

The Naturalist

July 2023 Newsletter | Volume 19, Number 7

Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists

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Feature Photo: Stratocumulus Clouds over the Atlantic Ocean in Virginia Beach with parasailer in the distance, 07/30/23 by Claire White. After weeks of hot and humid temperatures, July 30th was a relief with a 10 degree drop from the previous day.

A Message from the President

by Connie Reitz

It's August. The summer doldrums. The dog days of summer. Air that you can wear. There's a breeze, but it's blowing hot air. What else can be said for the closing days of Summer? Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) volunteers are out and about in the heat & humidity doing lots of activities. Make sure you read and heed the information in the article by Roger Gosden (Risk Management). We want each of us to be safe while volunteering.

Bluebird monitoring is winding up this season and butterfly counts are being held almost everywhere there's a spot of land. Ospreys are getting ready to fly from the nest and purple martins will be starting their migration south. It will be fun to hear the results of each of these activities as counts are completed and trends noted—whether good or not so great.

The **Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) conference** is September 29th – Oct 1st. I hope you will make plans to attend this yearly offering. There are several field trips and many on-site educational sessions. Please review the daily activity options and be ready to make your selection when registration opens on Aug 10th at 6p. You'll want to choose early and choose wisely.

The current photography display— “Through the Eyes of a Naturalist”—by HRC members is at the Williamsburg Regional Library until the end of August. I hope you have had the opportunity to see the talents of the many photographers in our chapter. If not, please make a special effort to get there. Many thanks to Judy Jones who coordinated all the many different factions of making this display happen. This means securing the library site, sending emails, finding judges, framing, and hanging! Thanks to all the photographers and the other members who helped in this effort.

The Basic Training committee has been busy preparing for Cohort XVII. Applications, references, field days, presenters, supplies, and site locations have been completed. The final details are being checked off the list. Classes start in September and culminate with March 2024 graduation.

Did you get to meet any of the new cohort applicants who were able to attend the Summer Solstice Social at Waller Mill Park in June? It seems fun was had by all attending. What a great way to gather current members, a transfer member, and

future trainees! Thank you, Shirley, for making the June membership meeting such a great send-off since we don't meet as a chapter in July and August. Thank you to the Hospitality team of Donna Benson and Marie Robertson for strong arms for scooping ice cream.

Will I see you in September? Yes, keep singing now that I've put that worm in your ear! Oh, maybe you're not old enough to know the tune! Sorry, forgot how old I am. Now back to the article. September brings the return of general membership meetings. All meetings begin at 6:00 pm and end by 7:45 pm to respect the closing of the JCC Library on Croaker Road. The Zoom link will be sent to members on the Sunday prior to the meeting. I hope you'll consider attending in person as many members will be receiving certification and milestone awards. And it's always fun to have an opportunity to visit with others you haven't seen for a few weeks.

That's the news for now. See you outside somewhere.

On the Calendar

See Better Impact and HRC Google Group monthly Continuing education (CE) emails for more opportunities.

*Ongoing	August	HRC Exhibit “Through the Eye of a Naturalist” Gallery at Library Theatre
Wednesday	Aug 9	Wildlife Mapping 8:45am-12:00pm at Jamestown Island *See email
Wednesday	Aug 9	CE Chubs are selfish, and that's good... 12-1pm *VMN webinar registration
Saturday	Aug 12	Williamsburg Butterfly Count 9am-4pm (various locations) *FAQ
Wednesday	Aug 16	CE Butterflies, Bees, Habitats 6-8pm with Peninsula VMN *Zoom
Friday	Aug 18	Deadline (5pm) to Submit Artwork for 2023 VMN Recertification Pin
Sunday	Aug 20	CE Bird Walk 7am with Hampton Roads Bird Club at Newport News Park
Saturday	Aug 26	Third Annual Pawpaw Festival 10am-4pm at Historic Endview
Wednesday	Sept 6	HRC Board Meeting 6:30pm (Zoom) *Contact Connie Reitz to join.
Monday	Sept 11	Deadline to Register for VMN Statewide Conference in Abingdon, VA
Wednesday	Sept 13	HRC General Meeting 6-7:45pm at JCC Library (and Zoom)
Saturday	Sept 30	Outreach at BugFest 10am-2pm at Grafton Middle School *Signup coming.

