

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Volume 31, Issue 7

April 2013

Eastern Phoebe

by Wil Hershberger

Being so tied to human structures, the Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) is known to almost everyone. In fact, the Eastern Phoebe owes its range expansion into the mid-west to human settlement. During the late 19th century, common names for this species included, “bridge pewee” and “barn pewee.”

During our winter months, phoebes migrate to the southern states where they dine on insects and occasionally fruit. Populations can be severely affected when extraordinarily cold weather hits during their winter sojourns.

The Eastern Phoebe is one of the earliest nesting migrants. Appearing in our area in mid-March, males quickly obtain and defend a territory. Females arrive a week or so later and are actively pursued by the males. From houses to bridges, barns to potting sheds, the Eastern Phoebe makes its home in a location that is protected from the elements and, to some extent, from predators. The female picks the final nesting site after the male performs his nest-site-selection display at a number of suitable locations, which may include older nests that often persist from year-to-year.

During the initial pursuit stage of courtship, the male calls repeatedly to the female as he flies around his territory showing off potential nest sites. This behavior is very conspicuous and easily draws our attention to the presence of this species. You can listen to a recording that I made of this calling display, soon after the females arrived in the males territory, during March of 1999 in Frederick County, MD here: http://natureimagesandsounds.com/assets/EAPH/EAPH_CALLS.mov.

This was a magical evening. As this male was getting more and



Eastern Phoebe © Wil Hershberger

more excited that a female was following him around his territory he did something that no one had apparently seen, or at least written about, before. He did a FLIGHT DISPLAY, complete with a unique flight song. Here is the first known audio documentation of the flight song of the Eastern Phoebe that I recorded that March evening in 1999 and that I have archived with the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds at Cornell: http://natureimagesandsounds.com/assets/EAPH/EAPH_FLIGHT_SONG.mov

Though, perhaps not as exciting, the normal song of the Eastern Phoebe repeatedly declares its name, “phoebe, phoebe.” The song of this species, as with other non-songbirds, is not learned from its parents or other neighboring males. This song is somehow instinctive, coded in the DNA. Young Eastern Phoebes that are raised in isolation from all bird sounds develop normal sounding songs and calls for their species. Fascinating! Here then is the song of the same male Eastern Phoebe that we have been following in this story. This too was recorded in March 1999 in Frederick County, MD: http://natureimagesandsounds.com/assets/EAPH/EAPH_SONG.mov

Summer Camp Scholarships

The deadline to apply for summer camp scholarships has been extended to April 17, 2013. Act now!
See details on page 8.

Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon

Participate or support a team in this year's event!
Sign up or donate online:
www.potomacaudubon.org/birdathon

Birdseed Pickup Deadline

Stored birdseed should be picked up **before April 1**.
If there is a problem, please contact Diana Mullis at
dianamullis@aol.com or 304-267-3482.

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

Reflections on PVAS

by Bob Reynolds, PVAS President

On Saturday, March 2nd, our PVAS Board of Directors, advisers, and staff convened at NCTC for a six hour retreat. Our objective was not so much to resolve issues before us, but rather to openly share perspectives on priorities for development in the budget year beginning this July. I would characterize our discussions as open, positive, and expansive.



As expected we discussed PVAS community services – our vision for adult and youth education and enjoyment of the natural world, our conservation advocacy, and our protection and use of our three nature preserves. These discussions with the Board are ongoing, and in this issue you can read about actions we have taken to implement the Backyard Naturalist program, strengthen our collaboration with Shepherd University, and adopt a conservation advocacy policy.

In addition, however, our retreat discussions initiated exploration of PVAS infrastructure issues. How do we enlarge our membership in a four county service area with 335,000 residents? With heavy reliance on print media, how do we communicate more effectively with a population increasingly reliant on electronic media? Can we amplify our services by collaborating more effectively with other educational and service organizations in our region? What infrastructure does PVAS require to support expanded community service?

Obviously we did not resolve these or similar questions. The Board, however, recognizes that our aspirations for new programs require that we also attend to the organizational structure of PVAS. At our next Board meeting May 2nd at NCTC we will discuss adoption of a budget for the year beginning this July. The board retreat helped us clarify our challenges and opportunities. At our next meeting we will weigh the allocation of resources to best help us achieve our objectives.

Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

At the March meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board officially adopted a new advocacy policy for PVAS. We have not been involved in advocacy in recent years, but this policy is in keeping with one of the original purposes of PVAS set forth by the founding members 30 years ago.

The policy document provides background on how 501(c)3 non-profit organizations like PVAS can be involved with advocacy without crossing the line into lobbying or other activities outside our legal 501(c)3 status. It also provides other important information for easy reference.



