



# Valley Views

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## President's Note: Millipedes, Spiders, and Entomologists, Oh My!

By Suzanne Offutt, PVAS President

Who among us isn't more than a little annoyed with the eruption of the millipede population in our homes, basements, garages, and doorways this summer? There seems to be a virtual explosion of the little crawling creatures. Usually, millipedes reside in the outdoors where they thrive in moist trash, grass clippings, and rotting wood, but when weather conditions reach extremes of wet or dry, they may move inside our homes. And most disconcerting is when you suspect that you've stepped barefoot on one in the dark when they're most active. Yuck! How does one combat this infestation?

A quick review of an internet search lets me know that I have a whole host of actions that I could take. I could clean up any debris and leaf litter around my home. I could water my lawn in the morning so that it dries out before evening. I could seal and caulk any potential openings around windows, doors and foundations, and then I could vacuum the little critters since they're easily controlled. There's also a laundry list of insecticides that I could try. One method not noted, which has become my household choice, is the deployment of the mighty spiders.

Noting that wherever I had judiciously allowed cobwebs to develop under furniture and in corners near the floor, my trusty house spiders had effectively managed the demise of an astonishing number of millipedes. I've always relied on my legions of house spiders to manage other pests in the house, including flies and aphids which seemed to find their way into the craftily built webs. Teaching my children that these were likely some of "Charlotte's daughters," we always left our house spiders relatively undisturbed to make their contributions to home management.

All of this noodling about spiders and millipedes led me to wonder about other insects and little critters. Some scientists share deep concerns over the worldwide decline of the insect populations. We know that bees and their relatives have declined precipitously. Many blame our use of agricultural pesticides which have conversely increased crop yields significantly. Other researchers describe dramatically decreased populations often relying on anecdotal evidence. The latter is best known as the "windshield test." The seasoned among us will remember the

days when we returned from a road trip with the car's front windshield and grill filled with insect bodies. But that doesn't seem to happen so much anymore, so where have all the insects gone?

Frankly, we don't really know because the root of this conundrum is that we really have inadequate science to determine what our insect populations are and how they're trending. We don't have enough entomologists to take on the painstakingly detailed roles of studying insects in their habitats. Universities fill fewer jobs in these fields and have shifted from taxonomy skill sets to a greater emphasis on genetics. Field work is more expensive than lab work. If we are to have a deeper understanding of our ecology and web of life, we will need more entomologists in the future.

Enter PVAS's summer camp programs and school programs and adult programs and Master Naturalist programs into my rumination over millipedes. Just as millipedes have a reputed thousand legs, Audubon is reaching into the future with educational efforts that help inspire a new generation of entomologists, ornithologists, ecologists and other environmental scientists. We are building a web of actions that will extend far into the future with protections of habitat and people who appreciate wild and open spaces. So, do your part today, tolerate the millipedes, feed the spiders, and grow an entomologist or two.

## Welcome New Board Members

As of July 1, PVAS transitioned to its new fiscal year, which includes the July of our new Board of Directors. Dan Cogswell and Amy Evrard have stepped off the Board after wonderful contributions as Treasurer and Communications Chair, respectively.

New board members include Jim Cummins (Vice President) and At-Large members Melissa Gonzalez, Rita Hennessey, Pete Mulford, and Patti Mulkeen-Corley. We welcome these new folks to their leadership roles on the board, and appreciate their commitment and the experiences they will bring including education, communications, conservation, and non-profit expertise. You may read the impressive biographies of our new members and ALL our wonderful board members on our website at [www.PotomacAudubon.org/about/board/](http://www.PotomacAudubon.org/about/board/). We look forward to a great year!

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*Potomac Valley Audubon Society is dedicated to preserving, restoring, and enjoying the natural world through education and action.*

## Great Crested Flycatcher – *Myiarchus crinitus*

By Wil Hershberger, Nature Images & Sounds

Great Crested Flycatchers are a woodland-nesting species of flycatcher in our area and the only member of the *Myiarchus* genus typically seen here<sup>1</sup>. For a large bird, about the size of a Northern Cardinal, the Great Crested Flycatcher is easily overlooked even though they are rather pretty birds with grayish-green above, gray on the throat and upper breast, lemon-yellow from the lower breast to the undertail coverts, and rufous in the wings and tail. Their bill is large and wide at the base – great for catching insects on the wing. They can be hard to see in the dappled light of a forest understory as their coloration helps them to blend in quite well.

