

The Naturalist

November 2025 Newsletter | Volume 21, Number 11
Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists

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Feature Photo: Eastern Redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). Closeup of mature blue berry-like cones. College Creek Beach, 11/15/25 by Claire White.

A Message from the President

by Janet Harper

I hope you all had a very happy Thanksgiving! Ours was fun with family and friends, including two of our young granddaughters, ages 5 and 7. They spent the long weekend with us while their parents prepared to move into their new house. The girls are starting to learn about and appreciate nature and were very excited to see a doe and one-antlered buck in our yard. After exploring the yard for small twigs, seed pods, pine needles, acorns, and leaves of different colors and shapes, they spent a very quiet hour turning their finds into artwork. What fun!

The holiday season has begun! With one holiday out of the way, I'm looking forward to family nature crafts at Freedom Park on December 6th and the Christmas parade on December 7th.

As we approach the end of the year, I'd like to send out some reminders: **VMN re-enrollment is open now** and will be open until late January. Every HRC member should have received an email from the state VMN office indicating if you need to re-enroll or not. Remember this is an annual requirement if you want to remain a Virginia Master Naturalist. Anyone not completing this process will be removed from the active roster by VMN (= moved to archived) and will no longer be able to

participate in activities or to access Better Impact. Don't let that happen! Please get it done early so it's out of the way.

I'm starting to sound like a broken record, but please document all your volunteer hours ASAP so we can submit accurate data for the annual report. This also helps us know who will be re-certified (or achieve initial certification) and who is eligible for milestone recognition. **Re-certification is a different process than re-enrollment!** To re-certify, a member must complete 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of Continuing Education (CE) by December 31. The bling and recognitions will be received in March at our annual meeting.

Treasurer Marc Moyers sent out the first dues reminder recently. **The \$35 dues need to be paid by the end of March.** HRC requires dues for a member to remain active, but we can waive them for anyone with financial hardships. *We don't want to lose members related to not affording to pay dues, so please contact Marc to request a waiver if needed.*

We don't have a chapter meeting in December, and January's meeting will be a combined one with the Williamsburg Bird Club on January 21st. More information on that later. Our next newsletter will come out after the holidays, so if I don't see you before then, have a very Merry Christmas!

Thanks to everyone for a successful 2025!—Janet



On the Calendar

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

Tuesday	Dec 9	CE "Grants" 6:30pm Webinar with Dept. of Environmental Quality Register
Wednesday	Dec 10	CE "Wildflower Sowing" 6pm at Freedom Park with Judy Kinshaw-Ellis
Saturday	Dec 13	Birdability Survey 9:30am at Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery
Saturday	Dec 14	Local Christmas Bird Count mobilize.us/audubon-community-science/
Friday	Dec 19	Wildlife Mapping at New Quarter Park 10am with Babs Giffin
Sunday	Dec 21	CE Bird Walk 7am with Hampton Roads Bird Club at Newport News Park
Saturday	Dec 27	CE Bird Walk 8-10am with Williamsburg Bird Club at New Quarter Park

Weekly Wildlife Mapping: Hope to see you at one of the upcoming events at York River State Park (every Monday), New Quarter Park (3rd Friday—in winter), Greensprings Trail (2nd and 4th Thursdays), Jamestown Island (1st Wednesday), and Yorktown Battlefield (Last Sunday). Check email for any last-minute changes.

Upcoming 2026 Chapter Meetings: Dean Shostak, HRC Programs Chair, will send reminders for the special locations and dates of our upcoming chapter meetings as the dates approach. If you'd like to start filling in your 2026 Calendar, the first four meetings are as follows:

- **January 21:** Joint Meeting with the Williamsburg Bird Club (3rd Wed.) at Quarterpath Recreation Center
- **February 11:** HRC Meeting at the Williamsburg Library (theatre at downtown location)
- **March 11:** HRC Annual Meeting and Cohort XIX Graduation at Quarterpath Recreation Center
- **April 8:** HRC Meeting at the Williamsburg Library (theatre at downtown location)

Birdability in December: Support Accessibility by Surveying Park Sites

by Kevin Pettit-Pokora

Experiencing nature is as fundamental of a human right as breathing clean air. For some, physical circumstances can cause avoidance of the activity in trade for the psychological safety of not feeling less than or judged. That is where Birdability comes in.

Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) volunteers can come and help out with Birdability surveys around our area. These surveys provide information for those with physical challenges, about the accessibility of parks and other public places for viewing birds and other wildlife.

Virginia's Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) wishes to survey all of the Virginia Bird and Wildlife Trails (VBWT), public parks, and forests, in order to provide wildlife viewing site-specific information and promote better access to the outdoors. As volunteers, HRC members can support this effort by verifying the accessibility status of locations throughout Virginia and adding sites to the **Birdability Map** found at gis.audubon.org/birdability.

In the month of December, I would like to begin to survey potential Birdability sites north and west of Williamsburg, in nearby Charles City. I look forward to having you join me on the weekends. Here are a few upcoming dates:

Saturday 13 DEC 2025 at 9:30 am
Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery
fws.gov/fish-hatchery/harrison-lake

Afterward, we can take a hike as a group for some potential wildlife viewing.

Saturday 20 DEC 2025 at 9:30AM
Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area
dwr.virginia.gov/wma/chickahominy/

This is more of a driving route with stops for wildlife viewing.

November 2025



Photos above: (1) Male Hooded merganser—*Lophodytes cucullatus*—photographed by Martha Moss on November 19, 2025 at Greensprings. (2) Two pages of Birdability Site Review Checklist.

Before participating, you can learn more by doing the following:

(1) View and/or print out the 5-page Birdability Site Review Checklist found online at bit.ly/BirdabilityChecklist

(2) Watch the 19-minute “Birdability Training Video for VMN project with DWR” found at bit.ly/BirdabilityVMN

This video is required for the leader(s) who submit the paperwork.

Please contact me and tell me which pop-up(s) you'd like to join.

Kevin Pettit-Pokora, ummicro@me.com

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James River Elementary School Nature Explorers Club



Pictured above: (Left) Elizabeth Meyers with an “Amazing Bees” display during a pollination themed day. **(Right)** Students and Christine Mason during the bird migration game.

Introduction by Robert Ambrose

Greetings from Nature Explorers Club! This year, we have three new co-leaders for our club: me, Elizabeth Meyers, and Jeff Honig. We also have two super assistants, Christine Mason and Amelia Connally. I wanted to share some thoughts with you about the club and our experience so far, however, I thought it would be more interesting to hear from Amelia, an HRC member and college student. See below for her reflection.

Nature Explorers Through the Eyes of a William & Mary Student by Amelia Connally

After connecting with the Historic Rivers Chapter in the spring, I joined the team of volunteers this fall leading the Nature Explorers Club at James River Elementary School. Along with Robert Ambrose, Elizabeth Meyers, Jeff Honig, and Christine Mason, I spend my Tuesday afternoons with seventeen joyful 3rd-5th graders. We started the semester by learning about the components of a habitat, and have since covered a variety of topics, such as pollinators, bird migration, and invasive plants.

Nature Explorers Club has provided me with a space to connect with others and nature, outside of my on-campus bubble. I love working with kids, and this bunch is bursting with energy and questions. Their smiles are infectious; they hardly move without running and are surprisingly competitive when it comes to a bird migration simulation or scavenging race. I see myself in these kids: I was a Girl Scout growing up in Louisville, KY, and was always outside exploring.

It is easy to forget about the larger life of Williamsburg when I’m focused on my academic and social life on campus, so I’ve really enjoyed getting involved in the broader community. As a sophomore Biology major, it’s been a valuable opportunity for me to develop my leadership and collaboration skills. I’ve learned how to most effectively communicate with the kids and teach small sections of the lesson, such as how climate change impacts pollinators. And while I don’t plan on pursuing a career in ecology or plant biology, I am soaking in all the information and thoroughly enjoying every week. I’m grateful to be a role model and friend to these kids, and I look forward to more weeks of sweet smiles, silly questions, and hilarious stories.

