a program on Bird Conservation Activities by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The DGIF, in addition to the restoration and management of game bird species, has a rich history of implementing and supporting the conservation of nongame avian species. DGIF takes a multi-faceted approach to bird conservation, including research and monitoring, education and outreach, habitat management and land acquisition. This presentation will give an overview of DGIF's bird conservation activities, with a focus on research and monitoring and highlighting a few select projects.

Sergio has worked as a Nongame Bird Conservation Biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries since 2005. In this capacity he is responsible for interagency coordination on bird conservation issues, including coordination of the VA Bird Conservation Initiative. Sergio is also the VA coordinator of the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), and regularly participates in avian surveys. These have included breeding land-bird surveys of Wildlife Management Areas as well as surveys of bald eagles, peregrine falcons, golden-winged warblers and breeding marsh birds.

Plan to join us on April 20 at 7:30 pm in Room 150, Millington Hall, on the W&M campus. Jan Lockwood will be providing the refreshments. **Don't forget to use**

**your parking permit.**

**April Field Trip** On 16 April 2011, Alex Minarik will lead our field trip to the Dismal Swamp. There will be just enough insect life stirring to welcome the Prothonotary Warblers and other beautiful migrants like the ones who offered us stunning sights and sounds there last spring!! For those wishing to carpool, a 6 am departure is planned from Colony Square Shopping Center, with a comfort stop planned en route before hitting the swamp. During last April's field trip 48 species were seen, including an American Bittern, a Swainson's Warbler, Prairie Warblers and Prothonotary Warblers. For those wishing to meet us there, we will walk the Jericho Ditch portion of the swamp.



## *"Does Spring Get Any Better Than This??" - By Shirley Devan*

I was out biking and "naturalizing" this afternoon at the swamp on the west side of the hike/bike trail at Warhill Sports Complex.

I was thrilled to see TWO male Red-headed Woodpeckers on dead cypress trees.

While I was standing there I heard what I'm sure were a couple of American Bullfrogs plus American Toads. Is it too early for these guys?

I looked down next to the water line and saw what looked like an egg mass. Here is a photo from my iPhone. Is that an egg mass in the middle (with the slender red leaf at 2 o'clock)? If so, any clues?



Then I was walking my bike back to the road and paused near the bridge over the swamp. Two large butterflies popped up. One was an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and the other was a Zebra Swallowtail. I'm sure that's what they were. Is it too early for those? Plus I saw Sulphurs (Clouded, I think) and Spring Azures.

The Carolina Wren pair is feeding each other on the bird feeder and the Carolina Chickadee nest is about 3 inches thick in the nest box in my yard.

I bought some cheap cracked corn today to throw out for the squirrels to keep them occupied and off my bird feeders. So far the little rascals look like they are gorging themselves. My hope is they'll get too fat to jump on the feeders. One looked like he was in a food coma. That would be OK too.

Does Spring get any better than this?? OH YES -- when the warblers arrive!!

All the while, Kathi Mestayer and I are texting back and forth about our observations:

[3:44 pm] Kathi: Bloodroot! (with a photo!!)

[4:24 pm Shirley: 2 red-headed woodpeckers & a bullfrog

[5:19 pm] Kathi: I'll see your frog and raise you a carpenter bee

Shirley: I'll see your bee and raise you an eastern tiger swallowtail AND a Zebra Swallow-tail. So there!

[5:36 pm] Kathi: Okay, now you're making things up.

Aren't you?

Shirley: Noooooooooooooooooooo

Kathi: Where r u?

Shirley: Over at the swamp by the WISC entrance road, just off Longhill Road. Good Stuff. Where were you?

Kathi: Just the front yard. No butterflies yet...



Bloodroot

by Kathi Mestayer

## Wastewater and Birds by Kathi Mestayer

In February, a business trip took me to Denver, to a joint water and wastewater managers' conference. I gave a talk on Sustainable Utility Sites, which features sites in Loudoun County, Roanoke, Tucson and Albany, Oregon. It also introduced the Sustainable Sites Initiative ("SITES"), which is developing standards similar to LEED (which deals mostly with buildings). SITES deals exclusively with site selection, design, construction, O&M, the whole life-cycle. They use the concept of ecosystems services to develop the standards. Much more is online at <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>

The powerpoint presentation I used in Denver is here, and describes the sustainable utility sites, the costs, the advantages, etc:

<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/14719504/sustainable%20utility%20sites.pptx>

On the way home, I visited Tucson Water's Sweetwater Wetlands, which, if memory serves, Dan Cristol originally told me about. The Sweetwater Wetlands is part of a wastewater treatment process for the City of Tucson. They constructed the wetlands in response to a consent order from the state regulatory agency, which required them to spend \$400K. They ended up spending almost \$2 million, for which they got their money's worth, and then some. From a process standpoint, they are the penultimate stage in cleaning up wastewater (the final stage is two large sandy "settling basins," which the water flows into underground storage. Then it is pumped out for reuse by about 700 reused-water (irrigation) clients, including golf courses, schools, an Air Force base, and many others. The City installed a parallel pipeline system to convey this water to its end-users (not included in the \$2 million price tag).

I spent the morning with the site manager, Bruce Prior, who proudly showed me around the 15-acre constructed wetlands, which are not looking very constructed at all at this point (the site opened in 1998). They are a lush, wet site in the middle of the desert. Obviously, the birds have long since figured this out, and there were hundreds of them in the trees, ground and water in that relatively-small area. The Tucson Audubon Society lists the site as one of its local birding "hot-spots," and works closely with Bruce to make the site as bird-friendly as possible. Bruce says over 100 school children visit the site weekly (the parking lot has spaces designed for school buses), and there are a



lot of good interpretive signs (some of the best I've seen, actually) throughout. They have also worked with a local native plant seed-search group to find the native plants and seeds for the site.

My first siting was a life-lister; a black phoebe! That was followed by a cinnamon teal, ruddy ruck, northern shoveler, northern pintail, moorhen, widgeon, harris' hawk, gila woodpecker, and yellow-rumped warbler (which almost fooled me again with its flycatching behavior). And I was trying to pay attention to Bruce!

Here's a shot (p&s) of the wetlands with an assortment of waterfowl.



**Our  
Chapter  
Volunteers  
in  
Action**



Bill O'Connell Checking Bluebird Nests  
Photo by Shirley Devan



Patty Maloney and Kathi Mestayer volunteering with the Native Plant Society during Invasive Plant Removal Week beginning March 7th.