



THE NATURALIST

Virginia
Master
Naturalist



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



<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 7 No.11 December 2013



Letter from the President

Greetings, Historic Rivers Chapter!

As we approach the end of 2013, it brings to mind the wonderful things to be thankful for within our chapter: our awesome natural areas with the abundance of flora and fauna, great friends to share it with, the opportunities to learn more about our natural world, and of course, the many opportunities to volunteer and give back.

Thank you all for the hundreds of volunteer hours you have given this year. We continue to make a difference throughout our community by helping with citizen science projects, maintaining gardens, parks and trails, and educating the young and the “young at heart”.

Please, please make sure that you have logged your volunteer and advanced training hours into the VMN system. This data is included in our Chapter’s annual report and gives the state the statistics they need to support the VMN program. In addition, if you recertify this year with 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training, you will receive the latest “bling”, a beautiful *Claytonia virginica* (Spring Beauty) pin.

Hope to see you all at the end-of-year party on December 11th at Legacy Hall. Don’t forget to bring a “pot luck” dish; your own “reusable” plates, cups, silverware and napkins; and whatever you want to drink. (Beer and wine are allowed.)

Patty Maloney

President

Historic Rivers Chapter



PS: A special thanks to Ted and Judy Sargent for hosting our fall picnic at their home on the Chickahominy. A great time was had by all: bird walks, breakfast, plant walks, kayaking trails, crabs and oysters, gourmet side dishes/desserts and wonderful friends!

A Christmas Poem

By Clyde Marsteller

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the Zoo
Not a creature was stirring except a mouse or two.

The millipedes were all snug in their beds
While visions of mushrooms danced in their heads.

Their stockings were hung from one wall to another
Hundreds of them, they were such a bother.

The roaches were running hither and thither
While writing to Santa for edible litter.

The Hissing cockroach writes for its brood
The young prefer cheerios for their food.

The worms were writing their lists in dark interlude
Trying to find who's he/she without being crude.

The termites were all in a bunch
Writing for a Yule Log (trying not to be lunch).

Slugs and snails are sending to Santa their texts
"What to buy a creature when you don't know its sex"?

Betsy Beetles were busy talking and squeaking
While with their lists they're constantly tweaking.

Black Widow is accused of eating her mates
But her silken letter simply states:

"To be guilty of Husbandcide is a bunch of lies"
And proceeds to ask for Blue Bottle Flies.

Wolf Spiders Lobo and Shelob
have their eggs in a silken globe.

When their young come in hatches
The toys will be sure to come in batches

The toads and frogs dream of crickets galore
Not free range but bought from a store.

The Eft has turned into a Newt
So it needs a new list. What a hoot.

Our Spotted Salamander dreams of spring
Wishing for a pond is just the right thing.

The centipedes have written for food
Termites and ants would festive their mood.

The snake was curled up in its cage, its eyes on a
mouse
Wishing it could slither across the floor of the
house.

The new critters Amen and Lizzy
Waiting for Yule has them in a tizzy.

They have written their wishes
But can't have all their dishes.

The Box Turtle was asleep in its shell
Until spring, so we just wish it well.

In the winter woods and not in the Zoo
The apex predator Black Racer too.

Is coldly calculating
Asking for a mate so captivating.

The Zoo Cru Gals and Guys
Are all wondering how time flies.

They're celebrating the end of the year
There will be new visits, never fear.

Now Ma in her Snuggly and I in my cap
Had just sat in our chairs for a long nap.

When from the Den there arouse such a clatter
I sprang up to see what was the matter.

