

The Naturalist

December 2025 Newsletter | Volume 21, Number 12
Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists

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Feature Photo: *Wilson's snipe* (*Gallinago delicata*) on a snowy day at Mainland Farm, Williamsburg, Virginia, Monday, 12/08/25 by **Martha Moss**.

A Message from the President

by Janet Harper

Happy New Year everyone. I hope you all had a great holiday; however you chose to celebrate it. We made a pre-holiday trip to Seattle to see our son and his family with a side trip to Leavenworth, WA, a Bavarian Christmas Town in the mountains where we had a little snow and enjoyed all of our favorite German foods. We got back a couple days before Christmas to all the craziness of last-minute shopping, cleaning and cooking for Christmas dinner guests. I'm looking forward to a much quieter January!

I hope you're all enjoying nature this time of year. I love how we can see so much of it in our own yard. As I write this, we have 3 deer in their lush winter coats relaxing in our back yard, close enough for us to watch. The young one is laying down behind the large blueberry bush while the two adults are resting a few feet away. I'd rather see them this way than eating our azaleas and hostas! We also have a wren roosting overnight in the Christmas wreath on the door for the 3rd year in a row. All we can see is his speckled brown butt tucked into a gap in the greenery. I wonder where he goes when we don't have the wreath up? We're missing our usual raccoons but have seen two different opossums on the Ring camera at night. So

far, on FeederWatch days we've mostly just seen the 'usual' birds we see most of the year, and not a lot of migrating birds. Hopefully we'll have some new ones appear soon. Don't you just love nature!

Thank you all for making 2025 such a good year for the chapter; we did a lot of worthwhile projects and made a big difference in our community. I'm hoping 2026 will be an even better year for us. Perhaps we'll have new projects to work on or expand on some of our current ones. **Do you have thoughts about what HRC should accomplish in 2026? Are there community needs we should be addressing, or projects you'd like to lead or support? What would you like to accomplish as an HRC member?** Someone once told me that instead of making New Year's resolutions that don't get carried out, we should make plans for the things we want to achieve. My plans include assisting the transition to a new president, expanding my

repertoire of activities once my tenure as president is over, and getting involved in more stewardship activities. What are your plans? Together we can make 2026 our most successful year yet!

Our January chapter meeting is a joint one with the Williamsburg Bird Club and will be on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, January 21, at Quarterpath Recreation Center, starting at 6 for social time and 6:30 for the meeting. I'll send an email to the chapter after the board meeting with announcements, so I won't have to talk a lot about HRC business at the joint meeting. Be on the lookout for an email from the Bird Club about the presenter's topic and the Zoom link. Also watch for details about the **3rd Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service** activities on Sunday, January 18 and Monday, January 19.

Have a safe and Happy New Year!

On the Calendar

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

Saturday	Jan 10	Longleaf Tree Planting at James River NWR Contact Cyrus Brame, FWS
Sun-Mon	Jan 19-20	MLK Jr. Day of Service Activities—details to come via Google Group
Wednesday	Jan 21	Joint HRC-WBC Meeting 6pm Social, 6:30pm Speaker at Quarterpath Rec
Saturday	Jan 24	Invasives Removal behind Berkeley Middle 9am-12pm with Tracy Melton
Sunday	Jan 25	Wildlife Mapping at Yorktown Battlefield 9am-12pm with Jeff Honig

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.



Photo by Dave Watt: Panoramic view of 16 volunteers planting 600 longleaf pines at the James River National Wildlife Refuge on 30 Dec 2025. There are two more planting events on Jan 6th and 10th, starting at 9am, meeting at 4550 Flowerdew Hundred Road, Hopewell, VA.. Volunteers should notify Cyrus Brame 48 hours prior at

cyrus_brame@fws.gov so he can have enough supplies (there's cocoa, too).

