

Northern Neck Master Naturalists Newsletter

December 2011

Volunteer Hour Opportunities

Belle Isle State Park will have a First Day Hike on Sunday, January 1, at 2 p.m. Volunteers are needed to lead a portion of the hike on Mud Creek Trail and boardwalk. This trail goes by marsh and creek, through forest, and by open field. The total hike will be between 3/4 mile to 1 mile. The portions of the walk will be divided by the number of volunteers available to lead a portion. Hot cocoa, apple cider and coffee will be available. Contact Charlene to register.

Advanced Training Opportunities

Flying WILD Teach Workshop

Thursday, January 26, 2012, 6 - 9 pm

Princess Anne Recreation Center, 1400 Nimmo Parkway, Virginia Beach

For Teachers and Informal Educators Only

Presented by Lynnhaven River NOW & Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation as part of the Winter Wildlife Festival

Celebrate birds with Flying WILD, a conservation education guide featuring interdisciplinary hands-on classroom activities along with information for engaging students in a school-wide bird festival. Key concepts include migration, adaptation, importance of habitat and bird conservation efforts. Designed originally for middle school teachers and students, the guide contains activities suitable for all grade levels. All participants will receive a copy of the Flying WILD Activity Guide and supplementary materials on Virginia birds. For more information, please call Helen Kuhns at 757-962-5398. Registration is required. To register, visit vb.gov.com/winterwildlife. Seats are limited.

Project Underground Workshop

February 23, 2012

9:00am – 4:00pm

Grand Caverns, Grottoes, VA

In the morning participate in and learn Project Underground activities. The Project Underground program offers an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the unique

karst environment (a land area that includes sinkholes, springs, sinking streams and caves). The lessons in the guide can be used to teach citizens of all ages about karst topography and the management needs of the karst resources. Use these materials with students in classrooms and in outreach programs with citizens and agency staff.

In the afternoon participate in a Cave and Sink Hole experience at Grand Caverns. Enjoy a hike up cave hill to see sinkholes and natural cave entrances and then explore the underground in Grand Caverns.

Please bring your own lunch, snacks and beverages for this workshop.

To learn more about Grand Caverns go to <http://grandcaverns.com/v.php?pg=15>

To register for this workshop go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/projectunderground>

For further information contact either Carol Zokaites at carol.zokaites@dcr.virginia.gov or Page Hutchinson at page.hutchinson@deq.virginia.gov

While the Northern Neck does not have caves, the geography of Virginia is one of the topics a Master Naturalist must be knowledgeable about.

News to Use

Outdoor Time Helps Kids Get a Good Night's Sleep

McClatchy Tribune – November 07, 2011

By McClatchy Tribune

When kids spend time outdoors, they sleep better. Although that's something your grandpa may have said over the years, there's now a study that proves he was right. The report and parent guide, "Green Time for Sleep Time" from the National Wildlife Federation, says between racing around on tight schedules and staring at electronic media for hours a day, the majority of kids are sleep deprived. It says lack of play time outdoors is a big part of the problem. Today's indoor kids are over-stimulated by television, handheld games and other electronic devices. To get a good night's sleep, they...

- [\[>\] Read the article](#)
- [\[>\] Download the report and guide](#)

Guide to the Frogs and Toads of Virginia Now Available

A Guide to the Frogs and Toads of Virginia is a 44 page field guide that covers all 27 species of frogs and toads that inhabit Virginia. Species accounts, descriptions, biology, behavior, habitats and conservation issues are all described and illustrated through more than 80 photographs and drawings. Included is a complimentary CD of *The Calls of Virginia Frogs and Toads*. The price is \$10.00 and is [available through the VDGIF website](#).

[Read the introduction to *A Guide to the Frogs and Toads of Virginia* »](#)

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has created the Open Spaces blog to showcase some of their wildlife refuges and to offer the general public an inside view of the day-to-day operations. Blog posts profile their work in the Everglades, migratory birds, and more. Entries link to additional materials, including lesson plans and more.

