



# Valley Views

Volume 38, Issue 2

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## Director's Report

By Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

I find myself in front of the computer a lot these days... I've had to delegate "field tasks" to staff and volunteers, so I don't get to our preserves as much as I used to. A few times over the last couple of months, a staff person has said, "You've got to go check out the meadow at Stauffer's Marsh!" or, "The meadow at Cool Spring is magical right now!"

Sometimes it's hard during the week, so on Sunday I loaded up JJ (now seven years old) and off we went to Stauffer's Marsh. And is it ever magical. Volunteer Steve Hartmann had the trails looking picture perfect, and the trees he has planted for the beginning phases of an arboretum at Stauffer's are looking wonderful. JJ and I wandered the trail along the road to see where an Eagle Scout has proposed to build a viewing platform at the marsh. We came out to the site where the trees opened up to reveal a lovely view of the marsh over the cattails. From this one spot we spied Wood Ducks, Great Blue Herons, Canada Geese, a Green Heron, and either an immature Night Heron or a Bittern that was too far away to tell for sure. In spite of having an active seven-year old along, the birds graciously stayed put.

We headed back to the trailhead to do the loop along the marsh to Back Creek and then through the meadow that we've been restoring to pollinator habitat over the last two years. The marsh continued to impress, allowing us to see a White Egret, Muskrat, another Green Heron, and more Wood Ducks (and geese, of course). Back Creek was peaceful (but very low). While the forest and wetland have healed from the devastating flood of last year, Back Creek still has many trees down across the creek. But the meadow, while past peak, looks fantastic, and pollinators were abuzz with activity.

And Monday morning, before the phone started ringing and before I opened my computer, I took a hike at Cool Spring. More magic. With the dry summer, the formerly muddy trails have dried out beautifully. The Jewelweed is in full bloom and there were few blossoms that weren't being explored by one insect or another, if not a hummingbird. And the meadow is in its full Goldenrod glory with the wide, mowed trail meandering through it. A lovely way to start the workday. And this was BEFORE the Day of Caring work days when everything got spruced up!

So I'm going to try to practice what I preach a little more often and get outside to take a hike. Our preserves are precious

resources with so many purposes...enjoyment of the casual guest; education through Master Naturalist sessions, natural history workshops, school field trips, summer camps, home school programs; habitat for pollinators, birds and other animals; and peaceful respite from our sometimes crazy world.

All four preserves provide so much richness to the PVAS mission. Thanks to your membership dollars and other contributions, PVAS can manage them for all to enjoy. Thank you for your support, and I hope to see you at a preserve sometime soon! I know I, for one, am going to try to visit them more often.

## Join Us! 2019 Fall Fundraiser

Save the date for Sunday, October 27th! Our annual fall fundraiser will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. at the home of Mr. Alan Gibson and Dr. Scott Beard in Fernbank, near Shepherdstown. Alan and Scott have a beautifully decorated home and gorgeous backyard to relax on a fall afternoon.

The wonderful PVAS Events Committee will provide a spread of elegant hors d'oeuvres, wine and bubbly. An incredibly talented concert pianist, Scott has generously offered to play his grand piano. In addition, guests will be able to tour Alan and Scott's impressive home and art collection. Plenty of parking will be available.

Please come prepared to visit the PVAS Marketplace where you will find lots of interesting items for sale. Everything has been donated and 100% of the sales go directly to PVAS programs, so pick up something for yourself, the upcoming holidays, or just because you want to be supportive.

We hope to see you on the 27th! To request a paper invitation, or if you have any questions about the fall fundraiser, get in touch with PVAS Program Administrator, Erin Shaw, at [admin@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:admin@potomacaudubon.org) or (681) 252-1387. You can also purchase tickets and find more information at [www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar). All proceeds from this event will support PVAS educational programs, conservation initiatives and nature preserves.

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

## Another Modest First for Jefferson County: Modest Katydid – *Montezumina modesta*

By Wil Hershberger, Nature Images & Sounds

The annual singing insect walks have been very popular, well attended, and full of interesting sights and sounds. The past few years have been especially interesting with the discovery of the first Jefferson County record of Long-spurred Meadow Katydid (*Orchelimum silvaticum*) in 2017 and the first Jefferson County and first West Virginia record of Slow-tinkling Trig (*Anaxipha tinnulenta*) in 2018 – both at Cool Spring Preserve<sup>1</sup>.

This year was no exception. The singing insect walk at Steamboat Run was well attended and full of insect sounds. The cicada chorus was not as loud as expected for an area that is surrounded by deciduous forest, but there were many representatives of several species singing away; Lyric, Linne's, Robinson's, and Scissor-grinder Cicadas.

