

# Valley Views

Volume 40, Issue 6

June/July 2022

## Director's Report

By Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director



Happy Spring! I hope everyone has been able to get out to enjoy the wildflowers, warmer temperatures, and the return of our warblers and other migrants. My annual phoebe babies have hatched on my porch so spring has officially “sprung” and summer is well on its way!

As you saw in the last issue of Valley Views, this is PVAS's 40th anniversary year. We've been having a wonderful time going through the files and archives and finding past issues of Valley Views, photos and correspondence.

I continue to be overwhelmed with what this chapter has achieved over the years. The group has been involved with so many significant conservation impacts: establishment of Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge; protection of Altona Marsh; reintroduction of osprey to the region; contributions to international organizations to protect migratory birds; and partnerships to preserve and manage 500+ acres of green space here, close to home.

The other thing that impresses me as I go through the files is how many people have stayed involved over the years. So many of today's active members were founders or have been key players in the organization for decades! That kind of commitment and continuity is incredible – and probably one of the reasons the organization still thrives.

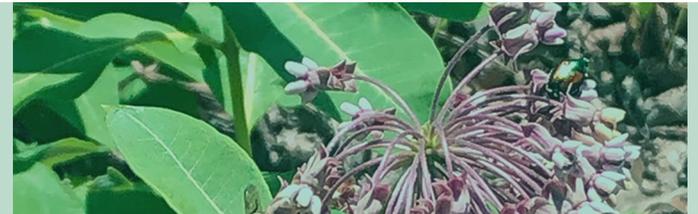
We've included the first-ever Valley Views in this issue just for fun, and we've published the original membership roster as well. I'm sure some names will be familiar!

I hope you'll join in some of the festivities. In this issue you'll learn about Founder's Day activities for July 10th, a canoe trip down the Shenandoah on August 12th, and the PVAS Membership Picnic and Reunion on August 20th, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the signing of our charter.

But let's not focus so much on our past that we forget about the future! You'll be receiving your ballot for the incoming PVAS Board of Directors via email shortly. Board members shape the future of the organization so your vote is important! Also, arriv-

ing by mail, you'll be receiving our “Summer Appeal” mailing, asking for your support. It will include a beautiful “trail map” of PVAS's conservation accomplishments featuring artwork by our talented AmeriCorps, Gus Rasich. Our goal this summer is to raise \$40,000 in honor of PVAS's 40 years. It's a lofty but worthwhile goal. The conservation accomplishments of PVAS over the last 40 years are an inspiration and demonstrate PVAS's history of successful endeavors. As we enter the next decade, I think you'll agree that our conservation work has never been more critical. Your generosity will ensure our capacity to accomplish great things.

I hope you'll join me as we celebrate past successes and prepare to launch the next decade of conservation and education accomplishments.



## NATIVE PLANT SALE

Spring 2022

Saturday, June 4

10:00am - 2:00pm

Sunny Meadows Garden Center  
Boonsboro, MD



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

## A Triller in the Woods – Pine Warbler (*Setophaga pinus*)

By Wil Hershberger, Nature Images & Sounds, LLC

One of the first wood-warblers to return to our area to breed is the Pine Warbler. Most of the population of this species spends the entire year within the United States, a very uncharacteristic behavior for a wood-warbler. No other warbler is so tied to pine and mixed forests, and is never found in purely deciduous woodlands.

Males return to their territories a week or so before the females. The males spend their days looking for resources and singing to establish boundaries with neighboring males. Male Pine Warblers sing a song reminiscent of the trills of Chipping Sparrows or Dark-eyed Juncos, but sweeter, more musical in quality. Once the females arrive and territories are set, the males begin to sing more at dawn, perhaps in an effort to alert other males that this area is taken and to



Pine Warbler © Wil Hershberger, Nature Images & Sounds, LLC

stay out. These dawn song bouts are very different from the daytime singing efforts of this species. At dawn, the males will sing several song types alternating from one to another so that the same song type is rarely repeated back-to-back.

During these dawn bouts, males will sing up to 15 songs per minute. Some males may only have two song types for these dawn performances, while other males may have six. Occasionally, a male will give a surprising series of chatters that sound nothing like the species' song during these dawn concerts. You can hear a good example of this dawn chatter in this recording at the 2 min. 22 sec. (2:22) mark (<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/435694551>). An example from another male can be heard in this recording at the 3:58 mark (<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/230476361>). During daytime singing, the male Pine Warbler uses a different song type that is higher in pitch and sung at a slower rate of around 5-7 songs per minute. These songs seem to be focused more toward females and possibly only used for mate attraction (<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/240869641>).

In our area, Pine Warblers nest high in coniferous trees, typically Shortleaf, Virginia, and White Pines. The nest is constructed mainly by the female, with some help gathering nesting material by the male. The deeply cupped nest is composed of plant fibers, pine needles, grasses, and twigs and is lined with material such as fur, feathers, and fine plant fibers

Once the nest is finished, the female will lay 3-5 gray-white eggs that are speckled with brown at the large end. It appears that only the female incubates the eggs for the 10-14 days it takes for them to mature and hatch. During incubation, the male will occasionally feed the sitting female. Both parents brood the young. The nestlings fledge about ten days after hatching and are fed by both parents for an additional 2 to 4 weeks when the young become independent. It appears that there is only one brood per year in our area. When the nest is under attack from a predator, the adults may flutter to the ground and give a broken-wing display similar to that of Killdeer.

Pine Warblers are doing well in our area. Forested areas with stands of pines among deciduous trees are preferred, and this habitat appears to be more common as wooded areas are left standing from year to year. Climate change is predicted to reduce the suitable habitat for this species by as much as 50% by 2050 over its entire range. Within West Virginia, the effects on this species should be minimal as long as the forests are allowed to flourish.

