

Virginia Master Naturalists

Northern Neck Chapter

October 2011

From the editor:

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the our chapter's newsletter. My goal is to have it out early each month, especially the months when the chapter has its meeting. My hope is that this will be a newsletter written by the members of the chapter. Please submit items of interest to my personal e-mail at ctalcott@nnwifi.com. Remember that the time you write articles can be counted as volunteer time, under administrative hours. If you are writing a report about a project that you are leading or participating in, those may count as project hours.

President's message

Advisor's corner

All Virginia Master Naturalist chapters are required to have one advisor from one of the sponsoring agencies. These agencies are the Virginia Departments of Forestry, Game and Inland Fisheries, and Conservation and Recreation, in addition to Virginia Tech, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

Our chapter is fortunate to have two advisors. Rebecca Wilson is the Chesapeake Steward for Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Natural Heritage Division. Locally, she oversees Dameron Marsh, Hughlett Point, and Bush Mill Stream. Charlene Talcott is a Chief Ranger Interpreter for DCR, and is based at Belle Isle State Park. You will find out more about your advisors in upcoming issues.

Upcoming meetings

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 9, at Belle Isle State Park Visitor Center. The board meeting will begin at 12:30 pm, followed by the general meeting at 2 pm. The program will be about using GPS devices and Geocaching. GPS units can be used for marking flora and other items of interest. Geocaching is using the GPS units in a fun way that connects with nature.

Curriculum committee and new class updates

The curriculum committee has been working diligently to line up speakers and arrange field trips for the next new member class, which will begin on February 23. The class will meet each Thursday morning, with field trips on most afternoons and occasional Saturdays.

Member news--Boots and BBQ and wildlife refuge outreach

Pinesap research

By Ellis Squires

Glyn Surdam, Earline Dickinson and Ellis Squires went on an expedition to find Pinesap, *Monotropa hypopithys* at Bush Mill Natural Area Reserve, just south of Heathsville. We found several nice stands of the little reddish plants that look like Indian Pipes, except there are multiple flowers on each stem. This is one of the myco-heterotropes.

Our goal was to collect some specimens and submit them to the Flora of Virginia project, as they are not recorded in Northumberland County. Two of us have plant collecting permits which allow us to remove plants for scientific purposes.



Afterwards, Glyn and Ellis went to Hickory Hollow to collect specimens of the plant because it wasn't recorded in Lancaster County. Again, we located a hillside with a nice scattering of the plants. We collected and will press some specimens to add to the Flora.

There were also an abundance of mushrooms fruiting this time of year, and many different types of coral fungi covering the forest floor.

Projects

Two projects at Belle Isle State Park:

A new trail was built by the Youth Conservation Corps this summer. Unfortunately, Hurricane Irene knocked some trees down on the trail and parts of it flooded and need to be regraded.

Native flower beds around Belle Isle are in need of being adopted and cared for.

Both of these projects can be completed at any time, dependent on weather. Contact charlene.talcott@dcr.virginia.gov to volunteer.

Advanced training

The **Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in VA (CBNERRVA)** is pleased to offer: **Grasses, Sedges and Rushes, Oh My!** This 1-day workshop features in-depth lectures on the biology and identification of Virginia's grasses, sedges and rushes. Portions of the afternoon session will include a "virtual lab" on some species discussed in the morning. The workshop will be held on Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, in Gloucester Point, VA.

*The instructor, Dr. Douglas DeBerry, is a Research Assistant Professor of Environmental Science and Policy at the College of William and Mary, and a Senior Environmental Scientist, at VHB. Dr. DeBerry has worked in Virginia's ecosystems for 17 years studying plant ecology, conservation, and restoration. His professional and academic endeavors have focused on wetland ecology and management, natural resource inventory, and ecosystem assessment models. As a member of the Advisory Board for the Flora of Virginia Project, he recently completed descriptions for all 196 of Virginia's *Carex* species – the largest genus in the state.

To register contact

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Volunteer database--be sure to submit your hours!