The policy provides guidance for PVAS Board, staff, and volunteers to consider future positions and actions on local, state, regional, national and international issues that are appropriate to our mission. Because of our limited resources, our priority focus will be on local issues because we feel we can have the most influence here at home.

The second priority will be regional and statewide issues that have significant effects on our service area or for which our members may have particular interest and expertise. Thus PVAS may choose to actively engage in advocacy on these issues when time, member effort, and necessary staff support are available.

National and International issues will also be considered as time and resources allow, but being a small organization, we recognize that we will likely not be as effective in these issues. In these cases, we will most often encourage members to contact their elected officials individually. PVAS may also choose to direct members to appropriate materials provided by the National Audubon Society or other national conservation organizations that have the resources and contacts to be effective advocates on this scale.

The policy further outlines the types of actions that could be taken on issues, such as informal actions (alerting members of an issue so they can take action individually, inviting speakers to present on a conservation issue at a monthly meeting), formal actions (a formal comment letter, a letter to the editor, testimony in a public forum or meetings with public officials for the purpose of providing and discussing an official PVAS position), and ways staff and Board collaborate to make decisions on such issues and what actions should be taken.

If you are interested in learning more about this policy in more detail, the entire policy can be viewed on our website's "Governance" page at <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/gov>. An enormous thank you goes to Heather McSharry, PVAS Conservation Committee Chair, for drafting an exceptionally professional policy for consideration by the Board.

To become involved with this advocacy initiative, or if you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me at 304-676-3397 or Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org.

View from the Eagle's Nest

By Sandy Sagalkin

Every year on President's Day weekend, PVAS sponsors a waterfowl trip to the Eastern Shore. Dave Myles, an excellent birder, has led the trip. The weather is usually miserable and this year was no exception. But as Matt Orsie pointed out to our group over lunch our first day: "If you want to see good birds, you need lousy weather." Matt, the Predictor, was right: those of us on the trip saw more birds and more good birds than on any of our previous trips to the Eastern Shore. One of the PVASers on the trip was Steve Hartman from Martinsburg. Steve has been birding now for a couple of years. He added 26 new birds to his life list. This was his first winter trip to the Eastern Shore. "The highlight for me was seeing Harlequin Ducks in the Ocean City Inlet and Razorbills at the Indian River Inlet." The Razorbill is a funny penguin-looking bird, unusual to

see even in the winter. In fact, both birds are uncommon and can only be seen here in the winter. We saw so many Bald Eagles on the trip that we stopped counting after 40.

Here is Dave's report of the trip highlights, which he posted on the West Virginia Listserv:

"We just completed a fantastic 3 day trip to the Eastern Shore starting at Bombay Hook NWR (BH) and working south to Fowler Beach (FB), Silver Lake (SL), Indian River Inlet (IRI), Ocean City Inlet (OCI), Chincoteague NWR (CH), Cambridge (CA) and finishing at Blackwater NWR (BW). The weather may have been cold, but the birding was hot. The trip resulted in 108 species, a personal best (PB) for this trip. The list included 24 duck species (PB), 13 shore bird species (PB), 5 Gull species (PB), 6 woodpecker species (PB), 20,000+ Snow Geese and 40+ Bald Eagles (PB). We had 84 species on the first day. Every stop had something new to offer. I almost gave up on the Redhead duck #24 until Sandy yelled REDHEAD at the entrance ponds to BW. 20 duck species on this trip is achievable, but 24 are normally out of the question. This was a trip I'll never forget. One member of the team logged over (26) lifers."

Below are other notables:

American Bittern: 2 BH
 Cackling Goose: 1 BH
 Harlequin Duck: 3 OCI
 Common Eider: 1 IRI
 All 3 Scoter species: IRI
 Razorbill: IRI...20 ft from our entrance to the jetty
 Great Cormorant: IRI...6 on the tower
 Redhead Duck: BW
 Greater Scaup: CA
 Willet: CH...40+
 Marbled Godwit: CH...10+
 American Avocet: BH and CH
 Boat-tailed Grackle: CH
 Lesser Black-backed Gull: FB...2
 American Oystercatcher: FB
 Red-headed Woodpecker: BW
 Eastern Meadowlark: BW
 White Pelican: BW

Stauffer's Marsh Update

If you've been to Stauffer's Marsh recently you may have noticed a few changes. Based on some concerns about the original trail being too close to the wetland, the trail has been rerouted. The new trail brings visitors to the north side of the dam, preventing birds from becoming alarmed and taking flight. Eventually the trail tops the dam in two locations, allowing a clear view of the wetland and bird life. The original trail has been closed for revegetation. The new trail still allows for fishermen (allowed with written permission) to access the deepest fishing holes.