Cohort XIX in December by Basic Training Committee

Cohort XIX surpassed the halfway mark of their training to become Virginia Master Naturalists in December with three months of activities under their belts. The twelfth and final training event of 2025 occurred on Saturday, December 6th as a combination geology class and field activity. Linda Morse, College of William and Mary (W&M) geology instructor and Cohort VII member led the group in a full day immersion into the geologic history of our region including an overview of the five physiographic regions in Virginia, plate tectonics, continental drift, rock and mineral classification, and fossils. Half the day was spent in the lab at W&M, then a carpool caravan crossed the James River (via ferry) to go to Chippokes State Park to explore the marine fossils found in abundance along the shoreline there.



Pictured Above: "Geology Day" Snapshots of Cohort XIX. (Top Left) Steve Day, Robin Rose, and Cheryl Lynch take a front row seat at the lecture portion of the day. All three trainees are also Master Gardeners! **(Top Right)** Tom Mierle, Katherine Wilkins, and Chris Wilkins with igneous rock samples. Tom is an active wildlife transporter, and the Wilkins have been making an effort to make it out to as many different volunteer opportunities outside of basic training as possible. **(Bottom) Cohort members with Linda Morse along the banks of the James River after fossil hunting.** Left to right: Ajit Joshi, Tom Mierle, Kevin Pettit-Pokora, Robin Rose (standing), Katherine Wilkins (sitting), Caitlyn Verlik, Kyle Morford (standing), Hope Cook (sitting), Chris Wilkins, Steve Day, Linda Morse, Andrea Case, and Cheryl Lynch. Missing Erin Schibani and Chloe Harner.

Holiday Outreach: Give Earth a Chance by Marie Robertson



As with many HRC activities, the Christmas Parade was the result of many volunteers' time, talents and efforts. It takes a village for events and activities to happen, and our village showed up for the parade again this year! The two Zoom brainstorming sessions were well-attended by an enthusiastic group that helped us choose our "Give Earth a Chance" slogan, based off the 1970 Earth Day theme. We were guided by Dean and Valerie Shostak's experience organizing and leading last year's HRC entry in the parade. The inflatable globe was loaned to us by Marie's colleagues in the Center for Geospatial Analysis at The College of William & Mary.

Most importantly, Bill Grass' generous offer to use his 1950s Ford pickup as the parade float allowed us to beautifully fit in with the 2025 parade theme: Rockin' Retro. Bill spent much of his fall rebuilding and restoring the 1920s Thrush & Stough antique sleigh, which he pulled behind his truck on a trailer that he welded specifically for the sleigh and this event. As if that wasn't enough, Bill devised a way to use a car battery to power the light strips that he attached to the sleigh and his truck. **The photo above shows the truck and sleigh lit up along the parade route as captured by HRC member Cynthia Ferentinos.**



Fairy lights were loaned to us by the Shostaks, and Suzanne Stern created the large "Give Earth a Chance" and smaller "Protect Habitat" signs that we added to our sign collection this year. Not to be outdone, Bill constructed two wooden frames to hold the large signs in the truck bed, so they would be secure and visible to everyone. The Shostaks and Ginny Broome decorated empty boxes to look like gifts, which helped round out the sleigh decorations.

Surprising everyone, Bill arrived at the parade with a **stuffed horse (pictured left)** that he had found at a local thrift store and mounted into the truck bed to 'pull' the sleigh. Marie used a reindeer antler headband and red nose to make the horse into a reindeer, which Bill was able to shine a light on just as the parade was starting. Katherine Wilkins and Dean helped Marie tie down and decorate the inflatable globe with a large red bow and a red Santa hat. All around the float, HRC members were busy assembling and putting on their costumes.

As we walked in the parade, we enjoyed hearing comments from bystanders: "I love trees" when they saw Valerie's tree costume; "I love mushrooms" as Hope walked by in her homemade mushroom costume. Others exclaimed over Dean's light-up sunflowers and Ginny's bee costume. An unforgettable surprise along the route was seeing HRC past-president Connie Reitz, who had driven in from the Pittsburgh area to cheer us on and even stepped out to give us hugs.

