

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society

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President's Perch

by Jane Vanderhook, PVAS President

As I write this, we are about \$1,400 short of our goal of \$40,000 in our annual appeal. Your generosity helped us reach the record-breaking \$40,000 last year, and we're hoping to match that again this year.

The annual appeal doesn't wrap up until the end of March, so we have until the end of the month to meet this goal. THANK YOU to those of you who have already contributed, and thank you in advance to those who still intend to give. You can mail a check to: PO Box 578, Shepherdstown WV 25443 or give on-line at www.potomacaudubon.org/support.

Interestingly, this year we have seen many first-time donors. This is a very healthy shift for us as an organization, and I'm thrilled to see new folks supporting the important work we do. A broad base of support is key to any non-profit's success.

We also can't forget to thank the many donors who have given generously and consistently over the years. The annual appeal provides the financial foundation for the year and allows us to plan for the year's activities.

So thank you! We'll have a full report next month on the final results. Fingers crossed, we'll have good news for the year ahead.

Now, on a completely different note, my four-year-old granddaughter asked me if I wanted to learn how to read a robin's mind -- something that she apparently has the ability to do. "When you are near a robin you have to be very quiet and listen and you can hear what a robin is thinking," she told me. Seems like good advice in general. So the next time you are outside, remember to be very still and listen. And if you happen to hear what a robin is thinking, please give me a call.

Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

I am always in awe of the generosity of PVAS members and friends.

The monetary generosity is one obvious example. As we wrap up the Annual Appeal at the end of March, I can't help but think of the incredible support our members and friends provide. As you know from Jane's President's Perch, the Annual Appeal provides the financial foundation for our year, and helps us plan activities accordingly for the following year. Your generosity makes all those programs possible.

This year we have also been given the generosity of time and input you have shared through the survey we recently sent out electronically. We've received some wonderful ideas on new topics for presentations and workshops, and insights into what is most important to you – our members and friends. As we look to the spring and beyond, these ideas and insights will be very important in the formulation of plans and priorities for the years ahead.

The survey is open through February, so watch for a summary of findings next month once all the results are in.

In the meantime, THANK YOU for all your incredible support – your time, your donations, your input. We appreciate each and every type of gift.

BOURBON ! CHAMPAGNE ! CHOCOLATE !

Sunday March 20th from 4-6pm at the Shepherdstown Train Station.

Celebrate the first day of spring and with it, the return of longer days and new growth!

Choose from some very good bourbons. Or for something a little lighter, visit the Champagne cocktail bar. Non-alcoholic libations will be available as well. The Special Events Committee cooks will serve an array of delicious savory and sweet bites guaranteed to tempt you.

Our chocolate tasting will include chocolates from Nathan Miller Chocolate. Nathan is an independent chocolatier located in Chambersburg, PA, with a commitment to sustainability using organic and fair trade beans for his award-winning chocolates.

We will offer a number of items for sale in our silent auction, so come prepared to bid and take something special home with you.

Ticket are available on the website's events calendar, and start at \$45 per person. All proceeds go to support PVAS programs.

Questions? Call 304-676-3397 or email us at admin@potomacaudubon.org. We hope to see you there!

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

Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)

