Celebrating 25 Years

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

VALLEY VIEWS

Volume 26, Issue 8 May 2008

Eidolon Land Transfer Approved

On March 20, the Board of Trustees of the West Virginia chapter of the Nature Conservancy formally approved a proposal to transfer a portion of the Eidolon Nature Preserve to PVAS, so we can begin to develop facilities there to support educational programming.

The preserve, a 354-acre property on Sideling Hill in Morgan County, was bequeathed to the Conservancy in 2006 by its longtime owner, Marguerite Zapoleon, and formally opened to the public in May 2007.

PVAS signed an agreement to co-manage the property in the fall of 2006.

The portion of the preserve that will be transferred to PVAS will consist of two parcels that have already been surveyed and platted.

The larger of these two parcels, which is about 7 acres in size, includes the old stone cottage near the Sideling Hill ridgeline and the land immediately surrounding it.

We plan to restore the cottage so it can be used for educational purposes and then, in time, build an open education pavilion nearby. This pavilion will be similar to the one we built several years ago at our Yankauer Nature Preserve.

The smaller parcel, which is about 1.4 acres, is a few hundred feet inside the preserve entrance. It will be developed as a parking area for the preserve.

The current goal is to complete the transfers of these parcels to PVAS by the start of the fiscal year July 1, so we can begin work on improvements to the preserve this summer or fall.

May Meeting Will Include Annual Meeting

As we noted last month, our May meeting will include our annual business meeting and a talk by leading area birder Matt Orsie.

The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m., May 14, at the National Conservation Training Center.

The annual meeting portion of the program will come first and will include the election of a new treasurer and the re-election of three current board members.

The treasurer's position is open because our current Treasurer, Jane Vanderhook, will have completed two consecutive terms in office when our fiscal year ends June 30 and our by-laws require officers and board member to step down at that point. The nominee for the treasurer's position is **Lex Miller** of Shepherdstown. A retired actuary, Lex for the past several years has coordinated the American Association for Retired Persons' Tax-Aide program in the Eastern Panhandle. The program provides free tax counseling and preparation services to low- and middle-income taxpayers.

The three current board members who are standing for re-election—all to three-year terms—are as follows:

Clark Dixon. Clark, who has served on the board since 2006, is a retired National Park Service administrator. He lives in Ranson.

Carolyn Thomas. Carolyn has also served on the board since 2006. She lives in Scrabble and is a visiting assistant professor at Shepherd University in the Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports.

John Reisenweber was just appointed to the board in March to fill the vacancy created by Chris Wolf's resignation last fall. The term of that seat expires June 30. John is an executive banker at Centra Bank, and resides in Martinsburg.

Program Presentation: Following the business meeting, Matt Orsie's talk will focus on a birding trip he took to Alaska last year. It will include an overview of the trip, a discussion of the native life on St. Lawrence Island, and a look at birds from the Gambell and Nome regions.

Annual Appeal Yields $26,855

The final total from our annual fundraising appeal, which began December 1 and concluded March 31, was $26,855.

On its face, this sum is only $131 more than the $26,724 we raised last year.

However, this comparison is deceptive. Here's why:

Last year's annual appeal total included a one-time, $5,000 challenge grant, designed to spur new donations.

Annual Appeal – continues on page 2, column 1

Annual Appeal – continues from page 1

This year's total includes $2,000 from the individual who contributed last year's challenge grant.

So to fairly compare the giving in both years, we should discount the extra $3,000 which that individual gave last year.

And when you do that, we actually exceeded last year's total by $3,131, or about 13 percent—which is a healthy increase by any standard.

In addition, the number of families and individuals contributing increased this year by a similar percentage, from 114 to 130.

We were particularly gratified to see a big increase in contributions from Morgan County: last year, we received only three contributions totaling $650 from that county; this year we received 12 contributions totaling nearly $1,400.

Overall the average contribution to this year's appeal was $192.67.