Overall, we had a wonderful time walking in the parade. The weather was relatively mild for December, and many people showed up to watch. We greatly appreciate everyone's contribution, whether it was wearing a costume, helping with final decorations, inflating the globe on-site (thanks, Keith Navia!), and carrying signs and the HRC banner along the parade route. Bill was a patient and careful driver, and Karen Hines was a wonderful help breaking down the float at the end. It was a fun way to spread the word about our wonderful chapter and everything that we do. Note: If you are interested in helping the HRC participate in next year's parade, please let Marie Robertson know; we'd love to have someone lead the effort for 2026!



Photos by Linda Morse: (Above) HRC participants (with the Grinch) prior to the parade start. Loosely left to right: Pam Schnabel (cardinal), Grinch (parade visitor), Tracy Matthew Melton (naturalist), Valerie Shostak (tree), Suzanne Stern (raptor), Bill Grass, Dean Shostak (sunflower), Janet Harper (raccoon), Marie Robertson, Jeanette Navia (bear), Katherine Wilkins (fox), Hope Cook (mushroom), Patty Maloney, Bill Harper (naturalist), Ajit Joshi (monarch), and Ginny Broome (bumblebee). **(Below) Karen Hines and Bill Grass in front of Bill's 1950s Ford pickup, the focal point for the HRC float with the "Give Earth a Chance" signs.**

A Christmas Parade Rhyme* by Marie Robertson



'Twas the evening of the parade, and all through the 'Burg,
Floats were being decorated, music could be heard.
The HRC naturalists assembled around
Bill's 1950s Ford and a globe, so round.

The globe was lit from below and all sides,
Its festive bow and Santa hat worn with pride.
An antique sleigh served as its seat,
While the truck bed carried the reindeer lead.

The naturalists were costumed, to the entertainment of all,
As a mushroom, a bear, a raptor, and a bright red Cardinal;
While walking sunflowers, a fox, a 'coon, and a tree,
Marched alongside a woodsman, a monarch, and a bee.

A green Grinch from afar joined the naturalist group,
Rounding out the amusing and very memorable troop.

Slowly they got in line for the start,
Where the public eagerly awaited them in the dark.
The cheers, Christmas greetings, and waves were exuberant,
From the crowds of adults, and children with their parents.

The driver, Bill Grass, maneuvered the way
While his co-pilot, Karen, observed the fray;
The HRC banner was carried by two,
Who fearlessly marched ahead of the crew.

“Now faster, now slower, stay in the middle lane,
We’re passing the judges, they’re announcing our group name!
Keep pace, don’t dawdle, the route isn’t long,
And some floats keep playing the same Christmas song.”

There came a few turns as the float neared the end,
and the naturalists searched for their friends.
Most were still there, except the racoon and the Grinch,
Who caught up to the group, but it wasn’t a cinch!

The signs were dismantled, belongings handed out,
The globe was cut free and taken down from its mount.
Tired as they were, the naturalists looked forward to bed,
While visions of smiling faces danced in their heads.

‘Twas great fun, a success, a right merry good time,
And we hope that the people learned from our signs:
To protect habitat and insects, choose native trees and plants,
All of which will give our precious Earth a better chance.