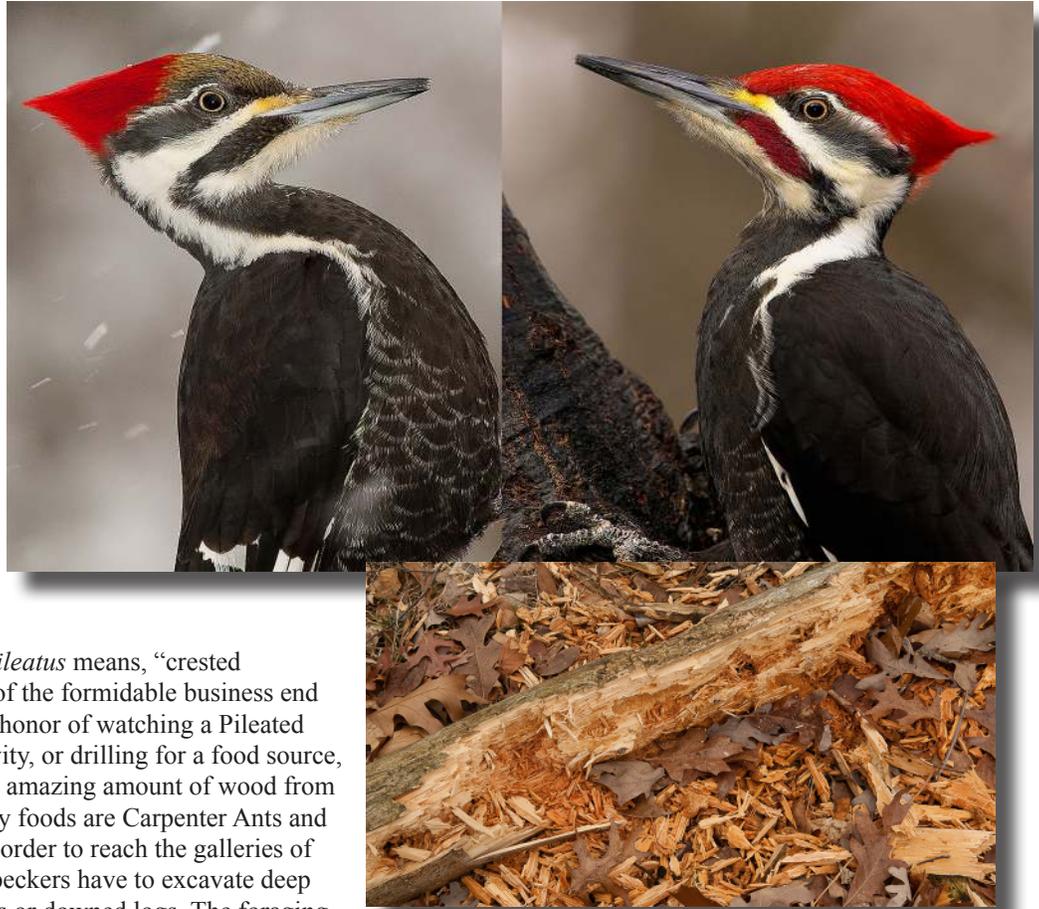
By Wil Hershberger

Of the seven species of woodpecker that we regularly observe in our area (Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Northern Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker) the Pileated Woodpecker is the largest and certainly most memorable. Anyone who has spent time in the woods has a story about an encounter with a large, black-and-white bird calling wildly as it flew through the forest. These memories last a lifetime and are often recalled over a summertime campfire or around the hearth at a hunting lodge. "It was as big as a crow and had large white patches on its wings and called like a crazy hen as it flew between the trees."

The scientific name, *Dryocopus pileatus* means, "crested dagger," certainly an apt description of the formidable business end of this bird. Anyone who has had the honor of watching a Pileated Woodpecker excavating a nesting cavity, or drilling for a food source, knows that these birds can remove an amazing amount of wood from a tree in very little time. Their primary foods are Carpenter Ants and the larvae of wood-boring beetles. In order to reach the galleries of these ants and larvae, Pileated Woodpeckers have to excavate deep into the trunks, or large limbs, of trees or downed logs. The foraging excavations are typically elongated, rounded at each end, and can be from a few inches to a yard or more long. They are often drilled right to the center of the tree or limb, and are diagnostic for this species. In order to perch on the side of a tree, woodpeckers have stiff tail feathers, which act as a third support improving balance and stability. Careful observation of a woodpecker will show that they "hitch" their way up or down a tree. When going up, they can leave their tail resting against the trunk as they make short jumping movements upward. To move down the tree, woodpeckers must flick their tails out away from the trunk and then make a quick jumping motion downward, bringing the tail in to the tree for support at the end of each jump.

Pileated Woodpecker pairs are monogamous and typically remain together all year. In our area, courting begins in February with lots of calling, chatter, head swinging, crest raising, and chasing between mates. Males start drumming, tapping loudly on a hollow tree trunk or log, in February to establish and defend their territories (<http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/191163>). The drumming of this species is distinctive; starting with loud tapping that becomes more rapid and quieter during the 2-3 second display. The "Wuk" call is the most often heard vocalization of this species and is prominent during the breeding season as pairs interact (<http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/110259>). Nesting cavities are excavated by both members of a pair and are built, typically, with a round entrance hole, about 2.5 inches in diameter, leading to a pocket that is 10 - 24 inches deep and 18 inches in diameter. Completion of this immense nest takes about 4 weeks. Three to 5 white eggs are laid and incubated by both parents for about 18 days, at which time they hatch. Nestlings are brooded up through their 10th day and will leave the nest when they are about 28 days old. Interestingly, the male takes the night shift on the nest for incubation and brooding duty. As with most woodpeckers, juveniles can be very noisy, giving begging calls and practicing the normal calls of the species from within the nest cavity. They are especially vocal when a parent arrives at the nest with food, as heard in this wonderful recording by my friend David Herr (<http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/63121>).

Pileated Woodpeckers are considered a keystone species of forested landscapes because: they help to improve and accelerate the decomposition of dead or diseased trees in our woodlands by breaking them down into smaller pieces that are more readily degraded and recycled; they help to control the population of wood-boring beetles; and they build nesting and roosting cavities that are subsequently used by a number of other species, including other woodpeckers, owls, Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, and mammals. Pileated Woodpeckers require large woodlots with many standing dead or diseased trees for food and for excavating nesting and roosting cavities. Our woodlands would certainly be more dreary and desolate without the amazing, vociferous, and spectacular Pileated Woodpecker.



Pileated Woodpecker female on left, male on right; downed tree limb with damage. © Wil Hershberger

Birding News and Events

April 9 “Race for the Birds” Coming Up Soon

Here’s a reminder that PVAS’s 15th annual “This Race is for the Birds!” will be held on Saturday, April 9, 2016 at a new location: Wild Goose Farm at 293 Shepherd Grade Road in Shepherdstown.

The farm is just across the road from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services’ National Conservation Training Center, where the event has been held previously. The Center is no longer able to host the event.

The 2016 event will include two professionally timed races—one 5 kilometers long and another 10 kilometers long. There will also be a 1-mile “Fun Run” for children under 10 years of age. In addition, adults and families who wish to walk or jog the 5K course at their own pace may do so.

