



THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 6 No. 4 April 2012

In this Issue

President's Message

Page 2

Chapter Elects New Board

Page 3

The Graduation of Cohort VI

Pages 4-6

Annual Awards and Celebration

Pages 7-8

It's Bluebird Time at Newport News Park!

Page 9-10

Everglades Presentation Notice

Page 11

Invasive Plant Removal Day

Page 13

The Great American Cleanup

Page 14

English Ivy

Pages 15-16

The 54% Solution

Pages 17-19

WBC Dismal Swamp Trip

Page 20

YCMG Hort Extravaganza

Page 21

Advanced Training

Page 22



The Torch is Passed! Historic Rivers Chapter says goodbye to Past President, Barbara Boyer (left), and welcomes New President, Patty Maloney (right), at the Chapter's Annual Meeting held March 14, 2012.

Chapter Board of Directors 2012-2013

Officers

Patty Maloney, President

Kathi Mestayer, Vice President

*Ruth Gordon and Jan Lockwood,
Secretary*

Thad Hecht, Treasurer

Hart Haynes, Member-at-Large

Nancy Norton, Member-at-Large

Dean Shostak, Member-at-Large

Mary Apperson, Chapter Advisor

Committee Chairs

Felice Bond, Historian

Shirley Devan, Publicity and Outreach

Jennifer Trevino and Sharon Plocher, Basic Training

Susan Powell, Membership

Lois Ullman, Volunteer Service Projects

Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscoll, Advanced Training

Kathi Mestayer, Programs

Patty Riddick, Newsletter

Janet Curtis, Host

Les Lawrence, Field Trip Coordinator

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings, Historic Rivers Chapter:

Welcome, Cohort VI! Welcome, Spring! To quote Robin Williams, "Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'" We certainly started the spring party season off right with our Cohort VI graduation celebration. Thanks to all who were in attendance and all who were involved in the successful planning and hosting of this awesome event

Spring has definitely sprung and our Chapter members are out in force "partying" with nature. Just to highlight a few of our volunteer service activities this month:

The vernal pool teams have been out exploring the wilds of Virginia trying to locate 20-year old pools that support spotted and marbled salamanders. Several active pools have been found with salamander eggs, salamander larvae, frogs, tadpoles and frog eggs.

The bluebird trail monitoring has begun. Teams are reporting a variety of activity in the boxes including full and partial bluebird nests, chickadee nests as well as flying squirrel nests. Wildlife mapping on these trails identified several butterflies including orange tips, zebra swallowtails, and spring azures.

The streams are flowing and ready to be monitored. Many Chapter members have attended the Virginia Save Our Streams training and are out scooping for benthic macroinvertebrates in their assigned streams.

The kids are ready to explore. Clyde and his Zoo Cru are visiting the elementary schools and parks; Chapter members are supporting field trips planned for New Kent Forest and New Quarter Park; and Chapter members are teaching environmental classes at the Jamestown 4-H Center.

The invasives are sprouting. Chapter members are assisting Freedom Park, New Quarter Park, York River State Park and the National Park Service (Jamestown and Yorktown) in trying to control a variety of invasive plants, including bamboo and wisteria.

You are invited to any and all of the above "parties" as well as all those volunteer service projects and advanced training opportunities listed on our website. BYOE (Bring Your Own Enthusiasm)! And be ready to explore, learn, share, make a difference, and above all, have fun!

See you at the next "party",

Patty Maloney, President

Historic Rivers Chapter

Virginia Master Naturalist

Notes from the Board

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

©2012 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: patryriddick@cox.net.

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.

**VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALIST
HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2012-2013**

**President: Patty Maloney
Vice President: Kathi Mestayer
Co-Secretary: Ruth Gordon
Co-Secretary: Jan Lockwood
Treasurer: Thad Hecht
Member-at-Large: Hart Haynes
Member-at-Large: Nancy Norton
Member-at-Large: Dean Shostak
Chapter Advisor: Mary Apperson**

**Historian: Felice Bond
Publicity and Outreach: Shirley Devan
Basic Training: Jennifer Trevino and Sharon Plocher
Membership: Susan Powell
Volunteer Service Projects: Lois Ullman
Advanced Training: Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole
Programs: Kathi Mestayer
Newsletter: Patty Riddick
Host: Janet Curtis
Field Trip Coordinator: Les Lawrence**



Congratulations to Cohort VI!



