



THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 No. 8 August 2011

**President's
Message**

Page 2

**Advanced
Training**

Page 3

**Naturalizing at
Colby Swamp**

Pages 5-6

**HRC Teams
with 4-H
Campers**

Pages 7-8

**Ramblins by
Clyde**

Page 9

**Trip with VIMS on
the Schooner
Alliance**

Page 11-12

*WELCOME
TO
COHORT
VI*

Chapter Board of Directors 2011-2012

Officers

Barbara Boyer, President

Ted Sargent, Vice President

*Patty Maloney and Lois Ullman,
Secretary*

Thad Hecht, Treasurer

Felice Bond, Member-at-Large

*Kathi Mestayer, Member-at-
Large*

Nancy Norton, Member-at-Large

Mary Apperson, Chapter Advisor

Committee Chairs

*Geoff Giles, Historian and
Outreach*

*Jennifer Trevino and Sharon
Plocher, Basic Training*

Shirley Devan, Membership

*Susan Powell and Cherie
Aukland, Volunteer Service
Projects*

*Adrienne Frank and Gary
Driscoll, Advanced Training*

Ted Sargent, Programs

Patty Riddick, Newsletter

Janet Curtis, Host

Janette Navia, Webmistress

*Dean Shostak and Les Lawrence,
Field Trip Coordinators*

Message from the President

July has been a brutal month for many of our outdoors adventures! The combined heat and humidity have led many of us to curtail our outdoor volunteer service projects and led to the postponement of our annual picnic. We hope that we can get our picnic rescheduled in the near future (hopefully once this weather pattern breaks). In the meantime, I would like to invite our chapter members to consider signing up for the Virginia Master Naturalist State Convention (September 23, 2011 – September 25, 2011). This year, it can be a day-trip if you would like, or a really fun camping adventure.

The conference will be hosted by the Rivanna Chapter and it will be held at Camp Friendship, 573 Friendship Way, Palmyra, Virginia 22963. This location is about two hours from Williamsburg, and promises to have lots of great activities and learning possibilities. The early registration date has passed, so if you have not signed up, the rates will be a little higher, but I would encourage you to take a look at what is being offered. You are not required to attend the entire conference – you can pick and choose the activities you would like.

Attending the state conference is an excellent way to get to see what other chapters are doing and what their successes have been and what their plans for the future are. The weather in late September (barring a hurricane) is usually excellent, and the location is central enough to the entire state that we will be able to meet people from all over the Commonwealth.

The link to the information site is:

<http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=978684>

or you can “Google” Virginia Master Naturalists 2011 State Conference.

Hope to see you there!!

Notes from the Board

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

©2011 Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Program. No parts of this newsletter may be reproduced without permission of the Board of Directors of the Historic Rivers Chapter. Contact: newsletter-editor@vmn-historicrivers.org

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.

Rice Center Advanced Training – July 9, 2011

This was the second frog event of the summer with Lou Verner and Anne Wright.

After a delicious pot luck dinner, Lou gave a great presentation on the frogs we might see and/or hear. We observed frogs at the Rice Center, and then drove over to the Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery. We were very fortunate to have several agile kids in our group. These youngsters were catching anurans right and left. Everyone enjoyed close looks at all the critters. You, too, can see some of the critters – just follow this link to the photos:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/askop/sets/72157627040429365/>

Alice and Seig Kopinitz

Advanced Training - August 2011

[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] VSO Field Trip - Craney Island - August 20, 2011 from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm at Craney Island, Portsmouth

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

[AT] VSO Field Trip to Craney Island - August 21, 2011 from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm at Craney Island, Portsmouth

[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

Please see additional Advanced Training information on page 14...and on the HRC website....

A New Species?

By Nancy Norton



I think I have discovered a new species of humming bird !!! I have named it *Archelochus mexicanus Nortonii* .

Just kidding, but sure was surprised to find a house finch on my humming bird feeder. They showed up as a gang of 4 to 5 each morning at 10, with loud raucous chatter. This is what made me go see WHAT was going on. They are heavy enough to tip the feeder so the nectar gathers in the bowl of the flower and drank to their hearts content. They even came back for dinner that night.