Visit by Michelle Prysby, VMN Director by Claire White

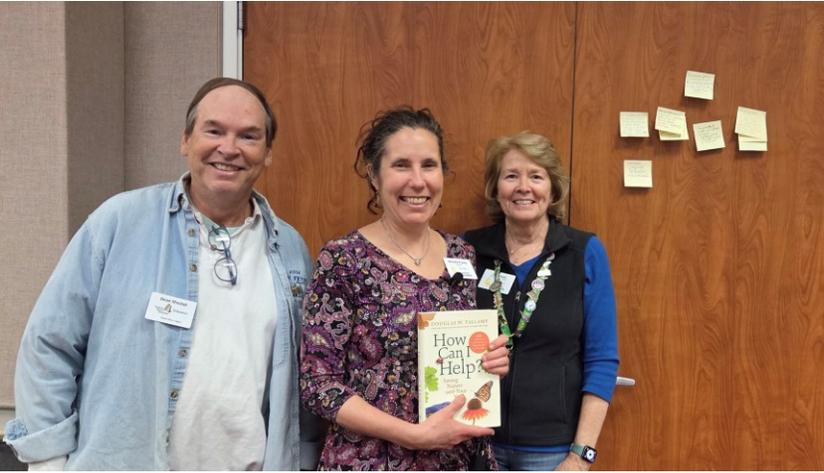


Photo Caption: (Top) Dean Shostak (Chapter VP), Michelle Prysby (VMN Program Director), and Janet Harper (Chapter President) at the conclusion of Michelle's presentation. Michelle is holding a signed copy of Doug Tallamy's book, *How Can I Help? Saving Nature with Your Yard*, a gift from the chapter. In the background sticky notes can be seen from a group brainstorming activity during Michelle's talk.

(Bottom) Group photo from Michelle's visit to Brickyard Landing Park.

Our final 2025 Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) meeting was held on November 12th at the James City County Library and included an informative and engaging presentation by Michelle Prysby, Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) Program Director. Michelle traveled from the Charlottesville area for a tour of the Brickyard Landing Park Riparian Buffer Demonstration Garden, a local project in James City County, and her 1-hour presentation to members of the HRC on the history and future of our statewide volunteer program.

President Janet Harper had this to share about Michelle's visit the day after: "Thank you for the wonderful turnout for Michelle's talk. She was happy to see so many of you there. Prior to the meeting several of the board members toured Brickyard Landing Park with Michelle so she could see the progress made there. Over an early dinner we were able to discuss our chapter's projects, accomplishments, and concerns. She expressed that overall, we have a very active, successful chapter!"

During Michelle's presentation on "The Past, Present, and Future of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program" she identified three long term outcomes for the VMN program:

- The VMN program and its volunteers will engage diverse communities in natural resource conservation.
- VMN Chapters will be sustained with adequate leadership, membership, and resources.
- Through VMN volunteer service activities, the health of Virginia's woods, wildlife, and waters will be improved.

She then challenged the group to think about and discuss the following prompt: *What can we do to best achieve our long-term outcomes for the VMN program in a measurable way?* If you're interested in reading some of the comments of the audience members check out the December board meeting minutes in Better Impact for the transcript of responses. The Zoom recording link can be found on the "HRC Speaker" CE opportunity listing in Better Impact and on the monthly CE Opportunities list for December.

Two Fox Encounters by Linda Hughes

While on my regular walk at Greensprings Interpretive Trail I saw what looked like an off-leash dog. But as I got closer, I saw it was a beautiful Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) on the trail. It appeared healthy. Upon my approach it did a submissive dog move by lying down. I kept my distance. However, it seemed habituated to human presence. Still, I was awestruck.

Another day, driving home from running errands, I saw a Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) stumbling into the very busy John Tyler Highway. It seemed to be having seizures.

Since I help as a Wildlife Transporter, I immediately called Julie Wobig, at Tidewater Wildlife Rescue. She contacted Animal Control. A friendly driver stopped to help keep the sick animal out of the road with a long pole he had in his van. Within 10 minutes Officer Jennifer Garcia, James City County Police came ready to help. I'm thankful for our Animal Control team and Officer Garcia for quick & compassionate response to a suspected distemper case.



Photo above: Series of photos of Red Fox at Greensprings Interpretive Trail, including submissive stance. **Photos below:** Series of photos of Gray Fox, spotted along John Tyler Highway, with suspected case of distemper. Animal Control was called and an officer removed the ill animal.



From the VMN Bi-weekly Email for November 25: “The Virginia Gray Fox camera trapping study, a collaboration between DWR and Virginia Tech researchers, has been sharing some great trail cam footage and interesting research results lately,

as well as promoting the project to people in eastern Virginia (the focus area for 2026 surveys) and letting folks know about their current crowdfunding campaign. To date in this study, no gray foxes have been documented north of the I-64 corridor. 2026 will be the final year of the survey.” Learn more in the November 4, 2025 article “Graduate student leads gray fox conservation effort” on Virginia Tech’s website at news.vt.edu/articles/2025/10/cnre-research-gray-fox.html

Summary of Bassett Trace Tours in 2025 by Judy Jones



Bassett Trace is considered the hidden gem of Colonial Williamsburg, and our chapter's adopted nature trail tours offer community members and visitors to Colonial Williamsburg a chance to explore Virginia's wildlife and native habitats in this unique environment.

