

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society

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President's Perch

by Jane Vanderhook, PVAS President

Well, it's that time of year again: *time for the Annual Appeal*.

Once a year we ask for your help to cover all those expenses that grants, fees and other sources do not. While we are very diligent about keeping our costs low, we cannot continue our mission without the financial support of our friends. (As an example, you will notice this year's Annual Report has gotten leaner in order to lower printing and postage costs, and to save paper.) Nevertheless, if we wish to retain or add key staff members in order to reach a wider audience, your support is essential.

This is who we are: "PVAS is people dedicated to preserving, restoring and enjoying the natural world through education and action." And we remain strongly committed to our mission.

Last year, despite a record-breaking Annual Appeal of \$41,465, we had a small budgetary shortfall (2.8%). We had anticipated and were prepared for this. Knowing we had healthy reserves, we made the decision to expand our reach and invest in growth; but we don't like deficits. So we are asking you to help us.

Let's set a new record with this year's Annual Appeal. Every contribution moves us closer to our goal and is **100% tax deductible**. We are grateful for all gifts, no matter how great or how small; and we thank you for your support.

March with PVAS in the Annual Shepherdstown Christmas Parade!

Join us and show your PVAS pride as we march down German Street on Saturday, December 5th at 11am.
ALL AGES WELCOME!

We will have signs and some stuffed animals for the kids to carry. We will begin gathering on Church Street at about 10:30am.

For more information or to sign up, please email Melanie at admin@potomacaudubon.org.

Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

I just dropped the Annual Report off to the printer. Every year I'm amazed at what we've been able to accomplish in 12 months!

Thanks to the support of our members and friends, by the end of 2015, we will have:

- reached over 7,000 people (!) – an increase of more than 27% over 2014. 5,500 of those are kids and their families and 1,500 of those are adults. That's remarkable for an organization our size.
- installed a composting toilet facility and a well at the Yankauer Preserve! At the writing of this article, there is still some fine-tuning to be done, but once the grading around the building is complete, the building will feature two ADA compliant restrooms to complement the ADA trail at the Preserve. Drinkable water will be a huge improvement at the preserve – especially for Audubon Discovery Camp, school programs, and special events.
- placed trail signage and installed a gravel parking lot at Stauffer's Marsh. The parking lot is big enough for buses, allowing school groups to visit the preserve. Signs will help visitors orient themselves when they arrive, and better enjoy the preserve trail system.
- piloted school curricula for grades K-5 at Stauffer's Marsh, realizing the educational potential of the preserve for wetland education.

That's not a bad list! And there are many other accomplishments that will be highlighted in the PVAS Annual Report that will be hitting your mailbox soon! I hope you will take the time to read it. It provides a great summary of what PVAS has accomplished this year thanks to the support of members, volunteers, and donors. We could never accomplish this much without you!

With that annual report will be our annual appeal letter, asking you to support PVAS. 2016 is shaping up to be at least as busy. Donations from members and friends like you help us match grants, support program staff, and cover everyday expenses like insurance and supplies that grants rarely cover. Your support provides the financial foundation that every non-profit needs to survive and thrive.

Thank you in advance for your support in 2016! We look forward to another great year.

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

Wild Goose Farm to Host 2016 Race

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society is excited to announce the race venue for Race for the Birds 2016!

Michelle and Cricky Shultz, of Wild Goose Farm, have generously offered to host the race free of charge. Their beautiful property offers a fantastic fit for our community of runners. With a 10K, a 5K, and a one-mile kids fun run in the works, the course will follow the Farms bridle and fox hunting trails. Our runners will experience rolling hills and grassy, non-technical cross-country trails.

The race will take place on Saturday, April 9, 2016 with a fun after race celebration in the renovated historic barn. Registration will be open on runsignup.com as soon as possible. Look for more details in the February Valley Views or on our race website, www.raceforthebirds.org!



