



## THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 No. 7 July 2011

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Dave Youker and Felice Bond were recognized at the Chapter General Membership meeting on June 8 with Volunteer Service Hour Milestone pins. Dave has given 250 hours to the Chapter and Felice has given 1000 hours to the Chapter. We congratulate them and give many thanks to Dave and Felice for their continued service to the Chapter and to the conservation of natural resources in our area!

## Chapter Board of Directors 2011-2012

### Officers

*Barbara Boyer, President*  
*Ted Sargent, Vice President*  
*Patty Maloney and Lois Ullman,  
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Outreach*  
*Jennifer Trevino and Sharon  
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*Shirley Devan, Membership*  
*Susan Powell and Cherie  
Aukland, Volunteer Service  
Projects*  
*Adrienne Frank and Gary  
Driscole, Advanced Training*  
*Ted Sargent, Programs*  
*Patty Riddick, Newsletter*  
*Janet Curtis, Host*  
*Janette Navia, Webmistress*  
*Dean Shostak and Les Lawrence,  
Field Trip Coordinators*

**"There are no passengers on spaceship earth. We are all crew."**

Marshall McLuhan

...**Herbert Marshall McLuhan**, (July 21, 1911–December 31, 1980) Canadian educator, philosopher, and scholar...



### Quotes from Anonymous Master Naturalists

*"It proves to me over and over that each of us can make a difference and change the world for the better--especially if we all work together."*

*"This is the first program I've been part of that has the potential to leave something of what I value behind when I am gone."*

### Notes from the Board

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

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# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

## Advanced Training - June, July, & August 2011

[\[AT\] VIMS The Effect of Climate Change in Hampton Roads](#) - **June 22, 2011** from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at Waterman's Hall, Gloucester Point

[\[AT\] WBC Walk at New Quarter](#) - **June 25, 2011** from 7:00 am to 9:00 am at WBC Walk at New Quarter

[\[AT\] Investing in Sustainable Forestry for Land Owners](#) - **June 25, 2011** from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at King William Fire & Rescue, Aylett, VA

[\[AT\] RICE Center Evening](#) - **June 25, 2011** from 6:00 pm to 9:00 am at RICE Center, off Rt 5

[\[AT\] VA Museum of Natural History - VINYL Course](#) - **June 26, 2011** from 9:00 am to 10:00 am at Virginia Museum of Natural History

[\[AT\] VIMS Antarctica: Penguins, Plankton, and More - Presentation](#) - **June 28, 2011** from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at VIMS - Catlett-Burress Research & Ed Lab, 1375 Greate Rd, Gloucester Point

[\[AT\] VIMS Lecture - Antarctica: Penguins, Plankton, and More](#) - **June 28, 2011** from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at VIMS - Catlett-Burress Ed Lab, Gloucester Point, VA

[\[AT\] Sail on the Alliance](#) - **June 29, 2011** from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Yorktown

[\[AT\] HRBC Bird Walk](#) - **July 3, 2011** from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[\[AT\] Butterfly Count - Chippokes](#) - **July 6, 2011** from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at Chippokes State Park, Surry

[\[AT\] WBC Bird Walk at New Quarter Park](#) - **July 9, 2011** from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

[\[AT\] RICE Center](#) - **July 9, 2011** from 6:00 pm to 9:00 am at Rice Center off RT 5

[\[AT\] Monthly meeting](#) - **July 13, 2011** from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at JCC Human Services Bldg., 5249 Olde Towne Rd., Williamsburg

[\[AT\] Native Plant Society Field Trip - Stonehouse Elem](#) - **July 14, 2011** from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm at Stonehouse Elementary School, 3651 Rochambeau Drive

[\[AT\] Native Plant Field Trip, Lake Matoaka](#) - **July 16, 2011** from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at Lake Matoaka, College of William & Mary

[\[AT\] Butterflies in the Ellipse Garden](#) - **July 16, 2011** from 10:00 am to 11:30 am at Ellipse Garden, Freedom Park, James City Co.

[\[AT\] HRBC Bird Walk](#) - **July 17, 2011** from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[\[AT\] VIMS - Underwater Music](#) - **July 19, 2011** from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm at VIMS Catlett-Burress R Ed Lab, Gloucester Point, VA

[\[AT\] WBC Walk at New Quarter Park](#) - **July 23, 2011** from 7:00 am to 9:00 am at WBC Walk at New Quarter Park

[\[AT\] Native Plant Field Trip - Freedom Park](#) - **July 23, 2011** from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at Freedom Park

Continued on next page-

**[AT] Delmarva Tip Annual Butterfly Count, Eastern Shore - July 24, 2011** from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at Wildlife Refuge, Tip of Eastern Shore of VA

**[AT] Butterfly Count - Dismal Swamp - July 30, 2011** from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at Dismal Swamp, Suffolk Va

**[AT] Walk & Talk - Attracting Butterflies - August 6, 2011** from 9:00 am to 10:00 am at New Quarter Park, near Queens Lake, York Co.

