

The Naturalist

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FROM THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER
VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

Virginia
Master
Naturalist



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The President's Message

By Adrienne Frank

Over the past few months, our HRC Board has been working on **goals** to help enhance our chapter's mission. Of course, we are the **finest** chapter, but we can always improve. The HRC Board set three continuing goals for the coming two years: DIVERSITY, RETENTION, and STEWARDSHIP.

The DIVERSITY goal addresses our Historic Rivers Chapter's need to establish relationships with and recruit participation of those who are of diverse race, ethnicity, age, and interest. Future ideas to work toward this goal include developing closer working relationships with parks to target specific groups or locations in our region. For example, James City County Parks and Recreation has activities in a variety of neighborhoods and perhaps we would join them. Charles Brown Park in Lackey may be a location for projects or events. We can continue to build a repertoire of educational speakers and go to new venues. We can continue to offer scholarships to children who could not otherwise afford to attend Nature or other camps. We could also offer scholarships and/or payment strategies to Basic Training participants, if we are able to address a few issues.

The RETENTION goal seeks to retain active membership by offering leadership, choice, and engaging activities. At present, our chapter has a relatively high retention rate, but we can always do better. We can continue to identify champions/leaders for projects who will actively seek participation of members. We can continue to offer diverse projects and great field trips in new interest areas, and schedule more activities on weekends. One great idea is to assign a communicator/historian for each cohort, who would encourage communication and activities.

The STEWARDSHIP goal promotes volunteer activities that help to protect or restore wildlife habitat, improve water quality, improve our parks, etc. Thanks to Shirley Devan, our chapter participated in the James City County Beautification project and last month, we had over 100 hours of recorded stewardship. We may offer some new ways of recording hours that reflect what we are doing. For example, if you are cleaning or maintaining trails while wildlife mapping, you may be able to record that work. A new project for the chapter is "adopt-a-location," and Connie Reitz is our new champion for trash pickup at the Powhatan Creek Park on Jamestown Road.

The Board is always open to your ideas, concerns, and comments. If you have thoughts about our focus for the next year or so, please let me know. I would love to have your ideas to present to the Board.



Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole teach a class at the New Kent Forestry Center on the last day of the program.



CLEAN THE BAY DAY

On Saturday, June 2, 2018, volunteers from the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists helped to Clean the Bay by picking up litter at York River State Park. The team was joined by other organizations from the community to work together to make our local park even more inviting. Coordinated by Master Naturalist and YRSP Ranger John Gresham, teams worked in the main park, at Riverview, and at Croaker Landing. Together, they definitely made a difference!

Chapter Board

Chapter Advisor	Page Hutchinson
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Vice President, Programs	Linda Morse
Co-recording Secretaries	Sue Mutell, Connie Reitz
Treasurer	Barbara Neis
Membership	Renee Dallman
Volunteer Service Projects	Shirley Devan
Continuing Education	Jennifer Trevino
Basic Training	David Lunt, Janet Harper
Past President	Judy Jones
Historian	Keith Navia
Education & Outreach	Sherry Brubaker, Karen Grass
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Newsletter	Cindy Baker
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Host Committee	Randi Heise
Members-at-Large	Sharon Plocher, Gary Driscole, Rick Brown, Alister Perkinson, Joe Beene
Webmaster	Jeanette Navia
Social Media	Sonny Bowers



This America Robin is keeping an eye on the Board for the summer.

NATURE CAMP IS COMING AND OUR GIRLS ARE READY!

by Judy Jones

Summer is nearly here and with it comes Nature Camp. Our three campers this year are all girls, all excited, and all ready to head out for two weeks in Vesuvius, Virginia. I'd like to take a moment and introduce you to all three:

SARAHÍ JUAREZ – Sarahi is 11 and a rising 6th grader who presently attends Waller Mill School. She writes: "I am a Mexican-American and I know a little bit of Spanish but I am still learning. My parents say I am very talented and some of talents include dancing, singing, playing basketball, and exploring nature. To relax, I like to go outside and see many of the interesting creatures out there. I have a small forest surrounding my house. Sometimes I go into the forest to look for turtles, snakes, spiders and stick bugs. Nature is beautiful, from an autumn leaf to a gray squirrel, and I am ready to learn about the dangers and the benefits as well as the beauty. I am excited to learn more about nature this summer at Nature Camp."

