

THE NATURALIST



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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 7 No. 6 June 2013

By Sherry Brubaker:

Mary Turnbull's wonderful haven was visited by many of our members on May 25. Some of us tried to come up with memory tricks to help remember a few of the 89 labeled items we encountered. Perhaps our mnemonic for Bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, was the most creative of all (ask Adrienne for a detailed re-enactment and explanation)! We also worked hard on our memory trick for Jumpseed, *Persicaria virginiana*, that involved a jumprope in the shape of a "v" (to remind us of the purple "V" which is on the leaf). "Ve" did get a little carried away but if you, too, are trying to remember things, *Moonwalking with Einstein*, *The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*, might be helpful. Gordon Bell (at Microsoft) also has written *Total Recall: How the E-Memory Revolution Will Change Everything* which also sounds interesting. Mary is to be congratulated for her wonderful contribution to the World of Nature and she even had Cardinal nests and Towhee babies hidden away (where we could see)!

See photos and more information on page 13 of this newsletter.



You are invited to attend another all-nighter of bugs and owls (and frogs) with guest entomologist, **Dr. Art Evans!!!**

Date is **June 8-9** from **7PM to 9AM**.

Please **RSVP** to this Doodle poll if you will be there...<http://www.doodle.com/9fn4u37xkpvkuhiq>

See page 14 of this newsletter for more details.

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Greetings, Historic Rivers Chapter:

Now that the summer vacation season is upon us, don't forget about the many exciting volunteer and educational opportunities available through our Virginia Master Naturalist Program as well as our local parks. You don't have to go far for new adventures and opportunities to experience the miracles of nature! Mark your calendars for:

Field trip to the Wildlife Center of Virginia in Waynesboro, VA on 1 June to see and learn about their wildlife rescue operations.

Black lights, Owls and Frogs at the Rice Center on June 8 at 7 p.m. Come for the potluck dinner, bug and frog events and stay for the optional overnight campout. RSVP at <http://www.doodle.com/9fn4u37xkpvkuhig>. Contact Anne Wright, abwright@vcu.edu, if you have any questions.

The 2012 HRC photography display, "Through the Eyes of a Naturalist" at the Williamsburg Library until June 15th.

The award winning "Green Fire" film on the life of Aldo Leopold and the photography reception on 12 June at the Williamsburg Library.

Regular bird walks at New Quarter Park (by the Williamsburg Bird Club) and at Newport News Park (by the Hampton Roads Bird Club) to see, hear, and learn about the many birds that live and pass through our area.

Wildlife mapping at York River State Park and New Quarter Park to document and learn more about the wildlife that frequent those areas.

And the many, many other advanced training and volunteer opportunities listed on our website!

Enjoy these warmer days and hope to see you at one of our many activities,

Patty Maloney

President

Historic Rivers Chapter

Virginia Master Naturalist

PS: The 2013 HRC-VMN Training Application is out! If you know someone who is interested in joining our Chapter, please forward them the training application posted on our website.

Notes from the Board

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

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I've been to the zoo— have you?! The Zoo in Clyde Marsteller's bag(s) that is!!

A BANNER DAY!

On the 21st of May, at Yorktown Elementary School, Zoo Keeper Clyde Marsteller presented the Zoo to a first grade class. As of this presentation the Zoo had been seen and enjoyed by over 10,000 children and adults! Actually, according to the Zoo Keeper, this class topped 10,052 folks who had met Clyde, the Zoo Cru, and the wonderful Zoo Critters! A banner day indeed! Clyde shared with me that he had a personal goal to honor the children lost at Sandy Hook Elementary School by presenting the Zoo to 26 elementary classrooms this year - and this was the 26th.

Clyde Marsteller is a member of Cohort I, Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Program, which began in January of 2007. Early in the chapter's history, Clyde conceived of the Zoo, wrote the program, and began collecting his critters from his backyard and his church grounds – his "God's Three Acres (G3A)." The Zoo's first official appearance was at Poquoson Elementary School in his granddaughter Kayla's third grade class. From there word spread and Clyde, with his Zoo, has been in steady demand. He has presented his Zoo program at schools and festivals, to civic groups, and at local community events.

School children, teachers, parents, and friends have met some of the live Zoo Critters including: Mushroom, the Fowler's Toad; Millie, the Millipede; the Patent-leather Beetles; and the Worm Snake – not to mention the frightening RoboWasp. All these critters have served to teach over 10,000 people, young and old, about our environment, about conservation, and especially about being good stewards in taking care of our planet.

Our chapter, our community, and our world thank Clyde Marsteller and congratulate him on this monumental accomplishment!

