

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Volume 29, Issue 4

December 2010

PVAS Receives Grant to Help Ranson Park

PVAS has received the “TogetherGreen” grant it was seeking to help the City of Ranson continue development of its new Flowing Springs Park (June 2010 *Valley Views*).

The grant will provide a total of \$25,384 for the park project.

It is one of 43 such grants awarded nationwide and announced November 23 by the National Audubon Society. Together, the grants total nearly \$1.1 million.

The “TogetherGreen” grant program was launched in 2008 by the National Audubon Society and Toyota.

It is a five-year program designed to fund innovative conservation projects, support conservation leadership, and offer volunteer opportunities that significantly benefit the environment and reach new audiences.

Funds are awarded to Audubon organizations and partners that demonstrate exceptional creativity in working with other groups on projects that will produce tangible benefits for environmental quality.

Generally speaking, PVAS’s “TogetherGreen” grant will be used to finalize plans for the park, to foster public involvement in the park project, and to begin the actual restoration process.



Ranson Elementary fourth-graders use the park as a laboratory for their Watershed Education Initiative class

More specifically, the grant will fund the development of a land management plan that will both help determine the park’s final design and help guide its operation.

It will also fund deer fencing to promote a riparian buffer to protect the headwaters of Flowing Springs; volunteer days to help clean up the park from tires, trash, invasive species, and other problems; and the planting of native trees, shrubs and grasses that will improve the habitat for grassland birds. (The site already provides excellent habitat for several bird species on Audubon’s Watchlist

See *TogetherGreen*, Page 2

Watch for PVAS Annual Appeal Mailing

PVAS will launch its annual fundraising appeal December 1.

We know this isn’t an easy time to be asking for funds. Particularly here in our region, the economy is still a great concern and many families are still struggling to make ends meet.

But the fact remains that we really depend on your contributions.

So it’s our job to make the best case we can for your support, and that’s what we’ve tried to do in our appeal letter and in the annual report that will accompany it.

Please keep an eye out for this mailing and take time to read it if you can.

And please remember that no matter how much you give to PVAS or how you give it, your contribution is greatly appreciated.

We couldn’t provide all the services we provide without the help we receive from members and friends like you!

Thanks in advance for whatever support you can provide to PVAS this year!

Sign Up Now for Local Christmas Bird Counts

PVAS has set December 18 and January 2 as the dates for this winter’s annual Eastern Panhandle Christmas Bird Counts.

The December 18 count, traditionally called the “Charles Town” count, will focus on Jefferson County. The January 2 count, called the “Inwood” count, will focus on Berkeley and Morgan counties.

These local-area counts are part of a Christmas Bird Count that has been conducted throughout the western hemisphere every year since 1900 under the auspices of the National Audubon Society.

The purpose is to monitor the status and distribution of early-winter bird populations.

See *Christmas Bird Count*, Page 3

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

President's Perch



Hello everyone:

Elsewhere in this issue of *Valley Views*, you'll note that PVAS has received a special \$25,384 grant to help the City of Ranson continue development of its new Flowing Springs Park.

Regular readers of this newsletter know that PVAS has been assisting this park project for about two years now, doing biological surveys and providing technical advice on protecting the park's wetland wildlife habitat.

The new grant will take our involvement in this project to a new level. Its funds will allow us to help finalize a long-term plan for the park, to foster public involvement, and to start habitat restoration work.

The grant is one of 43 awarded this year by the "TogetherGreen" conservation grant program, which is a joint venture of the National Audubon Society and the Toyota Corporation.

This grant program is unique because it's exclusively aimed at the grass roots level, and it only funds projects that involve partnerships between local Audubon chapters and their communities.

The great thing about this approach is that it encourages Audubon chapters to work closely with their communities (and vice versa) and allows Audubon chapters to help their communities secure funding that would not be available any other way.

We're grateful to National Audubon and Toyota for their willingness to provide such funding, and we're happy to have the opportunity to serve Ranson in this way.

—Peter Smith

TogetherGreen (continued from page 1)

such as the Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Field Sparrow.)

Finally, the grant will help PVAS offer programs that will help local schools to use the park as an outdoor classroom.

The Flowing Springs Park project combines two goals.

One goal is to preserve the headwaters of Flowing Springs and protect valuable habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife. The other is to create a park that attracts community members and, ultimately, inspires them to invest in the park's protection.

The new "TogetherGreen" Grant is aimed at fostering both these goals.

Also assisting with the park planning process are the Conservation Fund's Freshwater Institute, the WV Division of Forestry, and the WV Conservation Agency.