If you are lucky and have Pine Warblers breeding in your yard or neighborhood, get out at first light and listen for the dawn singing concert as males switch from one song type to the next. Also, listen for the rare chatter calls that can only be heard during these dawn performances. Later in the day, go back to the same area and listen for the male as he sings a different song type that is higher in pitch and sung at a slower rate. Listen for the difference between the songs of the Pine Warbler and those of the ever-present Chipping Sparrow. With a bit of practice, you'll be able to quickly tell who is singing that trill in the wood.

## PVAS Events

### Adult Programs Through the Summer Months

*By Krista Hawley, Adult Program Coordinator*

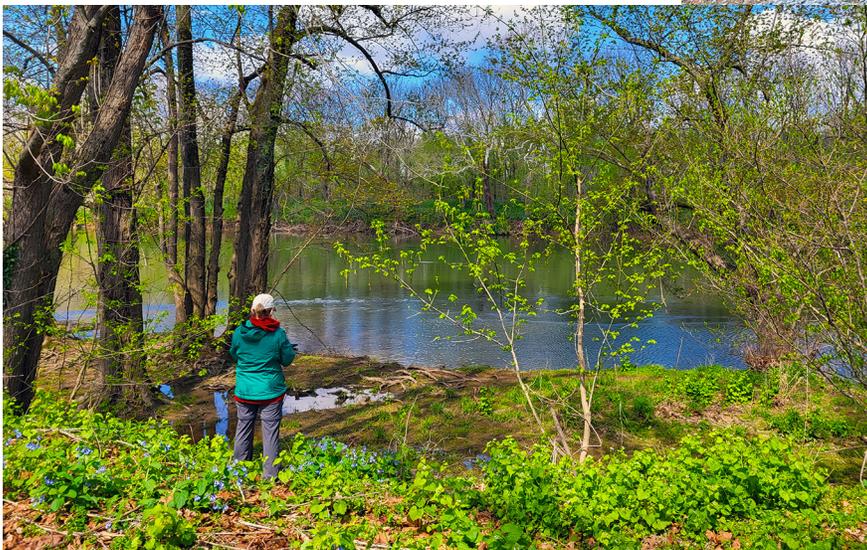
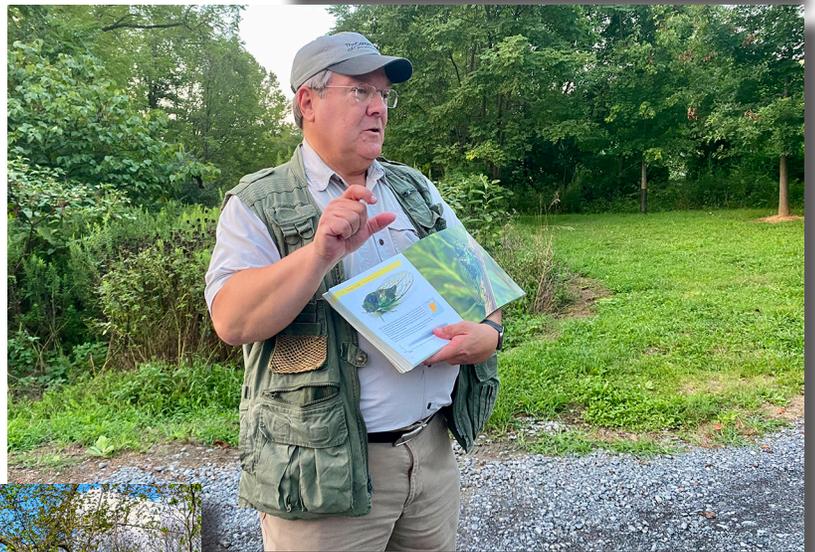
The sweet smell of summer is in the air! The sunlight stretches our days well into the evenings, the trails, lush and overgrown, are abuzz with busy pollinators and the deep blue skies are painted with the signature summer puffy, 'fair weather' cumulus clouds. Step outside with PVAS as we explore and celebrate all that our summers have to offer.

If you are searching for ways to become more involved, our June 8 PVAS Ambassador Training is an excellent place to start. Learn the inside scoop into all things PVAS and the tools you'll need to host events, nature walks or represent PVAS at fairs and festivals. We welcome your ideas and look forward to working together to continue to offer exciting and interesting walks, workshops and field trips.

Our Wellness Walkers have been having great fun adventuring around our PVAS preserves. In May, the group hiked the trails of Eidolon learning about the history of this unique property and enjoying the natural beauty our higher elevation preserve has to offer. On June 14, the Wellness Walkers will set off exploring a new venue, Shenandoah University Cool Spring's River Campus along the Shenandoah River. The group will return to Stauffer's Marsh in July to visit the Pollinator Meadow in its full glory. The Wellness Walks are a great way to get outside, stay active and we welcome all levels of walkers!

With a goal of connecting to our senses of wonder and curiosity and reflecting on our observations in nature, Joy Bridy, local potter and Master Naturalist, guides the monthly Nature Journaling Gatherings. The Summer Solstice will be the highlight of June's gathering at Cool Spring Preserve and anyone with an interest is encouraged to join, regardless of their journaling experience.

Our cool, early morning bird walks are a delightful way to embrace the gifts of summer, however if evenings are more favorable to you, join our evening bird walk on June 14 at the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center. Registration for our bird walks is open to anyone with an interest, including newcomers, and our leaders are happy to provide binoculars to those who request them.



