

The Naturalist

October 2023 Newsletter | Volume 19, Number 10
Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists

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A Message from the President

by Connie Reitz

You're going to enjoy reading this month's "President's Message." It's terrific! Several members of our chapter attended the Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) state conference in Abingdon September 29 thru October 1. Many of these members have shared their experiences and memories of these few days filled with activities and educational experiences. I discovered I was making new friends and really enjoying the sharing of information, whether it was a new activity which had been started or how the board administration worked. The state VMN staff, the members of the Holston Rivers and High Knob Chapters worked diligently to provide us with an exciting few days in an area of the Commonwealth many of us don't often visit. There is a wealth of activities and state parks to enjoy. Plan a trip after enjoying the conference reflections from fellow members below.

Janet Harper

This was my third conference and they've all been great. The planners always put together a nice variety of classes and field trips to choose from, so there's truly something for everyone. It's always fun to travel to a different part of the state and explore the natural areas there. Several from our chapter

went on the field trip to the Blue Ridge Discovery Center where we saw their wetlands restoration project. We toured their beautiful building which used to be a girl's school complete with chapel and dorm rooms. When Jeanette Navia and I used a dip net to see what was living in the marsh, we found dragon fly larvae, water boatmen, and large and small tadpoles. Someone in our group found a crawfish. One of my favorite parts was the fun conversation with Jeannette on the bus ride there and back!

Judy Jones- Blue Ridge Discovery Center

One of the most interesting field trips offered by the Abingdon Chapter at the recent VMN state conference was the one to the **Blue Ridge Discovery Center**. This site, originally the home of the Konnarock Training School, is now a focus for wetlands restoration and for a summer camp for students of all ages. Their website explains, "The Blue Ridge Discovery Center (BRDC) is creating a bold new approach to ecological awareness and outdoor learning that supports the growth of a prosperous, sustainable economy based on the Blue Ridge region's amazing natural assets." In other words, BRDC is reaching out to all interested individuals, no matter their age, to teach them ecological awareness and the value and necessity of protecting and preserving this ecosystem.

Originally, the school was a resource for young mountain women, teaching them in a free boarding school format, how to acquire skills and tools that would allow them to have a job and work beyond their mountain communities. The school was an invaluable resource, providing much to the young women from 1924-1959. Once the county included these students into the school system, Konnarock was closed. Now as a school for environmental education, it offers young folks the same opportunity to learn skills and incorporate those skills into the mountain communities.

On our field trip, we toured the building with its all-chestnut tree bark shingled exterior, to see the chapel, the classrooms, the kitchen, and the dormitories. Then we were given a tour of the rain garden followed by wetlands exploration. It was a unique experience. We highly recommend any interested HRC naturalists to check out their volunteer field experiences. They are offered throughout the year, with leaders who are experts in their field and who can make it understandable and interesting for everyone from inquisitive amateurs to accomplished naturalists. There is something for the entire family with field trips, expert speakers, and children's programs. Topics include birding, phenology, arachnids, nature journaling, general natural history and much, much more.



Photos above: Dwarf Mallow (pictured left) at Blue Ridge Discovery Center (pictured right). Photos by Judy Jones.



Judy Jones- The DWR Elk Tour

The VMN state conference was held from Friday till Sunday, but for the lucky 10 of us who could arrive on Thursday, the ‘preconference’ activity was a [Department of Wildlife Resources elk tour](#) from 5:00-8:00 pm in Grundy, Virginia. This necessitated a 7-hour drive from Williamsburg, but – you know – ROAD TRIP – so that was all well and fine.

We met at the top of the mountain at Southern Gap Outdoor Experiences, boarded a bus, and slowly made our way over the difficult dirt roads to see – you guessed it – an amazing herd of elk in rut. Their eerie bugling echoed over and around us as we watched them. Elk were successfully re-introduced to Virginia between 2012 and 2014, from a growing herd of elk in Kentucky. The numbers in Buchanan County, Virginia are now nearing 300 and we were lucky enough to see a small herd of about 30 gathered together in the evening sunset. And rutting they were. ...bugling, chasing each other, and clashing those antlers. It was amazing to watch them jockey for place and for power – just magnificent creatures. We all felt so lucky to be able to experience the thrill of watching them on a warm and picture perfect evening.



Photos above of sunset and elk by Judy Jones.

