



THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 No. 10 October 2011

In this Issue

President's Message
Page 2

Volunteer Service Hour Awards
Page 3

3rd Annual VMN Conference News
Pages 4-8

Acorn Collecting
Page 9

Advanced Training
Page 11

New Volunteer Project
Page 14

Affair with Miss Terry
Pages 16-17

Volunteering at Stonehouse
Pages 18-19

Bluebird Monitoring at NN Park
Page 20

"The Big Year"
Page 21

Art in the Garden
Page 22

Running with Cohort VI
Page 23

Editor's Remarks
Page 25



Photo at right top: Barred Owl by Dean Shostak seen on leaving Camp Friendship-VMN Annual Conference.

Photo at right bottom: Pandorus Sphinx Moth by Patty Riddick seen at the Best Western Motel while attending VMN conference.

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 Driscole, 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

VA Master Naturalists State Conference

The Virginia Master Naturalists' State Conference was held this month at Camp Friendship, just outside of Palmyra, Virginia. I was very excited when I saw the central location of the conference site, anticipating that many Virginia Master Naturalists would be able to attend. I was not disappointed! I am not sure of the exact numbers, but I heard somewhere in the range of 160 to 170 attended at least part of the weekend activities. Many of our Historic Rivers Chapter naturalists attended the Friday, pre-conference hikes as well as the Saturday and Sunday scheduled workshops and hands-on adventures.

Friday evening's "meet and mingle" time was one of the best parts of the conference. Many chapters from around the state set up booths to demonstrate their activities and interests, and most had informative booklets and charts depicting the projects and activities of their chapter. The feeling of déjà vu was strong – different people engaging in very similar activities as we do! What a great experience!

Probably the most satisfactory part of the conference was the often-repeated comment upon learning that I was part of the Historic Rivers Chapter: "you guys are awesome!" or "your chapter is always doing really great things!" or "your chapter has so many active volunteers!" I was very pleased to agree with them!

Many of us who attended the conference discussed what wonderful opportunities we could provide should our chapter choose to host a state conference. I would like to take this opportunity to urge us to consider this. Michelle Prysby has let us know that the next two years are spoken for, so we would be looking at 3 to 4 years from now, but we can start thinking about this now. It would be a huge undertaking, but I know we could do it. In the meantime, I would strongly urge our chapter members to attend next year's conference and see how much fun it is! Even in the rain.....!!!

Barbara Boyer, President
Historic Rivers Chapter

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.



Jeanette Navia Reaches 500 Hours of Volunteer Service!



Shirley Devan presents Geoff Giles, Jeanne Millin, and Kathi Mestayer with 250
Volunteer Service Hour Pins!



Cherie Aukland and Susie Engle Hiking in the Rain on Turk Mountain

Photo by Barbara Boyer

Notes from the VMN Statewide Volunteer Conference and Training

By Dean Shostak

Having now just returned (and recovering) from an exciting weekend with my fellow VMNs, I wanted to report on my experience for those who did not go and wanted to know what it was like. It was so great to spend time in the field with my dear friends in our chapter and make some new friends. Spoiler: my epiphany came, appropriately enough, on Sunday Morning at 9:32 AM.

Friday, 9 AM-4 PM

I went on the optional 2.5 mile Appalachian Trail that explored “Geology, Disturbance and Botany.” We hiked through several types over different elevations to find a variety of flora, and minerals. The most challenging part was not the hike, but the deluge that fell on us during the hours we were out there. Several of us, including me, had tried and true waterproof gear that finally failed to keep the water off us. But we can laugh about it now.

Friday 7-9 PM

After a family style spaghetti dinner all chapters had a show and tell. Ted brought the photos from last year’s contest and the other chapters were very, very impressed with the talent in our group. It was fun to see what the other chapters were up to. Overnight, some wonderful mysterious bearded person had hung these beautiful pictures throughout the dining room for all to continue to enjoy.

Continued on Next Page...