Great Crested Flycatchers are the only species of flycatcher in our area that nests in a cavity. Typically, they will find an abandoned woodpecker nest or a natural cavity in a tree or pole to use for their nest site. They can also be enticed to use nesting boxes<sup>2</sup>. The male will guard his territory and his mate from other males by calling. His simple calls are often answered by the female as she inspects the prospective nest site and examines the territory (<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/94314>). The nest, built mostly by the female, is large and composed of just about anything that is flexible enough to get into the hole. While leaves, twigs, grasses, plant fibers, and pine needles are typical nesting materials used by this species, items such as cloth, paper, duct tape, plastic bits, and even horse manure have been reported. The list of items used for nesting material also includes shed snakeskins. If you see an old snakeskin hanging out of a hole in a tree or post, keep an eye on that cavity, it might be a Great Crested Flycatcher's nest. Apparently, the



snakeskins help to deter flying squirrels from entering the nest and preying on the eggs or young. The female finishes the nest in about four days and begins to lay the first of 4 to 8 creamy-white or pinkish eggs marked with a lattice of reddish streaks often concentrated at one end. She lays her eggs, one per day, typically in the morning and she alone incubates the eggs for about two weeks. The male defends the territory and follows the female around while she is foraging between periods of incubation. The male does not feed her while she is incubating, nor does he help with the incubation duties. The altricial young are dependent on the parents for warmth, food, and nest sanitation for about two weeks.

Interestingly, the nestlings are quite vocal, keeping up an almost constant peeping from within the cavity from the day after hatching. We were very fortunate to have a pair of Great Crested Flycatchers nest in an old screech owl box in the woods not far from our back deck. From there, we could easily hear the young begin their daily routine of calling, begging the parents to feed them (<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/166144941>). The louder “wee-eeep” calls are the adults, probably the male, as he guards the female during her trips to the nest with food and from the nest with fecal sacs. The male also feeds the young, but he doesn't keep up the pace of the female as she repeatedly visits the nest with food while he sits calling nearby.

As with most of the nesting species of birds in our area, the adults and young feed almost exclusively on insects during this time of year. If these insects are not present because of or are contaminated with pesticides, the effect on the young and adults can be devastating. Studies have found Great Crested Flycatchers to be significantly more abundant on organic farms than on conventionally managed farms. The removal of dead or dying trees from woodlots or forest patches can be a significant detriment to this species as well as woodpeckers and other cavity-nesting birds. To help maintain a healthy population of Great Crest Flycatchers in our area you can manage your land by allowing dead trees to stand in woodlots and by providing nest boxes as described in footnote 2.

1. See the article about the Ash-throated Flycatcher that Bob Dean and I found on a Charles Town Christmas Bird Count in 1990 on page 61. ([http://www.brooksbirdclub.org/uploads/5/2/8/3/52832773/1991\\_redstart\\_vol\\_58-2.pdf](http://www.brooksbirdclub.org/uploads/5/2/8/3/52832773/1991_redstart_vol_58-2.pdf))
2. <https://tinyurl.com/GCFL-nest-box>

Great Crested Flycatcher photos © Wil Hershberger

## PVAS Events

## Late Summer Adult Programs

*By Krista Hawley, Adult Program Coordinator*

If you have returned from your summer vacation wondering what local opportunities are available to keep you busy and entertained, PVAS has plenty of options for you!

We will spend much of our late summer months celebrating the wonderful world of insects. PVAS is offering a whole array of interesting and educational programs for people of all ages. These programs vary, but remain committed to the study and appreciation of moths, butterflies, pollinators and all local insects. Kathy Barylski's 'mothing sheets,' will attract the marvelous moths that inhabit our preserve; participants of Night Creatures of Cool Spring will listen to our boisterous insects that like to sing after dark; Wil Hershberger will try his luck at finding yet another 'first ever documented in Jefferson County' insect (in 2017, he found a Long-spurred Meadow Katydid on his Singing Insect Walk); see pollinators at work in Rita Hennessy's native meadow; or learn how to capture, tag and release Monarch butterflies at one of our numerous Monarch events. Please visit our events calendar to see a full list of insect focused programs...so many options, not enough time!

If taking an evening stroll along the trails of Cool Spring Preserve with a glass of wine in hand sounds enticing, then you will not want to miss our first annual 'Wine in the Woods' event on Sunday evening, September 8. Wine experts will be on hand at all three of our wine tasting stations, discussing the wines you will be sampling. As you sip your wine, there will be an opportunity to learn about what makes Cool Spring Preserve so unique.

Our Monthly Programs return in September with Katie Fallon's presentation, "Vulture: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird." Mrs. Fallon will present on Wednesday evening, September 11 at the Hospice of the Panhandle's Education Center. She brings a fresh perspective to this overlooked, underappreciated bird of prey. Our Monthly Programs are free and open to the public, and are an excellent way for Master Naturalists to earn one hour of continuing education credit.