As the sunset and the light faded, the cicadas fell silent, and the crickets could finally be heard. A Striped Ground Cricket was singing from the grassy area where we parked. Handsome Trigs were singing from the vegetated edges of properties on the north side of the paved road. Carolina and Allard's Ground Crickets were singing from the unmowed portions of the meadow. The louder songs of the katydids soon overshadowed these trillers. A Nebraska Conehead began singing incessantly from the brush at the edge of the woods. Soon, there were several Round-tipped Coneheads, singing from the meadow. The loudest of all, a False Robust Conehead, started singing from the east end of the field as the light was finally fading from the western sky.

This transition from light to dark signals the Common True Katydid that it is safe to start singing from the treetops – they did just that. As we walked back toward the cars along the riverside of the meadow, we were entertained by numerous sights and sounds of insect activity at night. At one point our flashlights caught a bright green insect on a dark green Paw Paw leaf. From its size and shape, and the fact that I had just been reading about Drumming Katydid, I thought that it might be just that. However, upon careful examination with a hand lens, the truth was revealed – this was a Modest Katydid (*Montezumina modesta*)! (<http://songsofinsects.com/katydid/modest-katydid>).

The farthest north they were thought to be in our area is northern Virginia and southern Maryland. However, here was a healthy male sitting in plain sight for us to see and appreciate. I do know that this species has been observed and recorded in Adams County, Ohio – so, the range map will have to be revised.



*Montezumina modesta* (top and bottom) photos © Wil Hershberger

The song of the Modest Katydid is very weak, at least to our ears, as the pitch of the song is mostly above 18,000 Hz. If he had been singing, we would have never heard him over the chorusing of the other inhabitants of the meadow and woods. The song is a crescendoing series of 10 – 21 evenly spaced lisps delivered at about one lisp per second. Pauses between songs are highly variable lasting from several seconds to many minutes. The Modest Katydid is small, even smaller than the round-headed katydids that inhabit the forest understory in our area. His hind legs are curved slightly, perhaps an adaptation for jumping farther.

I captured this individual for photography and to record his song in the quiet of the studio. He performed admirably at both tasks. Three days after capture, I returned him to the very leaf where we had found him. As soon as his feet hit the leaf, he bounded off, jumping farther than I expected him to be able to.

It will be interesting to watch the progression of Modest Katydid in our area. Perhaps the warming climate is causing them to move farther north. This northward migration has been observed with several other species of singing insects all across the eastern United States. How long will it be before we find the Modest Katydid at Cool Spring Preserve?

*Postscript:* the number of Slow-tinkling Trigs at Cool Spring was nothing less than amazing. They were very numerous in the understory along Bullskin Run and the meadow at the west end of Linda's Loop along the run. There were many immature individuals in the woods and mature and singing adults in the fields – a testament to the fact that warmer microclimates allow these tiny songsters to mature more rapidly.

## PVAS Events

## A Tribute to Jenny Eaton

We were shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Jenny Eaton, a PVAS volunteer, who was tragically killed in a hit-and-run accident while she was riding her bike near Moorefield, WV. Jenny was part of the birding community and will be sorely missed. Following are some memories and tributes shared by friends:

**From Jessica Coulson...**

*One of Jenny's favorite birds (maybe even her number one, but us bird people find it hard to pick just one) was the Carolina Wren. Jenny was much like a Carolina Wren, hopping about constantly energized. One of the stories I recall is even her bringing her own teakettle to Charleston and making tea in the hotel room. Oddly enough the Carolina Wren's call sounds like "teakettle, teakettle, teakettle..." The other story I recall so vividly is doing the bird count with her and...it was so cold outside in the beginning of January. At the end of the count we went to her house and had the warmest most fulfilling soup that she had made -- it warmed me inside and out. So the next time you see a Carolina Wren or just look at the birds, in general,*



*you will see a being that keeps on singing despite how cold it may get – that is Jenny. She hopped and "flew about" from families' homes and her friends' and colleagues'*

*hearts. "And if the whole wide world stops singing and all the stars go dark, I'll keep a light on in my soul, keep a blue-bird in my heart" - Miranda Lambert.*

**From Bob Dean...**

*Jenny was a beacon to many and will be missed by all who knew her. It was about time for her to appear on Dolly Sods for her nearly annual visit to the banding station for a few days. She was a good recorder who helped relieve some of the pressure on banders during heavy flights. Her willingness to help with both local Christmas Bird Counts year after year as a section leader was a refreshing and welcome offering. But the one thing I'll really miss was her unflagging friendship. Every meeting was a joyous reunion, calculated only to let the other know that we cared. I will miss her sweet soul as she travels, far too early, to the next stop on her journey.*

## Volunteer Spotlight

## Have you met Nancy Kirschbaum?

Nancy has been volunteering with PVAS since she moved here from Baltimore as a retired teacher. She began by volunteering with our school programs, but being an excellent birder, she quickly began leading bird walks for PVAS, as well. She even served on the PVAS Board as Vice President for several years. She now helps teach Birding 101, is always "on call" to identify birds over the phone, and has even been known to go out in the field to identify some mysterious sightings! We're so grateful for the many and significant contributions Nancy 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).