Saturday, 7AM -11AM

After attending the morning bird and nature walk I attended the “Lifestyles of the Rich and Biodiverse: How Do Aquatic Insects Fill Their Days.” It was a great follow up to Charlie Dubay’s lecture/field trip and was presented by the extraordinary Rose Brown. Her passion for this subject was so infectious that she made the hours fly by. At the end she shared a portion of a DVD called “Bugs of the Underworld.” I have already ordered a copy of the DVD because it was so amazing. That one class would have been worth the whole visit.

Saturday 11:30 AM-4 PM

River guide, John Holden lead us on a six mile kayak/canoe adventure down a remote section of the Rivanna River where we saw all manner of birds, fish, reptiles, and insects, as well as breathtaking views of sheer rock cliffs jutting out over the river. Small rapids kept us grinning from time to time as well. I was thrilled to see so many broad-wing hawks migrating.

Saturday, 6 PM-10PM

After dinner, Monticello’s Lucia Stanton gave a wonderful talk “The View From Monticello: Natural History in Jefferson’s Virginia” which was fun and enlightening. We then all met later at the bonfire for skits, songs, and smores. I played a little fiddle and even got to accompany Michelle Prysby as she sang “The Fox Went Out On A Chilly Night.”

Sunday, 9-12

Nearly dead from exhaustion, I almost blew off Sunday and headed home since I was going to Jason Mraz that night and had my own new fall concert season starting on Monday, but I rallied, and attended Hub Knott’s “Tracking: A Window Into Landscapes and Animals Lives.” To say this class changed my entire approach to being a naturalist would still not come close. Hub showed us how to use everything that makes us who we are to not just learn about the natural world but to encompass it in every aspect of our lives. His lesson was about so much more than tracking but to learn and appreciate the story of a footprint, scat, feather, leaf, or even a stone. He combined humor, literature, philosophy, science, and a thousand other things to “track.” He and the people he described are the type of naturalist that I aspire to be some day. I was truly inspired. I got of a sense of the long, wonderful journey that is awaiting me. My whole group was transformed by his presentation.

What a weekend! My boots should dry out in a week or so. I wouldn’t have missed a minute of it.

Highlights of VMN State Conference

By Shirley Devan

For me, two of the highlights of the third VMN Statewide Conference and Training (and there were more than two!) were:

Saturday afternoon's visit to the James Madison Landmark Forest at Montpelier, the home of the 4th President of the US. I have long wanted to walk through this forest of 200 acres, practically untouched for more than 150 years. This forest is managed as a wilderness. Non-native plants are removed. Downed trees are cut only to keep the interpretive trail open. In addition to the wonderful trees, we enjoyed the tour led by the Montpelier Horticulturalist Sandy Mudrinich. Sandy obviously loves this forest and was pleased to show off the big and small trees. She described the "old growth forest" as



one that has tree species that have reached their maximum lifespan. She explained the longer life span of the white oaks vs the slightly shorter life span of red oaks. They fall when they get too old not necessarily because they are diseased. I considered it a privilege to walk through the forest with this knowledgeable and articulate scientist. Our Chapter should plan a field trip ... er, forest trip... to this unique treasure.

**Barbara Boyer
at Montpelier**

Saturday night's Keynote Speaker, Lucia (Cinder) Stanton, the Shannon

Senior Historian at Monticello. Her topic was "The View from Monticello: Natural History in Jefferson's Virginia." Again, it was a privilege to hear Ms. Stanton quote Jefferson at length from memory and describe his naturalist contemporaries as if they were close friends. She would probably have been perfectly happy to present her program without PowerPoint slides ... but who does that these days? She reminded us that in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, most of the flora and fauna in Virginia was unidentified. Both Jefferson and his friend James Madison received specimens from their local neighbors for identification – much like we circulate a photo of an insect around our list serve and hope someone can ID it. She described Jefferson's considerable efforts and expense to ship Virginia and American specimens to Europe to convince the European scientists that the New World flora and fauna was at least as important and worthy of research as the Old World specimens. Ms. Stanton is the type of person I wish I could sit next to at a dinner party and listen to her talk about what she does. Thank goodness there are organizations like Monticello that fund research like Ms. Stanton's.

