

The Naturalist

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FROM THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER
VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

Virginia
Master
Naturalist



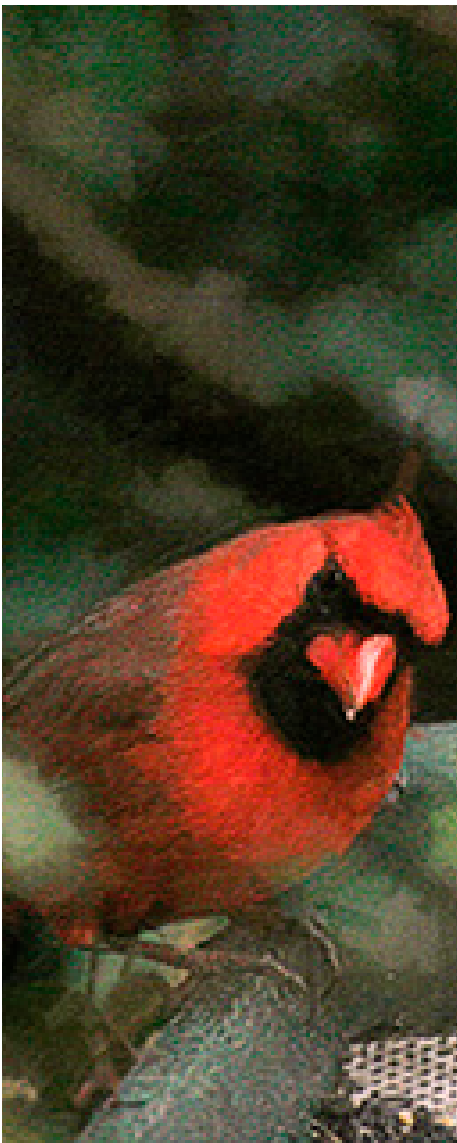
November/December 2018

Volume 13, Number 8

The President's Message

By Adrienne Frank

Happy Holidays— A Time to Reflect on 2018 and Look Forward to 2019



Northern Cardinal Photo by Cindy Baker

The end of the year is a great time to reflect back and celebrate the past year. It's been a wonderful year, filled with new projects, friendships, community partnerships, field trips, and more.

The HRC Board of Directors will end this calendar year by writing the annual report to the Virginia Master Naturalist State Office. We will count our members, tally our volunteer hours, report on our goals, and choose projects to highlight.

Our membership chair, Renee Dallman, will gather and compile all of the data about members and volunteer service hours, so please be sure to submit yours.

By now, our chapter has surpassed 15,000 hours of volunteer service; more than 1000 hours per month. We currently have #104 active chapter members and 20 new Cohort XIII members. At this rate, our members are averaging more than #120 hours per person.

One of Chapter goals set by the HRC board is to increase stewardship hours. We had more than 1300 hours of stewardship (about 8% of the hours spent on projects), which is higher than in years past. This is one area that we want to continue to increase our participation.

Just for curiosity, I looked up the projects with the highest number of hours. At present, the highest number of hours for any one project is Wildlife Mapping (in multiple locations), administration (Board and committee meetings, Basic Training), followed by Feeder Watch, the Breeding Bird Atlas, and the Bat Monitoring Project.

Our second goal is to increase diversity. We record and report the number of minorities who are members of our chapter, and the number of minorities that participate in education and outreach. Our membership chairs, Karen Grass and Sherry Brubaker recently attended the Leadership Day sponsored by the VMN State Office and learned strategies to address diversity. We will work on a few projects in 2019.

As far as projects to highlight, we have quite a few with significant accomplishments. I am sure you recall that Jan Lockwood and our Bluebird Trails were recognized at the VMN State Conference. The Bat Project has acquired technology, conducted monitoring transects, and have "Gone Batty" at Freedom Park. Other significant projects include Keep James City County Beautiful, the Butterfly Festival, and much more. We may need a little help from some

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members to write up one or more project summaries. I am sure that 2019 will bring us more exciting and productive projects and events.

On behalf of the HRC Board of Directors, I would like to wish you all HAPPY HOLIDAYS and a very wonderful, natural, productive, and fun NEW YEAR!

**DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT
YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS
BEFORE DECEMBER 31.**



Pat Murphy helps a young visitor construct a holiday decoration from natural materials at the "Make and Take" event at New Quarter Park December 8. Several Chapter members participated in this Outreach event. Photo by Shirley Devan

Chapter Board

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Webmaster	Jeanette Navia
Social Media	Sonny Bowers
Liaison to the State	Susan Powell



Junko Photo by Cindy Baker

All the Cohort XIII News That's Fit to Print

Cohort XIII moves through training curriculum—November By Renee Denham

Unfortunately, the popular field trip to York River State Park with Hugh Beard was canceled after Tropical Storm Michael caused damage in the Park. Due to the full training calendar, the field trip could not be rescheduled.

Dr. Shawn Dash led the Oct. 16 session in Entomology giving the participants a new appreciation for our friends in the insect world. Wrapping up October, Bill Williams led his second class of the curriculum covering Ornithology on Oct. 30. Dean Shostak presented information on CoCoRaHS and took equipment orders for the newest group of citizen scientists.

On Nov. 3, the Cohort traveled across the Coleman Bridge for a field trip to VIMs where Karen Duhring covered Estuarine and Coastal Ecology and Management. The Cohort had the opportunity to tour coastal habitats and were surprised to see a Groundsel Bush covered by *Danaus plexippus*.

Heading back to the classroom, Michelle Prysby discussed Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination at the Oct. 13 class. Barbara Neis finished the class with Interpretive Skills and Toolboxes.

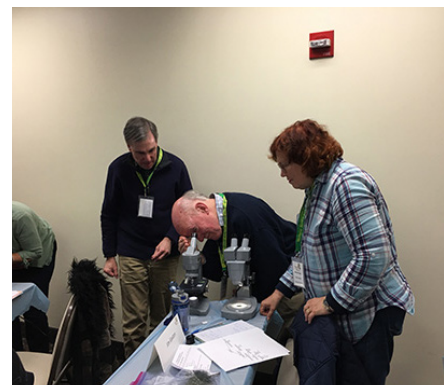
We are sad to announce that one trainee had to withdraw due to a recent move and other time commitments. We are hopeful that she will be among the first to sign up for Cohort XIII!

Snakes and Oak Trees and Fossilized Whalebones, Oh My!—December By Janet Harper

Cohort XIII, which now has 19 members, continues to be busy with training classes and field trips. Recently, they were actively involved in a botany class presented by two York High biology teachers. They learned about photosynthesis, monocots and dicots, angiosperms and gymnosperms, plant reproduction, and other fun facts about plants. For the hands-on learning, they were able to dissect flowers, view plant parts under microscopes, and practice tree identification using a dichotomous key. Did we ever decide if that one specimen was from a Pin Oak or a Scarlet Oak?

December started with a wonderful geology class by Linda Morse. Trainees learned how the continents and the Chesapeake Bay were formed, and about the geology of Virginia and the coastal plain. Everyone enjoyed handling the many mineral, rock, and shell specimens Linda brought for them to see. During the field trip following class, trainees were able to hunt for their own fossils. Many treasures were found, including shells, coral, colonial bricks, and pieces of whalebone. Cohort member Meghan Lamoreaux was a big help to the group with her geology background.

The year ended with the December herpetology class, where they learned about snakes, salamanders, turtles, frogs and toads. OH My. If you see any of the new cohort members at volunteer or continuing education events, please say hello and introduce yourself. They are an enthusiastic bunch and we are happy to have them in the chapter!



All the Cohort XIII News That's Fit to Print—Bios

Gathered by Shirley Devan

Denise Roxanne Machamer

I am one of those with a dual name. My mom and other relatives call me Denise and my friends call me Roxanne. I am married to Rick and have a daughter Tess, a step-daughter Becky, and a step-son Ricky.

I am a native Virginian and enjoyed the historical Virginia Peninsula as my playground growing up. I had a love for the outdoors, animals and people in my play and later in life through my work. I was driven to advance my Registered Nurse degree and became one of the earliest Family Nurse Practitioners (VCU/MCV Richmond) in our area, breaking barriers and obtaining hospital privileges. Seeing the interconnections of our environment to the health of the individual, I developed my personal theory of practice. My patients were not only the individual but also their community, their cultural influences and their environment. All affects physical, mental and community health. When I was chairperson of the York River Sierra Club, we challenged city leaders to protect air quality by adopting recycling instead of incineration. I promoted aesthetic values and environmental protection of drinking water by stopping a 25,000-seat arena and creating serene green spaces within business locations. In recognition of these achievements, the Sierra Club presented a Virginia State Chapter award.