Eighty-three of this year's contributions, or about 65 percent, were for $100 or more. Of those, 23 were for $250 or more, and nine were for $1,000 or more.

A full list of all those who contributed, along with a list of others who made other cash or in-kind contributions over the last 12 months, is included in this newsletter as a special insert.

Thanks again to all of you who have been so generous to PVAS. We appreciate all your support, and you can count on us to put your contributions to good use!

Summer Camp Essentially Full!

Enrollment for our summer camp programs at the Yankauer Nature Preserve set a new record this year! All sessions are now full with a couple of exceptions (our "Something's Fishy" program for grades 5-8 still has a couple of slots left).

This means that about 240 registrations were received between the end of February and the end of March!

We have many children still on the waiting list, and our Director of Children's Programs, Ellen Murphy, is working on finding ways to provide more camp sessions to accommodate additional campers.

Fourth Graders Take to the Field

About 850 Fourth Graders from ten Jefferson and Berkeley county schools engaged in field trips between March 31 and April 10 as part of our Fourth Grade school program, the Watershed Education Initiative.



Susan Brookreson gives some hands-on instruction

Since February, this popular program has been preparing children for these trips through a series of carefully planned classroom sessions that instruct them about the nature of watersheds and water quality issues, introduce them to the kind of life that can be found in our rivers, and show them how the presence of different organisms can tell us how healthy the river is. They've also been learning about testing for water quality by measuring temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and other water health indicators.

The field trips included a visit to the Potomac River at the Berkeley County Izaak Walton League facility as well as a tour of the Shepherdstown, Martinsburg, or Eagle School Road wastewater treatment plants.

The field trips allow fourth graders to observe first hand how treatment plants clean wastewater from homes, businesses, roads and parking lots before reaching streams and rivers.

They also allow students to test the river water for themselves to see how clean it really is, as well as observe and discuss other impacts on the river such as trash, erosion, and farm runoff.

These field trips would not be possible without volunteers. This year, a special thank-you goes to Susan Brookreson, Nancy Kirschbaum, and Teresa Marmorella.

In addition to those volunteers, three Potomack Intermediate School fifth grade students helped with two days of the field trip. These three students participated in last year's Fourth Grade Watershed Education Initiative program and have been involved with a "Watershed Club" offered by PVAS this year. Helping with the field trip is part of their service learning experience that is supported by the FLOW (Future Leaders of Watersheds) grant PVAS received last year.

We'd like to thank the members of the Berkeley County Izaak Walton League and the staff at the Eagle School Road Sewage Treatment Plant, the Martinsburg Sewage Treatment Plant, and the Shepherdstown Wastewater Treatment Plant for touring so many students through their facilities. Thanks also go to Bill and Bonnie Stubblefield for allowing us to use their river front for the program. This important program would not be possible without this support and valuable time.

This year's Watershed Education Initiative has been the subject of an article in the *Martinsburg Journal* and covered by West Virginia Public Radio.

Earth Day Events



PVAS participated in a series of Earth Day events this year.

On April 20, there were plans to participate in several events, however, some got rained out.

The Shepherdstown Farmer's Market had an Earth Day emphasis, and we had an informational table there.

In the evening, we had a display at an Earthfest event at the Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church.

PVAS is also scheduled to have a display at a special April 27 "Voices of the Earth" concert at the Berkeley Springs High School.

In view of the area's need for rain it seems that mother earth was taking care of us even though we still struggle to take care of her.

Plan Now To Attend Special June Meeting at Yankauer

For June, instead of holding our regular second-Wednesday-of-the-month meetings at NCTC, we're organizing a special, family-oriented evening event on Saturday, June 7, at the Yankauer Nature Preserve.

The event, which will begin at 5:00 p.m., will include a potluck supper, recognition of PVAS volunteers, and a special program featuring live raptors and other birds of prey.

