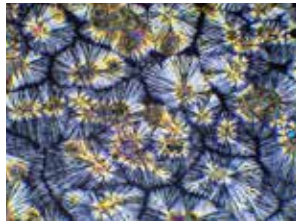




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# THE NATURALIST

THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER OF VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

## The President's Message

by Connie Reitz

### Historic Rivers Chapter Celebrates in March

The first Historic Rivers Chapter in-person meeting since March 2020—when Rick Brown was elected as president—was held at the Kitzinger Room in the Upper County Library. And it was our first hybrid meeting, also. What a celebration we had as we gathered.

The highlights of our meeting were numerous and the chatter in the room reflected the fun of seeing familiar faces for the first time in several months. The excitement of new graduates anticipating the awarding of certificates was noted by the persistent wide smiles on their faces. And we finally got to meet our newest co-advisor to the Chapter, Meagan Thomas. I have to tell you I didn't recognize her until I heard her voice. My facial recognition skills from Zoom meetings are questionable!

Janet Harper and Karen Hines, co-chairs of the Basic Training committee, shared some of the interesting observations of the members of Cohort XV. This group has jumped into the activities of the Chapter and continued to be enthusiastic volunteers.



Four members of the Cohort were elected to the HRC board at the meeting! Ten members of the Cohort were awarded certificates for membership after completing the required 8 CE and 40 volunteer hours. I expect the other six members will be certified soon. No wonder they have been dubbed the "eager" Cohort.

But we weren't finished with new graduates. Linda Morse brought the W&M van filled with Cohort 1 & 2 graduates. Can you imagine the laughter and chatter they shared along the route? Those bright, young adults lowered the average age in the room by 20



William & Mary's Cohorts 1 & 2

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Virginia Master Naturalists, Historic Rivers Chapter, Cohort XV

years! Let's hear it for age diversity! Seven members of Cohort 1 completed their course of training in 2021 but we were unable to celebrate with them at that time. The certificates were kept safe and presented as candid photo slides were shown on the big screen. Five members of Cohort 2 were presented with their certificates of training completion, also. Seeing these new members in person and on the screen brought smiles to all. And please remember to offer rides to these members to help them share in our many varied activities, projects, and celebrations.

Next on the agenda of celebrations was the awarding of volunteer hour milestone pins. Shirley Devan announced two of our members—Gary Driscoll and Judy Jones—have joined the elite group of volunteers with 5000 hours. This pin is golden in color so you immediately know how valuable this group is to our Chapter. Their wisdom, leadership, and guidance help to make our Chapter such a grand one. Other milestone achievers were Connie Reitz

with 2500 hours, Joe Beene and Mike Woodward with 500 hours, and Suzanne Stern with 230 hours.

The agenda for the general meeting shifted focus as Adrienne Frank, chair of the nominating committee, presented the proposed slate of candidates for HRC 2022-23. There were no nominations from the floor, no write-in campaigns presented, and no withdrawals. The slate was approved by acclamation. The list of the current board is included in the newsletter and has been updated on Better Impact. Be sure to thank each of the individuals who said "YES" when asked to serve on the HRC Board. Their commitment fills the needed administrative role which keeps our Chapter active and meets VMN requirements.

Finally we celebrated the 2020-22 presidency of Rick Brown as he presided over his first and last in person HRC meeting. He provided our Chapter with leadership in a time like no other. We experienced separation due to Covid restrictions. We grieved the

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deaths of several members and colleagues while being unable to gather. And yet we remained together through the Zoom meetings. We learned how to continue activities while staying safe. We became a 501(c)(3) group. Basic training was held again after a year's hiatus. Better Impact was a smooth transition from our old VMS system. Our field trips resumed with outside learning events and outings. And the glue which held us all together was Rick. Judy Jones presented a "funny but true" candygram to Rick as a reward for his efforts. Rick's supply of adhesive materials was replenished after being depleted over the past two years. May the guidance he provided our Chapter continue as we start a new year of outside adventure, learning, and productivity. Congratulate Rick for a job well done when you see him. Bravo, my friend, Bravo!