The 5 and 10K races will follow non-technical cross-country trails through the farm’s scenic fields, rolling hills and woods. The course will be suitable for all runners. The 5 and 10K races will begin at 9:00 a.m. Please note that the time for the children’s Fun Run has changed: it will be held at about 10:45 a.m.

The children’s Fun Run will be free. Fees for the other portions of the event will range from \$25 to \$35.

To register, and for more information, go to the race website at www.raceforthebirds.org. Or contact Nan Johnson, race4birds@potomacaudubon.org, or 304-870-4414. Registration for the 5 and 10K races will be capped at 300 for both, so same-day registration may not be available.

All proceeds will be used to support our programs for children, and all fees are tax deductible.



Join March 10 Trip to View Woodcock Mating Display

PVAS will sponsor a special evening trip to a site in Berkeley County on Thursday, March 10 to observe the mating display of the American Woodcock. The trip will start at 6:00 p.m. and be led by local birding expert Bob Dean.

The event is free and anyone is welcome to join. However, because it will be held on private property with limited parking, participation will be strictly limited to no more than 12 people, and pre-registration is essential. To pre-register and get full details, go to the Society’s website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

It will offer a rare chance to see the spectacular mating display of one of North America’s most reclusive woodland birds. Also known as Timberdoodles, American Woodcocks are members of the Sandpiper family. Short, stocky birds with long bills, they spend most of their time on forest floors, foraging for earthworms and other invertebrates.

In the early spring, shortly after sunset, males seek female mates by going to clearings near the edges of forests and engaging in an elaborate and lengthy ritual.

First, they strut about on the ground for about a minute or so, emitting a distinctive call in every direction. Then they fly up, circling higher and higher and making a whistling sound until they reach a height of several hundred feet. Then they abruptly and quickly dive back down to their strutting place, uttering yet another kind of call throughout their descent. This process is repeated over and over.

Participants should dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions and wear sturdy, waterproof footwear. If the weather is adverse on March 10, this trip will be rescheduled to the next evening, March 11.

For more information, contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 703-303-1026.



Birding News and Events

Join March 30 Harpers Ferry Bird Walk Sign Up Now for March 19 NCTC Trip

PVAS will sponsor a morning bird walk on the C&O Canal near Harpers Ferry on Wednesday, March 30. There is no fee and anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of their birding skills. Children are welcome. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. To register, go to the PVAS website.

The walk will involve about 4 miles of level walking along the towpath. Participants should plan to meet at 8:00 a.m. outside John Brown's Fort, where Potomac and Shenandoah Streets meet in Harpers Ferry National Park. Parking is available along Potomac Street near the train station.

From there, participants will take the footbridge over the Potomac River and walk about two miles northwest along the C&O Canal towpath and back. Species likely to be sighted include raptors, waterfowl, and other winter birds.

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.

The walk may be cancelled in the event of heavy weather. For more information, contact trip leader Deb Hale at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-1528.

Join March 26 Antietam Bird Walk

PVAS will sponsor a bird walk along the Final Attack Trail on the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, MD on Saturday, March 26. 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 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. 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 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.

"Birding 101" is Full!

This year's "Birding 101" course for beginning birders, which is being held during June, has filled up quickly and there are currently no spaces left. However, a waitlist has been started, and if you'd like to be on it you can sign up for it on the PVAS website (go to the site and look for "Birding 101" under "Birding" or "Events Calendar"). If and when spaces open up we'll send you an email.

To recap the details, this will be the course's 31st year. The instructors will be Bob Dean and Wil Hershberger. The course will utilize both evening classroom sessions and daytime field trips. Participants will learn everything from bird identification to birding techniques and resources to field etiquette. The evening classroom sessions will start on Thursday, June 9 and be held each of the following three Thursdays (June 16, 23 and 30). All of these sessions will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center just north of Shepherdstown. The field trips will be held at various locations around the Panhandle from roughly 7:00 a.m. to 12 noon on the Saturdays following the Thursday evening sessions (June 11, 18 and 25 and July 2). Tuition for the full course package of four classroom sessions and four field trips (a total of 28 hours of instruction) is \$90 for PVAS members and \$100 for nonmembers.

PVAS Events

PVAS to Hold First Native Plant Sale

We are happy to announce our first “Native Plant Sale: Promoting Pollinators in the Panhandle.” The sale will be held Saturday May 21, 2016 from 9am-4pm in conjunction with the well-established annual Back Alley Garden Tour and Tea in Shepherdstown, WV. The Native Plant Sale will take place behind the Shepherdstown Public Library where the Sunday farmers market takes place.

The intent of this new event is to provide high-quality native plants to our members and the larger community, with a focus on plants that benefit pollinators in trouble like the honeybee and Monarch Butterfly. PVAS will be selling swamp milkweed and butterfly weed at the event through a partnership with The Monarch Alliance of Washington County. In recent years some of our members have been traveling all the way to Leesburg to purchase plants at the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy sale. Our goal is to have a similar event closer to home for the convenience of our members and friends.

Participating vendors will agree to provide plants that are native to North America with preference to regional varieties (including annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees) and must be neonicotinoid free. Further, all products (i.e. pest controls) sold must be safe for pollinator species. We will be particularly interested in vendors who can provide plants beneficial to pollinators such as bees and butterflies. We will also be distributing information and providing expertise about pollinator plants at the event.