This went on for about a week until the Ruby Throated male showed up and chased them off. I haven't seen either in a while, could be the heat or time to change the solution. Probably the latter as to HOT to go out and do it !!!!

Nancy Norton

Naturalizing at Colby Swamp by Shirley Devan

Naturalizing at Colby Swamp at Freedom Park should be a leisurely, relaxing adventure. In mid-July the lushness is almost claustrophobic. But the lushness hides summer jewels. Some make themselves visible; some hide and tease the observer. The butterflies were out in mid-morning: Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Red-spotted Purple, and Red Admiral. Standing in the shade brought fungi to my attention. I had better luck identifying the birds than the fungi. Highlights were a Green Heron flying up from the swamp plus a Summer Tanager singing near the top of a tree as I headed back to the parking lot. Maybe the heat is good for something -- it forces us to SLOW down and pay closer attention.



A native wildflower in bloom now -- St. Andrew's Cross

Photo by Shirley Devan

Continued on next page--



Fungi. Looks like a critter took a nibble out of the larger one and then moved on!

Photo by Shirley Devan



Here is a photo of a Red-spotted Purple taken 19 July 2011 at Colby Swamp, Freedom Park.

Photo by Shirley Devan

HRC Teams with 4-H Campers

By Patty Maloney

Photos by Felice Bond

On July 26 and 28, 2011, 4-H campers and HRC Chapter members explored the wonders of the wetlands and benthic macroinvertebrates at the York County 4-H Camp. Thirteen campers and three counselors, along with Larry Riddick, Felice Bond, Susan Powell and Patty Maloney, wandered the 4-H Camp stream and netted a variety of critters and leaf litter. During the second hour, the critters along with the leaf litter were analyzed at the 4-H lab where plastic gloved hands explored with tweezers, spoons, paint brushes, magnifying glasses and microscopes.

Over 12 types of macroinvertebrates were identified including dragonfly larva (Family Gomphidae), aquatic worms, leeches, crayfish, aquatic sow bugs, scuds, beetles, gilled snails, clams, water striders, mosquito larva, and the group's most popular true bug, a type of water scorpion (Nepa apiculata). This type of water scorpion resembles a wicked looking giant water bug with a "tail" that preys on insects and macroinvertebrates. This "tail" is actually a breathing tube that pokes above the water's sur-

face like a snorkel and allows the bug to bury itself in the mud during droughts. Because of the wide variety of macroinvertebrates found, including the pollution intolerant Gomphidae dragonfly larva and gilled snails, the group determined the 4-H Camp stream's water quality was good.

Other critters collected along the stream bank included salamanders and tadpoles plus beautiful flying black winged damselflies, ebony jewelwings. At the end of each session, the group released all of the critters and leaf litter back into the stream.

The HRC team had a fantastic time learning and exploring with the 4-H campers. All agreed, if called upon again next year, they will be ready, willing and able to lead the "expedition".



Above: "Larry Riddick supervises campers as they collect stream samples..."



Left: "Patty Maloney explains Virginia's watershed..."

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



“Susan Powell has the microscope ready for a close-up look...”

“The samples taken indicated a healthy stream...”



“Felice Bond helps a camper identify an aquatic sow bug...”

Ramblins.....

Two weeks ago I found a little lady Box Turtle in G3A (God's Three Acres). I brought her home to be part of two Zoo presentations I had scheduled in July. I knew it was a female using Tim's criteria: brown eyes(remember the song "Beautiful Brown Eyes")?, short tail, cloaca close to both the plastron and the rear scute of the carapace, flat plastron, straight claws and subdued coloration. I counted the rings on her scutes and it seems she is twelve years old. She has a gentle disposition and acts like a little lady. Miss Ellie immediately named her "Princess". She has a fondness for Bing Cherries, Blue Berries and Earthworms. It was fun to watch her eat a big juicy night crawler. I would put it on her dinner plate and she would ignore it until it started to crawl then she would watch in what direction it was headed to. She would grab it by the head and decapitate it . As the rest of the body squirmed around she took dainty bites out of it.

She entertained 80 children during her two visits to the Hampton Roads Academy summer camp and the NN Midtown Community Center. The children loved her. Both she and they were very well behaved. I was going to keep her for the Freedom Park opening but when it was canceled I released her back into G3A.