The program, entitled "Wings and Things," is part of Maryland Department of Natural Resources series intended to give adults and children alike the opportunity to see live wildlife up close and personal.

A Maryland state naturalist will present a variety of birds, discuss their natural histories and habitats and the current threats they face, and tell the story of how each bird was brought into the state's care.

All of the birds used in the program are injured birds that have been rehabilitated but cannot be released back to the wild, either because their injuries make them unable to survive or because they have become too imprinted on humans.

More details will be provided in the June *Valley Views*.

PVAS Gets Two New Grants

The Carl M. Freeman Foundation on April 7 named PVAS as one of the winners of its first grant cycle for nonprofit organizations in the Eastern Panhandle.

PVAS' $5,000 award will be used for signage and other improvements at the Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County.

In all, the Foundation awarded a total of $50,000 to 12 Eastern Panhandle organizations through its FACES (Freeman Foundation Assists Communities with Extra Support) program, which supports smaller organizations.

The Foundation uses advisory boards composed of local community leaders to decide its FACES program awards.

The Carl M. Freeman Foundation only provides grants in areas where the Carl M. Freeman Companies do business. It has established a presence in the Eastern Panhandle since the Freeman Companies purchased Coolfont Resort in Berkeley Springs and developed Potomac Towne Center in Ranson.

Meanwhile, the City of Ranson has awarded us a grant of $1,500 to provide our nature education programming again this year to students at Ranson Elementary School.

We received a $1,000 grant from the City last year for the same purpose.

Our elementary school programs are intended to increase young children's understanding and appreciation of the natural world. They utilize the Yankauer Nature Preserve as a field laboratory and include pre- and post-visit classroom activities to enhance and reinforce the field experience.

Trail Work Continues at Eidolon Preserve

We held a number of work sessions throughout the winter at our new Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County.

Our land and facilities chair, Tim Murphy, coordinated the effort and most of the activity was concentrated on clearing and developing the four-mile network of existing trails.

Many thanks to the following individuals who helped out: Lucinda Dick, of Berkeley Springs; Sue Dralle, of Great Cacapon and Annapolis, MD; Lee Fisher, of Crofton, MD; Joe Gentile, of Berkeley Springs; Chuck Honiker, of Martinsburg; Ron Kidwell, of Great Cacapon, and his son, Alec, and brother, Kenny; Tom Kloster, of Harpers Ferry; John Lehman, of Shepherdstown; Cynthia and Robert Reiffen, of Largent and Columbia, MD; and Gary Sylvester, of Martinsburg.

There will be plenty of other volunteer opportunities at Eidolon, so if you're interested in lending a hand there please contact Tim Murphy at 304-876-8133 or timurf@comcast.net. Or contact Peter Smith at 304-876-1139 or pvsmith@frontiernet.net.

In particular, we're looking for an individual or set of individuals who would be willing to team up with Joe Gentile to walk the trails on a regular basis during the non-winter months to make sure the trails are kept free of deadfalls or other obstructions during periods of peak use.

School Programs Take Flight!

Twenty-four classrooms from Kindergarten, First, Second, Third, Sixth and Ninth grades are visiting the Yankauer Preserve during April and May under the auspices of our educational programs for area schools.

In all, some 550 children from seven schools are participating in these programs.

This is a record number, and it is only possible because of Ellen Murphy's full time status and the work of dedicated volunteers.

Ellen could still use some additional hands for some of these programs, so please contact her at 304-676-3397 or pvasprograms@comccast.net if you'd like to help. She'd be happy to train you.

Calendar

May 2 ------Birding field trip to Sideling Hill
May 4 ------Field trip to Blandy Farm/Virginia Arboretum
May 10 -----Master Naturalist Workshops at NCTC
May 14 -----PVAS monthly meeting and annual meeting
May 19-23 -Science Olympiad at NCTC
May 29 -----PVAS program at Cacapon State Park
May 31 -----Workday at Yankauer
June 2 ------Audubon Discovery Camp begins!
June 7 ------Field trip to Ice Mountain
June 7 ------Family program at Yankauer Nature Preserve
June 15 -----Field trip to Cranberry Glades
July 11-13--Nature Photography Workshop

May Field Trips

We have two field trips scheduled for May.

