

VALLEY VIEWS

**Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society**

Volume 25, Issue 6

March 2007

Annual Appeal Deadline Nears!

As this is being written, PVAS's annual fundraising appeal, which was launched December 15, has raised over \$21,600.

That's a great result, and we appreciate all the support received so far.

But we've still got to raise another \$3,400 to make our \$25,000 fundraising goal.

And we've only got a month to do that—the annual appeal giving period will draw to a close on March 31.

So if you haven't contributed yet, please consider doing so now.

Contributions should be made out to "PVAS" and sent to PVAS, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

Annual Appeal Progress



PVAS Adds Bookkeeper

Elizabeth Lowe, of Martinsburg, joined PVAS's staff in February as a part-time bookkeeper. Her duties will include disbursements, payroll, tax reports, and monthly financial statements.

Elizabeth has long experience with such matters, having served for many years as office manager for Martinsburg architect Robert Eckels. Now retired from full-time work, she also is currently treasurer of the New Street United Methodist Church in Shepherdstown.

PVAS has never had a professional bookkeeper before; until now all of the organization's bookkeeping chores have been handled by the Treasurer. That arrangement was satisfactory when PVAS's annual budget was only a few thousand dollars, but those days are long gone. This year, the organization's budget is over \$125,000, and it continues to grow in size and complexity annually.

Elizabeth will provide PVAS with a new level of expertise and free up the Treasurer to concentrate on oversight, planning, and policy issues.

Master Naturalist Classes Full

Applications for enrollment in this year's Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program (PVMNP) classes have significantly exceeded the number of available slots, so unless there are drop-outs at the last minute the classes will be full for this year.

Applications are being considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Those who have applied this year but have not been admitted will automatically be at the top of the waiting list for admission to next year's classes. This year's PVMNP classes will begin the weekend of April 14-15 and run through October.

PVMNP participants normally pay a fee of \$300 to cover the costs of instruction and certification. However, Tom and Sandra D'Onofrio, very generous PVAS members and supporters, have donated a full scholarship for this year. It is their wish that this scholarship be awarded to a young person who will be able to give back to the community for many years to come, and for whom the normal \$300 fee would be an obstacle.

For further information about this scholarship contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or pvasmail@aol.com.

The PVMNP is a local chapter of the State of West Virginia's Master Naturalist Program, which is one of the first in the nation. The program is aimed at allowing individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of the natural world while helping their communities and the environment.

More information is available at www.potomacaudubon.org.

Correction on Upcoming Programs

A few things have changed since the last newsletter. Please note the new, corrected schedule:

- March 14: PVAS program: Morel Mushrooms (Leetown)
- March 31-April 8: Watershed Cleanups (Varied Sites)
- April 11: PVAS Program: Bird Songs of the Season (Leetown)
- April 21: Wildflower Festival (Yankauer)
- April 22: Earth Day! (Martinsburg Library)
- April 28: This Race is for the Birds! (NCTC)
- May 9: PVAS Program: "Wings and Things" (Yankauer)
- June 2: PVAS Potluck (Yankauer)

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

Morel Mushroom Study Will Be Topic of March Meeting

Our March meeting will feature a presentation about a federal study that is examining reported declines in morel mushroom populations along the C&O Canal and possible responses to the problem.

The speaker will be Elizabeth Barron, a Rutgers University graduate student who is one of the study's lead investigators.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 14, at the U.S. Geological Survey Leetown Science Center, 11649 Leetown Road (County Route 1), Kearneysville.

The federal study, which is a four-year project scheduled to conclude in 2008, is a collaborative project between the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and Rutgers.

It is assessing the status of morel populations at both the C&O Canal National Historical Park and the Catoctin Mountain National Park, two area parks that have long allowed the public to harvest mushrooms for personal consumption.

In recent years, harvesters have been reporting declines in morels. It has been speculated that these declines are due to overharvesting, high deer populations, environmental change, or some combination of those factors.

The study is aimed at determining the extent of the problem, the degree to which human harvesting practices may be contributing to it, and the feasibility of developing a sustainable management plan that might better protect morels.

