

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society

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May 2017

President's Note

by Michael Sullivan, PVAS President

April 2017 was the season of environmental advocacy and action. PVAS's Forum on April 13th (see page 3) provided guidance to members and the community at large on effective environmental advocacy. On April 22nd, Earth Day 2017 activities emphasized education as the foundation for stewardship of our natural resources. The March for Science, also on April 22nd, was a celebration of science as a "pillar of human freedom and prosperity." Through their activities on April 29th, the People's Climate Movement raised awareness about global climate change.

Education and science are central to responsible environmental advocacy and action. The mission of PVAS – *people dedicated to preserving, restoring, and enjoying the natural world through education and action* – is strongly aligned with the major themes of these national and international initiatives. In fact, we practice what we preach every day with our youth, family, and adult programs.

One of the major accomplishments of PVAS is our contribution to bringing STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math - to so many children through our school and summer camp programs. Our hands-on classroom programs, field trips, and camp activities provide students and campers with knowledge about streams, watersheds, wetlands, soils, plants, and the many forms of wildlife – insects, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals – that abound in our area. Ideally, the children of today become the adults of tomorrow who not only appreciate wildlife and outdoor activities, but also have the awareness and tools to protect it.

Another major accomplishment of PVAS is the amount of education provided to adults through our evening programs, natural history workshops, field trips, and the Master Naturalist Program. These programs and activities inform participants about the importance of nature and the need to protect our natural resources. They foster awareness about environmental issues, promote conservation, and set the stage for effective action.

Taken together, PVAS is doing the right thing at the local level, as it should. Let's keep up the good work!

Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

A new record has been set. Thanks to our amazingly generous members and friends, PVAS has far surpassed the goal for our Annual Appeal. This year's annual appeal has received \$50,715!! That is nearly \$10,000 more than we budgeted for the year. This is a truly remarkable number for a small organization like ours, and I can't thank all of you enough for making this a reality.

Between the exciting gift of Cool Spring Preserve, inspiring conservation projects like the chimney swift tower, and the unprecedented numbers of adults and children reached through our educational programs, 2016 was quite a year. And to have the 2016 Annual Appeal exceed all expectations is truly incredible. Thank you so much to everyone who helped us achieve this significant milestone.

2017 will certainly have its challenges, as federal and state grant sources will likely be fewer, so we truly appreciate the support of our members and friends. We have big dreams for the year ahead, and we can move forward confidently thanks to your overwhelming support providing a firm foundation for the year. We truly thank you for your incredible generosity.

Annual Meeting and Picnic!

Please save the date for the Annual Member Meeting at 6:00 p.m., on Saturday, June 17, at the Yankauer Preserve. Once again, dinner is on us.

The Board is hosting the event (plates, silverware and napkins will also be provided) as a "Thank You" to our members and volunteers. The event will begin with a very brief business meeting to meet board members, recognize Birdathon winners, and thank dedicated volunteers. This is a members-and-volunteers-only (and free) event. Please vote by June 1 using either the enclosed Board Election ballot or https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Board_Election_2017, so we can announce Board Members for 2017-2018 at the event.

For planning purposes, please RSVP using the website's event calendar (<http://potomacaudubon.org/event-2532397>) or leave a message at 304-676-3397 to let us know how many from your party to expect for dinner. We hope you will join us!

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

Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*)

By Wil Hershberger

It is an astounding moment when you get to see a Whip-poor-will. About the size of an American Robin, though plumper, these exceedingly well-camouflaged birds are hidden in plain sight during the day, often sleeping on a horizontal branch close to the ground. Once the sun goes down, these birds are much easier to “see,” especially along the sides of backcountry roads where their eyes reflect the headlights as an eerie orange-golden glow. Much like cats, foxes, coyotes, and White-tailed Deer, the eyes of Whip-poor-wills have an extra membrane, called the *tampetum lucidum*, that reflects light back through the retina in order to capture as much light as possible in the dim conditions of dawn, dusk, and moonlit nights. It can be a bit unnerving to see these glowing, apparently bodiless eyes floating up from the roadside and off into the woods as you drive along.