On Friday, May 2, we will join the Washington County (MD) Bird Club for a birding trip to the Sideling Hill area in Maryland.

Participants should plan to meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Park and Ride lot by the Motor Vehicle Administration office off Route 65 just south of I-70 near Hagerstown (from 65, turn west onto Col. H. K. Douglas Drive; the lot is just behind Wendy's restaurant).

Please be sure to pre-register by contacting Nancy Kirschbaum at 304-876-6881 or nancyk500@comcast.net.

On Sunday, May 4, we will take a trip to the Blandy Experimental Farm in Clarke County, VA.

The Blandy Farm is a 700-acre University of Virginia research facility that houses the State Arboretum of Virginia.

Our trip will focus on the Farm's Bluebird Trail, a bluebird-nesting program which is managed by the Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society.

This program, which incorporates some 110 nest boxes, is intended both to encourage bluebird populations and to facilitate scientific research. Since 2005, the Blandy Bluebird Trail has been participating in an Incubation Rhythm Studies project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, in Ithaca, NY. The project employs specially designed monitors, no larger than a coat button, which record environmental conditions within the next boxes. The resulting data provide insights into the ways factors such as temperature affect the number of hatchlings in a brood.

The Trail program's manager, Kaycee Lichliter, will be on hand to explain the various research efforts underway there.

Field trip participants will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the main parking lot next to the Arboretum's information pavilion, and the organized portion of the trip will last until about 11:00 a.m.

After that, participants are welcome to bring a picnic lunch and explore Blandy's trails and gardens on their own in the afternoon. The property, which contains more than 8,000 trees and woody shrubs, has much to offer. Its collections include more than half the world's pine species, a Virginia Native Plant Trail, the largest collection of boxwood varieties in the U.S., a spectacular grove of more than 300 ginkgo trees, an herb garden featuring culinary, medicinal and ornamental herbs, and more.

For more information, see the Blandy Farm website at www.virginia.edu/blandy or contact Nancy Kirschbaum at the telephone number or email mentioned previously.

To reach the Blandy Farm from Charles Town take Route 340 South through Berryville and Boyce to Route 50, and turn right (east) on Route 50. The Arboretum is approximately1.5 miles on the right.

Camp Wish List

Please save your 2-liter bottles and six-pack rings! We have BIG plans for them this summer! Please coordinate a drop-off of these donations with Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739 or pvasprograms@comcast.net.

Science Olympiad May 19-23

Volunteers needed! PVAS will be assisting Jefferson County Schools and the National Conservation Training Center with their Science Olympiad again this year.

The dates of this year's event are May 19-23.

We would love additional volunteers to help with the PVAS stations which may include an activity about the NCTC eagle nest, dissecting owl pellets, nature walks, predator/prey activities, and other subjects.

Lesson plans and training are available, so if you'd like to help with this fun, meaningful, and educational event, please contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or PVASmail@aol.com. PVAS could reach about 200 sixth graders that week with these activities, so we'd love your help.

PVAS Sponsoring May 29 Talk at Cacapon State Park

PVAS will sponsor a talk on May 29 at Cacapon State Park about fish kills and related problems in the Potomac River and its tributaries.

The speaker will be Dr. Vicki S. Blazer, the fish pathologist at the Leetown Science Center's National Fish Health Research Laboratory.

The program will be held in the Daniel Morgan Room of the park's Lodge starting at 7:00 p.m.

Admission will be free and anyone with an interest is welcome to attend.

Dr. Blazer will discuss the latest research into fish kills and the increase in intersex fish, and the possible relationship to "emerging contaminant" issues.

