

Northern Neck Master Naturalists

June 2012

CONGRADULATIONS TIMES TWO



Northern Neck Master Naturalist Linsey Kramer was recently named 2011-2012 Teacher of the Year for the Colonial Beach Elementary School. Linsey has just finished her second year of teaching kindergarten.

Linsey and husband John are expecting twins in October.

NEW FACES AT BELLE ISLE STATE PARK

BISP has two new folks to help out during the summer and early fall.

Virginia Vere is the seasonal interpreter at Belle Isle State Park. She will be there until the end of October. She grew up in the Northern Neck and her father, the late William Humphreys once worked at Belle Isle. (A picnic shelter is named in his honor.) She loves being out in nature and teaching others about the importance of the environment.



Russell Reed is the AmeriCorps member at Belle Isle this summer. He is a rising sophomore at Longwood University where he majors in anthropology and he hopes to make

a career with Virginia State Parks. He is from Mathews, where he grew up kayaking and playing in the Chesapeake Bay.

STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

Early bird registration is now open for our next Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Volunteer Conference and Training, September 7-9, 2012 in Martinsville. Early bird registration ends July 15. Early bird price is \$100 for the full conference or \$40 for Saturday only. These go up to \$120 and \$55 after July 15. Full conference registration includes: Friday supper, Saturday lunch and supper, Sunday lunch, instruction, and materials, and choice of two 3-hour sessions at the Virginia Museum of Natural History on Saturday and one field session at Fairy Stone State Park, Sunday. Saturday only registration includes: Saturday lunch, instruction, and materials choice of two 3-hour sessions at the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Registration fees do not include lodging. Limited lodging is available at Fairy Stone State Park (it will probably be taken by the time you read this, but try anyway). Very reasonable group rates have been setup at two motels in Martinsville.

www.regonline.com/2012_vmn_conference is the url for more details and registration information. **All registrations close August 6 (one month prior).** Register as early as possible to get your choice of sessions, all of which have limited availability.

The Southwestern Piedmont Chapter will be hosting the event, and our two main venues will be the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville, and nearby Fairy Stone State Park in Patrick County.

Fairy Stone is the largest of Virginia's 6 original state parks, and its attractions include more than a dozen miles of trails, a lake, and, of



course, the staurolite stones that give the park its name.

The Virginia Museum of Natural History has been one of our sponsoring agencies since the beginning of the Virginia Master Naturalist program, and it is well-known for its educational programs, exhibits, scientific research, and collections.



MASTER NATURALIST PHOTO CONTEST

Our Chapter is holding an internal photo contest to select our entries for the State Photo Contest. Each member can submit three Virginia Flora and three Virginia Fauna pictures for judging. The pictures must have been taken in Virginia. Pictures will be submitted for judging as .jpg images. Pictures must be submitted by July 15. The pictures that are judged to be the best in each category will be printed and framed by the Chapter and sent to the State competition. See attachments for rules and guidance.

A big screen viewing and critique of all submitted pictures will be held at BISP on Tuesday July 24 at 10:00 AM.

MASTER NATURALISTS SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL EVENT

On Thursday, May 24, Lancaster Middle School sixth-graders enjoyed Think Outside the Sink—a day of meaningful water conservation activities and having fun outside. The event, organized by Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District (NNMN Faye Andrashko) with Belle Isle

State Park (Charlene Talcott), gave the class of 89 sixth-graders a chance to participate in inland and waterside environmental education activities and enjoy a beautiful day at Belle Isle State Park.

Groups of sixth-graders rotated through six hands-on activities stations: Seining and Tide Marking; Pollution & Water Quality—testing with probes ; Incredible Journey—the Water Cycle & Groundwater; Oysters: Filterers, Food & Fun; Wetlands—the Salt Marsh Cast; and Watersheds, Soil Health & Erosion. The stations incorporated presentations and associated activities intended to reinforce subject knowledge gained from classroom activities and the Virginia Standards of Learning.

Ten of the twenty-six volunteers from local partnering organizations were Northern Neck Master Naturalists. They assisted with planning, station programs, escorting, timekeeping, safety, and general setup assistance.