If you have a favorite provider of plants or garden supplies, please contact volunteer Bridget Tinsley at bridget.tinsley03@gmail.com or 541-788-8994. We will extend an invitation! Applications and fees (\$40/booth) will be due by April 22, 2016. Additional information and the application can also be downloaded from the PVAS website.

The event is being coordinated by a committee of volunteers including Susan Jones, Debbie Maiorano, Bridget Tinsley, and Virginia Winston. We will be recruiting additional volunteers for the event to help set up, carry plants, and provide information about pollinators and backyard habitats.

We are very grateful to the Shepherdstown Community Club for allowing us to collaborate with them by adding this Native Plant Sale to their Back Alley Garden Tour plans, and to the Town Council of Shepherdstown for allowing us to use the farmers market space behind the library for the event.

March 9 Program Will Feature Astronomy Presentation

PVAS’s monthly program for April will feature a presentation about Astronomy. The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, March 9 at the Hospice of the Panhandle facility in Kearneysville. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome to attend.

The speaker will be Kevin Bowles, a founding member of the Morgan County Observatory Foundation and the organization’s current President. His presentation will focus on star maps and navigating the night sky, with a particular emphasis on March skies. He will also discuss his experiences building and running the observatory, and share some pictures of Pluto. The Morgan County Observatory Foundation is a nonprofit organization focused on improving interest in the sciences among West Virginians.

The Hospice facility’s address is 330 Hospice Lane, Kearneysville. The Audubon events are held in the main meeting room of the facility’s Main Office building. There is plenty of parking at the facility.

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

Southern States’ Wild Bird Appreciation Day



Joette Borzik, Chip Alliger, Jean Neely and Will Hershberger are pictured with posters explaining the Grassland Bird Initiative.

PVAS members and expert birders Joette Borzik, Jean Neely and Wil Hershberger spent the morning of Saturday, January 30 talking with Southern States’ customers about the array of bird feeders and seed they carry, and the many things that PVAS does to support wild birds, like the Great Backyard Bird Count, Grassland Birds Initiative, Christmas Bird Count, Birdathon, Bird Walks, etc. Southern States hosted the event, which was held to promote awareness of our wild birds.



PVAS Events

Join March 13 Work Session on Invasive Vines

PVAS will sponsor another volunteer work session at Shepherdstown's Morgan's Grove Park on Sunday, March 13. As in the past, the session will be focused on severing invasive vines – both native and non-native – that are weighing down or girdling some of the park's trees. Shawn Walker, a certified Arborist and Master Naturalist, will provide guidance and supervision. Although the primary goal will be to help the park, this will also provide a good opportunity to learn proper techniques for handling invasive vines, and to learn more about trees in general.

The session will start at 10:00 a.m. and last about two hours. Participants will meet in the lower parking lot near the railroad tracks. There is no fee and anyone with an interest is invited. Children will be welcome, but must be supervised carefully because tools will be involved. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. To register, go to the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

Participants should plan to meet in the park's lower parking lot, near the railroad tracks. They should dress for the weather, wear work shoes and work clothes, and bring work gloves and safety glasses if they have them. They also should feel free to bring their own tools, such as loppers, saws, and pruners. Tools, gloves and safety glasses will also be available onsite for those who need them.

Morgan's Grove Park is a 25-acre public park that serves Shepherdstown and surrounding areas. It is owned by the Shepherdstown Community Club and operated by the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Commission. The park is located just southwest of Shepherdstown at 4198 Kearneysville Pike (Route 480). If this event has to be cancelled because of winter weather, it will be rescheduled to Saturday, April 2. For more information, contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 703-303-1026.

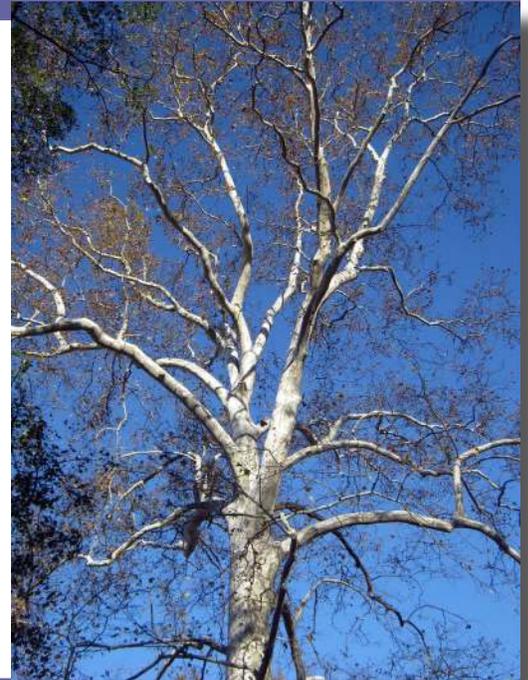
March 19 Shepherdstown-Area Winter Tree-ID

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society will offer a winter tree-identification field trip along the C&O Canal across from Shepherdstown the morning of Saturday, March 19. West Virginia state forester Herb Peddicord will lead the trip. He will show how to identify trees through such clues as their branching habits and overall shape, twigs and buds, and bark.