People attending the August 12 Morgan County Program on Wetlands are invited to not only listen to the in-depth presentation at 2:00 p.m., but also join instructor, Elizabeth Byers, on a field trip to a local wetlands following her talk. Ms. Byers, a Senior Wetland Scientist at the WV Department of Environmental Protection, will offer a demonstration on how to recognize a wetland and provide explanation on some of the special features found there.

Joining together an appreciation for art and nature, Susan Loonsk offers workshops that connect participants to nature through expressive activities. Yoga on the back deck of Cool Spring, learning about Ecopsychology concepts through nature and art activities and guided meditative earth walks are just a glimpse of what one can expect to experience during these workshops.

PVAS is also offering a 'Breakfast with the Birds' in late September. After working up your appetite on the trails searching for Yellow Breasted Chats or Ruby Throated Hummingbirds with our expert birders Carol DelColle and Carol Winckler, enjoy a lovely outdoor breakfast on the back deck of Cool Spring Preserve.

Please remember to check the PVAS Calendar of Events for the most up to date information on our programs and events, and to register for any of the above mentioned programs: <https://www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar/>.

### Volunteer Spotlight

## Have you met Dan Cogswell?

Dan Cogswell's history with Audubon is an impressive one. He started as a volunteer with the National Audubon Society in 1990, when the organization had its regional conference in Shepherdstown. Dan tends to stay behind the scenes, but has been critical to PVAS for many years. Most recently Dan was the Treasurer - for the last six years - until his term concluded at the end of June. During that time he modernized PVAS bookkeeping systems and helped us transition to a professional part-time bookkeeper to meet the growing needs of our organization. Dan has also served as PVAS President, and was instrumental in getting Yankauer Nature Preserve up and running as an outdoor classroom for local schools. If you enjoy hiking Yankauer's Kingfisher Trail, you can thank Dan! He and a representative from The Nature Conservancy first blazed that trail. We are so grateful for Dan and the many significant contributions he has made to PVAS over the years.

All of our PVAS volunteers are great! If you know someone who deserves a shout out, please contact Kristin at [Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org).





## PVAS Events

**Summer Concert Series Returns to Cool Spring Preserve**

*By Erin Shaw, Program Administrator*

When I started as an AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer with PVAS in 2017, one of my early assignments was to revive the Summer Concert Series. I was lucky to have the help of a fantastic volunteer, Mary Etta Boesl, who helped me schedule performances at Yankauer Nature Preserve, and also turned in a fabulous performance with her ukulele group.

Nevertheless, my first (semi-panicked) thought was, “how are we going to book nine performances?” I very quickly learned that was not going to be a problem. There is no shortage of musical talent in this area. Even more remarkably, there is no shortage of wonderful, generous musicians willing to volunteer their time and talent.

With that said, I’m so excited to announce that PVAS’s Summer Concert Series will return this August to Cool Spring Preserve. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and a picnic, and enjoy an hour of music at Cool Spring’s beautiful natural amphitheater. All performances will be held from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome, and there’s no need to register. Concerts are free, and will be held rain or shine. Here’s the line-up:



- August 1: Flowers and Birds (Scooter and Sophia Scudieri)
- August 8: Steve Warner
- August 15: Bill and Paul Young
- August 22: The Dilettantes
- August 29: Todd Coyle and Don Oesher

If you have any questions, get in touch with me at [admin@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:admin@potomacaudubon.org) or (681) 252-1387. Hope to see you at the preserve this month!

**Volunteers Needed for Annual Bike Event**

The Potomac Pedalers Touring Club, Inc. is hosting its annual Back Roads Century Bike Ride on September 22nd. Yankauer Nature Preserve is one of the planned rest stops along the 100 mile bike route. We'll need volunteers throughout the day to help with handing out water and snacks, preparing food, and setting up/taking down.

If you're interested in lending a hand, get in touch with Krista at [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org).

**Birdseed Sale Set for November 2nd**

Our annual Birdseed Sale will be held Saturday, November 2nd at multiple pick-up locations in Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, and Washington counties. We'll once again be partnering with Sunny Meadows Garden Center in Boonsboro, Maryland to bring you a variety of high-quality seed and suet at discounted costs. Based on feedback from last year's sale, we're working hard to provide you with storage options for your seed. We're also developing an online store to streamline the ordering process and ensure order accuracy.