Signs at Yankauer in Place

The signs at Yankauer are all in place and have been inspected (and admired!) by the Division of Highways who funded the project. Please come and check them out! This grant allowed us to afford several physical improvements at the preserve but none of it could have been done without countless hours of volunteer help. A special thanks goes to Chris Robinson who applied for the grant and whose expertise, guidance and commitment was critical to the success of the project. Special recognition also goes to Jeff Feldman who wrote the interpretive sign text with the help of Fiona Harrison and Georgia Jeppesen. Many hours of physical labor were invested by Satch Alwin, Susan Brookreson, Dan Cogswell, Joe DeMandel, Dennis Parsons, Chris and Laurie Robinson, George Snyder, Gary and Diane Sylvester, Shepherd men's basketball players, Rodney Woods, and many others. This was truly a team effort and everyone should be proud of the part they played in this very exciting and successful project. Thank you!

This Race is for the Birds, 2007!

The race is on! Pushed to spring due to our overwhelming fall schedule, this year's race will take place **April 28 at NCTC**. Diana Gaviria has generously offered to coordinate the race again this year. Stay tuned for details, and if you'd like to volunteer to help that day, please let Diana know at 274-2690. We'd love your help and there are opportunities

New Project Focuses on Fish Health

Growing concern about fish kills and the rising incidence of intersex fish in West Virginia rivers has prompted four environmental groups to create Potomac Water Watch (PWW), a new project aimed at increasing public awareness and action concerning these problems.

The four groups involved in the project are The Appalachian Center for the Environment and the Economy, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, the Cacapon Institute, and the Friends of the Cacapon River, with support from the Potomac Headwaters RC&D.

As one of its first actions, PWW has launched a website (www.potomacwaterwatch.org) that provides a platform for collecting and disseminating current information on fish health, emerging contaminants and endocrine disruptors.

The site includes definitions, news stories, articles, and references and provides a timeline giving background and history.

It also provides suggestions about steps individuals and families can take to protect themselves and improve the situation, according to current thinking. For example, it is now understood that outdated and unused medications should NOT be flushed away, a standard practice in the past.

This spring, PWW will distribute posters that will encourage fishermen, boaters and others who use our rivers to report any fish kills or diseased fish they see. The posters will be distributed along the South Branch of the Potomac, the Cacapon and the Shenandoah, all in the Potomac River Watershed.

PWW is coordinating this effort with the West Virginia divisions of Environment Protection and Natural Resources. It is hoped that increased reporting will lead to greater understanding of the nature and extent of the problems at hand.

For further information email contactpww@aol.com or call Abby Chapple at 304-947-7590.

Wildflower Festival/ Earth Day Celebration

This year's Wildflower Festival will be held at the Yankauer Nature Preserve on April 21, the day before Earth Day. The festival will be held from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and will include guided wildflower walks, booths from environmental organizations, artwork with a nature focus, children's activities, music and more. A special "advanced" walk will be led by Joe Metzger at 10a.m. as a field trip for



Dutchman's Breeches



Spring Beauty

PVAS, the Maryland Native Plant Society, and other

interested folks. Stay tuned for details in the next newsletter! If you'd like to volunteer to help with a festival booth or to lead a walk, please contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397.

Images compliments of © Daniel Reed – www.2bnthewild.com

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

PVAS is now accepting applications for its 2007 Summer Youth Camp Scholarship Program. Each year the program helps send deserving area youngsters to summer camps that emphasize conservation and the environment.

Any youngster within our membership area (the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and Washington County, Maryland) is eligible to apply.

This year, applicants will be able to choose between six different camps. The camps, listed in ascending order of the age groups they accept, are as follows:

Audubon Discovery Day Camp, Yankauer Nature Preserve, Shepherdstown, WV; ages 6-12, several sessions mid-June to late July.

Trout Unlimited Conservation & Fishing Camp, Syria, Virginia (near Shenandoah National Park); grades 8 through 11, June 24-29.

Mountain Institute Youth Ecology Camp, Spruce Knob, WV; ages 9-11, July 29-August 2.

