VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Volume 25, Issue 7 April 2007

ANNUAL APPEAL GOAL MET!

As this is being written, with about two weeks left in our annual fundraising appeal, we've already topped our $25,000 goal and the amount raised now stands at $25,469.44. That's more than twice the amount we've raised in any previous appeal.



This is a wonderful outcome! Many thanks to all of you who contributed, and to those who assisted with the appeal effort.

Planning is underway for an event to thank our many donors; please watch for details. Meanwhile, a full list of donors will be included in the next issue of *Valley Views*.

PVAS Summer Camp Registration Opens



PVAS' Audubon Discovery Camp, our summer day camp for area children at the Yankauer Nature Preserve, is now registering campers.

This year's camp is being expanded to seven weeks between June 4 and July 27.

It will kick off with a new, one-week camp program for pre-school children ages 4-5. Entitled "Just for Fledglings," this new program will consist of half-day sessions lasting from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. June 4 through June 11. Each day will be built around a different nature theme and feature circle time, short hikes, hands-on exploration, stories and crafts. Participating children must be accompanied by a parent, with two children per parent as the maximum. The cost will be $45 for the week for the first child and additional $10 for a second child.

The remaining six weeks of camp will be for children ages 6-12. Each of these weeks will be structured around a different nature or environmental theme so children can attend week after week without repeating information and activities. This year's themes include "It's Great to be Gross" (June 11-15), "The First Campers" (June 18-22), "The Amazing Race" (June 25-29), "Watchers in the Woods" (July 9-13), "Earth Artists" (July 16-20), and "Camp Survivor" (July 23-27). These camp sessions are held daily from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Children should bring a snack, plenty to drink, and a lunch each day. The cost is $100 per child per week and includes a free t-shirt.

Families that register for camp are also invited to an overnight family campout on July 27. The cost for the campout is $20 per person (maximum $75 per family), which includes dinner, campfire, evening activities, s'mores, and breakfast the next morning. Space is limited.

PVAS members get a 10-percent discount on all camp fees.

The sizes of all our camp sessions are kept very small for an excellent instructor/child ratio of 1:10. Instructors are thoroughly trained in first aid, natural history, and environmental science.

The camp director is Ellen Murphy, who recently joined the PVAS staff as Director of Children's Programs. Ms. Murphy has extensive experience in developing, directing, and delivering educational programs for children.

For more information see the PVAS website or contact Ellen at 304-676-8739 or ellenmurphy@comcast.net. Easy online registration is available at the website.

PVAS Celebrates 25th Anniversary, 1982 -2007

Mark your calendars now! On June 2 at 6 PM at the Yankauer Nature Preserve, our annual meeting will include a festive birthday celebration. Tentative plans include a cookout, a bonfire, music, an interactive time line, story sharing and more. Check your files and bring along photos, stories and remembrances. PVAS will provide food and refreshments so an RSVP will be needed by May 19. Look for more details about this event in the May Valley Views. Susan Brookreson is organizing the event. She can be reached at 304-263-2823 if you would like to help, RSVP or if you have questions.

Photo Camp for Teens Being Offered Again This Summer



PVAS will be partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) again this summer to offer a special, one-week digital nature photography camp for teens.



The camp, which FWS and PVAS pioneered last year, uses technology to help children build affective connections with nature. FWS views it as a model that could be applied nationally to help combat "Nature Deficit Disorder" – the impact that lack of time and interaction with nature has on children's physical and mental health. This topic has been brought to the forefront of public awareness in recent years by author Richard Louv.

The camp will be held July 30-August 4 and will include classroom and field instruction at the National Conservation Training Center. Students will have an opportunity to learn and practice skills in basic nature photography and digital image editing. These skills will be further developed during day-long field trips to FWS' Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland, and to the National Zoo's Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Virginia.

This year's camp will be funded by a generous grant from Nikon's "Spirit Initiative."

If you have questions about the program, please contact Kristin

Summer Camp Scholarships Still Available

Just a reminder that we are still accepting applications for our summer camp scholarships. The cut-off date is April 15.

Our scholarship program, which was described in the last issue of Valley Views, helps send deserving area youngsters to summer camps that emphasize conservation and the environment. Any youngster within the Society's membership area (the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and Washington County, Maryland) is eligible to apply.

For information and application forms go to our website or contact Kathryn Henry at 304-876-6681 or dhenry@myexcel.com.

Volunteer Days!!!