In addition to online orders, we'll also be taking orders via postal mail. A hard copy ordering form will be available in the October/November issue of *Valley Views*, but keep an eye on the PVAS website, as well as our e-newsletter for additional details as they develop. If you have any questions about the Birdseed Sale, contact Erin at [admin@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:admin@potomacaudubon.org) or (681) 252-1387.

## PVAS Events

## Member Perks

By Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

Thank you so much for being a member of PVAS! Your membership dollars provide the foundation PVAS needs to run the day-to-day operations of the organization. It also gives us more weight when advocating about environmental issues when we can say “PVAS has 257 members who care about the natural world.”

Besides knowing your dollars go to a good cause, there are other “perks” to being a member of PVAS. This bi-monthly newsletter, *Valley Views*, is now a member benefit. You should also be receiving our e-newsletter the first and third Wednesday each month (if you’re not receiving that, please let us know at [admin@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:admin@PotomacAudubon.org) and we can help trouble-shoot). Members get discounts to programs such as Birding 101, summer day camps, facility rentals, and birthday parties. Membership also allows you to take advantage of member-only events such as our annual dinner, special field trips, or other events exclusively for members.

PVAS has also partnered with organizations who provide reciprocal membership perks such as ANCA (Association of Nature Center Administrators). This allows you to visit participating nature centers across the country for free or reduced admission. We’ll be adding more opportunities like this over time. Finally, several local businesses have offered special discounts for PVAS members. Lists of reciprocal memberships and local business discounts can be found on our website at <https://www.potomacaudubon.org/support/become-a-member/>.

We value our members and want to make your investment in PVAS worthwhile. If we can answer any questions for you or help you get the most out of PVAS, we’d love to help.

## Farewell to Eric

By Amy Moore, PVAS Naturalist

Eric Collins, our AmeriCorps Environmental Educator Volunteer, will be ending his service with us in mid-August. Eric is a fantastic educator with an energy and enthusiasm that really engages and motivates the children he teaches. We loved watching him grow as a teacher during his time with PVAS. When asked what his favorite part of the job was, he said he most enjoyed the watershed field trips and engaging students in these outdoor field experiences.

Eric has accepted a position as a Freshwater Ecologist with the Fairfax County Government. He will be conducting watershed and stormwater educational programs in schools, as well as testing local streams and rivers to monitor stream health. If you’d like to join us in wishing Eric all the best, he can be reached at [eric@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:eric@potomacaudubon.org) until August 15.



## AmeriCorps Positions Open

Interested in teaching our area’s youth about the natural world, watersheds, sustainable energy, and more? Know someone who is? We are seeking two AmeriCorps Environmental Educator Volunteers to start with us in mid-September. These instructors will help PVAS implement school programs, summer camp, scout programs, spring break programs, library programs and much more.

AmeriCorps, often described as the domestic version of the Peace Corps, involves adults in a year of service targeted towards important social outcomes. AmeriCorps volunteers receive a living allowance of \$1,216.70/month, an education award of \$6,095 at the completion of their service year, healthcare benefits, child care assistance, student loan forbearance, and extensive professional training while in service.

To apply, send a cover letter and resume with contact information for three references via e-mail to Amy Moore at [amy@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:amy@potomacaudubon.org) by Monday, August 26th. You can also find more information on this position at <https://www.potomacaudubon.org/about/positions-with-pvas/>. Please feel free to share this opportunity with anyone who may be interested.



## Camp Programs

### That's a Wrap! Summer Camp Highlights

By Amy Moore, PVAS Naturalist

What a wonderful camp season! 334 children attended sessions at either our Cool Spring Preserve or Yankauer Nature Preserve camp locations. Our amazing camps would not have been possible without our two camp directors, eight camp staff, and seventeen Junior Staff volunteers. A big thank you to all of them!

Here are some highlights from the camp sessions:

- At Earth Art Camp, campers made cattail weavings and harvested and processed clay from the preserves to create clay sculptures. Some campers made their own recycled paper with added plants and flowers. Others crafted bowls from gourds and wrote nature poems.
- At Camp Survivor, campers learned to whittle, build fires, purify water, and identify edible plants.
- At Cool Spring's Splish Splash camp sessions, campers spent a majority of their time in Bullskin Run, catching fish and macroinvertebrates. They also built their own mini-rafts out of natural materials and raced them down the creek.
- At Wild Child Camp, campers made mud pies and camouflage outfits. At the Yankauer session, they even made a mud slip and slide. Campers also harvested Jewelweed and Plantain leaves to make a homemade salve. These plants have soothing properties for insect bites and rashes caused by Poison Ivy and Stinging Nettles.
- Our middle school Outdoor Adventure campers had a chance to explore the Whittings Neck cave near Yankauer Nature Preserve, while the Cool Spring Outdoor Adventurers went paddle boarding on the Potomac River. We finished out both weeks with an overnight campout at each of the preserves.
- At our Nature Detective Camps, campers investigated skulls and bones and had a chance to meet camp counselor Taryn's Ball Python, and Yankauer camp director Cristin's King Snake, Geckos, Skinks and Snapping Turtle when learning about animal adaptations.
- At our preschool Wee Naturalist Camp, we made a mud kitchen, dressed up like birds and butterflies and sang nature songs.