Gail Sigler and Sam Johnson (NNSWCD) talked with the students about Watersheds, Erosion and Soil Health. Lowery Pemberton, shown



here, along with Amanda Strong (NNSWCD) covered Pollution and Water Quality and Water Testing.

Possibly the most fun of the day was had by Carol Hammer and Pam and John Narney. Their presentations on Tides and Seining turned into a day at the beach for them and the students. Everyone who wanted to, got their feet and a

lot more wet. Carol is shown helping the students retrieve the fish and shell fish that they have seined.



Here John is showing students the rise in water level caused by the rising tide.

Special recognition goes to Gail Drake, Nancy Garvey, and Jane Henley for their work as group escorts. If you think herding cats is tough, try keeping groups of sixth graders on schedule on the next to last day of the school year. Thanks to Jim Eury for taking pictures of the event.

THE CRABBING EXPERIENCE

Thanks to Pam Narney

If you did not go on the June 12th boat trip with Richard Moncure and his father-in-law, Martin Hinson, you missed one of the greatest educational experiences of the year. The high overcast and fresh breeze kept all of us cool.



Half of us boarded the boat while half toured the Simonson area near Indian Banks with Richard. Then we switched places.

Watermen don't just go out in their boats, pull up a ton of crabs and call it a day. They check all of their pots, and sort the crabs by size (Crabs must measure 5 inches tip to tip to be keepers.) and condition: hard shell-ready to



eat; jimmies-males; sooks-females; peelers-ready to shed their shells; busters- have begun to shed; and soft shell- the shells are gone and the new one hasn't formed yet. Once all of the pots are checked (Most pots had 2 or 3 crabs or were empty.) the crabs are turned out into compartmentalized tables in a shed with flowing water. The soft shelled crabs don't wait to grow their newer and bigger hard shells, so someone has to get up at 3:30 in the morning to check on the crabs. Richard's wife, Martin's daughter, was out on the boat teaching us how to measure and sort crabs.

Master Naturalists got to measure the crabs and look for the red line, which indicates a true peeler ready to bust. Even though I was wearing a thick rubber glove, a monster (her description) crab bit me when I tried to pick him up and drew blood.



I learned to hold the crab from the back.

Crabbing is not always profitable these days so Martin needs many different jobs to support his family: crabbing, oyster growing, and dock and bulkhead building. Each job is needed when crabbing is low, which it is now due to pollution in the waters.

So watermen deal with empty pots, biting crabs, rough seas, extreme heat, getting up in the middle of the night and still must worry if they can support their families. Not the job for me. I wonder now why that pint of crabmeat that seemed to be so expensive costs so little compared to the work involved.

OF INTEREST

Special thanks to Ellis Squires for the following photos and article.

The Lesser Whorled Pogonia: A Rare Orchid Discovered at Hickory Hollow

On a walk in Hickory Hollow this May, I was showing a group of people some of our native orchids. We found a few plants which I first thought were Whorled Pogonia, *Isotria verticillata*. There had been a recent discovery of a significant group of Whorled Pogonia at Chilton Woods.

However, a week later, a couple of orchid specialists excitedly revealed these new plants to be the Lesser Whorled Pogonia, *Isotria medeoloides*. I had always hoped to see this unusual plant someday but knowing its rarity didn't think I would.

This find adds to the orchid species count for Hickory Hollow and so far ten species have been found in this unique property. According to property steward Rebecca Wilson, Hickory Hollow is the only Natural Area Preserve in Virginia where this plant has been found. It is

also a first for the Northern Neck. The nearest population is in Gloucester and Caroline counties.



At the U. S. Marine Corps Base in Quantico one of North America's largest populations of *Isotria medeoloides* is found. Military exercises and timbering operations are planned so as not to threaten the population and Base Natural Resource specialists monitor the plants annually.

Isotria medeoloides is a small, perennial orchid of deciduous forests with a grayish-green, smooth stem up to a foot tall. At the top it bears a whorl of 5-6 light-green, elliptical, pointed leaves. One or two yellow-green flowers may appear in April. I hope to see this flower for the first time next spring. This leaf whorl gives the plant its name. There is only one other orchid, its close relative *Isotria verticillata*, which looks similar, but has a purplish stem and the stem bearing the ovary is longer than the ovary.