The U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce recognized me as the Outstanding Young Woman for Virginia.

Becoming a Master Naturalist is exciting. I have seen that our health is directly influenced by our surroundings and how important education is to our environment; from plant natives to the insects that pollinate—all play a role in our health. Education is the key to protect our environment, promote health and secure our future.

Jim Easton

I was born and raised in Newton, Massachusetts, and though I haven't lived there for almost 40 years, part of me will always belong to New England (Go Sox!). After graduating from Vanderbilt University, I spent the next few decades building a family with my wife Marty, and in a succession of positions in retail management. After retiring several years ago, I've been an active volunteer, primarily with Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg, SCORE, and Williamsburg Landing.

My mother-in-law gave me a bird guide around 15 years ago. It sat in a bookshelf, untouched, until shortly after I retired. What started as a backyard bird ID weekend project became almost-daily hikes on our many wonderful trails, combining my lifelong hobby of photography with a growing appreciation for, and love of, the natural world. I can't wait to see what new opportunities being part of VMN brings.

Pat Murphy

I grew up in Larchmont, NY. I worked as a paralegal and then as a fidelity underwriter. I love kids! I was drawn to training/education and so I went back to school for a Masters in Education. I taught 4th Grade for 3 years and then we started our family. Rich and I moved with our son Jack to Fairfield, CT. Our daughter Molly was born there. I volunteered for and ended up working for CT Audubon. I returned to the classroom as a Kindergarten teacher in Fairfield for a year. My husband's company was closing down then so we decided to take his severance and move to Colorado. Acreage and skiing attracted us! I continued teaching Kindergarten for 5 years in CO while volunteering as a park guide at Castlewood Canyon State Park. We moved to Glenview, IL in 2012 for Rich's work. I worked as a program educator at The Grove, (an historic landmark and nature center) and at Air Station Prairie. We moved to Williamsburg, VA this past March. My mom has lived here for 25 years and we decided to finally join her. I am now working part time as a Reading Tutor. I love all things VMN and am looking forward to the years of service ahead! The Murphys are NEVER moving again!! I hold a B.A. in Government & Law from Lafayette College and a Masters in Ed from Pace University-NY.

Tory Gussman

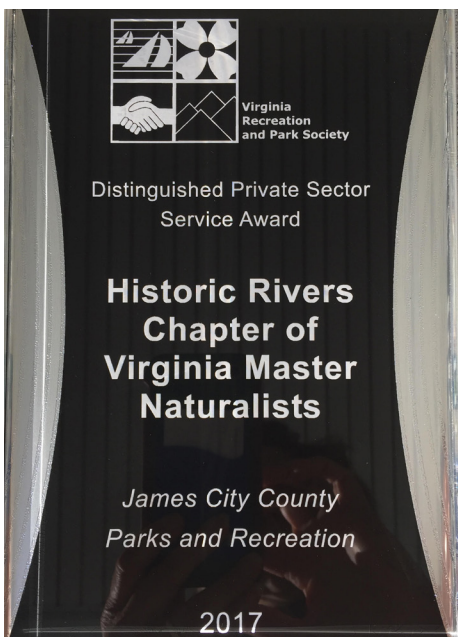
I grew up in northern California, graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz, spent a year studying in Norway, and attended graduate school at Penn State where I got a degree in Man-Environment Relations and met my future husband, David. When newly married we took advantage of a PanAm promotion and traveled around the world in 80 days before settling in Virginia so he could do graduate work at VIMS. We ended up staying here and raising our family of four boys. I worked for James City County (planning and development) for 9 years and for Colonial Williamsburg (property management, real estate, capital projects) for 27 years. I helped launch the Historic Rivers (now Historic Virginia) Land Conservancy and place some lands under easement. I deeply appreciate the beauty and complexity of nature and enjoy birding, hiking and kayaking. In joining the HRC-VMN I am eager to broaden my knowledge of Virginia's natural history as well as participate in the many volunteer opportunities VMN sponsors and supports.

And... The Distinguished Private Sector Service Award Goes to the...

Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists



Gary Driscoll and Adrienne Frank receive the Distinguished Private Sector Service Award from James City County Parks and Recreation on behalf of HRCVMN.



The Virginia Master Naturalists are a community-based natural resources volunteer program, and the local Historic Rivers Chapter serves James City County, the City of Williamsburg, York County and Gloucester County. Members of the Chapter donate their time to provide stewardship, citizen science and environmental education to the community.

The Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalists has a very active presence in our community, and has been an invaluable asset to James City County Parks & Recreation. In 2017, they dedicated over 2,500 volunteer hours in James City County parks and facilities with an estimated value of more than \$61,725. The projects, all related to protecting our natural resources, varied greatly and included leading environmental education programs, park maintenance and wildlife monitoring. Regular projects included wildlife mapping, installing and monitoring Bluebird and Prothonotary Warbler nesting boxes, Osprey monitoring, bird and butterfly counts, maintenance of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden and leading summer camps and nature programs.

SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF A SPECIAL EVENT OR PROGRAM

Last year, the Historic Rivers Chapter contributed 410 hours of volunteer service in providing direct educational instruction in James City County programs. Volunteers interacted with over 4,000 visitors at the 2017 Butterfly Festival, an annual event held over two days at Freedom Park in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

Master Naturalist volunteers were stationed in two tents that were filled with live butterflies, and educated visitors as they passed through and observed insects.

The Chapter also led three, week-long environmental education summer camps at Freedom Park—*Little Sprouts Nature Explorers* for youth ages 4-5, and two sessions of *Nature in Your Backyard* for ages 6-9.

On each day of the camp, Historic Rivers Chapter volunteers would lead participants in hikes and other activities throughout Freedom Park. The volunteers taught participants about native plants and wildlife, and provided fantastic resources for the participants to interact with, including animal pelts and bones, tree ID guides and sometimes even live animals or insects! The camps have served as an outstanding model for program delivery, with James City County providing facilities and administrative tasks, and enthusiastic volunteers providing the program content. In addition, the chapter regularly leads nature walks for youth and adults at multiple parks, and sets up educational wildlife displays at special events.

CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE ACQUISITION OR DEVELOPMENT OF PARK AREAS, FACILITIES OR EQUIPMENT

The Historic Rivers Chapter has done a variety of projects related to the development of interpretive features in James City County parks. Past projects have included creating a database and providing pictures of plants and animals used in an interactive kiosk in the Freedom Park Interpretive Center, and creating the content and providing photographs

for the interpretive signs on the Living Forest Interpretive Trail, also at Freedom. In 2017, the Chapter worked with the James River Association to create a field guide to plants and wildlife that could be found along the County's Powhatan Creek. The field guide will be available to visitors at the James City County Marina, which is located on the creek, and will be made available to patrons renting canoes and kayaks to serve as an interpretive accompaniment when they when they paddle the creek. To create the guide volunteers spent 161 hours in kayaks, paddling the creek to identify plants and wildlife at various times of the year. The guide is a very unique way to present natural interpretation along the Powhatan Creek Blueway.

The Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists are an incredible group of enthusiastic volunteers whose work benefits the

PHOTOS

Above right: A group of Master Naturalists volunteers.

Middle right: Gary Driscoll and Teta Kain work to identify a plant on an interpretive trail.

Bottom right: Page Hutchinson describes a mammal pelt to a young visitor at the James City County Recreation Expo at James City County Recreation Center.



Wildflower of the Month—November 2018

John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

By **Helen Hamilton**, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

COMMON HACKBERRY

Celtis occidentalis

Distinctive warty, cork-like ridges cover the smooth gray to light brown bark of Hackberry.

The form is that of a shrub, with several woody stems growing from the base; the crown is rounded, and the branches spread and droop slightly.

The leaves are long-pointed and alternate on the stems. They have coarse teeth and mostly uneven bases and are rough on the surface, about four inches long. Another species, *C. laevigata*, has subtle differences in the leaves; the Flora of Virginia states that the distinction between the two species “is problematic in Virginia.”

In early spring, inconspicuous yellowish-green flowers appear in small clusters, followed by small, orange to purple fruit on stalks at the leaf bases. Flowers bloom in April and May and fruits follow from October through November. Five species of butterflies, including mourning cloak, visit the flowers for nectar and many birds love the sweet, ripened fruits, often called “sugarberries.”

