

Northern Neck Master Naturalists

Summer 2016



Echinacea purpurea, Purple Cone Flower in Pam Narney's garden

It seems that there was enough interest and input from chapter members to keep the newsletter alive for at least one more edition so here we go. John Narney, editor

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Class of 2016 Graduates

The June 16 Graduation of the 2016 Northern Neck Master Naturalist Basic Training Class was

the culmination of twelve weeks of classroom and field training that took the class from George Washington's Birthplace on Pope's Creek in Westmoreland County to Irvington and the Chesapeake Bay and over to VIMS at Gloucester Point. Interspersed with class room and field trips were hours of reading and written assignments that exposed the class to the varied disciplines that qualify one to be a Virginia Master Naturalist. New to this class was a requirement that each student give a brief presentation on a naturalist of their choosing. These excellent presentations included Virginia naturalists The Reverend John Clayton from the seventeenth century and our current local preeminent naturalist and photographer Teta Kain.



Theta Kain , photo from Clayton VNPS

Lest you think it was all work see Jeff Wright's "Gilligan's Island" pictures below.

Thanks to all who participated in making this class a success. Particular accolades go to Nancy Joel and Bill Blair who picked up the ball and ran with it. It couldn't have been done without their unwavering effort. We also need to recognize John Powell for always being there to help and Alison Sowar for arranging an excellent graduation luncheon on a tight budget.

2016 Statewide Conference Sessions Filling Up

Due to an unprecedented number of early registrations for the 2016 Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Volunteer Conference and Training, many of the training sessions have been filled. There are no plans to increase the size or number of sessions for the Conference. The Conference will be held Friday, August 26, through Sunday, August 28, 2016 at the Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center in Wirtz, Virginia. For more details go to www.regonline.com/vmn2016conference

RareQuest MN Project

Stewartia ovata, Mountain Camellia

How simple and fun a project can be.
by Carol Hammer

With no advanced knowledge of the plants we would be asked to locate, Bill Blair and I along with other Master Naturalists around the state volunteered for Project RareQuest. Project RareQuest is a pilot project to involve trained Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers in monitoring occurrences of rare species of plants and animals, many of which have not been seen in many years. It is a partnership with the [Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage Program](#), and it is funded in part by the [Virginia Native Plant Society](#).

Bill and I volunteered to find plants in our area. Packets were given out and in each case, we were given approximate locations of each of the three plants in our area which we were to locate and record if found. Our first learning tool was to take the online RareQuest class to learn what was expected and to become familiar with the applications that would record our findings. One of the three plants we were to locate was a mountain camellia, *Stewartia ovata*, last surveyed in Lancaster County in

1960. We were given plats of land (many acres) for us to contact owners to get their permission to look for this in bloom in June.

Bill, a Master Gardener and plant man extraordinaire, and I divided up the work. I was to contact all property owners to obtain permission, and he would do all the data entry work given the apps we were to use to input our information. Both of us would go into the field to try and locate the rare occurrence of the mountain camellia in our area.



Stewartia ovata, Mountain Camellia.
Photo by Carol Hammer

I thought my portion would be easy, however, we were not given telephone numbers, only addresses of those who owned the property. I used the Internet to obtain as many phone numbers as possible and began contacting those I could. For those without a telephone contact, I sent a letter of introduction and asked for their permission to look for the mountain camellia. All but one person I contacted graciously offered their property for us to try our luck in locating the plant. Many were excited about this project and a few offered to walk with us.

With all our ducks in a row, Bill, John Powell and I met early one morning. Property owners Bill and Betty joined us on the hunt. We planned on

first going to the address where we were told one of the shrubs existed and were met by a second property owner, also named Betty, who told us of the existence of the plant on Peter's property.

At Peter's, we were pleased to find a healthy mountain camellia in bloom among mountain laurel shrubs on this particular property. It was exciting in that I had never seen this plant much less in bloom. The flowers on it were white with delicate undulating edges. We took photos and spoke to the land owner about other possible sightings. We walked along the bank where we hoped to find other plants. Over the next few hours, we searched other nearby properties to see if any other Mountain Camellias existed. Although disappointed in not finding one other shrub, we were very happy to have located the one in bloom. The day was a success and Bill finished his part of the project by sending all the information to the state via the applications he had on his device.



**Bill Blair using smart phone to enter data on mountain camellia.
Photo by Carol Hammer**

With a good working team and the luck of some local input, our job was made easy. Not only that, we met some wonderful people who were very interesting and interested in our project. Never underestimate how much fun a project can be!

