

Northern Neck Master Naturalists

October 2012

CAROL HAMMER TAKES FIRST AT STATE CONFERENCE

Congratulations to Carol Hammer for taking first place in the Flora Division of the State photo competition with her picture of Spiderwort, *Tradescantia virginiana*.



Carol Hammer's First Place Photo

There were 19 total submissions from 10 chapters, and everyone was very impressed with all of them.

STATEWIDE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

The Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Volunteer Conference and Training was held at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville and Fairy Stone State Park in Stuart September 7-9, 2012. Five Northern Neck Master Naturalists attended the conference.



VAMN Conference Attendees

Carol Hammer, Maggie Gerdts, Pam and John Narney made the trip from the Northern Neck while Bill and Linda McConahey commuted from their place across the border in North Carolina. Pre-conference activities on Friday included field trips and behind the scenes tours of the museum. Friday activities were capped off with a very nice buffet dinner in the Museum's Great Hall.



Friday Dinner

Saturday's events included fifteen three hour training sessions in and around the Museum building. These included *Wildlife Permits*, *Indigenous Ecology*, *Invasive Species: Early Detection/Rapid Response* and *Aquatic Insects* to name just a few. Saturday wrapped up with a BBQ dinner at Fairy Stone State Park with Brigadier General William Clark as guest speaker. General Clark spoke on the naturalist aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Sunday morning hands on activities were out doors in beautiful Fairy Stone State Park.

The Southwest Piedmont Chapter did an excellent job organizing and executing this outstanding conference.

CAROL HAMMER ON THE STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

Martinsville, VA is the home of the Virginia Museum of Natural History and where this year's Master Naturalist Conference was held. After over 5 hours of driving with little traffic along the way, Maggie Gerdtz and I arrived at the museum just in time to take a behind the

scenes tour. We saw the Vertebrate Paleontology Lab where they have dinosaur bones and others to work on. They walked us through collections for mammals and wet and dry invertebrates. I never realized how many centipedes could end up in one place in jars. What I found most interesting was that the museum loves to get help from the local Master Naturalists on a regular basis and would welcome any of us to help should we plan a visit. They are a very user friendly museum.

Besides this extra tour, Maggie and I took the same offerings. Saturday morning was spent learning about collecting insects and the afternoon we got a nice overview of wilderness first aid. Both classes were very informative, interesting and well attended.

People usually ask how the food was when you have attended a conference with so many people, *well I can attest it was better than most* and I didn't hear a person complain. The first night we got to eat in the museum with a whale and an extinct bird's bones hanging over our heads. Saturday, our meal was held at Fairy Stone State Park, half of us eating outside, the other half inside. The evening was delightful and we were treated to a guest speaker from the Lewis and Clark expedition, William Clark himself dressed in period costume. He held our attention as he told us about their adventures and how they were among the first true Master Naturalists documenting all kinds of flora and fauna as they progressed across the country.

Sunday Morning we chose to do a service project for the park and pulled honeysuckle from among some azaleas and weeded around the store. Meeting folks from different chapters was a lot of fun and working together gave us a chance to get to know one another better.

Fairy Stone State Park, the largest of Virginia's six original state parks, is a beautiful park with real log cabins spread out, plenty of hiking paths and a large lake. We didn't have time to explore the area, but I plan to return some day to take advantage of this beautiful park Before

departing the area, we stopped nearby to collect our own fairy stones for which the park is named, These stones are cross-shaped and abundant in this area.

Fairy Stone Clean Up Crew



Visiting the VA Museum of Natural History, staying at Fairy Stone State Park and meeting other Virginia Master Naturalists made the weekend fun and enjoyable.

Carol Hammer

Black Gold in the Back Yard

Got worms? Ted Munns has worms and wants to give them to everyone. If you missed the presentations by Ted and John Lunsford, you missed a highly informative and hilarious time exploring "controlled degradation" involving several composting techniques.