PS. Patti Maloney's leech was headed toward MY bed at 10 pm Saturday night when we corralled it and banished it and its friends to the porch!



HRC campers hiking in the rain!

Cherie Aukland, Barbara Boyer, Shirley Devan and Susie Engle (left to right)

Photo courtesy Shirley Devan



HRC campers ready for dinner!

Cherie Aukland, Alice Kopinitz, Seig Kopinitz, Dean Shostak, and Larry Riddick (left to right)

Photo courtesy Patty Riddick

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



Ida Swenson (Rivanna Chapter), showing off the mascot (snapping turtle) at the Scheier Natural Area ponds.

Photo by Patty Maloney

Donna Finnegan (Central Rappahannock Chapter) getting ready to return a bull frog back to the ponds.

Photo by Patty Maloney



Montpelier Horticulturalist Sandy Mudrinich on left, our tour guide through the Montpelier Landmark Forest Saturday afternoon. She is standing next to a downed American Chestnut Tree trunk that fell about 70 years ago. Very slowly decomposing!

Photo by Shirley Devan

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

"Several HRC members gathered at York River State Park on Sep 20 to gather acorns for the DOF project. Billy Apperson (DOF) and Mary Apperson (YRSP Ranger and chapter representative) led the group, locating and identifying the different oak trees. Unfortunately, the acorns at the park were not ready for harvesting, but we did mark several trees for future harvesting and cleaned up debris around them to make it easier when the time is right."

Billy Apperson identifies acorns for Nancy Barnhart, Jan Lockwood and Cheryl Jacobson (Cohort VI).



Alice Kopinitz and Mary Apperson look on while Seig Kopinitz never misses an opportunity to search for bugs or egg casings!



Cheryl Jacobson, Jan Lockwood, Nancy Barnhart, Mary Apperson, Alice and Seig Kopinitz preparing to collect acorns at the "Majestic White Oak" at York River State Park.



Text and Photos by Les Lawrence

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



WHAT: WILLIAMSBURG FARMER'S MARKET

WHEN: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22ND, 8 to 12 noon.

WHY: TO ACQUAINT THE PUBLIC WITH THE VMN PROGRAM

HOW: HRC VOLUNTEERS WILL MEET AND GREET VISITORS

WHERE: DUKE OF GLOUCESTER STREET, WILLIAMSBURG

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! COME OUT AND JOIN THE FUN!

EARN SERVICE HOURS FOR VOLUNTEERING!

CONTACT: Kathi Mestayer at kwren@widomaker.com



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29TH



Please mark your calendars for our next social event on Saturday, October 29th, at York River State Park.

We are planning a picnic lunch for everyone from 11:45 - 1:00. Cohort VI will already be at the park for a day of training which ends at 4:00.

Ted Sargent has graciously offered his property for some afternoon activities for non-Cohort VI members, and Cohort VI will join us again at Ted's for a wine and cheese party in the evening. Details will follow - but please keep the day free.

Janet Curtis, VMN Host Chair

Advanced Training for October

[AT] HRBC Bird Walk - October 2, from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[AT] Christopher Wren Class - Tragedy of the Commons SH-A18 - October 4, 11, & 18 from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm at Little Theatre, W&M Campus Center

CLASS: Plant Biology - October 4, 2011 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Human Services Building, 5249 Olde Towne Rd., Williamsburg, VA

[AT] Eastern Shore Birding Festival - October 7, 8, & 9 Eastern Shore of VA

[AT] WBC Bird Walk at New Quarter Park - October 8, 2011 from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at Beaverdam Park in Gloucester

[AT] Monthly meeting - October 12, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at JCC Human Services Bldg., 5249 Olde Towne Rd., Williamsburg