PVAS Sponsoring December 3 Tour of USDA Research Facility

PVAS is sponsoring a special tour of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Kearneysville on Thursday, December 3. The tour will begin at 9:15 a.m. and last about an hour and 45 minutes. Anyone with an interest is welcome to participate, and there will be no charge, but participation is limited and pre-registration is essential. Register on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

The research station conducts a wide variety of basic, applied, and developmental research on critical issues affecting major fruit crops grown in temperate climates (apples, peaches, pears, plums, and various berries). Its work is aimed at maximizing productivity and quality of those crops and minimizing the adverse effects of pests, diseases, and environmental factors.

The tour will begin with a welcome address by the station director, Dr. Michael Glenn. Then the tour group will visit various labs and hear presentations from six scientists regarding their research.

For additional information on the Research Station and directions, visit the facility's website at www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm?docid=3470. For more information about the tour, contact Debbie Maiorano at 540-535-5145 or debbiem58@aol.com.

January 13 Program on International Wildlife Trafficking

Our monthly program for January will feature a presentation about international wildlife trafficking. The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 13 at the Hospice of the Panhandle facility in Kearneysville. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome to attend.

The speaker will be U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Historian Mark Madison, who is based at the Service's National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown.

Mark will discuss the current extent of international wildlife trafficking and approaches to curbing it. He will bring with him some confiscated wildlife items from NCTC's archives. He will also explain the "Suitcase for Survival" program, a joint government-private sector project that provides schools and zoos with information kits that be used to help educate children about the problems associated with wildlife trafficking.

The Hospice facility's address is 330 Hospice Lane, Kearneysville. The Audubon events will be held in the main meeting room of the facility's Main Office building. There is ample parking at the facility.

For more information go to the PVAS website or contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 703-303-1026.

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 5 and there are brief special seasons for antlerless deer December 17-19 and 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 5.
- On all other days between November 30 and December 4, 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 two special antlerless deer seasons.
- 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.

Full details can be found on the PVAS website.

Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*)

The Tufted Titmouse is a common year-round resident in our area. They are easily attracted to feeders and will use bird boxes and abandoned woodpecker holes for nesting. Their pale-gray plumage, large eyes, stocky build, long tail, and crest make them easy to identify. Tufted Titmice are considered a “nuclear species” — they, along with chickadees, lead winter flocks that are joined by many other species wintering in the same area. Any sign of trouble, such as a predator, and the titmice and chickadees will start to raise a fuss with calls and chatter. The commotion soon brings in the other birds of these winter flocks such as; White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, kinglets, Downy Woodpecker, and others. The titmouse composition of these winter flocks is usually adult birds and their young; non-kin young were actively chased away from winter flocks that were carefully observed. During interactions, easily seen at feeders, titmice use their crests as a sign of dominance or submission. A raised crest is aggressive and shows dominance. Subordinate members of the flock will lower their crests when dominant flock mates approach.



Photo © Wil Hershberger

Interestingly, Tufted Titmice will start to sing in earnest in late December on or near the winter solstice – apparently their first day of spring. Each male may have 12 or so different songs that are, for the most part, shared with immediate neighbors. These different song types seem to have different meanings within the community of neighboring titmice. In playback studies, songs from as little as 3 km away did not evoke the same response as songs from immediate neighbors. This seems to indicate that titmice have local dialects, with song sharing among neighbors, but not among more distant communities.

Song: <http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/100712>

Tufted Titmice have a complex vocabulary of calls. Anyone that has been around a bird banding demonstration knows the shrill “distress call” of this species when the bander handles the bird. Titmice also use “*chick-a-dee*” calls. The number of “*dees*” and the rate that they are sung signifies a higher threat risk when predators are around. So an Eastern Screech-Owl, which will prey on small birds, will elicit a call with many, rapidly sung “*dee*” notes, while a large hawk or eagle elicits only a few of these “*dee*” notes.