March 14, 2012

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



*The Graduates!
Go Cohort VI!*



HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



Cohort VI Rocks!



HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



And the Chapter Celebrates.....



HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

It's Bluebird Time at Newport News Park!

By Patty Riddick

"Stephanie and I spent a drizzly, but delightful, Sunday afternoon checking our boxes this week.# 38 continues to house our resident Flying Squirrel. Our Box #5 was the **winning Bluebird Box with a mama sitting on BB eggs**. We could only see one egg, as she was not budging, but there may have been more out of sight. Steph got a nice picture of her.....Susie"



New bluebird box replaces an old box at NN Park.

Photo shared by Clyde Marsteller



Mama Bluebird at NN Park

Photo by Stephanie Schmuck



A Happy **Bluebird?**at NN Park

Photo by Patty Riddick

THANKS TO NEWPORT NEWS GREEN FOUNDATION AND THE GREEN CORPS!

Historic Rivers Chapter Newport News Bluebird Trail members wish to thank the Newport News Green Foundation Green Corps for making and donating 20 new bluebird boxes and 20 new bluebird box roofs for use on our bluebird trail. The Green Corps is made up of high school and college age students ages 14-21 who participate in environmental and community service projects as representatives of the Newport News Green Foundation. One of our HRC members, Clyde Marsteller, serves on the Green Foundation Board and is a VMN Consultant to the Green Corps. We also wish to extend thanks to Mr. Douglas F. Kennedy, Superintendent - Landscaping & Maintenance, Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, City of Newport News for his support.

Written by Patty Riddick and Clyde Marsteller

I took this photo Friday, March 23. This is the nest box in my yard. The female was bringing nesting material. Today when I checked the box, there is a complete nest with a very deep cup. I'm hoping eggs arrive soon!

Shirley Devan



Everglades Trip 2012 Presentation at General Membership Meeting April 11, 2012

In January, twenty-two Master Naturalists, spouses, and family members headed to the Everglades. They spent four days hiking, paddling, wading, and riding through one of the most amazing places in America. Dean Shostak, who led the trip, will give a video presentation and talk about this adventure at the next general meeting on April 11.

Dean



Photo by Dean Shostak

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Cabin Fever Event at New Quarter Park on March 24th



"In the rain but under the shelter at NQP: Cheryl Jacobson, Jan Lockwood, Lois Ullman, Shirley Devan"

Submitted by Shirley Devan



Vernal Poolers Lois Ullman and Hart Haynes

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, May 2, from 9 am-12 p.m.

Submitted by Kathi Mestayer

YOU ARE INVITED to participate in the statewide campaign to help rescue native habitats from competing invasive plants. Colonial National Historical Park is a host site for the statewide Master Naturalist campaign, **INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL DAY!**

Our work site that morning has been a seven year effort to remove a host of very invasive plants. Just in the last year or so native wildflowers, understory trees and shrubs have begun to recover from a severely infested stand of Oriental wisteria. With the help of the NPS Exotic Plant Management team, Master Naturalist, Master Gardener and the John Clayton Virginia Native Plant Society volunteers, most of the wisteria has been reduced to small outbreaks. Now wonderful native wildflowers such as Jack in the Pulpit, ferns, white snakeroot, and blue mist flower have emerged and spread. Black and Red Chokecherry shrubs area sprouting everywhere and small pine, redbay, oaks and sweetgum saplings are emerging. However, the newcomers also include perilla, expanded growth of invasive microstegium (stiltgrass), Japanese honeysuckle and garden vinca. They need to be removed before they expand further!

On site, training will be given on how to identify an Oriental wisteria vine from our native trumpet creeper, and how to identify microstegium from other grasses. Our work will focus on pulling out Japanese honeysuckle vines, microstegium and garden periwinkle.

Space for this project is limited to 15- 20 people to avoid trampling new sprouts!

If you are interested in participating, please register by April 24. Please email Dorothy Geyer at Dorothy_Geyer@nps.gov.

This project is pre-approved for HRVMN service hours under the umbrella project called “Colonial National Historical Park Invasive Species Control and General Maintenance.”