Jeanette Navia

I loved seeing elk and learning about the DWR's elk restoration project in Grundy prior to the conference. I also enjoyed both field trips I took: I saw how the Blue Ridge Discovery Center, with a grant from the government, recreated a thriving wetland in six months from a plot of land that had previously been a trailer park, and I birded around the fresh- and brackish-water ponds in Saltville. But

my favorite part of the program was the keynote address given by the dynamic speaker Jeremy Stout of the Steele Creek Nature Center in Bristol, Tennessee. His talk was titled “Ghosts of the Forest,” and he discussed the long history and ecology of the area, going back to prehistoric times. Random facts from notes I took: the great Smoky Mountain region is the salamander capital of the world; hummingbirds are only found in the Americas; most mountains in Europe run east-west whereas those in the US run north-south, so species have an easier time moving north here as the climate heats up than they do in Europe where they would have the mountains as barriers; Saltville is the only place where mammoths and mastodons have been found preserved in the same site. The Virginia landscape is incredibly diverse, and Jeremy Stout gave a stimulating overview of the various bio- and physio-geographic regions as well as how they developed.

Photo below: Shirley Devan in front of a Woolly Mammoth sculpture in Saltville, Virginia after conference birding trip. Photo by Jeannette Navia.



Seig Kopinitz

I attended a tour of the Abington Veterans Memorial Park and was very impressed with both the park and our guide. The trees in the park have been gifted by families to honor or memorialize a veteran. This park provides a meeting place for relatives to gather and remember their loved one. Kevin, our guide, is the arborist for the town of Abingdon, also. It was a pleasure to listen to both

his descriptions of the many trees and the history of this memorial park.



Photo above (left to right): HRC members Linda Morse, Ginny Broome, and Lisa Nickel hike to the **Twin Pinnacles**. Photo by Shirley Devan.

Alice Kopinitz

Friendship - That is one of the intangible/tangibles that is part of the annual VMN conference. One of my wishes after signing up for the conference was to meet and thank Henry McBurney from the Peninsula Chapter. He was listed as an attendee. A bit of the back story. Last year, at the VMN conference in Virginia Beach, I returned home with a potted long leaf pine tree, donated by Henry. I enlisted help from Judy Kinshaw-Ellis to plant the tree in our yard. The tree has done well. Whenever we do Bassett Trace Trail monitoring, I have to compare my tree to the several pines near the beginning of the trail. At the conference this year, I read a lot of name tags. Finally, I found Henry and thanked him. We had a cordial visit and I shared photos of the tree.

Shirley Devan- The Cedars Natural Area Preserve

The opportunity to visit one of Virginia’s Natural Area Preserve was one I could not resist. The VMN state conference offered a field trip to this treasure on the Friday afternoon of the September 29 – October 1 conference weekend. Like many Natural Area Preserves, **The Cedars** is not open to the public, so a chance for a guided tour by one of the Preserve’s Stewards was not to be missed.

This preserve is part of Virginia’s Natural Heritage program which is part of Virginia’s Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Cedars, a collection of multiple parcels of land in Lee County, is so far west in Virginia that if you went directly north you would bump into Columbus, Ohio! **Check it out on a map.**

Our guide for the afternoon was Laura Young, Southwest Region Steward, and she was an enthusiastic ambassador who described the Cedars and its “impressive karst landscape that supports one of the highest concentrations of rare plants, animals and natural communities in Virginia.”

Laura described and showed us in our trek the features of a karst topography – sink holes, caves, springs, sinking streams, and a natural bridge. These are features of a water-soluble limestone and dolomite bedrock. The flatlanders from the Coastal Plain that were on this field trip were amazed by the limestone forests, barrens, and exposed rocks. Laura explained that she and a diverse team of experts actively use a fire regime to maintain this unique habitat. She pointed out several unique plants including River Cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) along the Powell River that she had planted herself three years ago in an effort to reestablish its native habitat. She was particularly proud to show us how it had grown and spread along the shoreline since the original planting. I really appreciate the effort the Conference organizers made to include this unique place in the Conference’s weekend opportunities.



Photo above: Natural Bridge at The Cedars by S. Devan.