Trees were also removed from the dam per the requirements by the USDA Wetland Easement. There was concern that the roots of the trees were going to compromise the integrity of the dam, leading to significant maintenance issues in the future. The dam will need

to be maintained free of trees in perpetuity.

Volunteers also erected a pole for a Purple Martin house to be located at the marsh. The property is perfect habitat for Purple Martins, and a beautiful martin house was donated by PVAS member Renee Schwartz. The house will be erected this spring in time for young male martins to find it and establish a colony.

Other projects under consideration include a sign welcoming visitors to the marsh and orienting them to the trails and what they may see there, and a bridge connecting the current marsh trail entrance to the trail leading to Back Creek. The bridge will be outside the wetland easement and will prevent visitors from having to access the Back Creek Trail along the busy road.

A special thank you goes to volunteers Steve Hartman, Wil Hershberger, and Bob Dean for rerouting the trail, erecting the purple martin pole, and removing the trees from the dam.



Stauffer's Marsh

© Wil Hershberger

Plant Nursery Open House

The Winston Gardens Native Plant Nursery has once again pledged to donate 15 percent of the proceeds from its upcoming spring Open House Plant Sale to PVAS. The donation will be used to support our new Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve.

The Open House will be held the weekend of May 4 and 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day. Light refreshments will be served and a door prize will be offered.

The nursery is located in northeastern Berkeley County, at 1121 Hollida Lane, one mile off Swan Pond Road.

Operated by noted local landscape designer Virginia Winston and her husband Eldon, it specializes in trees and shrubs native to this region and typically offers more than two dozen different species for sale, ranging from popular favorites like Sugar Maples and Redbuds to hard-to-find species like Fringe Tree, Witch Hazel, and Black Haw Viburnum.

For directions and a full list of the plants available, go to the Nursery's website at www.winstongardens.com or call the Winstons at 304-267-6924.

April Birding Trips

PVAS has scheduled four birding trips in and around Jefferson and Berkeley counties for April.

All the trips are free and anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of birding skills. Children are welcome. All the trips will last about three hours and will focus on birds that migrate in early spring, as well as year-round birds like woodpeckers and raptors.

Full details can be found on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

The specific dates and basic details are as follows:

April 3: Birding trip to the Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve in Berkeley County.

The marsh is located in Back Creek Valley, one-half mile south of Shanghai, on the east side of Back Creek Valley Road (County Route 7). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the gravel parking lot at the north end of the marsh. No pre-registration required. For more information contact Sandy Sagalkin at 240-291-6465 or monsansagalkin@myactv.net.

April 13: Birding trip to the Snavelly Ford section of the Antietam National Battlefield.

Snavelly Ford is located on Antietam Creek in the southern part of the Battlefield, near the Burnside Bridge. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Burnside Bridge parking lot. No pre-registration required. For more information, contact Sandy Sagalkin (see contact information above).

April 24: Birding trip to the Murphy's Farm section of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Park's main Visitor Center off Route 340. Please note that the Park Service will charge a fee of \$6 per vehicle to enter the Park unless you have an annual Park pass or an NPS Golden Eagle pass. No pre-registration required. For more info, contact Deb Hale at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-2346.

April 27: Birding trip to the National Conservation Training Center outside Shepherdstown.

In addition to general birding, this trip will offer a good opportunity to see the Center's resident Bald Eagles. Because of the Center's security requirements, space will be limited and registration is required. To register, contact trip leader Sandy Sagalkin at the email address or phone number shown above no later than Thursday, April 25. For each trip, participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for prevailing weather conditions, and bring water. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them.



Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

A trip may be cancelled because of bad weather.

International Migratory Bird Day 2013

by Sandy Sagalkin

Spring is in the air. In April, many spring migrants will start to arrive and take up their posts on trees in your backyard or neighborhood and start singing their wonderful songs. If you are a birder, you also will be looking forward to May, when the spring migration is at its peak. May 11 is International Migratory Bird Day, when the country celebrates the return of these little creatures that give us so much pleasure.

This year's PVAS celebration of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) should be bigger and more fun than ever. IMBD is celebrated on the second Saturday in May each year, but this year we will celebrate IMBD with a whole week's worth of special events. Our grand finale will be the Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon on May 11-12.