The species name, "*medeoloides*," refers to the resemblance between seedlings of the orchid and the Indian cucumber, *Medeola virginiana*. Both are found in this area of Hickory Hollow. The lily *Medeola* has very different flowers and a wiry, slender stem, in contrast to the Lesser

Whorled Pogonia, which has a stout, hollow stem.

In a bulletin from the Center for Plant Conservation, the Lesser Whorled Pogonia was cited as "the rarest orchid east of the Mississippi." This orchid is listed as endangered in 14 of the 18 states and provinces in which it still occurs; it is thought to have gone extinct in 5 other states. There are approximately 104 populations known (NatureServe 2001), which are mainly on the eastern seaboard with outlying populations in Ontario and Michigan. Total number of plants in North America, based on average population size, is likely to total under 5,000 plants. Some sites have only one or two plants.



Nowhere is it common. Most known populations contain fewer than 25 plants, and are quite vulnerable to local extinction. The primary threat to its existence is destruction of its woodland habitat for development or forestry. Without the quick action by the concerned citizens, Northern Neck Audubon Society, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation in 1999, Hickory Hollow and its natural treasures would have met the same fate; Lancaster county was planning to develop an Industrial Park on the site.

--Ellis Squires

NEW VOLUNTEER PROJECT

Project #S8a Grasses for the Masses: Growing and Planting Wild Celery Grass in the James River

This project involves the recruitment of people in our communities to grow Wild Celery Grass which will improve the substrate of the James River by improving turbidity and allowing for our underwater friends places to grow. This process helps to revitalize one of our important rivers and helps to make the public, especially children, aware of the importance of changing the ecology that impacts this river. This project enlists the support of people to obtain equipment (\$40.00 fee) to grow these seeds at their houses. They will monitor this growth and manage it for about 5 months until the grasses grow to a suitable length for planting. The planting will take place at Westover Plantation on the James River. The participants will break down their equipment and transport it and the grasses to Westover in May for plantings at low tide.

For more information check the project on VA MN Volunteer Web site or contact Bill Walker, wcmwalker@inna.net, or (804) 693-6540.

NOTES FROM CHARLENE

With the year half over, I hope everyone is making progress toward the required 40 hours of service and 8 hours of continuing education. If you are not half-way there don't wait until fall!

There are plenty of opportunities for advanced training. The Audubon walks are always informative. Whenever they have them at Belle Isle and I join I learn not only one or more new birds, but their habits and other interesting facts as well. There is at least one a month throughout the year. Wildflower walks, nature lectures, guided hikes and other events at Belle

Isle and Westmoreland State Parks, VIMS, and RRVNWR are just the beginning.

For projects, at Belle Isle we have a Weed Warriors group that meets on Tuesdays to keep the gardens productive. Glyn Surdham is looking for partners for trail work he is conducting at the park. Rebecca Wilson needs help at the natural preserves with rare plant monitoring and shore-line clean-up. Bill Walker is conducting a "Grasses for the Masses" program in which shore line grasses are grown at home and then planted on the shores of the James River. Other possibilities are available at Westmoreland State Park and along local trails. Just check the "Opportunities" on our website www.northernneckmasternaturalists.org and contact the appropriate chair.

Everyone that completes the requirements earns the title Certified Master Naturalist for the next year, and receives a cool pin and the



Cool Pins

respect of your fellow Naturalists. Earning hours is fun, productive, and much needed by the sponsoring agencies. Thank you for all that you do.

MORE ON PHOTO CONTEST

We have secured the shop next to the Kinsale museum to hang photos that our members have framed and wish to exhibit. This will not be judged, but rather a venue for outreach so that the community is aware of the MN program and can view the flora and fauna that we are so fortunate to photograph in Virginia. We hope many of you will contribute a photo or

more to make this a good show. We will have the venue mid July through part of September. Details are attached.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 10 – Menhaden Fishing industry, Reedville Fisherman's Museum

July 15 – Deadline for submitting photo contest entries

July 25 – Viewing and critique of submitted photos, BISP

August 14 – Composting and Vermiculture, Ted Munns, Northumberland Library

Sept 7-9 – State Conference, Martinsville

Sept 11 – General Meeting, Sam Johnson on Soils

Thanks to Faye Andrashko, Jim Eury, Carol Hammer, Pam Narney, Ellis Squires and Charlene Talcott for their work on this issue.