Oglebay Institute Junior Nature Camp, Dallas Pike, WV; ages 10-15, July 23-29 or July 30-August 5.

Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies, Capon Bridge, WV; ages 11-15, June 24-July 7.

West Virginia State Conservation Camp, Camp Caesar, Webster County, WV; ages 14-17, June 11-16.

For more information and application forms go to our website at www.potomacaudubon.org or contact Katherine Henry at 304-876-6681 or dhenry@myexcel.com.

All applications must be submitted by April 15. Applicants must indicate which camp they wish to attend (and their second choice, if they have one), submit an essay that describes their interest in attending, and include a letter of reference from an adult other than a family member.

Transportation costs to the camps will be the responsibility of the scholarship recipients.

Scholarship winners will be asked to make a presentation on their camp experience at a PVAS meeting next December (place and exact date to be determined).



Sarah Shadle presents at the December 2006 General

The scholarship program is supported by the proceeds from our annual fall bird seed sale. Additional community sources also support scholarships to our own day camp program at the Yankauer Nature Preserve.

Birding 101

We are very happy to report that Bob Dean, Wil Hershberger, and Matt Orsie have agreed to teach Birding 101 again! This course, celebrating its twentieth year, is designed for beginning birders. The course will focus on bird identification, birding techniques, using field guides and other resources, and etiquette. The classroom sessions will be held four weekday evenings from 7-9 p.m. at NCTC and four Saturdays from roughly 7 a.m. – noon at various sites around the panhandle. Specific dates will be announced via e-mail and on the website as soon as they are available. This year's course will be \$50/person. Pre-registration is required. To register or to learn more, check out the website or contact Kristin at PVASmail@aol.com or 304-676-3397.

PVAS Gets Grant for Nature-Explorer Backpack Program

Using a \$2,000 grant from the Nora Roberts Foundation, PVAS this year will team up with area libraries to offer a new nature-education program for pre-school and home-schooled children.

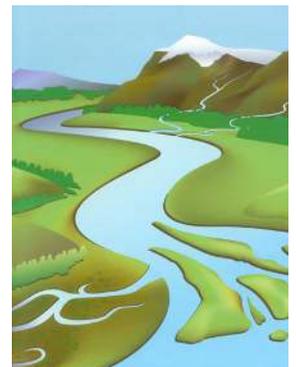
Through the program, PVAS will provide the libraries with a series of "Nature-explorer" backpacks that can be checked out for approximately two-week periods. Each backpack will have a different theme (insects, birds, etc.) and contain materials and instructions for parent-directed activities related to that theme. The backpacks will also provide directions to public natural areas where backpack activities can be carried out.

Suzi Taylor, a former PVAS summer camp director, will be working with PVAS Executive Director Kristin Alexander to implement this program.



Watershed Program

The "Water Cycle Boogie" can be heard in hallways and classrooms across Jefferson and Berkeley Counties because the 2007 Watershed Education Initiative has begun! Ellen Murphy, our new Director of Children's Programs, began going in to 4th grade classrooms at five area schools in February. She'll be seeing the same students for one to four hours every other week through the end of the school year teaching them about watersheds and how to take care of them. This year the students and their families will be invited to clean up their watershed with local watershed organizations the first week in April!



President's Perch



Hello everyone:

Once again, I want to thank all of you who have helped make our annual fundraising appeal such a success so far.

By now, we've managed to raise over \$21,600! That's far more than we've ever raised before, and we appreciate all your support.

But we've still got a way to go to reach our \$25,000 goal and time is running out: we need to wrap the appeal up by the end of March at the latest.

So if you've been planning to give but just haven't gotten around to it, this is the time to act.

Or if you haven't really thought about giving, this is the time to do so.

Consider this: As PVAS enters its 25th year, we're providing a wide range of exciting new programs—from our summer photography camp for teenagers to our new Master Naturalist Program training for adults to our new Eidolon Nature Preserve for whole families.

And we couldn't begin to meet the community's demand for this kind of expanded programming without the funds we raise through our annual appeals.

Can't afford to make a cash donation? That's OK. There are plenty of other ways you can help out.