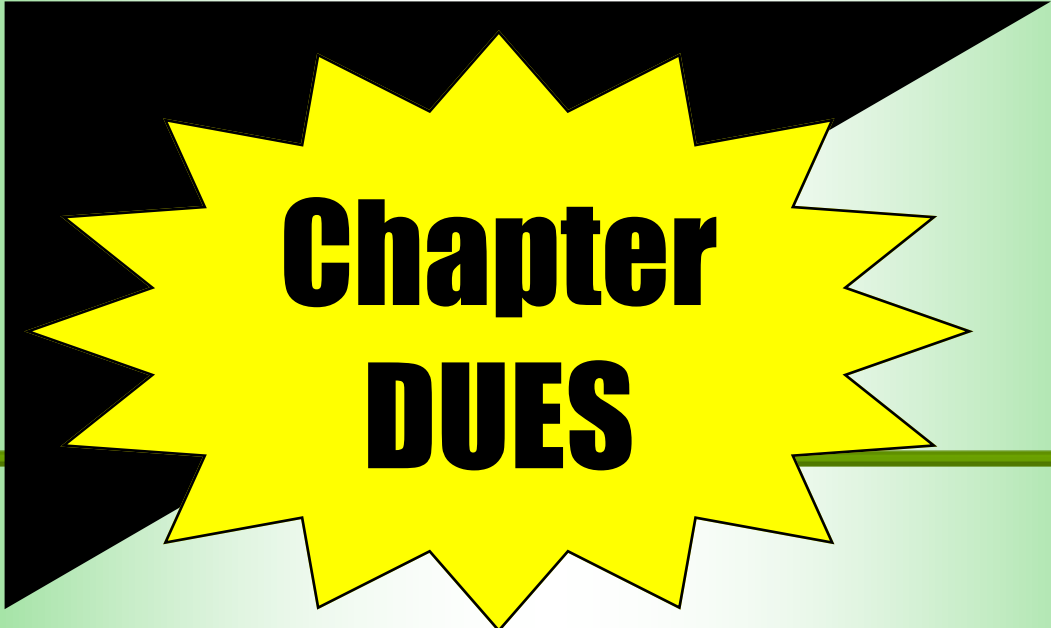
I opened the door and what did I hear?
All the creatures were singing:

"Merry Christmas to all and a Happy New Year"

From all the creatures both great and small
A Happy Holiday to you all.



The Zoo Keeper, the Zoo Cru & all the
creatures in "A Zoo In My Shopping Bags"



Chapter DUES

Greetings:

As the year grows to a close and I think about all the fun and accomplishments of our group, I am so impressed!! I know 2014 will hold lots more fun. We have many goals for our organization and your time and commitment is critical!

We would not be able to accomplish what we do without your membership dues.

Please send \$25.00 for your 2014 dues to: Historic Rivers CH VA Master Naturalist, PO Box 5026, Williamsburg, VA 23188-5223.

You may make additional donations in the same check (either for our Chapter or for the Nancy Norton Scholarship Fund). If you do so, please mark on the memo line of your check the designation of additional dollars. Because we have limited funds to carry over into next year, we urge you to be timely in paying your dues.

**Thank You on behalf of the Board and myself as Treasurer
Cheryl J. Jacobson**

Nancy Norton Nature Camp Scholarship



The Nancy Norton Nature Camp Scholarship is named after a Historic Rivers Chapter member, our Nancy. She was in Cohort IV and felt, till the day she died, that it was by far the best cohort. (Those of us in other cohorts profoundly disagree.) Nancy was a woman born to be a master naturalist. She was an avid birder, loved camping and walking in the woods, working with plants, sharing habitat information with friends and neighbors, measuring trees in New Kent, maintaining the trails at New Quarter and York River, and – despite the ticks, heat, and hard work -- removing invasive bamboo and wisteria from Jamestown. Yep, she did it all...until uterine cancer took her from us last year.

Nancy was a school nurse for years. Her love of children and the environment combine in the Nancy Norton Nature Camp Scholarship Fund. This is an opportunity not only to honor one of our own, but also to offer some passionate young people in our community (future master naturalists perhaps) a chance to explore, identify, and discover the world of nature that we all cherish. Your donation keeps this dream alive. Thank You!

Article written by Judy Jones



Nancy Norton 1946-2012

Congratulations to:

Felice Bond

Statewide VMN Photography Contest Winner

“Reflect on This”, by Felice Bond, was awarded 1st Place in the Virginia Fauna category at the 2013 Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Conference in Glen Allen this past October.

On the state level 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons were awarded in the following three categories: Virginia Flora, Virginia Fauna, and Virginia Other. Ten of the twenty-nine Virginia Master Naturalist Chapters participated in the photography contest this year.

One of the judges, Bill Fox, was an instructor of Nature Photography at this year’s conference. The other two judges are both members of the Focus Group Camera Club in Richmond. The photos were all displayed during the conference and then returned to the photographers at the conclusion of the conference.