She explains that emerging contaminant issues involve contaminants only recently recognized as problematic and not routinely monitored. They include pharmaceuticals and chemicals from personal care products, which pass through wastewater treatment facilities into natural bodies of water; antibiotics and other substances from animal manures, which are carried into rivers and lakes by runoff; and pesticides and herbicides from agriculture and lawn care, which are also carried away by runoff.

Dr. Blazer has worked at the Fish Health Research Laboratory since 1992. Since that time, she has been involved in numerous fish disease issues in the Chesapeake drainage area, as well as national and international fish health issues.

Previously she was assistant leader of the Georgia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit at the University of Georgia, where she taught courses in fish diseases, fish pathology, and fish nutrition and directed graduate student research.

She has a B.S. in Marine Biology from Southampton College of Long Island University and a Ph.D. from the University of Rhode Island. She did two years of postdoctoral work at the University of Georgia's Veterinary College.

PVAS Set to Vote for Regional Member of National Audubon Board

Every three years in the spring, PVAS and the other chapters in the Audubon's Mid-Atlantic Region must vote to nominate a regional member of the National Audubon Society Board of Directors.

The winners of these regional elections are then placed on a national ballot in the fall for formal election by Audubon members nationwide.

This year, the choice for chapters in our region is simple: there is only one candidate: Caroline Coe, of Richmond, who is already our regional representative on the National Board.

Ms. Coe is a longstanding member of National Audubon and its Richmond chapter. She is a past president of the Richmond chapter and the Virginia Audubon Council, which represents all the chapters in that state.

Unless we hear objection from the PVAS membership, the PVAS Executive Committee plans to approve our chapter's vote for Ms. Coe at its June meeting, which will be held on the 4th at 3:00 p.m. at President Peter Smith's house at 1212 Steamboat Run Road, Shepherdstown.

National Audubon rules require that the exact time and place of this meeting be communicated to the chapter membership at least 30 days in advance.

If anyone has an objection to PVAS casting its vote for Ms. Coe, they should notify Peter Smith c/o PVAS, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

Ice Mountain Trip Being Planned for June

Looking ahead to June, we are planning a field trip to the Ice Mountain Preserve in Hampshire County on Saturday, June 7. Details are still being worked out but mark your calendar now if you've never been to the Preserve before—this will be a good opportunity to visit this unique place, which PVAS last visited three years ago and which can only be accessed through organized trips of this kind.

A Nature Conservancy property, the 149-acre Preserve contains an unusual geologic site: a high rocky slope that traps winter ice and retains it year round, like a kind of natural refrigerator.

The ice itself is mostly hidden from view deep within the rocks but cold air flows continually from a series of vents at the bottom of the slope.

Historically, Native Americans and early settlers used the vents for storing perishable food in the warm months. Now the vents are of interest primarily because they create a unique ecosystem that supports Canadian, Alpine, and even Arctic species of plants in addition to native Appalachian species. The mountain also has high sandstone cliffs offering impressive views and rock chimneys that are home to large ravens. One may also see eagles there.

Watch our web page and the June issue of *Valley Views* for more information. Pre-registration will be required for this trip. If you'd like to go ahead and sign up now, contact Carolyn Thomas at 304-267-3115 or webethomas@aol.com.

Sign Up for July Photo Workshop at Cacapon State Park

If you weren't able to make the nature photography workshop that Wil and Donna Hershberger offered at the National Conservation Training Center in April, they've got another one scheduled for the weekend of July 11-13 at Cacapon State Park in Morgan County.

The workshop is tailored primarily for beginners who have used a camera at least a few times but it will certainly be useful for those with more experience.

It will run from Friday evening through Sunday noon and include both classroom time and field work. It will cover all aspects of nature photography and include such topics as seeing light, reading tonalities, composition, and equipment needs and use.

Registration will be limited to 15 people, so the level of instruction is very personal.