On the Calendar

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

Wednesday	Nov 8	HRC General Meeting 6-7:45pm at JCC Library (and Zoom)
Wednesday	Nov 15	CE “Christmas Bird Counts” 6pm with Williamsburg Bird Club at Quarterpath
Thursday	Nov 16	HRC Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force Meeting 7pm (Zoom)
Saturday	Nov 18	CE Nature Walk 11am-12pm with Nature Conservancy, Cumberland Marsh
Sunday	Nov 19	CE Bird Walk 7am with Hampton Roads Bird Club at Newport News Park
Wednesday	Dec 6	HRC Board Meeting 6:30pm (Zoom) *Contact Connie Reitz to join.
November through April		Project Feeder Watch with The Cornell Lab

Five Year Gathering of Marina Bluebird Team

by Connie Reitz



Photo Above: Seated (left to right): Judy Jones, Joe Beene. Standing (left to right): Thad Hecht, Keith Navia, Chris Curtis, Janet Curtis, Betty Bennink, Jeanette Navia, Sherry Brubaker, Patty Maloney, and Connie Reitz beside the marina. Photo credit Connie Reitz. **Photo below:** Bluebird, pulled from [Better impact opportunity](#) description. You can learn more about bluebirds and monitoring using the North American Bluebird Society [fact sheets](#).



Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) members of the Marina bluebird monitoring team gathered on Friday, September 22nd for fun, food, social conversation, and an opportunity to match names with faces. It was a time to celebrate the many volunteer hours this team contributes as bluebird monitors and litter pickup participants at this adopted park.

This is the fifth year HRC has adopted James City County (JCC) Marina Park. The bluebird monitors do litter pickup each week as they check the boxes. The teams continue to do litter pickup once a month from September through February.

Thanks to Judy Jones (trail coordinator) and Connie Reitz (litter team organizer) for planning this event and providing the pizza and a sweet treat to end the gathering.

Education in the Schools and Treasures in the CAR

by Marie Robertson

In early October I was asked to speak to the 4th grade classes at Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School (CBB) about native plants. To focus my presentation, I contacted the head teacher to find out what the children were learning in class. She shared that they were studying Virginia's natural resources and that it is difficult for teachers to expose the students in a hands-on way to native plants, animals, as well as soil, minerals and rocks. She asked if I could make the presentation as hands-on or eyes-on as possible. Suddenly, a manageable native plant presentation became much broader and more challenging than I had expected.

What is a Master Naturalist to do?! I contacted Jennifer Trevino and went to pick up some CAR (Collection and Resources) boxes, especially those with rocks and minerals. I found a treasure trove of samples from around the Commonwealth, including a laminated paper explaining what many of these were used for (in concrete, cat litter, for making glass, etc.). I spent some time researching how to categorize these by physiographic region (another request by the teacher) and then put together some notes on the importance of natural resources, conserving them, and the role of native plants and insects that have evolved together over thousands of years.

The day of the presentation, I drove up to the outdoor classroom area at CBB to unload my boxes of materials. Each picnic table hosted a physiographic region of VA, with samples of the rocks and minerals found in that region, as well as the laminated papers listing how they are used. The students rotated from table to table, picking up the rocks, touching the ground specimens, and exclaiming over the color and texture. Their enthusiasm for the samples was remarkable, and they didn't mind my apology that I am not a geologist, so I could not necessarily answer all their questions. They also learned that we have a state rock, Nelsonite, which was one of the sample rocks from the CAR.

Photo above: Longleaf pinecone, pine needle and oak apple galls. **Photo below:** CBB Instagram post showing discussion of longleaf pines led by Marie Robertson.



After everyone rotated through the rock and mineral samples, I used the CAR samples of **longleaf pinecones and pine needles** to discuss the importance of natural resources, and the greater importance of conserving

natural resources. We flew through a discussion of why forests are important, and the importance of plants in sustaining food webs. With insects being the organisms best suited to converting plants into food for other animals, we discussed the vital role played by pollinators as well as by insects that help decompose organic matter. We played a native plant guessing game in which I showed them cuttings of native plants (asters, goldenrod, milkweed, narrow-leaf sunflowers) and non-native plants from my yard (mums, rose, crape myrtle). They were amazed by the number of pollinators and caterpillars supported by our native plants, especially compared to the non-native examples.