Wil Hershberger returns to the trails of Cool Spring Preserve on Friday, July 29 for his popular Singing Insect Walk. Mr. Hershberger will lead an exploration along the trails hunting for a variety of insects including tree crickets, several species of meadow katydids, one or two species of round-winged katydids, northern true katydids, oblong-wing katydids, and perhaps some bush katydids.

We encourage you to visit [PotomacAudubon.org](http://PotomacAudubon.org) for an up-to-date listing of all our events and activities as we are continually adding opportunities to get out, enjoy and learn in nature.

## PVAS Events

**22nd Annual “This Race is for the Birds!” – An In-Person & Virtual Event**

*By Krista Hawley, Adult Program Coordinator*

The trails were in perfect condition. The course was marked, grass was cut, and everything was ready to go. Then, the skies opened, and the rain came down for three long days & nights. It was the great deluge of spring 2022. When the rains finally gave us some much-needed respite, we headed out to assess the trails. With less than 24 hours to go until the race, the field trails were underwater and the trails through the woods a mushy, muddy mess. With a positive ‘can-do’ attitude, the amazing race-prep team rolled up their sleeves, pulled on their galoshes and set out to re-route trails and build more bridges. Playfully, the ‘muddiest racer’ award was born. Thankfully, the race-day early morning sweep of the course reported sweet success – the trails were passable – dry enough and ready for our loyal runners and walkers!

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, supportive sponsors and nearly 250 participants (including 33 virtual) from 11 states and Washington DC, “This Race is for the Birds!” 2022 was a great success. With the generosity of many, over \$17,000 was raised to support PVAS’s nature preserves and educational programs.

We were thrilled to be able to return to our traditional start/finish with the use of 5Runners Racing, professional timing services, and our community of runners and walkers gathering to start the race; all together at the same time. The 5K course was much the same as in years past, with the addition of a rewarding sweep through a gorgeous broomgrass field just prior to the long, steep hills that guide participants back to the finish line. Our 10K runners/walkers were treated to newly created trails that took them through a 4th beautiful woods section before heading downhill to the famous bluebell trails along Back Creek. The course at Broomgrass is ‘one of a kind’ and PVAS loves being able to offer this unique experience at such a fabulous venue.



Our winner of the 5K was a lightning fast 15-year-old Broomgrass resident, Silas Yates, with a chip time of 21:46! The first-place female in the 5K was Sarah Kristin Farthing of Martinsburg with a chip time of 23:14. Derek Gallagher took first place in the 10K with an incredible chip time of 47:30 and Katie Thompson, our first-place female in the 10K, had a chip time of 50:51 (earning her 4th overall!). Full results are available on the race website <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/14016#resultSetId-309003;perpage:100>.

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society is extremely grateful for 22 years of fun adventures hosting this event. Our generous community of sponsors, numerous hard-working volunteers and adventurous runners & walkers go beyond anything we could ever dream of.

As Confucius said, “It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop,” and with that advice, we look forward to welcoming all levels of walkers and runners for many years to come!

## PVAS Events

### Stephanie Diamond, In Memorium

By Kristin Alexander

We are sad to share that Stephanie Diamond, a Master Naturalist, PVAS volunteer, and science teacher passed away on May 7th. Stephanie taught 6th grade science at Charles Town Middle School. She participated in the first teacher training PVAS ever did, offered in partnership with Shepherd University and NCTC. She stayed connected with PVAS and she kindly shared her musical talents with us. Some of you may remember Stephanie as the harpist at our fundraiser at Belle Vue MANY years ago. Stephanie enrolled in the 2011 Master Naturalist class and she continued to be in touch about ways to get her science students outside and involved in local conservation projects. When PVAS was working on Flowing Springs Park in Ranson, she offered to have her science students make bluebird boxes for the trail there.

To learn more about Stephanie, her obituary can be found here: <https://ti-nyurl.com/ye5s8vfb>.

Also, read this *Journal* article about Stephanie's efforts as a science teacher at: [https://www.journal-news.net/journal-news/charles-town-middle-students-put-environmental-lessons-to-work/article\\_de7b30a1-65a3-5f7b-a802-b42ae-c3badf6.html](https://www.journal-news.net/journal-news/charles-town-middle-students-put-environmental-lessons-to-work/article_de7b30a1-65a3-5f7b-a802-b42ae-c3badf6.html)

She will be greatly missed and we are so grateful for her many contributions to education and conservation.



### PVAS Now Accepting Donations for Fall Auction

This year's on-line auction will be held the first week of November, concluding November 6th.

PVAS is now accepting donations to sell as a fundraiser for PVAS. Past donations have included photography, local kayak and paddleboard adventures, hand-made jewelry, artwork, pottery, antiques, and more.

If you are doing any spring cleaning and find some items you'd like to rehome while benefiting PVAS, please get in touch with Kristin at [Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org) or call the office at 681-252-1387.



### 4th of July Parade Invitation

Come celebrate Independence Day with PVAS by marching in the Shepherdstown 4th of July parade. The parade will form up on Church Street, then proceeds down German Street to Princess Street and ends there.

Come find us along Church Street any time after 10:30. If you have trouble finding us, ask one of the parade coordinators for help.

Bring your binoculars, PVAS or camp t-shirt, a favorite stuffed animal to represent the critters we strive to protect, and/or whatever else you feel best represents PVAS. We hope to see you there!

*Save the Date!*

Saturday, August 20, 4pm

**PVAS's 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

Celebrate the founders, past Board members, and PVAS game changers.

Look for details in August/September *Valley Views*

PVAS Events

**Your Vote is Needed!**

It's time to vote for future board members!