Wetlands Inventory

by Karen Duhring of VIMS & Paula Boundy of NNMN

Often while going on field walks at Belle Isle State Park (BISP), I would hear that there were "X numbers of wetlands at the park". X would sometimes increase so that the last I heard was 8. However, upon inquiry, no Park staff could cite the different types and locations of wetlands to support the number. I consulted the Park's website and found under general information: "The Park lets visitors explore a wide variety of tidal wetlands interspersed with farmland and upland forests." and "There are eight distinct types of wetlands within the park. These diverse ecosystems make Belle Isle an excellent outdoor laboratory for environmental education."

Thus, what are and where are the 'eight distinct types of wetlands within the park'? I have led two wetland focused field walks at BISP and had done some research into types of wetlands to attempt to locate and educate about them. Identification can get tricky and scientific names, like Tidal Oligohaline Marsh, are only somewhat descriptive. I needed guidance so I called on Karen Duhring, Coastal Management Scientist with Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) who was excited to help me because the project of mapping and labeling tidal wetlands in Lancaster County was already in progress. I could assist in her piece of the project and she would complement some efforts begun by Virginia DCR on comparable goals.

A plan was made and goals expanded with inputs from VIMS, DCR and my curiosity. Karen

traveled to BISP on May 25-26th and was transported around the park by Nathan Curtis, Asst. District Resource manager of DCR with Hannah Lee, an AmeriCorps volunteer.

Karen's focus was on ground truthing [print outs of] wetland maps of BISP from DCR, VIMS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' website for National Wetlands Inventory/Mapping. These print outs have codes and colors to delineate wetlands or other ecological areas. Nathan's focus was two-fold: to revisit previously treated stands of invasives, particularly Phragmites, and verify BISP ecological areas for management and planning purposes. Hannah's expertise is in tree identification, important because much of defining wetlands and ecological areas centers on the dominant plant and wildlife present. I merely provided some guidance around the park and my limited knowledge of its recent history - such as having participated in the planting project in 2008(?) on Neck Field's Trail. Bald cypress trees were planted there which would have mystified Karen since they are unusual in the number and growth pattern present now. I also showed Karen the bald cypress cluster near the Camp Store, planted by the boy scouts over 10 years ago. These wetland trees are now 30 feet tall and the casual observer would not know it was not natural.



From left to right: Hannah Lee, Nathan Curtis, and Paula Boundy identifying wetland plants in the Mud Creek Salt Marsh. Photo by K. Duhring, VIMS

Our other assistants were not available the second day and the park's Gator tractor was out-of-service so Karen and I did our field work on bicycles and on foot. We were able to visit the upper non-navigable portions of Mulberry Creek and some of the inland swamps and wetlands, noting the vegetation present in the different numbered/colored areas on the maps for subsequent identification by DCR staff as to the type of wetland or ecological area present.

Out on the White Oak Swamp Loop, at the open swamp 'pond', several species of frogs were calling - a celebration of all the recent rains. Later, on the Mud Creek Trail, near the Primitive Camp, Karen identified Sea Lavender plants for me that will be in bloom late this summer calling for a return visit. While visiting a swampy area on the Bluebird Trail, Karen photographed Christmas fern as her first sight of it in a natural setting. In the same area, Blue-eyed grass was blooming- charming.

Karen's notes and ground-truthed maps will be submitted to DCR for their confirmation of the 'eight distinct types of wetlands' claimed for BISP. My job is to continue asking.

Gilligan's Island

By Jeff Wright



A Motley Crew at VIMS. Individuals not identified to protect the families. Photo by Jeff Wright

The purported members of NNMN class 2016 were found aimlessly and randomly wandering around the Virginia Institute of Marine Science Gloucester Point Campus on 9 June. It appears they were attempting to incorporate all of the risk management lessons learned from classes 1 thru 15. Braving day light, with minimal sun screen, insect repellent, food, water, credit cards, cell phones, - and while wearing a variety of haute couture beach togs, - but with only their field notebooks as umbrellas they camped out on a beach and attempted to play volleyball using a seine net. A good time was had by all. But really how many students does it take to operate a seine net? Apparently a lot of students. Critters cooperated allowing for some