Calls: <http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/110375>

Scolding with other flock mates: <http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/84704>

Once a nest site is selected, the female alone will build the nest in about a week. She uses damp leaves and green moss for the outer structure and then lines the nest with fibers, cotton, and mammal hair. These hairs may be plucked from live animals! She may also use shed snakeskins in the nest construction. When she is satisfied with the nest she will lay eggs, once a day, until a clutch of 5-6 eggs rest in the nest. She will then start to incubate continuously for about 2 weeks. During this period, the attending male will feed his mate either on or off of the nest. Both parents feed the nestlings, which leave the nest at about 14-16 days after hatching. Young from the previous summer may help the parents feed the current year’s young.

The oldest known Tufted Titmouse was 13 years 3 months old (a banded bird). The typical lifespan is more on the order of 2-3 years. Titmice require woodlands with nesting cavities for their survival. Clearing forests and removing old, dead trees will severely limit the survival of this species. As the climate has warmed over the last decade, titmice have moved into the Northeast. Breeding populations have significantly increased from northern Pennsylvania all the way to Northeastern Maine. Winter bird feeding is also allowing this species to survive harsher winter weather than they could with out this supplemental food.

The Tufted Titmouse was almost the WV state bird. The WV Federated Women’s Clubs had adopted this species as the state bird. However, the WV State legislature adopted the Northern Cardinal as the state bird with House Concurrent Resolution No. 12, on March 7, 1949.

If you live in the woods, listen for Tufted Titmice to start singing in late December, watch for dominance and submissiveness by watching their crests as birds interact, and above all, enjoy these wonderful, feisty, bundles of energy.

Birding News and Events

Christmas Bird Counts Set for December 19 and January 2

PVAS has set Saturday, December 19 and Saturday, January 2 as the dates for this winter's annual Christmas Bird Counts in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. These local-area counts are part of a massive, historic 116-year-old citizen science project: a volunteer-based 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.

Count volunteers join teams that go out in the field and follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. Experienced and novice birders are always welcome to join these teams. Novice volunteers will be teamed with those who have more experience.

Conversely, people who live within the circle areas can simply count the birds they see at their feeders during the day, and submit a record of their sightings to PVAS.

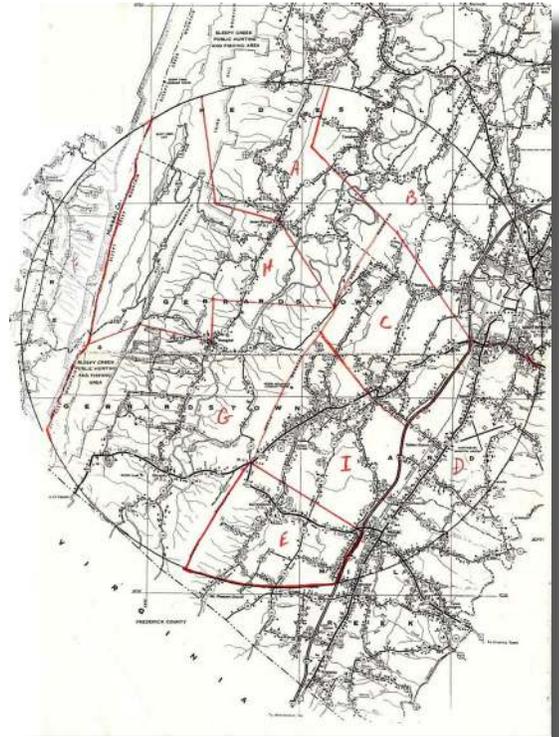
The December 19 Charles Town count encompasses a circle that is centered near Charles Town, and stretches from the Shannondale area to the east, to near Middleway to the west. The circle for the January 2 Inwood count, is centered near Shanghai in Berkeley County, and includes the west side of Martinsburg and Inwood to the east, and the Stotler's Crossroads/Greenwood section of Morgan County to the west.

To get more information about participating, either as a field team member or by recording birds at home feeders, go to the PVAS website. All those who participate as a field team member must register beforehand with PVAS. To register, or to get additional information, contact Bob Dean at bobdean52@gmail.com or 304-671-4995.