JASMINE BARBOUR-BASSETT – Jasmine is 13 and a rising 10th grader, presently attending a combination of Home Schooling and Williamsburg Co-op Classical Academy. She writes: "I love to garden organically. I feel I am about to help the earth by recycling. So I now compost and use it in my garden. I have a passion for environmental science and so I recycle, compost, and garden organically whenever I can. Last spring, I helped teach younger Girl Scouts about water conservation. I also talked about the environment when I presented my science fair project on how to build a compost and how using biodegradable products causes composting to break down items faster. As you can see, everything I learn I like to teach to others. This also helps the earth and could preserve our earth better for future generations."

HEATHER HERRICK – Heather is the only camper we're sending who is a returning Nature Camp student. We actually sponsored her in 2015 and she was also able to attend, sponsored by Greenspring Garden Club in 2016. She is presently 15 and in 9th grade, attending Lafayette High School. Her goal this summer is to study herpetology. She writes: "I've attended Nature Camp in the past and every year I walk out with new knowledge and new experiences. I feel it is important to understand the world we live in and what better place is that than Nature Camp? I learn so much and want to return home and be able to share amazing facts and knowledge with my friends and family. Going to Nature Camp will benefit me by expanding my knowledge and give me more opportunities to interact with people, like me, who are there to learn. I think we need to tell as many kids as possible about nature and how precious it is so they can go out into the world and be the light, the future, the hope for a better tomorrow. I want to be that hope."

I hope you are as proud as I am to send these three talented, intelligent, and very promising young ladies off to camp, representing our Historic Rivers Chapter. Let's wish them a tick-free, laugh-filled, memorable experience!



Heather Herrick (l), and Jasmine Barbour-Bassett (r).

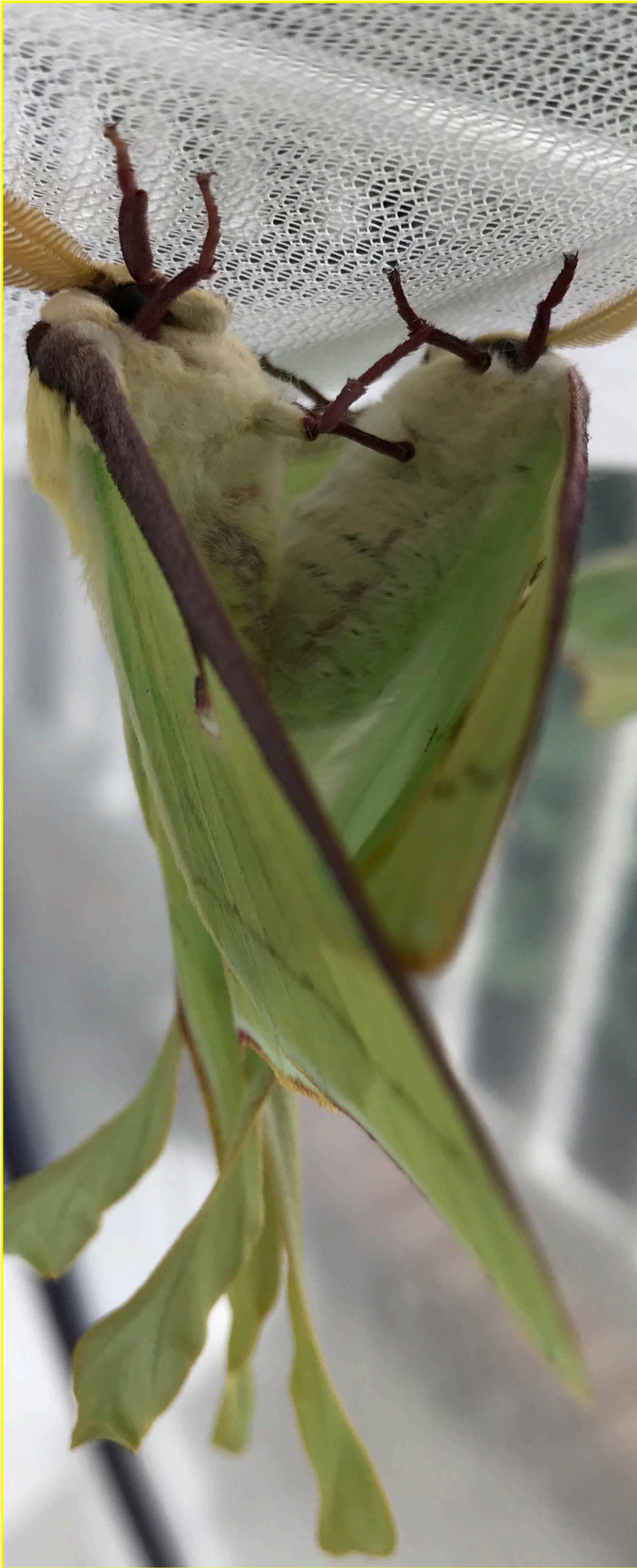
JAMES RIVER EXPERIENCE RECIPIENT—MAYA REESE