More details about the "TogetherGreen" grant program and a complete list of the 2010 "TogetherGreen" grant awards can be found at www.TogetherGreen.org/grants.

Green Home Tour & Wine Tasting Event

We can't thank Keith and Tari Janssen enough for opening their beautiful home for our Fall Wine Tasting and Green Home Tour. Guests enjoyed informative tours provided by the hosts. Those in attendance learned about the home's solar hot water system, solar electric, their reclaimed and recycled doors, tiles and other items, the masonry stove, passive solar design, and many other green features of the home.

In addition, guests enjoyed a gorgeous array of delicious foods, wine and cider provided by the event committee: Alice Barkus, Gretchen Meadows, Diana Mullis, Deb Pathhoff, and Jane Vanderhook. Grapes and Grains Gourmet contributed a variety of holiday wines for guests to try as well. In addition to the hard work of the event committee, many thanks also go to Joe Brookreson and Jeff Feldman for their volunteer assistance with the event. All in all, the event raised over \$3,000 for PVAS' educational programs, and we thank all for their contributions.



Tari Janssen leads a tour group

Reminder: Eidolon Hunting and Hiking Schedule for December

If you're planning to visit the Eidolon Nature Preserve in December, please remember that the main firearm season for deer continues through December 11 and there is a special, three-day season for antlerless deer December 29-31. Please keep the following rules in mind:

- In accordance with state law, no hunting is permitted on Sundays, and hikers can use Eidolon's trails freely on those days during hunting season.
- During the early December portion of the main firearm season for deer, the trails will be closed to hikers on Saturday, December 4, and Saturday, December 11.
- On all other weekdays between December 1 and December 11, the trails will be open to hikers from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. only.
- The preserve will be closed to hikers during the entire three-day antlerless deer season, which runs from Wednesday, December 29, through Friday, December 31.
- Hunters must be licensed by the state and follow all applicable state laws and regulations.
- For their part, hikers should exercise appropriate caution at all times during hunting season and wear at least one item of blaze orange clothing.

School Program Activity

Several schools have already called requesting spring programs either at Yankauer or for delivery at the schools themselves. We are

gearing up for spring watershed programs with four local schools signed up to date. Due to increasing scheduling challenges, we are now offering several versions of the fourth-grade Watershed Education Initiative program so teachers have more choices of time and financial commitments. This means that teachers may sign up for either the full program – a commitment of about 10 hours – or a shorter version of either three or five hours, depending on the time and financial resources available. As you may recall from earlier in the school year, some schools have chosen to go with the full year-long program as well.

All versions of the program still focus on teaching students about their watershed and the importance of water quality to people and wildlife as well as how our local actions impact the Chesapeake Bay.

Three high schools have signed up to help us formally pilot the more advanced version of Watershed Education Initiative. These classes will learn about the impacts water pollution has on fish health as well as how water travels underground.

As the fall semester comes to a close, we are wrapping up the second- and third-grade pilot programs that have been delivered at local schools. Transportation issues continue to be a challenge, so this year PVAS is testing second- and third-grade programs that are delivered at the schools, using the schoolyard for the program whenever possible. The program themes are the same, and they are still hands-on and meet state-mandated education requirements, but the programs remove the obstacle of bus transportation.

The last of the programs are being tested and evaluated as of the writing of this article, but the general (yet informal) feedback from teachers appears to be that they prefer the programs at Yankauer. However, the programs at the schools are a very acceptable option when transportation issues make visiting Yankauer impossible.

Summer Camp Planning Underway

As the weather gets cooler, planning for our 2011 Audubon Discovery Camp begins. The summer schedule and locations are already being set so families can begin registering for camp early in 2011.

We plan to continue offering at least two weeks of summer camp at CraftWorks at Cool Spring Farm in southern Jefferson County. PVAS has also begun talking to the Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission about the possibility of holding a week of camp at Peter Burr Farm in Bardane. There will be several weeks of camp at the Yankauer Nature Preserve and the ever-popular “Camp Survivor” theme will certainly be among the options.

Additional options being explored include another overnight trip to the Chesapeake Bay, an overnight at FLOC (For Love of Children Outdoor Education Center near Shannondale) for older youth, and perhaps an evening camp where campers can enjoy nighttime activities such as owl prowls, night hikes, moth attraction, storytelling and campfires.

Stay tuned as the camp plans get firmed up, and if you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Ellen Murphy at pvasprograms@comcast.net or 304-676-8739.

Reminder...No *Valley Views* in January

Please remember that there is no January issue of *Valley Views*. The next issue will be the February issue.