The frog in the photo is an American Bullfrog, *Lithobates catesbeianus*, and the image was shot in Les Lawrence’s backyard pond, a frog haven. “Reflect on This” will be displayed at Freedom Park in Williamsburg, along with other contest photos taken by HRCVMN members.



Christina Woodson

Christina was recently elected to the board of the Virginia Bluebird Society (VBS). Her board position involves administering New and Refurbished Grants for VBS trails state-wide. County Coordinators submit applications for these grants, together with appropriate paperwork and supporting documentation. Christina is responsible for reviewing the applications and submitting those that qualify for approval to the Board.

You might enjoy a recent youtube video that Christina produced to summarize the final results of the bluebird trails she oversees in Richmond and Henrico. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fPoCsmrIBY>





BACK BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE and
Back Bay Restoration Foundation *present*

Winter Waterfowl Walks

December	January	February
7 at 9am*	4 at 9:00am*	1 at 9:00am*
13 at 9:00am	10 at 9:00am	7 at 9:00pm
14 at 3:00pm*	11 at 3:00pm*	8 at 3:00pm*
21 at 9:00am*	18 at 9:00am*	15 at 9:00am*
27 at 9:00am	24 at 9:00am	21 at 9:00am
28 at 3:00pm*	*SATURDAY DATE	22 at 3:00pm*

Join us on a one-mile hike along Back Bay NWR's Bay Trail, guided by expert birders. We will observe and enjoy the variety of waterfowl that feed and rest here during the winter months! Bring your camera and binoculars!

*Meet at the Back Bay NWR Visitor Contact Station
4005 Sandpiper Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23456*

CALL TO REGISTER AT (757) 301-7329 EXT. 152
Walks are every other Friday and every Saturday.

NOTE: The waterfowl walks will be led by Bob Ake and David Hughes.

Notes from the Wildside—By Ramblin Clyde

Butternut Wooly Worm

Back in the mists of time, when I was a pre-teen, I spent my summer vacations running the ridges and meadows of the Pennsylvania Pocono Mountains with my trusty fishing pole and a can of worms. One misty morning I was on a date to meet a wild brook trout in the little stream running through my Uncle's farm. There was a nice pool in the middle of a clump of Hazel nuts and by a big Hickory tree. To get to the trout I had to crawl on my hands and knees above the pool and v-e-r-y carefully float my baited hook into his home without scaring him.

As I was inching along I noticed a couple of white “flakes” on the Hazel nut bushes. They seemed to be small caterpillars covered with fungus. I touched one and found the “flakes” were sticky. I decided that my date with the trout was more important than a couple of sick caterpillars. For the next 65 years I never saw anything like them again.

Imagine my great amazement when my little sister posted a blog titled *Ethereal White* on her web site “the Iris and the Lily” (<http://theirisandthelily.wordpress.com/2013/09/26/ethereal-white/>).



There was my “sick” caterpillar! I emailed her and asked if she knew what it was. She didn't and was going to ask a Entomologist friend of hers if she could ID it. In the mean time I looked through all my reference on insects and caterpillars but had no luck. A few days later Bonnie (bet you didn't know we are Bonnie & Clyde) called. Her friend said it was a Butternut Wooly Worm. Back to the references. Guess what it ISN'T a caterpillar at all. It is the larva of the a Sawfly, *Eriocampa juglandis*.



If you look closely at Bonnie's photo you can see the larva has seven prolegs (lepidoptera caterpillars have 5). The name Sawfly is also a misnomer. The creature isn't in the Order Diptera (flies) but is in the Order Hymenoptera (bees , wasps & ants).

A 65 year old mystery finally solved. If any of the Cohorts spot one next year please give me a call. I really want to renew my acquaintance with them.

Oh yes, about that trout. It was too smart for me and as far as I know lived a long and good life.

Live long & prosper,
Ramblin Clyde



Become part of this happy group!



Photo by Jan Lockwood

Join us for Wild Life Mapping at New Quarter Park.
Our next dates are December 10th and 17th at 10:00.