Once you have registered, you will receive a reminder email from Dorothy Geyer, Resources Officer for the National Park Service, with directions as well as instructions about what to wear, what to bring, and where to park. The site is located between the Route 359 entrance to the Colonial Parkway.

Above is a photo of Patty Maloney and Kathi Mestayer at work on another NPS site (Yorktown), with the NPS “SWAT” Team (in the background with chain saws).



Clean-Up, Green-Up & Spruce-Up Your Community With Us!

Dear York County Clean the Bay Day Volunteer,

OpSail is coming to Yorktown! We are excited that Yorktown is an affiliated port for OpSail 2012 which runs from June 1 - June 12th. Although this is great news, this event also coincides with Clean the Bay Day, which will be on Saturday, June 1st. As a result, we are redirecting our efforts this year to the Great American Cleanup!

What is the Great American Cleanup (GAC)? The GAC is the nation's largest community improvement program. From March 1 - May 31, volunteers across the Country get together to collect litter, plant gardens, spruce up parks and more! The Hampton Roads region was selected by Keep America Beautiful to be a host site for a National Kickoff of the Great American Cleanup™, and we'd love for you to be part of it! On April 27th & 28th events will be going on all throughout the region, and we're trying to recruit volunteers now. Our goal is to have over 1,000 volunteers in the region! Please help us meet this goal and make Hampton Roads an inspiration for others. We are seeking teams of 25 or more volunteers from Hampton Roads companies and military commands to take on a project as well as individuals who wish to participate.

We are hoping your group will be interested in volunteering for The Great American Cleanup!

To register, please go to <http://askhrgreen.org/the-great-american-cleanup/>.

Additional information can be found at the following sites:

<http://askhrgreen.org/the-great-american-cleanup-projects-and-sites/>

<http://askhrgreen.org/calendar/>

Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

I'm looking forward to seeing you on April 27th or 28th!

Molly Nealer

York County

nealerm@yorkcounty.gov

757-890-3513

Shared by permission of Molly Nealer

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

A report about an exciting joint activity by the Arlington Master Naturalists and Tree Stewards:

The TreeStewards and Arlington Regional Master Naturalists (ARMN) applied for and received a grant from the Arlington County Tree Canopy Fund to develop and launch a social marketing campaign to encourage homeowners to remove ivy from trees in their yards. We worked with the Biodiversity Project, based in Chicago, to help us develop this campaign, which was intentionally kept very narrowly targeted. Our objective is twofold: to improve the urban tree canopy and to begin to educate homeowners about the damage done by English ivy. We have referred to educating homeowners about English ivy as the “gateway drug” to invasive species. Our hope is that if homeowners understand the damage caused by English Ivy in their own yards, they may begin to understand the damage inflicted on our parks and natural areas.

We intentionally designed the materials so that they may be easily shared and adapted by a wide range of communities. Additional materials, including a powerpoint presentation, are available on the TreeStewards website: <http://treestewards.org/> and on the ARMN site: <http://armn.org/>

We now have about 60 volunteers who have agreed to either give presentations to local citizen associations, staff information booths, and/or work with homeowners to demonstrate ivy removal techniques. We're working to enlist the County government to assist us in the outreach effort, and the story has already been picked up by a widely read local blog. We hope to be able to measure results through our respective reporting systems.

We hope you might be able to adapt these materials for your use in your own community and join us in our effort to eradicate English ivy from trees. Please feel free to share this information with other organizations that might be interested in using this material and do not hesitate to contact either me or Nora if we may provide additional information on the campaign.

Best,

Nora Palmatier
President, TreeStewards

Caroline Haynes
President, Arlington Regional Master Naturalists

As shared by Kathi Mestayer

English Ivy "Tree Rescue" by Kathi Mestayer



Nothing to get the winter blood flowing like going out there and killing something. A couple of property owners in my neighborhood gave me permission to kill English ivy that was strangulating (sic) their tree. Here's an "after" shot of one of the tree rescues, with it's neighbor across the fence line as a reference point. It takes a good month, sometimes longer, for the ivy to start to die back, and it's important *not* to pull the dead vines off; they will fall off of their own accord in a year or two. Pulling them off can result in healthy bark coming off with them.