Through the Eye of a Naturalist by Judy Jones

Members of the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists know that nature is filled with unique beauty. Our photo display at the Williamsburg Regional Library offers glimpses into a naturalist's inquiring mind and a never-abating interest in the natural world. Our photographers are trying to capture and hold tight those brief moments when light, shade, and perspective enhance detail, color, and form. Entitled "Through the Eyes of a Naturalist", our thirty-one photographs will be on display from July 17-August 31 in the lobby of the WRL Williamsburg Library Theatre, to share this perspective with our community. Many thanks to five HRC members, Ted Sargent, Rick Brown, Robert Ambrose, Elizabeth Myers, and Frank Smith, who joined Judy Jones to hang the incredible display of photos for our installation at the Williamsburg Regional Library. If you have an opportunity, please stop by the lobby outside the WRL Library Theatre and look for yourselves at the talent and beauty on exhibit.



Pictured above: closeup of photos in the fauna category and master naturalists at work category.

Pictured left: Ted, Elizabeth, Judy, Robert, and Frank in front of one gallery wall after installation. (Photo credit: Rick Brown)

Caution: Heat and Humidity

by Roger Gosden

Naturalists are aware they must cover up to avoid sunburn and keep hydrated but obvious precautions are not guarantees against a risky rise in core body temperature. Although not my specialty, I have an academic interest as a physiologist. Recent research suggests body heat tolerance is lower than formerly believed (figure to the right). Air temperature is rising everywhere and although it is my impression that Hampton Roads has 'normal' summer temperatures so far, humidity is a compounding factor. Many outdoor activities are planned through August and butterfly counting involves roaming for hours in direct sun.

I don't want to sound alarmist because the chapter makes safety paramount for volunteers. But few people know their personal heat tolerance because that requires lab measurements.

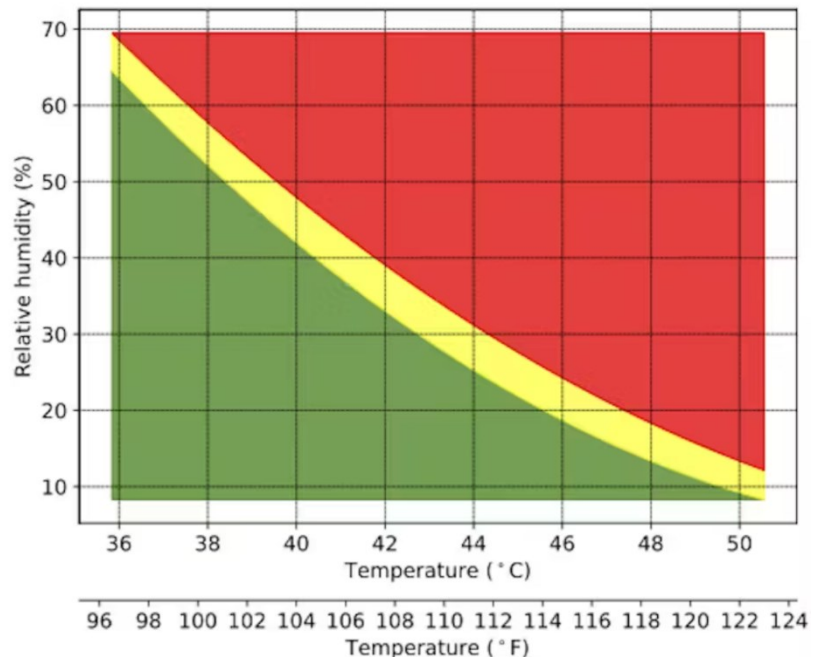
In recent studies at Penn State the stability of core body temperatures was measured in men and women in environmentally controlled chambers. The upper environmental limit (above which the core rises steadily) was believed to be 35 Centigrade or 95 Fahrenheit. For example, if you sit in a tub of hotter water, you overheat and cannot sweat it off (95 is the so-called thermoneutral temperature when you neither get cooler nor hotter).