*Nancy, in the blue jacket, helping visitors locate a sighting on one of her walks.*



## PVAS Events

### Our AmeriCorps Volunteers

We are eager to introduce you to the PVAS AmeriCorps team! This year, we have three AmeriCorps Volunteers to help us implement and develop school programs, summer camp, scout programs, spring break programs, library programs and much more.

Matt Wuertzer, who started with PVAS in September 2018, has decided to renew his AmeriCorps position through August 2020. Matt has a wonderful rapport with students and is a fantastic environmental educator - we couldn't be happier to have him with us for another year!

Laurel Schwartz and Griffin Bosserman are our new AmeriCorps Volunteers, just brought on in early September. Laurel is a recent graduate of the Environmental Studies program at Shepherd University, where she concentrated on Sustainable Resources Management. During her time at Shepherd, she completed two summer seasonal positions as a Park Ranger



for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and for the Army Corps of Engineers at Loyahanna Lake. Through both of these positions, she was able to make meaningful connections with park visitors and provide education on both the natural and cultural history of the areas. She is passionate about sharing her love for nature with youth and enjoys learning all she can about the beautiful world around her.

Griffin is a recent graduate of Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he earned a B.A. in Environmental Studies. During his time at Wofford, he became immersed in the natural world, learning how to view it through the lens of the '3-legged stool' - the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the human-

ities. Along with his background in Environmental Studies, Griffin has spent the last six summers as an overnight camp counselor at Kingswood Camp for Boys in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. While there, he led hikes, fishing trips, and camping experiences, while also teaching daily clinics and overseeing the general safety and well being of the campers. Outside of work, Griffin enjoys hiking, running (anything outdoors!), as well as watching sports and playing games with friends and family. Griffin hopes to instill his passion for the natural world on the next generation of environmental stewards.

As you can see, we have an incredible team this year. If you'd like to welcome Griffin and Laurel, they can be found at [Griffin@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:Griffin@PotomacAudubon.org) and [Laurel@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:Laurel@PotomacAudubon.org). If you'd like to thank Matt for his continued service, he can be reached at [Matt@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:Matt@PotomacAudubon.org).



### Grant Funds Available

The Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation (EWVCF) recently awarded PVAS a grant to provide environmental education programs at Title 1 schools in Berkeley and Jefferson counties. We already have programs on the calendar for Back Creek Valley Elementary and Bedington Elementary in Berkeley County, but our aim is to reach as many students in both Berkeley and Jefferson counties as possible. Are you a teacher looking to provide your students with a hands-on, nature-based learning experience? Or know a teacher who is? Get in touch with PVAS Program Administrator, Erin, at [admin@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:admin@potomacaudubon.org) or (681) 252-1387 to see if your school is eligible for grant funding, and if so, schedule a program!



## PVAS Events

### Autumn Adult Programs

By Krista Hawley, Adult Programs Coordinator

The mid-day warm sunshine might be lulling us in to believing that summer could possibly be with us for a few more weeks. However, the mornings, with their crisp, cool temperatures and the orange, red and yellow colors dotting the trees, are the real indicators that Fall is officially here. PVAS welcomes Fall with an abundance of activities!

Hawk Watch field trips have returned to Maryland's Washington Monument State Park. The Washington Monument is an official hawk-watch station that has been recognized by the Hawk Migration Association of North America. This area is a hotspot for watching the Broad-winged Hawks as they take advantage of the wind currents in the Cumberland Valley's migratory bird flyway. Fall is the peak of the migration and Steve Hartmann will be leading hawk-watches in both October and November. For more information about the hawk migration in the Monument area, visit [www.hmana.org](http://www.hmana.org).

Fall is a fabulous time to take advantage of PVAS's Owl Banding field trips. Whether joining a trip to the banding station on South Mountain with Steve Huy, or at PVAS's local expert birder Bob Dean's station, both offer an opportunity to see these amazing Saw-Whet Owls up close and learn a lot about the birds' lives. The fall banding stations found along the eastern United States are excellent educational tools and have shown that the owls migrate south in much higher numbers than previously thought.