John Lunsford and Ted Munns

John showed us how to make different composting bins out of plastic containers. He went on to say composters need to rotate their inclusion of green (vegetative matter) and brown (food scraps). Turning the compost often is imperative. John's compost deteriorated into a usable form in only 6 months.



Composting Bins

From Ted we learned that worms are sensitive to light and shy away from it, and that red wigglers are good for fishing because they don't drown like tunneling worms do.

The strangest question that Ted has been asked about worms was, "What happens when a worm dies?" Ted answered with a deadpan expression, "In nine years I have never seen a dead worm."

To start on your own path to controlled degradation with worm composting, all you need is a large plastic bin, dark colored, with a lid with air holes in the top (Ted's pattern of air holes spells WORMS!) and some nesting material. Ted shreds his junk mail to create a comfy worm home. Start small. Make a nest of shredded paper in the corner of the bin. Add kitchen refuse but not fat or bones, corn cobs or corn husks, tea bags, citrus, or onion skin. Add worms and stir from time to time. Every so often add a cup of sand.

As the moisture level rises, add more paper and then harvest the worm tea with a turkey baster.

I won't be going to Ted's for Thanksgiving dinner. To use, dilute the worm tea: one part worm tea to 10 parts water. He also boasted that friends of his "got worms from me." Ted will be happy to give you worms for your first bin.

Thanks Ted and John for an informative and humorous look at the life of controlled decomposition.

Pam Narney

ADVANCED TRAINING

LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS...

Oops! No! How about skunks, bobcats, and bears – oh my!

Join the Northern Neck Master Naturalists on Tuesday, October 9, at 1:00 p.m. to hear State Biologist Galen Hall explain the elementary points of mammalogy. Hall, a Northern Neck resident, will be joined by a collection of wildlife skulls from the area. We'll look at teeth, talk about diet, the critters habits and habitat.

Pick your favorite backyard/backwoods fauna – rabbit, raccoon, groundhog, coyote, feral hog, and more – and, come learn the traits and tricks of their survival.

This advanced training is at the Wilna Lodge of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge. See you there! Questions? Contact Gail Sigler at 703-455-8637 or gsigler@toast2.net.

Assessing the Health of a Watershed

Are there ways to teach students about riparian zones, point and nonpoint source pollution, run off, impervious surfaces, and land use without boring lectures? You bet there are! Join us for a day of exploration and inquiry based activities. Participants will receive the *Healthy Water, Healthy People Educator's Guide* and *Field Testing Manual* in this workshop. Wednesday,

October 10, 2012, from 9-4 at Belle Isle State Park. Fee is \$10 which includes lunch.

This class is part of 2012-2013 Watershed Educators Institute. The Watershed Educators Institute is a series of one and two day workshops offered from September 2012 through June of 2013 for those desiring to be formally recognized as leaders in watershed education in the state of Virginia.

There is still room in this workshop for any who are interested. It is being taught by Page Hutchinson, the Watershed Education Coordinator from Dept of Environmental Quality. You must be pre-registered so that lunch can be provided.

To register:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WEI2012-2013>. For more information, contact Page Hutchinson at 804-698-4488 or Page.Hutchinson@deq.virginia.gov.

2013 Advance Training Schedule

Jan 8, 2:00 PM, Bill Bonnell will speak on Dowsing at Bank of Lancaster, Lancaster Square, Kilmarnock. General Meeting to follow. Board meeting at 12:30.

Feb 12, 10:00 AM, Charlie Knoelleer will speak on forestry in the Northern Neck at NN Electric CoOp in Warsaw.

Mar 12, 2:00 PM, Lise Maring will speak on Virginia Indians, colonists and slaves use of native plants for medicinal purposes at Menokin. General Meeting to follow. Board meeting at 12:30.

Apr 9, 10:00 AM, Charlene Talcott will lead a field trip on Tracks and Scat at BISP.

May 14, 2:00 PM Teta Kaine, "Along Came a Spider", location TBD. General Meeting to follow. Board meeting at 12:30.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Oct 11, "Think Outside the Sink" Water Event, Fall 2012. Water Festival event for Lancaster and Northumberland 6th-graders at Belle Isle State Park, 8:30 to 2:00. Contact Faye Andrashko , faye.andrashko@nswcd.org, for details.