A day at the beach. Photo by Jeff Wright

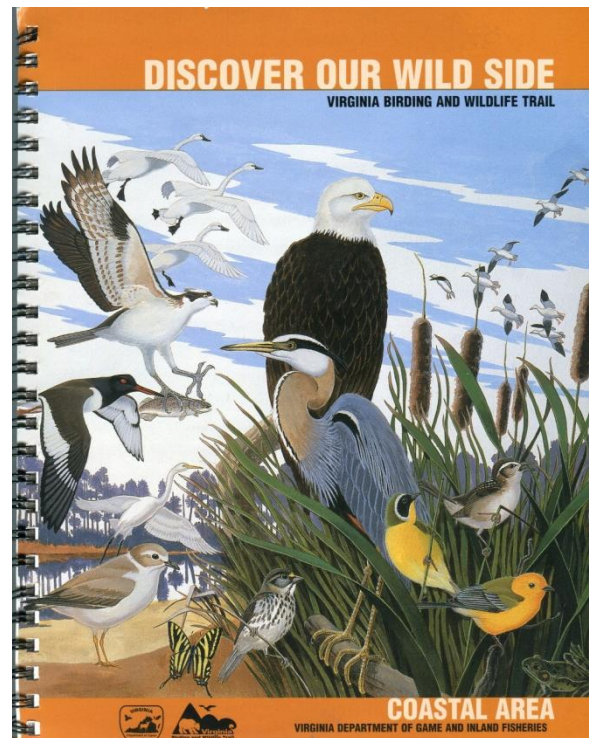
good learning about marine life and aquatic plants. This was another event where the class attempted to use dichotomous keys and failed to pair the native species with the correct fast food restaurant.

Adopt a Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail Project

Hello from Alison (Sowar)!!!

I am the Adopt-a-Trail Chapter Coordinator for the Central Region of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. Spring was our beginning season to prepare quarterly checklists, as a NNMN volunteer project for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). We are required to contact the owner or manager of the site, get their feedback in several areas,

such as if the VBWT brings visitors, and whether they would like the site descriptions changed. The checklists show the condition of signage, directions, amenities, site descriptions, issues of safety and access, as well as bird and other wildlife sightings. The spring season lists were due in June, and I am pleased to say how great the results were. Every report received was outstanding, and they will be a big help to DGIF; they do not have the manpower to check the sites themselves. Another purpose of gathering information for the checklist project is to update a 2002 DGIF booklet, "Discover Our Wild Side-Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail: Coastal Area".



2002 VBWT Booklet

The summer season will end in September, and I will need the checklists by September 20 to allow time for processing. At this time, only one site is still available; it is Wilmont Landing up in King George County. If you are interested, please contact me at alison.sowar@gmail.com. The project at this point is open ended as to a time frame; it should last a year or two. That is only "a guess" on my part. Therefore, I would

anticipate other sites that are currently covered becoming available now and then.

As coordinator of this project, I recently received an email from Jessica Ruthenberg, DGIF's Watchable Wildlife Biologist, thanking OUR CHAPTER along with only two others out of 12 participating, for submitting their results. My thanks again to everyone involved

Mini-Grant Project to Increase Outreach Diversity

By Nancy Joel

To be honest when it comes to the mini grant the chapter recently received, it really was a case of "nothing ventured, nothing gained" when John Narney and I submitted an eleventh hour application. Just like those enormous lottery jackpots our thinking was "If you don't play, you can't win." John did the leg work to get the submission together, and no one was more surprised when our efforts netted a very nice prize of \$825.00 to fund our idea.

On last year's annual report to state we recorded excellent outreach results. Over 2,000 people viewed our outreach booth thanks to the sterling work of our booth staff, who gave up many hours to promote our organization. Our numbers look impressive, but fewer than 10% of our booth visitors were recognized as from a diverse population. There are some reasons for this, namely the booth is not always at a free public event, or at a venue that attracts a diverse attendance. We do have



Possible Stand Alone Display Option

messages that are valuable to all our Northern Neck population, so in applying for the mini grant our intention was to try to create community outreach materials that might reach a

more diverse audience, and by its format be more mobile, and be able to "stand alone" as a presentation opportunity.

So with grant in hand it is time for action to implement our suggested project. This will take



Possible improved outreach display media

a three part approach. Firstly we need to identify strategies to increase outreach to more diverse populations, secondly we need to create the outreach materials, and thirdly we need to implement our suggested outreach schedule and evaluate its effectiveness.

What can you do to help?