By Patty Riddick



Clyde and the Zoo at Poquoson Elementary School assisted by Jan Lockwood and Patty Riddick.

And, thoughts about the Zoo from Clyde Marsteller as shared with Patty Riddick.....

“After I became a Master Naturalist I knew I wanted to become involved with teaching our children about the concepts of conservation, stewardship of our natural resources and to share with them the beauty and mysteries of our natural world. I feel, as does Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods, that they suffer from Nature-Deficit Disorder. The children are getting divorced from the outdoors and are addicted to TV, TV games, iPods and texting. I realized the VMN Program had given me the knowledge and training to put together a teaching tool based on the idea of taking nature into the classroom. Thus A Zoo In My Shopping Bags was born. I originally tailored my presentation to the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. This gave me a range of 8 to 12 year olds and fit perfectly into their SOLs. Since its inception I have adapted the program to any age range that requests it to include K-12, college and adult groups. The Zoo has become a sought after program in 5 major school districts: James City County/ Williamsburg, York County, Newport News, Hampton and Poquoson. The Zoo absolutely charms and fascinates the children. To see youngsters involved and responding to the plants and animals that share their world and to open their minds to the concepts of Stewardship and Conservation is one of the most satisfying things I have done.

Has my project had an impact on my communities? The children often write me letters that are eloquent testimonies of the Zoo's impact. Even more gratifying is to see them involved in their Ecology, Junior Master Gardeners and 4H clubs. The epitome is having them run up to me at school functions or at the malls and have them tell me how much they enjoyed our visits and relate stories of what they have experienced in the outdoors. In order to properly and safely present the Zoo and explain how the animals live and interact with them and the environment I have enlisted the aid of fellow VMNs who I fondly call my Zoo Cru. Without them the presentations would be impossible to do.

Since its inception in 2007 the Zoo has now entertained and educated more than 10,065 children and adults.

I feel the Zoo fulfills a quote from one of my heroines- Rachel Carson: ‘If a child is to keep his/her inborn sense of wonder... they need the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with them the joy, excitement and the mystery of the world we live in.’”



Clyde presenting A Zoo in my Bags at Poquoson H. S.

A WALK IN THE W&M WOOD

By Ginny Carey

It was a cool and slightly dreary May 4 morning, at an early, but not too early, hour. Our group, easily identified by sensible walking shoes, cargo pants, safari hats, and hiking shorts, gathered in the Crim Dell amphitheater after only a minor parking snafu at PBK (what's new....)

Our fearless leaders, Dr. Martie Mathes and the ubiquitous and lovely green-haired Helen Hamilton of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, gathered us together (and that's saying a lot because there were about three dozen of us). We set off through the wilds of the William and Mary campus to visit their special trees—native specimens AND those carefully and purposefully transported from elsewhere.

We learned a great deal of interesting information about the origins of the whole Crim Dell wildlife area. Dr. Mathes shared several humorous anecdotes about his involvement over the years and the commitment of Dr. John Baldwin who was an early force in horticultural efforts at W&M.

Personal favorites along the way included the lovely Blue Ice Juniper, several chestnut varieties, the Dawn Redwoods (tallest if not biggest in America), the large and lovely cryptomeria (sounded like Superman plants to me), and the Windmill Palm trees in the shelter of the ell at Ewell Hall.

It was wonderful to see Dorothy, our nonagenarian weeding queen from Freedom Park, often out in front of the pack with her creative walking stick....a naturally candy cane shaped branch she found in her back yard. She remarked that it "works much better than the cane (she) bought." Her enthusiasm was an inspiration to us all.

As promised, Dr. Mathes had us back to the parking lot before any tickets were issued and a wonderful and informative time was had by all.



NOTES FROM THE WILDSIDE— BY RAMBLIN CLYDE

Turtle Tales, A Fluttering Leaf, and Flower Pot Snakes

Hello Cohorts, Several weeks ago I was out pruning "Water Sprouts" from my Pyracantha Tree (*Pyracantha specie*) and I noticed Jacob and Miss Terry, our backyard Box Turtles (*Terrapene carolina*), in a compromising position in the Vinca ground cover. I called Miss Ellie to see and took several photos. She chided me for my invasion of their privacy. I can say though the "dimple" works!. I have seen the pair several times since snuggling in the butterfly garden. Perhaps I'll be a grandfather some time this summer.



Again doing yard work, I just finished mowing the front yard when I noticed a leaf under our Japanese Red Maple (*Acer palmatum*) "fluttering". It turned out to be a large female Polyphemus Moth (*Antheraea polyphemus*). She had several large lacerations on her abdomen. I think I interrupted a bird starting to make a meal of her. I put her in a jar overnight hoping to attract some males but she expired.



