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THE NATURALIST

THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER OF VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

The President's Message

by Rick Brown

Here are a few upcoming events, a couple of reminders, and random thoughts:

1. The next Chapter meeting for October is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 13th, at 6:30 PM.** It will be on Zoom again and an invitation will be sent to everyone prior to the meeting. The members of Cohort XV are welcome and encouraged to attend to get to know the Chapter.

2. The HRC Board will meet by Zoom on **Wednesday, October 6th, at 6:30 PM.** All members of the Chapter and Cohort are always welcome to attend any Board meeting. Just contact any Board member for the Zoom invitation link for admission.

3. If you are looking for an easy way to enter your volunteer time try the My Impact app, available wherever you get your apps. On an iPhone it is found at: [My Impact](#), on Android it's [here](#). The page for time log in could not be simpler. Just start typing the activity name and it will self-populate and offer suggestions. It's easy. Try it. Here is a sample page I created using my app:

The screenshot shows the 'My Impact' app interface. At the top, there's a header with the 'Virginia Master Naturalist' logo and the word 'Historic'. Below the header is a search bar with the text 'Trails and Trash - Bassett Trace Trail Maintenance - CW'. There are buttons for 'Menu' and 'Log Ho'. The form includes fields for 'Date Volunteered' (9/18/2021), 'Hours' (1), and 'Minutes' (0). There's a 'Feedback' section with a 'Description' field containing 'Hiked and maintained trail; emptied trash cans.' and a 'Direct Contacts' field with a value of 1. There's also a 'Mileage' field with a value of 12. At the bottom right, there's a 'Log Ho' button.

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4. Plans are being finalized and preparations are well underway for the **annual HRC Picnic** at Ted & Judy Sargent's picturesque home on the Chickahominy. **Saturday, October 23rd** is the big day! As the date gets closer you will likely receive reminders and updates. This is a great occasion to get together. This year is even more special after missing last year's picnic because of Covid. Valerie Shostak, Brynn Ullrich, and their Hospitality Committee have some special events planned and there will even time to earn volunteer and CE hours. The picnic will be a fun day and a good time. Come early for breakfast, or whenever your schedule permits.

5. Elisabeth Wilkins is the Manager at Waller Mill Park and a fellow Master Naturalist from the Middle Peninsula Chapter. She has asked our chapter for volunteers for a number of projects that presently she has going at the Park and in the future. Your volunteer time may be logged into BI at "Trail Maintenance-Multiple Partners". Please contact her at ewilkins@williamsburgva.gov, or text 757-707-6344 to volunteer.

6. The Bassett Trace Nature Trail is open to the public once again! The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation closed the trail for a 30 day period after visitors reported seeing a coyote(s) on or near the trail. It is hoped that Wiley and his/her buddies, if any, have decamped to distant trails less travelled. Those of you who participate as Trail Steward/Maintainers may once again return to volunteering. Members of our chapter can be expected to photograph and document the location of any recurrent *Canis latrans* future observations, as expected of good citizen scientists. New volunteers for this project are always welcome. Contact me at: ricklin46@cox.net if you would like to become a Maintaineer. Take a hike!

7. Connie Reitz reports that we have amassed 335+ pounds of soft plastic in our collective efforts to obtain a donated bench to honor the memory of our

former member and advisor, Page Hutchinson. The effort is ongoing until we have collected 500 pounds. Connie will be updating the chapter on our progress and future dates and collection points to allow you to drop off your contributions.

8. Cohort XV have now received their Risk Management training and are ready to volunteer for our Chapter's projects. They have also been added recently to our Chapter's listserv. When scheduling an activity please remember that they are included in mailings to the Chapter and provide specifics as to events, locations and times. They are not yet acquainted with our VMN shorthand. We welcome them as volunteers and friends. **[SEE PAGE 8 FOR A GROUP PHOTO AND INTRODUCTION]**

9. Judy Jones has championed our Chapter's annual sponsorship of sending kids to Nature Camp. Each scholarship is approximately \$1,000 per student. Last year we sent 4 campers because there was a reduced rate. This year we have raised over \$5,000 and based on Judy's recommendation the board discussed and decided that because this is such a worthwhile sponsorship project we should spend the entire amount raised in the Nancy Norton Fund to send 5 campers to the 2022 season.