[AT] WBC Field Trip - October 15, from 7:00 am to 1:30 pm at WBC Field Trip

[AT] HRBC Bird Walk - October 16, from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

CLASS: Dendrology - October 18, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Human Services Building, 5249 Olde Towne Rd., Williamsburg, VA

[AT] VIMS Secrets of the Seafloor - October 27, 2011 from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Waterman's Hall, 1375 Greate Road, Gloucester Point

FIELD TRIP: Wetlands Ecology - October 29, 2011 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscoll, AT Co-Chairs

Please go to the website for more information www.historicrivers.org



Teta Kain gave the chapter a fascinating class on spiders in September at our general membership meeting.

Now we all love spiders!

Thank you, Teta.

Living Shorelines :

Addressing Erosion with Environmentally-Friendly Methods

A workshop for waterfront property owners and anyone else interested in learning more about this Bay-friendly technique

Tuesday, November 1, 2011, 9 AM to Noon

at the Jamestown 4H Educational Center

3751 4-H Club Road



- Classroom and outdoor sessions
- Meet living shoreline experts
- Learn about different methods

The workshop is free, but space is limited and reservations are required.

For more information and to register, contact:

Tony Lea, Center Director

Jamestown 4-H Educational Center

757-253-4931 adlea@vt.edu

Workshop Speakers:

Karen Duhring, Shoreline Scientist, Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Walter Priest, NOAA Restoration Center



November 5 TogetherGreen Volunteer Day: Western Shore Marshes Important Bird Area (IBA)

By Shirley Devan, Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalist



Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 5 – a TogetherGreen Volunteer Day – the inaugural event to celebrate the recent adoption of the Western Shore Marshes Important Bird Area (IBA) by two local bird clubs – the Williamsburg Bird Club and the Hampton Roads Bird Club.

Any and all volunteers are welcome to participate in the TogetherGreen Volunteer Day sponsored by the National Audubon Society, the Virginia IBAs, the Williamsburg Bird Club and the Hampton Roads Bird Club. This is an approved Volunteer Service Project for the Historic Rivers Chapter – project # C2s (a citizen science project).

Volunteers from the Williamsburg and Peninsula area as well as volunteers from the Middle Peninsula will conduct a bird survey and a road/beach cleanup at Bethel Beach and New Point Comfort Natural Area Preserves, both in Mathews County. A couple of volunteers from the Virginia Audubon IBA office plan to join us that day and will assist in advance with publicity and outreach to media.

The Western Shore Marshes is one of 20 IBAs in Virginia and one of 424 Global IBAs. This IBA covers more than 12,000 acres ranging in elevation from 0 to 8 meters.

The Virginia IBAs are a joint project of the VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Center for Conservation Biology at W&M and VCU, the Virginia Society of Ornithology, the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, and the Virginia Audubon Council.

Western Shore Marshes IBA is important because it supports the largest concentration of salt marsh habitat in the lower Chesapeake Bay and largest in Virginia outside the Eastern Shore; surrounding lands are under increasing pressure for residential development; and avifauna in these areas has received little study.

These marshes stretch from the cities of Poquoson and Hampton north through the shores and beaches of the counties of York, Gloucester and Mathews. Check this web site for more details about this IBA and the habitats and species that depend on these areas: <http://web4.audubon.org/bird/iba/virginia/Documents/Western%20Shore%20Marshes.pdf>

Logistics: If you can help out November 5, contact Dave Youker, Hampton Roads Bird Club and Historic Rivers Chapter, VMN, by November 3. Phone: 757-224-1188 or email: youkerd@aol.com If we have enough volunteers Dave will divide the group so that we can cover Bethel Beach and New Point Comfort at the same time. Everyone will meet at Mathews High School at 8:30 am Saturday, November 5. Folks from Williamsburg should meet at Colony Square Shopping Center on Jamestown Road at 7 am to carpool to Mathews High. The Bird Clubs will provide trash bags and data collection sheets. Volunteers should wear appropriate footwear (and clothes) for wet ditches and sandy beaches. Gloves are recommended. If you have long-handled grabbers, bring them along. You should also bring water, snacks, lunch and binoculars, of course.