Participants will meet at 10:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Ferry Hill Place, the old brick mansion on the Maryland side of the Potomac River that used to be the C&O Canal Park headquarters. The entrance is on MD Route 34 just east of the Rumsey Bridge across the Potomac.

There is no fee, and anyone with an interest is invited to attend. However, space will be limited and pre-registration is essential. To pre-register or get more information go to the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org or contact Debbie Maiorano at debbiem58@aol.com or 540-535-5145.

The total time of the trip will be about two hours. If the trip has to be cancelled because of weather, it will be rescheduled to March 26. Those who participate should be sure to dress warmly and wear sturdy footwear.



Join April 2 Composting Farm Tour

PVAS will sponsor a tour of the Cam Tabb & Sons Composting farm near Leetown on Saturday, April 2. The tour will last from 9:00-10:30 a.m. It will provide an opportunity to see first-hand how a wide range of waste materials can be recycled through composting. This event is free and everyone is welcome, but it is not suitable for children under 6 since potentially dangerous farm equipment will be present. Pre-registration is required: to register and get directions go to the PVAS website or contact Debbie Maiorano at debbiem58@aol.com or 540-535-5145.

The Tabb family farm is now in its fifth generation. Its operations include raising antibiotic-free beef cattle, but recycling has been Mr. Tabb's passion since 1990.

Currently, his farm uses raw materials from construction sites to produce animal bedding, and it uses trees and tree stumps to make compost that is used for topsoil. In addition, kitchen food scraps from the Veterans Administration hospital in Martinsburg are sent to the farm for composting, which keeps hundreds of pounds of food waste from going into local landfills. The farm tour will involve about one mile of walking over mostly even ground. In the event of rain, the tour will be rescheduled to April 16.

Youth Programs

PVAS Is In Schools This Spring

Even though the great January snow delayed our school programs for a week, PVAS continues with our fourth grade watershed program in Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan Counties. After spring break, most of the watershed classes will participate in a field experience to a local stream where students will practice the water quality testing techniques and macroinvertebrate studies that they have been learning in class. We can always use volunteers to help with these field studies!

Several other schools have contacted us for programs, either in the classroom or to visit Yankauer Nature Preserve. Volunteers are assisting Ellen Murphy in presenting these programs, allowing us to serve more schools. Many of these programs are being funded by grants from the Eastern WV Community Foundation and Ecolab. Students in every class at Rosemont Elementary in Martinsburg will participate in a program at their school in April. Second graders from Valley View Elementary near Tablers Station will visit Yankauer Preserve in early May.

Register Now for March 20 Spring Egg Hunt at Yankauer

PVAS will hold its ninth annual Spring Children's Egg Hunt the afternoon of Sunday, March 20 at its Yankauer Nature Preserve north of Shepherdstown. The hunt will be held from 2:00-3:30 p.m. Designed for children ages 2-6, it is a family-oriented event, and parents should plan to accompany their children as they hunt for eggs.

Unlike traditional egg hunts, this one combines fun with an educational experience. The eggs used in the hunt are colored to resemble real eggs of wild birds. Children are challenged to find these eggs on the preserve's trails and, in the process, discover how birds use camouflage to keep their eggs safe from predators.

Other activities this year will include a "penguin egg walk" and an "ostrich egg balance challenge," as well as an egg-toss game. At the end of the event, collected eggs will be "traded in" for a sweet treat: decorating an egg-shaped cookie to enjoy on the spot with lemonade, or to take home and enjoy later. Two lucky egg hunters, who find "special eggs" receive a unique reward.

Space will be limited and pre-registration is required. There will be a fee of \$5 per child. Registration for this event is now open on the PVAS website <http://potomacaudubon.org/event-2139409>. For more information, contact Ellen Murphy, PVAS's Director of Youth Programs, at Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org or 304-676-8739.



Sign Up Now For Spring Wee Naturalists

We're now accepting enrollments for our March, April, and May "Wee Naturalists" sessions for preschoolers. The sessions are designed to provide opportunities for children ages 3-5, with a caring adult, to explore nature together safely, under the guidance of an experienced PVAS instructor.

All sessions are held at the Yankauer Nature Preserve. Each session will last from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., and each will include songs, sensory activities, movement, hikes, and a take-home craft. They will be led by Anne Young, an experienced educator, and mother of a preschooler of her own. Programs begin at 9:30 a.m., but the first thirty minutes is for free play and exploration, followed by the structured activities. (Don't forget that the new Pixie Hollow area near the pavilion is perfect for free play!)

The March session, entitled "Furry Tails," will be held on Monday, March 21. It will focus on identifying the animals of the forest, their tracks and habitats. (We even have special animal tails for the preschoolers to try on and decide whether they would look best as a squirrel or an owl or even a skunk!) The April session, "Dirt Don't Hurt," will be held on Monday, April 18. It will look at soil and the creatures that live in it. The May session, "A Log Home," will be held on Monday, May 16. It will look at the role logs play in providing habitats for different creatures.