The data collected from each year's Christmas Bird Count are 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.

In the Eastern Panhandle, the Charles Town count has been held every year since 1952, and the Inwood count has been held every year since 1953.

The data from previous year's counts are available online through the National Audubon Society website at <http://netapp.audubon.org>. Once there, click on "Historical" and "Results by Count". To view data from the Eastern Panhandle counts enter their official 4-letter Count Codes, WVCT and WVIN, in the appropriate field.



Join December 12 Altona Marsh Birding Trip

PVAS is sponsoring a birding trip to the Altona Marsh in Jefferson County on Saturday, December 12. The trip will begin at 8:30 a.m. and last a couple of hours.

The Marsh is a rare, 70-acre marl wetland protected by a Nature Conservancy easement. It is a good site for birding, not only because it harbors a rich variety of species but also because the terrain offers easy viewing. Species likely to be seen at this time will include waterfowl, winter visitors, and year-round birds.

The trip is free and anyone with an interest is welcome, regardless of birding skills. Children, ages 12 and up, are also welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. Please note: participants must pre-register. To pre-register, and to get more information, go to the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org. In addition, at the beginning of the trip, participants will need to sign a waiver and release, as the walk is through a protected site with access issues.

Those with mobility issues may find this walk to be very difficult, and should call the trip leader, Joette Borzik, at (240) 440-4221 to find out more details.

Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them. The trip may be cancelled in the event of bad weather.

Birding News and Events**Harpers Ferry Bird Walk Set for December 21**

PVAS will sponsor an early winter bird walk in Harpers Ferry on Monday, December 21. There is no fee, and anyone with an interest is encouraged to come along, regardless of birding skills; children are also welcome. The walk will involve 3 miles of walking along level, but somewhat rough, ground.

Participants should plan to meet trip leader Deb Hale at 9:00 a.m. at the train station in Harpers Ferry National Park. Parking may be available along Potomac Street near the train station. From there, participants will walk west along the Potomac Street extension to the old dam at the far end of the street (approximately 1.5 miles), and back. Species likely to be sighted include raptors, waterfowl, and other winter birds.

After the walk, everyone is invited back to Deb's house for a light lunch of warm soup to celebrate the Winter Solstice!

Participants should bring water and dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions. The Society will provide binoculars for those who do not have their own.

Pre-registration is recommended but not required; to register, go to the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org. The walk may be cancelled in the event of heavy weather. For more information, or to check on possible weather cancellation, contact trip leader Deb Hale at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-2346.

**Antietam Bird Walk Set for December 19**

PVAS will sponsor a bird walk along the Final Attack Trail on the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, MD on Saturday, December 19. The event is free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of their birding skills. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. The walk will last about 2 1/2 to 3 hours, and cover mostly level terrain.

The walk will take place the same day as the Christmas Bird Count for Washington County, MD. While this portion of the battlefield is not included in that count, birds sighted on the walk will go into the battlefield's records.

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

Participants should plan to meet walk leader Sandy Sagalkin at the Burnside Bridge parking area at 8:00 a.m. To get there from Sharpsburg, head northeast towards Boonsboro. Take the first right turn after leaving Sharpsburg onto Rodman Avenue, which takes you into the battlefield. Turn left at the "T" and follow the road up the hill to the parking area.

Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water and insect repellent. 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 monsansagalkin@myactv.net or 240-291-6465.

Notes from the Preserves

Toilets at Yankauer!

The toilets and modular structure were delivered October 27th and construction began! The talented volunteer team who put it all together included Lou Scavnicky, Tony Erwin, Bob Dean, Jeff Feldman, and Mike Sullivan. As with many construction projects some creative problem solving involved, so we were very fortunate to have such an experienced crew on hand for two whole days to make it all work.

There is still some fine-tuning and finish work to be done.