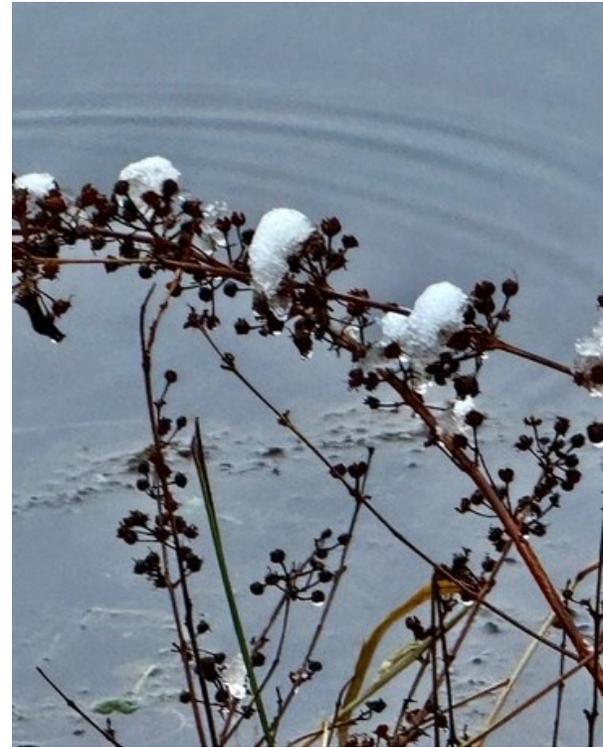
(*Poem NOT created by AI, based on the 19th century poem
“Twas the Night Before Christmas”)

Pictured right: (Top) Cohort XIX basic training members Ajit Joshi, Katherine Wilkins, and Hope Cook dressed to capture the attention of parade watchers as a monarch butterfly, fox, and mushroom, and with vibrant “Protect Habitat” signs.

(Middle) Dean and Valerie Shostak, Patty Maloney, Ginny Broome, and Pam Schnabel show off variations of sign messages including “Plant Trees. Grow Hope” and “ Plant Natives for Pollinators.” **(Bottom)** Tracy Matthew Melton was dressed ready to remove invasive plants, Bill Harper looks ready for a hike with hiking poles and binoculars in tow, and Janet Harper is cozy in a raccoon costume.



Winter Scenes at Greensprings, Dec 6 by Linda Hughes



Captions for winter scenes above, left to right:

"He was made of snow, but the children know how he came to life one day."

"Ooh Frosty the snowman
Knew the sun was hot that day
So he said, "Let's run and we'll have some fun
Now before I melt away."

Decodon verticillatus, the sole living species in the genus *Decodon*, is a flowering plant in the family *Lythraceae*. It's commonly known as waterwillow or swamp loosestrife. It's native to wetlands in the eastern half of the United States and Canada.

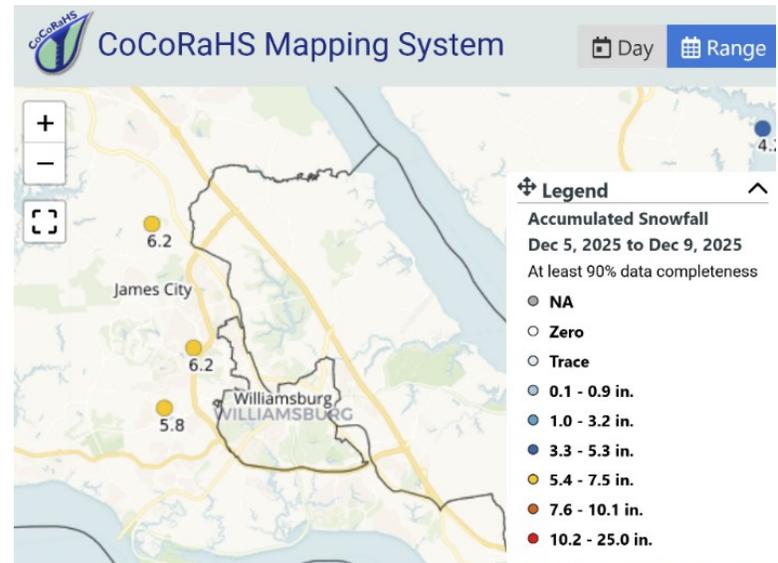


Photo bottom right with Editor's Note: Three CoCoRaHS precipitation monitors in the Historic Triangle area recorded snowfall accumulations exceeding 5 inches between **December 5th-9th**. Local schools were closed on Friday, December 5th due to snowy conditions in the morning. The weekend was free from fresh snowfall and most had disappeared by midday Saturday, December 6th, but by late Sunday evening a front moved back into the area closing schools for an additional two days with the highest snow fall occurring the evening of December 8th. CoCoRaHS is a citizen science project that aggregates daily precipitation data across country for use by a variety of organizations.