For example, if you like outdoor work there's frequently some chore that could use an extra hand or two at our Yankauer Nature Preserve near Shepherdstown. And the same will no doubt be true at our Eidolon Preserve near Berkeley Springs, as we begin to get that property up and running.

Or if you'd like something less physical you can sign up to assist with specific events, most immediately our April 21 Wildflower Festival at Yankauer or our April 28 5K race/walk event at the National Conservation Training Center.

Or, if you want to get involved in a more cerebral way, we're often looking for talented people to help manage various aspects of whole programs.

The fact is, even though we've evolved to the point that we've now got some paid staff, an awful lot of what we do—most of what we do, really—is still accomplished through volunteer effort.

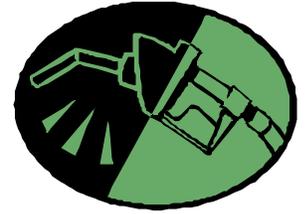
Want to learn more about possibilities for volunteering with PVAS? Give me a call at 304-876-1139 or send me an email at py-smith@frontiernet.net. Or contact our Executive Director, Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or pvasmail@aol.com.

We'll do our best to match your interests and availability to our needs.

—Peter Smith

ASK AUDUBON— Biodiesel vs. Ethanol

“Can you discuss the differences between biodiesel vs. ethanol and the advantages/disadvantages to using each? -- Submitted by Ed W., of Brooklyn, New York



Biodiesel is made from raw materials such as soy bean oil, cooking oil waste, animal fats, and rapeseed oil. This alternative fuel can be used by any vehicle that runs on diesel -- no modifications are needed for up to 5% blends. Many diesel engines can utilize a blend of 20% biodiesel and 80% petroleum diesel (B20). Biodiesel can be used in its pure form (B100), but may require engine modifications.

Ethanol is an alcohol-based fuel produced by fermenting and distilling starch crops such as corn, barley, and wheat. When produced from trees and grasses, it is labeled bioethanol. Ethanol can be blended with gasoline to create E85, a blend of 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline. E-85 can be used by flexible fuel vehicles (FFV), which are able to accept a variety of fuel types.

Both biodiesel and ethanol are becoming available from an increasing number of suppliers and are less toxic and more biodegradable than conventional fuel. Ethanol has a lower energy (BTU) output than gasoline. It takes about 1.5 gallons of ethanol to deliver the same mileage as 1 gallon of gasoline. However, according to a recent National Academy of Sciences study, ethanol production is more efficient than biodiesel, with approximately 420 gallons of ethanol produced per acre of corn versus 60 gallons of biodiesel generated per acre of soybeans. Still another factor found by the study was that ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 12 percent compared with fossil fuels, whereas biodiesel, reduces emissions 41 percent.

There is not one clear cut answer as to which fuel alternative is best. What is clear is that a variety of options must be explored.

Value of Trees

According to a Michigan State University publication, over a fifty year period a tree will produce \$31,250 worth of oxygen, provide \$62,000 worth of air pollution control, recycle \$37,500 worth of water, and control \$31,250 worth of soil erosion. - *WV Dept. of Agriculture Market Bulletin, April, 1989*

2007 Tree Seedling Sale

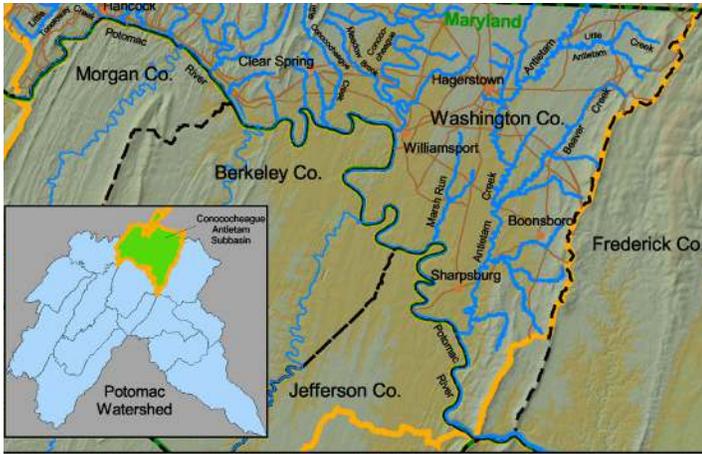
You can do something positive for conservation in your own backyard. Help add to habitat and beauty by planting seedlings. Contact the EPCD for order forms and pickup information for the 2007 *Tree Seedling Sale*. Prices and selections are extraordinary this year but orders must be placed by March 27.