The Zoo was part of Yorktown Elementary School's first grade classes field trip on May 21. I had collected a beautiful Rough Earth Snake (*Virginia striatula*) to show the children. They are absolutely docile and easy to handle. One of the boys exclaimed excitedly, "Its a Flower Pot Snake"! His mother had repotted a large plant and uncovered several Earth Snakes that had taken up residence there. So from now on and evermore my little snakes will be "Flower Pot Snakes".

By the By - the Zoo has now reached out to entertain and hopefully educate 10, 052 children and adults.

Thank you Zoo Cru.



Ramblin Clyde (and Zoo Keeper)

Photos on this page provided by Inge Curtis

Match the Label to the Correct Photo

(answers on page 8)

A



- ◆ **Black Skimmers**
- ◆ **American Oystercatchers**
- ◆ **Laughing Gulls**



B

C



CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP OF THE MEH-TE-KOS BLUEBIRD TRAIL

After three years of caring and dedicated leadership of the Meh-Te-Kos bluebird trail in York River State Park, Les Lawrence has decided to let someone else take over as the leader of this trail. We and the bluebirds will miss him, but he will still lead and coordinate the Wildlife Mapping project at York River. Les' service and commitment to bluebird conservation has been remarkable and most appreciated. We thank him sincerely.

Cheryl Jacobson has volunteered to organize a team to monitor Meh-Te-Kos for the remainder of the season, in addition to the YRSP Entrance Road trail that she and Deane Gordon lead. We are grateful to Cheryl for her efforts to ensure that the trail continues to be carefully monitored.

Lois Ullman and Jan Lockwood

Carolina Chickadees in box on the Meh-Te-Kos Bluebird trail at YRSP

Photo by Shirley Devan



Osprey babies as seen from the VIMS webcam. Photo provided by Sherry Brubaker.



Answers to photo quiz on page 7:

- A. American Oystercatchers
- B. Black Skimmers
- C. Laughing Gulls

Marsh Bird Survey with the National Park Service



Dave Youker and Patty Maloney volunteer with Dorothy Geyer and Dana Filippini on the Colonial National Historical Park's 2013 Marsh Bird Survey. This long-term survey will track yearly changes anticipated in the marsh habitats and populations due to climate change. The team monitors various GPS points monthly throughout the marsh by kayaking or walking (and sinking) into the marsh with waders. Once at the specific GPS point, the team listens, watches and records every type of bird using the marsh for five minutes. The team then plays recorded calls of key species such as the black rail, least bittern, sora, Virginia rail, king rail, clapper rail, American bittern, and common moorhen; and annotates which of those birds respond. The 2013 survey started in April and will continue through July.

Patty and Dorothy sampling in high grass



MARK YOUR CALENDAR
JUNE 12

New Documentary on Aldo Leopold Showing at Williamsburg Regional Library

Green Fire film connects legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold with modern environmental projects

Williamsburg, VA, —On Wednesday, June 12, 2013, the Historic Rivers Chapter and the Peninsula Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists will host a free screening of the **Emmy**® award winning film, *Green Fire*, the first high definition documentary film ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. The one-hour film explores Aldo Leopold's life in the early part of the twentieth century and the many ways his land ethic idea continues to be applied all over the world today. This screening is free and open to the public – no tickets required.

The film shares highlights from Leopold's life and extraordinary career, explaining how he influenced conservation and the modern environmental movement in the twentieth century and still inspires people today. Although probably best known as the author of the conservation classic *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold is also renowned for his work as an educator, philosopher, forester, ecologist, and wilderness advocate.

"Aldo Leopold's legacy lives on today in the work of people and organizations across the nation and around the world," said Aldo Leopold Foundation Executive Director Buddy Huffaker. "What is exciting about *Green Fire* is that it is more than just a documentary about Aldo Leopold; it also explores the influence his ideas have had in shaping the conservation movement as we know it today by highlighting some really inspiring people and organizations doing great work to connect people and the natural world in ways that even Leopold might not have imagined."

Viewers will meet urban children in Chicago who are learning about local foods and ecological restoration. They'll learn about ranchers in Arizona and New Mexico who maintain healthy landscapes by working on their own properties and with their neighbors, in cooperative community conservation efforts. They'll meet wildlife biologists who are bringing back threatened and endangered species – from cranes to Mexican wolves – to the landscapes where they once thrived.