For every session, each child must be accompanied by a parent, grandparent, other adult relative, or guardian. To ensure that everyone receives close, personal attention, enrollment will be limited and pre-registration is required. Easy on-line registration is available on the PVAS website. Families may register for one, two, or all three months. The fee is \$10 for one child and an adult partner per session; \$15 for two children and an adult. You can register at www.PotomacAudubon.org/weenats. For more information, contact Ellen Murphy at Ellen@potomacaudubon.org or 304-676-8739.

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

Join Us At The Wildflower Festival!

On April 16, families are especially 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 StoryWalk® book has been selected for this year's festival, and children's games and activities will be held at the pavilion.

Guided tours will be offered between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., but everyone is welcome to wander the trails at their leisure. For the ninth year, we will feature poetry by local poets and children's art, all celebrating the beauty of spring!

Camp Programs

Sign Up For A Camp Session Now

Registration for our 14th year of Audubon Discovery Camp has begun, and some sessions are already half-full. The camp brochure with full information about sessions and dates is posted on the PVAS website, and brochures are being distributed in several schools in Berkeley, Jefferson, and Washington Counties.

Sessions at Yankauer include “Camp Survivor,” “Nature’s Architects,” and “Science in the Woods.” “The Simple Life” and “Pioneer Survivor” are being offered at the Peter Burr Farm. “Wildlife CSI” (at Yankauer) and “Pioneer Survivor” (at Peter Burr Farm) are designed for older elementary campers. Junior Staff opportunities are also available for teens entering grades 7 and up. A training session for Junior Staff is being offered on Saturday, June 4.

New this year is a session called “DIY Nature” which allows families to pick and choose one day of camp or multiple days. Each day will have a specific theme: Bird-Brains on Monday, Eco-Arts on Tuesday, Everything Animal on Wednesday, Fort Building on Thursday, and Science Friday on Friday. This program is being offered the first full week of June. Another new program this year is a 3-day “Project Webfoot” session at Stauffer’s Marsh in Back Creek Valley. The setting will be primitive (portable toilets and tents for shelter), but the fabulous program will focus on wetland birds and other animals, and exploring the water. It’s designed for ages 10-13, and offered in mid-June.

And for high-school students, our popular Digital Nature Camp, with instructor and professional photographer Ben Schonberger, is one of the best youth programs around; limited enrollment ensures personalized attention, and campers become proficient on digital SLR equipment, and learn computer software to manipulate images. Shepherd University is generously hosting this camp.

Camp sessions are \$150 per week for PVAS members, although a few are slightly higher or lower. Those who are not yet PVAS members pay a higher fee that includes a one-year organization membership, but you can avoid that by joining or renewing your membership now (www.PotomacAudubon.org/member)! Just remember that the non-member fee applies only to the first camper session you register for.

Scholarships for all programs are available for all Audubon Discovery Camps, and the short application form is available to download online. Questions about camp should be directed to Ellen Murphy (Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org).

Camp Scholarships are Available!

Here’s your opportunity! If you are a young person, or a family, who would enjoy learning about nature at a summer camp, do consider applying for a camp scholarship from PVAS. If you know someone else who would be interested, pass this information along!

Applications must be postmarked by Wednesday, **April 6, 2016**, so act now! Camps, locations, ages, and dates are listed below, but the PVAS website, www.potomacaudubon.org, provides much more information, including exciting camp descriptions and links to camp web pages with great photos and other details.

Audubon Discovery Day Camp: our own local day camp at Yankauer Nature Preserve, Peter Burr Farm, and Stauffer’s Marsh; pre-school to grade 12 plus junior staff opportunities for grade 7 and older; a variety of week-long sessions in *June and July 2016*.

Oglebay Institute Junior Nature Camp: at Dallas Pike (near Wheeling), WV; ages 10-15; *July 24-30, or July 31-August 6, 2016*.

Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies: at Capon Bridge, WV; ages 11-15; *June 26-July 9; July 12-26; or August 3-16, 2016*.

West Virginia Junior Conservation Camp: at Cedar Lakes, Ripley, WV; ages 11-14; *June 15-19, 2015*.

Mountain Stewards Summer Camp, MIDDLE SCHOOL Program, Spruce Knob, WV; entering grades 6-8; *June 12-17, June 19-24, June 26-July 1 (All Girls Week), and July 10-15, 2016*.

Mountain Stewards Summer Camp, HIGH SCHOOL Program, Spruce Knob, WV; grades 9-12 (up to age 17); *June 12-17, June 19-24, June 26 - July 1 (All Girls Week), July 3-8, and July 10-15, 2016*.

West Virginia Senior Conservation Camp: at Camp Caesar, Webster County, WV; Campers must be age 14 by January 1 and not past age 18 on June 1; *June 13-18, 2016*.

Nature Photography Camp: at Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV; grades 9-12 (ages 14-18); *June 20-24, 2016*.

Check our web site at www.potomacaudubon.org for PVAS scholarship application forms, links to the camps’ web sites, and other details. Look for additional opportunities as they become available. You may also contact scholarship coordinator Kathryn Henry at 304-876-6681, or dhenry@myexcel.com.

PVAS offers scholarships for eligible persons throughout our membership area – the WV Eastern Panhandle and Washington County, Maryland. Camp scholarships are generously supported by our fall birdseed sale, as well as other donors and community sources. We thank our birdseed customers and all loyal scholarship supporters!