49th Christmas Bird Count Recap

by Shirley Devan, photos by Barb Creel

As our thoughts turned to the Dec 14, 2025, Christmas Bird Count, the COLD temperatures of the 2024 count were still fresh in our minds...and toes and fingers! Surely, the 2025 count would give us better weather. How could it be worse? How naïve we are?

As compiler I kept my eye on the forecast for December 14 – wondering about the number of participants and birds who would show up for the forecasted rain, snow, sleet, wintry mix in the morning. And then...in the afternoon, the expected increased winds and dropping temperatures. And it was still fall – officially!

Unfortunately, the forecast was correct and the early birders on the 14th set out in rain, snow, and wintry mix around 7:00 am. The tentative count for total number of participants is 126: 70 field participants and 56 feeder watchers. Most field teams called it a day by mid-afternoon, and some were home in time to count their yard and feeder birds before early sunset.

Total species for our 2025 count was 114, higher than the 2024 count of 110. The total number of **individual birds was 23,067** – almost 10,000 FEWER birds in 2025 and 30% fewer than 2024. **Highlights included** a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at a feeder in Ford's Colony and a Western Tanager at a feeder in the Rolling Woods neighborhood (which also hosted 2 Baltimore Orioles!).

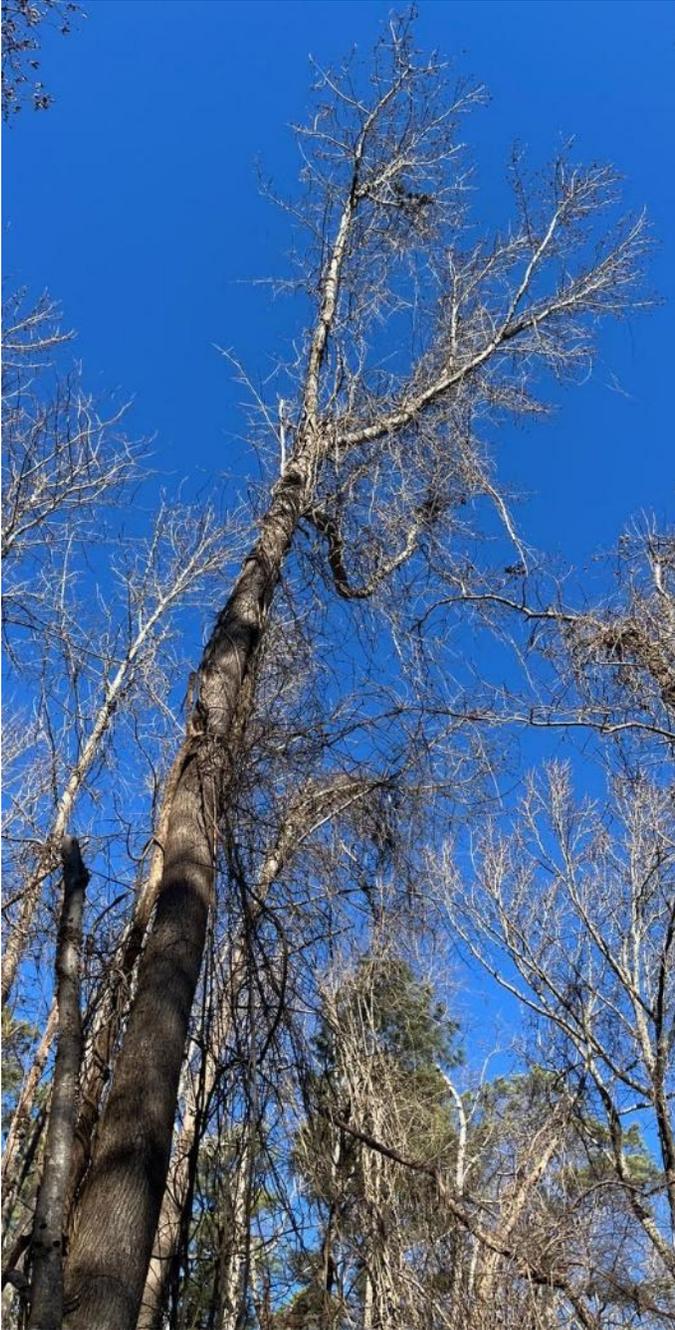
Two important numbers that the Audubon scientists pay a lot of attention to is the EFFORT for both party hours and party miles. Party hours on foot in 2024 were 117 hours. In 2025, party hours on foot were 97. Party miles on foot in 2024 was 87; in 2025 party miles on foot were 53. These numbers are so important because Audubon weighs the number of species and birds against the effort of the observers. That helps them determine if indeed the numbers of birds are lower than usual – or if the lower numbers are a result of the lower numbers of observers. After all, it's the science that counts!