We have had three gracious offers from groups to volunteer at Yankauer so far this spring. A special thank you goes to Libby Howard, Will Howard, and Christian Thomas for taking some of their spring break to do some "spring cleanin" at Yankauer. On April 4, NCTC Employees' association will be coming out to Yankauer to continue the clean-up efforts at the preserve as well as help us get some invasive species under control before they bloom. We are also working with the Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church's Mission committee to organize a workday at Yankauer sometime this spring. Thank you all!!

April 29 Birding Trip

PVAS will sponsor a birding field trip to the Sleepy Creek Wildlife Management Area in Berkeley and Morgan counties on Sunday April 29. The trip will be led by noted local bird expert Matt Orsie. It will be aimed primarily at locating migrating and returning warblers.

Field trip participants will meet at 6:30 a.m. at the Food Lion supermarket parking lot on Route 51 in Inwood, just off I-81, and depart from there. For more information contact Nancy Kirschbaum at 304-876-6881 or nancyk500@adelphia.net.

Eidolon Trails Cleared and Re-marked

We have been working hard over the winter to make our new Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County more accessible to visitors, and most of this work is now complete. All the preserve's trails have now been cleared of deadfalls and other obstacles and remarked with fresh painted blazes. In addition, one trail that ran over rather dangerous terrain has been rerouted somewhat.

As this is being written, we hope to have all the trails fully mapped by the end of March, and to have a trail map developed and posted on our website shortly after that. In the meantime, as an interim step we have added a copy of the property's plat to our website. The plat includes trail information, and anyone wishing to visit the property now can download this document and take it with them when they go.

The preserve currently contains three marked walking trails (white, yellow and blue) plus an access road that runs up to the FAA tower at the highest point on the property and an old coach road that runs down the mountain toward Woodmont Road. In all, these trails and roads total perhaps three miles. All the trails (and the old coach road) include steep changes in elevation and some relatively rough ground, so visitors should wear sturdy shoes and be prepared for a workout.



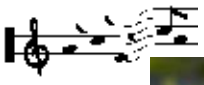
Projects planned for this spring at the preserve include a breeding bird survey that will be undertaken with assistance from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and some initial efforts to deal with invasive plant species.

PVAS and The Nature Conservancy are currently planning to hold a formal ceremony and "open house" at the preserve Saturday, May 19, to officially open the preserve to the public. Details will be announced later.

April Meeting to Focus on Spring Bird Songs

Our April meeting will feature a presentation on spring bird songs by local naturalist Wil Hershberger. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 11, at the U.S. Geological Survey's Leetown Science Center, 11649 Leetown Road (County Route 1), Kearneysville.

Wil, a former PVAS president who lives in Hedgesville, has been a naturalist all his life with a special concentration on birds. He has been photographing and recording the natural world for more than a decade and his work has been published in magazines, calendars, and books. Most recently, he is coauthor of *The Songs of Insects*, a full-color book and audio CD that has just been published by Houghton-Mifflin Company.





Song Sparrow image used with permission of Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, *nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/*
Under Fair Use provisions

His recordings of birds, frogs and insects are archived at the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. His website can be found at www.natureimagesandsounds.com.

Birding 101 Schedule

As we announced in last month's *Valley Views*, we will once again offer our popular "Birding 101" course for beginning birdwatchers in April. The course schedule, which was not available last month, will be as follows:



The classroom sessions will be held at the National Conservation Training Center j from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 5; Thursday, April 12; Thursday, April 26; and Monday, April 30. The field trips will be held at various locations around the Panhandle on Saturday mornings from roughly 7:00 a.m. to 12 noon on April 7, 14, and 28.

The course is open to beginning birdwatchers of all ages but children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Tuition for the full course package of four classroom sessions and three field trips is $50. Space is limited and registration is required. Registration forms are available on our website or by contacting Kristin Alexander at PVASmail@aol.com or 304-676-3397.



PVAS Partners with Jefferson County Parks and Recreation

This spring, PVAS is partnering with Jefferson County Parks and Recreation to bring some of our programs to Sam Michaels Park. We will be offering two programs each on Birds and Insects for preschooler/adult teams.

The first program, "Birds of a Feather" will be offered on March 31 from 10:00-11:00 a.m. and on April 25 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. The second program, "Incredible Insects – Splendid Spiders," will be offered on May 2 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. and on May 19 from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Enrollment is being handled by Jefferson County Parks and Recreation. For more information, please contact them at 304-728-3207.

Wildflower/Earth Day Festival

Remember to mark your calendars for our annual spring Wildflower Festival, which is being held Saturday, April 21 at the Yankauer Nature Preserve.