The 54% Solution

Recently, Helen Hamilton, VNPS Clayton President, emailed Doug Tallamy (Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware) with a question. Helen's question was about a set of figures he uses in his book, *Bringing Nature Home*, to estimate the amount of land in the U.S. that is currently "undisturbed." Tallamy's bottom line is that between 3 and 5 per cent is "undisturbed," depending on how you define the term. What follows is a brief summary of his reply, for the purposes of this newsletter. The full text is available from me at kwren@widomaker.com or Helen at helen48@cox.net. All of the text in quotes below is from an attachment to Dr. Tallamy's email to Helen.

"These statistics are often questioned because so many of us cling to the belief that there is still a lot of nature out there. People hear that I say 54% of the US is in cities and suburbs, but what I really say is that 54% of the U.S. is in what I call the "suburban/urban matrix"...the patchwork of cities and towns, with small remnants of fragmented habitat between and within them. We worry about the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, 15% of which has already been logged: but, by comparison, an astounding 70% of our Eastern forests are gone and no one seems to notice (Brown 2006).

"How did I get the 54% figure? Michael Rozensweig's work at the University of Arizona (Rosenzweig, M. L. 2003. *Win-win Ecology: How the Earth's Species can Survive in the Midst of Human Enterprise*. Oxford University Press, New York, New York. 211 pp) tells us that only 5% of the U.S. (lower 48) is pristine. The USDA web site tells us 41% of the U.S. is in some form of agriculture. That leaves 54% that has been chopped up into cities, suburbs, malls, roads, airports, golf courses (there are over 2.5 million acres of golf courses in the US), etc. and little habitat fragments. That woodlot the developer left at the end of the street, or the corridor of trees along the highways look like pristine habitats to most people. But those tiny patches are unable to sustain many species for several reasons. First and foremost is that the patches of habitat in fragmented landscapes are too small to sustain the number of species they supported when they were part of large contiguous habitats.

"There are both evolutionary reasons and ecological reasons that small, isolated habitat patches lose species after fragmentation (Rosenzweig 2003). On an evolutionary time scale, the rate at which new species evolve is much slower within small habitat islands than within large habitats. The mechanisms that promote speciation such as physical barriers to gene flow scarcely exist in small spaces, thus limiting the opportunity for the evolution of new species in isolated habitat islands.

(note: When there are physical "barriers" such as rivers, mountain ranges, or even just distance, populations can become physically separated from each other, facilitating the development of two or more distinct species over time. Those physical barriers are more likely to exist in larger spaces.)

"When a large habitat is chopped up into a series of small, isolated habitats, the large populations of plants and animals that once inhabited that area are reduced to several small populations that are isolated from each other. Therein lies the problem, because small populations are highly vulnerable to local extinction (Mace & Lande 1991). All populations fluctuate over time: under favorable conditions, they increase in size and in unfavorable times, they decrease in size. Large populations can absorb these natural fluctuations without disappearing from their habitat, but small populations typically decline to zero within a local patch the first or second time they are stressed. Once they disappear from a habitat fragment, they rarely have the opportunity to re-colonize it because source populations are too far away.

Continued....

(here, Dr. Tallamy gives an example of a real habitat island; Barro Colorado Island, in which many species became extinct after it was separated from the mainland when the Panama Canal was built. The population declines continue to this day.)

"Area effects are no less devastating on habitat islands - - forests surrounded by developments rather than by water - - than they are on real islands. The creatures that depend on the resources found only in forests cannot make a go of it on manicured lawns crisscrossed by paved roads. Just as on islands surrounded by water, the loss of species from habitat islands takes time, but it inevitably happens. For example, Ashdown Forest in Sussex, England, the inspirational setting of A. A. Milne's "Winnie the Pooh" has become entirely isolated by development since Milne wrote the book in the 1920s. In the ensuing 90 years the forest has lost 47 plant species (Marren 2001). Ashdown Forest is over 6000 acres in size, yet it is still too small to sustain its species over time.