(The toilet paper holders have not been installed, for example.) But the fans are operational and the toilets are installed. (They work if you can forgive some of the parts and pieces still lying about and bring your own TP.) There is even a toddler toilet seat on one of the toilets to serve our preschool program participants! The portajohn will still be in place until the grading and other construction details are complete.

We can't thank the volunteer crew enough for all they did to help with this project! As always, volunteers proved to be our most valuable resource.



Youth Programs

Fall Youth Programs Are Finished!

When we talk about our youth programs, some folks want to know how many children we have reached, while others want to know what activities we have provided for classes.

Many of our youth programs this fall have focused on wetlands because of a grant from WV DNR, but we've also conducted field trips at Yankauer Preserve (Sensational Senses), provided the watershed program to several classes, and introduced a new program on Bats. Our Lifebridge AmeriCorps volunteer, Rick Allison, introduced a new story program for elementary children at the Shepherdstown Library in November.

As far as numbers go, since school began, we have already served 277 children in kindergarten, first, and second grade classes. Approximately 150 more will be added to that total by the end of November. In addition, 715 fourth graders were enrolled in either the fall or the year-long watershed program, and more will be served in the spring of 2016. Over 350 students in Washington County, MD have also participated in a watershed-focused program this fall. It's been a busy few months, but now there is a short break until after the New Year.



Captain Lou and friends study watersheds



Youth Programs

Gracias! Merci! Danke! Arigato!

However you say it, PVAS can't say it enough to our volunteers: thank you, thank you, thank you! Whether it is helping at camp, leading a birding field trip, or coordinating a family program, we depend on the generosity of others' time and talents to make them all happen. This fall, PVAS volunteers have gone above and beyond!

Because of two grants that were nearing completion, we had an unbelievably busy fall season of field trips as well as other school programs. Several folks gave repeatedly of their time to help us make all the activities happen. Lou Scavnick, Nancy Kirschbaum, Mary Duke, Elizabeth Morningstar, Marybeth Grove, Sandy Brown, Melanie Snyder, Carol Del-Colle, and Chrissy Lewin all helped with one or more field trips or classroom programs.

It seemed, however, like three of our volunteers spent the entire month of October with Ellen Murphy at Stauffer's Marsh! Mary Lynn Robinson, Mary Etta Boesl, Mary Beth Ross donated 130 hours of their time in support of youth programs in just one month. They would all three win the "trip to Tahiti," if we could afford to do it for them! Without their help, the field trips at Stauffer's Marsh could never have happened. When you next see any of these people, please take a moment to thank them for their dedication to PVAS Youth Programs.



Camp Plans Are In The Works!

How can it be possible that we will begin our 14th year of Audubon Discovery Camp in 2016??

We're working on some new programs for campers ("Nature's Architects") and polishing up the favorites ("Camp Survivor"). Plans are underway for programs at Yankauer Nature Preserve, the Peter Burr Farm, and something special for our older campers (ages 11-13). Registration for camp begins on February 1st. The camp brochure with full information about sessions and dates will be posted on the PVAS website in late January. Most sessions will remain \$150 per camper, per week, although fees are higher for those who are not current PVAS members. You can avoid those fees by renewing your membership now (www.PotomacAudubon.org/member).

Scholarships are provided for our own day camp and for several overnight nature camps like Junior Nature Camp in Wheeling, Burgundy Wildlife Center in Hampshire County, and the WV Junior Conservation Camp at Cedar Lakes in WV, as well as the National Audubon Society's Family Camp at Hog Island, Maine. In addition, teens can apply for scholarships to the Student Climate and Conservation Congress (SC3) at NCTC, and to our Teen Photo Camp at Shepherd University. Scholarship forms will be available soon after the first of the new year.

Spring Programs Preview

Even though winter is here, we know that the weather will warm up in a few months. PVAS will begin our spring watershed program immediately after school begins in January. Several schools in Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan Counties plan to participate.