Because the park is closed during the week, we meet at the parking lot by the first gate. (I have a key). My cell is 303-519-0989 if you have questions or are running late and want us to wait for you. I lock the gate once we have driven through. Everyone is welcome. Right now we are mostly focused on birds and mammals as there are few butterflies. Hope to see you in December!

Cheryl Jacobson

Why participate in a “Citizen Science” Master Naturalist Volunteer Activity?

Cheryl J. Jacobson

I have recently wondered about the usefulness of the vast amount of data that our activities have produced and I have also heard this question verbalized by other volunteers. This has led me to research the question on line. I was overwhelmingly surprised at the multitude of reports that have been generated about the importance of Citizen Science.

One article on the National Science Foundation (NSF) web site emphasizes the important impact and difference that just one person can make. The NSF funds some of the projects that Master Naturalists support in our volunteer efforts. Much of our data can help the scientific community unravel the mysteries of where Mother Nature is today and where she is headed. We can collect data and share our observations and insights on a scale that full-time scientists simply cannot accomplish.

“Volunteer citizen scientists are helping to generate new knowledge about biodiversity, the weather, stars and galaxies, and even the molecules in cells,” says David Hanych, an NSF program manager. “The significance of their contributions is supported by various lines of evidence.”

Although citizen science projects have existed since the 1800s, the number of projects has increased dramatically during the past decade. The increase is partly due to the availability of Internet resources that are making it easier to form and to manage citizen groups and transmit data from citizen scientists to the scientific community. And regardless of the backgrounds of citizen scientists, studies show that the data collected by them has been reliable and valid, Hanych notes.

Two Master Naturalist Volunteer Projects were mentioned specifically by Hanych - the Community Collaborative Rain Hail and Snow Network and the USA National Phenology Network. For one thing, citizen scientists provide strength in sheer numbers. He stated: “For example, the USA National Phenology Network, which monitors the timing of seasonal events such as spring blooms, currently engages more than 4,000 volunteers across the United States. Since 2008, these volunteers have contributed 1 million records to the NPN database - far more data than researchers could collect themselves.

In some cases, citizen scientists are the sole sources of important types of data. Henry Reges, the national coordinator of the Community Collaborative Rain Hail and Snow Network, which feeds information about precipitation to the National Weather Service and others, says even a single, real-time report of major precipitation from a volunteer in an area that is otherwise not monitored can speed the issuance of potentially life-saving flash flood warnings.” Two other examples are:

[Project Budburst](#) which engages the public in collecting data on the timing of the leafing, flowering & fruiting of plants in the United States. Data generated by this project was recently used to help validate models of the timing of cherry blossoms in Washington, D.C., and the mid-Atlantic states in the presence of climate change.

[Projects sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) which use data submitted by citizen scientists across the world to help researchers better understand birds and their habits . (Project Feeder Watch, Great Backyard Bird Count)

Much of the data included in the Department of Interior's annual [State of the Birds](#) report for 2011 originated from Cornell's citizen science programs. The report helps public agencies identify significant conservation opportunities in various habitats.

Wild Life Mapping is another example of a more localized project in which we are generating vast amounts of important data. So next time you engage in a Citizen Science Project, remember that **one person can make a difference!**