10. Got an idea for a new project? Want to participate in presentations to the public? Do you have a suggestion to offer to improve the Chapter? What can we do better? Get in touch with any officer or board member to bring your ideas to our attention. We are always open to discuss ideas and ways we can provide better communications and increase awareness of the work we do. Here's a list of board members and contact information: [HRC Board](#), it is also available at the end of this newsletter.

-Rick

Our Chapter Is Now a Non-Profit!

by Glenda White

In March 2020, the HRC VMN Board started considering becoming a legally recognized nonprofit. We were aided in our endeavors by a SCORE mentor, Dean Risseuw. SCORE is a volunteer organization of business mentors and Dean had guided several organizations through the process to become a non profit. We also communicated with Michelle Prysby, the VMN State Coordinator, who encouraged us to pursue becoming a non profit.

The first step towards our chapter becoming a nonprofit organization was to file with the Commonwealth of Virginia to become a Nonstock Corporation. To do so the chapter was required to have the following documents:

- *Articles of Amendment*
- *Mission and Bylaws*
- *Conflict of Interest Policy*
- *Estimate of revenue and expenses for three years*
- *Articles of Incorporation for a Nonstock Corporation*

We were fortunate to already have very good Bylaws. The other documents were created with the assistance of Rick Brown, Sue Mutell, Connie Reitz and Shirley Devan. They were then reviewed, and approved, by our SCORE mentor, Dean Risseuw, as well as Michelle Prysby and Tiffany Brown.

To make a long story short, our chapter was approved as a Virginia NonStock Corporation on Feb. 17, 2021. That then allowed us to apply to the IRS for Recognition of Exemption from federal taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue

Code. On June 10, 2021, the chapter received an IRS Determination Letter exempting the chapter from federal income tax and allowing donors to deduct contributions made to the chapter under IRC Section 170.

The next step was to pursue an exemption from sales taxes. An application was made to the Commonwealth for that purpose and on August 18 we received a Certificate of Exemption for Retail Sales and Use taxes.

Finally, on August 24, we received confirmation from the Commonwealth of our registration as a charitable organization to solicit donations which was a requirement to actually ask for donations such as those we make to the Nancy Norton Scholarship Fund.

All of this means, contributions to our chapter, not dues, are tax deductible and we no longer have to pay sales taxes on purchases for the chapter made with chapter funds. To aid in that, I will soon contact our bank to apply for either a debit or credit card.

Other benefits of becoming a nonprofit are: 1) eligibility to apply for federal and state grants, and, 2) our officers and directors are immune from civil suit and any liability for their actions when acting in good faith while serving in their official capacities.

What Is The Future Of Our Bluebird Trails?

by Judy Jones and Connie Reitz

Our 2021 bluebird season has ended – and what a season it’s been! We’ve added trails, we’ve fledged four different species of birds, and we’ve had over 70 HRC members monitoring birds at 20 different locations!

But what does the future hold for our Historic Rivers bluebird monitors? The trails are established. Leaders and volunteers have contributed many hours to monitor and care for the bluebirds. However, no one has volunteered to be our next county coordinator after Judy Jones and Connie Reitz relinquish the position after this season.

Has this activity run its course? Are members no longer interested? What can be done to promote this activity and keep it available for members? Options include:

1. This will cease to be an activity sponsored by the HRC. Bluebird monitoring will end.
2. Each trail leader will become a county coordinator and individually report the end of year data to VBS for his/her trail.
3. Or — *the best option* — a Chapter member(s) will volunteer to fill this position, strongly supported by previous county coordinators.