The Great Backyard Bird Count will be in February and we hope that several schools will encourage their students to be involved with that citizen-science project. (You can too!) On March 20th, it will be time for our ninth annual Spring Egg Hunt, which features eggs painted like wild bird eggs rather than in the usual spring colors. On April 16, everyone is invited to celebrate wildflowers at Yankauer Preserve during our annual Wildflower Festival. This family-friendly event is a great time to explore the trails with a knowledgeable guide.

A new and exciting program we are planning for 2016 is "Spring Break Camp." This program, similar to summer camp, will be held the week of March 28 through April 1. Interested families will be able to sign up for each day separately or for the whole week. More information and online registration will be available in early January on the PVAS website.



Schools have already been contacting us to schedule field trips to Yankauer Preserve in the spring. Then before you know it, summer will be here, and with it, summer camp! As in years past, we are able to provide scholarships to both our Audubon Discovery Camp and several quality, overnight, nature-focused camps, thanks to the just-complete birdseed sale.

Although it seems far off, the spring will be here before it seems possible. Our advice for now: enjoy the cold temperatures and snow, be nice to the birds, and take a walk in the winter woods.

Family Programs

Family Events for 2016 begin with an Animal Discovery Hike February 13 at Stauffer's Marsh

This winter and spring are chock-a-block with fun activities for families and children of all ages. We have Animal Discovery Adventures, Nature Hikes, and Bugs-n-Frogs Hunting on the agenda.

The first event, "Who Lives Here?" will be held February 13th at Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve, located on Back Creek Valley Road, near Shanghai, WV. Other upcoming events will include a nature hike at Yankaur Preserve, and bug and frog hunting at Stauffer's Marsh. More details will be available for the hike and hunt in the February issue of *Valley Views*.

On February 13, participants, led by Rick Allison and the PVAS team of volunteers, will walk around the marsh area on established pathways to discover, identify and maybe get a picture or two of animal tracks, homes, scat, and maybe even the animals themselves. It is recommended that you dress in layers, wear waterproof hiking shoes or boots, and a warm hat. Dress for the weather: it will likely be cold!

The adventure will begin at 1:00 pm, with a story-time reading about who could live there, and about animals of the marsh. Then we will "Ruck Up" with our day packs, snacks and water bottles and walk one of the three paths at the marsh. For the more adventurous, we have an approximately one-mile hike along the shore and roadway to the mudflats and wading areas for birds, raccoons, fox and other wetlands wildlife. For those with a bit less leg length and energy, or the very young, we have a less-than-three-quarters-mile hike directly to the marsh shoreline. There, we can look for birds, raccoons, and nests or dens. The third path leads to Back Creek, where we could see signs of wild turkeys, raccoons, birds, fox, and maybe muskrats. We will return to the parking lot and finish at 3:00 pm.

There is a small charge of \$5.00 per family, and a limit of 25 people per hiking guide. To register go to the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org. You may contact Rick at Rick@PotomacAudubon.org or 240-463-3956 for more information.

Great Family Camp Opportunity at Hog Island, ME

The PVAS Camp Committee has reserved spaces for a great family adventure at the Hog Island Family Camp on the coast of Maine, August 7 – 12, 2016. We have camp scholarship funds available too!

The two families that we sent in the past returned with truly glowing reports. Grandparent-grandchild groups are encouraged to apply also. Children should be ages 8 – 12 years.

To learn about the camp go to <http://hogisland.audubon.org/family-camp-name-change>. To obtain scholarship information, please contact Kathryn Henry, at 304-876-6681, or dhenry@myexcel.com.



Photo of the Hog Island facility by Don Henry

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

Sign Up Now for 2016 Master Naturalist Program

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program is now accepting applications for its 2016 classes. Instruction will begin in April, 2016 and continue monthly through October. Applications must be postmarked by January 31. Enrollment is strictly limited to 20 persons each year.