On May 4 the Washington County Bird Club will be sponsoring a bird walk at Snavelly's Ford on the Antietam National Battlefield, a beautiful trail along Antietam Creek and one of the "birdiest" areas in Washington County. Nancy and Elliot Kirshbaum, two local birding experts, will be leading the walk. Other bird walks will follow during the week.

Each year, IMBD has a theme. This year, the theme focuses on life cycles. This theme details all aspects of a migratory bird's life, from nesting and migration to breeding and raising young. Most importantly, it addresses the need for conservation throughout the life cycle.

We are planning two special events for you this year. On May 8, we will present Katie Fallon, the author of "Cerulean Blues." This is the story of the declining population of a beautiful species, the Cerulean Warbler. She will speak at our PVAS monthly meeting at NCTC on May 7 at 7 p.m. Then on Thursday, May 9, Katie will bird with us at the Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County, a PVAS preserve that features Cerulean and other warblers. Everyone is invited to both events.

Then on Friday, May 10, we will be co-sponsoring with Shepherd University a dinner and guest speaker from the World Wildlife Fund: Dr. Eric Dinerstein, Vice President and Lead Scientist, Conservation Science Program, and author of the recent title on critically rare species, "The Kingdom of Rarities." While there will be a charge for the dinner, the talk will be free and open to the public. Shepherd University will host this event on its campus. The dinner will be at 6 p.m. followed by Dr. Dinerstein's presentation at 7 p.m. We will post the location in next month's newsletter. I hope all of you reading this will come to the dinner and talk and help make this year's IMBD the best ever.

We will end the celebration with our annual Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon on May 11-12. We are planning to make this year's event special too. We will be using the proceeds from the birdathon to support PVAS's major conservation initiative, the Grassland Bird Initiative (GBI). Led by Wil Hershberger, the GBI's purpose is to help save grassland species, such as Eastern Meadowlarks, Grasshopper Sparrow, and other species dependent on nesting in

grasslands, whose populations have declined by more than 2% per year since 1966. I hope we can count on your support for the GBI by entering the birdathon or sponsoring a birdathon team.

This year, for the first time, we will be holding one or more public “Big Sits” during our birdathon. We hope to attract anyone in the area who wants to have some fun and learn something about birds to join a Big Sit, at which you count the number of different species of birds you can identify within a 50-foot diameter circle. It could be a great educational experience for families as well as being fun. We hope to have refreshments available. Loaner binoculars will be on hand as well as some PVAS volunteers to offer help. We will host a Big Sit at Morgan Grove Park near Shepherdstown and possibly other locations in our region on Sunday, May 12.

I hope we can count on your support by enjoying our activities, coming to the dinner and presentation at Shepherd University, or entering or sponsoring a team. As always, the PVAS website will have details and more information as we get closer to the date.

Congratulations to Great Backyard Bird Count Winners

From Antarctica to Afghanistan, bird watchers from 103 countries made history in the first global Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), February 15-18, 2013. In the largest worldwide bird count ever, bird watchers set new records, counting more than 25.5 million birds on 120,000+ checklists in four days -- and recording 3,144 species, nearly one-third of the world's total bird species. The data will continue to flow in until March 1.



In order to encourage new participation in this important citizen science program, PVAS decided to hold a contest for the highest number of species reported and the highest count reported by first time participants. That honor goes to Diana Mullis for reporting 18 species and Kathy Bilton for reporting the highest count of 85 birds. For their efforts, each is awarded a 50 lb bag of black oil sunflower seeds, the best seeds for feeding birds, .

Congratulations to you both.

Backyard Naturalist Program

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society's (PVAS) Backyard Birding Committee is preparing a Backyard Naturalist Program for members of PVAS, as well as the public, to help them further enjoy the birds and ecosystems of their own backyards. The Backyard Naturalist Program will be an addition to the birding and nature programs presently available through PVAS. The backyard provides an ideal laboratory to introduce a whole new segment of the public to nature, birds, other flora and fauna, habitat needs, citizen science, and the importance of conservation of our natural resources.

The Backyard Naturalist Program has it's own webpage on the PVAS web site at: <http://potomacaudubon.org/BYN>

The first module of the program, “Birds of Early Spring,” will be available soon and will feature 12 species of birds that you might find in your backyard during early spring. The module features narration describing the birds and includes arrows pointing to the features you should look for when identifying a particular species of bird. The songs of the birds are also included with tips on identifying these species by voice.

