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THE NATURALIST

THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER OF VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

Virginia
Master
Naturalist



The President's Message

by Connie Reitz

Another year over and a new one just begun! Go ahead, keep singing. Now you'll have this earworm for the day. You're welcome!

GET YOUR RE-ENROLLMENT DONE NOW! Let's be the first chapter to have all members re-enrolled. The re-enrollment period continues through the end of this month. At this writing 63 members have not yet completed the process required by the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE). Any VMN volunteer who was enrolled in the VMN Program the previous year in any capacity must re-enroll. Re-enrollment has nothing to do with whether a VMN volunteer is certified or not, if a member has paid dues or not, nor how many hours a member may have logged in the last year(s). If this process is not completed by January 31st, the VMN/VCE will archive the member.

5 Easy Steps for Re-enrollment after logging into [Better Impact](#):

1. Check and update all profile information, including contact info and emergency contact.

2. Self-disclosure of criminal history in the last 12 months

3. Express intention to be an active volunteer in the upcoming year

4. Agree to Code of Conduct

5. Commit to Volunteer Agreement

If a volunteer does not have access to Better Impact, a paper form may be requested from the VMN State Office by emailing masternaturalist@vt.edu or calling 540-231-0790. Any member of HRC may ask a board member for assistance with re-enrollment. The board member may help you access BI but the individual member must answer the 5 steps noted above. *Further information and more detailed instructions on re-enrollment can be found on page 8.*

Congratulations to the Historic Rivers Chapter-VMN for receiving the Adopt-a-Trail Group of the Year award from The Capital Trail Foundation! This activity was started by Karen Grass and is led currently by Karen Hines who organizes an outing each month.

Continued on next page...

Sign up to join her and other “trashy folks” sometime. Thank you to all members who have participated in litter pickup on the Capital Trail—Karen’s Mile #6. See the full article on page 3.

The nominating committee, led by Rick Brown and joined by Shirley Devan and Karen Hines, will begin work in January. We all enjoy volunteering for outside activities, but leadership must have volunteers for these activities to continue. I hope you will respond positively when asked to share hours in a leadership role. Maybe you will offer to volunteer before the call is made!

The Tree Steward training class has all 30 trainee slots filled. Training leaders from both the Historic Rivers and the Peninsula Chapters have been most diligent in securing the curriculum, speakers, meeting places, and funding details. We are all excited to have this new area of training made available for those wanting more focus on dendrology education. And we will all benefit as these students share their enhanced knowledge.

A team of members—Adrienne Frank, Jennifer Trevino, Judy Jones, Rick Brown, Shirley Devan, and I—worked together to prepare the HRC annual report for the state VMN. Each of us had different areas of responsibilities but we all worked together to bring the report to completion. Several chapter members contributed information and photos needed to highlight specific activities or an activity which had an impact in the community. The attention to detail, thoughts and ideas, photos and writings, volunteer hours and financial totals. All this and more were melded into a report I hope you’ll find interesting and

informative to read. Look for a copy to appear in your inbox soon.

Great continuing education speakers will provide excellent information at our general meetings. Meagan Thomas, HRC advisor & DWR wildlife biologist, will be the speaker in January. Deb Woodward, HRC member and AWARE volunteer, will speak in February at the joint meeting with the Williamsburg Bird Club. NOTE: The February meeting will be held on the 3rd Wednesday at 6pm!

Happy New Year! Until next month.

—Connie

Some dates to remember...

January 11 — HRC General Meeting 6pm (Hybrid) Meagan Thomas, Speaker on Diamondback Terrapins: Biology, Conservation, & A New Citizen Science Initiative

February 1 — HRC Board meeting 6:30pm

February 15 — HRC General Meeting with Williamsburg Bird Club 6pm / Deb Woodward, Speaker on Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Volunteer with AWARE and HRC member

HRC Dues!

It's time to renew your HRC membership. Your support is essential for the chapter to cover the costs of projects, continuing education, the website, and much more. Please consider donating additional funds. Dues alone do not cover all of our costs. A dues payment form can be found at the end of this newsletter — payment by January 31st would be appreciated!