Eastern Panhandle Conservation District
151 Aikens Senter, Ste. 1
Martinsburg, WV 25404
Phone: (304) 263-4376



Field Trips: Watershed Clean-ups!

PVAS is pleased to be partnering with other organizations this year to help clean up the Potomac River Watershed. The Alice Ferguson Foundation, WVDEP's "WV Make It Shine," and local watershed groups are all working together to keep West Virginia's streams and rivers clean for the benefit of people and wildlife alike.



Map Courtesy of Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin
 - http://www.potomacriver.org/info_center/maps.htm

Explore the tributaries of the Potomac and clean them as you go. Gloves, bags, and other supplies are provided. We encourage you to help out a group that is active near you:

March 31:

- 1) Jefferson County Watershed Coalition will be meeting at the Shepherd parking lot at corner of Princess and High at 8:30 a.m. Rain date: April 7. Contact: Dick Latterell at 876- 6072
- 2) Opequon Creek Watershed will meet at Mountain Ridge Intermediate School parking lot in Inwood/Gerrardstown at 9a.m. Adopted by Opequon Project Team. Contact: Alana Hartman: Ahartman@wvdep.org or 304-822-7266

April 7:

- 1) Back Creek Watershed will meet at public water access at Allensville Memorial Bridge (on Allensville Road off Rt. 901). Adopted by Blue Heron Environmental Network. Time to be determined. Contact: Sherry Evasic: Bluheron7@earthlink.net or 304-754-8717.
- 2) Friends of the Cacapon will meet at 10 a.m. under the Rt. 9 bridge in Great Cacapon. Contact: Crawford Horne at 304-258-0519.

April 14:

- 1) Sleepy Creek Watershed Association – contact Gail Foulds at dgfoulds@aol.com



JOIN PVAS TODAY!

We now offer two kinds of memberships:

1. PVAS Local Membership

Here's what you get:

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

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

2. Dual Membership with National Audubon

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

Membership Form

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

Membership Type (check one):

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

Dual Membership with National Audubon _____

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

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

Clip and mail this form to:

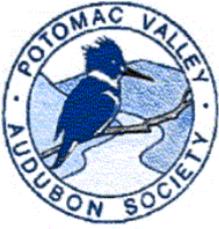
Membership Chair, PVAS
 PO Box 578
 Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Thank you for your support!



● RED DOT ALERT

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



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DATED MATERIALS

A proud partner of the United Way of
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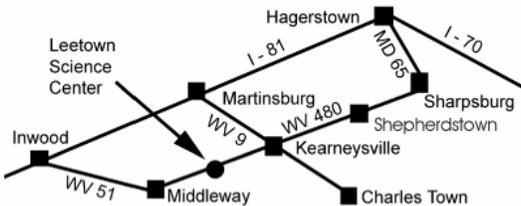


MAIL TO:

March 2007

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Volume 25, Issue 6



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

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

PVAS Officers and Board Members

- President: Peter Smith 304 876-1139pvsmith@frontiernet.net
- Vice President: Nancy Kirschbaumnancyk500@comcast.net
- Secretary: Mina Goodrichlarrymina@peoplepc.com
- Treasurer: Jane Vanderhook 304 876-6993janhook@frontiernet.net
- Board Development: Wayne Braunstein 304 728-7181wbraun@frontiernet.net
- Board Members-at-Large: Alice Barkusabarkus@hughes.net
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- Christine Wolfchriswolfathome@yahoo.com

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

Emeritus Board Members

- Bill Beltonwbelton@hughes.net
- Jean Neelyjeaneely@comcast.net

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- Web Master: Kathy Biltonkathy@fred.net
- PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis304-267-3482 & 304 724-4520(day)