When I showed them the **munched-on leaves from my common milkweed and swamp rose-mallow (pictured top right)**, they agreed that the leaves did not look nice or healthy. I emphasized that these leaves showed the plants were useful to numerous insects, and that the plants generally survived the munching. Perhaps the greatest excitement resulted from asking the students to point out the **caterpillar camouflaged on an oak leaf (pictured bottom left)** that I had happened to find in my backyard that morning. The students also loved popping the seed pods of the Jewelweed (aka touch-me-not) that I brought in from my yard. It was difficult to transport the **Jewelweed cuttings without having the seed pods (pictured bottom right)** explode in my car, but it was so worth it to see the students' surprise when the pods exploded between their fingers.

We closed the session with ideas about what the students could do to help protect our native insects and ecosystems: reduce lawns, refrain from using pesticides/herbicides, leave the leaves, and plant native plants and oak trees. I also learned a few important lessons: Always figure out what exactly you are being asked to present BEFORE agreeing to do so; NEVER underestimate what is in the CAR; and, that students are enthusiastic learners that do not expect you to be an expert or to have all the answers. For my fellow naturalists, if you have an opportunity to go into your local schools and provide tangible examples to the students, I can say it is well worth your time and energy to do so. The students and teachers are very appreciative and receptive audience.



What is happening at Brickyard Landing?

By Judy Kinshaw-Ellis



If you visit [Brickyard Landing](#), you will be able to see some of the work that we have all been waiting for: a new fence to keep people in the parking lot. In order to start the planting of trees, shrubs, grasses and perennials, a barrier was needed to stop park visitors from driving off the road. The barrier was completed mid-October. This riparian buffer demonstration garden is taking a bit longer than expected to get started, but the barrier and completion of a formal design plan should get things moving along.

As soon as grant funds are released, also in October, plant materials will be purchased, and we should get some plants in the ground in early November. The November planting will be primarily trees and woody shrubs with perennials and grasses going in next spring. The native meadow will not be installed until this time next year.

In addition to planning, volunteers, including co-leads Donna Benson and me, have completed some smaller projects through the summer. We planted seedlings, including Bald Cypress, Red Cedar, and Silky Dogwood and some larger Pin Oak and Bald Cypress trees that were donated. We also removed invasives including honeysuckle and Japanese Stilt Grass and did some general clean up in a couple of areas where we will be working.

We have a list of people who are interested in working with us, but we will need a large group of volunteers for the days we plant. Please keep an eye out for a call for workers when plants are scheduled to be delivered. We look forward to working with you!

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VMN Golden Circle Welcomes 10th HRC Member Jennifer Trevino

By Claire White

Virginia Master Naturalists (VMN) who complete 5,000 hours of volunteer service become part of the Virginia Master Naturalist program's **Golden Circle**. Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) member Jennifer Trevino joined this special group after surpassing 5,000 hours during the month of September 2023. At the October HRC general meeting Membership Chair Judy Jones announced the achievement.

Jennifer is the tenth HRC member to achieve this distinction. At the time of this article only 31 VMN volunteers in the state are listed as Golden Circle members. The VMN State Program office recognizes volunteers who complete 250, 500, 1,000, 2,500, and 5,000 hours of service. Jennifer's latest accomplishment and those of other volunteers throughout the state will officially be recognized at the end of the year.

Jennifer joined HRC in 2010 as a part of Cohort V and has since then been involved in many aspects of leadership including currently serving as the chair of Volunteer Services Projects and a committee member for Basic Training. She has also served as curator and host to the Collections and Resources (CAR) for many years. Her role as the CAR curator includes housing multiple bins of resources available to members for use with Education and Outreach events.

Fellow HRC Golden Circle members include Shirley Devan (2017), Les Lawrence (2018), Cheryl Jacobson (2019), Judy Jones (2020), Adrienne Frank (2021), Gary Driscoll (2021), Jan Lockwood (2022), Dave Youker (2022), and Nancy Barnhart (2023). Volunteers in the Golden Circle are given a few perks including being recognized on the VMN website and invited to attend the VMN Statewide Conference for a discounted fee. When opportunities arise Golden Circle members are invited to provide input on some decisions and initiatives of the VMN state program office.



Photos: Golden Circle Members

Top: Jennifer Trevino, newest Golden Circle member, during a moment of glee petting pigs at an HRC field trip to the Foxwire Alpaca Farm in 2018. Photo credit Sharon Plocher.

Bottom: Six of ten Golden Circle members at the HRC picnic in October 2023. Left to right: Gary, Adrienne, Judy, Nancy, Shirley, and Jan. Photo credit Claire White.