Feather I.D. for Dummies

Story and Photos by Kathi Mestayer

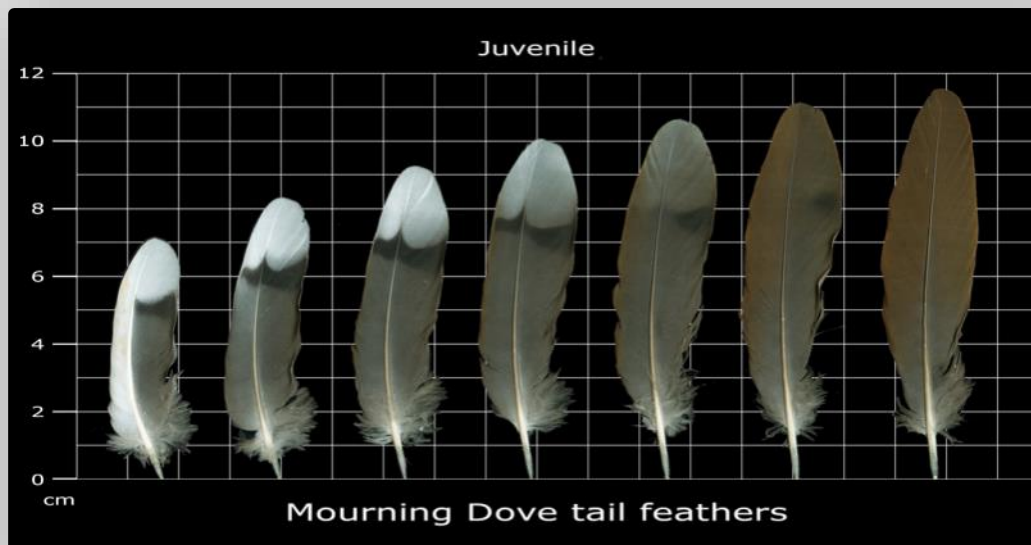
Not long ago, I found this feather stuck in the ground in my front yard. This did not give me a warm, fuzzy feeling, because our resident sapsucker ("Sally") had recently disappeared and two red-shouldered hawks were known to frequent our neighborhood. Once, Mac even saw one of the hawks fly straight into the holly tree that Sally seemed to always be in.



So, I looked at the feather with some dread. Was it the sapsucker's? I googled feather identification, and got the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Feather Atlas. I did searches on "sapsucker," and all the others I could think of, including the woodpeckers, nuthatches, etc.

Then, I noticed they had a "search for similar feather" tool. It prompted me to select two features: feather pattern and color (from a list of possibilities they provided). I hit "Find Similar Feathers" and, voila! Up popped a really long list of feathers that fit my two criteria. But it was in taxonomic order, so I could cruise right past the ducks and gulls (I know, not very empirical), and there it was.....juvenile mourning dove tail feather.

I'm just telling myself it's a moulted feather and moving on....



HRC Members Lead Scouts on Nature Hike

Story and Photos by Les Lawrence

HRC members Nancy Barnhart, Nancy Gore, Judy Jones, and I had a great day leading a group of Cub Scouts from Williamsburg area Pack 102 on a nature hike at YRSP, on Nov 3. Mr. David Simmons, a Pack leader who is also the IT Manager for the VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, requested assistance for the hike and, naturally, the HRC was happy to accommodate.



One requirement for the hike was that it had to cover three miles within a two-hour timeframe so that two of the Cub Scouts could complete their Webelo hiking badge. We settled on a modified hike on the Taskinas trail, including a walk on the boardwalk out into the marsh looking for the recently reported family of three bobcats. No such luck – maybe a bit of noise prevented that? The Scouts had no problem

with the distance; quite a few parents did.

We spent the day acquainting the Scouts, leaders, parents, and siblings - 22 people in all - about habitats and the flora and fauna found in the park and along the trail. Another need was for the Scouts to learn about at least five trees.



No problem with that. I heard one of the boys saying to himself, “I can’t wait to get home and write about this (the trees) in my journal.” Now that was rewarding.

Cub Scout Pack 102 and HRC members

Wildflower of the Month – December 2013

John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

Slender Goldenrod

Euthamia caroliniana (*Solidago tenuifolia*)

This erect perennial grows 1-4 feet tall, with many-branched stems. Tiny golden flowers grow on the tips of the branches, forming a flat-topped floral spray. The leaves are alternate, pointed, very narrow (less than ¼ inch wide), and smooth on the margins. The tiny one-seeded fruits have fluffy hairs to aid in dispersal. The leaves of a related species Flat-top Goldenrod (*E. graminifolia*) are wider, over ½ inch across.



Growing in damp to dry, sandy soil, these plants are found in brackish and freshwater marshes, roadsides, and thin woods. Slender Goldenrod grows along the coast from Nova Scotia to Florida and Louisiana, including central and eastern counties of Virginia. Blooming from September through December, the stems and fading seedheads are visible most of the winter. Overwintering insects will lay their eggs in the hollow stems of these plants.

Flat-top Goldenrod blooms earlier, from August-September, and has a wider distribution, occurring over most of U.S. and Canada.

The genus name *Euthamia* is from a Greek word meaning “well-crowded,” referring to the dense flower clusters. Also known as goldentops, these two species were formerly placed with other goldenrods in the genus *Solidago*.