To use the modules, click on the button or text for the module you wish to view. Once it loads, press the play button in the center of the screen. The module will start playing as the media loads. You should let the module progress at its own speed. Jumping forward or backward repeatedly, in the slide sequence, can have unpredictable effects. There is a quiz at the end of the module. To use the quiz, select your answer, click on “Submit” and you will be told if you were correct. You may try again. After you exhaust the attempts to answer the question, or once you are correct, click “Next” to advance to the next question. If there is audio still playing after you click on “Submit,” click “Next” twice to advance to the next question. Otherwise, you will have to listen to the entire audio clip.

There is a short video linked at the bottom of the Backyard Naturalist page that describes how to use the modules.

The modules require Internet Explorer 9 or later, Safari 5.1 or later, or Chrome 17 or later. The modules will be supplied in two versions for your convenience. If the main module does not work well on your computer or tablet, try the alternate; it is Adobe Flash based. The main module will work on iPads as well computers with the browser versions indicated above. Google's Chrome browser is a small program that runs very well on most computers, including Mac and PC.

Additional modules will be added in the coming months, including “Birds of Summer,” “Backyard Singing Insects,” “Wildflowers,” and “Butterflies.” Many additional modules will be added in the coming year or two as funding permits.

If you would like to donate to support the Backyard Naturalist Program, please see this link: <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/support>.



Backyard naturalists

© Ellen Murphy, PVAS

PVAS Nature Writing Group



Potomac Valley Nature Writing Group formed in 2009 to promote the art and appreciation of nature writing. We meet September through May to discuss a monthly book selection. Members can also participate by contributing reviews, comments or sharing their own writing online at the [PVNWG blogspot](http://potomacvalleynaturewritinggroup.blogspot.com/). 2013 spring season authors include Gretel Erlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces*--March, David Carroll, *Swampwalker's Journal*--April and Tom Brown, *Nature Observation and Tracking*--May. For more details, email pvnaturewriters@gmail.com or visit <http://potomacvalleynaturewritinggroup.blogspot.com/>

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists Update



The Potomac Valley Master Naturalists began their seventh class March 17-18 at Cacapon State Park. Classes were held at the park's Old Inn. This year's class has 14 students from Berkeley, Morgan, and Jefferson counties as well as Maryland. On Saturday, the students learned about the basics of Taxonomy (classification systems) and Ecology. On Sunday, the topics covered Recording, Preserving and Sorting, and Nature Interpretation. The next class will be in April. Natural History Workshops, sponsored by PVMN, help current Master Naturalists maintain their currency, but all workshops are open to the public. Two Natural History Workshops are scheduled in April: Exploring Vernal Pools on April 20 and History and Ecology of the Chesapeake Bay on the Schooner Sultana on April 27. Registration is open now for both of these workshops at www.PotomacAudubon.org.



Wildflower Festival

Don't forget this year's Wildflower Festival at Yankauer Preserve, April 6, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Knowledgeable volunteers will be leading guided hikes on the Kingfisher Trail throughout the day. Children's activities will be available at the pavilion and a special StoryWalk® will be featured on the Cedar Loop. This new activity combines reading a children's book aloud while trail walking. Families will find it a special way to celebrate wildflowers, but everyone will find it fun! Light refreshments will be available. Registration is not needed for this event, so plan to come and celebrate wildflowers!



2012 Wildflower Festival

Watershed Programs Winding Down For This Year

Watershed programs for fourth grade students are ending for the Spring of 2013. Classes in Jefferson, Berkeley Counties and Morgan Counties are finishing the classroom sessions and getting ready for field trips to local tributaries of the Potomac River. The program combines hands-on learning in class with a real-world experience of the field trip. Field trips to Flowing Springs Run will take place immediately after students return from Spring Break and those to Back Creek and the Cacapon River will occur soon after. Students from Paw Paw and Warm Springs Intermediate Schools in Berkeley County will enjoy their field trip at the new public access area, near the Fisher Bridge, south of Great Cacapon. The Morgan County watershed program was featured in the Spring 2013 WaterNet newsletter, published by the West Virginia Watershed Network (WVWN).

Volunteers are always needed and welcome at these field trips! If you would be willing to spend a few hours helping youngsters explore a stream, look for stream critters, and test the water, please contact Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739 or Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org.

Eidolon Bird Walk on April 28

PVAS will sponsor a morning bird walk the Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County on Sunday, April 28.



The walk will begin at 7:30 a.m. and will be led by local birders Jon Boone and Janet Ardam. There is no fee, and anyone with an interest is invited to attend. No pre-registration is required.

The walk should offer an opportunity to get a good look at a variety of migrating and year-round birds before trees are in full foliage. In particular, it will offer an opportunity to see the rare Cerulean Warbler, a species of concern that can be found in considerable numbers at Eidolon at this time of year.