You'll be receiving an e-mail with a link to the electronic vote and bios of candidates will be on our webpage:  
[www.potomacaudubon.org/about/board/](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/about/board/)

If you prefer voting by mail, you may request a ballot by e-mailing [Kristin@PotomacAudubon](mailto:Kristin@PotomacAudubon)  
 OR calling 681-252-1387.\*

*\*Please leave a message if no one answers. We're out in the field often this time of year and can't always answer the phone. But we do check voicemail!*

**Volunteer Spotlight**

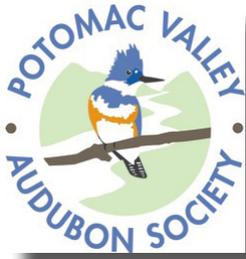
**Have You Met Our Watershed Program Volunteers ?**

As our Watershed Program field trip season is winding down, we wanted to recognize all of the wonderful volunteers who helped us out this Spring. Over thirteen field trip days, we have served upwards of 1200 students in Berkeley County and Morgan County. This is no small feat, and we are grateful for all of our volunteers, as we would not have been able to provide a comparable experience without them.

We would like to recognize Pete Mulford, Susan Wolcott, Ed Schwartz, Beth Dobson, Paul Dobson, Ellen Murphy, Susan Parker, Diana Pavlik, Jen Willett, Pat Grinnan, Courtney Hampshire, and Allen Miller for their dedication to youth Watershed education.

Each of these volunteers arrived for service with a smile on their face, and helped create memorable experiences for students.





# 40th Anniversary

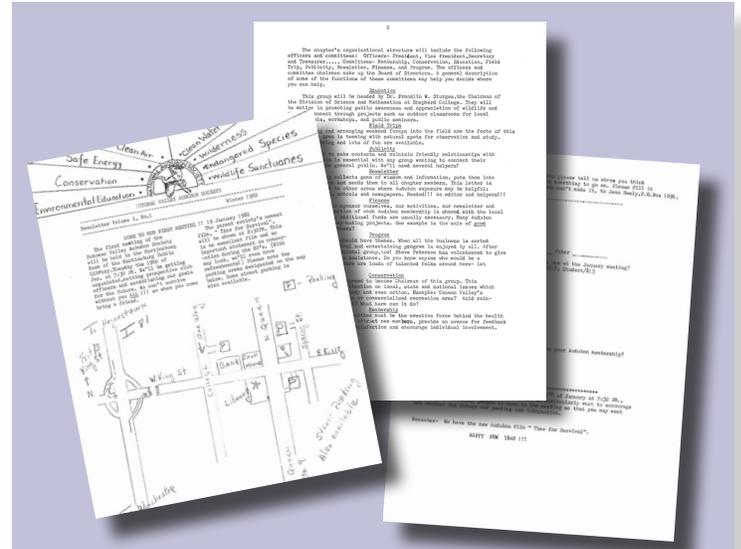
## Founders Day July 10

Come out to the Yankauer Preserve to celebrate PVAS's founders and the accomplishments of PVAS since its inception. On July 10, from 10am – 2pm we'll have refreshments and activities for all ages.

We'll have a "StoryWalk©" for families to read a story along the trail, and also a "Walk down Memory Trail" where you'll be able to travel through time reading about PVAS's accomplishments and contributions to conservation along the path. Guided walks will be provided at 11am and 1pm, and of course you're welcome to hike on your own at any time!

Back at the pavilion we'll have lemonade, water, cookies, cake pops and other celebratory fare provided by volunteers. We'll also have some of our founders and board members, past and present, to greet you, reminisce, and answer questions. You'll have the opportunity to share PVAS stories, memories, and hopes for its future.

Details will be available on the website calendar as we get closer to the event at [PotomacAudubon.org](http://PotomacAudubon.org). We look forward to celebrating with you!



First newsletter edition, 1982. To view the entirety of the first ever newsletter, go to: <https://www.potomacaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/1982FirstNewsletter.pdf>

## PVAS Member List, January 27, 1982

### Summer Anniversary Activities

Save the Dates to Celebrate with Us!

See details on the website calendar

#### PVAS BioBlitz!

June 18 "Dirt Dwellers" Yankauer Preserve

July 9 "Tremendous Trees" Eidolon

July 23 "Pollinator Palooza" Stauffer's Marsh

August 6 "Wetland Wonders" Cool Spring Preserve

Monday, July 4, 11am

**Independence Day Parade  
in Shepherdstown, WV**

Sunday, July 10, 10am-2pm

**Founder's Day Open House  
at Yankauer Preserve**

Friday, August 12, 10am

**Shenandoah Float Trip**

Saturday, August 20

**40th Anniversary Member  
Dinner and Celebration**

(time and location TBA)

Mrs. Edwin Abrahamson\*  
Robert & Suzanne Beckett  
William Belton  
Mrs. Caroline Borden  
Mrs. Glenda Breichner\*  
Joe & Susan Brookreson  
Sue Brown\*  
Eunice E. Burdette  
L. A. Campbell  
Charles & Karen Costello  
J. Blackwell & Eileen Davis\*  
James & Emile Davis  
Robert S. & Ruth Ann Dean  
Capt. L. C. & Mrs. Dottie Dittmar\*  
Diane Everson  
Daniel H. Fisher  
Charles J. Gebler  
Carole Goodyear  
Mrs. Evelyn Grant\*  
Mr. & Mrs. Roger P. Grittner\*  
Dr. John T. & Mrs. Barbara King\*  
Isabella Harrison, MD  
Bill Hartgroves\*  
Mr. A. R. & Mrs. Ruth Hoxton\*  
Marie Johansson\*  
John H. Kilmer  
Dr. John & Barbara King\*  
Mary E. Kline  
Bert Lustig\*  
Marjorie D. McGarry  
Dr. V. Maheswaran\*  
Mr. & Mrs. Raymond B. Maloy