The new data show the limit is exceeded above 87°F for humidities above 50%. E.g., 87°F at 100% humidity and 100°F at only 60% humidity. If that doesn't sound alarming, consider that all the subjects were young and fit. Tolerance drops with age and poor health. Hyperthermia is dangerous to vital organs. One way to check is wearing a device to measure heart rate, which rises under heat stress. I can't say what rate is a warning sign because it varies between individuals and in exercise.

Learn More: ¹ [Humans can't endure temperatures and humidities as high as previously thought](#) (Penn State) and

² [How hot is too hot for the human body? These Penn State experts explain](#) (Pennsylvania Capital Star)

Figure below: This chart translates combinations of air temperature and relative humidity into *critical environmental limits*, above which *core body temperature rises*. The border between the yellow and red areas represents the average critical environmental limit for young men and women at minimal activity (W. Larry Kenney, CC BY-ND).



Caution: Hammerhead Flatworm (*Bipalium kewense*)

Adrienne Frank reported finding “a couple of these really bad worms in my yard” and encourages you to learn more about this invasive pest using the following resources:

NPR 5-minute Listen: [If you see a hammerhead worm, remember: salt, don't slice!](#)

Texas Invasive Species Institute: [“Hammerhead Flatworm/Hammerhead Slug” Inventory](#)

July Snapshots: HRC in Action



July 8- Bassett Trace Trail stewards (photo left) piled brush and debris across two points of the trail to block a closed and eroded portion of the trail and encourage use of the established detour. Bruce Glendening (right), Rick Brown (photographer), Claire White (not pictured), David and Therese Stansberry (center couple), Judy Tucker and Randy Flood (couple on left) participated.

Unfortunately, within two weeks an unidentified person(s) removed the heavy piles created by the stewards. If you see any suspicious persons on the trail, please report them to security. In the meantime, follow the orange blazes to stay on and enjoy the main trail. The detour goes to the left at the ½ mile mark.

July 10- “I went to YRSP today to check on the Martin colony and as I approached the pole, I met the group of Wildlife Mappers. They were excited to tell me that they saw martins entering one of the gourds with dragonflies. Of course, I also got very excited and called Sherrie Hancock who monitors there routinely. She arrived at the park and we checked the gourds and found **five purple martin chicks** (bottom left photo). It has certainly made my week!!” –Cheryl Jacobson

July 15- Wildlife Rehabilitator and VMN **Deb Woodward** was a speaker at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden “Learn and Grow” program in the Freedom Park Interpretive Center. She spoke about the what, the why and the how of caring for orphaned and injured creatures as a permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator in Virginia, and how citizens can help to protect wildlife. (Photo Credit: Barb Creel).

July 19- College Creek Beach litter pickup co-leads Martha Moss and Marie Robertson (bottom right photo) stand with 52 pounds of trash collected by a team of 9 HRC members. Fishing paraphernalia, food and beverage packaging, and the beach gear were removed from public area between the James River and College Creek. Three weeks prior the litter team collected 43 pounds. (Photo Credit: Claire White)



Master Naturalists at our Local Schools:

Outreach and Native Habitats by Claire White



Monday, August 28th is the first day of school for the two public-school systems in our area: Williamsburg- James City County Public Schools (WJCC) and York County School Division (YCSD). Curious about what volunteering in one of our local schools looks like? Now's the perfect time to start exploring how other HRC members have been volunteering with our schools and how you can join in. Contacting the right people now will likely give you the opportunity to find the right school or project for you. Maybe you're someone who wants to help maintain a native garden, lead a nature walk, assist an afterschool nature club, or help a class raise monarch butterflies. There are many ways to help connect the youngest of our community with the natural world. And who knows, maybe along the way you'll notice a student who would be a great future HRC Nature Camp Scholarship recipient!