"My point is simple: the most destructive part of suburbia is not the space occupied by houses and roads, although that is substantial (the paved surface area of the 4 million miles of roads that crisscross the U.S. now covers an area over five times the size of New Jersey: Hayden 2004, Elvidge et al. 2004;). Instead, it is the way suburbia fragments large chunks of habitat into areas too small to sustain nature that so threatens our biodiversity. David Quammen draws a superb analogy between a Persian carpet and an intact ecosystem (Quammen 1996). A Persian carpet is an exquisite piece of art with both form and function. If you were to cut it into 36 pieces, it loses both. It does not become 36 new carpets; instead, it is reduced to 36 worthless scraps of fraying material. Ecosystems are similarly degraded in both form and function when they are fragmented. Unlike Persian carpets, however, ecosystems have no optimal size at which they function best; their diversity and thus functional capacity increases linearly with their size (Rosenzweig 1995, 2003). In the case of ecosystems, bigger is always better."

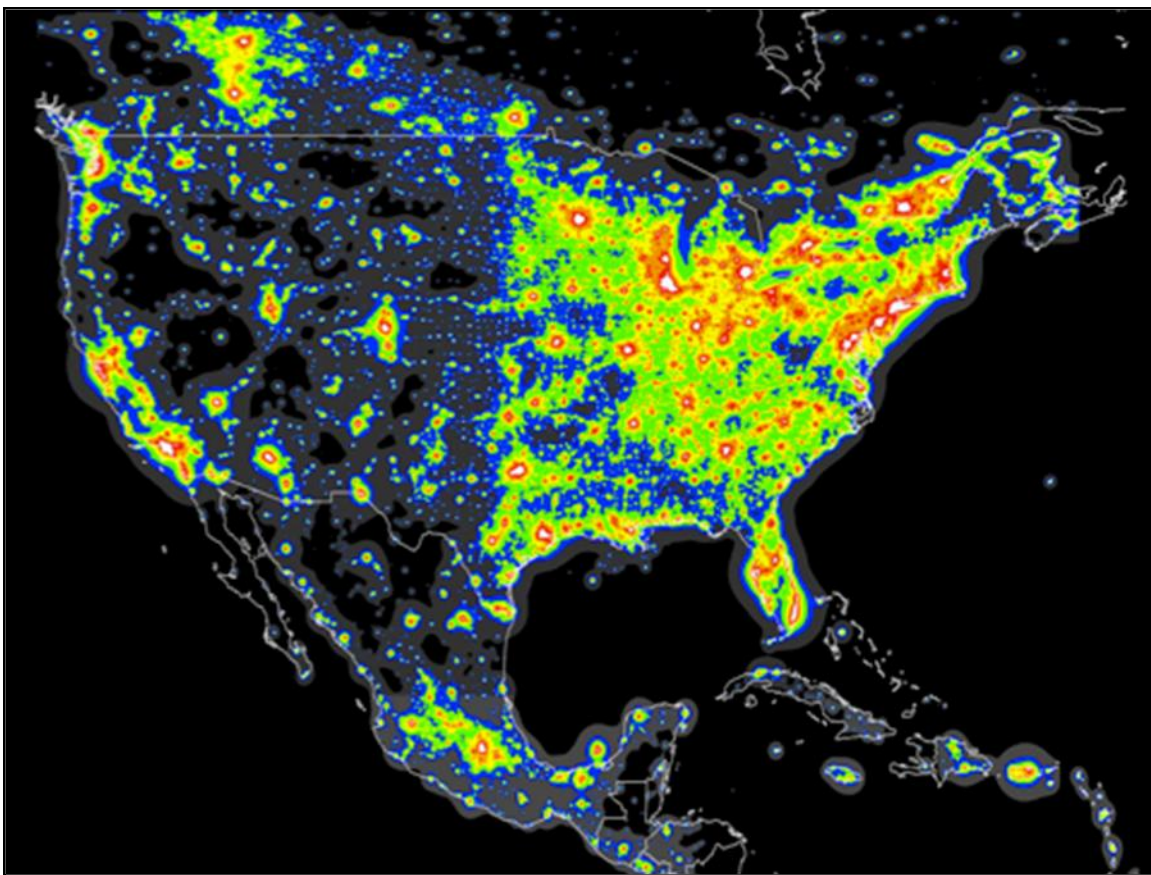
Bringing Nature Home, Tallamy, D., Timber Press, 2009 (second printing). p. 36.

Attachment to email to Helen Hamilton from Doug Tallamy, 2-21-2012.