Rita Maroncelli  
Mr. C. David and Mrs. Barbara Miller\*  
Clark Miller  
Mr. A.M.S. & Mrs. Cricket Morgan, III\*  
Robert W. Moss\*  
Diana Mullis\*  
Bradley D. Nash  
Sitaram Nayak, MD  
Capt. William E. & Mrs. Jean C. Neely  
John Ostrowski  
Barbara Protas\*  
Sharon Rose  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Sardone\*  
Mr. Ben & Mrs. Shirrel Schley\*  
Mildred R. Sloat\*  
Leah M Staling  
F. W. Sturges  
Katherine R. Sweeney  
Ellen Thjgeson  
John Warner\*  
Mr. V. C. and Mrs. Maris Wilkins\*  
Elizabeth R. Wolfe  
Marshall Young  
Suzanne Offutt  
Mike Zagarella

\* NEW Charter Members

Note: To obtain a Charter with the National Audubon Society, the Potomac Valley Audubon Society was required to enroll 35 NEW Charter Members\*

Birding

2022 Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon Results

By Anthony Marmorella and KC Walters

Our Birdathon competition this year ran from May 1 to May 7, and took place at our Cool Spring Nature Preserve. Participants came together to create teams of 1-4 people, and to get in the spirit of the competition, each team came up with a clever name. The competition lasted the entire week, and teams were encouraged to choose what they thought was the best birding day for their count. Each team had up to 24 consecutive hours to count as many birds at possible. The diversity of birds found across the property made it an excellent location to hold the competition. Keeping track of all the birds they found, the goal for the teams was to find as many species as possible, with the team finding the most earning the grand prize. This year's prize was a custom watercolor or pencil commission of any bird, courtesy of Dana Wyatt Art. Teams were encouraged to use eBird to document all the birds observed over the week.

Despite the less-than ideal birding weather, we had four teams enter the competition this year. Our fourth-place team, the Budding Bird Nerds consisted of a mother and son duo who battled the rain on May 4 to observe 10 species. The third-place team, The Lone Loonie, also battled the rain and a 5:45a.m. start time to observe 37 species on May 6 before heading into work for the day. This dedication was rewarded with an early morning Barred Owl and a Green Heron flyover. In second place was Team Hummingbird who managed to observe 38 species in just over one hour of birding time on May 5. The winner of this year's Birdathon is the Cool Spring Wrenegades, a lovely lady duo consisting of Lynne Wiseman and Carol Winckler! They completed their count on May 2, observing 60 species, including three uncommon warblers: the Black-and-white Warbler, Magnolia Warbler and Chestnut-sided Warbler.

In total, the four teams recorded a total of 400 birds, with 70 different species observed. This is invaluable information, demonstrating the overall health of Cool Spring Preserve! A big thank you to all of the teams who participated in this year's Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon, and congratulations to the Cool Spring Wrenegades! Below is a complete list of birds identified during the competition.



- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Mourning Dove
- Killdeer
- Green Heron
- Barred Owl
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Black Vulture
- Turkey Vulture
- Cooper's Hawk
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Acadian Flycatcher
- Eastern Phoebe
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Eastern Kingbird
- Blue-headed Vireo
- Warbling Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Fish Crow
- Common Raven
- Carolina Chickadee
- Tufted Titmouse
- Tree Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- House Wren
- Carolina Wren
- European Starling
- Gray Catbird
- Brown Thrasher
- Northern Mockingbird
- Eastern Bluebird
- Wood Thrush
- American Robin
- House Sparrow
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch
- Chipping Sparrow
- Field Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Eastern Towhee
- Orchard Oriole
- Baltimore Oriole
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Common Grackle
- Common Yellowthroat
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- Black-and-white Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Magnolia Warbler
- Yellow Warbler
- Chesnut-sided Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler

- Prairie Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Northern Cardinal
- Indigo Bunting



Photos © Carol Winckler

**Family and Youth Programs**

**The Watershed Program Inspires Student Action**

*By Laurel Schwartz, Watershed Program Coordinator*

Our Watershed Program educators have been busy throughout the spring months, finishing up classroom Watershed lessons and providing field trips for every Berkeley County school. While it has felt like a marathon, it has also been extremely rewarding. For many 4th grade students, this is the first field trip they have had since their 1st grade pumpkin patch excursion, due to Covid. Teachers have expressed their gratitude for PVAS’s willingness to provide this experience, and we are equally grateful to teachers for their program participation and flexibility this year. We are so grateful to the City of Martinsburg and the Berkeley County Public Service and Sewer District for sponsoring this program for Berkeley County fourth graders.

In Jefferson County 4th grade classrooms this Spring, students and teachers have been diligently planning and following through with schoolyard and community action projects which build on their Watershed education in the classroom. We would like to share a few of these action projects, in hopes that our PVAS members find youth action inspiring.

At Blue Ridge Elementary, Ms. Nedorostek’s class has been working on a project entitled “A Bridge to Nature.” At this school, there is a nature trail on the schoolyard, but it is often unused because of an underground spring in the path which makes it difficult to cross. The class came up with the idea for building a bridge over the spring to prevent erosion from foot traffic and protect the plant life that exists there. Ms. Nedorostek is putting her woodworking skills to good use helping make this project idea come to life. Students will also be cleaning up trash from this area. In the future, students have expressed interest in creating an outdoor classroom nearby as well.



Fourth grader Aaron Aparacio Colgate had the following to say about the project, “It [the bridge] can help students connect to nature more because when you go past the bridge and into the forest students can see what kinds of plants grow in that area and other things like that!” Classmate Peyton Younker was asked what the bridge project means to her. She said, “It means that it will help make the path look better and we are doing something to help the school.” As for the bridge’s watershed impact, student Brantley Pauley said, “It will not damage the underground spring that could have macroinvertebrates.”