YCSD has four schools with a Williamsburg postal address, while the remainder of the schools stretch south along the peninsula. We have HRC members on both ends of York County volunteering with the **4-H Schoolyards Habitat Outreach**, a program sponsored by the Virginia Cooperative Extension office for York and Poquoson. Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, and other volunteers work together and independently in the program to support environment-based K-12 activities and native plant gardens. Monthly meetings and a library of curriculum offer support to volunteers. The first step to joining in is to check out their webpage (linked above) and email the coordinators at SchoolyardHabitatsOutreach@gmail.com so you can get on their mailing list. There is a Monarch Workshop scheduled for August 27th so you'll want to email the coordinators soon so you can join in. Regular outreach meetings have typically been held at the Tabb or Yorktown libraries in the past, but may move to a Zoom format, with recordings available, about a month into the school year.

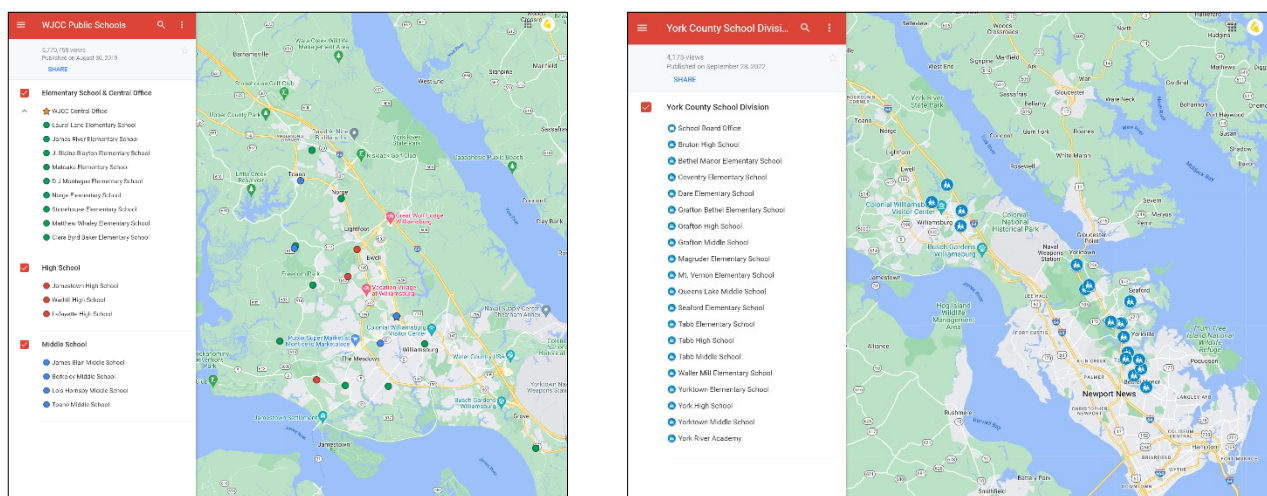
WJCC schools do not have a formal outdoor environment-based education program like YCSD, but there are a few schools that have projects already in place for you to join. One long-standing project is the **Stonehouse Elementary School Garden**, whose maintenance is coordinated by the John Clayton Native Plant Society. To join in on Wednesday 4:30-6:30pm gardening days email the current project chair Jennifer Myers at jennifernaglemyers@gmail.com. She can use your help now during the month of August. If you're more interested in working with students in an after-school club setting be on the lookout for emails for HRC members Pat Murphy and Marie Robertson in the next couple of months as they recruit help for their respective **Nature Explorers Clubs** at James River Elementary



School and Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School. If you're interested in supporting another WJCC school (perhaps secondary) or starting your own nature-based club, be sure to fill out the [WJCC Volunteer Interest Form](#) sooner than later. SHIP, the Student Health Initiative Program, has funding for WJCC clubs that get students outside and moving, but WJCC will want to help you develop any proposals you might have or connect you to staff that would like nature-based learning support.