Historic Rivers Chapter is sponsoring Maya Reese, a rising 10th grader at Lafayette High School for the James River Experience, says Judy Jones. Her nominator, Caleigh Remocaldo, Environmental Educator for the James River Experience, writes that "Maya is an exceptional student who loves to kayak, camp, and adventure outside. For the past 10 years, she has been a Girl Scout and has accomplished things such as organizing a food drive for her community as well as building 'buddy benches' on playgrounds to support making new friends.

Maya's favorite subject is science and she looks forward to learning about the science on the James including learning new things about our wildlife."

"I met Maya last week at our meeting and knew just from that meeting that she would be a great recipient of your sponsorship!" says Judy.

The James River Experience is a week-long canoe trip down the James River, learning about the river, the ecology, and the habitat it touches as the waters travel to the Bay.



Luna Moths Copulating

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's union wasn't the only love connection on May 19. My home grown, over-wintered Luna Moth (*Actias luna*) cocoons hatched and mated in celebration, too! The result? One hundred eggs deposited during the night-time for collecting and rearing the second and final batch of the year expected in August. It's a moth world...

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Box Turtle in backyard



Male and female line—is it agony or ecstasy?



Male mounting female.

Waystation Wonders

By Joni Carlson

Maintaining a Monarch Waystation on our property in Surry, VA has all sorts of perks. You see something everyday...and it never ceases to be a fertile ground for Naturalist knowledge-gathering, either. But sometimes you find something and you just have to stop and research.

We have been removing a flower bed to prepare for an addition to our house so my husband and I have been spending a lot of time outside; so I know the sound of a turtle moving or a snake slithering...it is always a good time to pause work and watch and wonder. This time it was was turtle sound yet rhythmic. Tall weed debris was crunching and swaying. What in the world? Peering into the brush I found copulating box turtles. A first for me. I watched and photographed, and then it happened...the male flipped over on it's back! What do I do? It seemed so vulnerable but I didn't dare interfere with a mating moment! The internet to the rescue! This is what I found out...

1. Males have red eyes so you can tell sexes of box turtles.
 2. Females are usually bigger than males
 3. The male mounts and thrusts during mating, flips during optimum time and interlocks feet (among other things) under females shell.
 4. She can drag him in this position for up to several hours.
- Wow. Learned something there.

Photos by Joni Carlson

SAVE THE DATE

Fall Picnic on Oct. 20 with
rain date Oct. 21. at the home
of Ted Sargent



Photo by Judy Jones

HRCVMN AT THE WILLIAMSBURG FARMERS MARKET

Our Farmer's Market Crew of HRC Volunteers reached out to 100+ visitors of all sizes and ages sharing the mission of the HRC as well as engaging the children in education about butterflies and moths. Thanks to Christina Clarke for her butterfly expertise as she awed the children with the life cycle of the monarch. Our newest member, Glenda White of Cohort XII, was able to share her excitement and enthusiasm for Virginia Master Naturalists, convincing others to become part of this great organization. Judy Jones, Shirley Devan, Jeanne and Mike Millin rounded out the Crew and drew in the crowds attracted by our photographic display and our themed rotating boxes! Thanks to all our volunteers for helping to spread the good news about the Historic Rivers Chapter.

VMNHRC Photography Finalists

Displayed on this page are the Chapter's photography finalists' photos that will be sent to the state for entry in the VMN Photography Contest. These and the Honorable Mention photos will be on display at the Williamsburg Regional Library beginning July 16 through Aug 30. The reception will be held August 19. The categories for the contest were: Flora, Fauna, VMN in Action, and Landscapes and Habitat. The Committee added another category for our Chapter alone entitled Parents and Young.



Milkweed Photo by Joni Carlson (Flora)



Heron in Greensprings Photo by Judy Jones (Landscapes and Habitat)



Owl Eye Photo by Maloney (Fauna)



Kayaker Photo by Sonny Bowers (VMN in Action)



Horse and Foal Photo by Mike Millen (Parents and Young)

Williamsburg Area Butterfly Count

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

On August 11, 2018, the our chapter will host the annual **Williamsburg Area Butterfly Count**. The project was developed so that our members could learn about butterflies. All members of our chapter are welcome to participate. No prior experience needed, just your interest!