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

By Helen Hamilton, past-president of the John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Photo: Slender Goldenrod (*Euthamia graminifolia*) taken by Helen Hamilton

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

False Cape State Park & Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Winter Tram Tours

Join Refuge and Park staff for a scenic ride, to observe numerous flocks of wintering waterfowl such as Snow Geese, Tundra Swans and dozens of different waterfowl species. Then, continue to the heart of False Cape for a one mile (round trip) hike to the remnants of the Wash Woods Methodist Church and cemetery site.

Sunday, November 3 & 17

Sunday, December 8 & 22

Sunday, January 5 & 19

Sunday, February 9 & 23

Sunday, March 9 & 23

from 1:00PM-4:30PM



**Reservations required,
to make a reservation please call
(757)426-7128.**

**Tours begin at Back Bay National
Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center.**

Cost: \$8/Per Person

**Trams are unheated, open-aired
vehicles, please dress warmly.**



800-933-PARK (7275) | www.virginlstateparks.gov

2014 Historic Rivers Chapter-VA Master Naturalist Budget

On December 4, 2013 the Board approved our first ever budget. As our organization has grown it has become clear that processes need to be more formalized. At the recommendation of the Treasurer, input has been obtained from members and a budget developed. Many drafts have been reviewed and discussed in detail. As with all budgets, this is a framework for financial decision. As the year progresses and more information is obtained, dollars may need to be shifted somewhat. When we develop a budget for 2015 we will be able to evaluate the accuracy of our first attempt.

I believe this will be helpful to the membership as you will know how your dollars are spent. Many of you did not know we had given operating expenses which are outlined in the budget.

Since we have a cash flow issue-(to be corrected in the future by our reserve fund) even though there maybe a line item in the budget, members should not incur an expense and expect reimbursement. Please email me at jcheryljoy@aol.com to learn the status of a line item.

~please see 2014 Budget on next page~

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Historic Rivers Chapter-Virginia Master Naturalist

Budget 2014

Income.....	\$6850.00
Member Dues....	\$3000.00
...Raffle Sales.....	850.00
...Fees Cohort 9.....	3000.00
Total Expenses.....	\$6850.00
Operating Expenses.....	\$650.00
Post Office Box..	\$ 86.00
Flickr.....	\$ 44.95
ListServe.....	\$ 72.00
Permits.....	\$120.00 plus &75.00 for bird permit
Website.....	\$108.79
Misc. Supplies...	\$100.00
Training Expenses Cohort 9.....	\$3000.00...
Memberships.....	\$150.00
VA Native Plant Society...	\$50.00
...possible new memberships WBC or CVWO	\$100.00
Tool Box.....	\$250.00
\$233.19 (egg replicas, talon replicas, display boxes, jars, stuffed birds, Misc items)	
Photo Exhibit.....	\$150.00
\$125.00	
Name Badges and Recruitment	\$250.00
\$150.00 Badges	
\$100.00 (recruitment mailings and other mailings)	
Social Expenses.....	\$450.00
Graduation..	\$150.00
...Picnic...drinks and paper products	\$150.00
...End Of Year Party ...drinks and paper products	\$150.00
Gifts.....	\$150.00
Speaker Fees.....	\$275.00
Flyers.....	\$300.00
Outreach/Materials/Public Education.....	\$375.00
Reserve Fund.....	\$850.00

Advanced Training for December 2013

Remember to go to our chapter's calendar for all event details! http://www.historicrivers.org/?page_id=1246

[AT] Field trip: Geology & Fossils - December 7, 2013 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

[AT] Cohort Training, Wildlife Habitats and Beekeeping - December 10, 2013 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at JCC Human Resources Building, 5249 Olde Towne Road, Williamsburg

[AT] Monthly meeting: Holiday Party - December 11, 2013 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Legacy Hall, New Town

[AT] WBC Bird Walk at New Quarter Park - December 14, 2013 from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

[AT] HRBC Bird Walk - December 15, 2013 from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[AT] WBC Bird Walk - December 28, 2013 from 7:00 am to 9:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

Lucy Manning, Advanced Training Chair; (757-646-0877; lucymnng@gmail.com)

Notes from the Board

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

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