Continued.....

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

This following photo of light pollution in the US shows very clearly how thoroughly humans have usurped habitat across the country. It visually supports the 54% figure pretty well.



This presentation of an email from Dr. Tallamy to Helen Hamilton is presented and edited by Kathi Mestayer with an assist by Susan Powell.

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

WBC Dismal Swamp Field Trip, Sunday, 22 April: This should be a great one! Bob Ake will lead us into (and hopefully out of!) the one and only Dismal Swamp in prime warbler time. We can expect to see prothonotaries, prairies, palms, common yellowthroats and more. Bob advises that our trip is also in prime time for a chance to see and hear the grail bird for the Swamp - the elusive and sought-after Swainson's warbler!

You will recall Bob's recent presentation to our club on his sensational Big Year. Bob is not only a premier birder, he is a true expert on the Swamp, which is not far from his home. He recommended a Sunday trip, so we will have the warblers more to ourselves, since they are in spring migration plumage and voice and the Swamp will be jammed with other birders on Saturday. So Sunday it is!!

We will begin by birding Jericho Ditch, an area which has yielded spectacular sightings for us in the past. Bob will continue after the first area, for those who are inclined to see more of the Swamp's treasures, to lead us through either Washington Ditch or Railroad Ditch. Bob will be up to date on what we can expect to see and hear in those other reaches of the Swamp. Don't overlook your favorite mosquito repellent for the early hours.

We will depart from Colony Square at 6:00 on the morning of 22 April and carpool down to Jericho Ditch. Please pack lunch and beverages, as there are no places nearby to purchase those. There are restrooms at our stops in the swamp. For anyone planning to come on your own, please meet us at the gate for the entrance road to Jericho Ditch no later than 7:00. The number of cars permitted is limited and we will have a group pass for the day.

This should be an excellent day's birding! No need to RSVP and no limit on numbers of our members who may participate. Feel free to contact Geoff Giles for any questions via email at tylerandal2@aol.com or phone at 757-645-8716. Hope to see you there!

Submitted by Geoff Giles, Member Historic Rivers Chapter and Williamsburg Bird Club

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

The York County Master Gardener Horticultural Extravaganza took place at Tabb H. S. on Saturday, March 10th. Historic Rivers Chapter was asked to participate in the extravaganza for the fourth year in a row. The Chapter was represented this year by Clyde Marsteller and his Zoo, Patty Riddick, Dave Youker and Stephanie Schmuck. Other Chapter members were there but representing the Master Gardeners that day. Stopping by to help and visit were Larry Riddick, Pam Camblin, and Evelyn Parker. A good day was had by all.

By Patty Riddick



Dave Youker, Larry Riddick and Pam Camblin



Stephanie Schmuck and Clyde Marsteller

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

April Advanced Training Opportunities - For more information about AT opportunities go to: <http://www.historicrivers.org>
By Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole

[AT] HRBC Bird Walk - April 1, 2012 from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News Park

[AT] NPS Walk - Lafayette High School Nature Trail - April 7, 2012 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at LHS parking lot off of Longhill Road, Williamsburg

[AT] Monthly meeting - April 11, 2012 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at JCC Human Services Bldg., 5249 Olde Towne Rd., Williamsburg

[AT] Mycological (Fungi) Mystery Tour - April 12, 2012 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Webb University Center, Old Dominion University

[AT] Tomorrow's Landscapes Conference - April 14, 2012 all day at Winchester, VA

[AT] WBC Bird Walk at New Quarter Park - April 14, 2012 from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

[AT] WHEN IT RAINS, IT DRAINS: Northern Neck VMN Stormwater Workshop - April 14, 2012 from 10:00-3:00 pm at Placid Bay Civic Association Building, 67 Mattox Avenue, Oak Grove, VA

[AT] HRBC Bird Walk - April 15, 2012 from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News Park

[AT] WBC Field Trip - April 22, 2012 from 7:00 am to 1:30 pm at WBC Field Trip

[AT] Dragon Run - Plant Walk - April 21, 2012 from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm at Meet at Food Lion parking lot on Route 17, Saluda, VA

[AT] HRCVMN Geology Field Trip - April 28, 2012 all day bus trip from VA coast to mountains