I extend sincere and grateful thanks to the 12 sector leaders and the 70 field participants who braved the nasty weather for science! Master Naturalists are critical to a successful count. Forty-seven Master Naturalists from three Chapters joined in. Our Historic Rivers Chapter had almost 45 participants with one person from the Peninsula Chapter and two from the Middle Peninsula Chapter (estimated). Thank you so much! Our 56 feeder watchers are as critical as ever. Without these diligent observers (tucked into their warm homes!), we would not have our Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Western Tanager, or 10+ Baltimore Orioles.

All numbers in this note are tentative until The National Audubon Society and the Regional Editor officially accept them. I'll be entering the final numbers by January 15. The numbers may change a tad, but not much. *Our next count is the **Spring Bird Count April 26, 2026**. The weather WILL BE WARMER.*



Liquidambar Raining Down by Tracy Matthew Melton



On December 17, Keith Navia, Linda Morse, and I removed wisteria roots and runners in the woods behind the Berkeley Middle School athletic fields. Wisteria vines have killed or heavily damaged numerous trees in this area. Several large tree trunks have snapped under the weight of the strangling vines. The canopies of other trees have been diminished and deformed by the vines. Cut wisteria vines hang from trees and broken trunks. Wisteria-damaged bark spirals up the trunks of a couple of young beech trees. We worked immediately adjacent to a tall stump left after wisteria had killed the tree.

As we worked, Linda noted robins gathering in the canopy of a tall sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) tree hovering above us (pictured left). Dead vines draped the sweetgum.

Soon after, I heard what sounded like raindrops softly landing in the surrounding leaf litter. I looked up at the sky but saw nothing that looked like rainclouds. I felt light impacts, again like raindrops.

Keith looked up and saw that the robins were energetically feeding on the seeds in the gumballs hanging from the sweetgum branches high above. Their feeding was raining black, winged seeds and gumball chaff down on us. The shower continued for several minutes. When I looked up, I saw a falling seed, plummeting directly toward my left eye. Keith had a similar experience. Linda sat on a pine log, brought down by wisteria, and seeds and chaff collected on her pants. I found some in my hair when I got home.

This area will recover after the wisteria is removed. Numerous, small American holly (*Ilex opaca*) seedlings scattered across the slope behind Berkeley and a pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) patch on the edges of the infestation offer hopeful evidence that productive native plants will again thrive here.

Standing in this shower of sweetgum seeds, though, made that process more palpable. We could hear it. We could feel it. We could see it. We were immersed in the moment, as natural interactions that might restore an environment that people have severely damaged were so exuberantly taking place. We cannot know now if any of those sweetgum seeds will germinate and grow to maturity. But it is an inspiration to know that this wisteria-draped tree is still healthy enough to reproduce, and a gift to experience this abounding moment so immediately.