This year, Bassett Trace tours led by 10 members of the Historic Rivers Chapter, offered 114 walks across

spring, summer, and fall, with fall emerging as the most popular season. Spring drew 154 guests over 39 tours, summer had 113 guests across the same number of tours, and fall attracted 211 guests in 36 tours. Three special birding walks led by Nancy Barnhart brought in an additional 44 participants. Attendance was strongest on weekday mornings, with spring and summer Tuesdays at 9:30 drawing 99 and 79 guests respectively, while fall saw its highest turnout on Wednesdays at 10:00 with 80 guests. Overall, participation was steady throughout the year, with fall tours showing the greatest engagement and birding events adding extra appeal. Learn more about the trail at experience.plantsoon.com/visit/friends-of-the-bassett-trace-trail

HRC Annual Report 2025 Draft Complete by Janet Harper

We owe a huge "Thank You" to all who contributed to the Annual Report! Many chapter members were asked to write narratives about their projects, and everyone did a great job! Committee members then reviewed, revised, or edited those as needed to provide "one voice" for the report. Now the report is complete except for the big groups of numbers we get from Better Impact after the end of the year.

Since the report represents what HRC accomplished as a chapter, I thought you might like to know what reports we included. Obviously, we can't write about all of our projects. We try to choose the most impactful projects, or ones that have required a lot of time and effort, or new and unusual projects.

For **follow up of stewardship projects** this year, we included narratives about Brickyard Landing, the extensive invasive plants removal on The College of William and Mary campus, and the Paspapegh project at Jamestown Settlement. The "Noteworthy projects" section includes information about our increased outreach efforts, the Wildlife Viewing Backpack Project, and installation of the Greensprings Interpretive Sign.



In the third narrative area titled "Other Impacts", we discussed "strengthening HRC's social ties" in the chapter through our in-person activities like the picnic, ice cream social, and Cookies and Conversation. We also included our 2nd annual Martin Luther King Day of Service and the state award for "**Distinguished Volunteer Service**" Judy Kinshaw-Ellis received for her extensive efforts supporting the local area. Judy's dedication and impact serve as an inspiration to all members and exemplify the values we strive to uphold within HRC. We'll send the report to the chapter after it is submitted to VMN in January. Give it a read to learn more about the impact we've made in the community! Thanks again to all the writers!!

Pictured left: Judy Kinshaw-Ellis planting a Longleaf pine tree at Brickyard on November 2. Photo by Barb Creel.

Basic Training Cohort XIX in November by Basic Training Team



Pictured left to right: Cohort XIX in the marsh at York River State Park—Kyle Morford, Tom Mierle, Chloe Harner, Erin Schibani, Robin Rose, Hope Cook, Chris Wilkins, Andrea Case, Katherine Wilkins, Steve Day (standing) and **Dr. Jim Perry** (kneeling, maroon shirt, wetlands instructor), Pat Lytton, Ajit Joshi (standing) and Kevin Petit-Pokora (kneeling), Cheryl Lynch, and Caitlyn Verlik. **(Bottom)** Erin examining the cordgrass roots.



November captured several firsts for the Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) basic training program with new presenters and activities. On Saturday, November 1st we welcomed Dr. Jim Perry, as a first-time presenter for our “Wetlands” class and field day at York River State Park. Dr. Perry has worked for decades as a wetlands researcher with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. His knowledge of the salt marsh was vast and engaging. Kudos to co-chair Donna Benson for her work seeking out Jim as a speaker.

Our second event of the month was on Tuesday, November 6th, when we packed our evening class space with a rotation of chapter members giving 20-minute presentations on various “VMN Skills.” The class started with the debut presentation of “New Projects” by Judy Kinshaw-Ellis, followed by Cynthia Ferentinos completing her first presentation of “Education & Outreach” to trainees during her first year as the Outreach co-chair. The night ended with repeat presenters: Shirley Devan spoke on “Citizen Science,” Janet Harper presented on “Administration,” and Marie Robertson closed out the night with a focus on “Stewardship.” All five ladies were passionate about their topics and gave trainees the tools and inspiration to

seek new volunteer opportunities within our key areas of focus.