Rita Hennessy's seasonal Residential Native Meadow field trips will wrap up on November 2nd. Stroll around her meadow paths to learn how native meadows can provide winter cover for birds and insects, as well as discussing the big question: to mow or not to mow? Registration for this, and other field trips, can be found on the events calendar at [www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar/](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar/).

The PVAS October Monthly Program, Is that a Sinkhole? Climate and Geology of the Eastern Panhandle; Focusing on Karst and Human Impact, will be presented by Jim Cummins, PVAS's Vice President. Prior to the program, Ken Raines of DD Commodities, a bird seed supplier, will be on hand to showcase some of the products that will be available at PVAS's November bird seed sale. At the November Monthly Program, we will welcome Jennifer Burghoffer, Manager of Education at the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center located in Boyce, Virginia. Ms. Burghoffer is a Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator through the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and will share her passion for wildlife rehabilitation as well as introduce us to some of her wildlife education ambassadors.

The Master Naturalist 2019 Program will wrap up on October 5th. Classes in Aquatic Habitats, Bats, and Mammals will be taught at the beautiful Cacapon Resort State Park. All Master Naturalists and Master Naturalist Candidates are welcome to celebrate together at the Fall Gathering at Cool Spring Preserve on October 19th. There is a full schedule of events planned for the day including a bird walk, wetlands walk, trees walk and an option to build a bat box with a potluck lunch on the back deck. Master Naturalists and MN Candidates looking to earn volunteer hours are invited to participate in an Oriental Bittersweet Removal project offered over two weekends (November 1 & 2 and 15 & 16) at Cacapon State Park. Please visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080c4ba9ae-2ba3f49-pvmm> to register.

To find out more about these and other programs, check the calendar insert in this issue of *Valley Views*, subscribe to our biweekly Heads-Up!, and check our website ([www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org)) regularly. We are adding programs and events all the time, so the website is the best way to keep up to date.

### Bird Seed Sale Is Underway

The 38th Annual Bird Seed Sale has arrived! Expect a hard copy order form in your mailbox, but you can also place an online order at this link: [www.potomacaudubon.org/event/38th-annual-bird-seed-sale/](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/event/38th-annual-bird-seed-sale/). Prior to the PVAS Monthly Program on Wednesday, October 9th (6 p.m.), Ken Raines of DD Commodities (one of our bird seed suppliers this year) will be on hand to showcase some of the products available for order. We'll serve bird friendly coffee and cookies while you meet with Ken.

We've once again partnered with Sunny Meadows Garden Center in Boonsboro, Maryland to bring you a variety of high-quality seed, suet, and feeder blocks for your Fall and Winter bird feeding needs. A pick-up date of Saturday, November 2nd has been set. Pick-up locations include Audiology, Inc. in Martinsburg, Cool Spring Preserve near Charles Town, Hunter's Hardware in Berkeley Springs, and Sunny Meadows. You'll also be able to order seed for storage at Sunny Meadows, just note the pick-up deadline for stored orders is Saturday, February 29th.

All proceeds from this annual fundraiser support our educational programs, conservation initiatives, and nature preserves. If you have any questions about the Bird Seed Sale, or need assistance placing an order, contact Erin at [admin@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:admin@potomacaudubon.org) or (681) 252-1387.



## Family and Youth Programs

### Youth Programs Update

*By Amy Moore, Lead Teacher & Naturalist*

#### Watershed

This fall we are providing our watershed program to 4th graders at Ranson Elementary, Orchard View Intermediate, South Jefferson Elementary, and Tomahawk Elementary. If you aren't familiar with this program, here is an explanation in a nutshell: the watershed program consists of five lessons that introduce students to their watershed and how they are connected to this larger environment. We discuss what pollutants impact the watershed and learn how to monitor water quality using chemistry. We also study benthic macroinvertebrates, as they are indicators of stream health. The program also includes a field trip to a local stream, where students apply their newly gained knowledge to their own watershed. It is a wonderful program where we see many students walking away with a newly found appreciation for their watershed and nature as a whole.

However, we feel that we can do more for these students. Our goal is to get students thinking about the issues and how they can make a difference, too. We want to help them become environmental citizens - shaping them to be environmental citizens will now be something we implement into the program.

I recently had a wonderful conversation with the principal at Orchard View Intermediate. He told me that he really supports our program and what we provide to the students. We got into a discussion about plastics and how they are a major pollutant in our oceans and how it's such a large scale, global problem. I told him that we teach students about issues like this, but students realize that a huge problem like this is beyond what a 4th grader can fix. I told him that it is now our goal in the watershed program to get students involved in project-based learning by encouraging youth voice, so students can feel they can make a difference on a smaller scale. This is where environmental citizenship comes into play.