We're already excited for the Summer 2020 camp season. Mark your calendars with these important dates: we'll begin hiring camp counselors in January, and registration for camp will open in February.

### A Camper's Perspective

By Alivia Haas

This summer, I attended a few different camps at PVAS, but my favorite one was called "Wild Child." I was in the oldest group, which had about six kids in it. We had two counselors named Fiona and Josie, and they were really awesome.

I loved the camp because I made new friends and we got to be outside all day! We did a lot of fun things such as catch butterflies, splash around in the creek while looking for crayfish and other wildlife, and we got to explore the woods and trails.

We also did some fun art activities using items we found during our hikes. One day we designed bandanas using a hammer and leaves. Another day we made jewelweed salve and I learned that you can use it for mosquito bites! We also got to create a nature journal that we could draw and write in.

I really like coming to PVAS for homeschool classes and for camps. It's really a fun place!





## Conservation

### Plight of the Pollinators

by Liz Janelle, Land Management & Conservation Intern

Ninety percent of flowering plants, and one third of human food crops, require pollinators for reproduction. The reproduction of these plants is vital to sustaining human life and biodiversity. The work done by pollinators impacts everyone in some way, from the crops we use for our food and clothes, to the landscapes we enjoy. The relationship between the plant and the pollinator is mutually beneficial. As bees, butterflies, and other pollinators pollinate plants, the pollinators receive nectar and/or pollen from the plant. During this time, the plants are pollinated by the insects, resulting in seed production. Without this mutually beneficial process, many plants would not be able to reproduce.

Native pollinators (bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, flies, birds, and bats) are threatened by habitat loss, disease, and overuse of pesticides. The popularity of agro-chemicals, like pesticides, as a way to treat crops has heavily impacted the native pollinator population. The use of pesticides and herbicides directly impacts the bees, butterflies, and other bugs that come in future contact with that plant. Climate change is also negatively impacting pollinators, as some pollinators no longer emerge at the same time their main food sources are available.

There are many ways for landowners to help facilitate pollinator populations in their area, and help reverse some of the damage caused by human activity. A few basic steps homeowners can take to help facilitate pollinator populations include reduced mowing and avoiding pesticide use. Another great way for homeowners to help pollinator populations is by designating a pollinator patch in their yard. A pollinator patch is essentially an area of land, any size, exclusively designated for native plants that promote pollinator health (Goldenrod, Milkweed, Ironweed, etc.).

There are many benefits to a designated pollinator patch, including:

- Increased livelihood and reproductive success of native pollinator species.
- Possible return of species that have disappeared from our area.
- Establishment of a functional meadow habitat that benefits a host of native plant and animal species (even more than just pollinators!)

If you are interested in designating a pollinator patch in your backyard, we encourage you to enroll in Potomac Valley Audubon Society's brand new Protected Pollinator Patch program. If you have at least 1/2 acre of open, unmowed meadow on your property that you would like to steward for pollinators, contact Land and Conservation Manager, KC Walters, at [katelyn@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:katelyn@potomacaudubon.org), to set up a time and date for an initial property assessment. During the assessment, a certified Master Naturalist will walk with you around your property and evaluate the habitat. You will then receive a hard copy of the assessment including land management recommendations. If your property meets the criteria of a Protected Pollinator Patch, you will then be invited to enroll in the program.



## Conservation

### Top 5: Late Summer Pollinator Plants

By Liz Janelle, Land Management & Conservation Intern

**1. Milkweed:** Milkweed is a particularly good plant to facilitate monarch butterfly populations, as it's the only type of plant they will use to lay their eggs. In West Virginia there is a wide variety of native Milkweed species: Butterfly Milkweed, Common Milkweed, Swamp Milkweed, Whorled Milkweed, Poke Milkweed, and many others. Aside from its benefit of facilitating monarch butterfly populations, it is also a great nectar source for pollinators, blooming in the summer months.



**2. Pawpaw:** This native plant is a commonly used butterfly larvae host. Pawpaw flowers in the spring, but it is a great option to help facilitate the growth of butterfly populations year round, partially because the plant is undesirable for deer.