Look for opportunities like this each quarter. The IBA points of contact are Geoff Giles for the Williamsburg Bird Club (phone: 757-645-8716) and Dave Youker of the Hampton Roads Bird Club. Both Dave and Geoff are members of our Historic Rivers Chapter. Please join us in this important conservation effort. See you there!

“My turtle rescue for the day crossing Jamestown Road near Lake Matoaka ...”...Tom Dougherty



*“When we try to pick out anything by itself,
we find it hitched to everything else in the
Universe.” --John Muir*

My Affair With Miss Terry (*Terrapene carolina*)

There is a 50s song that starts with “ Beautiful, Beautiful Brown Eyes, I’ll never love Blue Eyes again” . Brown Eyes have drifted in and out of my life many times since I became a VMN in 2006 (Cohort I).

The first time involved the Sunday Snake and the Monday Turtle. In the Beginning the Zoo came into existence with forays into God’s three Acres (G3A) aka our church’s wood lot. I was invited to a Monday Zoo visit at Poquoson Elementary School when a photo team from Virginia Wildlife Magazine was doing a story about the new eco-friendly facilities. I wanted to take along a small earth snake for the children to see. Sunday morning I told Miss Ellie I was going to skip communion and look for a “specimen” in the wood lot for my Monday visit. Usually I could find an earth snake almost immediately under the many Isabel logs in G3A. Try as I might – no snakes. My final try was under a piece of plywood in the upper end of the woods. I could always count on finding a snake there. When I raised the plywood I found a 3 – 4 foot Black Racer, one of G3A apex predators. It stood its ground repeatedly striking at me. I finally pinned its head down and picked it up. It immediately wound itself around the sleeve of my suit jacket. The adage “having a tiger by the tail” came to mind. As I carried my catch back to the church parking lot I realized I didn’t have a container to put it in. I briefly thought of going into the kitchen of the Parish Hall and looking for one but the women were setting up coffee hour and I really value my life and marriage. I sat down on an Isabel log and carefully unwound the snake and set it down. It immediately tried to eat my leg. As I scrambled away I tripped on something. It was the first of my Brown Eyes. A beautiful female Box Turtle. I am convinced the Guardian Spirit of G3A looked after me. Brown Eyes went to school on Monday and back to G3A on Tuesday.

My second affair came a few years later. Miss Ellie and I were spring cleaning our garage on a Saturday morning when a motorcycle came roaring up. A biker dude picked something out of his saddlebag and walked over to us. He said, “I have something for you” and handed me a small box turtle, Susie Blutz had entered my life. Miss Ellie took one look at her and also fell in love, “She is so cute” (Ellie was sure anything that cute had to be a little girl). She named her ‘Susie Blutz’. It seems in her childhood home town when a new girl moved in the kids called her Susie Blutz until they became acquainted. I was relieved to see Susie accepted as you don’t say no to a biker dude named “Mad Dog”. Some time later Jeanette and I released her in Waller Mill after their Earth Day near where she was found.

Brown Eyes #3 was a G3A resident that visited with the Zoo for a series of presentations with the Newport News schools and then went back home. I see her occasionally in my ramblings.

A little over three years ago a big male box turtle took up residence in our backyard. We named him “Jacob”. Over the years we would see him especially after a rain looking for slugs and worms. Number 4 showed up on Wednesday, September 21. I think she has a “history” with my guy in my backyard. I was doing some weeding in my flower bed and there in the Vinca sat a new turtle. She blinked her brown eyes at me and was immediately named “Precious”. I suspect Jacob is really happy to see her. I have spotted her today in the same area and took her picture.