If you have themes for which we might develop promotional materials, we would love to hear from you. To attract new members it might be valuable to promote all the state organizations whose work we support, so that is an advertising option. Our state sponsors also have specific projects they request our support for like the DGIF Adopt A Trail, and DCR Backyard Habitat, so these are also options for promotional materials. There may be things that are specific to Northern Neck audiences. At one of our recent meetings, Katie Register from Clean Virginia Waterways spoke of the dangers of discarded fishing gear, so that might be a topic of interest to our many boating communities. There may be other unique education, conservation and stewardship ideas that need promotion

What we also need is the expertise of anyone who has graphic design experience. Our dollars

will go a lot further if we can set up our own promotional materials prior to printing. I include some ideas for the promotional material we hope to create, with a focus on ease of assembly, storage and movement. Using printed vinyl will allow for both indoor and outdoor use, ease of cleaning and an extended display life. This additional set of materials will expand the chapter's present opportunity to promote the extensive work of Master Naturalists into settings we have not pursued in the past.

This is NNMN volunteer project **E5n Increasing Diversity through Enhanced Outreach**. If you would like to participate in the initial planning for this effort please contact Nancy Joel so that a meeting can be arranged, joeln@wmlcps.org.

Adventures with Arlene

New Master Naturalist Arlene Crabbe Kilduff Reports

The Basic Training Class taught us how to observe and note details. After learning the elements of discovery stewardship, which include observing details, problem solving, and knowing the folks to contact for information, it is gratifying to pass on that knowledge.

First Dead Turtle



Deceased Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle, *Lepidochelys kempii* at Hughlett Point. Photo by Arlene Crabbe Kilduff

I live ten minutes from Hughlett Point, so I go there all the time. I love it there. I walk the beaches and take pictures. Hughlett Point is my Calm Place.

The second Saturday after classes had finished, my daughter and I were at Hughlett Point when we saw a dead turtle. It was terrible. Three feet further down the beach was a dead dolphin. I



Deceased Dolphin at Hughlett Point. Photo by Arlene Crabbe Kilduff

contacted one of the Basic Training Class Instructors, Bill Blair. Bill connected me with DCR Ranger Tracy Boyd. Boyd is also a school teacher in Richmond. Ranger Boyd marked the spots and contacted a Virginia Beach group called the Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Team (VASRT). I met two folks from the VASR team at Hughlett Point the following Monday. They wanted copies of my pictures, the time that I found the animals, the locations and any other details that I had. From them I learned that in 2013 there had been a measles outbreak that killed thousands of dolphins. That was not the case here. The team loaded the dolphin into their trunk and headed for their next call in Reedville.

Having made Ranger Boyd's acquaintance and expressing my love for the area, Boyd asked me if I could gather information for him the week he was on vacation. I agreed and was asked to count the number of dogs, on the leash and off. There is a \$200.00 fine for having an unleashed dog at Hughlett Point. I walked the area and

counted dogs twice a day for a week and was happy to be able to both enjoy the area and contribute to its maintenance.

ACTION POINT: \$200 fine for having an unleashed dog at Hughlett Point.

Again while walking, I spotted another dead dolphin but it was on private property, so I couldn't get closer to it. As A Northern Neck Master Naturalist I had to set an example by obeying the laws. I contacted a neighbor of mine who has permission to enter the property, so we headed on over. It was time to call the Response Team again, but this time I haven't heard what developed.

ACTION POINT: Here is what you should do when you see stranded, injured or dead marine mammals.

The Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Team will respond to any marine mammal or sea turtle strandings, whether the animals are alive or dead.

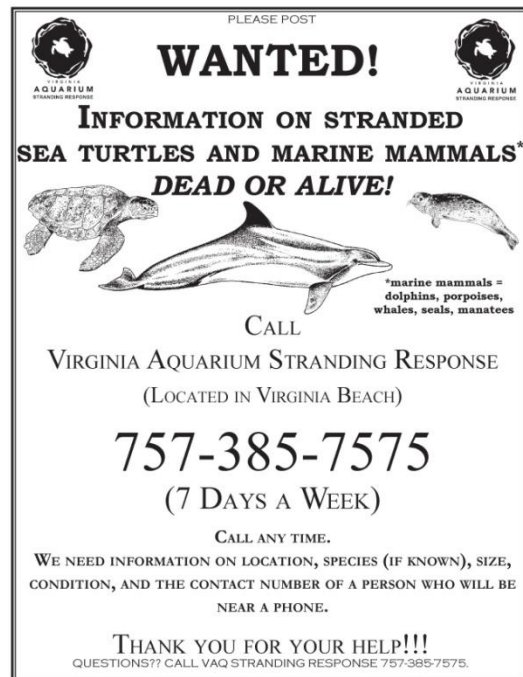
We define strandings as:

- *animals that wash up on beaches either sick, injured, or dead*
- *animals that are in the water either sick, injured, or dead*
- *animals that are entangled or entrapped and cannot return to their natural habitats without assistance*

Marine mammals that strand in Virginia include whales, dolphins, porpoises, seals and manatees. There are also five species of sea turtles that you might see in Virginia. If you see a stranded animal, it is important that you call the Stranding Response Team as soon as possible at [\(757\) 385-7575](tel:757-385-7575). If the animal is alive, your immediate call may make the difference for its survival. If the animal is dead, the sooner we can conduct an examination and necropsy (animal autopsy), the better the chances of discovering the cause of stranding and death. In addition, rapid response ensures that we can

maximize the scientific research available from these amazing animals.

*Immediately call the **Stranding Response hotline** at [\(757\) 385-7575](tel:757-385-7575) if you see a stranded marine mammal or sea turtle, alive or dead. The hotline is available 24 hours per day, every day of the year. When you call, we will ask for information on the location of the stranded animal, the species (if known), the size, the condition (alive or dead), and a phone number where we can call for further information. You can also print out our [Wanted Poster](#) and keep it handy for information on reporting a stranding in Virginia.*



Source: <https://www.virginiaaquarium.com/serve/report-a-stranding>

Another day when I was walking at Hughlett Point, three women approached me asking, "Are you by yourself? If so, watch what you are doing. There is a disturbed man on the beach. Don't go down there by yourself."

I noticed a man talking to himself. This man caught up with another man on the beach who

was walking his dog. I heard the talking man say, "Ninja!" and other strange things as he passed by the dog walker. I began backing up away from the direction the talking man was taking.

The talking man continued his walking and talking until he caught up with me and a woman with her family. I didn't know what to do. The man reached out and touched me.

I called the police.

The police arrived but could not do anything unless I pressed charges because the man had touched me. I did not want to do that, but the police were adamant that they could not take him anywhere else unless I pressed charges. The police called DCR and someone from Matthews came. He wrote the man up and banned him from Hughlett Point and Dameron Marsh.

ACTION POINT: From this incident I learned the proper thing to do is to let the professionals deal with the situation. Call the police. They will call DCR and DCR will deal with the situation.

A Cautionary Tale

What follows is a reprint from the NNMN August 2012 Newsletter. Given the recent high temperatures your editor feels it warrants another look.

Paul Billings Westmoreland State Park Trail Walk and Endurance Training

A Cautionary Tale

John Narney

On Thursday July 19, 2012 Department of Conservation and Recreation District Resource Specialist Paul Billings led what organizer, Carol Hammer of NN Native Plant Society, had advertised as an informative "*walk in the park*" (emphasis added) along rerouted trails at Westmoreland State Park in Montross.



Figure 1 Paul Billings and Pawpaw. Photo by John narney

Assembled for this adventure was what could be called a multi-organizational, inter-generational and international group of stalwarts totaling, by your scribes count, 27. (There were 9 NNNPS members, 6 NNMN, 4 Friends of Westmoreland State Park, and 3 adult and 5 teen/preteen visitors from England. There may have been some double counting in these numbers as the scribe learned to count from a Chicago election official.)

After carpooling to the back of Camp Ground C the group set out on what Paul said was a little over a mile hike on the new trails. At 10:00 it was a mild 90° and the humidity was 59%; we were going to be in the shade and there was a light breeze. What could spoil this day?

The park suffered massive damage during last fall's hurricane Irene; so much damage that the park was closed for months. In some areas professional loggers were called in to remove downed trees; other areas were cleared by park staff and staff members from other parks in the state. The scope of the damage was evident from the number of downed trees that can still be seen along the trails.



Downed trees across old WSP trail. Photo by John Narney

The trails that we hiked on Thursday were the Turkey Neck and Beaver Dam Trails. Turkey Neck has only been reopened recently. Paul, and other park staff, determined that rather than clear all of the trees that were down on the trail, they could improve the hikers' experience by rerouting the trail to more scenic areas. The original trail had followed old logging roads and had not been designed with hikers in mind. With the help of a national hiking group, Paul and other members of the staff designed the revised trails and cleared them using chain saws and hand tools. The resulting trail provided a beautiful walk downhill with forest views transitioning to views of Big Meadow Run and Yellow Swamp.