**3. Goldenrod:** Goldenrod is a native nectar source for pollinators. This plant blooms near the end of summer and into early fall. It is also great for those with allergies, because Goldenrod's pollen is actually too heavy to become airborne, and therefore is not a nasal threat.



**4. Ironweed:** This fall blooming plant is a WV native, and another great nectar source for pollinators. Named for its tough stem, Ironweed adds a bright pop of purple to the autumn landscape.

**5. Bee Balm:** Another plant native to WV, Bee Balm is a nectar source for bees and butterflies alike, and popular in many backyard pollinator gardens. This plant blooms in early to late summer in a variety of colors including vibrant pink, red, and white. It is also known for its medicinal use, as a source for the antiseptic, Thymol.



### Monarch Alliance Fall Milkweed and Native Plant Sale

**The Monarch Alliance will host its third annual Fall Milkweed and Native Plant Sale on Saturday, September 7th.**

The sale will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Sunny Meadows Garden Center, located at 7437 Sharpsburg Pike, Boonsboro, MD 21713.

There will be a large variety of native plants available, including multiple milkweed species.

Children's games and information on the Monarch butterfly's migration will also be available.

### Save the Date: Native Tree and Plant Sale

We'll be hosting our Fall Native Tree and Plant Sale on October 12th.

Full details will be available in the October issue of Valley Views, but check our website calendar for up-to-the-minute additions.

In the meantime, you can reach out to KC with questions, or requests for plant species you would like to see at the sale:

[katelyn@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:katelyn@potomacaudubon.org)



## Notes from the Preserves

### In the Preserves

by KC Walters, Land and Conservation Manager

How is summer nearly over already?

June was absolutely spectacular weather-wise, but July was hot, hot, hot! Nevertheless, we had some wonderful accomplishments at the preserves.

Cool Spring has had several brand new land management volunteers in the last few months. At the June workday, there were a total of 16 volunteers helping to plant native plugs in the pollinator meadow. In just over 3 hours, 600 plants were added to diversify and beautify the meadow habitat. Be sure to come for a hike at Cool Spring in late August or early September to see the meadow in its full late summer glory.

The front entrance to Yankauer is transforming. The pollinator garden is seeding and expanding. The overgrown vegetation was removed by the power company, and the area along the parking lot is now open and more welcoming to guests. Did you know you can rent the pavilion for a special event? Check out the Yankauer Usage Form on our website for more details and to make your reservation.

Stauffer's Marsh will soon be featured in Jefferson Magazine, a local publication highlighting Jefferson County and the surrounding area. Local birders, Steve Hartmann, Wil Hershberger, and Bob Dean will all be included in the article. Be sure to pick up a copy!

The last several workdays at Eidolon have included a steady stream of trail clearing. Thanks to amazing local, and not-so-local volunteers, all the trails remain open and accessible to hiking. On June 30, the first Eidolon Appreciation Day picnic was hosted by Eidolon neighbor and volunteer, Bart Rutley. The local community came out to learn more about the preserve in their backyard and how to get involved with PVAS. A fun time was had by all, and we look forward to making this an annual tradition.



We also spent a workday out at Flowing Springs Park in Ranson. This little known park was the site of riparian buffer restoration projects that were a joint effort of Ranson Parks and Recreation, WV Division of Forestry, and PVAS several years ago. During the workday, we were able to remove the deer fencing protecting the planted trees. This deer fencing will now be reused to protect the PVAS native tree and shrub nursery. Stay tuned for more info on the return of PVAS's Native Plant Sale scheduled for October 12. If there is something you would like to see grown and sold in the PVAS nursery, be sure to let me know.

Liz Janelle, our Land Management and Conservation Intern, has been such a helpful addition to land management at the preserves. We hope you all enjoyed getting to know and work with her during our volunteer workdays. Unfortunately, we only have her for a few more weeks and then she returns to West Virginia University for her senior year. If you would like to send her a farewell or obtain her permanent contact info, please email her at [naturepreserves@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:naturepreserves@potomacaudubon.org) before August is over.

Mark your calendars for the United Way Day of Caring, which will be held on September 10 this year. We will be having volunteers working at Cool Spring and

Yankauer beginning at 9:00 a.m. Lunch and t-shirts are provided. Register on our website today.

Don't let the last of summer slip away without earning some of your 2019 volunteer hours. Registering for workdays on our website, or sending an email to [katelyn@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:katelyn@potomacaudubon.org), helps me to better plan the workday activities and communicate with you about changes or cancellations.