Family Programs

Area Libraries Will Offer PVAS Nature Programs at End of March

PVAS is teaming up with six libraries in Jefferson and Berkeley counties to offer a series of special “Passport to Nature at the Library” programs for children. The programs will be offered during Spring Break Week (March 28-April 2). On each of those six days, one of the libraries will offer a unique, one-hour program. Each library’s program will be focused on a different nature topic, featuring a read-aloud story and an activity that relates to that topic. The children who participate will be given “passports” that they can have stamped at all the libraries they visit.

The programs are aimed at children ages 4 and up. Parents are encouraged to stay, and older siblings will be welcome. All are free and open to everyone, and no registration is necessary. The programs are being funded by a generous grant from the Nora Roberts Foundation. The schedule is as follows:

Monday, March 28, 1:30 p.m.: Shepherdstown Public Library, 100 West German Street.

Topic: “Float Your Boat.” Make a “boat” out of natural materials and see if it will actually float!

Tuesday, March 29, 1:30 p.m.: North Berkeley Public Library, 1255 T.J. Jackson Drive, Falling Waters.

Topic: “Follow The Sun.” Make a sun print art masterpiece using natural materials.

Wednesday, March 30, 1:30 p.m.: South Jefferson Public Library, 49 Church Street, Summit Point.

Topic: “Make A Trail.” Learn about maps and follow a trail outside.

Thursday, March 31, 1:30 p.m.: Martinsburg Public Library, 101 West King Street.

Topic: “Spy That Scat!” Learn how to identify animals by their droppings.

Friday, April 1, 1:30 p.m.: Bolivar/Harpers Ferry Public Library, 151 Polk Street, Harpers Ferry.

Topic: “Track an Animal.” Learn about animal tracks and them make a track to take home.

Saturday, April 2, 11:00 a.m.: Charles Town Library, 200 East Washington Street.

Topic: “Build a Campfire.” Learn how to build a campfire by making a pretend one you can eat.

Cacapon State Park Wildlife Signs Walk Set for March 12

PVAS is sponsoring a “Wildlife Signs Walk” at the Cacapon State Park in Morgan County on Saturday, March 12. The event is free and anyone is welcome to join in. Participants should meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Park’s Nature Center. The walk will begin from there and be led by the Park’s naturalist, Renee Fincham. It will last about one-and-a-half hours. This will be a family-friendly event that will show how to look for tracks and other signs of wildlife in West Virginia forests.

If there has been a major snow the day before or the weather is especially inclement on the day of the trip, check the PVAS website to make sure the trip is still on. If the trip is snowed or rained out, it will be rescheduled. Participants should wear sturdy footwear and dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. To register, go to the Society’s website at www.potomacaudubon.org. For more information, contact Susan Jones at vvbagend@frontier.com or 340-671-4478.

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

10th Year of Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Classes to Begin in April

The 10th year of Potomac Valley Master Naturalist classes are set to begin April 2nd and 3rd at the Hospice of the Panhandle Education Center. The first weekend of classes kick off with sessions including Ecology, Recording and Sharing, Nature Interpretation and more. Classes will continue one Saturday per month through September at a variety of venues including the National Conservation Training Center, the Leetown Conference Room at the Fish Health Building and Cacapon State Park in Morgan County.

Each student enrolled in the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program will receive a total of 48 Core and 16 Elective hours of instruction.

If you have been thinking of enrolling in this exceptional program, now is the time. We are still accepting applications as we have just a few slots open. You can find a complete schedule and application at potomacaudubon.org/masternat.

Please contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 703-303-1026 with any questions you may have.

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Chapter Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Spring is only weeks away and that means that the 10th Anniversary Celebration for the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists will be kicking into gear. Activities will commence on April 9th at 8:00 a.m. with the Reforestation Service Project at NCTC. This project will help reestablish the native hardwood ecosystem, widen the existing forest corridor for wildlife movement, and create better conditions for forest interior dwelling species.

May 7th will bring the Spring Gathering at Cacapon State Park. The 2015 Spring Gathering was a great success and we expect nothing less than an outstanding time for 2016. The day will start early with a bird walk, followed by fly fishing instruction, a wildflower walk, and a demonstration of campground cooking using a Dutch oven. A representative from the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will join the group at lunch to discuss the DNR State Plan and the ways for Master Naturalists to help the DNR mission. Next comes the overnight campout on June 4th & 5th at Rolling Ridge. Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains just beyond Shannondale, Rolling Ridge is 1,400 acres of wooded land nestled between the Appalachian Trail and the Shenandoah River, and is protected by a conservation easement with ATC. Activities will include bird walks, stream and waterfall treks, hiking to the AT atop the ridge, creating miniature wood elf homes, swimming in a pond, telling stories and singing around a campfire, night hiking, and stargazing.