"Aldo Leopold is one of our nation's most beloved nature writers," says environmental historian Susan Flader. "His *A Sand County Almanac*, published posthumously in 1949, has become a catalyst for our evolving ecological awareness and a classic in American literature." Leopold is regarded by many as one of the most influential conservation thinkers of the twentieth century, and the film highlights the ways his legacy continues to encourage us to see the natural world "as a community to which we belong."

Historic Rivers Chapter and the Peninsula Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists are hosting this screening of *Green Fire* for the community. Free and open to the public. No tickets required.

Join us Wednesday, June 12, at 7:30 pm in the Library Theater, Williamsburg Library, 515 Scotland Street, Williamsburg.

Come early for a reception (6:30 – 7:30) in the Library Gallery honoring the Winners of the 2012 Historic Rivers Chapter Nature Photography Contest – "Through the Eye of the Naturalist." The winning photos are on display until June 15.

<http://www.wrl.org/events/through-eye-naturalist-1>

Tell me more about “Wildlife Mapping”

***Wildlife Mappers
Ready to Head
Into the Woods,
May 20 at YRSP***



Les Lawrence, Nancy Gore, Gary Driscole, Shirley Devan, Debbie McGowan, Nancy Barnhart, Felice Bond

Documenting Nature—Felice is taking photograph of a skink



Tell me more about "Wildlife Mapping"

All of the Monday Frolics at YRSP are both rewarding and lots of fun!! The "Frolics" involve a bit of gardening and park maintenance followed by lots of wildlife mapping.

On one recent Monday, the "wild ones" mapped the Taskinas Trail, which is over 3 miles long (lots of ups and downs) and requires about 3 hours when mapping.

Our group of 6 HRC members and a visiting member from the Tidewater Chapter sighted 17 bird, 6 reptile (3 snake, 2 skink, 1 lizard, & 1 turtle), 1 amphibian, and 3 butterfly species. The broad-headed skinks were a life-time reptile for Shirley, so that added a bit of excitement.



Broad-headed Skink

The weather was threatening most of the time we were on the trail searching for any/all critters, and the skies finally opened up over the last half-mile. But what's a little rain when you're having fun?

Our visitor, Debbie McGowan, was invited by Nancy Barnhart who had met her while doing the CBF's oyster restoration project at VIMS. While she has been certified for wildlife mapping, her chapter does not yet have any designated sites nor practical experience. She seemed to enjoy her time on the Taskinas trail, and we certainly invited her back to join us again.

Prior to the group activities, Shirley & Felice began their day by checking out the Croaker Landing site. They saw 20 bird species, including a lone female Ruddy Duck which had no business still being around.



Box Turtle

You never know what you'll see when roaming the trails!

(Mammal skull & spine)



Fence Lizard

Mary Turnbull's Garden Walk

By Adrienne Frank

On May 25, Mary Turnbull opened her garden to more than 50 people including those in the John Clayton Chapter of the Native Plant Society and more than 10 members of the Historic Rivers Chapter, VMNs. The .16 acre garden had steps and winding paths, a spring fed creek, a water feature, and sculptures to add an artistic touch.

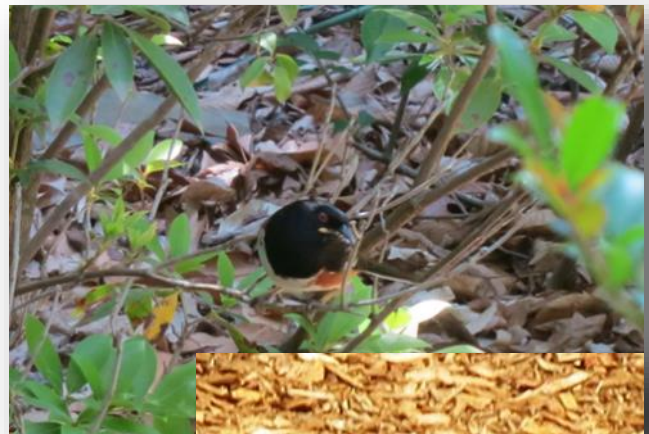
Each participant received a list of common and botanical names for 88 native plants. Mary numbered each and provided photographs of the some flowers, not in bloom, so that participants could complete a self-guided tour.

Prior to the walk, Donna Ware visited the garden three times and identified 50 native species, in addition to the ones that Mary knew existed. Recently, Donna added several tree species to the list: Persimmon, Bitternut Hickory, American Elm, and Green Ash. She also clarified a few species for Mary including Sedge, Wood Rush, False Nettle, Honewort, and Rose Azalea.