HRC Clean-Up Award

by Rick Brown and Judy Jones

Historic Rivers Chapter members received a wonderful piece of news in December of 2022. The Capital Trail Foundation chose the Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists to receive the Adopt a Trail Group of the Year award. The Foundation is an organization responsible for the Virginia Capital Trail, a dedicated, paved pedestrian and bicycle 52-mile trail that connects the Commonwealth's past and present capitals of Jamestown and Richmond along the Scenic Route 5 corridor.

This accolade represents the hard work of so many of the Chapter members and is truly a recognition of which we can be proud. The cleanup team, which varies in number and 'litter-pickers' each month, is only required to 'scour' their mile

once a quarter. Instead, coordinator Karen Hines has 6-10 folks meeting every month at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, wearing gloves, closed-toed shoes, sunscreen, orange vests, and carrying both water and 'litter grabbers', ready to clean up the trash on Capital Trail Miles 6-7.

This activity was first created by HRC stalwart Karen Grass, whom we lost suddenly in 2020. She was an avid biking enthusiast and felt that helping to keep the Capital Trail clear of litter was not only a gift to bikers and hikers but also to the community as a whole. In her honor, we have continued this activity naming it "Karen's Mile", and we view this award as a tribute to her leadership and vision as well as to our commitment as a Chapter to carry on her legacy.

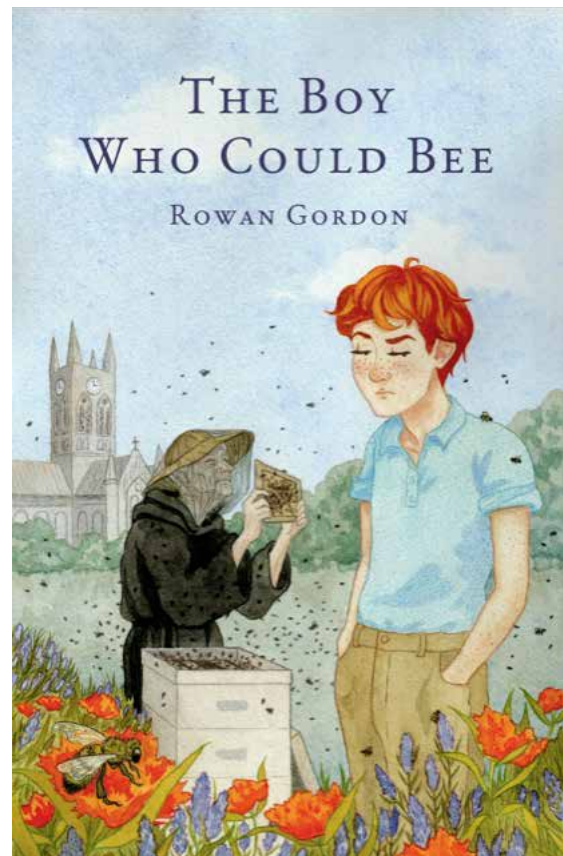


Book Review: *The Boy Who Could Be* by Rowan Gordon

by Ruth Gordon

In *The Boy Who Could Bee*, a tale unfolds as Joe, the young star of the story, learns about beekeeping from monks in an abbey in his village. Joe, who is grieving over the death of his father, has gotten into trouble with a gang of boys and as punishment, he is forced to work with a grumpy old beekeeping monk. In the process of helping the monk, Joe develops an affection and appreciation for the bees in the abbey yard, as well as for the old beekeeper. As a fantasy parallel, bees in the hives explain their very complex society through the adventures of several of the bees.

This delightful tale is written by Dr. Roger Gosden under the pen name, Rowan Gordon, with an intended audience of young readers age 11 and up, but it is a lovely read for adults as well. Profits from the sale of *The Boy Who Could Bee* go to children's cancer research in the United States and in the United Kingdom.



Book Review: *Nature's Calendar, A year in the Life of a Wildlife Sanctuary* by Colin Rees

by Elizabeth Myers

The last week of December 2022 has provided warm temperatures and sunny days, perhaps as an apology for those brutally cold days in the prior week. Taking advantage of the sun and warm air, my husband and I took a walk along the Greensprings Interpretive Trail pausing every few feet to look for plant and wildlife in the water below the layer of clear, melting ice. Ordinarily I would have been looking up for birds and observing the trees, however on this day, my attention was focused down on the small, detailed life in the green and brown plant matter under the melting ice thanks in part to a book I had read in the fall: *Nature's Calendar, A Year in the Life of a Wildlife Sanctuary*.