Please email Adrienne and Gary (adrienne-gary@cox.net) and let us know if you would like to join us. We will be assigning small groups ahead of time; you will need to know where to go to join your assigned group.

If you would like to get a little practice, participate in Wildlife Mapping. All of the Wildlife Mapping teams are identifying butterflies as they see them.

HOW TO PREPARE....

BEING PREPARED FOR BUTTERFLY COUNTS

WHAT TO BRING

Lunch - Snacks, fruits, or whatever you want to eat during the day, probably best in a small cooler.

Water - Plenty of water/drinks to sustain you for all day, if needed.

Binoculars - Close-focusing binoculars are the best, but you can use any binoculars.

Camera - It is helpful to have someone on your team take pictures of small butterflies to help identification. A lot of photography can hinder the process.

Butterfly guide - There are cards of common species and several good books. It is helpful for the team to have several books available for comparison. (e.g., "Butterflies of North America" by Kaufmann or "Butterflies Through Binoculars" by Glasberg)

Pencil and Paper - To write field notes.

WHAT TO WEAR

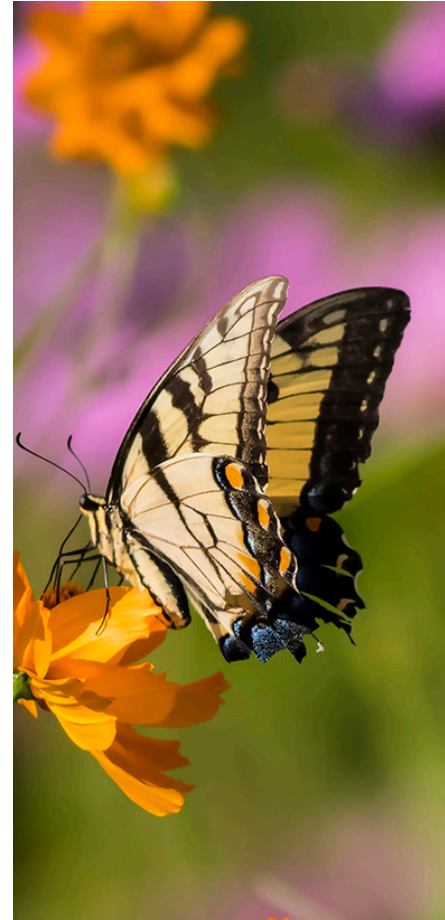
- Be prepared for warm temperatures, rain, the sun, and insects: hat, sunglasses, insect spray, sun screen, cotton long sleeve shirt, long pants, hiking shoes or waterproof shoes.
- If you are a photographer and like to get down on the ground close to your subject, you may wish to bring a pair of knee pads.
- Other items for personal comfort: handiwipes or a moist washcloth in a plastic bag (on ice in your cooler can be refreshing)

HELPFUL HINTS

Meet at the designated time and be prepared to leave your car. Often, the leader will designate groups of participants to travel as a team.

A pick-up truck or an SUV is a good vehicle to use during the count for driving on country roads.

Please be prepared for a full day. The group may want to spend the entire day and cover a large territory.



Easter Tiger Swallowtail

Photo by Judy Jones

Wildflower of the Month – July 2018

JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

BLUE MISTFLOWER

By Helen Hamilton, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

This native perennial is topped with masses of soft, fluffy violet-blue flowers. It's a member of the Aster family, but there are no rays on the flowers. Each flowerhead has as many as 50 little florets, each with 5 tiny lobes and a long style that gives the flowers a fuzzy appearance. Other asters like black-eyed susans, dandelions, and sunflowers have both ray and disk flowers.

Mistflower grows 3-4 feet tall, and spreads by creeping roots. It can take over an entire border, but the roots are shallow and easy to pull out. The plant grows best in full sun to light shade, in moist conditions – it does not handle drought well but requires little attention. With a long blooming season – July through October, this perennial feeds insects well into fall. The leaves and stems die back during winter, but emerge again in early summer.

Blue Mistflower grows wild in woods edges, stream banks, ditches, meadows, and fields, in nearly every county in Virginia. It is also known as Wild Ageratum because the flowers resemble those of the shorter (6-12") annual Dwarf Ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*,) sold in garden centers as bedding plants.