Whip-poor-wills eat night-flying moths and insects. Therefore, they need the enhanced night vision, as described above, to see and follow their prey, and to avoid running into trees and limbs. Another adaptation to this food source is a very large mouth, the edges of which are also equipped with barbless-feathers called rictal bristles. These bristles help to funnel prey into their gaping maw, as they deftly fly among the branches of their woodland homes.

Males sing their endlessly repeated, “WHIP-poor-WILL” songs from perches throughout their territories. At close range, an introductory “cluck” can be heard just before the whip note. During the mating season, males may be heard doing a long series of “gurr” calls after a long session of singing. It is believed that these calls are used during courtship, and perhaps during the mating process itself.

I was fortunate to get an amazing recording of a male singing, and then doing, a long series of these “gurr” calls, and then flying away with an accompanying wing clap. A wing clap is where the wings are brought together either over or under the bird, and clapped together to make a sound; this also apparently used during courtship, and in territorial defense. I knew that there were territorial males in the area and that one male seemed to sing repeatedly from one small patch of pines. I placed a stereo microphone on a tripod into the edge of this stand of pines in the wee hours of the morning, before the Whip-poor-wills had starting to sing. I ran a microphone cable back to my truck, using it as a blind, to hide and keep noises from reaching the mics. Within 30 minutes, the male flew in and landed within a few yards, if not feet, of the mics, and began to sing. He became more excited, and sang more rapidly, then suddenly changed to a long series of “gurr” calls, each call slightly lower in pitch than the preceding note. After about a minute of this, he flew off with clapping wings. I can’t imagine when he breathes during this long “gurr” display. You can listen to this recording here: http://natureimagesandsounds.com/assets/WHWI_sounds_full_length.wav

Females do not build a nest; they just make an impression into the leaf litter and lay their two creamy-white eggs that are marked with lavender blotches. Males and females share incubation duties during the three weeks that the eggs require to hatch. The young are semiprecocial – able to move around to some extent at a very early age. The young are brooded by both parents for an additional week or so. The young are able to fly two weeks after hatching.

In our area, Whip-poor-wills return to their breeding sites in early April. The best areas are Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management (WMA) area in Jefferson County, and Sleepy Creek WMA in Berkeley County. For the later, the road that goes past the ranger’s station is the best. From the foot of Third Hill Mountain to the top, there are several territorial males within earshot of the road. Songs are most easily heard after sunset or before sunrise while the sky is still dark. These amazing creatures are dependent on flying insects, moths in particular. If you live in an area where there are Whip-poor-wills please be very careful with insecticides – one beings’ pests are another beings’ food.

Whip-poor-wills; Photos © Wil Hershberger



PVAS Events

Advocacy Forum: Guide for the Uneasy Environmentalist

“There has never been a better time to be an advocate,” declared Mary Ann Hitt of the Sierra Club, during the PVAS Advocacy Forum on April 13, 2017. Judging by the strong attendance, our community members concur! The Advocacy Forum was the first such event held by PVAS, and was inspired by member feedback from the 2016 PVAS Survey.

Over 400 viewers were reached in person and through social media, and several journalists also attended. Each speaker held an insightful perspective on how to more effectively support organizations, politicians and policy regarding environmental and conservation issues in West Virginia. As Dr. David Didden stated, humans are bonded to the environment, if we don't take care of the natural world, our health will feel the consequences.

Advocates need to be organized, first determining specific and measurable goals, explained Mary Ann Hitt. From there, work backwards and strategize what effective tactics, partnerships and modes of communication will help achieve success. Partnering with local organizations is an effective way to create change. Many local groups help support good environmental practices by providing long term monitoring data. Stephen Skinner pointed out that vigilant monitoring to ensure accountability is essential. Christian Thomas from SkyTruth, a local environmental non-profit, shared information about numerous on-going monitoring projects that need volunteer participation and support. SkyTruth works to track industrial activity through satellite imagery and remote sensing.