This late in the season and after the scorching weather we have had this month, there wasn't a great expectation of a lot of wild flowers to see. It didn't take long, however to find an interesting plant. Marie, Judy, Paula and Nick were summoned to provide identification. There was much discussion; Newcomb's was broken out and a consensus was formed. This was repeated many times along the trail. Our guests from England added interest to the discussions by comparing the plants we have here to the ones in the UK. Throughout the hike Paul kept up a steady discourse on the variety of trees in the park and provided more history of the park to include its being built by the CCCs. The event was a pleasurable experience, for most, but not all.

I started this with a little silliness in the head count—the actual number of participants was 18—but now I would like to get serious, after all, this is a cautionary tale. Although most of the group experienced no problem with the heat, a couple of folks did. These were people



Survivors! Photo by John Narney

who felt they were in good condition. What contributed to their problems? The walk may have been closer to a mile-and-a-half. We started on a gentle downhill from about the 150 foot elevation down to about the 20 foot level followed by a relatively steep climb back up, and 90° and 59% humidity may not have been as hot as the past few weeks but it is still hot. Just a few notes on heat issues: on the trail, make an honest personal evaluation of your physical condition; hydrate, hydrate, hydrate; rest before you have to; know the symptoms of heat illnesses both in yourself and others around you and the steps to deal with it. This isn't Marine boot camp. Enjoying nature is supposed to be fun.

NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

C3w Bluebird Trail Monitoring Lancaster Library. As the name suggests this project is to monitor the Bluebird nesting box trail at the new Lancaster Library. Boxes are monitored on a weekly basis throughout the nesting period (April through August). Contact Paula Boundy 804-436-4944 paula.boundy@va.metrocast.net for more information.

C5m BISP Wetlands ID and Mapping This project is being coordinated by Katy Shepard at BISP & Karen Duhring of VIMS. Project is to identify and map the various types and locations of wetlands at BISP for educational and stewardship purposes. Trails to these sites will be emphasized for public access and conservation. Information will then be available for access on the website and Park map. Contact Paula Boundy 804-436-4944 paula.boundy@va.metrocast.net for more information.

E5n Increasing Diversity through Enhanced Outreach. The chapter has received a grant to expand our display capability to be able to handle two activities at a time to help us reach a broader audience. We will also replace parts of our display with professionally made vinyl type display boards and signs. This project's purpose is to plan and design our Enhanced Outreach strategy and materials. For more information contact Nancy Joel at joeln@wmlcps.org.

Outreach Booth

Jane Henley is looking for three volunteers to help her with the Pollinator Exhibit on August 6 at the Irvington Farmers' Market. This is a great opportunity for new members to get some hours.



Paula Boundy with NNMN Outreach Booth. File photo

Jane will be there to teach you the ropes. We will be using the brand new tent which is just like the previous tent that lasted five years. We

will be putting it up at 7:30 AM and taking down at 1 PM. Jane needs one other person at least to be there to help her open at 7:30. She would love other volunteers to come in for a two hour shift or more.

Also needed are volunteers for the Irvington Farmers' Market on Labor Day Weekend, Sept. 3. If you can't do it in August, how about Sept.? or October 1? If you would like to participate, contact Jane Henley at mlewisnut@aol.com.

Watch nmnemail for specific event dates and locations.

THIS & THAT

State and Local Photo Contest

Grab your camera and shoot pictures of flora, fauna and Master Naturalists in action! In the Virginia Flora, Fauna and Other Species category the main subject must be Virginia native species. This is a change from previous years. Professional photographers have been enlisted to judge the entries and the winners of each category will have their prints submitted to the statewide conference photo competition!



Carol Hammer's 2012 State Master Naturalist Photo Contest First Place Winner, Spiderwort, *Trandescantia virginiana*. Photo by Carol Hammer

Participation is easy and open to all members in good standing. There are significant changes to the rules of the photo contest, so please pay particular attention to the new and updated

guidelines attached to this newsletter before submitting your entries! All photo entries should be submitted via email by July 29 to mikeg@mikegphotos.com For more information or questions, contact Petra Walian at pwalian@yahoo.com.

Rare Sighting

The attached picture was taken by Nick Ferriter in his garden. It is a mole kingsnake which is very unusual to see. It is normally nocturnal and fossorial (adapted to digging and living underground) so unlikely to be out during the day.



Mole Kingsnake, *Lampropeltis calligaster*. Photo by Nick Ferriter

This one was about 3 ft long and appeared completely healthy. They can reach almost 4 ft and are considered quite rare although it is uncertain since so few are actually seen. It will strike, although it is mainly a constrictor and is non venomous.