<http://www.fws.gov/news/blog/index.cfm>

Make a Special Bird Treat

DGIF Outdoor Report

The following recipe is a great food mixture for birds that can be smeared on tree bark, fence posts, the wood in a wood pile, or pine cones hung in the yard where they can be seen from your windows. This mix provides a supplemental source of fat energy and nutrients to the birds. Making the mixture is fun, inexpensive and something the whole family can join in.

First, in large bowl, stir together:

1. 1 part flour
2. 3 parts yellow corn meal
3. 1 part bird seed
4. a handful of raisins
5. a handful of shelled peanuts

Then add 1 part of lard or peanut butter and stir until the mixture holds together in one big ball. (Or, you can substitute bacon grease that's been rendered and chilled, but do not use shortening.)

This mixture will attract nuthatches, chickadees, tufted titmice, brown creepers, woodpeckers, mockingbirds, and even bluebirds. Keep a record of the different species of birds you observe, it's fun, and educational for "children" of all ages. The birds will appreciate it too!

Blaze Orange Is Not Just For Hunters! Be Safe, Be Seen!

DGIF Outdoor Report



Blaze orange is not just for hunters. Any time you are working or walking in the fields or forests during the firearms seasons, wear blaze orange so that you can be clearly seen by hunters. Be safe – be seen!

Except for early muzzleloading and hunting waterfowl, wearing blaze orange during the general firearms hunting season is not only smart - it's the law! And a good one that saves lives each year. **But blaze orange is not just for hunters.** This high-visibility "safety orange" is recognized in the workplace, both indoors or out, so you can be seen. If you are a landowner, jogger, hiker, or walk your dog on woodland trails, you would be wise to wear a blaze orange hat, vest, or coat so a hunter can see you and not mistake your movement for game. Just like driving defensively, you should take the same precautions and awareness if you go to the woods for any reason during the hunting seasons from October through January. **Dress defensively. Wear blaze orange to be safe and be seen.** Also, if you should fall and get injured, rescuers will find you easier... time saved that could keep you from further harm. If you have dogs that "roam" out of the yard, put a blaze orange collar on them so they are not likely to be mistaken for a fox or coyote. Remember whether you are a hunter, or just enjoying the outdoors, cutting firewood or walking a woodland trail, wear "safety orange"- it's the woodwise thing to do!

Drivers, Use Caution to Avoid Hitting Deer

DGIF Outdoor Report

With shorter days, many motorists will be commuting in the dark, increasing the likelihood of their vehicle colliding with a deer. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) is encouraging Virginia's drivers to be more cautious as they travel the Commonwealth's highways this season. Deer are more active during the fall breeding season than any other time of the year, and a majority of all deer/vehicle collisions occur in the months of October, November and December. While less than 2 percent of vehicle fatalities and injuries involve deer collisions in Virginia, hitting a deer can cause considerable damage to both people and property.

Deer populations are managed with regulated hunting. The Board of Game and Inland Fisheries sets hunting seasons, bag limits, and other wildlife-related regulations based on sound science through a process that includes considerable public input. Wildlife biologists with VDGIF estimate the white-tailed deer population in Virginia at this time of year to be at approximately 900,000 animals. Each year, deer hunters harvest more than 200,000.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries recommends the following tips to drivers to avoid hitting a deer.

1. When driving, particularly at dusk and dawn, slow down and be attentive.
2. Deer typically travel in groups. If you see one deer, likely there will be others. If one deer crosses the road as you approach, others are likely to follow.
3. Drivers should apply brakes to avoid hitting a deer, but should never swerve out of the lane to miss a deer. A collision with another vehicle, tree or other object is likely to be more serious than hitting a deer.
4. Deer habitually travel the same areas; therefore deer crossing signs have been installed by the Virginia Department of Transportation. Use caution when you see these signs.
5. Rely on your caution and your own senses. Deer whistles mounted on the bumper of a car have not been shown to be effective.
6. Any person involved in a collision with a deer or bear while driving a motor vehicle should immediately report the accident to a law enforcement officer. Once properly documented, a driver may keep the carcass for their own use.

If you have articles, advanced training, volunteer opportunities or other information to submit please send them to ctalcott@nnwifi.com