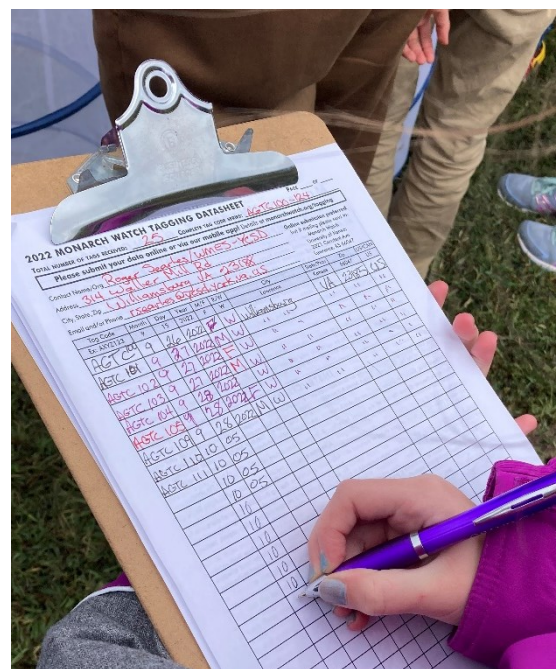
What WJCC and YSCD schools are closest to you?

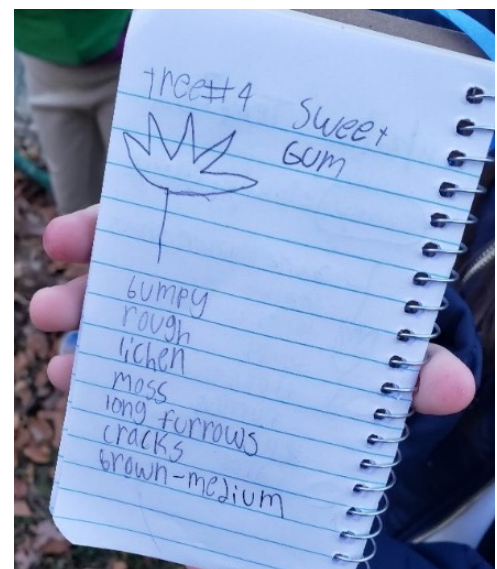
Currently there are 35 schools between the two school divisions. Click on the images below to be linked to interactive maps of **WJCC** and **YCSD** schools and find the ones closest to you.



Waller Mill Elementary (YCSD) Snapshots

Patty Maloney shares that 4-H Schoolyard Habitats Outreach volunteers “bring a variety of nature-based activities to the schools. Some of the activities with the students include planting and maintaining native plant gardens, raising and tagging monarch butterflies, monitoring bluebird trails, leading bird walks and participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC).” Pictures from WME below.





Nature Explorers at James River Elementary (WJCC)

On select Mondays from 3:30-4:30pm during the 2022-2023 school year Pat Murphy and her merry band of 5-6 HRC volunteers tromped through the outdoor spaces of James River Elementary (JRE) with up to 18 student Nature Explorers (pictured top left). Trees were examined and described in nature journals, dirt was dug, binoculars searched for birds, and movement activities tied into this year's theme of "Does JRE have all components of a healthy habitat?" Pat organized the lessons, while the school's SHIP coordinator handled sign-ups for the two different afterschool sessions, one in the fall and one in the spring, both 7 meetings total. As a part-time reading tutor at JRE with a varied background as an educator Pat felt comfortable taking on the task of creating and leading the club starting in 2019 (pre-pandemic). When asked about some of her favorite experiences from the club this spring she shared, "I love hearing kiddos express their ideas from Miliyah explaining that a lichen reminds her of a barnacle to Jacob expressing that a Cardinal has a mohawk... They were intrigued by the tent caterpillar on Ramon's hair. Amelia asked me why James River Elementary is called that at lunch last week. I just love that they're noticing and questioning. I hope they stay interested!"