Monitoring bluebirds in this area has a strong heritage. In the 1990’s, local efforts to monitor the declining numbers of bluebirds were led by Greg Millslagle who lived in Queen’s Lake. He set up bluebird houses in New Quarter Park—even though the park did not become public until 2005. Also, during this same time, Shirley Devan and other Bird Club members monitored bluebird boxes in YRSP.

In March of 2010, Sara Lewis recruited HRC members to “Adopt-a-Box” at New Quarter Park. Each volunteer monitored a box for the entire season. This became the foundation for the HRC BB Trails Project in 2011. In 2012, the York County Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to the HRC-VMN Bluebird Team led by Jan Lockwood.



2010 HRC Bluebird Team, from left-to-right: Shirley Devan, Lois Ullman, Nancy Norton, Jeanette Navia, Gary Hammer, and Evelyn Parker / Sarah Lewis



Bluebirding at the Marina, from left-to-right: Sherry Brubaker, Thad Hecht, Jeanette Navia, Keith Navia, Betty Bennink

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Today, the Historic Rivers Chapter supports 20 bluebird trails with a total of 337 boxes. Almost 30 trail leaders and more than one half of the Chapter members volunteer to support at least one trail! A remarkable total of 1158 hours were documented by volunteers on these trails in 2021. And we fledged 1,237 bluebird chicks – almost one volunteer hour for every new bluebird! The chart below compares the bluebird fledges for the past two seasons.

This has been a wonderful bluebird season, even with all the obstacles presented by the pandemic. Trail leaders and team members were creative in solving problems posed by COVID and their creativity and persistence allowed us to monitor effectively and safely. A huge thank you to all the members who have volunteered over all the years to make this a fun learning activity!! And, with high hopes, we wait for volunteers to step up to coordinate the trails in 2022!

Trail	2021 BB Fledges	2020 BB Fledges
Cedar Grove Cemetery	41	43
Chickahominy	67	39
Dr. Grass Grafton-Bethel	34	12
Ford's Colony	100	98
Freedom Park	48	23
Grace Church, Yorktown	5	No Data
Griffin Trail at W&M	8	No Data
JCC Marina	22	11
Kingsmill	221	217
Kiskiack Golf Course	88	No data
Matoaka ES	13	11
New Quarter Park	69	83
Newport News Park	135	99
NPS Colonial Pkwy	48	30
Poquoson Garden	32	23
Veterans Park	40	No data
Waller Mill ES	19	23
Warhill HS	11	No data
York Co. Sports Complex	48	41
York River State Park	188	No data



We offer sincere thanks to all the members of Historic Rivers Chapter—past and present—for their help in fostering bluebird recovery.

The 8th Annual Butterfly Count - August 14, 2021

by Adrienne Frank

The 8th Annual WABC was a great count, despite the heat index of 106 degrees or higher. We were a bit concerned but the rain held off until we finished. Some people stayed until lunch time and others were persistent and stayed out until 4:00 pm.

We had 48 participants in 7 groups and 4 home gardens. People came from other places. The farthest was Elkton, and others came from the Northern Neck, Aylett, Surry, and the Middle Peninsula). The Williamsburg sectors were led by: Les Lawrence for York River State Park and beyond, Deane Gordon for Williamsburg City, Nancy Barnhart for New Quarter Park and more, Shirley Devan and Brian Taber split the Centerville Corridor, and Adrienne and Gary led the Upper James City County group.

Susan Crocket led the Middle Peninsula Master Naturalists which had the largest group (9 people). They covered the sector on the other side of the York River. On August 28th, they will have their first butterfly circle count. Contact Susan Crocket scrocket@cox.net if you are interested.