Blue Mistflower is usually covered with butterflies and skippers sipping nectar and bees collecting pollen. The leaves grow opposite on the stems with soft toothed edges, 3" x 2". Deer usually don't bother this plant because the leaves have a bitter taste.

Other species with similar characteristics – flat-topped clusters of disk flowerheads – are closely related and include joe-pye-weeds, flat-topped goldenrods and bonesets. All are butterfly magnets.

For more information about native plants visit www.vnps.org.

Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) by Helen Hamilton in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, July 2006.



Round One of Bluebirding is Complete

As of June 16, 2018, the first nesting of the season is largely complete.

Here is a brief overview:

- Eastern Bluebird fledges have quadrupled to 420 from 104 on the May 23 report;
- Currently the boxes contain 78 active Bluebird nests with 271 eggs and 70 chicks. The second nesting is gaining momentum;
- Carolina Chickadees have completed their single nesting for the season with 61 fledges;
- Other Species with successful fledges include Tufted Titmouse (31), House Wren (5), and Brown-headed Nuthatch (4);
- Currently, House Wren, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Tree Swallows have 8 active nests in the boxes among them. Carolina Wren nested once but the fate of those chicks is unclear.
- The Little Brown Bat is again occupying a box on the York River State Park trail.

Earlier we observed that the 2018 bluebird season was slower paced than the 2017 season. That has just changed.

- Activity recorded on June 16, 2018 - 271 eggs, 70 chicks and 420 fledges reflects a total of 761 eggs laid;
- This is a teeny bit more than the activity recorded on June 20, 2017 - 212 eggs, 132 chicks, and 410 fledges for a total of 754 eggs laid.
- However, the reverse is true for the Other Species nesting in our boxes.
- The number of Other Species' eggs, chicks, and fledges totaled 139 on June 16, 2018;
- The number of Other Species' eggs, chicks, and fledges totaled 185 on June 20, 2017.

Thank you all again for everything you do. Your timely visits, careful record keeping, enthusiasm and delight in the new eggs and chicks are really appreciated. Thank you, too, for watching out for one another. It's time to be careful. We and the birds have several more weeks of heat, humidity, ticks, chiggers, and long grass to conquer!

Happy Bluebirding!

Jan Lockwood and Lois Ullman



This female Eastern Bluebird has been laying eggs in a box in Cindy Baker's front yard. First time in years a pair has taken up residence in her yard.

Upcoming Continuing Education (CE) Opportunities May 2018

The Continuing Education (CE) calendar is posted on the VMN Volunteer Management System website. When you log in to enter your hours, you can find the link to the CE calendar in the left-hand column under, Event Calendars—Continuing Education. [Click an activity on the calendar and open to find a more detailed description \(including registration information, contact information, any cost, etc.\) of the continuing education activity. Reminder: Travel time is not a part of CE credit/hour\(s\).](#) Note: Should additional applicable CE event(s) come up during the month the event(s) will be posted on the CE calendar in the VMN Volunteer Management System.

Christopher Wren classes that contain content on the natural environment are accepted as CE training. CW classes require registration and payment (\$\$\$) through the W&M Christopher Wren Association. Typically, there are 3 session and 6 session courses. Applicable courses are listed on the CE Calendar. VLM programs require registration through the VLM. VIMS programs require registration through the VIMS.

If you have a question about the relevance of a topic for Continuing Education or wish to check whether or not you can obtain CE hours, please contact the Continuing Education Chair, Jennifer Trevino, jbktrevino8@cox.net

SAT 07/14/2018	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) Bird Walk Warhill Sports Complex- 8:00 am
SAT 07/14/2018	John Clayton Chpt-VNPS Plant Walk, "Ferns, Mosses, and Forest Plants," Freedom Park, 9:00 am
SUN 07/15/2018	Hampton Roads Bird Club Sunday Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7:00 am
SAT 07/21/2018	WBotGarden-"Understanding Snakes: Fear Not!"-10 am, Freedom Park Interpretive Center
THU 07/26/2018	VIMS After Hrs Lecture 7:00-8:00 pm; "Deep Sea Discoveries--" VIMS
SAT 07/28/2018	Williamsburg Bird Club Bird Walk at New Quarter Park - 8:00 am
SAT 07/28/2018	HRC Field Trip to Joni Carlson's- "Waystation Wonders . . ." 9:15-10:45 (wait-list)



Mourning Dove with Nestling Photo by Shirley Devan (One of the finalists in the Parents and Young category)