A final note. I have been scouring G3A for an Earth Snake for the Zoo’s visit to NN Go Green, Save Green Expo on Saturday on the 24th. I have had no success. After my last foray I was driving home when I spotted something on the road. You guessed it. It was a big male Box Turtle headed for the embankment next to I-64. I pulled off on the shoulder and saw a “Irene” garbage truck coming at us. I waved frantically and he stopped. I grabbed the turtle and took him home. He has the most vivid yellow coloring I have ever seen in the specie. Red eyes, dimpled plastron, very long claws, and a long tail. He has been named “Smaug”. He is going to Expo and then back to where I found him but as far from I-64 as I can get. I got his picture too.

Ramblin Clyde

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



Jacob

At left

**Smaug
the Magnificent**

At right



Precious

At left



Tom Dougherty joins Jan Newton (VNPS) and other volunteers in a “Habitat Helpers” program at Stonehouse Elementary School north of Williamsburg. To quote Tom, “Jan has done an incredible job with setting up and maintaining the habitat. It has been a great experience for me and I am sure for the students and other volunteers Spent a great afternoon out at Stonehouse with Jan Newton The storm made a small mess so we spent a good 3 hours cleaning up, weeding, etc. The highlight was Jan finding some wild passion fruit which she shared and also got us all nibbling on fennel seeds and shoots. Great time.”



Tom volunteered with local students as well as with Mary Meier, (seen above) a grad student who has moved into the area from Wisconsin.

Gardens at Stonehouse Elementary

Photos courtesy of Tom Dougherty



Newport News Park Bluebird Monitoring

By Susie Engle

Early this spring, I volunteered to help with monitoring the bluebird boxes at New Quarter Park for the second year in a row. It was so enjoyable last year, and the location/park gave me a good excuse to hike, look at native plants, and watch for birds and butterflies. After this year's first monitoring session, I was contacted by Sara Lewis, VBS County Coordinator, about the possibility of taking over a new trail. Steven Living, our local wildlife biologist, would assist with start up if we could find a team. It seems Newport News Park had an established trail, but the monitors had to discontinue last year, and new ones were needed.

When I put feelers out about the possibility, I was told that the Newport News Chapter of the Master Naturalists might want to work in tandem. When I contacted the person already involved, it took us a couple of emails to realize that her trail, though in Newport News Park, was not the one in question. Seems the NN Chapter had taken on the monitoring of the Golf Course Bluebird Trail. They were very busy with many houses, and would welcome our assistance. However, the trail Sara contacted us about was at the other end of the Park and not connected. From our own Historic Rivers Chapter, I quickly had an enthusiastic group of five folks who were excited about taking on this needy trail.

Several of us met Steve at the park in early May for an orientation as to the location of the boxes. As we drove around in the twilight of late spring, we noticed that these were 'seasoned' boxes and that a few may need to be replaced. However, the season was already in full swing and some of the houses were already occupied. Because we were starting late, we opted to monitor and evaluate the houses for the current season and make recommendations for the future later.

Our team of five dedicated members included Larry and Patty Riddick, Geoff Giles, Clyde Marsteller, and Susie Engle. Along the way, we were assisted with interested family members such as Susie's son, Josh, and her father, Olde Chuck, as well as Geoff's son, Tyler, Clyde's granddaughter, Kayla, and the Riddicks' grandson, Andy. As stated before, we began the season in early May with an orientation to the box locations and continued weekly monitoring sessions in pairs until August 19. By mid August, we were noting no new activity and by the 19th, all fledglings had departed.