Established in 2006, the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program is sponsored by the Potomac Valley Audubon Society and is a chapter of the State of West Virginia Master Naturalist Program. Its classes are open to anyone who wants to be certified as a Master Naturalist by the state of West Virginia. Most who enroll come from Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan Counties. Interested persons who live outside this area are welcome to apply, but they must commit to completing all their volunteer work in West Virginia.

In all, 64 hours of classroom time and 30 hours of volunteer work are required to complete the certification cycle. Classes are held at several locations in Jefferson and Berkeley Counties and at Cacapon State Park in Berkeley Springs.

Tuition is \$300 per person for the full course of instruction. A limited number of scholarships will be available. Application forms and more details are available on the Potomac Valley Audubon Society website. Scholarship applications are also available on the website. You may also contact Melanie Snyder at 703-973-5419, or littleowl48@hotmail.com.

The Master Naturalist program is patterned after the long-established Master Gardener program. It trains individuals in the fundamentals of natural history and nature interpretation as a way of promoting responsible stewardship of natural resources.

Graduates of the program become part of a corps of highly qualified volunteers who assist government agencies, schools, and non-government organizations with research, outdoor recreation development, and environmental education and protection.

To remain certified they must take 8 hours of training and participate in 16 hours of volunteer activity annually.

Potomac Valley Master Naturalist 10th Anniversary Pin

Start the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist 10th anniversary year in style! The PVMN coordinating committee has commissioned a 10th anniversary pin designed for hats, vests and lapels. The enameled pin features the new PVMN logo and will add a nice accent to summer hiking gear. Pricing for pins will range from \$5.00 - \$7.00 depending on the number of orders received. Celebrate the PVMN 10th anniversary, and order now! Orders should be sent to Diana Pavlik at pavlikdm@gmail.com.

Did You Know...

When Master Naturalist Chapters Began in West Virginia?

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Chapter is proud to be celebrating its 10th year in 2016. Over the years, PVMN has gathered many amazing and dedicated folks who have given of their time and knowledge to environmental stewardship and education.

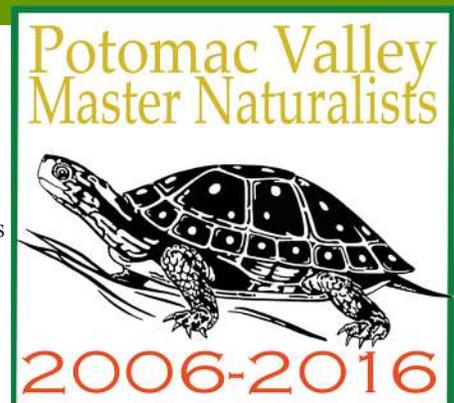
Many states have Master Naturalist chapters. However, have you ever wondered when and where the Master Naturalist Chapters began in the great state of West Virginia?

According to www.mnofwv.org, the Master Naturalist Program originally developed through the partnership of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, the West Virginia University Cooperative Extension Service, the Canaan Valley Institute, and Davis and Elkins College in 2003. The program was loosely based on the popular Master Gardeners Program. The very first sessions were held for the state on April 30 – May 2, 2004 at Hawks Nest State Park with 20 students. Sessions were held quarterly at different state parks throughout WV. Unfortunately, in 2006, due to expense and other issues, it was decided that the quarterly sessions would be discontinued.

The discontinuation of the quarterly state sessions made way for local chapters to present the program, thus serving more students statewide, and providing more volunteers for regional community projects. Chapters in the state are overseen by the WV DNR as well as the Master Naturalist State Advisory Committee. Each year, there is a State Annual Conference in June, for all Master Naturalists to gather and attend programs together, as well as to conduct official business.

From such beginnings the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Chapter was born, and is still going strong in our community 10 years later.

For any questions regarding the PVMN program, please visit www.potomacaudubon.org/masternat or contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org. We are currently accepting applications for the 2016 course.



Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists Honor Graduates and Members on October 31

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalists gathered on Halloween to share good spirits, honor their fellow naturalists, and help raise funds for future scholarships. Fifty Master Naturalists enjoyed an afternoon that included a potluck lunch, a silent auction, a short business meeting, and a certification ceremony.