Oct 14, Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends Group will cosponsor the second annual **Go Wild! Festival**. The event will be held at the Hutchinson Tract in Essex, Virginia, from 1 PM to 5 PM and will feature a nature-themed silent auction, a guided kayak tour, and free lunch. Many demonstrations and activities are planned at this fall event which is free to the public. NNMN will have a booth at this event and the Outreach Committee will be planning some youth oriented activities to go along with our educational displays. Contact Jane Henley to volunteer, MLewisNut@aol.com.

Oct 15, "Think Outside the Sink" Water Event, Fall 2012. Water Festival event for Lancaster and Northumberland 6th-graders at Belle Isle State Park, 8:30 to 2:00. Contact Faye Andrashko , faye.andrashko@nswcd.org, for details.

Menokin Flora/Fauna Survey. The Menokin Flora and Fauna Survey is an informal survey that will be used to aid the Menokin Foundation in securing permits for two soft water access landing canoe/kayak sites and one view shed.



Menokin Fauna, Eastern Rat Snake

Participants will work within 20 feet on both sides of two main trails, Tree Trail and Menokin Landing Trail, to survey Flora and Fauna and locate any Rare, Endangered, or Threatened species. Because Master Naturalists is a volunteer organization, members will choose areas they wish to sample. The project will run from August 2012 until June of 2013 and may be extended. Contact Pam Narney, pnarney@verizon.net, for details.

NOTES FROM CHARLENE

Know the Law Regarding Feeding of Wildlife - *Let's Keep Wildlife 'Wild'*

This is from the DGIF "Outdoor Report"

Last year, on July 1st 2011, it became unlawful to feed wildlife in such a way that the food or attractant being placed creates a situation where the increased presence of wildlife causes property damage, endangers people or other species of wildlife, or creates a public health concern. Even though the effects of feeding wildlife can seem minimal to some, this behavior has the potential to create dangerous situations, as well as to have a significant impact on personal property. When wild animals are allowed to feed on human-related food sources, they can become dependent on people for food and lose their innate fear of humans, a situation which could be detrimental to both the animals and to people. Feeding also draws animals unnecessarily close to our homes, where they could cause damage to residential landscaping, decks and patios, gardens, and crops.

People who feed wild animals are often doing harm to the very animals they are trying to help. An artificial food source will often create unnatural concentrations of animals, increasing the potential for the spread of wildlife diseases. A pile of food meant for one species is going to attract many others, some of which may carry undesirable parasites or diseases such as Lyme disease and rabies that can impact humans and domestic animals. The spread of wildlife

diseases is also a serious concern to wildlife management officials both here in Virginia and across the United States. Keep wildlife wild by not feeding them and by letting them live as nature intended.

Go to www.dgif.virginia.gov to learn more about responsible wildlife feeding practices. You can also find the telephone number for your nearest Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries regional office if you have any questions concerning feeding regulations and would like to talk to a wildlife biologist or conservation police officer.

Virginia regulation reads as follows: *"It shall be unlawful for any person, as defined in § 1-230 of the Code of Virginia to place, distribute, or allow the placement of food, minerals, carrion, trash, or similar substances when it attracts any species of wildlife in such numbers or circumstances to cause property damage, endanger any person or wildlife, or create a public health concern. Upon notification by department personnel, any such person shall be in violation of this*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CHESAPEAKE BAY NOTES



Have App, Will Travel

Look for our new [Chesapeake Explorer](#) mobile application that will allow travelers to carry detailed information with them as they explore parks, museums and historic sites along

Chesapeake trails, byways and water routes.

