

# VALLEY VIEWS

Summer Breeze Edition

Potomac  
Valley  
Audubon  
Society

Volume 34, Issue 11

August 2016

## President's Note

by Michael Sullivan, PVAS President

It is mid-summer at PVAS. Summer camps are over, and there is a bit of a pause in our programming. This affords us the opportunity to reflect on accomplishments, to look ahead to the start of another year, and to take some well-earned rest... well-earned, because PVAS has just finished a fantastic year.

Our youth, family, and adult programs have reached more people than ever over the past twelve months. Our generous donors and the thousands of hours contributed by our many wonderful volunteers were instrumental in making this happen. So let's get some mid-summer rest in order to be refreshed in September when I predict we'll hit the ground running with the resumption of our regular environmental education programming.

It is mid-summer for the birds of North America too. Most of the breeding and fledging of birds within the Atlantic Flyway has already occurred. Our avian friends are learning to fly and building up strength. Many are resting for long migratory journeys. They will need the rest because critical habitat along and throughout the Flyway is threatened by a variety of factors including global climate change, sea level rise, human disturbance, and predation. These threats affect resident as well as migratory birds.

PVAS is doing its part to offset the loss of habitat in our part of the Eastern Flyway. We do this through our management of PVAS nature preserves, our environmental education programs, our Grasslands Birds Initiative, and our promotion of native plants and pollinators. But our work is far from done. As Thoreau said, "In wildness is the preservation of the world."

Rest up and enjoy the remainder of the summer.



Eldon planting sunflower seeds at "Fireflies, Fiddles and Frogs."

## Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

I hope everyone's been able to get outside and enjoy what summer has to offer! Whether participating at summer camp at Yankauer, Stauffer's Marsh and Peter Burr Farm, "Fireflies, Fiddles and Frogs" at Wild Goose Farm, canoeing down the Opequon courtesy of the Opequon Project Team, taking a hike at one of our preserves, or enjoying an early morning bird walk, there has been lots to do to get out and about!

As summer programs wrap up, we're looking to fall! We are gearing up for school programs, Day of Caring and other work days at the Preserves, and the return of our evening lectures starting in September.

One of the big changes afoot is a new staff person for PVAS! Bridget Tinsley will be joining our team starting August 1. She'll be jumping in immediately after returning from a summer job in the Galapagos Islands with EduTerra where she has been working with high school students doing service-learning excursions. Don't worry – we've already booked her to present one of our fall lectures so you can hear all about it! We can't wait to hear about her adventures.



Bridget will be our "Land and Watershed Program Manager." She will be overseeing our Watershed Education Program in the schools, our management of nature preserves, and our conservation programs like the Grassland Birds Initiative.

She comes to us after completing her Master's Degree in Natural Resource Conservation at the University of Montana. She has a strong background in Environmental Education and Conservation. A Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia, she developed training modules and manuals for environmental education and to promote reforestation, among other responsibilities. She is fluent in Spanish, has taught a variety of ages, has a strong botany background, and is currently enrolled in this year's Master Naturalist program to familiarize herself with the natural history of the mid-Atlantic. She's been volunteering for PVAS over the last year and we look forward to having her joining our team full time. Welcome, Bridget!

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

### Another Successful Year of Camp!

Audubon Discovery Camp has finished for 2016 with over 225 campers participating in one or more of our weeks of camp. Twenty-two teens served as Junior Staff (CITs), a new record!

Two sessions of “Camp Survivor” found kids building forts and exploring the woods at Yankauer Preserve. Other sessions there included “Nature’s Architects” and “Science in the Woods.” Teens learned everything from fingerprinting, to owl pellets, to threats from the Emerald Ash Borer at “Wildlife CSI.”

At the Peter Burr Farm, campers experienced life on the frontier at “The Simple Life” and “Pioneer Survivor,” which featured an overnight under the stars after cooking dinner over the fire. A special 3-day session was held at Stauffer’s Marsh for the first time ever.

Preschool campers enjoyed a shorter day at “Nature Buddies,” or a half-day with a caring adult at “Out of the Nest.”



Volunteers who spent time at one camp or another included: Susan Fluharty, Deb Shaw, Mary Beth Ross, Merilee Cunningham, Becki Jones, Wanda Miller and Gretchen Kemman. Special guests included: Mark Madison from NCTC, Deborah Rochefort at the Peter Burr Farm, Shawn Walker, and Clark Dixon. We can’t thank them enough for their time!



### What An Amazing Evening!

We hope you didn’t miss our family picnic night, “Fireflies, Fiddles, and Frogs” because it was such fun! Wild Goose Farm in Shepherdstown hosted our event for the second year and it couldn’t have been better. Even though it was hot and humid, not a raindrop fell the entire evening!

Over 250 attendees brought a picnic to eat around the pond while listening to music provided by Bob Dean (guitar and vocals), Robin Dean (fiddle), Mike Cusic (bass) and Gary St. Onge (banjo). After eating, children had a great time visiting the nature activity stations that were scattered around the meadow. Activities included fish printing, pond exploration, making a coyote track, designing a “firefly ring,” listening to nature themed stories, learning about Monarch butterflies and enjoying the StoryWalk®. Many, including adults, took part in the Coyote Trot and then compared their top speed with that of the canines. (Coyotes can run up to 43 mph!)