## Advocacy

**Shareholder Resolutions: Another Tool for Fighting Climate Change**

*By Neal Barkus, Panhandle Progressive*

Those of us concerned about climate change in the United States have a right to be frustrated. The Trump administration seems determined to undermine every hard-won diplomatic, legislative and policy success in the climate arena. Take, for example, withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accords, weakening targets for power plant emissions, and installing an implacable opponent of the agency to chair the EPA. The list goes on. While the federal government is in the grip of these science-deniers and climate change reactionaries, other governmental units and private citizens must find a way to make a difference. One tool available to many private citizens is to exercise their rights as shareholders of large corporations.

Over half the American population owns shares in public corporations, either directly or in their retirement savings plans. Public corporations are supposed to function as democracies of a sort in which each shareholder has influence in corporate governance according to the number of shares she owns. Each shareholder can vote on who will sit on the board of directors and, in some cases, on non-binding resolutions affecting corporate policy and direction. These shareholder resolutions usually can be adopted by the vote of a majority of all voting shares.

There is a long history of shareholder resistance on environmental and social grounds. Shareholders pushed Dow Chemical to cease producing napalm during the Vietnam War. Shareholders forced corporations to cease doing business with South Africa, or to divest, during the apartheid years. And shareholders have recently forced McDonalds to stop using polystyrene foam packaging.

The number of shareholder resolutions of all sorts introduced each year has been growing until just recently. But the number of climate-related resolutions at energy companies has dropped over the last three years. Some see this as a good sign that corporations are willing to take the issues more seriously without the need for shareholder resolutions. All of the resolutions for the last decade are collected at the website of the organization As You Sow ([www.asyousow.org](http://www.asyousow.org)).

Shareholder resolutions often call for reports to shareholders on the corporation's plans to cut emissions or its adherence to the guidelines in the Paris Climate Accord. Here is a recent shareholder resolution at Amazon:

**BE IT RESOLVED:** Shareholders request that Amazon.com Inc. adopt a policy with quantitative company wide goals for managing greenhouse gas GHG emissions considering the objectives and timelines of the Paris Climate Agreement and report at reasonable cost and omitting proprietary information on its plans to achieve these targets.

Frequently, a shareholder resolution fails to achieve a majority of the shares voting, at least the first year it is introduced. But resolutions can be resubmitted and many in the climate arena pick up support from year to year. An environmental proposal must obtain 3% of the total vote its first year to be resubmitted, 6% the second year and 10% the third year. If it fails to meet these minimum vote totals, it may not be resubmitted for three years.

Even a failed resolution, or one unlikely to succeed, can have a positive effect. Shareholders should think of resolutions as a portal to open dialogue with corporate management. In many cases, management will confer with the shareholder group advancing a proposal and come to some agreement that satisfies the group. This is then followed by a withdrawal of the resolution before it is voted on by all the shareholders. So far in 2019, climate-related shareholder resolutions at General Electric, Amazon, Emerson, Kroger and J.P. Morgan, among others, have followed this "agreement then withdrawal" pattern.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has developed rules for submitting shareholder resolutions and whether particular ones should be permitted. Any shareholder who owns \$2,000 worth of company stock and has held it for one year prior to the annual filing deadline may file a proposal. Unless the corporation agrees to the resolution, it is inserted in the proxy statement issued to shareholders in advance of the corporate annual meeting. Proponents of the resolution are allowed only 500 words in the proxy statement to present their case.

Several shareholder activist organizations have produced FAQ sheets and downloadable guides to filing shareholder resolutions ([www.iccr.org](http://www.iccr.org)). The process is relatively easy, but recent climate-related shareholder resolutions at large U.S. energy companies have hit a speed bump. Resolutions calling for the disclosure of specific targets for emission reduction and adherence to the Paris Climate Accords have been blocked by the SEC at Chevron, Devon Energy, ExxonMobil, and Hess Oil.

In the Obama era, similar shareholder resolutions were allowed to proceed despite opposition from the corporations. Now, the Trump SEC has decided these resolutions are an attempt to micromanage the corporation, even though they are non-binding. Since Trump took office the SEC has consistently ruled in favor of corporations that oppose these resolutions. Hawaii Senator Brian Schatz has written to the SEC Chairman complaining that the use of the "micromanagement" concept is an unwarranted effort to reduce shareholder efforts to protect their investment from the effects of climate change.

*continued next page*



*Shareholder Resolutions continued from previous page*

The approach of the Trump SEC should come as no surprise, given the overwhelming power and influence that energy companies have bought with their huge Republican campaign contributions. One commentator has suggested that investors may now be left only with the ax – divestment from corporations that are inhospitable to strong measures to reduce climate change. Writing in *High Country News*, Carl Segerstrom reports that the divestment movement claims to have pulled more than \$8.5 trillion out of fossil fuel companies. Massive divestment will certainly get the attention of corporate executives.