Participants should wear sturdy walking shoes or boots, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather, and bring water and bug spray. Directions to the preserve can be found on the PVAS website.

For more information contact the Nature Niche store in Berkeley Springs at 304-258-0992 or natureniche@earthlink.net.

PVAS and Shepherd Formalize Partnership

PVAS and the Shepherd University's Institute for Environmental and Physical Sciences (IEPS) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize and facilitate various partnership opportunities. PVAS has partnered with Shepherd for many years, but mostly in informal ways and on a case-by-case basis. The new agreement will smooth the way for new initiatives and opportunities that mutually benefit both parties.

The impetus for this formalization is the new partnership for International Migratory Bird Day. As mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter, Shepherd will be hosting a lecture by Dr. Eric Dinerstein to kick off the Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon.

Under the MOU Shepherd University will provide classroom space for PVAS meetings and courses, advertising of internship and volunteer opportunities for students, faculty expertise, and other benefits.

PVAS will, in turn, provide students with internship opportunities, assist the University with conservation-related endeavors on and off campus, and provide facilities at appropriate PVAS properties for students and faculty to conduct research or pursue other academic ventures. These sites may also be used for Shepherd staff retreats or experiential activities for students.

We look forward to our expanded partnership and the resulting programs and services we can provide as a result.

April PVAS Program: Focus on New Park

PVAS's April program at the National Conservation Training Center will focus on efforts to create a new national park in West Virginia.

The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 10 in Room 114 of the Instructional East Building.

Admission is free and everyone is welcome to attend.

The presenter will be Judy Rodd, Executive Director of the West Virginia Friends of Blackwater organization, which is headquartered in Charleston.

She will discuss efforts to create a new "High Allegheny National

Park and Preserve" in the West Virginia highlands.

This new park would showcase and connect some of West Virginia's most iconic landscapes and celebrated historic sites. Proponents say it would bring thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in revenue to an eight-county area. Traditional hunting and fishing and other sporting activities would continue, and no private land would be taken.

Race Volunteers Needed!

On April 20, 2013 (and even the day before) we could use your help for the Race. Opportunities abound, and most jobs are done before noon on race day! Ways you can help include: registering runners, handing out numbers and t-shirts, setting up snacks, being a race marshal, handing out water and snacks along the race route, setting up the gymnasium on race day (or the day before), cleaning up the gym, taking down directional signage, and removing any trash along the trail.

If you are able to help, contact Ellen Murphy who is coordinating volunteers on race day. She can be reached at Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org or 304-676-8739. Thanks in advance for volunteering! All volunteers get coffee (donated by Hypnocoffee), lunch (donated by Chick-fil-A), and a race t-shirt!

Teen Digital Photo Camp



Teens in high school (grades 9-12) are invited to our Digital Nature Photo Camp that will be held at the Shepherd University Center for Contemporary Arts, June 17-21, thanks to the generosity of the school's administration and arts faculty. Leading the camp will be professional photographer and artist Anne Cropper, a graduate of the Visual Arts Program at Shepherd.

Campers in the program will learn the basics of digital photography and composition techniques for taking the best pictures, even if they have never held a camera! A Nikon 35mm digital SLR camera will be provided to each camper to use during the week and all the photos taken will remain with campers after the camp is over.

Much of each day will be spent outside photographing nature and a full day during the week will be devoted to a field trip. Members of the Potomac Valley Nature Photographers have volunteered to help students learn tips and tricks for taking amazing photographs. Each student will be able to select one photograph for display at a public art show at the end of camp.

Registration for the camp is limited, but information can be found on the PVAS website, www.PotomacAudubon.org/photocamp. A grant from Jefferson County Arts and Humanities Association (AHA) is helping fund this year's program. For more information, contact Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739 or Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org.

Volunteers Needed to Help Mother Earth in April!

We celebrate Earth Day on April 22, but working to help our Earth stay clean and healthy takes more than one day! Help clean up the Opequon Creek on April 6, 9 a.m.-12 noon. Volunteers should meet at the VanMetre Ford Stonebridge (Martinsburg area), wearing sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing for the weather. Please bring your own work gloves. You'll get dirty and a little wet, but you'll make some new friends and the creek will be a little cleaner when you are done. Contact Sandra Bernardi at sbernardi@frontier.com or 304-267-6657 for more information or directions to the site.

Volunteers are needed on April 9 and 11 to help with a tree planting along the Route 9 Bike Trail near Ranson. April 9th will be a work day at the Ranson City Nursery so that small bare root trees can be potted, labeled and organized. On April 11, holes will be dug at the planting site and each tree will be planted, staked, and mulched. (Rain date is the day following.) Times for each day are 9 a.m.-5 p.m., but if you can only help for a few hours, your presence will still be most welcome! Contact William Gregg at wpgregg@frontiernet.net or 803-528-7747 to sign up.