Beat the summer heat. Take the opportunity to join the Float Trip on July 16th and see the beauty and splendor of Opequon Creek. Paddle the lazy waters as they meander through rural farmland, and see turtles, snakes, blue and green herons, Pileated Woodpeckers, kingfishers, beavers, muskrat and deer. You will wonder why it took you so long to get out there and enjoy this gem of a creek we all have in our back yard. The float trip will take about 2 hours and traverse 7 miles of the creek from the Rt. 45 bridge to the take-out, and a pot luck lunch at Lou & Jake Scavnicky's place just downstream of the old Myers bridge. Make a trip north from July 28th to August 1st. The end of July will be highlighted by a visit to the Aldo Leopold Foundation Baraboo Wisconsin. The tour will take in the "Shack" that was the center of one of our nation's earliest attempts at land restoration. Then walk through the woods and hear the history & philosophy of naturalist Aldo Leopold, and see the landscapes that provided the inspiration for *A Sand County Almanac*. The trip will tour the International Crane Foundation, the only location in the world where all 15 crane species can be seen together. As the summer winds down, join the Owl Prowl on September 10th and take a chance at finding these elusive night dwellers.

The culmination of the 10th Anniversary Celebration will come on the evening of October 8th when PVMN will host a dinner and concert at NCTC. Along with nature-themed music, the evening will include poetry, guest speakers, and an exhibit showcasing the nature photography and art created by PVAS and PVMN members. More to come on this!

Additional detail on these events can be found on the PVAS Events Calendar at www.potomacaudubon.org. Some events such as the Opequon Float Trip and Aldo Leopold Foundation tour require advance registration, so be sure to check the Events Calendar.

PVMN 10th Anniversary Trip to Baraboo, Wisconsin in July 2016

This exciting trip will be highlighted by a visit to the Aldo Leopold Foundation. Our group tour will take us to the "Shack" to learn about the history & philosophy of Aldo Leopold. We will walk through the landscapes that provided the inspiration for *A Sand County Almanac* and see the famous "Shack" that was the locus of one of our nation's earliest attempts at land restoration. We will also see the "greenest building in the world" and learn about how this energy efficient design, alternative energy technologies and the use of local materials earned this rating. By combining these two tours we will see how the thread of Aldo Leopold's land ethic ties the two sites together. We will also spend time on the trails of this interesting property.

Our second adventure will be to visit The International Crane Foundation, the only place on Earth that you can see all 15 of the world's crane species. We will have several guided tours of the facility: "Flyways," "Culture and Cranes," "Whooping Cranes," and "Conservation Leadership," and we will take a hike on their nature trails, and browse their nature themed gift shop. We will observe all crane species, learn about crane biology, investigate the current threats to crane survival and methods used to conserve endangered species, as well as learn about international work and initiatives.

For our third day in Baraboo, we will be planning several other venues to visit. A meeting will be held in mid-April to discuss travel and third day events. Please sign up as soon as possible so we can start making plans!

This will be a three-day schedule of events in Baraboo on July 29-31st. Travel is on your own but we will have information for you on trains, planes and car routes. Once in Wisconsin, we can provide transportation to and from events and to dinner. We have spoken to several hotel/motels in the area (Baraboo & Wisconsin Dells) that will be reserving rooms for us. You will need to plan to be there on July 28th as we will be starting the tour of Aldo Leopold at 9 a.m. on July 29th. Our events will end on the evening of Sunday July 31st, so you can plan to leave on August 1st or stay on and enjoy the area.

For further information, fees to foundation events, transportation to events and other venues (travel to Wisconsin and lodging at your own expense) please call Lynne Wiseman 304-676-2725 or LEWiseman@aol.com. Please sign up on the PVAS website events calendar.

Did You Know...?

WVMNs and Political Activism

As 2016 is an election year, we think it is a good time to discuss guidelines set by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources concerning political activism as it pertains to Master Naturalists.

A section of the Standards of Conduct and Ethics for Master Naturalists of West Virginia states: "Avoid use of the **West Virginia Master Naturalist title or logo** for personal profit or to **advocate, lobby, or promote political agendas** or business or personal endeavors." (http://www.mnofwv.org/what_is_a_master_naturalist).

What does that statement really mean? Does it mean you can never discuss politics, or advocate, or volunteer for your chosen political party once you have certified as a Master Naturalist? Not at all! It simply means that while you are volunteering at an event and identified as a Master Naturalist you cannot promote any sort of political agenda. It means that, in a public setting, you cannot speak for all WV MN's and say things such as, "Master Naturalists should vote for so-and-so" or "WV Master Naturalists support this particular candidate." When you are wearing your MN nametag while volunteering at an informational booth at a festival, for example, you shouldn't also be wearing a t-shirt or other paraphernalia promoting a particular candidate or view. When you are representing yourself, you are as any other American citizen who can discuss and advocate politics, but when you are officially wearing your Master Naturalist "hat" you are, during that time, politically neutral.

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Chapter is a fun, educational, diverse group and we welcome people of all political perspectives.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please email Krista at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org, as the Master Naturalist Committee is happy to discuss it with you.



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: _____

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

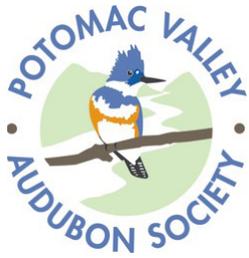
PO Box 578

Shepherdstown, WV 25443



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.

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

President: Jane Vanderhook (2016)..... janehook@frontiernet.net
 Vice President: Michael Sullivan (2016) msullivan@limno.com
 Secretary: Diana Gaviria (2016) jpikester@comcast.net
 Treasurer: Dan Cogswell (2017) daniel.cogswell@gmail.com
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