**[AT] HRBC Bird Walk - August 7, 2011** from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

**[AT] Monthly meeting - August 10, 2011** from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at JCC Human Services Bldg., 5249 Olde Towne Rd., Williamsburg

**[AT] WBC Bird Walk at New Quarter Park - August 13, 2011** from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

**[AT] Native Plant Field Trip - Jamestown - August 19, 2011** from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Nature Trail at Jamestown

**[AT] HRBC Bird Walk - August 21, 2011** from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

**[AT] Native Plant Walk at College Landing Park - August 27, 2011** from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at College Landing Park

Adrienne & Gary

## AT Rally at Sweet Briar College – June 3 – 5, 2011

By Patty Riddick

Four members of the Historic Rivers Chapter participated at the recent AT Rally held at Sweet Briar College in Amherst County, Virginia. We arrived on Friday afternoon, signed in, and had dinner in the college dining room. This was followed by a mingling of all attendees on the patio of the Conference Center, music provided by Bramble & Rose string band, and a cash bar. Our own Dean Shostak sat in with the band and did a marvelous job entertaining us with his music.

Saturday morning we were off for workshops of our choosing. The Riddicks chose a “Wildflowers and Fungi in Late Spring” walk, Dean went off to “Shocking Fish Tails,” and Christina enjoyed her session on “Hummingbird Banding.” After lunch we had a presentation by Bruce Pettejohn, Chief of the Bird Banding Laboratory at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, MD. Bruce presented us with some very interesting statistics and stories of his experiences in bird banding over the years. In the afternoon, we were off once again: the Riddicks and Christina attended the “Restoration /Creation of Seasonal Wetlands” led by biologist Mike Hayslett, Director, Virginia Vernal Pools Program. Dean attended the “Bats: Be Afraid” presentation.

Saturday evening we were treated to the movie “Lords of Nature” which talked about our loss of predators and the implications from this loss. A panel discussion led by two naturalist professionals followed. Interestingly enough, the panel felt the introduction of mountain lions into Virginia would be a good step forward to put our ecosystem back in sync. The “terrible three” (raccoons, skunks, and opossums), the meso-predators, would then come in check.

Sunday we took off on forays. Again the Riddicks and Christina attended a wetlands program, “Ancient Wetlands of Piney River.” We visited neighboring wetlands which had been created by Mike Hayslett, biologist at Sweet Briar College, in an effort to create and/or replace natural wetlands in the area. Dean was off to the “Mussels in the Tye River” foray which took him and other participants down a steep slippery slope and through chilly chest-deep river water in their search for mussels. According to Dean, this was quite an unexpected part of the adventure cumulating in the sighting of only four mussels.



The conference ended Sunday afternoon with tired, hot, but happy naturalists. Sweet Briar is in a beautiful location and is a lovely college campus. We all stayed in the dorms there and were well cared for and well fed. I would hope many more of you get to participate when the AT Rally is once again offered.

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



Vernal Pools and Wetlands with Mike Hayslett. Above is Mike's creation of a vernal pool on a ridgeline which never dries up thus allowing the Mole Salamander to reach sexual maturity while remaining in larval stage in the pool.



Mike shows off another of his re-created vernal pools.

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE AT RALLY

Photos by Patty Riddick



Lunch in the college dining room.

It's an all girls' school- they think pink!



Christmas Tree Moss



Pincushion Moss



Newly Morphed American Toad



Newly Morphed American Toad

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE AT RALLY

Photos by Christina Woodson

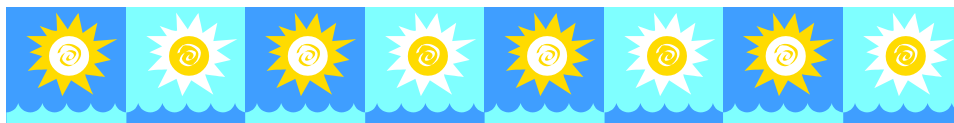


Spotted salamanders with gills still evident.

Mike Hayslett in one of his favorite habitats.







## **Cohort VI Basic Training Begins August 30, 2011!**

Jennifer Trevino, Co-Chair, Basic Training Committee

Although the hot days of summer are just beginning, the HRC-VMN Basic Training Committee is hard at work preparing the Cohort VI, 2011-2012 Basic Training session. To date, we have thirteen master naturalist candidates registered for the training; we will cap the class at twenty four candidates.