Volunteers are also needed to help out occasionally, for an hour or two, at the Ranson Nursery during this year's growing season to help with weeding, watering, and mulching small trees in containers. Some of the trees will be used at Flowing Springs Park, along Route 9, and in Ranson. This is an ongoing project, and William Gregg can arrange dates and times for you.

SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS STILL AVAILABLE

We have extended our deadline to apply for summer camp scholarships. That late-winter snow is gone; spring has arrived; what a great time to plan for summer nature camp! Applications must be post-marked no later than April 17, 2013, so act now! Scholarship offerings include the camps listed below, with ages and dates given. Our web site www.potomacaudubon.org provides additional details about each camp.

Audubon Discovery Day Camp: our own local day camp at Yankauer Nature Preserve and Peter Burr Farm Site; pre-school to grade 12; a variety of week-long sessions May 28 to July 19, 2013.

Oglebay Institute Junior Nature Camp: at Dallas Pike (near Wheeling), WV; ages 10-15; July 21 - 27 and/or July 28 - August 3, 2013.

Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies: at Capon Bridge, WV; ages 11-15; June 23 - July 6; July 9 - 23; or July 30 - August 12, 2013.

Mountain Adventures Camp: at Mountain Institute, Spruce Knob, WV; ages 12-17; June 16 - 22, June 23 - 29, June 30 - July 6, 2013.

West Virginia State Conservation Camp: at Camp Caesar, Webster County, WV; campers must be age 14 by January 2013 and not past age 18 on June 1; camp dates are June 10 - 15, 2013.

Student Climate & Conservation Congress (SC3): at the National Conservation and Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV; rising grades 9-12 (ages 14-18); June 23 - 29, 2013.

Digital Nature Photo Camp: at Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV; grades 9-12 (ages 14-18); June 17 - 21, 2013.

Coastal Bird Studies for Teens: at National Audubon's camp on Hog Island, Maine; ages 14-17; June 16-21, 2013

Please check our web site for details about individual camps, scholarship application forms, and links to the camps' web sites, providing lots more exciting information, pictures, and camp descriptions! You may also contact scholarship coordinator Kathryn Henry at 304-876-6681, or dhenny@myexcel.com.

All young people within the PVAS membership area are eligible to apply for camp scholarships, which are supported by our fall bird seed sale and by additional individual and community sources. Many thanks to these loyal supporters of our summer camping programs!

Local Camp Sessions Are Filling Up!

Registration for our Audubon Discovery Camp has opened and sessions are filling fast! Sessions are being offered at Yankauer Nature Preserve through early July and at the Peter Burr Farm, near Bardane, through mid-July. Most sessions are geared for children ages 6-13, but teen campers have the opportunity to do some special caving and hiking/canoeing adventures. There are also sessions for preschoolers. Older teens, entering grades 7-12 may attend a training before camp sessions begin and then volunteer to work as junior staff during the summer.

The Nature Digital Photo Camp for teens returns this year at Shepherd University and more information is available below.

Most sessions of day camp will offer before/after camp care for a reasonable fee. Before and after care will be available on a pre-arranged, weekly basis. You can make the arrangements at the same time you register for a camp.

The fee for most traditional camp sessions is \$150, but preschool camp options are less. A \$50 deposit will secure your child's spot in a session with the balance due in May. T-shirts will be available for pre-order online and will cost \$10 again this year. Sizes range from Youth XS to Adult XL. Our shirt "mascot" this year is a frog on a kiwi green shirt.

Audubon Discovery Camp has been offered since 2003.

Special Events This Spring

A number of special outings and events are being offered for children, adults, and families this spring. *Birding 101* begins in early April, a *Nature Photography Workshop* is being held at NCTC, a day trip focusing on *Geology Highlights of the Eastern Panhandle*, *birding trips* to Antietam, Harpers Ferry, and the NCTC campus, a workshop exploring *Vernal Pools* and a trip on the *Chesapeake Bay aboard the Schooner Sultana* have all been scheduled.

Outdoor Explore! events for 6-9 year olds will continue for a few more months, thanks to a grant from the WV Division of Natural Resources. These special outings have allowed younger children to experience free exploring in a variety of natural areas around the area. In April, the program is scheduled to hike the Maryland Heights Trail across from Harpers Ferry. There also will be an early morning birding adventure in May at Yankauer Preserve and an expedition to Flowing Springs Park in June.