Saturday, November 15th, trainees earned four hours of volunteer service wildlife mapping and litter picking as a group at established chapter projects. Jennifer Smith, Cohort XIX mentor and a recent Cohort XVIII graduate, led a 2.5-hour wildlife mapping at Greensprings Interpretive Trail, where 32 species of birds and 3 species of salamanders were identified. Afterwards, the group removed 125.5 pounds of litter and a canoe (not weighed) from College Creek Beach, after the National Park Service site had been closed for over 40 days due to the federal government shutdown. Plenty of glass beverage containers, and beach and fishing gear were gathered.



The month's activities ended on the evening of Tuesday, November 18th, when we had a new pair of topics being presented together: **dendrology and local invasive plants**. Stewart Ware, Emeritus Professor of Biology from The College of William & Mary, gave his tried-and-true presentation on local trees (dendrology), which was a natural segue into local invasive plants. Tracy Matthew Melton, HRC invasives removal champion, shared a vast knowledge of invasive plants and created a greater awareness of invasives locally by spotlighting his work in the City of Williamsburg, especially at The College. It was fun for all to see Stewart and Tracy ask questions and contribute to each other's presentations. Stewart stayed the whole night! The committee agreed that Tracy's new presentation was a great fit and is a welcome permanent addition to the training program.

All fifteen trainees have been busy completing CTEs (Class Topic Explorations) after class, attending chapter events, and building relationships. They are over halfway done with their scheduled training events.



Pictured above: (Top) Marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*) at Greensprings Wildlife Mapping on November 15th Cohort XIX Volunteer Service Day. (2) Trainees with an abandoned canoe removed from woods at College Creek Beach. Did you know it's illegal to launch boats from National Park Service property without special permission? Picture in canoe, from front: Hope, Tom, Erin, and Kyle. Caitlyn, on right of boat. Standing in back, from left: Katherine, Chris, Ajit, Robin, Pat, Kevin, and Steve. Missing from photo Chloe, Cheryl, and Andrea. (3) **Tracy Melton and Stewart Ware, instructors**, after their presentations on November 18.

Shorter Shares from HRC Members and Beyond



Native Plant Seeds Are Currently Available at the WRL Seed Exchange! —by Cynthia Ferentinos

It's now time to plant those seeds that require cold stratification to germinate. So, in December and January you're invited to pick up a free packet of seeds during each visit to the Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL). The WRL Seed Exchange is active at both locations: the downtown Williamsburg library as well as the James City County (Croaker Road) location. You can choose from over 50 species of native plants this season and planting a variety of seeds will enable you to enhance the biodiversity in your area!

Many thanks to those who collected and donated seeds from native plants this year and to the WRL Seed Exchange volunteers who cleaned the seeds and packaged them!

Tech Ad Hoc Committee

Interested in helping the chapter review their online subscriptions and digital platforms in 2026? Contact Marc Moyers or Claire White if you have questions and are considering joining the team.



Nov 1: Pop-up Saturday Wildlife Mapping at Upper County Park, Toano

Thirteen HRC Master Naturalists (pictured above) attended the first "pop up" weekend wildlife mapping. They visited Upper County Park (108 Leisure Road, Toano) on Saturday, November 1 after feedback from members at the October Projects Fair hoping for more weekend mapping.

Moving forward from time-to-time Babs Giffin, Shan Gill and Tory Gussman will host Wildlife Mapping on Saturdays at various locations in our area. The data gathered from these outings helps researchers understand wildlife species distribution and supports wildlife management, habitat protection and other research efforts.

Pictured: (front, left to right) Lisa Nickels (photographer), Chris Wilkins, Liz George, Babs Giffin, Tory Gussman, Dean Shostak, Jenny Kahn, Adrienne Frank. **(Back, left to right)** Katherine Wilkins (blue coat), Gary Driscoll, Kevin Pettit-Pokora, Gail Peterson, and Shan Gill.