For late breaking announcements please check the PVAS website regularly, www.potomacaudubon.org, keep an eye on your email, and see your local paper for changes and new announcements.

If you haven't already signed up for the PVAS Heads Up email announcement list you can do so by sending a request with your name and email address to pvasmail@aol.com.

Christmas Bird Count (continued from page 1)

The data collected from this volunteer-based effort have been folded into what is now the longest-running database in ornithology, representing over 100 years of continuous information. This database is used to help spot trends in bird populations, which in turn can help identify shifts in environmental conditions.

Currently, over 50,000 volunteers across the Americas participate in each year's count.

Both experienced and novice birders are welcome to join in this season's Eastern Panhandle counts. Novice volunteers will be teamed with those who have more experience.

All those who participate must register beforehand with PVAS.

To register and/or to obtain more information, contact Bob Dean at bobdean52@gmail.com.

For more information about the Christmas Bird Count, go to <http://birds.audubon.org/Christmas-bird-count>.

Birdseed Sale Thank You

...for your order, and for your patience with our seed shortage on delivery day. The snow storms and tornados in the Midwest delayed shipments.

Thanks are in order for our Birdseed Team and helpers. Thank you John & Nancy Ostrowski for organizing and computerizing all the orders and payments. Thanks also to Marvin & Judy Gower, and to John Bir and all the staff at Gower's in Williamsport & Ranson ... it's a pleasure to work with all of you. Thanks also to Hunter Hardware in Berkeley Springs for letting us deliver seed from their warehouse.

Last but not least, many thanks to our delivery day helpers: Susan Jones (Berkeley Springs), Al Davis and Barbara Rice (Williamsport), Bruni Haydl, Kim Myles, Carl Thomas, Christian Thomas and Daniel Pike, and also to David Pennock who brought Boy Scout Troop 42: Matthew Pennock, Philip Pennock, Ricky Nathan, and Robert Puster (Ranson). We sold over 26,000 pounds of birdseed this year, and increase of 2,000 pounds.

Thanks to one and all!! If you run into any snags with your order, call me: **Diana Mullis at 304-267-3482 or email dianamullis@aol.com**

Stauffer's Marsh Will Be Topic at January PVAS Program at NCTC

PVAS's January program at NCTC will focus on a popular Berkeley County wetland birding site known as Stauffer's Marsh.



Photo credit: Wil Hershberger

The presenter will be Stauffer Miller, a Charlottesville, Virginia, veterinarian, birder, and author who owns the marsh. He will review the marsh's natural assets and talk about its future.

The program will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, January 12, in Room 151 of the Instructional West Building.

Admission is free and anyone is welcome to attend.

About 30 acres in size, the marsh is located on Back Creek Road (Route 7) near Shanghai, in Berkeley County.

Local birders regard it highly as a good site for viewing migrating shorebirds in spring and fall. Dragonflies, butterflies, and amphibians may also be seen.

The marsh contains several pools and islands, and there is a trail around part of it.

Some parts of the marsh can be viewed from the roadside and there is sufficient room for cars to pull over. There is also a parking area near the start of the trail.

Join Great Backyard Bird Count in February

The 14th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is coming up February 18-21, 2011.

The four-day event is free and is open to bird watchers of all ages and skill levels. Participants watch birds for any length of time on one or more days of the count and enter their tallies at www.birdcount.org. The results provide a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species.

The GBBC is a joint project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada.

Mid-February is chosen as the time for the Great Backyard Bird Count because it offers a good picture of the birds typically found throughout the winter months. It also coincides with migration for some species, such as the Sandhill Crane. That window of transition affords an opportunity to detect changes in timing for northward migration.



The GBBC is a great activity for families with children. On the www.birdcount.org website participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators.

Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website's photo gallery.

All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great birding products.

An estimated 63,000 people from across the United States and Canada participated in last February's GBBC, submitting more than 97,300 bird checklists.

More information is available on the www.birdcount.org website. Or contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473, gbbc@cornell.edu, or Audubon at (202) 861-2242 ext. 3050, citizen-science@audubon.org.

GBBC is a joint project of

The Cornell Lab
of Ornithology

Audubon

James Blackwell, "Blackie", Davis: An Appreciation

By Jean Neely

Years ago—say, 28, when we were starting this Audubon chapter, like all new organizations, we needed a treasurer. Someone said: "Ask Blackie Davis." I did.

I went over to his office in Charles Town to meet him—he was trust officer for Blakeley Bank (long ago swallowed up by a bigger fish) and we talked about it. Before I left the office, he had opened up a bank account for us, and said he'd serve as treasurer "until you can get someone permanent." He turned out to be that someone.