This enjoyable at-your-own-pace read was written by Colin Rees, a naturalist born in the United Kingdom, who worked as a global biodiversity specialist with the World Bank. Rees taught within the Zoology Department at the University of Maryland. He is a dedicated birder and has also written several ornithology books.

The book spans a complete calendar year in the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary in southern Maryland near Washington DC and describes the plant, animal, and bird life each month as the weather, daylight, and landscape changes. The book reads like a journal starting at the beginning of each month and follows Rees' walks through the sanctuary paths and quiet sitting on the observation decks. Beginning with January, he describes the first snow of the year and the general quiet that comes with the new fallen blanket and then writes of the subsequent days of warming air that brings out wildlife for play and foraging (much like the start to 2023). With his narrative writing

style and very detailed observations, as a reader, you establish a pattern of reading his observations, visualizing the landscape, plants, and animals, and develop the sense that you are walking along with him while he meanders and observes.

As the book and year progresses, there are descriptions of the changing landscape with the awakening in spring, migratory birds returning and then leaving in the fall, insects coming and going, and the end of the year with another snowfall and cold temperatures. Rees describes the birds, plants, fish, and insects he sees as well as their importance to the ecosystem in the sanctuary and the possibilities or disruptions of life without them.

One of the joys of reading this book is the ability to read it at a pace as fast or as leisurely as you desire since each month is its own self-contained journey. I learned about familiar birds and lesser known (to me) marsh plants. Each chapter provides a small walking or hiking adventure that can be taken at anytime. Two appendices at the end offer a detailed list of the plants and animals mentioned in the text.

Rees' final words in the Epilogue are a call to action, "So, gentle reader, permit me to say all nature is on your doorstep, waiting to be explored. In this hurried life, it offered us a time to reflect and enjoy this remarkable world before it is too late". During the colder temperatures this winter, when it is not possible to get outdoors, this book is an enjoyable companion to read, reflect, and vicariously enjoy nature from your favorite reading chair.

Invasive Plant Removal on W&M Campus

by Tracy Melton

I'm a member of the Historic Rivers Chapter Cohort XVI. I became connected to VMN through my work removing invasive species on the W&M campus. I contacted then W&M Dean of Sustainability Calandra Waters Lake for permission to remove Japanese honeysuckle and other invasives. She put me in touch with Dr. Linda Morse who heads the student VMN program on campus and manages invasive plant removal in the natural areas on campus.

I've been out with Dr. Morse and her VMN students at least three times working on invasive removal. We've focused on English ivy, Japanese honeysuckle, and wineberry, mostly along the paths in the Wildflower Refuge.

Wineberry had not been a focus until we happened to notice well over one thousand wineberry canes at the eastern end of Crim Dell. The patch ran up the slopes and into the woods. We worked on that with students but could not get all of it in one day. I loved that when I went out soon after to follow up, Virginia Master Naturalists Keith Navia and Thad Hecht showed up together to do the same work. We got it all removed.

I like to work in the colder months when ticks and snakes and other critters are not as prevalent. I start in late autumn on the wooded edges of campus where few students are around. I work in the heart of campus over school holidays when students are away.

That way, on days like today, when I was crawling through the thick bayberry patch behind the McLeod Tyler Wellness Center, removing large, thick Japanese honeysuckle vines with 50' runners, my lack of dignity, as a moderately fit fifty-nine-year-old guy, with muddy pants and glasses askew, was more

of a private matter, and not something shared with hundreds of students passing by.

Despite the sore muscles, multiple loads of laundry, and embarrassed amusement at my own indignity, I'm feeling very pleased with the progress that we've made. Campus has much fewer invasives in the woods. They look more like Virginia woods, and native species have more room to thrive.

Over the last few days, I've noticed that someone has been working diligently to cut English ivy vines growing on large trees on campus. Many of these vines have fresh cuts. I'm going out tomorrow with fellow Cohort member Ron Hunt to remove wineberry regrowth in and around Crim Dell. It's great to see Virginia Master Naturalists working together to beautify my alma mater, an effort that not only benefits the historic college but also the region where we live, in many ways.