### **Basic Training Schedule:**

08/30/2011	Intro. to VMN; Meet the Board; Meet Cohort VI; Basic Skills of Naturalists; The Nature of Naming
09/06/2011	Risk Management; Biology Basics
09/17/2011	Citizen Science & Research; Scientific Methods: Field Methods
09/20/2011	Habitats
10/04/2011	Plant Biology
10/18/2011	Dendrology
10/29/2011	Field Trip – Wetlands Ecology
11/01/2011	Geology
11/12/2011	Field Trip – Geology
11/15/2011	Entomology
11/29/2011	Indigenous Cultures
12/06/2011	Weather and Climate
12/14/2011	Holiday Party
01/03/2012	Herpetology
01/14/2012	Field Trip to New Kent Forestry; Forest Conservation and Management
01/17/2012	Ornithology
01/28/2012	Freshwater Ecology & Winter Botany
01/31/2011	Naturalist Biography Due – No Class
02/11/2012	Mammalogy
02/21/2012	Ichthyology/Fishes of VA
02/25/2012	Session Make-Up Day; WBC Bird Walk; Native Plant Walk; Tree Walk
03/06/2012	Ecology Concepts
03/14/2012	Graduation

Note: Dates are subject to change. All speakers/presenters have not yet been confirmed

In addition to the above schedule of training dates, the Basic Training Committee will be hosting a HRC-VMN Informational meeting for Cohort VI candidates. The meeting will take place on August 9, 2011, 6:30-8:30 pm., at the Williamsburg Library.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in the VA Master Naturalist Program, please have them visit the chapter's website or send us an email.

Last Month's Mystery Picture— What is it?  
By Kathi Mestayer



Last month's mystery object was from York River State Park. It is/was an iron concretion, or as my husband Mac likes to say, "fossilized mud ball." It looks like it's been around the block a few times.



**You Know You Are a Master Naturalist when.....**

...you see a cute little box turtle in the front yard, and pick a few ripe blackberries to give it. The next day, you go over to the garden to check on that very first ripe tomato that was hanging kind of low....and see what the turtle has been eating. You mention the chewed-up tomato to your husband, and he says, "Was it the turtle? Great!"

Kathi Mestayer

## HUMMINGBIRD BANDING AT SWEET BRIAR

by Christina Woodson

Imagine holding a tiny bird weighing one eighth of an ounce and applying a band slightly more substantial than foil to its delicate, twig-like leg. Bruce Peterjohn, a wildlife biologist at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland, is very familiar with this process. He is one of only 125 individuals nationwide to hold a permit to band hummingbirds. It is work which takes the skilled and delicate hand of a master craftsman or surgeon and is quite a contrast to his "day job", coordinating 20 staff biologists in the development of data management systems for bird population monitoring programs and surveys.

Training to be a hummingbird bander is a highly specialized process, involving an apprenticeship with a permitted bander, followed by a rigorous four day certification period during which some 150 birds are banded. Unlike most bird bands, which are pre-formed, each band is cut individually from a light aluminum sheet. It takes a few hours to make a string of several hundred bands, each stamped with a code barely visible to the naked eye.

As one of only two permitted hummingbird banders in the Mid-Atlantic region, Peterjohn travels far and wide with his canvas tote bag decorated with hummingbird artwork and filled with specialized tools. Last winter, he drove three hours through freezing rain and snow to band a Rufous hummingbird at the Amherst home of a member of the Central Virginia Chapter of VMN. He also banded the female Allen's hummingbird who overwintered in Chester. The Rufous makes up about 90% of the six species which have been banded in Virginia during the winter months. Calliope, Black-chinned, Ruby-throated, Broad-tailed and Allen's have also been identified in recent years.

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Although summer is not the best time for attracting birds to the feeder, there are too many alternate sources of food available, participants in the Sweet Briar hummingbird banding demonstration were rewarded with almost instantaneous results. A male Ruby-throated entered the trap within minutes, only to quickly regret the error of his ways as he began to emit a remarkably loud whining sound for such a tiny creature. Apparently, the birds are quick learners, as Peterjohn almost never encounters a banded bird in a trap.

Within minutes, a male Ruby-throated hummingbird enters the trap and is carefully transferred to a soft mesh bag for transportation to the banding table.



Lo-tech: A soft mesh stocking is used to constrain the hummer during examination and handling.



# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Citizen science in action! A VMN Rally participant assists with documentation.



Once banded, this is the moment when the bird was supposed to fly away.....but didn't.