I was sorry not to be able to keep her as a companion for my resident backyard male box turtle "Jacob". He has been with us for at least five years and lives in the brush pile next to the compost pile. We see him on his forays after a good rain. He has a fondness for slugs and my Hostas. He keeps reappearing so I guess he may have a lady sequestered somewhere in the neighborhood or maybe he's just an old crusty bachelor.

The Drain Pipe robin babies have fledged (a bit early I thought). They flew into the Japanese Maple in the front yard this morning. The one baby fell on the ground and when I picked it up and put it on a branch I had Mom, Dad, a pair of Cardinals and the local Mocking Bird dive bombing me. The baby fell out of the tree again and hopped into the street. Immediately the parents dived at it actually knocking it over and chased it back into the tree again. There are four fledglings but with the neighborhood cats and the local raccoon I have grave doubts to their survival.

The Patent Leather (Betsy) Beetle grubs are building their metamorphosis chambers underneath their home logs. The chamber has four earthen sides and the log is the "roof". They will pupate for several weeks eventually transforming into soft shelled brown adults. After another couple of days the exoskeleton hardens and turns the glossy black of the true adult beetle. As you might expect the brown phase can't "talk".

Ain't nature miraculous?

Ramblin Clyde

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Cohort VI Basic Training Begins August 30, 2011!

Jennifer Trevino, Co-Chair, Basic Training Committee

As we approach our August 30th Cohort VI Basic Training kick-off, the Basic Training Committee is finalizing all necessary preparations for the six month training session. To date, we have 19 confirmed HRC Basic Training 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.



FIELD TRIP: EXPLORING THE BAY WITH VIMS – TOURING THE WATERMEN’S MUSEUM

By Les Lawrence

Over the summer, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) partnered with owners of Yorktown Sailing Charters to present a variety of science programs aboard the 105-foot schooner Alliance, while exploring the waters of the York River and Chesapeake Bay. On June 29, 19 members of our chapter and 7 guests traveled aboard the Alliance for a program about sea turtles, presented by VIMS scientist Diane Tulipani. The program included information about all the different species of ocean-going turtles and those we could expect to see in local waters – including some hands-on examples. The cruise, sailing from the pier at Yorktown, and the lecture spanned two hours aboard ship; some members even got to lend a hand in “hoisting the rigging.” The sun was bright, the breeze gentle, the information enlightening.

After the Alliance cruise, many of the participants then had a private tour of the Watermen’s Museum and ended the day with a picnic on the museum grounds. For those who were able to attend, it was a fun day.

Continued on next page...

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Aboard the Alliance



A Bit of Humor from The Washington Post as shared by Clyde Marsteller....

The Washington Post's Mensa Invitational once again invited readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

Arachnoleptic Fit (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.

Beelzebug (n.): Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.

Caterpallor (n.): The color you turn after finding half a worm in the fruit you're eating.

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Join the Williamsburg Bird Club for Advanced Training Trips!

August 7: Williamsburg Bird Club Field Trip: Martin Madness, 6 pm departure from Williamsburg

Join us the evening of 7 August for Martin Madness in Richmond! Have you ever witnessed the fall spectacle of clouds of literally thousands of purple martins, swirling and pirouetting in the late light of day, made frantic by the attacks of a nearby peregrine falcon who hunts them in their nightly roosting ritual? Me neither! But we have the chance to enjoy just that, on the evening of 7 August. A Sunday eve is our choice to ensure ease of parking and walking to the roost site at the 17th Street (and Cary St) Market in downtown Richmond.

If you are inclined to travel on your own, we will see you at the market square at 7 that evening. If you prefer to carpool with other Williamsburg Bird Club Martin and Peregrine fans, we will depart for Richmond at 6 in the evening on Sunday, 7 August from the IHOP parking lot near Wal-Mart, at 199 and Rochambeau Road in Williamsburg. Hope you will join us for what should be a pleasant and memorable evening! For any further info, call Geoff Giles at 757-645-8716.

August 27: Williamsburg Bird Club Field Trip to Craney Island, 7 am.



Our black bear at the Great Dismal Swamp Butterfly Count.....by Patty Maloney

“And I thought the only ‘fuzzy’ things we'd find on a butterfly count would be ‘moths!’”