At first we were a bit surprised at the large number of boxes on the trail (39), but we quickly learned how to move through the monitoring efficiently. There are several boxes recommended for relocation, and a few that need to be replaced altogether. Those tasks will keep us busy during the non-breeding months. Here's a compilation of the data gathered from our team and reported on the Virginia Bluebird Society Annual Summary Report sheet:

Out of **39 Total Boxes** on the Newport News Bluebird Trail, there were:

***Number of Nest Attempts** ~ Bluebird = 35, Carolina Wren = 3, Chickadees = 4, House Wren = 1, Titmouse = 1, Flying Squirrel = 1

***Number of Eggs** ~ Bluebird = 117, Carolina Wren = 10, Chickadee = 9, House Wren = 0, Titmouse = 6

***Number Hatched** ~ Bluebirds = 101, Carolina Wren = 10, Chickadees = 9, Titmouse = 6

***Number Fledged** ~ Bluebirds = 96, Carolina Wren = 10, Chickadees = 9, Titmouse = 6

There were signs of unknown predation at five of the boxes. Also, wasps found our clean, dry boxes very attractive and provided a continuing battle. In the final weeks, the lone occupant observed was an unhappy Flying Squirrel in Box 38. S/ He is welcome to stay until we prepare for next season!

Williamsburg Bird Club Meeting on October 19th!

“The Big Year” – The Real Thing

After you’ve rushed out to see the October 14 first showing of “The Big Year” starring non-birders Steve Martin, Jack Black, and Owen Wilson (who play the characters competing to see who can find the most bird species in one year), plan to attend the Williamsburg Bird Club’s meeting Wednesday, October 19 to hear about “Bob’s Big Year” – the true and recent adventure of a Norfolk, Virginia birder.

During 2010 Bob Ake traveled the US chasing birds in an attempt to tally as many species in the ABA (American Birding Association) area as possible. For much of the year he traveled with John Spahr. Bob tells the tale of their year from the beginning when a well-considered itinerary was followed, trying to keep costs under control, until the end when every rarity was chased. In the process they drove personal cars, rented cars, took commercial flights, went on lots of pelagic trips, hiked, rode ATVs, and along the way saw some great scenery, were involved in some minor difficulties, had some really exciting times, and soared to many terrific highs.

Bob finished the year with 731 species, ranking him SECOND all-time among those completing an ABA Annual list. His illustrated talk, in addition to detailing his travels, describes the planning and the execution, gives a summary of the costs and miles traveled, and offers suggestions for anyone interested in trying an ABA Big Year. You can gain a taste of his Big Year by logging onto his blog <http://bobsbirds.blogspot.com/> where he posted daily notes and photos during his travels.

Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2011

Location: Andrews Hall, W&M campus, Lecture Hall 101

Time: 7:30 pm

Free and open to the public

Submitted by Shirley Devan

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Saturday, October 8, 2011

"Art in the Garden" Free Children's Program
York County Master Gardener's Learning Garden

10 AM to Noon

*Goodwin Neck Road at County Drive,
behind the fire and safety station*

For children 7 and older

Please pre-registration at 757 890-4940



Anna and I went into the garden to select her cutting, one of several Black-eyed Susan species in the garden. She drew with such patience and skill. Her observation was keen. We also spent some time talking about its parts and the composite plant family characteristics. Anna went back into the garden and selected another family member to complete her "Art in the Garden" portrait. The Learning Garden is the perfect garden for this workshop format, especially for children.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Linda at millerlcmiller@yahoo.com

Running with Cohort VI
By
Jennifer Trevino, Basic Training Co-Chair

Energy and excitement filled the air on August 30, 2011, as HRC-VMN Cohort VI began its' Basic Training adventure. Cohort VI members received Basic Training materials, met the HRC board, heard important information about their soon to be new role as Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers, reviewed the mission and objectives of the program, and discussed guidelines for participation. New members were then treated to an engaging presentation on "The Nature of Naming," presented by Bill Williams. The enthusiasm and excitement did not end on the 30th; since that time, Cohort VI members have participated in training classes on "Risk Management," presented by Catherine Short, "Evolution," taught by Hugh Beard, and "Habitats," presented by Susan Powell. Cohort VI also had the opportunity to spend a wonderful, rain soaked afternoon, at York River State Park, learning about "Citizen Science & Research Skills and Scientific Field Methods." Susan Powell expertly guided members in the techniques of field study skills, including observing, field journaling, following protocols, and recording data. Cohort VI members also learned how to calibrate binoculars, use field guides, and had the opportunity to investigate some of the local flora, up close and personal, using the new loupes they received at the training. Of course, no outdoor HRC-VMN training class would be complete without a terrific potluck lunch; Cohort VI members brought wonderfully prepared gourmet delights for everyone to share. In addition to attending classes, individuals have already started participating in advanced training opportunities and volunteer service projects. As Cohort VI members become involved in the various activities, they are met with smiles and welcoming words of encouragement extended to them by HRC Master Naturalists from preceding Cohorts, which inspires and further promotes camaraderie and personal connections among our chapter members.