At Driswood Elementary, students in Ms. Stevenson and Mr. Ratliff’s classes have installed a rain garden on their school grounds with the help of Cacapon Institute. They first participated in a lesson about the importance of native plants and the functions of rain gardens, and then got to work helping with installation. Rain gardens help mitigate pollution from stormwater runoff. We hope that this rain garden will serve Driswood for years to come!



Classes were able to have access to grant money through the Outdoor Learning Network Initiative (OLNI) to complete these projects. It is so rewarding to see the fruits of invested time and money into youth environmental education. We are so impressed by the motivation of students and teachers to complete these projects. While these two projects are highlighted, there are many more projects that have been underway this Spring that are equally as inspiring. In 5th grade next year, all Berkeley County students will also have the opportunity to complete a Watershed Action Project.

## Family and Youth Programs

### Field Trips and School Programs

*By Amy Moore Thomas, Lead Teacher and Naturalist/ Summer Camp Director*

This spring was very exciting for PVAS staff and volunteers, as it was the first time in two years that we were able to provide in-person Pre-K-6 grade nature programs and field trips at our preserves. After PVAS brought on staff member Laurel Schwartz last fall to coordinate our growing 4th grade watershed education program, we were able to grow our other youth programs.

We started a new program model this year where our programs always consist of two lessons. In the past, we sometimes would visit a classroom only one time in a year. We realized that working with students for only one 1-hour program was just not enough time for students to form meaningful connections to our instructors and lessons. With this new model, we have seen the students get so much more out of our programs and the natural world. Best of all, most of these two-part programs consisted of a field trip to one of our preserves. In total, 2000 Pre-K – 6 grade students participated in a program. Roughly 370 students participated in a field trip to Cool Spring and 160 students participated in a field trip to Yankauer Nature Preserve.



*South Jefferson Elementary 2nd graders show off the bird nests they made at their field trip at Cool Spring Preserve.*

### Earth Week and Spring Programs

*By Amy Moore Thomas & Laurel Schwartz*

This Spring, we enjoyed sharing in the rejuvenation of the season with our youth and family community. In April, Outdoor School students learned about plants and studied phenology at Yankauer Nature Preserve. Students also had the opportunity to visit Shepherd University's sustainable farm, Tabler Farm. There, students learned all about how local agriculture can be done in an eco-friendly way. They also helped Shepherd students with their spring planting projects.

Throughout Earth week, which was also, conveniently, spring break for students, PVAS hosted many youth and family programs. We provided drop-in library programs at five local libraries. Through these programs, we served over 70 children. Additionally, our education team hosted family wildflower walks at Yankauer Nature Preserve, and we thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful display of wildflowers there. We also hosted a program entitled "Foraging with Family" where families joined us to test recipes using foraged edible plants.

On Earth Day, we hosted a tree planting at Cool Spring Preserve. Our goal for this tree planting was to diversify our tree species on the preserve. We planted over twenty trees with the help of three eager volunteer families.



## Family and Youth Programs

### Morgan County Public Library Programs

By Mary Lynn Robinson

PVAS has expanded youth programs to Morgan County. The Morgan County Public Library, 105 Congress St., Berkeley Springs, WV will help host a program every Monday in June.

**June 6 at 1:00pm: BIRDS AND EGGS**

Join us for a program to help identify backyard birds and hear their songs. An egg replica for each bird will be shown to see the many differences of color and size.

**June 13 at 1:00pm: THE WV RAPTOR CENTER**

The WV Raptor Center will be bringing live birds of prey to discuss their characteristics, behavior, health, and how they are rehabilitated for release, or become educational ambassadors.

**June 20 at 1:00: WILD TURKEYS**

A book called Wild Turkeys will be read along with a turkey puppet to help identify characteristics. Often a turkey feather (quill) was dipped in ink for writing years ago. Try your hand at writing with a quill.

**June 27 at 1:00pm: SKINK TAILS**

Do you know what a skink is? Find out with this book about a skink losing its tail. An activity follows which includes pin the tail on the skink.

These programs are free and open to the public. Come join us!

## Camp Programs

### Summer Camp Fun!

By Amy Moore Thomas, Lead Teacher and Naturalist/ Summer Camp Director

June kicks off our summer camp season!

In June and July, we are offering 8 weeks of camps, at both Cool Spring Preserve and Yankauer Nature Preserve. Our summer camp staff consists of yearlong AmeriCorps Jade Harris and Gus Rasich; half-year AmeriCorps Molly Hillenbrand and Kristina Bonfils; and summer AmeriCorps Laura Cebulski, Nick Olsen, and returning counselor, Molly Hardy. Both Molly and Nick grew up attending our camp programs, and in recent years, Nick volunteered for camp as a CIT (counselor-in-training). It is amazing to have past campers now working as staff.

will be available to anyone during the first week of August. The second week is reserved for partnering established children's groups. We are still working on the details, so check our website in July for more information.

If you visit Yankauer and Cool Spring during a weekday this summer, I can almost guarantee that you will hear the sounds of children playing and laughing. Feel free to stop by and say hi to the camp staff!



During the first two weeks of August, we are offering a new summer camp program called "Nature in the Neighborhood". This is a program designed to bring a camp-like experience to children living in downtown Charles Town and Martinsburg who may have not had the opportunity attend a camp at Yankauer or Cool Spring. Drop-in programs at local parks in both counties

## Conservation

### Top 5- Plant This, Not That

By Anthony Marmorella, Land and Conservation AmeriCorps

Invasive species are one of the biggest threats that land managers face. They can take over any area of land from a forest of oak trees to a pasture or farmland. Invasive plant species are often introduced unintentionally, or planted for some beneficial use before they quickly take over and spread. It's important to know the major invasive species in your area so you can avoid planting and contributing to their spread. Luckily, there are alternatives to all these invasives that provide similar benefits without the unintended consequences. Here are five problematic invasives and five alternatives.