Sun, Dec 14: Williamsburg Christmas Bird Count

Mobilize and join a team of enthusiastic birders of all skill levels to collect important data on wintering bird species in our area on Sunday, December 14th. Learn more about the 49th Williamsburg Christmas Bird Count (CBC) at williamsburgbirdclub.org/2025-williamsburg-area-christmas-bird-count/

Email shirley_devan@icloud.com with any questions. Sign up at mobilize.us/audubon-community-science/event/864027/



Volunteer at James River National Wildlife Refuge

“Reserve your spot for one, two, or all of the upcoming volunteer days” with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by emailing Cyrus Brame (cyrus_brame@fws.gov):

- Wednesday, December 10
- Tuesday, December 30
- Tuesday, January 6
- Saturday, January 10

Planting of 2,000 longleaf pines on 10 acres will officially begin on December 30th, with the December 10th workday focusing on prep for the plantings and other tasks at the wildlife refuge located in Prince George County. Everyone can volunteer, so invite your friends and family!

In Case You Missed It: A Few Recently Recorded Continuing Education (CE) Opportunities

VMN November Leadership Session:

“Reaching an audience where they are... Outreach in Interpretation” with presenter Angela Yau, Nature Program Facility Manager at Locust Grove Nature Center with Montgomery Parks in Maryland. virginiamasternaturalist.org/continuing-education/webinar-series/

Wild Virginia Webinar: “Virginia’s ospreys face an uncertain future” with presenter Dr. Bryan Watts, Director of The Center for Conservation Biology, The College of William & Mary. youtu.be/VUltwE4oeP8

Chesapeake Bay Foundation Webinar:

“Climate Impacts and the Way Forward” with presenter Dr. Jeremy Hoffman, Director of Impact Evaluation and Community Science at Groundwork USA. youtu.be/BSInJQHmjHU

Blue Ridge PRISM Webinar: “How to be an invasive plant” (Assessing Invasive Plant Species in Virginia) with Kevin Heffernan, Invasive Species Coordinator, Natural Heritage Program, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. youtu.be/9jZXPHEMC3ZE

Invasive Jorō spider, spreading in Bay Region

On November 17th, the Chesapeake Bay Magazine reported on a large yellow and black invasive spider known as the Jorō spider (*Trichonephila clavate*) spreading in Maryland. It’s a new invasive species that can easily be mistaken for yellow garden spiders. Researchers are asking for citizen scientists to photograph and report sightings with the iNaturalist app. Read more at chesapeakebaymagazine.com/help-scientist-track-large-invasive-spider-spreading-in-maryland/

Tree Steward Applications are due December 20.



See Rick Brown's December 5th email for information regarding the 2026 VMN Tree Steward training course. Each applicant must be a **certified** Virginia Master Naturalist, in the

Historic Rivers Chapter, as of December 5, 2025, with chapter dues paid for 2026. Applicants will be accepted for the class based on the order of receipt of their applications and subsequent prompt payment of the tuition amount following notice of acceptance. A waiting list will be maintained until two weeks before the commencement of the first class on March 5, 2027.

Nov 20: HRC 2026 Dues Information Available— Marc Moyers, Treasurer

Annual membership runs from January through December, and dues of \$35 must be paid by March 31, 2026. Paying dues enables you to remain active in projects, activities, and communications. Your support is essential for the chapter to cover costs of projects, continuing education, website hosting, and much more. In addition to paying your dues, please consider additional donations.

HRC requires the payment of dues for a member to remain in good standing, but if financial hardship exists, please contact the treasurer to request a waiver. The State VMN Office and the Virginia Cooperative Extension requires that you update and re-enroll your membership on Better Impact each year, and that you complete at least one volunteer hour to remain "active".

Payments can be made by check or digitally by using the PayPal option found on our website at historicrivers.org/membership-renewal/.

See the email from November 20 for full details, including the "[Annual Dues Request 2026](#)" form or download it from "My Files" on the Better Impact Volunteer Management System.



Mysterious Mushrooms —by Kathi Mestayer

"Here are two photos of mushrooms that popped up at the edge of [my husband] Mac's plot at the Community Garden. Anybody recognize them? Did his tabasco peppers get them started?"

Newsletter Co-Editor Shirley Devan thinks it could be in the Coprinopsis (Ink Cap) genus. Co-Editor Claire White says fungi ID is very difficult and multiple observations over days can help. Features identified from the photo include a striate conical brown cap with relatively smooth white scaly patches, brown gills, and a veil does not seem to be apparent on the smooth and equal whitish stem.

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 including the Virginia Cooperative Extension and is based in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation within the College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech.

Virginia Cooperative Extension 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, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

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).



Eastern Red-backed Salamander (Plethodon cinereus) at Greenspring on 11/5/25. Photo by Chloe Harner.



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