The festival, which coincides with Earth Day and the arrival of spring, will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., rain or shine. It will include guided wildflower walks through the preserve on the hour. Children's activities and refreshments will be available throughout the day. Visitors are also welcome to explore the trails and enjoy the wildflowers on their own without a guide. In keeping with the Earth Day theme, there will also be informational booths sponsored by local environmental organizations.

Just prior to the festival, at 10:00 a.m., there will be a special "advanced" wildflower walk for anyone interested in more serious study of local wildflowers. This walk will be led by Maryland Native Plant Society expert Joe Metzger.

Admission to all these events will be free and everyone is welcome.

Mid- to late April is traditionally the peak of the early spring wildflowers at the preserve. Some of the wildflowers on display should include bloodroot, spring beauties, Dutchman's breeches, and rue anemone.

For more information contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or pvasmail@aol.com.

SPRING = BIRD NEST BOXES!

If you have bird houses up now, it's time to do some house cleaning. Also, please make sure to disinfect them after clearing out the debris. (Mustn't let the birds put nests over the old ones—makes them more susceptible to predators from above.) If you want to make new bird boxes, go online to Cornell's excellent Website for correct species-specific plans: http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/resources/

President's Perch



Hello everyone:

As is noted elsewhere in this newsletter, our latest annual appeal has now raised more than twice as much as any of our previous annual appeals.

And that's not all. The number of families and individuals who have contributed has also increased substantially—by a full third, in fact, to 110 from a previous high of 82. So we've expanded our fundraising base as well.

In addition, we've received ten new multi-year pledges (commitments to donate specific amounts for fixed periods of three to five years). Together, these pledges will bring us a total of $6,675 annually for the next three years and $5,300 annually for the two years after that. This gives us a good, solid foundation for our fundraising appeals in those future years, a foundation we haven't had before.

So by any measure, this annual appeal has been a tremendous success, and PVAS will benefit greatly from it.

Many thanks are in order.

Thanks first to our Fundraising Committee—Rob Hoxton, the chair, and members Kristin Alexander, Alice Barkus, Mina Goodrich, Jean Neely, Anne Small, and Jane Vanderhook—for all the work they put into this effort.

Thanks, too, to Dan Cogswell for designing and maintaining our fundraising database.

But mostly, on behalf of all of PVAS's officers, board members and staff, thanks to all of you who contributed. PVAS truly is a cooperative venture, and we couldn't begin to do the things we do without the generous help of our many donors and volunteers. We truly do appreciate your support.

--Peter Smith

PVAS Gets Grant for Ranson School Programs

The City of Ranson has awarded PVAS a grant of $1,000 to provide educational programming to Ranson Elementary School children this year free of charge.

Over the last several years, PVAS has developed education programs for all grades K-6. The programs are intended to increase young children's understanding and appreciation of the natural world. They utilize the Yankauer Nature Preserve as a field laboratory and include pre- and post-visit classroom activities to enhance and reinforce the field experience. All the programs have been developed and field tested in partnership with local teachers and support the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives.

At Ranson, we'll be delivering our programs for Kindergarten and the First, Second, Third, and Fifth grades. The programs will be presented this spring and into the fall.

We are very pleased to be able to offer this opportunity to serve Ranson children with the City of Ranson's support.

Annual Race for the Birds Coming Up April 28



We will hold our sixth annual "This Race is for the Birds!" event on Saturday, April 28, on the campus of the National Conservation Training Center.

The event, which will be held rain or shine, will feature a 5-kilometer cross-country run sanctioned by the Shenandoah Valley Runners Club. The race will begin at 9:00 a.m. Awards for Top Overall, Masters, and age group winners will be presented after the race.

Families and those who prefer a slower pace can also participate by walking the same course at their own speed. The course offers a good opportunity to enjoy the area's spring wildflowers because it winds through the NCTC woods along the Potomac River. The walk will begin immediately after the runners have cleared the starting area.

Following the completion of the run, at about 9:45 a.m., there will be a "Fun Run" for children under 10 years of age, on a special short course set up just for them. All children will receive a prize for participating.

This run/walk event is a major fundraiser for PVAS: all proceeds go to support the Society's youth education programs and its Yankauer and Eidolon nature preserves. The fee for adults participating in the 5-kilometer race or walk will be $20 per person and will include a free t-shirt while supplies last. The fee for children participating in the walk and/or Fun Run will be $10. All fees are tax deductible.

Runners may pre-register or register at the event. Walkers and Fun Run participants should simply register at the event. Runners who wish to pre-register can do so online at www.active.com or send a check payable to PVAS to Race, 526 Appian Way, Martinsburg, WV 25401. Registration forms can be downloaded our website.