#### 1. Plant Serviceberry, Not Bradford Pear

Bradford Pears have been planted in yards for years as an ornamental tree. The main attractions of the tree are the beautiful white flowers that blossom in the Spring. Don't be fooled by the allure of the flowers, Bradford Pear can rapidly spread and choke out native plants. Instead, consider planting Serviceberry, a non-invasive plant with many of the same characteristics. Serviceberry is a deciduous shrub, native to West Virginia and much of the Eastern United States. Like the Bradford Pear, it produces white flowers and blossoms in the spring. Its fruit is edible to humans, and attracts many types of birds and pollinators. It provides all the same benefits, and even adds some of its own, making it a safer and more beneficial option.



#### 2. Plant Hazelnut Shrub, Not Autumn Olive

Autumn Olive is one of the most widespread invasive species in the United States. Originally planted with good intentions as a beneficial plant for erosion control and wildlife, it has become a fast-spreading invasive plant. Autumn Olive can grow along forest edges, in grasslands, and along roads. It is very difficult to remove once established. Instead of adding another invasive plant, consider planting Hazelnut Shrub, a native alternative. Hazelnut Shrub, or American Hazelnut, also produces food for wildlife, in the form of edible nuts. The patches the shrub forms can act as erosional control, giving the same benefit as Autumn Olive. While it does not take over its environment, the shrub's dense foliage provides important cover and habitat for nesting birds. American Hazelnut blooms in mid-Spring and produces its nuts in late Summer. It can grow in almost any environment making it an excellent native alternative!



#### 3. Plant Wild Ginger, Not English Ivy

Wild Ginger and English Ivy are both vines planted as ground covers in shady areas. However, English Ivy is highly invasive. It spreads rapidly and can choke out larger overstory trees. On the ground, it acts as a monoculture, displacing native plants. Wild

Ginger, on the other hand, is native to North America and does not viciously choke out other plants. The perennial plant spreads slowly. Its attractive leaves and fragrant bell-like flowers also make it visually appealing. Wild Ginger flowers in April and May, grows best in moist woodlands, and is semi-evergreen. If you want to plant a groundcover, consider it over English Ivy.



#### 4. Plant Spicebush, Not Forsythia

Forsythia is a flowering plant that blooms in early spring. A member of the olive family, the shrub produces bright yellow flowers. It's often planted in landscaping as a natural fence or wall. Although it can provide landscaping benefits, it's fast growing and can rapidly take over an area. Since Forsythia is native to Asia, it's considered invasive and can be difficult to remove. Consider planting Spicebush instead. Spicebush is native to the eastern United States, so it will not become invasive. It produces fragrant yellow flowers that also bloom in early spring, making it a great alternative to Forsythia. Unlike the invasive plant, Spicebush is extremely beneficial to pollinators. It provides a nectar source for small pollinators like bees, and serves as a host plant to several species of caterpillars, moths, and butterflies. Spicebush is a perennial plant with deciduous leaves. It can thrive in full sunlight or partial-shade, moist to wet soil, and a range of pH conditions. Its adaptability to its environment makes it an easy plant to grow.



#### 5. Plant Wild Bergamot, Not Purple Loosestrife

Purple Loosestrife is an herbaceous perennial plant commonly planted in home gardens for its pink and purple flowering branches. Fortunately, it is losing popularity and has even been banned from nurseries due to its invasive nature. It thrives in wet areas and can spread to ponds, floodplains, stream banks, and freshwater wetlands. Purple Loosestrife spreads so quickly in marsh systems that other plants are unable to grow. This results in a loss of nesting sites and food for many marsh-dwelling species. Once it spreads to a new location, plant and wildlife diversity both suffer a sharp decline. Instead of the invasive Purple Loosestrife, plant Wild Bergamot, a native alternative. The perennial plant is native to much of the United States. It can grow in dry conditions but also in wet habitats like marsh edges and wet meadows. The plant produces similarly beautiful purple and pink flowers in mid-Summer, attracting hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinators. Wild Bergamot is great in home gardens because of its fragrance and bright flowers. It grows best in full sun and tolerates a range of soil conditions, although it does need a neutral pH. Wild Bergamot is the perfect native replacement for Purple Loosestrife.



## Notes from the Preserves

## In The Preserves

By Anthony Marmorella, Land and Conservation AmeriCorps

It's been a busy few months managing the preserves.

We hosted recent workdays at all four nature preserves. In early April we held a Make It Shine volunteer workday at our Cool Spring Preserve. As some of you may know, the property there used to be an old orchard. If you walk along the trails, you'll notice plenty of irrigation hoses left from its former use. We spent the afternoon clearing as much of them as possible. Thanks to WVDEP for sponsoring the event and providing resources as part of their Make It Shine Program!

The pair of beavers are starting to feel right at home at Cool Spring. In fact, they are even making their own volunteer workdays for PVAS. They've been busy building along Bullskin Run, constructing three dams along the stream. This has led to water rising in some areas. The worst of it is around the Rock Cairn, just upstream of one of the dams. In order to avoid flooding issues, we decided to reroute part of Linda's Loop beyond the cairn. That section of the trail now ventures into the trees before coming out before Old Orchard Trail. We were able to complete this with the



help of volunteers. The old trail has been closed to the public and we've added temporary signs for the new section.