Upcoming 2026 Weekend Volunteer Opportunities

Since the October 2025 Project Fair leaders in the Historic Rivers Chapter have been discussing ways of adding more group volunteer opportunities for members who work a Monday-Friday job. As a result, a few existing projects have added or expanded Saturday opportunities. In addition, we hope to spotlight existing opportunities from approved projects like The Nature Conservancy, Fish and Wildlife Service, and others.

January 2026 Weekend Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Saturday, January 10:** Longleaf Tree Planting at James River National Wildlife Refuge in Hopewell, 9am-12pm—email cyrus.brame@fws.gov to reserve your spot 48-hours before. Training provided.
- **Sunday, January 18 and Monday, January 19:** Martin Luther King Jr. “Day of Service” local chapter activities—details coming via Google Group. Invasives and litter pickup activities are being finalized.
- **Saturday, January 24:** Invasive Plants Removal behind Berkeley Middle School, 9am-12pm, 1118 Ironbound Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23188. Meet Tracy Matthew Melton at the Community Video Center at the back of the parking lot on the left (north) side of the school. Bring pruning tools if you have them.



Ongoing Monthly Volunteer Opportunities:

Subject to change as needed. Check the HRC Google Group for reminders and last-minute changes. No need to RSVP but appreciated if you're new to the project. Bring water, and other personal protective equipment (PPE). **Sturdy closed toe shoes and gloves are required for all stewardship projects.** No need to stay for the entire time. Work as your schedule allows and to your physical ability.

- **(Select Months) 1st Saturdays at Brickyard Riparian Buffer Demonstration Garden and Meadow Habitat, 9-11am** (April, June, August, October). Project Leads: Judy Kinshaw-Ellis and Donna Benson.
- **(Most) 2nd and 4th Saturdays working on invasive plant removal in the City of Williamsburg** (behind Berkeley Middle School and various locations on the campus of The College of William and Mary). Tracy Matthew Melton will send updates on specific locations and times monthly.
- **(Starting in February) 3rd Saturdays low tide litter picking along the Colonial Parkway** (pictured above). Claire White will send reminders with starting time and locations. All equipment provided.
- **Last Sunday Wildlife Mapping** at Yorktown Battlefield, 9am-12pm. Jeff Honig will send reminders.
- **Quarterly Pop-Up Wildlife Mappings.** Tory Gussman, Babs Giffin, and/or Shan Gill send updates.

A Closer Look at Lichen and Fungi by Adrienne Frank

In November, my husband Gary [Driscoll] and I went to the Upper James City County Park for a walk. We found a wide variety of lichen and fungi, some very colorful, interesting shapes, and lots of textures. We were able to identify some. I took a few photographs. Here are a few examples:



Funeral Bell *Galerina marginata* – An extremely poisonous skullcap mushroom; small but mighty.



Orange Hobnail Canker *Endothia gyrosa* – Sac fungus growing on a downed log.



Scalewort *Frullania* - Fun name! A leafy liverwort with greenish or brownish sub-pinnately branched shoots. Liverworts grow against flat surfaces.



Pink Earth Lichen *Dibaeis baeomyces* – Cool because it is pink.



Rim Lichen *Lecanora* - Called rim lichens, members of this genus have roughly circular fruiting discs with rims that have photosynthetic tissue similar to that of the nonfruiting part of the lichen body.



Script Lichen *Graphis scripta* – Crustose lichen that looks like someone was writing a letter on the tree.



Parmotrema – Foliose lichen with hairs.



British Soldiers *Cladonia cristatella* – Fruticose lichen with red caps and it sits next to one with brown caps *Cladonia sobolescents*.

Shorter Shares from HRC Members and Beyond

HRC Save the Dates

Jan 18/19—Be on the lookout for HRC service opportunities in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. “Day of Service” during the 3-day weekend. Monday, Jan 19 is a federal holiday.

Feb 14—HRC Hospitality is hosting an afternoon “Cookies and Conversation” with S’mores!



Winter Bird Feeder Tree —by Deena Obrokta

The students at Seaford Elementary School with help from Dr. Deena Obrokta, the Outreach partner, decorated a tree with popcorn, cranberries, orange slices and pinecones with sun butter and birdseed. The birds will be well-fed during the holiday break.