Chesapeake Bay Native Plant Center Web Site

In 2003, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released the publication, [Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping: Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#). Citizens, schools, non profit organizations, communities and government agencies used this resource to find the native plants that met their local conditions and interests in order to create landscapes to attract wildlife and reduce the amount of pollutants going into the Chesapeake Bay.

Demand for this resource has never waned. To reach more citizens and organizations, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service envisioned an online version of the guide, the Native Plants Center Chesapeake Region. This expanded online guide includes a geo-locator feature to identify plants suited to your location, a searchable database of the native plants that meet your conditions, and (coming soon) an online network to interact with other Chesapeake Bay stewards. <http://www.nativeplantcenter.net/>

Volunteer Hours

Now that the year is half over members should be well on their way toward the 40 hours of service and 8 hours of continuing education required for certification or recertification. A review of reported hours, however, showed that only 15 member had reported 20 or more hours of service and only 13 had four or more hours of continuing education as of July 1. If you have hours that haven't been reported please put them in the system so the membership chair can include them in the first semiannual hour report due to state by the end of July

Nomination of Chapter Officers for 2017

It is not too early to be thinking about election of next year's slate of Chapter officers. President, Vice President, and Secretary will be elected at the November General Meeting. If you would like to be nominated for one of these offices or know someone you feel would be well suited for the position please contact the nominating committee chair, Cindy Baliles, motor254@yahoo.com.

President's Comments

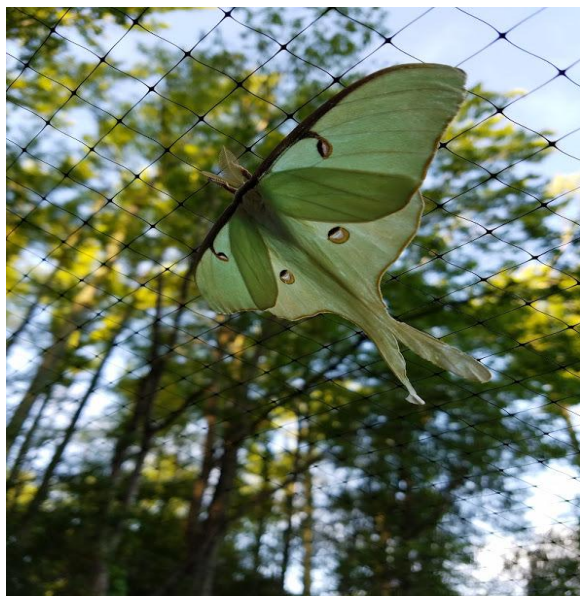
Dear Constituents:

As many of you know, on November first I will be departing the country on the first leg of my 2017 Southern Polar Habitat Census and Ecological Sabbatical as sponsored by the Antarctic Native Plant Society and the New Zealand Department of Public Broadcasting.

Sadly, the extreme conditions that are an obvious part of such a journey will severely limit my telephone, e-mail and internet communications, and as such I must reluctantly resign my position as President of this chapter. Sometimes meaningful research comes with a steep private cost, and I am afraid that this is one of those occasions.

I remain optimistic however that the NNMN will find new and exciting leadership and as such will remain a vibrant part of environmental stewardship and innovation for years to come following my sudden and unexpected departure.

At some point I do hope to return to the group with a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation as well as a sampling of native snacks and aquatic delicacies gathered during my trip, if budget allows.



Actias luna, Luna Moth. Photo by Don Hess

As a coda générale, I present this photograph of *Actias luna*, taken from beneath the poultry canopy at Erica Mall on July 18, 2016 and in so doing submit it to the annual photography contest which you may read about elsewhere in this newsletter. Enjoy.

Don

Upcoming Events

July 29 Deadline for submitting photos for local judging

August 6 Irvington Farmers' Market NNMN Booth 7:30 to 1:00

August 26 - 28, 2016 - "Virginia Master Naturalist Conference" The 2016 Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Conference and Training is taking place August 26-28 at the W. E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center along the shores of Smith Mountain Lake in Wirtz, Virginia.

September 3 Irvington Farmers' Market NNMN Booth 7:30 to 1:00

September 25 NNMN Booth Boots & BarBQ. Sabine Hall Farm, Warsaw, 1:00 to 4:00 PM

October 1 Irvington Farmers' Market NNMN Booth 7:30 to 1:00

September 13, 2016 - NNMN September meeting. "Orchids of Virginia" Speaker: Chesapeake Bay Region Steward, Zach Bradford. Upstairs meeting room at the new Lancaster Community Library. The Board of Directors meeting will be at noon with the general meeting at 1:00 PM and the speaker at 2:00 PM.