Wil and his wife, Donna, are founding members of our Potomac Valley Nature Photographers group, and Wil is a leading area naturalist and photographer. He is currently first vice-president of the Shenandoah Photographic Society, a member of the American Ornithologists Union, the Society of Field Ornithologists, the North American Nature Photographers Association, and the North American PhotoShop Professionals.

His nature photographs have been published widely. Most recently, he is coauthor of "The Songs of Insects," a book and audio CD published in 2007 by Houghton-Mifflin Company.

Tuition for the workshop is $150 and includes all instruction, a course notebook, and coffee and snacks.

Details and registration forms will be available shortly on the PVAS website or by calling PVAS at 304-676-3397.



Photo Camp for Teenagers Set for July

PVAS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are teaming up again this summer to offer their third annual digital nature photography day camp for area high school students.

The camp will be held July 7-12 and include four days of field and lab training on the National Conservation Training Center campus in Shepherdstown and a one-day field trip to the Patuxent Refuge in Laurel, MD.

Participating students not only learn about the fundamentals of digital nature photography and image editing from expert instructors, they also gain a greater understanding of nature and a greater appreciation for the conservation ethic.

Enrollment is capped at only ten students, so those who participate receive very intensive, hands-on instruction. They also have full access to NCTC's state-of-the-art computer laboratory.

The cost for the entire week is only $100.

Digital SLR cameras are provided, courtesy of the Nikon Corporation.

For more information or to apply contact Matt Pool of NCTC by email at 304-876-7962 or matt_poole@fws.gov.

President's Perch

Hello everyone:

Spring is here and—as this newsletter illustrates—there's a lot happening at PVAS. Here are some of the highlights:

- Our Fourth Grade school program, which began in February and which focuses on watershed protection issues, is still going great guns with some 850 students from ten different schools enrolled.
- Our programs for the other K-6 grades are continuing to take hold in area schools: about 550 students from seven schools are participating in these programs during April and May. A new $1,500 grant from the City of Ranson will facilitate the participation of Ranson Elementary School students in these programs for a second year.
- Our Yankauer summer day camp is so popular this time around it's almost literally bursting at the seams. We're still in the process of trying to add more camp sessions to accommodate more campers.
- We're once again teaming up with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to offer a digital nature photography camp at the National Conservation Training Center this summer. That camp is nearly full now, too.
- Among our programs for adults, our Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program has just begun its second year of instruction with the maximum 20 students enrolled. Courses will continue through October.
- Among our land and facilities activities, we're continuing to make progress in developing our new Eidolon Nature Preserve. Most importantly, the Nature Conservancy has now agreed to transfer some Eidolon land to us. That's a big step; once the transfer is completed we can begin working on improvements that will support educational programming at the preserve. We've also completed more trail work at Eidolon this winter and we've received a $5,000 grant from the Carl M. Freeman Foundation for signage there.

Thanks to the staff, interns, and many volunteers who have been pitching in to help make these and many other things happen.

Thanks, too, to the many families and individuals who have also helped make things happen by contributing to our annual appeal. The $26,855 that you contributed was a strong result—particularly since the economy was palpably worsening throughout the appeal period. These funds are invaluable in helping us to sustain our programming. We really appreciate your support!

—Peter Smith

We invite you to take a moment to look over the extensive list of our many donors and supporters.

WITH GREATFUL APPRECIATION — THANK YOU!

PVAS's Master Naturalist Program Begins Second Year

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program, which was established by PVAS last year, launched its second year of training on the April 12-13 weekend at Cacapon State Park.

The training will continue every month through October, with about half the classes held at Cacapon State Park in Morgan County, and half at the National Conservation Training Center in Jefferson County.



Kristin Alexander addresses the new class on their first weekend outing

This year's training program is being coordinated by PVAS Board Member Clark Dixon and Wanda Miller, of Martinsburg, who graduated from the program last year.