This volunteer opportunity is a part of the 4-H Schoolyard Habitats Outreach, coordinated by Virginia Cooperative Extension office of York/Poquoson. If you’re interested in earning volunteer hours with them learn more at the 4-H schoolyard webpage on yorkcounty.gov. Nearby York County schools in the Williamsburg area include Magruder Elementary, Waller Mill Elementary, Queens Lake Middle, and Bruton High.

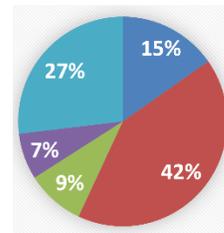
Soft Plastics Drive Update —by Karen Hines



The good news is that more soft plastics are being recycled with increased neighborhood and other group participation in the 2025 Nex Trex Recycling

Challenge. However, the chapter input has reduced as other drives have started. **HRC needs about 320 more pounds of clean, dry, stretchy plastic** to meet the Trex requirement for receiving another 6-foot bench to place in another local nature space.

We've been losing a considerable amount of plastic due to wet and food-contaminated offerings, as well as other unacceptable plastic. Please be sure your plastic is clean –leaf-free, dirt-free, and without food remnants—as well as dry and stretchy. Just test for stretch by pushing the plastic with your thumb. Plastic that held vegetables is not acceptable. You've been doing a great job of keeping recyclable soft plastic out of the landfill. **Our deadline is early February. Keep up the good work!**



42% Citizen Science
27% Stewardship
15% Administration
9% Continuing Education
7% Education and Outreach

2025 HRC Volunteer Hours

At the end of December **over 24,000 volunteer hours** were recorded by Historic Rivers Chapter members in Better Impact, the volunteer management system used by the Virginia Master Naturalist Program. 42% of our chapter’s hours were dedicated to citizen science projects, 27% to stewardship projects, 15% to chapter administration, 9% to continuing education, and 7% to education and outreach projects.



12/21 Wildlife Trail Cameras Installed —photo by Barb Creel

On the Winter Solstice 20 volunteers came out for the first wildlife camera installation of the season at York River State Park. This annual project, championed by HRC member Dean Shostak, monitors evidence of wildlife, mostly mammals which “are secretive and can be observed only by using unobtrusive techniques.” Pictured above, Andrea Case and Dean Shostak install a camera at the base of a tree. Volunteers installed 5 cameras on the Sunday morning outing. These cameras will be monitored regularly and moved as needed throughout the monitoring season.

EOY Book Box Update

127 Nature-related items (mostly books) were placed in the free community book boxes in the Lackey area of York County in 2025. Most were placed in the box at Charles E. Brown Park during litter pickups led by HRC President Janet Harper, while others have been added to the box at Lackey Clinic, a free and charitable healthcare center.



12/13 Glebe Gut and College Creek Beach Litter Pickup—by Claire White

On Saturday, December 13th seven volunteers came out for the final 2025 litter pickup along the Colonial Parkway. 60+ pounds of litter were removed from Glebe Gut (a new pickup site) in an hour, then the crew headed to College Creek Beach and collected another 17+ pounds of litter. Thad Hecht was able to take 12.5 pounds of recyclables to the JCC recycling facility after the event.

During 2025, 831.5 pounds of litter were removed from the Colonial Parkway with 43 HRC volunteers coming out to one or more of the 14 litter pickups scheduled across the year.

Pictured: (Above) Anne Annala standing in front of tree roots exposed during low tide by shoreline erosion at Glebe Gut. Photo by Gail Peterson. (Below) Les Lawrence, Thad Hecht, Kyle Morford, Dan Foster, Gail Peterson, and Anne Annala.

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).



*Bonus Photo:
British soldier lichen
(Cladonia cristatella)
at Greensprings
Interpretive Trail
on 12/23/25
by [Martha Moss](#).*

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