Don't worry if you missed out on some of the recent volunteer opportunities. There are plenty more in the coming months. As the weather warms and plants continue to grow, trail maintenance is important to keep up with. Please check out our events calendar to find up-

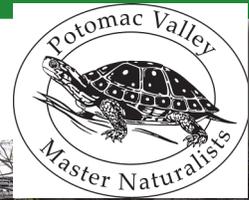
coming volunteer opportunities to help maintain our beautiful preserves. We're also gearing up for our BioBlitz event on June 18th that will be held across the four nature preserves. A BioBlitz is a fun and collaborative community event to document as many local species as possible. We'll have naturalists and leaders at each of the preserves to help identify and document the findings. You can find out more about this event on the website. We hope to see you there!

Last issue, we mentioned the new walls in the Cool Spring Nature Center that Gary Sylvester and Pete Palmer helped construct. I am happy to report that the doors have now been installed, giving us two complete office spaces! It took some trial and error to find the right color to match the rest of the walls, but we finally found a good match! The finishing touches were done just a few weeks ago. We're very grateful to have the help of wonderful volunteers like those two. It makes our work much easier.



## Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

### Potomac Valley Master Naturalists' Founders and Recognition Ceremony



By Leslie Boyd

On April 30th, at Morgan's Grove Park, the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists (PVMN) celebrated their 15th anniversary at the Founders and Recognition Ceremony. Coordinating Committee Co-Chair, Rick Brager, had this to say at the start of the event, "We have an absolutely stunning day for our 15th anniversary, unfortunately delayed by one year due to Covid. It looks like we are going to have a great turnout: about fifty Master Naturalists and twenty guests." And what a stunning day it was.



The Master Naturalists gathered together on a beautiful, sunny day on the grounds of the park surrounded by a variety of budding trees, such as the hackberry, pecan, and according to an informational park plaque, "the second largest male Osage orange in the state of WV as of 2021." Among the nearby trees, members socialized and bid on items in the silent auction. Proceeds from the auction go to the future Master Naturalist scholarship fund. There were many items available, such as birdhouses, plants, framed photographs and paintings, pottery, and so much more.

Members recognized recent graduates, five-and ten-year honorees, centennial volunteers and the founders of the program. Co-founder Clark Dixon, who was unable to be there in person, was still able to attend virtually, via Zoom. Ellen Murphy spoke about Dixon and all of his accomplishments, as well as thanked him for all that he has done for PVMN. Throughout the ceremony, some members had champagne toasts, while others enjoyed their picnic lunch and visits to the dessert table.

Of course, there can't be a PVMN event without educational opportunities. Shawn Walker, Trees 101, led a tree talk to discuss the effects that the Emerald Ash Borer has had on ash trees around the park and in the area. In addition, Paul Breitenbach, with the help of J.P. Miller, offered materials for Kestrel boxes for members to build and take with them.

After missing out on being together these last couple of years, it was nice to convene again. Potomac Valley Audubon Society's Adult Program Coordinator, Krista Hawley, was excited to be at the event. "My favorite part of the day was gathering in person and connecting with all the Master Naturalists who make this program such a success."

*Photos, clockwise from top: Potomac Valley Master Naturalists; 5-year certificate recipients; 10-year certificate recipients (center photo); 2021 cohort graduates; founders.*

**Advocacy**

**We All Need to be More Active Citizens**

*By Ginger Hankins, PVAS Advocacy Advisory Group*

“If the past few years have taught us anything, it’s that we all need to be more active citizens.”

On both a local and a national level, we learned some hard lessons about what happens when we are unengaged. It’s no longer enough to simply take a stand. We have to be better about taking action. These can be simple daily actions that only take a few minutes.

National Audubon has a good article on *How To Be An Effective Advocate*. The article gives specific instructions on how to communicate with elected officials by phone, email, in person or mail; how to monitor issues; how to write letters to the editor; and how to get others involved.

Here is the link to the online article on the Audubon website: <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/how-be-effective-advocate-less-five-minutes>.



**Jefferson County Foundation**

will hold a Community Forum on Rockwool’s upcoming operational air permitting process.

**When:** Thursday, June 2, 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

**Where:** Shepherdstown Train Station  
111 Audrey Egle Dr, Shepherdstown, WV.

*There is free parking at the Train Station.*

**What to expect:** A 30–45-minute presentation on Rockwool’s air permit, a summary of the Title V operational air permitting process, and a discussion about how concerned residents can make a difference in this process to protect human health and the environment.

***We ask that attendees please wear masks.***

**GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP!**

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

- 10% member discount on program fees, facility rentals, and birthday parties.
- A subscription to our bi-monthly newsletter, *Valley Views*, and twice monthly e-newsletter, *Heads Up, PVAS!*
- Free or reduced admission to participating nature centers/museums.
- Discounts to participating **local businesses**.

**Gift Membership Form**

To purchase a gift membership, send in the form below with an enclosed check. Dues are \$50/household, \$35/teacher (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 more details on membership, go to: [www.potomacaudubon.org/support/become-a-member/.](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/support/become-a-member/)

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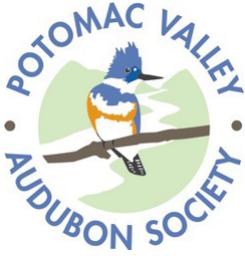
Membership Chair, PVAS  
PO Box 578  
Shepherdstown, WV 25443



**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: ..... Jim Cummins (2023)
- Past President: ..... Suzanne Offut (2023)
- Vice President: ..... Ginger Hankins (2023)
- Secretary: ..... Carolyn Thomas (2022)
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*Emerita Board Member:* .....

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- Valley Views editor/publisher: Charlotte Fremaux (301-404-8639) ..... 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.