Master Naturalist programs are patterned after the long-established Master Gardener programs.

They are aimed at allowing individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of the natural world while helping to serve their communities and the environment.

Participants receive 64 hours of classroom and field training in a broad range of topics in the fields of natural history and environmental education.

After completing their training and 30 hours of volunteer work, they are certified as Master Naturalists. They can then engage in such activities as leading interpretive walks at state parks, assisting biologists with research, and giving presentations to school children and other groups.

West Virginia was one of the first states to initiate such a program, and the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program is an official local chapter of the state program.

Only 20 individuals can enroll per year.

If you are interested in enrolling in future years, contact PVAS at 304-676-3397 or pvasmail@aol.com.

Yankauer Workday Set for May 31

Spend May 31 (or part of it) at our Yankauer Nature Preserve sprucing things up before summer camp begins.

We'll be weeding the flower garden, controlling invasive plants, cleaning out the shed, trimming the trails, and carrying out various other tasks before the campers arrive on Monday.

We'll be there from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Bring a sack lunch, but PVAS will provide snacks and water.

This is a great opportunity for Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists to earn volunteer hours! If you'd like to help, please contact Tim Murphy at timurf@comcast.net or 876-8133.

Wildflower Festival

We were fortunate enough to have beautiful weather for the festival and community members and visitors flocked to the Yankauer Preserve to see the wildflowers, read poems, do children's activities, and enjoy refreshments.

An estimated 100 people, many with young children, participated either by taking a guided walk or exploring the preserve on their own. Goose Route Performing Arts Collaborative performed several times in the afternoon for passersby, and we thank them for participating.



Cutleaf toothwort at Yankauer – photo by Laura Rau

A special thank you goes out to our volunteers. Judith Treesburg coordinated the poetry aspect of this year's Wildflower Festival which caught many people's attention and was very popular. Our wonderful walk leaders included Mary Duke, Kathryn Henry, Julie Laing, Joe Metzger, and Joy Pardue. Kathy Bilton led a "review walk" on Thursday for volunteers to review the flowers and share knowledge with one another, and Sarah Fedorchak helped Ellen Murphy with the children's activities in the pavilion.

Feedback was very positive about the day and it was wonderful to see the preserve abuzz with activity.

Learn More about Chimney Swifts

Chimney Swifts are returning to our area around now, and they're a very common species around our towns. It's worth taking some time to learn more about these fascinating, very intelligent birds.

Among other things, they're extremely beneficial to humans because one nesting family group—two parents and their offspring—will consume more than 12,000 flying insect pests every day, including mosquitoes, gnats, termites and biting flies.



They've also shown themselves to be very adaptable. Their original native habitat was large hollow trees in the forests, and when the old forests were logged out in the 18th and 19th centuries they learned to roost in open chimneys, especially large industrial chimneys.

But now that such chimneys are becoming a thing of the past, Chimney Swifts are running out of roosting options and their numbers are in decline.

There are ways you can help, including building chimney swift towers. To learn more, go to an excellent website devoted to the subject: www.chimneyswifts.org.

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 or $35 to renew an existing NAS membership ($15 in either case for seniors and students). 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 membership.

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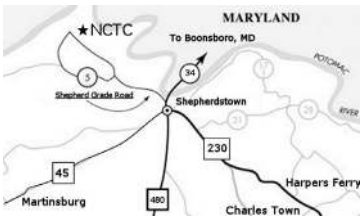
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DATED MATERIALS

A proud partner of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign.

MAIL TO:

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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, at the US Fish and Widlife Service National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV, in the Instructional West Building. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please call any of the board members listed her or see http://www.potomacaudubon.org. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD

The PVAS Board meets every other month on the first 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 304 876-1139	pvsmith@frontiernet.net
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Emeritus Board Members

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Special Contacts

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Web Master:	Kathy Bilton	kathy@fred.net

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