Day of Fun on the Chickahominy:

HRC Annual Picnic

By Donna Benson and Marie Robertson
(Hospitality Co-Chairs), Photos by C. White

The Annual HRC Picnic was a big success despite being postponed to October 15th due to rain. The day began early with an 8:00 am bird walk led by Nancy Barnhardt. Their meandering path led the group through the gardens on the property and in woods by the river. Despite the damp, overcast and chilly weather, the enthusiastic group tallied a number of species. As Nancy often says, “A bad weather day is a good birding day!” A delicious breakfast of frittatas and bacon provided by Judy Sargent greeted the birders return. Breakfast was rounded out by muffins and warm mulled cider to take the edge off the cold morning.

Thankfully, the drizzle cleared and the sun made an appearance by the time members of Cohort XVII arrived at 10:00 to participate in their makeup field trip in dichotomous key identification and binocular skills. Other HRC members had the opportunity to join the owl pellet presentation led by Judy Kinshaw-Ellis where participants were able to dissect the pellets and identify the remains contained within.

After lunch (everyone brought their own), Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscoll led a native plant and butterfly walk around the beautiful gardens followed by another owl pellet activity, this time led by Judy Jones. Throughout the day, members could also participate in a Beak Identification Game created by Marie Robertson and a Connections Word Game - Naturalist Edition created by Tory Gussman as well as scour the well-laden swap table for a nature-themed book, puzzle or item of clothing.

The first annual “Trash Grabber Relay” saw four teams of four contestants each vying for trash collecting glory. Each team member used a trash grabber to retrieve various items of litter such as bottle caps, cigarette butts, glass bottles and plastic straws and return the trash to their teams’ bucket. The winning team of Judy Jones, Melinda Cousins, Carolyn Morgan and Chris Bretton (friend of Carolyn) received an eco-friendly tote bag as a prize.

Photos (top to bottom): Trees along the riverfront site of the picnic. Jade and Marin, family members of James Bruce (Cohort XVII trainee), in action during the “Trash Grabber Relay.”





Before dinner was served, Ted Sargent and Shirley Devan presented the Nancy Norton award for outstanding service to the HRC chapter to Nancy Barnhardt (see top photo). Following the award ceremony, a dinner of crabs and fajitas was served. Thank you to Ford Robertson (Marie's husband) who expertly manned the grill. As well as Ted and Judy Sargent who provided the delicious crabs. In addition to the main courses, many people brought delicious salads and desserts to share. The HRC Chapter is never lacking in food!



After filling their bellies and watching a beautiful sunset, people had the opportunity to participate in a final activity - an evening presentation by Bill Harper of the bat monitoring team. It was a great way to end a wonderful day in nature shared with so many of our chapter members.

Donna and Marie want to thank the Sargents (and the Menzel family) for once again hosting the picnic on their amazing property. Thanks to the Picnic committee of Rick Brown, Shirley Devan, Judy Jones, Judy Kinshaw-Ellis and Connie Reitz as well as all the members who led the numerous activities. Also thank you to everyone who provided delicious food or donated items to the swap table. Everyone working together made for a great day enjoying nature and friendship. We're looking forward to next year!



Photos (clockwise from top): (1) Presentation of Nancy Norton Sprit Award to Nancy Barnhardt (on right). (2) Food prep crew of Marie, Donna, and Ford. (3) Sargent home after sunset. (4) Connie at crab table.

Field Day: Wetlands and Freshwater Ecology

On October 21st Basic Training members from Cohort XVII enjoyed a field day at two local sites. In the morning Hugh Beard presented "Upland and Wetland Ecology" at York River State Park. The second part of the day covered "Macroinvertebrates" at Warhill with Patty Maloney and Keith Navia (HRC members) presenting.



Photos: Collages of images from salt marsh by trainee Michele Garrard. Center photo of trainees from Jennifer Trevino, Basic Training Committee co-chair. Pictured in center photo: Garry Maynor and Michelle Gianvecchio (foreground); Cara Sanderson (striped hoodie) and Julie Peet (background); Connie Motley (background right).

5th Soft Plastics Drive Complete by Karen Hines

HRC completed another soft plastics drive in October. Members, a number of whom wrangled their neighbors and friends into the collection project, turned in 511 pounds (plus a few ounces) over three months.