Common Hackberry grows in moist soils, usually along streams, and also in forests, meadows and fields. Growing naturally in most counties of Virginia, the range is from Canada south to Virginia and west to Oklahoma. Hackberry is a good landscape choice since it grows rapidly, can resist strong winds, tolerate air pollution, provide erosion control and doesn’t require watering.

Hackberry is a member of the *Cannabaceae*, the Hops or Hemp Family, with 11 genera distributed worldwide.

Economically important species are *Humulus* (Hops), *Cannabis* (Hemp) and *Celtis* (Hackberry), that can be cut into lumber for furniture and containers.

The common name apparently was derived from “hagberry,” meaning “marsh berry,” a name used in Scotland for a cherry.

Small galls often produce tiny bumps on the leaves that are harmless to the tree and can be used to help identify the species. Contorted twig clusters called “witches’ broom” are often at the ends of branches. Produced by mites and fungi, they do little harm to the tree but can be unsightly. Some gardeners prefer cultivars that are resistant to witches’ broom for landscape use.

Native Americans used the hackberry for medicinal purposes as well as for food. The fruits (drupes) are sweet and sugary but with a hard stone that is rich in protein and fats. Survival manuals recommend crushing the entire fruits to a paste, then toasted into a bar.

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



Hackberry Bark and Berries (*Celtis occidentalis*), Photos by Helen Hamilton

Wildflower of the Month—December 2018

John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

By **Helen Hamilton**, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA

Magnolia grandiflora

Southern Magnolia is a magnificent tree of the South, densely covered with leathery, dark green, evergreen leaves. They are shiny on top and velvety brown underneath, much used in December for holiday decorations. Very large, very fragrant creamy-white flowers appear from spring and occasionally through summer. The flowers are 5 inches wide, usually with six thick petals, slightly cupped at the tips. Conelike seedpods follow the flowers with large red seeds.

This handsome tree grows a straight trunk and conical crown and can get quite large, over 60 feet tall and 40 feet wide, so it needs a lot of space. Southern Magnolia is often planted as a lawn specimen when the lower branches are allowed to reach the ground. The tree grows best in rich, moist soils in part shade. It does not do well in extreme wet or dry soils and should not be planted near pavement because the roots can lift and crack concrete.

Few trees can match its year-round beauty. Deer do not bother Southern Magnolia, it has few pests or diseases, and is salt tolerant. The leaves can be a nuisance since they fall throughout the year and do not decompose. They can be chopped with a mower and sent back under the branches to recycle the nutrients.

Southern Magnolia is not really native to the southern Coastal Plain in Virginia but has been planted extensively throughout and frequently escapes into local woodlands and moist bottomlands. Dr. Stewart Ware says: "The northern limit of the natural range of southern magnolia when Bartram did his explorations was at the South Carolina/North Carolina border. But as soon as colonists began to introduce it into various places in North Carolina, it began to reproduce as birds spread the seeds. Presumably that means that the northern limit in colonial days was not solely climate, but was a combination of climate, transport, and competitive interactions." The growth rate is slow – over the past 40 years, Dr. Stewart Ware has watched seedlings in the College Woods that are not over four feet tall and have never bloomed.

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



Magnolia grandiflora

Volunteer Calendar

Put together by Shirley Devan

Thursday, 12.20.18	8:30am	C1b	Wildlife Mapping Greensprings Interpretive Trail	Hart Haynes	olmar97@ hotmail.com
Friday, 12.12.18	9:00 am	C S1e	Work in Williamsburg Botanical Garden every Friday	Adrienne Frank	adrenne-gary@ cox.net
Monday, 12.24.2018	9:00am	C1b	Wildlife Mapping, York River State Park	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@ cox.net
Thursday, 12.27.18	8:30am	C1b	Wildlife Mapping Greensprings Interpretive Trail	Hart Haynes	olmar97@ hotmail.com
Friday, 12.28.18	9:00am	S1e	Work in Williamsburg Botanical Garden every Friday	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@ cox.net
Sunday, 12.30.18	9:00am	C1b	Wildlife Mapping Yorktown Battlefield	Jeff Honig	aberlour@cox. net*
Monday, 12.31.18	9:00am	C1b	Wildlife Mapping- York River State Park	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@ cox.net

*Text (757)771-8041 if you arrive late & need to locate group.