James River Frozen Over

by Jim Easton

On the morning of December 24, temperature 12 degrees Fahrenheit, I was curious if any part of Jamestown Beach was frozen. I've heard stories about the entire James River freezing years ago, and I wasn't expecting something like that, but had a feeling that it would look quite different that it normally does.

The river was frozen to around 100 feet out from the shoreline, and the shoreline vegetation and the few birds (like this Double-crested Cormorant) I saw were trimmed with ice. With high winds I was only able to stay out for a short time, but I'm glad I went.



Re-enroll Or Be Archived: It's New For 2023 And Beyond!

The re-enrollment process is now open and extends through January 31, 2023. If any member has difficulty with the re-enrollment process, please contact a HRC board member for assistance. We're ready to help. The following is an email from the state VMN office:

Hello! As we have previously announced in the VMN Bi-weekly emails, the VMN State Office is implementing an annual Re-enrollment process. All you need to do is take 5-10 minutes and follow the steps below on a laptop or mobile device.

If you do not have access to Better Impact and need a paper form, please call or email the VMN State Office at 540-231-0790 or masternaturalist@vt.edu to request that one be mailed directly to you.

Instructions for Re-enrolling in Better Impact:

1. [Login to Better Impact](#).
2. At your main MyImpact page, click on "My Profile".
3. From the drop-down menu, choose "Additional Info".
4. For those who are members of more than one Organization in Better Impact, chose your VMN chapter from the drop-down menu and tap or click "Select Organization".
5. Scroll down to the section labeled "VMN Re-enrollment 2023".
6. Review the instructions at the top of the section.

7. Answer all five questions truthfully. To see more information for any question (and to view the VMN Code of Conduct and/or the VMN Volunteer Agreement), click on the black and white "i" or Information Icon next to each question.

8. Once the questions have been answered, click "Save" at the top or bottom of the page. Your VMN Re-enrollment is complete.

Next Steps in the Re-enrollment Process:

- By the end of the Re-enrollment Period, the VMN State Office will confirm Re-enrollment status for volunteers who have completed the process and mark them as Re-enrolled in Better Impact. This will result in a badge showing up on your MyImpact page showing that you are Re-enrolled for 2023.
- If you have any problems completing the steps above, send an email to masternaturalist@vt.edu describing the problem and a staff member from the VMN State Office will get back to you.

What Happens if a VMN Volunteer does not Complete Re-enrollment?

If a VMN Volunteer does not complete their re-enrollment in Better Impact by the deadline of January 31, 2023, then they will be 'archived' in Better Impact. This means the individual is no longer enrolled in the VMN program, may not represent themselves as a VMN volunteer, and is no longer covered by the VCE liability insurance. The VMN State Office will inform any individuals if they have been archived.

If a VMN Volunteer has been archived for any reason, including not completing Re-enrollment, and they are interested in being reinstated in the VMN Program, they should contact the VMN State Office by email at masternaturalist@vt.edu or by phone at 540-231-0790.

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!

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

Annual Dues 2023

Dear HRC Member:

It's time to renew your HRC membership. Your support is essential for the chapter to cover the costs of projects, continuing education, the website, and much more. Please consider donating additional funds. Dues alone do not cover all of our costs.

Paying dues is not a requirement of VMN Membership or Certification. The State VMN Office and the Virginia Cooperative Extension requires that you update and re-enroll your membership on Better Impact each year, and if you are able, complete your 40 hours for annual certification.

Please indicate what and how much you would like to contribute to our chapter.

Dues - Not tax deductible	\$ _____ (\$25 or \$10 Student)
Nancy Norton Youth Scholarships	\$ _____
General Fund (Non-restricted)	\$ _____
Restricted (Please indicate below.)	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Restricted funds to be used for: _____
(e.g., Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion)

I would like to donate in honor or memory of: _____

Your Name (Please Print): _____

Email: _____

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Thank you for your contributions!

HRC VMN is exempt from federal income tax under IRC Section 501(c)(3) and is a nonprofit organization eligible to receive tax deductible donations. No goods or services were provided to you in return for your charitable donation.

"Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law."



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