Until next time.

Connie Reitz



Rick Brown Gets "Skors of Thanks" from Judy Jones and Connie Reitz



## Cohort XV, Part Three

*This is Part Three of an ongoing series of introductions to the Historic Rivers Chapter's newest group of Master Naturalist Trainees: Cohort XV!*



**Rob Nichols**

I joined Cohort XV to expand my knowledge of natural resource and environmental stewardship issues here in Virginia, as well as for professional development in Virginia State Parks.

I lived in Athens, Greece for two years while in graduate school (PhD Classical Studies) and taught Greco-Roman antiquity.

Two favorite moments: any discussion of taxonomy and classification (dead languages help) and my time with the Hampton Roads Bird Club.



**Sidra Morales**

I joined VMN HRC's Cohort XV because I want to make myself useful in helping our planet battle climate change.

One interesting thing about me is that I've had the alpha gal allergy for over 20 years!

Job skills: Engineering principles & data analysis

The favorite thing I've participated in so far is the wildlife mapping at Yorktown Battlefields.



**Virginia Gladding**

Since I'm relatively new to the Williamsburg area, joining Cohort XV is a wonderful opportunity to learn about, and become familiar with, the local wildlife and habitats.

In the Air Force, I traveled to many parts of the U.S., Europe, and Asia. It's fascinating to be able to witness firsthand the different cultures and landscapes around the globe.

Gardening, oil painting, hiking and biking are some of my hobbies and interests.

I was a professor at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., so I guess teaching is a skill I'm pretty familiar with.

Every aspect of the training to date has been wonderful. I'm very interested in herpetology, so I would have to say my favorite class was the lecture by Meagan Thomas.

## Graduation Gathering for Cohort XV

by Judy Jones

On Saturday, April 2nd, HRC was blessed with a sunny and cool day for our Graduation Gathering on the patio of Freedom Park's Interpretive Center.

The picnic, hosting about 65 folks, was a celebration of the graduating of Cohort XV and W&M

Cohorts 1 and 2 from training. The day, the food, and the opportunity to be together was a wonderful occasion for our Chapter members. From 'Nature Sounds' bingo to Steve Living's hike in the woods, the day was deemed a success by all.

Many thanks to hospitality chair, Valerie Shostak, and her enthusiastic committee for the wonderful Graduation Gathering.



Cohort XV Graduation Picnic



## Cedar Grove Cemetery Blue Bird Trail Update

Connie Reitz

If it's Monday it's time to monitor the blue bird trail at Cedar Grove Cemetery. Ready to start out to check 9 boxes are (left to right) David Lunt, Ginny Broome, Portia Belden, Jean Balutanski. They were joined by photographer Connie Reitz.



## Freedom Park Tree Planting

*Judy Kinshaw-Ellis*

If you have been to Freedom Park, you might think it has enough trees. However, the park's woods have been logged through the years and the trees that are there now are not as varied as what would have existed in an old growth forest. A 2018 Tree Steward project through the Master Gardeners included research into native trees and shrubs that would have been used by the early free black settlers of the Settlement at Freedom Park. In the years since, more than 1,000 native trees and woody plants have been planted in the Settlement area and around the Interpretive Center.

This year, the new VMN cohort joined together and spent the morning of March 5 planting nearly 200 seedlings. Following removal of hundreds of small and mid-sized Loblolly Pines that formed a wall around

the cleared area of the Settlement, the forest edge had a more natural look, but lacked shrubbery. The cohort planted sumac, gray dogwood, and buttonbushes to help fill in the understory. They also planted hackberry through the woods to add a new tree species and planted redbud around the Interpretive Center.