I continue to believe, however, that the swiftest and most certain method of returning corporations to the path of moral capitalism is to rid ourselves of the political leaders whose policies have allowed these corporations to subordinate our environmental future to short term profit in the first place. A political change at the top will signal that it is time to get serious about climate change in corporate boardrooms.

## PVMN

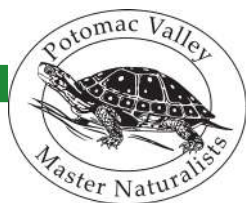
### Master Naturalist Program Update

*By Krista Hawley, Adult Program Coordinator*

The 2019 Master Naturalist class has had a busy summer learning about a wide variety of topics, both in the classroom and out in the field, including Geology, Ecology and Aquatic Habitats. These classes are just one part of what the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program is about. Not only has the 2019 cohort been attending classes, they have also been ‘feet on the ground’ for a whole variety of PVAS programs. These students, along with our certified Master Naturalists, have been rolling up their sleeves and working at all four of our preserves, volunteering at fun events like Fireflies, Fiddles & Frogs and attending meetings about how they can become a Field Trip/Workshop Coordinator (plus much more!) PVAS could not successfully serve our community without the help of these dedicated volunteers.

On June 29, 2019, one such Master Naturalist, Clark Dixon, was recognized for his lifetime of service. The Two Rivers Giving Circle, a donor-advised fund of the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation, presented Mr. Dixon with its 2019 Conservation Award. Clark is a founding father of the PVAS-sponsored Master Naturalist Program and his leadership in natural resources and commitment to service has been the foundation to this successful program. Congratulations, Clark on your well deserved honor!

For more information about PVAS’s Master Naturalist Program, please visit <https://www.potomacaudubon.org/education/adult/masternat/>.



## BECOME A PVAS MEMBER!

ALL of your dues will stay here to support local PVAS efforts and help us grow! And here's what you'll get:

- Ten-percent member discount to many PVAS programs and events.
- A subscription to *Valley Views*, the PVAS newsletter.
- Free or reduced admission to participating nature centers and/or their programs across the country.
- E-mail alerts about events and programs.
- An invitation to a PVAS Members annual gathering.
- Discounts to participating **local businesses**.

### Membership Form

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check. Dues are \$50/household, \$35/teachers (covering membership for everyone in your household for one year), or \$20/full-time adult student (benefits apply to member only). Make the check out to "PVAS." For details, go to: <http://potomacaudubon.org/member>.

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

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*To save postage costs, PVAS regularly sends its newsletter by e-mail. You can be assured that we do not share email addresses with anyone. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail check here: \_\_\_\_.*

### Clip and mail this form to:

Membership Chair, PVAS  
PO Box 578  
Shepherdstown, WV 25443



**Thank you for your support!**

### About the National Audubon Society

National Audubon has a membership program that is separate from PVAS. To become a National member, go to the Society's website at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), and click on "join." If you join National Audubon and reside in Berkeley, Jefferson, or Morgan counties in West Virginia, or in Washington County Maryland, you will automatically become an affiliate of PVAS, but not a full PVAS member. Affiliates will have access to our communications, and invitations to our events. However, all National Audubon dues go to the National Audubon Society and are not shared with PVAS. We heartily invite you to become a dues-paying member of both organizations.



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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please contact any of the board members listed here or see <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

*All Officers, Board Members, and Staff can be contacted at 681-252-1387.*

**PVAS Officers and Board Members** (year of term expiration in parentheses)

President:	Suzanne Offutt (2020)
Past President:	Michael Sullivan (2020)
Vice President:	Jim Cummins (2020)
Secretary:	Georgia Jeppesen (2020)
Treasurer:	Stephen Paradis (2021)
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	Susan Brookreson (2020)
	Don Campbell (2021)
	Shannye Carroll (2020)
	Laura Davis (2020)
	Melissa Gonzalez (2021)
	Mina Goodrich (2021)
	Rita Hennessey (2021)
	Tiffany Lawrence (2020)
	Pete Mulford (2021)
	Patti Mulkeen-Corley (2021)
	Stephen Paradis (2020)
	Rod Snyder (2021)

**Emerita Board Member:** Jean Neely

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Charlotte Fremaux (301-404-8639) ..... [newsletter@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@potomacaudubon.org)

## PVAS BOARD

PVAS Board meetings take place the first Thursday of every other month (September through June). Meetings are open to all PVAS members. Please contact the President or Vice President if you would like to attend.