In their final lesson, students will go outside and assess their school-yard for strengths and issues that they feel impact the watershed. Then in the classroom, we will brainstorm which issues resonate the most with the students and discuss actions that can be taken to address these issues. From here we will be encouraging teachers to continue the process and guide the students in the next steps for taking action. For example, perhaps a class will decide that they want to plant trees in their schoolyard. While they may not be able to implement that action project themselves, they could make posters to put around school to explain the importance of trees, or write a letter to the principal to persuade him or her to consider planting more. These are little actions, but the opportunity gives the students a voice and a sense that they can help make change happen. Research has found that an increase in civic engagement as an adult is a result of civic activities as a youth. This is exactly what we are trying to do through our program: help children become environmental citizens, a role that they carry through adulthood.

In October, we start a series of watershed field trips at Poor House Farm Park and Cool Spring Preserve. We are always looking for volunteers to help us lead these field trips. If you enjoy working with kids and are interested in volunteering, please contact Erin Shaw at [admin@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:admin@potomacaudubon.org) or (681) 252-1387.



#### Homeschool and Preschool Programs

Homeschool programs have been very popular but we are always looking for ways to make them better by adding new elements. This fall, in addition to our single monthly programs, we are now providing programs in a series, grouped by theme. These programs will consist of 2 to 4 sessions so returning students can build on what they learned in previous sessions. These themed series will include "Wetlands," "Trees are Terrific," and "Sustainable Energy." Families can choose to participate in all or just one of the programs within the series. In addition, our standalone fall program topics will include: Habitats, Ecology, and Dirt Dwellers (decomposition).

We are also offering monthly preschool programs with the following topics: Butterflies, Worms, Fall is Here and Critters in the Cold. All of these programs are open online for pre-registration.

#### Nature Birthday Parties

If you know of any children with a birthday approaching, consider scheduling a Nature Birthday Party with PVAS at Cool Spring Preserve. Our parties consist of a one-hour naturalist led activity and an additional one-hour use of the building. This is a great way to give a child a nature-focused party while at the same time supporting PVAS! Party themes and pricing can be found on our website.

## Conservation

### The Return of the Native Plant Sale

By KC Walters, Land & Conservation Manager

After a brief hiatus, the PVAS Native Plant Sale has returned! If you participated in our previous plant sales, you may notice this year is a bit different. The focus of this sale is native tree seedlings and saplings. I've been busy rearing young trees all summer in PVAS's new native tree and shrub nursery. We have over 100 baby trees, comprised of 22 different species, in need of forever homes. See the box at the right for an exclusive members only peek at the list of species we will have for sale.

Because we are now selling trees and shrubs, the sale has been moved to the fall. We also relocated the sale away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Shepherdstown, out to our own Yankauer Nature Preserve. We will have ample parking and a serene atmosphere for your shopping; and while you are there, why not take a lovely Fall hike around the Kingfisher Trail? We will gladly hold your trees while you hike.

The sale will be held on Saturday, October 12th from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Yankauer Nature Preserve. There will be additional vendors with nature-related wares and information. The items for sale will be one of a kind. This is a great opportunity to get a jump-start on your holiday shopping! Keep your eyes on our Facebook page for sneak previews of the vendors. This will also be your last chance to purchase (and possibly even win) birdseed from PVAS.

Boxelder (*Acer negundo*)  
 Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*)  
 Red Chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)  
 Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*)  
 Bitternut Hickory (*Carya cordiformis*)  
 Red Bud (*Cercis Canadensis*)  
 Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)  
 Gray Dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*)  
 Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)  
 Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)  
 Hawthorn (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*)  
 White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*)  
 Winterberry Holly (*Ilex verticillata*)  
 Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)  
 Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)  
 Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)  
 Blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)  
 Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*)  
 Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*)  
 Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)  
 Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*)  
 Chestnut Oak (*Quercus montana*)

### Top 5 Reasons to Plant Trees in the Fall

By Liz Janelle, Land Management & Conservation Intern (Summer 2019)

When looking to plant new trees, it is important to pick the right time of year. Here are 5 reasons why you should plant trees in the fall:

1. One reason Fall is a great season to plant trees and shrubs is because, usually, there is an increased amount of rain during the fall season. More rainwater helps to establish roots system, which is especially important when planting in the fall because root systems need to be established before the ground freezes in wintertime.
2. Planting shrubs and trees in the fall benefits their root system in more than one way. The combination of cool air and warm soil helps to stimulate root growth in young shrubs and trees. When the root systems have more time to establish before the winter season, it results in stronger root systems in the spring.
3. The climate during Fall benefits tree and shrub growth in a variety of ways, including a reduced risk of trees being stressed by extreme heat. Dry and hot conditions can be intense for newly planted trees, so it is important for them to be further along in their growth cycle by the summer months.
4. Planting in the fall does not allow for foliage growth, which means young trees can focus primarily on establishing a root system, rather than producing leaves. This also means less water is required for the trees, and more water can be retained in the root systems; it also means they can store energy through the winter.
5. Fall is also a great season for planting because cool air means fewer insects and pests to disturb growth. Fewer insects equals less stress on newly planted shrubs and trees.

If you're interested in planting trees this Fall, check out the PVAS Native Tree and Plant Sale on Saturday, October 12th at Yankauer Nature Preserve. All proceeds from the sale will go toward managing our four nature preserves, as well as our conservation initiatives. Get in touch with KC at [katelyn@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:katelyn@potomacaudubon.org) or (304) 283-7319 for more details.



A selection of trees to be offered at the PVAS Native Plant Sale

## Conservation

**Chimney Swift Update***By Kristin Alexander, Executive Director*

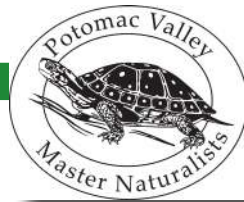
They're on the move! Chimney Swifts are well into their southern migration this Fall.

We kicked off the fall migration season on August 10th, with our annual "Swift Night Out" event, this year based at the new Chimney Swift tower on Shepherd University's campus. While early in the local migration season, guests enjoyed a free ice cream sundae bar while learning about the newly constructed roosting tower on University Drive, built to replace Sara Cree Hall's boiler chimney that was deconstructed in 2017.

Swifts have been seen gathering in town, using a few chimneys in homes and businesses, but not in the numbers we've historically seen using Sara Cree. As of the writing of this article, we've not seen Swifts use the newly constructed chimney yet, but we have high hopes. After recent consultation with Richard Bailey, the ornithologist for the WV DNR, the wisdom appears to be: be patient and they will come. They roost in traditional locations, so "new" doesn't happen quickly.

Volunteers and staff are keeping our eyes open, and we encourage you to do the same. Please let us know if you have seen any activity around the new roosting tower, or in a chimney near you. Contact KC Walters at [Katelyn@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:Katelyn@PotomacAudubon.org) or call us at 681-252-1387.

We are still raising money for the tower. The PVAS Board was committed to getting the tower constructed before migration season, which necessitated dipping into our reserve funds. If you are interested in helping PVAS cover the costs of this important conservation project, we welcome any and all contributions! We are continuing to seek grants, but we are also actively seeking donations from individuals and businesses. If you're interested, but need additional information, please contact me at [Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org).

**PVMN**

## Late October: Master Naturalist Program Accepting Applications

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist (PVMN) program - the official Master Naturalist Chapter for the Eastern Panhandle - will begin accepting applications in late October. Master Naturalist programs are administered by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, and those who complete the program's 62 hours of classroom/field instruction, plus a minimum 30 hours of volunteer service, are certified by the state as West Virginia Master Naturalists. In past years, the PVMN program has explored natural history topics including Nature Interpretation, Terrestrial Habitats, Birds, Slime Molds, Singing Insects, and much more.

Certified WV Master Naturalists are qualified to assist with natural resource activities in various ways, such as volunteering in state parks, assisting educators with instruction, participating in wildlife surveys, and other citizen science activities. The application deadline is January 31st, but enrollment fills quickly, so make sure to get your application in early! Keep an eye on this webpage ([www.potomacaudubon.org/education/adult/master-nat/](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/education/adult/master-nat/)) to apply for the PVMN program, or get in touch with PVAS Adult Programs Coordinator Krista Hawley at [AdultPrograms@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:AdultPrograms@PotomacAudubon.org) or (681) 252-1387 for more information.

**Seeking Snake for CSP Nature Center**

We're seeking a non-poisonous, preferably native snake to join our "animal teaching staff" at the Cool Spring Preserve Nature Center. This snake will join our current team of animal ambassadors, including Poppie (Red-eared Slider), Louie (Yellow-bellied Slider), and Scute (Eastern Box Turtle). This snake will be in frequent contact with people, so he/she should be friendly and accustomed to people. We are not looking for a snake taken from the wild, but one that was someone's pet that they can no longer care for or want.