New Newsletter Editor

As of this issue John Narney will be compiling and editing newsletter submissions. Please send items of interest, advanced training, news and pictures about your projects, and other newsletter items to jnarney@verizon.net.



*Northern
Neck Master
Naturalist
Photo Contest*

Flora and Fauna

Please join us on
Tuesday July 24th at
10:00 a.m. at Belle Isle
Visitor's Center to view
all submitted photos on
the large screen and to
announce contest
winners! Open critique
by Michael Geissinger.

Northern Neck Master Naturalists

Attachment 1: NNMN Chapter Photo Contest Information and Rules

Submission rules for images to be judged to go on to the state competition.

Remember, we have the frames for the two winners, the below information is for submitting .jpg images only. We will print the winners and frame them and send to state.

State MN photo contest rules must be followed.

Below are our requirements as well.

You may submit 3 photos in each category, flora and fauna.

All entries must have been photographed in Virginia.

File size: 500K to 1MB jpg (Or if your software options are just Small, Medium or Large, select Medium)

Send by email to: mikeg@mikegphotos.com and in the subject line, note that this is an entry for the MN photo contest.

Deadline: July 15, 2012

Identify your image*:

Your name: First initial + Last Name + 4 digit number (different for each picture)

Caption

Location

*This information can be added to the metadata that is automatically embedded in the actual image. If you do not know how to do this, please supply the information with your emailed entry, and we can add that for you.

(For the purposes of this competition, the above file sizes are appropriate. However, if you are planning on printing your photograph/s later on for exhibition, use the largest format on your camera and remember to save the large format file separate from the compressed file you are submitting. Winning photos will be printed from the large format file.)

Three judges will select 2 photos to go to the state. Those will receive a first place in each category. It will be up to the judges depending on the number and quality of photos submitted to select second and third place photos in each category.

In July there will be an open critique by Michael Geissenger of those images sent in. We will meet at Belle Isle State Park at 10:00 AM on July 25.

Any questions, please feel free to call or email Carol Hammer, caroljhammer@aol.com, or Cathy Sachs, cdpsachs@gmail.com.

Attachment 2: Photo Exhibit

We have secured the shop next to the Kinsale museum to hang photos that our members have framed and wish to exhibit. This will not be judged, but rather a venue for outreach so that the community is aware of the MN program and can view the flora and fauna that we are so fortunate to photograph in Virginia. We hope many of you will contribute a photo or more to make this a good show.

Dates to drop off and pick up to follow. We will have the venue mid July through part of September, so the dates will be set around these parameters.

We will have alternative ways for you to get the photo to us should you not be able to work with our set date.

On a 3 X 5 card, print your name, title of photo/photos, where taken in VA. Bring this with photos to hang. So that we can get some idea of how many photos will be submitted, please email Carol Hammer with the same information by July 14th.

caroljhammer@aol.com

A few things to keep in mind when submitting a framed photo:

It must be ready to hang with wire attached.

Photos look better when matted and it keeps the photo from pressing against the glass/plexi which can cause problems.

If using an older frame, dust it and clean the glass before dropping off.

Protect the framed photo by wrapping in bubble wrap or a substitute to keep all from being scratched when transporting.

Don't be shy. If you like a particular photo, others will enjoy it too!

Any questions? Feel free to email Carol as above.

Attachment 3: State Photo Contest Rules

Greetings fellow VMN Chapters,

Some of you may remember the Historic Rivers Chapter photo contest winners on display at last fall's State VMN Conference. At that time, we told attendees we hoped to expand to a statewide contest involving all chapters, and after a lot of planning we are ready to proceed with such a contest. Following are the rules, regulations, guidelines, and directions for each chapter to enter their best two pictures, one of Virginia flora and one of Virginia fauna. These are also the contest guidelines that HRC used to pick their winners, but that is merely a suggested method. *Chapters are allowed to use any manner they wish in order to arrive at the two pictures they will select to frame and submit to the state contest.* Chapters need not have any internal contest at all, although such an activity is very beneficial, and displaying entries to the public is rewarding outreach. All chapter entries will be on display in the Virginia Museum of Natural History during the Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Volunteer Conference and Training, September 7-9, 2012. A team of professionals will judge the entries, and the winners will be announced during the Conference.