See the below listed Master Naturalist web sites for more coming events:

Our Northern Neck site:

<http://www.northernneckmasternaturalists.org/Welcome.html>

State site:

<http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/>

Logging Hours site:

<https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>

Thanks to Carol Hammer, Paula Boundy, Jeff Wright, Allison Sowar, Nancy Joel, Arlene CrabbeKilduff, Jane Henley, Petra Walian, Temple Moore, Pam Narney, and Don Hess for their work on this issue. And thanks to Nick Ferriter for his mole kingsnake photo.

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

MASTER NATURALIST PHOTO COMPETITION SUMMER 2016

Submission rules

1. All entries must be taken by members or trainees in good standing of the NN Master Naturalist Chapter
2. A participant may enter up to five images total in one or all of the following categories
(*Note these categories are different from past years*):
 - a) Virginia Flora, Fauna and Other Species
 - b) Virginia Landscapes and Habitats (ex. Sunsets, waterfalls, geology, etc.)
 - c) Virginia Master Naturalists in Action (Citizen Science, Education, Stewardship)
3. All entries must have been photographed in the state of Virginia
4. In the Virginia Flora, Fauna and Other Species category, the main subject must be Virginia native species. Non-native species may be in the background
5. File size: 500K to 1MB jpg (Or if your software options are just Small, Medium or Large, select Medium. See note *1 below)

Photo Editing Guidelines

1. Modifications ***not*** permitted:
 - No borders or frames may be added to the image
 - Adding or replacing elements in an images is not permitted
 - Artistic filters are not permitted
2. Permitted modifications
 - Images may be cropped, resized, 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

Send photos via email to: mikeg@mikegphotos.com

Deadline Friday July 29th, *but please send in your submissions earlier if possible*

Identify each image see note*2 below:

- a. Your name: First initial + Last Name + a unique 4 digit number e.g. CSachs0123
- b. Image Title
- c. Location
- d. Category: see 2a, 2b, 2c above
- e. Date image was taken
- f. Species shown in image (both common and scientific, if known)

Notes

*1 For the purposes of this competition, the above file sizes are appropriate. However, if you are planning on printing your photographs later on for exhibition, use the largest format on your camera

*2 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

Hints on How to Take a Good Photograph

Ask yourself: what is the subject of this image? Is the foreground important? What does the background add to the composition? Is there anything in the viewfinder that is distracting from the main subject?

Adjust your depth of field appropriately (check your user's manual for tips on how to do this). Better yet, take several images with different depths of fields or exposures, so that you can judge the differences (but be sure to take notes so that you know what you did!)

Get rid of extraneous details, either through the lens or by cropping

Cropping and other "post production" work can and should be done later to enhance the image e.g. make a background darker or lighter, increase contrast to highlight the subject. Use the digital tools available

You may have heard of the "Rule of Thirds" but treat it as a guideline not a hard and fast Rule. If you imagine a tic-tac-toe grid over your image, the main subject/s usually look best when placed on these lines or intersections of lines. This will normally produce a more balanced image But don't let your own creativity hold you back from experimenting with placement

Other composition tips:

Horizons? Keep them straight unless there is an artistic reason not to do so

Close ups (whether flora or fauna) need to be really sharp (again unless there is an artistic reason not to do so). Use a tripod if necessary

Be conscious of "framing" the image when appropriate so that the viewer's eye is drawn to the subject

Beware of harsh light (e.g. midday) but if that is when you have to shoot, then see how you can soften it (again, check your user's manual)

Where is the light source for your subject? Take advantage of back lighting to achieve great effects, even silhouettes

Move! This is so important especially with nature photography. More than likely you cannot move your subject, whether that is a natural scene, insect etc. So you must move yourself to take a better photograph. For example:

Get in close, shoot from above or below, lie on the ground etc.

Move along the trail, to avoid the distraction of over-hanging branches

Judging

Judging will be handled by three judges: *Bill Portlock, Mike Geissinger and Cathy Sachs*

The first place winning photograph in each category will be matted in white and placed in a black frame and presented at the Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Volunteer Conference on August 26th

Questions?

Contact Petra Walian by phone at 757.869.4974 or via email at pwalian@yahoo.com