Seaford Elementary (YCSO)

Deena Obrokta, pictured left, shares that the garden at Seaford Elementary (SE) is certified by the National Wildlife Federation and is designated as a Monarch Waystation. As a 4-H Schoolyard Habitats Outreach Partner she educates "students and teachers on how wildlife sanctuaries safeguard plants and animals by sustaining breeding, migration and wintering populations." With the help of the SE Garden Club the garden is decorated with natural elements for the seasons including cranberry ornaments and pumpkins. A variety of volunteers help with maintaining the garden. Lower grades participate in observing the life cycle of monarchs and tagging them.

Stephanie Schmuck's Varied K-12 Experiences (YCSD)

Each school is different. For example, **Grafton High School** has a garden club and I helped once a month with whatever the teacher sponsors for the club wanted to do, mostly sourcing native plants for their garden. I also helped an environmental science teacher to source the supplies and then put in 3 bluebird boxes with her students and gave each of her classes an educational talk on bluebirds. I have helped Middle school teachers source monarch caterpillars and milkweed to raise and tag monarchs in the classroom. When I was involved with the elementary school, I did a lot of monarch caterpillar talks and set classes up with enclosures, as well as taking students on bluebird walks and taking care of the gardens.

Basically, the beauty of this project is you can bring something to it no matter what your skills and interests are. I think anyone interested in helping at a YCSD school should **join our project email list** and at least come to an outreach partner meeting. By being on the email list they will know when garden workdays or one-off events are happening or when we're looking for help. Also, by getting to know people in the group they will learn what each school has and decide where the best place would be to step in and help.

Additional Information on 4-H Schoolyard Habitats Outreach from Jody Turner, Coordinator and Master Gardener



Our core volunteers, aka **Outreach Partners**, match with a school of their choice, ideally as part of a team of two or more. Outreach Partners have a unique opportunity to develop a special relationship with a single school community over the course of a school year. There's no set regimen, though most tap into common topics like monarchs, pollinators, and birds. Outreach Partners have autonomy to engage with teachers and suggest and facilitate programming to meet their needs. We have a large library of tried-and-true curriculum and activity guides and a supportive network to offer suggestions. The minimal commitment per calendar year is probably 20 hours, though most log many more. At least one of the Outreach Partners for a school should be available at points during school hours to provide onsite outreach.

Program Champions are volunteers who help with a program request once or more during the year—a one-hour minimum commitment. Their time may be too limited to serve as an Outreach Partner. They may have a specific skillset or knowledge they wish to share, and there's no expectation that their help will always be provided at or for the same school.

Our biggest need from occasional volunteers is for assistance with habitat maintenance--particularly in August as we ready habitats for the first day of school and in the spring as the growth of weeds accelerates.

Special Project—Ongoing We'd love to encourage anyone to help build field guides to the individual school properties by taking photos at schools of wildlife and/or plants in bloom (most plant entries will be casual/cultivated) + submitting these to iNaturalist and then tagging them in the iNaturalist Project "757 Schoolyard Habitats York/Poquoson"

A Look Ahead: HRC General Meeting Lineup and Fall Picnic



September 13 “Select rare plants and orchids in Coastal Plain”

John Bunch, Historic Southside Chapter VMN

October 11 “Invasive fish in Virginia”

Clint Morgeson, Virginia Department Wildlife Resources

November 8 “Osprey and menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay”

Michael Academia, The College of William & Mary Center for Conservation Biology

December No Meeting

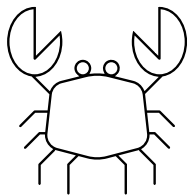
January 10 “Big Bend National Park”

Linda Morse, The College of William & Mary Geology Department, HRC-VMN

February 14 “From wetland to desert: Okavango and the Kalahari”

Roger Gosden, HRC-VMN

March 13 Cohort XVII Graduation



***Please save the date for this year's HRC fall picnic on Saturday, October 14.** Ted and Judy Sargent are generously hosting our fall picnic again and HRC family members are welcome to attend. There will be great food, fun activities, learning opportunities and social time with our fellow naturalists. We hope you can join us! –HRC Hospitality Team*