Scott Hemler and his crew at the Colonial Williamsburg Nursery tipped the scale to 500 pounds on Oct. 23, and others boosted it Oct. 27, the last pickup of the drive Oct. 27.

This is the fifth time the chapter has participated in the **recycling program**, which is sponsored by Trex Company, Inc. The Virginia-based firm manufactures “wood-alternative” outdoor products, using 95 percent recycled materials.

Benches are placed at sites where community members can have seat while enjoying nature, such

as local parks and trails. We’re hoping the plastics collection will serve a two-fold purpose: keeping useful plastic out of landfills and helping chapter outreach.

HRC will be eligible to begin its next soft plastics drive in February 2024. You can hoard your plastic (make sure it is clean and dry – smelly, moldy stuff will go in the garbage) until then or just take your offerings to a local Harris Teeter or Food Lion until then.

Thank you all for your efforts since August, especially Chapter President Connie Reitz, who kept the plastics collection going while I was out of town.

—Karen Hines, Your Reigning Plastics Princess.

Paws at the River: Outreach at Yorktown Market By MJ O'Bryan

We had a successful event at Paws at the River on October 28th to end the outdoor education and outreach season. Yorktown Market Days' annual Paws event is designed to bring awareness to animal rescue organizations and help place adoptable pets in their "forever" homes. HRC volunteers were on hand to educate attendees on wildlife rescue and wild-animal transport. Volunteers offered information on how household items can unintentionally harm pets and wildlife (pesticides, fishing line, hooks, soccer nets, Halloween cobwebs, picture windows, painting turtles & sticky traps).

The market was packed before 09:00am with costumed dogs, kids, and parents enjoying the beautiful weather. We made contact with 143 adults and 92 children for a grand total of 235 direct contacts. We realized that we could have used a third table! Our awesome volunteer team of eight helped 72 kids make adorable bats. We had six people interested in HRC basic training.



Photos (clockwise from top): (1) Bat craft. (2) Janet Harper, Barb Creel, and Shirley Devan wearing animal mask giveaways. (3) Jennifer Trevino, Cheryl Roettger, Brad Glasebrook, and Barb Neis behind VMN table. (4) Cheryl helping child dressed in an animal costume with bat craft. Photo 3 by S. Devan. All other photos by B. Creel.





Volunteers Needed:

Piney Grove Native Seed Collection

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has asked for help with their annual native seed collection during mid-November to early December. TNC will train volunteers to identify the correct plants. This is an on-demand volunteer event based on weather and maturation of seed heads at Piney Grove, located near Wakefield. Contact [Jennifer Dalke, TNC Volunteer Program Manager](#), if you would like to be put on the email list for upcoming collection dates. More information about the seeds being collected below:

Round-headed Lespedeza (*Lespedeza capitata*) also called Rounded-headed Bush-clover. This is native to Virginia in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont regions. As a legume & nitrogen fixer, *Lespedeza capitata* may cause trees (like Longleaf pines) to grow faster and thus sequester carbon faster.

Little Bluestem Grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*). This grass is native to Virginia and is of great use to wildlife—many caterpillars, grasshoppers and beetles feed on the leaves which in turn provide an important food source for insectivorous birds like the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. It's also an important plant to help spread fire in the landscape.



Providence Classical School Outreach

by Rick Brown

On October 10th the volunteer Tree Stewards and Master Naturalists teamed up to provide tours throughout the day for 18 4th graders from the Providence Classical School at Colonial Williamsburg (CW). They started with a tour of the CW Arboretum led by Rick Brown. Bill Dichtel of the JCC/W Master Gardener met them in the Catherine Orr Garden to tell them about colonial heirloom flowers, vegetables and herbs. Then Judy Jones of the HRC Master Naturalists took them on a nature walk on the Bassett Trace Nature Trail. The class was accompanied by their teacher Ann Marie Charbono, and 8 parent chaperones. It was a perfect fall day, a great learning experience for the class, and a terrific teaching opportunity for members of the two volunteer organizations.



Photos (top to bottom): Rick Brown and Judy Jones leading tours. Photo credit Ann Marie Charbono.

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).



*This month's bonus pic is a cluster of **Acorn Plum Galls** found on a Red Oak tree in New Quarter Park on October 8th. Inside this abnormal plant growth (known as a gall) is a single larva of a cynipid wasp.*



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