The little male quickly replenishes his energy and flies away, much to the relief of workshop participants, who let out a very audible sigh on his release.



# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

## Wildlife Mapping on The Greensprings Trail - June 2011

One of my favorite Master Naturalist activities is wildlife mapping on The Greensprings Trail, an approved Historic Rivers wildlife mapping trail here in Williamsburg. The trail has a variety of habitats and each offer an opportunity to discover its year round and seasonal residents. In the pond off the observation post, we have seen eight Great Herons who come every year to roost and a pair of Wood ducks. While continuing to record the wildlife, out came a doe. Shortly after appearing, two very small fawns leaped out and quickly nestled under their mother to suckle. The mother was very patient and allowed the two a few minutes to feed before she walked off. Each then leaped a small leap to follow close behind.

And the birding has been the best ever. Here are a few photos.....Enjoy!

Linda and Jeff Miller



*“A Perfect Wildlife Moment on the Greensprings Trail—June 16, 2011,” reported Linda Miller.*

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Wildlife Mapping on The Greensprings Trail - June 2011

Linda and Jeff Miller



**Left:**  
**"Male Common Yellowthroats  
on Greensprings Trail"**

**By Linda Miller**



**Right:**  
**"Mr. Blue Grosbeak"**

**By Linda Miller**

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Wildlife Mapping on The Greensprings Trail - June 2011

Linda and Jeff



Redheaded Woodpecker by Linda Miller

Rat Snake on Holly Tree by Linda Miller





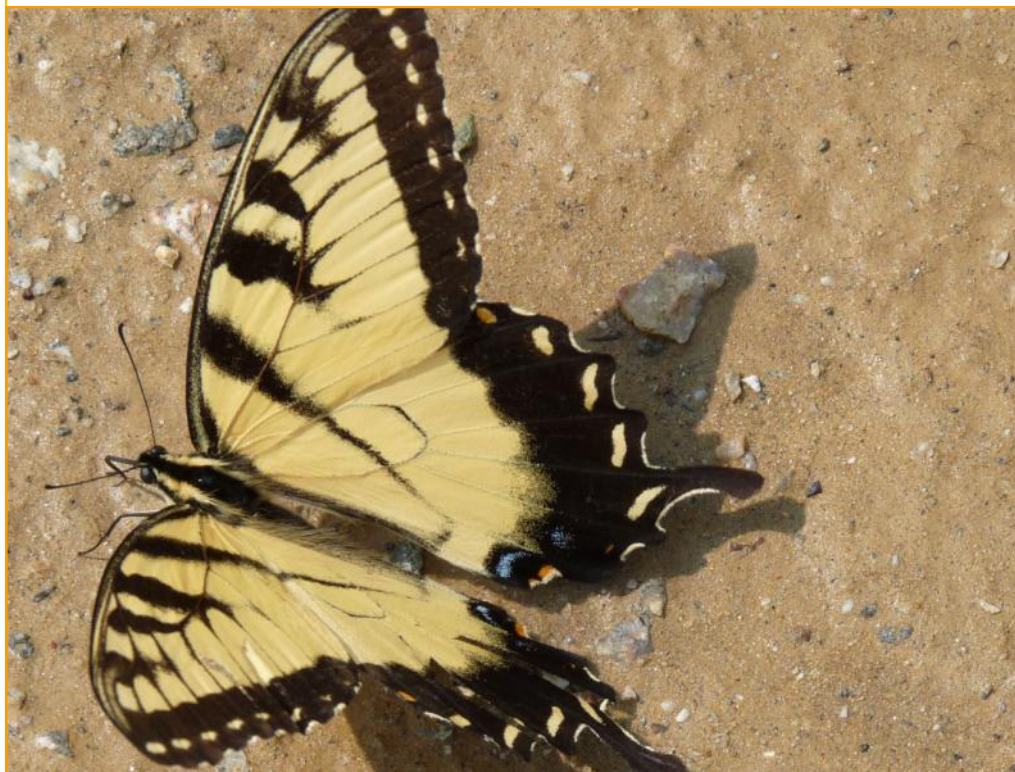
# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Naturalizing at Freedom Park – 12 June 2011

By Shirley Devan

I ventured out to Freedom Park to check the construction status of the Interpretive Center. The windows are in and I could still walk around inside. It will be very nice when it's complete in a few months.