October Basic Training Coming Attractions:

Oct. 4th 6-9 pm. Topic: Plant Biology; Speaker: Charlie Dubay
Oct. 18th 6-9 pm. Topic: Dendrology; Speaker: Stewart Ware
Oct. 29th 9-3 pm. Field Trip: Wetlands Ecology at YRSP; Speaker: Hugh Beard

(HRC All Member Picnic w/Cohort VI, YRSP, 11:45-1:00 pm.)



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

THE CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION'S

OYSTER RESTORATION CENTER

NEEDS VOLUNTEERS OCT. 11,12,and13, 2011

TO ASSIST WITH REEF BALL CONSTRUCTION

Location: VIMS, Gloucester Point, VA.

Tue. Oct.11 9:00-2:00

Wed. Oct. 12 9:00-2:00

Thurs. Oct. 13 9:00-11:00



WHAT ARE REEF BALLS???

Reef balls are molded from marine safe cement and mimic the structure of natural reefs.

Fiberglass molds are used to construct the reef balls. A completed reef ball is a hollow sphere, 18" high and 24" wide with several openings on the surface. Oyster spat attach to the reef ball, creating valuable habitat. These reef balls will be placed in the Piankatank River at a later date.

Volunteers will assist with assembling and filling reef ball molds and/or opening and removing reef balls from the molds.

This is an outdoor activity that involves lifting, carrying, bending, and hammering.

Volunteers must be 16 years or older. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

Please contact Laura Englund to RSVP

lenglund@cbf.org



Kudos to HRC members Catherine Short, Patty Maloney, and Ted Sargent, who taught the MWEE class to attendees at the VMN Annual Conference held at Camp Friendship, Palmyra, VA. By now, you've no doubt heard much about this great weekend with MN folks from all over the state; however, I could not let this pass unsaid. Catherine, Patty and Ted did a magnificent job of instructing. They were well organized, had great learning aids, and kept the class interest going. My husband, Larry, and I were two of the eager participants and we are proud to be associated with these folks as well as all the members of our chapter.

On a lighter note, Patty came with BMIs (Benthic Macro Invertebrates) to use in her demonstration. To quote Patty, "Since I was helping teach a MWEE session on Sunday, I got permission to take back some of the live macroinvertebrates we found at the ponds. To keep the bugs oxygenated and alive overnight, I had brought a battery-operated "bubbler" from home and placed it in five-gallon bucket with 5 inches of Scheier pond water. My cabin roommates were most welcoming of our "visitors" as long as there was a board on top of the bucket; and the bugs seemed content. We even added a plastic zip-locked bag filled with ice to keep their water temperature nice and cool. When I returned that night from the dinner, speaker and camp fire program, I found the bugs and their bucket kicked out of the cabin and on the front porch. It seems the bugs had outworn their welcome; one bad apple spoiled the whole bunch. The "leech" had escaped and was found crawling hungrily across the floor! You know you are a Master Naturalist when..... you won't sleep with leeches!



(The bugs overnighed in my car just in case a raccoon or other predator was looking for a midnight snack; and all were a hit at the MWEE session, including the leech!)"

And...to hear the rest of the story...be sure to read the last remark by Shirley Devan on page 6.

Patty Riddick, Editor