If you or someone you know is looking to re-home their pet snake, please contact PVAS Lead Teacher and Naturalist Amy Moore at [Amy@PotomacAudubon.org](mailto:Amy@PotomacAudubon.org).





## Notes from the Preserves

## In the Preserves

By KC Walters, Land & Conservation Manager

Happy Fall, y'all! I am feeling very grateful for the cooler weather and a break from the growing season.

Summer is always super busy in the preserves. The vegetation just kept growing and growing...and growing! Volunteers spent many hours clipping trails, pulling weeds and mowing at each of the preserves. I am so thankful for all of the effort put in both during the scheduled volunteer workdays and on independent workdays.

The 25th annual United Way Day of Caring, held on September 10th, was a huge success. This year, we hosted workdays at both Cool Spring and Yankauer and had a grand total of nearly 50 volunteers. Everyone showed up with work gloves and positive attitudes, ready to lend a hand.

At Cool Spring Preserve we had 19 volunteers divided into four awesome crews. The sign crew successfully installed our beautiful new trail signs designed by volunteer Dan Dalton and painted by my mom. Thanks to an in-kind donation from Frogale Lumber of Winchester, we had sturdy 4x4 posts to install the signs. A special thanks is due to Peter and Mary Palmer for bringing their skid steer to auger holes ahead of the sign install crew. The staining crew gave the gazebo a fresh coat of color to help preserve it for years to come; we were so excited to have an eco-friendly, non-toxic staining product thanks to Vermont Natural Coatings. The garden crew performed miracles on the front gardens - those ladies were weeding machines! Last but certainly not least, the handyman crew repaired barn and garage doors, washed the solar panels, assisted the sign crew and installed the new locking kiosk. Lunch was donated by Chick-Fil-A of Ranson.



At Yankauer Preserve we had a whopping 30 volunteers! Under the fearless leadership of our Executive Director, Kristin Alexander, one group of volunteers stained the benches and picnic tables using additional stain donated by Vermont Natural Coatings. Another group gave the pollinator gardens next to the pavilion and in the front parking lot a much-needed facelift, and pulled up pounds of stilt grass. Additional volunteers washed and waxed our interpretive signage, cleared the trails, removed pesky mud dauber nests, and rehung the gate. The lovely ladies of the PVAS Events Committee prepared a tasty lunch to fuel the other volunteers.



Exciting projects are brewing at Stauffer's Marsh. An Eagle Scout candidate is making progress on a marsh-observation platform located just off the West Pond Trail. We look forward to using this platform for programming and bird walks. Be sure to visit the preserve this Fall to check out the new view.

Be vigilant when visiting Eidolon. We are officially in hunting season and deer hunting is permissible at Eidolon. A calendar of the hunting/hiking schedule is on our website and posted on the kiosk at Eidolon; an at-a-glance calendar is also included here. Hiking is not permitted during any of the firearms seasons, however, hiking is allowed during bow season. Hikers are encouraged to wear at least one piece of blaze orange and refrain from hiking in the early morning and late evening. We want everyone to stay safe and still be able to enjoy all of the recreational opportunities Eidolon has to offer.

Only three months remain in 2019, so, Master Nats, it is time to get those volunteer hours completed! Preserve volunteer work days from now until the end of the year are up on our website calendar. Registering for workdays on our website, or by 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.

### *Eidolon Hunting Schedule At-a-Glance*

**Archery and Crossbow:** Sep 28 to Dec 3;  
Hiking permitted, but please be cautious.

**Youth Hunt:** Oct 19 & 20 and Dec 26 & 27; No Hiking

**Firearms (antlerless):** Oct 24 to 27, Nov 25 to Dec 7,  
Dec 12 to 15, and Dec 28 to 31; No Hiking

**Firearms (buck):** Nov 25 to Dec 7; No Hiking

**Muzzleloader:** Dec 16 to 22; No Hiking

**Mountaineer Heritage Hunt:** Jan 9 to 12; No Hiking

## Advocacy

# Undermining the Endangered Species Act

By Neal Barkus, *Panhandle Progressive*

We have just been treated to another example of what happens when conservation voters fail to go to the polls, or worse, when they vote for candidates who are antithetical to sound conservation values. On August 12, 2019, the Trump Administration announced its latest effort to modify the Endangered Species Act (ESA), not in the interest of the imperiled species the Act was designed to protect, but to satisfy the oil, cattle and mining industries who contribute so heavily to the Republican leviathan.

The ESA has been an enormously successful program to save endangered species and is the model for the rest of the world. Among its successes are the restoration of the California Condor, the American Alligator, the Bald Eagle, and the Gray Wolf. Nevertheless, the Trump Administration is convinced the ESA is antiquated and needs to be brought “into the 21st Century.” Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, not exactly a paragon of official candor, said:

“The revisions finalized with this rulemaking fit squarely with the president’s mandate of easing the regulatory burden on the American public, without sacrificing our species’ protection and recovery goals.”