Soft Plastics Drive: 500 pounds, August-November

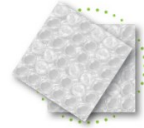
Karen Hines is spearheading the Trex Recycling Challenge for the HRC again. She and President Connie Reitz will post pickups at various locations and chapter events each week using the HRC Google Group. Once the chapter collects 500 pounds of **clean, dry, stretchy, and residue free soft plastics**, Trex will send us a park bench made from recycled soft plastics. The bench will be used to meet the chapter's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals. Read over the [3-page flyer](#) for acceptable versus unacceptable plastics, and frequently asked questions so you can help us meet this goal before Thanksgiving!



Grocery bags



Bread bags



Bubble wrap



Dry cleaning bags



Ziploc & other reclosable food storage bags



Cereal bags



Case overwrap



Salt bags

Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteers Invited to Submit Artwork for the 2024 Recertification Pin

Reprint from VMN state website post on June 22, 2023

The 2024 recertification pin, earned by previously certified VMN volunteers who complete at least 40 hours of approved volunteer service and 8 hours of approved continuing education during 2023, will be an image of one of two possible vines - poison ivy and Virginia-creeper. We chose these two species because of their widespread and ubiquitous occurrence across Virginia, because of their high value to wildlife species, and because we have not yet had a pin featuring a vine! Which of the two plants it will be and the artwork for the pin will be determined through an artwork contest. VMN volunteers are invited to submit their own artwork according to the guidelines below. The winning artwork will be selected by a team of judges that will include the VMN program staff and experts from our sponsoring agencies.

Contest Guidelines

- The artwork must be original artwork created and submitted by a currently enrolled VMN volunteer.
- Please limit submissions to one submission per volunteer. The volunteer may choose which of the two plants to illustrate.
- The artwork may be a drawing, painting, or photograph, but it must be submitted as a digital file, such as a PDF, JPG, PNG, or GIF file.
- **The artwork must be of either poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) or Virginia-creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*).**
- We tend to prefer artwork that allows us to create a pin in the shape of the plant, rather than having to be an oval or rectangular pin. Keep this preference in mind when creating your artwork, and imagine a pin cut in the shape of the image. Pins cannot easily have very finely detailed edges, so it is helpful if the image outline is a smoother line. See the dogwood image on our [recertification pin artwork history page](#) (also shown below) as an example of botanical artwork that was easily converted to a pin.

To Submit Your Artwork for the Contest

If you want to submit your artwork for the contest, please complete the [online contest survey](#) no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, August 18. You will be asked to provide your name, email, VMN chapter, and your permission to use the artwork. Have your digital artwork file ready; you will need to upload it within the survey



The **Virginia Master Naturalist** Program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. Interested Virginians become Master Naturalists through training and volunteer service. The program is jointly sponsored by seven state organizations and based in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation within the College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech.

Learn more about our chapter at historicrivers.org

The Naturalist is the monthly newsletter of the Historic River Chapter (HRC) of Virginia Master Naturalists. Other organizations may not publish material from the newsletter without express permission from the chapter. Newsletter contributions should be emailed to HRCeNewsletter@gmail.com by the end of the month. If you have a submission in the works, please notify the newsletter editor. Photos should include concise captions and credits to photographer(s).



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Shirley Devan

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Barb Neis

Janet Curtis

Treasurer

Adrienne Frank

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Jennifer Trevino

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Barb Creel

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Risk Management Team

Roger Gosden

Patty Maloney

Better Impact Contact

Judy Jones

Collections & Resources (CAR)

Jennifer Trevino

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)

Adrienne Frank

Basic Training (William & Mary Coll of the Wild)

Linda Morse

Webmaster

Jeanette Navia

Chapter Advisors

Megan Thomas, VA DWR

John Gresham, VA DCR

On July 10th Shan Gill asked for help identifying this approximately 3/8-inch crawling insect. Jenny Devasher suggested a *green lacewing larvae* (*Chrysopidae* sp.) adorned with camouflaging debris.