Everyone participating at the adult run/walk event should go to the gymnasium on the NCTC campus. Registration will take place 8:00-8:45 a.m. Registration for the children's "Fun Run" will be at 9:30 a.m. at the gymnasium.

For more information visit our website or call 304-676-3397 or email pvasmail@aol.com.

Potomac Mecklenburg Garden Club Spring Plant Sale

The Potomac Mecklenburg Garden Club's Spring Plant Sale will be held Saturday, May 5, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the courtyard of Trinity Episcopal Church—rain or shine—on German Street in Shepherdstown. This is a great opportunity to pick up some hard to find nursery propagated native plants and trees as well as some locally grown garden favorites. Shop early! For more information call Carolyn Thomas at 267-3115.

Preview of the Anniversary Issue
More to come next month ...



NAS Regional VP, Walt Pomeroy, presents Ben Schley with PVAS' founding charter, 1982

1982 Officers

President	Jean Nealy
Vice President	Ben Schley
Treasurer	J. Blackwell Davis, Jr.
Recording Secretary	Frank Sturges
Corresponding Secretary	Ruth Ann Dean

Still Around and Going Strong

Founding Organizer and First Pres.	Jean Nealy
First Membership Chair	Diana Mullis
Graphic Design and Field Trips	Susan Brookreson
Field Trips and Newsletter	Bob and Ruth Ann Dean
Publicity Chair	Joe Brookreson

Summer Camp Wish List

PVAS members and friends can assist our Audubon Discovery Camp effort by loaning or donating the following items:

- Plastic, screw-on bottle caps from 1 and 2-liter bottles (soda, water, etc)
- Toilet paper rolls
- Hand held GPS units
- Basic compasses (for use with topo maps in "The Amazing Race")

Cash donations can help, too:

- $150 will provide a scraped, raw deerhide for use in "The First Campers" unit
- $100 will provide a week of camp to a deserving child
- $50 will provide art supplies for the "Earth Artists" unit
- $25 will provide 2 field guides for campers to use

We also welcome volunteers who can help with ANY of the camp weeks!

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

We now offer two kinds of memberships:

1. PVAS Local Membership

Here's what you get:

- Access to a wide variety of PVAS programs and events for adults and children.
- Discounts for selected chapter activities, like children's summer camps.
- A subscription to PVAS's newsletter and e-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest.
- ALL your dues stay here to support local PVAS efforts!

To become a local member: Enclose a check for $20 ($15 for seniors and students). Please make check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year.

2. Dual Membership with National Audubon

You get all the benefits of PVAS membership plus membership in the National Audubon Society, which includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. If you select this option, almost all of your dues will go to National Audubon. To obtain a dual membership, enclose a check for $20 if you are joining NAS for the first time or $35 to renew an existing NAS membership ($15 in either case for seniors and students). Make check out to "National Audubon Society."

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____

Phone (optional): _____

E-mail: (optional): _____

Membership Type (check one):

PVAS Local Membership ____
(For PVAS local membership, check the box following if you do NOT want PVAS to share your contact information with National Audubon: ___)

Dual Membership with National Audubon ____

I'd like to get *Valley Views* by e-mail___ US mail ___ (check one)

.....(Audubon chapter code Y54; source code 79N7)

Clip and mail this form to:
Membership Chair, PVAS
PO Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Thank you for your support!

RED DOT ALERT

If a red dot appears on your mailing label, your membership may have expired and this could be your last issue of Valley Views. Take action to renew your Dual membership or Local member-

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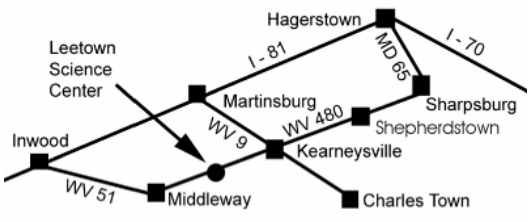
http://www.potomacaudubon.org

DATED MATERIALS

A proud partner of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign.

MAIL TO:

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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, in the auditorium at the USGS Leetown Science Center, Letown/Kearneysville, WV. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please call any of the board members listed her or see http://www.potomacaudubon.org. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD

The PVAS Board meets every other month on the first Wednesday of the month (Sept.-June). Meeting location will be announced prior to meetings. These meetings are open to all PVAS members.

PVAS Officers and Board Members

President:	Peter Smith 304 876-1139	pvsmith@frontiernet.net
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Emeritus Board Members

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Jean Neely ..... jeaneely@comcast.net

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Web Master:	Kathy Bilton	kathy@fred.net

PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis ..... 304-267-3482 & 304 724-4520(day)