There's something for everyone in these program, but all of these will fill up fast, so don't wait to register. Most of the events have a small fee and registration for each event can be completed on the PVAS website, www.PotomacAudubon.org. For more information, contact Ellen Murphy at Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org or 304-676-8739.

Wee Naturalists Sessions for April and May

PVAS is now accepting enrollments for its April and May "Wee Naturalists" sessions for preschoolers.

The April sessions will be held on Monday the 15th and Thursday the 18th and will focus on learning about signs of spring. The May sessions will be held on Monday the 6th and Thursday the 9th and will focus on animal babies and their families.

PVAS's Wee Naturalists program is led by Suzi Taylor, of Sharpsburg, MD, a veteran Audubon camp director who has a degree in environmental education. It's designed to provide opportunities for children ages 3-5 to explore nature together safely under the guidance of an experienced PVAS instructor. All sessions are held at the Yankauer Nature Preserve in Berkeley County. Each session will last from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

At each session, children must be accompanied by a parent, grandparent, other adult relative, or guardian.

To ensure that everyone receives close, personal attention, enrollment will be limited and pre-registration is required. Easy on-line registration is available on the Society's website at www.potomacaudubon.org. Families may register for the April session or the May session or both. The fee is \$5 per child/adult team per session.

For more information, contact Suzi at 301-432-1908 or tomand-suzi506@cs.com.

The Wee Naturalists program was established in 2009 with support from the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation's Two Rivers Giving Circle.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

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

- Access to a wide variety of PVAS programs and events for adults and children, including field trips, special events, workshops and courses, and environmental projects.
- A subscription to Valley Views, the PVAS newsletter
- E-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest
- Satisfaction of supporting conservation efforts, youth and adult nature education, individual and family recreation, and a wide array of programs in your community.

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check for \$20 (\$15 for seniors and students). Make the check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year.

Membership Form

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____
 Phone (optional): _____
 E-mail: _____

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

Clip and mail this form to:

**Membership Chair, PVAS
 PO Box 578
 Shepherdstown, WV 25443**

Thank you for your support!

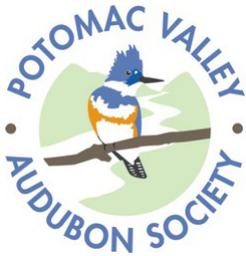


If you'd rather join the National Audubon Society:

Some people prefer National Audubon Society membership, which includes a subscription to the Society's Audubon magazine. To become a National member, go to the Society's website at 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 a member of PVAS and have access to our events, an e-mail copy of newsletter and e-mail alerts. However almost all of your dues payments will go to the National Audubon Society; only a small percentage will go to PVAS.

RED TEXT - DOT ALERT

T If red text or 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 Local membership. If you are a National Audubon Society member, the National Society will notify you directly when your membership is up for renewal.



Potomac Valley Audubon Society
 P O Box 578
 Shepherdstown, WV 25443
 Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 US Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 30
 Shepherdstown, WV

<http://www.potomacaudubon.org>

DATED MATERIALS

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



MAIL TO:

April 2013

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper

Volume 31, Issue 7

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April. 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.

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

PVAS Officers and Board Members

- President: Bob Reynolds (2015)robert.reynolds40@gmail.com
- Vice President: Gary Heichel (2015) GaryIris.Heichel@frontier.com
- Secretary: Mina Goodrich (2013) larrymina@peoplepc.com
- Treasurer: Lex Miller (2014).....pamandlex@frontiernet.net
- Board Members-at-Large:
 - Don Briggs (2015) 1donaldbriggs@gmail.com
 - Clark Dixon (2013)..... dixonconsultants@aol.com
 - Leigh Jenkins (2013)..... jenkinsleigh@hotmail.com
 - Heather McSharry (2014) heather_mcsharry@yahoo.com
 - Sandy Sagalkin (2015).....monsansagalkin@myactv.net
 - Lou Scavnicky (2015)..... captainlou@comcast.net
 - Kathy Stolzenburg (2013)..... kstolzenburg@gmail.com
 - Jane Vanderhook (2013)..... janehook@frontiernet.net

- Ex Officio Board Member:** Peter Smith pvsmitth@frontiernet.net
- Emeritus Board Member:** Jean Neelyjeaneely@comcast.net

Special Contacts

- Executive Director: Kristin Alexander (304-676-3397)Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org
- Program Director: Ellen Murphy (304-676-3397)..... Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org
- Web Master: Kathy Bilton.....kathy@fred.net
- PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis (304-267-3482)..... dianamullis@aol.com