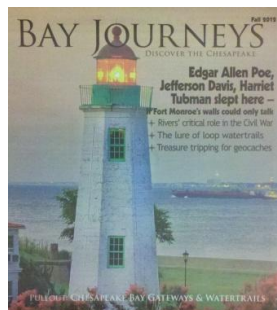
The app aggregates information about national parks, state parks, Chesapeake Bay Gateways

and Watertrails Network sites, and sites along three national historic and scenic trails in the watershed. Use the app's geolocation feature to find nearby national parks and trails that suit your interests, and tag favorites. The device also sorts locations by activity so someone can easily identify places to see waterfowl, bicycle, or boat, and plan their trips accordingly.

The app is free and will work with both iPhones and Android devices. A website, www.chesapeakeexplorerapp.com will be operating by late September and will provide information about the app and links to sites where it can be downloaded.

Chesapeake Tourism with Bay Journeys

The National Park Service and Chesapeake Conservancy have partnered with Chesapeake Media Service on a new publication. [Bay Journeys](#) offers residents and visitors an in-depth guide to adventurous and relaxing explorations of the Chesapeake Bay.



The inaugural issue of Bay Journeys in Summer 2012 was a smashing success.

BISP is a distributor of "Bay Journeys" and its companion "Bay Journal". Both are free.

Volunteer and Advanced Training Hours

These notes were in the last Newsletter but bear repeating. Each year there are members who get to the end of the year and find that they are short on hours needed to remain certified. And remember, putting in the hours won't matter if you don't enter them into the volunteer management system.

With the year three-quarters over, I hope everyone is making progress toward the

required 40 hours of service and 8 hours of continuing education.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Baylor Park Nature Trail Walk

The public is invited to explore Kilmarnock's new Baylor Park on Saturday, October 13, at 10:00 a.m. with the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. Paula Boundy, who will lead the walk, said: "This is a newly designated Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail that mostly follows an old logging road along a heavily wooded bank with many large hardwoods and pine trees. There may be some wet areas near the streams and non-tidal wetlands along Norris Pond, and a few sections of the trail are fairly steep."

Location: From Kilmarnock, go thru the traffic light at Walmart (Old Fairgrounds way) on N Main St. (Rt. 3) and down the hill proceeding slowly and looking for the park sign/entrance on the right.

From Lancaster Courthouse on Rt. 3 toward Kilmarnock, go past Goodluck Road to the traffic light at Walmart (Old Fairgrounds way). Make a left U-turn and go down the hill proceeding slowly and looking for the park sign/entrance on the right.

The Northern Neck Through the Lens

On Sunday, October 14, 2012, at 3:00 PM, NPI-Shiloh invites you to a program by two area award-winning photographers, Carol Hammer and Laura Dent. Nature is the subject of emphasis in the pictures, and will include not only plants, scenic views, but critters too. Some images are "up close" so that a viewer can almost smell a flower or feel the sticky feet of a little green frog. They will include action pictures of pound net operations a disappearing and fascinating activity of Bay watermen.

Hammer and Dent will discuss the angles, light, color, texture, emotions/moods in their images, as well as the technical aspects of their cameras, as a means to share their expertise with others. Such a program by NPI has been inspired by the unspoiled rural scene in the Shiloh School neighborhood, bringing a unique opportunity to all who enjoy nature and aspire to take pictures.

Come before 3 PM on October 14 (space is limited) to enjoy a cup of hot cider and to view some original artistic pieces by the two photographers. The program will recess by 5 PM.

Schedule of Events

Oct 9 – Native Wildlife-Mammals, Galon Hall
Oct 10 – Assessing the Health of a Watershed
Oct 11 – Think Outside the Sink
Oct 13 – Baylor Park Nature Trail Walk
Oct 14 – Go Wild Festival
Oct 14 – Northern Neck Through the Lens
Oct 15 – Think Outside the Sink
Nov TBD – General Meeting, John Sigler
“Environmental Security”
Dec 4 –Annual Christmas Party and Board Meeting

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Thanks to Carol Hammer, Pam Narney, Gail Sigler, Charlene Talcott and Polly Ward for their work on this issue.

Please send items of interest, advanced training opportunities, news and pictures about your projects, and other newsletter items to jnarney@verizon.net.

*For more details, times and locations go to the Event Calendar on the Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer Management web site.
<https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/users/index.cfm>

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