ENTRIES TO THE STATE CONTEST

- I. Rules for photography entries:
 - A. All entries must be taken by members or trainees in good standing with their Virginia Master Naturalist chapter.
 - B. Each VMN chapter may enter two pictures: one of Virginia flora and one of Virginia fauna. All photographs must be taken in the state of Virginia.
 - C. All pictures will be sized 11X14 and must be matted and framed per instructions below.
 - D. A completed Virginia Master Naturalist State Photography Contest form must accompany each entry.
 - E. All framed and matted pictures must be received by the VMN State Photography Contest Committee by Saturday, September 1, 2012. Entries should be sent to Virginia Master Naturalist Photo Contest, attention: Jessica Davenport, Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Avenue, Martinsville, VA 24112.
 - F. Each chapter will also send an email download of its two entries to Ted Sargent at wanted@aol.com by August 23, 2012, so that he can produce a slide show of all entries. Include the images and the contest entry forms as attachments.
- II. The following rules concerning photo modification have been adapted from the Walt Disney Corporation.
 - A. Modifications not permitted.
 - No borders or frames may be added to the images.
 - Adding or replacing elements in an image is not permitted.
 - Artistic filters are not permitted.
 - B. Permitted modifications

- Images may be cropped, resized, and rotated as necessary.
- Red-eye removal.
- One-step enhancement (such as Auto-Fix, Quick-Fix, Auto-Levels, etc.)
- Minor use of filters to sharpen, soften, blur, de-speckle.
- Minor use of corrective functions to improve the natural appearance of the image such as white balance levels, contrast, brightness, curves, intensity, tone, hue, saturation, lightness, value, color balance, de-saturation and tint.

If it can be done in a step or two, it's OK; if it takes you twenty minutes to edit the photo, It is no longer "minor"!

WINNERS

The entries will be judged by a team of professionals who will select First place, Second place, and Third place for both the flora and the fauna categories. Honorable mentions may be chosen if the judge deems it appropriate. Ribbons will be affixed to all winners.

EXHIBITION AND RETURN OF ENTRIES

All pictures will continue to hang in the Virginia Natural History Museum for an extended period. Following this exhibit, the pictures may be exhibited elsewhere throughout the state. All pictures remain the property of the VMN State Photography Contest Committee until any exhibitions are completed. When the exhibitions are completed, chapters will be notified and will be responsible for picking up the framed photos from a designated location. The location and deadline for pickup will be determined and announced in advance of the contest. Framing materials may be kept by the chapters for use in any future State Photo Contests. The pictures themselves should be returned to the photographers by the chapters.

FRAMING AND MATTING

Well in advance of the contest, chapters should order frame and mat kits online from Utrecht Art Supplies. Go to www.utrechtart.com and click on keyword or number. Type in #54399, which will produce a frame kit for a 16 X 20 frame with an 11 X 14 mat opening. Order the number of kits you will need (one or two). *N.B.* Be sure to get kit #54399. Many of the kits look alike, and we want a uniform look for our exhibition. The price of each frame kit is approximately \$35.

When the kits arrive, assemble them per the enclosed instructions. Once your picture is framed, it will be necessary to go to a local art store and get an inexpensive wiring kit with clamps in order to fasten a hanging wire tightly exactly five inches below the top of the frame. (The frame comes with a saw-tooth hanger which we cannot use.) Pictures may be displayed vertically or horizontally as is appropriate.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact Ted Sargent at wanted@aol.com or Michelle Prysby at mprysby@vt.edu.

**Virginia Master Naturalist Program
State Photography Contest Entry Form 2012**

Photographer's Name:	
Virginia Master Naturalist Chapter:	
Image Title (please limit to 75 characters):	
Location where image was taken:	
Species shown in image (both common and scientific names):	
Date image was taken:	