In addition to plant life, a few of the Master Naturalist participants found active bird nests. A cardinal had a nest with two brown chicks with huge looking beaks. Mary pointed out a nest with one hatchling and two eggs in the azalea bushes.



A pair of towhees were heard fussing, and mother came to feed the babies. Mary took some photos later that afternoon and found a second hatchling. What a treat!



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND

BLO VI

A NIGHT of **BLACK LIGHTS** and **OWLS**

VCU Rice Center, Charles City County

June 8 – June 9 , 2013

7:00 pm Saturday to 9:00 am Sunday

Join entomologist Dr. Art Evans and Coordinator Anne Wright from dusk to dawn documenting the nocturnal riches of the VCU Rice Center. We will catalogue insects attracted to ultraviolet and mercury vapor lights and make regular forays into the night in search of owls. A side trip to experience the mighty frog chorus at the Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery is also planned.

Dr. Evans is the author of the National Wildlife Federation *Field Guide to Insects and Spiders of North America*.

POT LUCK dinner! Bring a dish. A grill will be going.
Camp out or sleep (bring your own gear) in the LEEDS Platinum Education Building, and enjoy the science and camaraderie of creatures of the night!
~> RSVP: abwright@vcu.edu<~

Cicadas—Photo Friendly Critters?

By Alice Kopinitz

On Saturday, June 2, three cars left from Williamsburg bound for the Wildlife Rehab Center in Waynesboro. We stopped at the rest stop west of Richmond and were greeted with the sound we had wondered about for awhile. The cicadas were all around chirping away.

We observed the emergence holes in the ground around the oak trees and finally observed some flying and landing. The cameras came out in force because there has been nary a one in our coastal plain area.

We have been reading that there were 3 species in brood II. Naturally, Seig would like to have a few pictures. Now, we knew that the critters were west of Rich-



mond. After a little more searching on the web and we found reports of cicada observations at Deep Run Park in Richmond. That's where we decided to try.

When we drove into the park, we heard the unmistakable sound. We drove a ways into the park – no sound. We parked the car and headed into the woods toward the sound. We looked for the tell tale holes in the ground. Found those. They we began seeing the shed shells. After walking about ten minutes, our efforts were rewarded. We ended up in an area fairly close to the road in fairly dense underbrush and a mixture of both large and small trees. There were plenty of critters flying about and crawling on the foliage.

We decided that there was just one of the species (*Magicalcidas septendecim*) at both observations we made around Richmond. We certainly had opportunity for some up close and personal observation. The critters had some up close observations of their own.

An excellent web site that has a daily sightings map can be found here:

http://www.magicicada.org/magicicada_ii.php

Advanced Training for June 2013

[AT] **Field Trip to Wildlife Center - June 1, 2013** from 7 am to 5 pm at Waynesboro, VA

[AT] **HRBC Bird Walk - June 2, 2013** from 7 to 10 am at Newport News City Park

[AT] **Summer Public Tours @ VIMS - June 7, 2013** from 10:30 am to 12 pm at VIMS - Watermen's Hall, Lobby

[AT] **WBC Bird Walk at New Quarter Park - June 8, 2013** from 8 to 10 am, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

[AT] **WBC Field Trip - June 8, 2013** to Red-cockaded Woodpecker Preserve in Sussex County. 4 am departure from Colony Square Shopping Center

[AT] **BLO VI: Night of Black Lights and Owls - June 8-9, 2013** from 7 pm to 9 am at VCU Rice Center, Charles City County

[AT] **Monthly meeting - June 12, 2013** from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Williamsburg Regional Library

[AT] **Summer Public Tours @ VIMS - June 14, 2013** from 10:30 am to 12 pm at VIMS - Watermen's Hall, Lobby

[AT] **Developing and Evaluating a Natural Resource Management Plan - June 14, 2013** from 7 to 9 pm at Charlottesville, VA

[AT] **HRBC Bird Walk - June 16, 2013** from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[AT] **Experience the Chesapeake Bay 2013 - June 17 - 21, 2013** all day at ECO Discovery Park in Jamestown

[AT] **Summer Public Tours @ VIMS - June 21, 2013** from 10:30 am to 12 pm at VIMS - Watermen's Hall, Lobby

[AT] **Osprey Watch - June 22, 2013** from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at New Quarter Park, Williamsburg.

[AT] **The Costs and Benefits of "Fracking" - June 27, 2013** from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm VIMS

[AT] **Summer Public Tours @ VIMS - June 28, 2013** from 10:30 am to 12 pm at VIMS - Watermen's Hall, Lobby

[AT] **Registration Deadline for Trees-to-Products Program - June 30, 2013** all day at Wise County

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