Students from the 2014 and 2015 classes, who completed all 64 hours of coursework and 30 hours of volunteer service, were recognized as Certified West Virginia Master Naturalists. Those members are: Aileen Curfman, Amy Evard, Becki Jones, Cathy Purchis, Christine Marshall, Gail Berrigan, George “Steve” Hoover, John Hilleary, Karlin Sink, Kathy Clower, Larry Smith, Sandi Brown, and Katherine “Kat” Cooper. Each received a certification of completion, a West Virginia Master Naturalist patch, and a Potomac Valley Master Naturalist name badge.



Newly minted MNs pictured above are: (top row) John Hilleary, Steve Hoover, Karlin Sink, Aileen Curfman, and (bottom row) Amy Evard, Gail Berrigan, Cathy Purchis, and Christine Marshall

Thirty Master Naturalists who completed their annual eight hours of training and sixteen hours of volunteer service were acknowledged with recertification cards for 2015. Those Master Naturalists are Charlotte Fremaux, Cheryl Jennings, Darlene Kestler, Dave Pennock, Diana Pavlik, Ellen Murphy, Emily Gross, Flo Wilbik, Jennifer Jones, Kathryn Henry, Keith Jones, Kelly Wolf, Laura Clark, Lynn Wiseman, Marcyanna Millet, Marie Van Valkenburgh, Mary Etta Boesl, Mary Lynn Robinson, Mary Beth Ross, Melanie Snyder, Nan Johnson, Ora Dixon, Stan Oaks, Susan Fluharty, Susan Jones, Vicki Blazer, Virginia Winston, Wanda Miller, David Miller, Marilee Cunningham, and Tom Tskeris.

Master Naturalists have until the end of the year to complete and turn in their training and volunteer hours, so more recertifications are expected.

Susan Jones and Marilee Cunningham, who have been active Master Naturalists for five years, were honored as well, receiving a certificate and field bag. Three Master Naturalists who have gone above and beyond with the volunteer service hours to the Potomac Valley Audubon Society were honored with the Chairman’s Century Club award for their 100+ volunteer hours in 2015.



Susan Jones received her 5-year honors

Congratulations to all graduates and honorees this year!

The silent auction and book sale was once again a highlight of the day. \$720.00 was raised in just under two hours. The money collected from this event goes towards scholarships for the Master Naturalist Program. More information about the PVAS Master Naturalist Program can be found at www.PotomacAudubon.org/masternat.

Master Naturalist Open House

Are you interested in learning more about our very popular Master Naturalist Program? Do you love nature and environmental sciences? Are you interested in continuing your education or exploring a new one?

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Committee invites you to an OPEN HOUSE!

Certified Master Naturalists will be on hand to welcome interested participants, talk about their experience and share information about our exciting Master Naturalist Program.

When: Wednesday, January 14, 2016

Time: 6:00 – 7:00 PM (just prior to our Monthly Program)

Where: Hospice of the Panhandle, Education Center

Information on our PVMN Program:

potomacaudubon.org/masternat,
or email Krista Hawley at
adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org



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:

- Member discount to many PVAS programs and events.
- A subscription to *Valley Views*, the PVAS newsletter.
- Free or reduced admission to participating nature centers and/or their programs across the country.
- E-mail alerts about events and programs (upon request).
- An invitation to a PVAS Members annual gathering.
- Discounts to participating **local businesses**.

Details available at potomacaudubon.org/member

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. For details, go to: <http://potomacaudubon.org/member>.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____

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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: ____

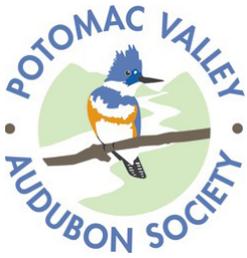
Clip and mail this form to:

Membership Chair, PVAS
PO Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443



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.



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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.

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