Trego Mountain Nature Center brought Nicodemus the owl for a return visit. South Mountain Creamery’s ice cream sundaes, donated by the Dr. J. Gibson Family, were thoroughly enjoyed, and after enjoying that treat, everyone was encouraged to “upcycle” their empty cup by planting a seed to take home. With any luck, there will be sunflowers blooming all over the Eastern Panhandle. “Passports” helped kids keep track of all the activities by having their passport stamped at each station. A full passport qualified for a prize! Nancy Broadley of Charles Town won the raffled quilt donated by “A Stitch in Line Quilts.” The evening ended with a chance to catch fireflies on the wing (although we let them go).



It took 40 experienced volunteers to make the event possible, and we extend a heart-felt “thanks!” Our generous sponsors included Wild Goose Farm, Dr. J. Gibson Family Dentistry, South Mountain Creamery, A Stitch in Line, Progressive Printing, and Eastern Area Health Education Center/Freedom’s Run. THANK YOU ALL!

## Antietam Bird Walk Set for August 27

PVAS has scheduled a bird walk along the Final Attack Trail on the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, MD on Saturday, August 27. The walk is free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of their birding skills. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available on the PVAS website.

Participants should plan to meet walk leader Sandy Sagalkin at the Burnside Bridge at 7:30 a.m. The walk will last about 2 1/2 to 3 hours, and cover mostly level terrain.

Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water. Also, please keep in mind that you should protect yourself from ticks, mosquitos, and sun. PVAS will provide binoculars for those who do not have their own. Various trip details could change depending on weather or recent bird sightings.

The trail the walk will follow is in the area where the Union Army made its final advance to drive the Confederate Army from Maryland on September 17, 1862, only to be turned back by A.P. Hill's final Confederate counterattack. It is also the site of an extensive effort by the Antietam National Battlefield to restore and preserve native grasslands on the Otto Farm fields in the Battlefield's southwest corner.

For more information, contact Sandy at [sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com](mailto:sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com) or 240-291-6465.

## Potomac Valley Master Naturalists Host Anniversary Celebration at NCTC

Master Naturalists, please join us on the evening of October 8th at NCTC, when PVMN will host a dinner and concert to celebrate our 10th Anniversary. The evening will include nature-themed music, poetry, guest speakers and an exhibit showcasing the nature photography and nature art created by PVAS and PVMN members. Dinner will be a la carte, and choices will range from salads at \$4.50 to a hot entrée with 2 sides at \$16.50. And, should a glass of wine with dinner sound appealing, a cash bar will be open throughout the evening. Registration is required and will close on October 4th. Do not delay! Register today.

## PVMN Rolling Ridge Campout to be Rescheduled

The 10th Anniversary campout, originally scheduled on the Rolling Ridge Foundation property for June 4th and 5th, had to be cancelled due to dearth of participants. It was not clear if the low registration level was due to lack of interest or just to the many other events competing for the same summer weekend.

PVMN would like to reschedule this event for some time in late September or mid-October, but prior to tying up resources to re-plan the event, we would like to poll members to determine the level of interest in attending the weekend campout. Although a date is not currently set, if you would be interested in attending such an event in late September or early October, please express your interest by sending an email to Larry Smith at [msmith19@frontiernet.net](mailto:msmith19@frontiernet.net). A detailed description of the planned activities for the camp out may be found in the May issue of *Valley Views*.

## Did You Know...?

The WV State Master Naturalist Conference is open to current Master Naturalist students as well as Certified Master Naturalists. The 2017 conference will be held at Chief Logan State Park June 9-11 and at Cacapon Resort in 2018. This is an opportunity to see the state, earn education hours, and meet other Master Naturalists. Mark your calendars!

***Congratulations to the Steamboat Run Community Association for successfully enrolling their meadow in PVAS's Grassland Bird Preserve program!***

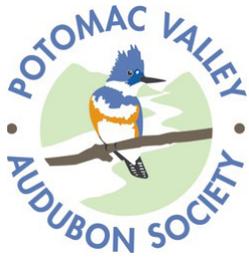


*The 10-acre meadow will be maintained as a grassland through rotational mowing, allowing high ecological value of meadow while balancing members' desire to access the river and enjoy recreational opportunities in designated areas. Thanks for participating!*

## Monarch Butterfly Migration Learning Adventure Tour February 18-25, 2017

Join PVAS friends on an 8-day land tour to two Monarch Butterfly sanctuaries in the western Sierra Madre Mountain Range in central Mexico (State of Michoacan)! In addition, visit several small folk art villages, Paracutin volcano (and the ruin of a town destroyed by the volcano), and the Uruapan National Park. Visit <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/Eco-Tours-and-Extended-Trips> for more information.





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MAIL TO:

August 2016

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper

Volume 34, Issue 11

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**  
 PVAS Board meet-  
 ings take place the  
 first Thursday of  
 the month (Sep-  
 tember through  
 June). Meetings  
 are open to all  
 PVAS members.  
 Please contact  
 the President or  
 Vice President if  
 you would like to  
 attend.

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

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