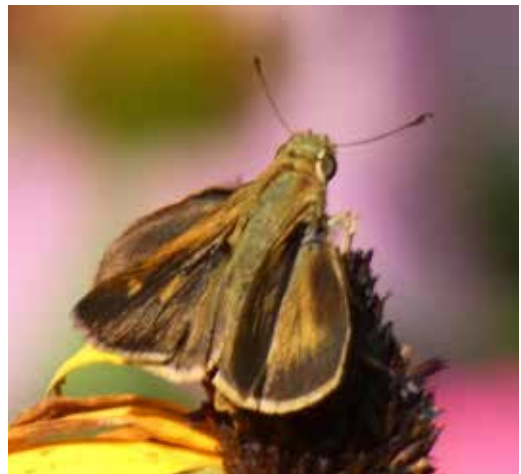
Our species total was 51, with 2437 individuals. Just FYI, our highest numbers were in 2019 (53 species with 3037 individuals). Our most abundant butterfly for the day was the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (533 individuals). Would you believe that in 2019, we had 732 of them.

For this count, we had 11 species with higher individual numbers than in all years past. Some had 2 or 3 more than in other years, while some had much more than previous years (Azure 33, Monarch 40, Zabulon Skipper 87, and Fiery Skipper 92). One of our typical butterflies was absent; no Red Admiral. We saw only 1 individual of several species (Snout,

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Williamsburg City Group (Linda Morse, Deane Gordon, Jeanette & Keith Navia, Mary Haines, and Sherry Brubaker) / Photo: *Jim Easton*



Northern Broken Dash (*Wallengrenia egeremet*) / *Brian Taber*

Appalachian Brown, Questionmark, Tawny Emporer, and Wild Indigo). For some others, we usually have a lot more of such as Orange Sulphurs, but we only had 3.

A few thoughts:

Zinnias – Two or more locations had rows of Zinnias with numerous butterflies (the Lavender Farm and Kelray Farms). We could talk our friends and neighbors into growing rows of them to help us next year. Zinnias are not native plants, but they sure attract butterflies.

Photographs – Taking good photos of the open and closed wings of butterflies can be difficult, but this year, review of photos gave us quite a few additional species, so we need to keep up the good work.

Groups - Maybe next year, we could have more locations with fewer people in each group. It would require good photographers and/or folks who can make identifications.

Thank you to everyone who made the count so successful!



Wild Indigo Duskywing (*Erynnis baptisiae*) / Navia



Upper JCC Group (Leslie Fellows, Jeff Wright, Gary, and Adrienne) / Photo: *Mike Smith*



Photo: *Jeff Wright*

Welcome To Our Newest Cohort - COHORT XV!

This cohort can be called “a dream team” because we all have dreamed that our chapter would be able to have another cohort this year and each of these new friends has so much to offer our Virginia Master Naturalist chapter.

They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and have a rich combined history of volunteering. Some of the areas in which they have volunteered are at a farmers’ market, York River State Park, a butterfly garden, the Virginia Aquarium, the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, and in Master Gardeners’ projects. One of our Cohort XV members has transported wildlife while others have been involved with birding and bird counts. Still others have volunteered for educational and environmental programs and CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow network).

The members of Cohort XV started their first class on Tuesday evening, September 7 with the “Nature of Naming” class and they seemed eager to

learn, share, and get involved. Hopefully everyone from Cohorts I to XIV will try to meet these new Cohort XV members at our meetings, field trips, Fall picnic, and volunteer activities.

A warm welcome to each member of Cohort XV and hopes for future volunteering together! The new members, who’ve completed their Risk Management session and are now “Accepted” are:

Emily Argo, Barbara Creel, Jenny DeVasher, Karen-Joyce Giese-Koch, Virginia Gladdin, Brad Glasebrook, Bill Grass, Jen Harrigan, Justin Horton, Deborah Humphries, Sidra Morales, Rob Nichols, Mary Jo O’Bryan, Cheryl Roettger, Michael Smith, Dave Stansbury, and Therese Stansbury.



The Naturalist is the monthly newsletter of the Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists. It is a membership benefit for current members of HRC.

Newsletter contributions are due by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the issue distributed to the HRC Google Group by the end of the month. Send your ready-to-publish photos, notices, stories, or reports to The Naturalist's newsletter editor at:

HRCnewsletter@gmail.com

Make sure your work is formatted and labeled properly. Please make sure your copy is error-free. We are happy to help you if you have questions!

Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists Board of Directors

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