The next week, another group of naturalists added buttonbushes and gray dogwoods to the edges of Colby Swamp in the park. They also added a few more redbuds and hackberries. The total number of trees planted in March was just more than 400.

This tree planting project has benefited by cooperation of several Adopt-a-Park programs, Tree Stewards, Girl Scouts, Master Naturalists, and other community volunteers. If you take a walk over to the Settlement, many of the new seedlings are marked with mesh tree protectors, so they are easy to spot.



Tree-planting at Freedom Park

## Update on Soft Plastics Collection for Bench in Memory of Karen Grass

*Karen Hines*

As of March 30, the soft plastics collection had reached 327 pounds of recyclable plastic! That's in just eight weeks. Adding the estimated 40 pounds of plastic waiting to be sorted, we're on track to reach our six-month goal in half the time allotted.

We can reach the 500-pound goal by the end of April if we collect just 30 pounds a week! Ask your neighbors to help keep recyclable plastic out of the landfill. Watch for weekly emails announcing drop off locations and times for clean, dry soft plastics.

This round's collection will earn the chapter a bench from Trex that will be placed on the Bassett Trace Trail in memory of Karen Grass, Cohort XI.



Soft Plastics



# John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

## 37th Annual Native Plant Sale!

### Saturday May 14, 2022

### 9am-3pm

Rain Date May  
15th

Held at:



**Williamsburg Botanical Garden**  
**5537 Centerville Rd Williamsburg 23188**



With cooperation from the Williamsburg Botanical Garden and James City County Parks



The John Clayton Chapter offers

- Experts to help you select plants and answer your questions
- Printed information and resources on native plant gardening
- A wide array of native plants suited to our region, the Coastal Plain of Virginia
- Plants that attract beneficial pollinating insects, use less water, and no fertilizer



JCC/VNPS is a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to education and the proliferation of native species. Proceeds fund a variety of research projects and nature camp scholarships.



*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](mailto: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!

#### HRC-VMN Board of Directors

Chapter Advisor	John Gresham	VMN Appointed September 2018*
Chapter Advisor	Meagan Thomas	VMN Appointed August 2020*

#### Officers/Executive Committee

President	Connie Reitz	Elected March 2022
Vice Pres./Programs	Shirley Devan	Elected March 2022
Secretary	Barbara Neis	Elected March 2022
	Bob Thomas	Elected March 2022
Treasurer	Adrienne Frank	Elected March 2022

#### Additional Board Members

Immediate Past President	Rick Brown	Effective March 2022
Historian/Publicity/Media	Deborah Humphries	Elected March 2022

#### Chairs of Standing Committees

Basic Training	Karen Hines	Elected March 2020**
Membership	Judy Jones	Elected March 2022
Volunteer Service Projects	Jennifer Trevino	Elected March 2022
Continuing Education	Barbara Creel	Elected March 2022
Newsletter	Adam Ferguson	Elected March 2021
Education & Outreach	Janet Crowther	Elected October 2021
	MJ O'Bryan	Elected March 2022
Hospitality	Jennifer Harrigan	Elected March 2022
Field Trips	Sherry Brubaker	Elected March 2022

#### At-Large Members

Suzanne Stern	Elected March 2021
Nancy Barnhart	Elected March 2022
Shan Gill	Elected March 2022
Bill Harper	Elected March 2022

#### Appointed Committees & Teams

Risk Management	Roger Gosden	Appointed March 2019
	Patty Maloney	Appointed March 2019
Collections & Resources	Jennifer Trevino	Appointed
Webmaster	Jeanette Navia	Appointed
Williamsburg Landing Liaison	Joe Beene	Appointed
Basic Training	Linda Morse	VMN approved 2019
(W&M Coll of the Wild)		
Better Impact Contact	Shirley Devan	Appointed January 2021
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	Adrienne Frank	Appointed October 2021

\* Ex-officio

\*\* Elected for a two (2) year term and serving one (1) additional year