The announcement was accompanied by supportive statements from 15 Republican lawmakers, and officials from the National Association of Homebuilders, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, and the Western Energy Alliance. The strong opposition of environmental groups wasn’t mentioned.

The ESA itself has remained untouched. Several attempts to amend the statute have failed, even though Republicans have controlled both houses of Congress. The Trump Administration has simply modified the regulations that control how the Interior and Commerce Departments will interpret and apply the ESA. A regulatory change of this type is easier to achieve - but also easier for the next administration to reverse; and no regulatory interpretation can contradict the actual statutory language.

What exactly are these regulatory modifications and what will they mean? The answers depend on an understanding of the way the ESA works. It creates a two-tiered approach to protecting plants and animals at risk. Species may be listed as either endangered or threatened. “Endangered” means a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. “Threatened” means a species is likely to become endangered “within the foreseeable future.”

### Economic Data on Industry Impact

The first Trump Administration modification is to what factors may be considered when listing and delisting a species. The ESA says that such determinations must be made “solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available” on the question of whether the species is in danger of extinction. The current regulation mirrors this language but adds the phrase “without reference to possible economic or other impacts of such determination.” The Trump Administration modification eliminates this additional phrase.

This is a clear invitation to industry to bombard the Interior Department with data on the possible harm to the affected industries, which will certainly be exaggerated, when a listing or delisting issue is considered. But recall the statute says that listing and delisting decisions must be made *solely* on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available concerning the extinction question. It does not include the economic impact on industry. Yet what purpose could collecting information on industry impact serve but to influence the ultimate decision? One commentator has likened this to considering cost before treating a patient who is having a heart attack. An obvious legal challenge is set up here because the modified regulation seems to contradict the statute.

### Shrinking Critical Habitat

When a species is listed as endangered or threatened, a critical habitat must also be specified. This is the geographical area occupied by the species at the time of listing, plus any additional area essential for the conservation of the species. The designation of critical habitat only affects federal agency actions or federally funded or permitted activities. Federal agencies are required to avoid destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat areas. Since the federal government owns enormous swaths of land in the West, a critical habitat designation could restrict the extent of federal land open for oil and gas drilling and mining.

Unlike on the question of potential extinction, the Interior Department must take into consideration the economic impact of a critical habitat decision. But this is not enough for the Trump Administration. The major change to this portion of the regulation relates to areas not occupied by the species at the time of listing, but that are deemed essential for the preservation of the species. Now there will be a presumption that an unoccupied area is inessential unless there is a showing that without the unoccupied area the critical habitat would be inadequate. Moreover, the Secretary will now be required to determine to a reasonable certainty that the area will contribute to the conservation of the species. The result of all this is that critical habitats will be smaller in the future.

### Elimination of Climate Change When Determining Foreseeable Future

A species can be listed as threatened when it is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future. Now the term

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*Endangered Species Act continued from previous page*

“foreseeable future” will extend only so far into the future as the Secretary can reasonably determine that both the future threats and the species’ responses to those threats are likely. Under this new rule it would have been nearly impossible to designate the polar bear as threatened in 2010 because of the projected loss of sea ice. Officials then relied on climate models to predict the effect of warming on bear habitat 80 years into the future.

Writing in *The New York Times*, ecologist Carl Safina said:

“It used to be that animals did not need us. Now they do. Unless we value their existence, the modern tide will engulf and obliterate them. Their survival – like our great-grandchildren’s – is a moral matter. No religion has ever preached that our role on earth is to destroy, or leave less for those who’ll come after us. No wisdom teaches that it’s OK for a generation to drive the world to ruin. We are taught that we must safely pilot the ark.”

This reference to the ark caught my attention. It is an apt metaphor, even if one is not inclined toward the scriptural view of the world. Noah carefully put all the animals on Earth into the ark, two by two, in order to preserve them from the deluge. We function as the modern day Noah. Except our current leadership in Washington is at the gangplank shouting “Hey! You two. Get out of line.”

The 17th Annual American Conservation Film Festival will be held October 4-6, 2019 at two venues in Shepherdstown. It will showcase 39 exceptional films, exploring many environmental themes. The encore weekend of October 11-13, 2019 will offer screenings of the eight award winners. Film descriptions and trailers for all 39 films, along with the schedule and ticket information can be found on the ACFF website: <https://conservationfilmfest.org>.

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### 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.*

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