He served cheerfully, paying our meager bills with our equally meager funds, patiently explaining the more arcane banking stuff to us, and even extending overdraft protection. We were very broke, not having anything except a \$250 'loan' from the National Audubon Society until our dues split money starting coming in. It seemed that I was always trotting over to see him about some problem with finances.

Blackie, a proud native son of Jefferson County, had a great life with his beloved Eileen and two special children, Mary and Tom. Nevertheless, he always had time for those who asked it of him. PVAS was indebted to him for his gracious service when we needed it most, and although we know he would be the first to protest that, I'll say it again now:

Thanks, Blackie!

Remember United Way/CFC Fund Drives

Here's a final reminder that the annual fundraising campaigns of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) will continue through December 15.

PVAS encourages its members to support these organizations.

Because PVAS is an IRS-qualified non-profit agency, individuals who contribute to either United Way or CFC can designate all or part of those contributions to PVAS, if they wish.

To designate United Way contributions to PVAS, look for the section of the United Way contribution form that says "Tell us how you would like United Way to invest your donation," enter the dollar amount you wish to designate to PVAS in the space next to the phrase "Restricted contribution," and write *Potomac Valley Audubon Society* in the line below that.

To designate CFC contributions to PVAS, enter PVAS's CFC number (29061) on the CFC form that you file with your employing agency.

United Way and CFC deduct a percentage from all designated contributions to cover their own administrative costs.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Alexander at pvasmail@aol.com or 304-676-3397.

Join Potomac Valley Nature Writers' Group

Do you enjoy reading and/or writing about nature? Then you are invited to join the Potomac Valley Nature Writers' Group (PVNWG). The Group meets each month from September through May to discuss a particular nature writer and his or her work. Selections vary to include male and female writers, classic and contemporary works, fiction and nonfiction, prose and poetry. PVNWG also supports members' own writing efforts such as nature blogging and nature journaling. Meeting dates and locations vary. For more information, visit <http://potomacvalleynaturewritinggroup.blogspot.com/> or contact pvnaturewriters@gmail.com

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- December 3: Potomac Valley Nature Photographers Mtg.
- December 5: Potomac Valley Nature Writers Mtg.
- December 18: Charles Town, Jefferson County Christmas Bird Count
- January 2: Inwood, Berkeley/Morgan County Christmas Bird Count
- January 12: PVAS Program, NCTC
- January 14: Master Naturalist Applications Due
- February 1: Master Naturalist Candidates Announced
- February 9: PVAS Program, NCTC
- March 9: PVAS Program, NCTC
- March 25-26: WV Environmental Education Assn. Conference

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!



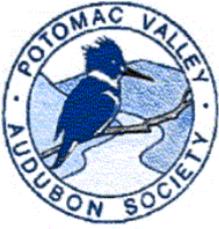
If you'd rather join the National Audubon Society:

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

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 Com-
 bined Federal Campaign.

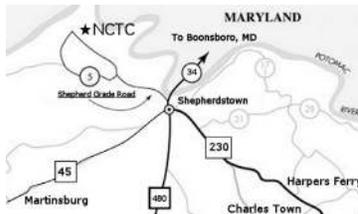


MAIL TO:

December 2010

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper

Volume 29, Issue 4



The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, at the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV, in the Instructional West Building. 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 Thursday 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 304 876-1139pvsmith@frontiernet.net
- Vice President: Georgia Jeppesen georgia_jeppesen@comcast.net
- Secretary: Mina Goodrich larrymina@peoplepc.com
- Treasurer: Lex Miller pamandlex@frontiernet.net
- Board Development: Wayne Braunstein 304 728-7181 wbraun@frontiernet.net
- Board Members-at-Large: Don Briggs ldonaldbriggs@gmail.com
- Clark Dixon dixonconsultants@aol.com
- Rob Hoxton rhoxton@hoxtonfinancial.com
- Leigh Jenkins jenkinsleigh@hotmail.com
- Jesse Morgan jmorgan@a-zoneenvironmental.com
- Kathy Stolzenburg kstolzenburg@gmail.com
- Carolyn Thomas webethomas@aol.com
- Jane Vanderhook janehook@frontiernet.net

Ex Officio Board Members

- Diana Mullis 304 267-3482 dianamullis@aol.com

Emeritus Board Members

- Jean Neely jeaneely@comcast.net

Special Contacts

- Executive Director: Kristin Alexander 304 676-3397 kaemail730@aol.com
- Web Master: Kathy Bilton kathy@fred.net
- PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis 304-267-3482