Despite the heat and humidity at 10:30 in the morning, I ventured down to Colby Swamp with my binoculars and camera to see what wildlife was about and waiting to be photographed.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail  
*Papilio glaucus*



Yellow-Legged Meadowhawk  
*Sympetrum vcinum*

# HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

The usual bird species were singing and calling. Near the parking lot I saw a rabbit plus a Summer Tanager and adult Eastern Bluebirds leading their new young around. Same for Northern Mockingbirds. When I reached the swamp, a Belted Kingfisher was flying from perches looking for fish and quite a few Common Yellowthroats were giving me the “witchety-witchety” just to tease me because I could not see them in the dense vegetation. A Red-shouldered Hawk circled around overhead and appeared to be molting – lots of ragged feathers in tail and primaries.

The beavers are back at work and they have taken out quite a few of the saplings on the other side of the swamp on the right.

One bird I was happy to hear (first) and then find was Northern Parula. Also heard Acadian Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, and Carolina Wren. American Crow and Common Grackle flew over. I observed a family of Northern Cardinals in the woods up beyond the swamp. I heard several chips and finally saw an immature cardinal flitting around at eye level. Then I saw the adults flying around giving little hints about their whereabouts.



Spangled Skimmer  
*Libellula cyanea*

The dragonflies were everywhere by late morning, some even perching close enough for my point-and-shoot camera. I was able to get photos of Yellow-legged Meadowhawks, Common Whitetail, and a Spangled Skimmer. I had no idea what these were. After I got home and downloaded the photos to my computer, I consulted [Wild Guide Dragonflies](#) by Cynthia Berger, a Stackpole Book.

Frogs and toads were making themselves known. Bull Frog sounded off a few times plus Green Frogs (gulp, gulp) and Cricket Frogs.

Butterflies included an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Zebra Swallowtail, and Buckeye.

Plenty of mountain bikers too – pedaling through the red clay mud just as I was tip-toeing around the wettest spots. A very satisfying morning and no ticks!

This is Stewart, our native persimmon (*persimmonious stewartii*).

When my cohort was having our training on trees by Stewart Ware, I asked him if native persimmons germinated from seed. My husband Mac had been gathering them on his walks at Jamestowne Island, and not a one had sprouted. Dr. Ware answered, "only if the seed has passed through the digestive system of a raccoon." Okay, then. Within two weeks, Mac came home with a ziplock bag full of persimmon seeds he had teased out of raccoon scat (he says it's easy to find; often on top of logs). So, we set about trying to raise one ourselves again. Several weeks later, we had a little plant coming up out of a pot, maybe 8" tall. Didn't particularly look like a tree seedling; more like a shrub or sturdy herbaceous plant. So, I carted it off to the winter tree walk at the Rec Center, and waited in the parking lot to ambush Dr. Ware and try to get a positive i.d. Sure enough, it was the baby we had been hoping for! We named him Stewart, and planted him in the front yard far enough from the phone/power lines to avoid unneeded pruning by overzealous contractors. Isn't he cute?



THIS IS STEWART.....

By Kathi Mestayer



## York County Master Gardeners' Learning Garden

*Presents*

A Learn and Grow Educational Program  
for children, ages 10+

### ART IN THE GARDEN

Open to children 10 years old and above

Free of charge

Class Limit 15

**Saturday, July 9**  
**10am - Noon**



**York County Master Gardeners' Learning Garden**

Goodwin Neck Road at County Drive  
Behind Fire & Safety Building



Botanical Artist Linda Miller will guide children as they create art from garden materials. Learning how to simplify complex structures, and add color with watercolor and colored pencils, everyone will create a beautiful journal page, using words and images.

All materials furnished by the instructor and the York County Master Gardeners' Learning Garden.

The class is held outdoors: please bring your own sun protection, insect repellent, water, and snacks.

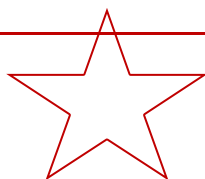


**Free and open to the public**

**Reservations required, class limit 15**

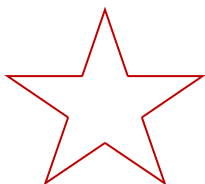
**(757) 890-4940**

**Save This Date!**



**VMN Statewide Volunteer Conference and Training  
September 23-25 in Fluvanna County**

**Hosted by the Rivanna Chapter**



**HRC PICNIC JULY 23 !**

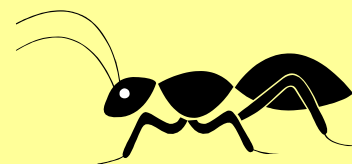
**COME JOIN THE FUN!**

Saturday, July 23rd, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Fort Pocahontas, Sherwood Forest

Stay for a while! Stay all day! Swim, hike, take a bird walk!

Bring your favorite picnic foods to share! Take a nap!

Tour Sherwood Forest, plantation, home of John Tyler, the 10th president of the United States!



See all your HRC buddies! More information to come, stay tuned.....