Volunteering supports the capacity of local organizations, and is also needed by political leaders who are commonly over-burdened with legislative issues, and frequently lack the human and monetary capital to accomplish more. The Advocacy Forum panelists shared areas of opportunity for concerned advocates, and also highlighted several great on-going efforts in our community.

Thank you to our panelists: Stephen Skinner; Dr. David Didden, Director of Jefferson County Public Health; Mary Anne Hitt, of the Sierra Club; and Christian Thomas of SkyTruth. We also appreciate our eager volunteers, staff, and board members who helped make this a successful event.



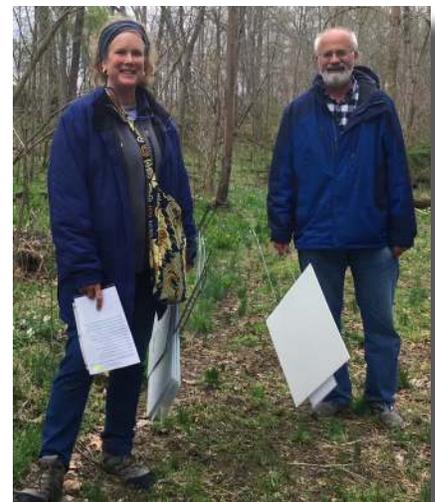
Moderator Joseph Hankins and panelists Stephen Skinner, David Didden, Mary Anne Hitt, and Christian Thomas

Volunteer Spotlight**Have you met Carolyn and Bruce Thomas?**

If not, we know you should, because Carolyn and Bruce are two of the most good-natured and selfless individuals around! In addition to their notable careers in public service, they have contributed countless hours volunteering for local organizations. Benefitting the Scouts, Trout Unlimited, the Garden Club, PVAS, and others, they are very engaged community leaders! PVAS is fortunate for the support of Carolyn and Bruce Thomas.

Among many other roles, they are critical to the success of our annual “This Race is for the Birds.” The Thomases are truly dedicated volunteers and advocates of conservation, and they bring immense joy to those around them. We at PVAS are grateful to know and work with Carolyn and Bruce Thomas.

We know all of our PVAS volunteers are great! If you know someone who others should meet, please contact Bridget Tinsley at bridget@potomacaudubon.org.



PVAS Events

Wildflowers Will Be Subject of May 10 Program; May 12 Walk

Our monthly program for May will feature a presentation about spring wildflowers of the Eastern Panhandle. The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10, at the Hospice of the Panhandle facility in Kearneysville. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome to attend.

The speaker will be Larry Stritch, a recently retired U.S. Forest Service Botanist. He will review some of the spring wildflowers commonly found in the area, the habitats where they may be found, and their natural history. Two days later, on Friday May 12, Stritch will lead a PVAS-sponsored spring wildflower walk at Jefferson County's Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area.

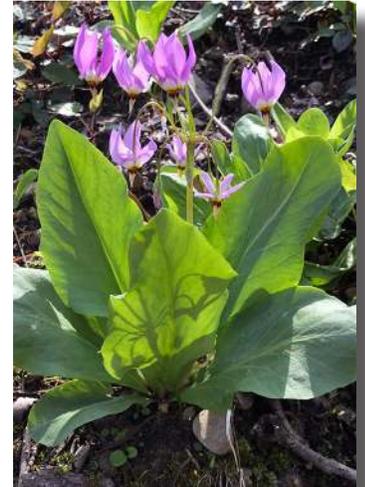
Stritch is an expert in native plant identification, propagation, and gardening with native plants. He is also an expert in pollination ecology, and recently served as staff to President Obama's Pollinator Health Task Force where he helped author *A National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators and Pollinator Friendly Best Management Practices for Federal Lands*. In addition, he has served on the Federal Interagency Monarch High Level Working Group.

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

The Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area is located on the east side of the Shenandoah River, about four miles east of Charles Town. Walk participants will meet at 10:00 a.m. at the parking lot by the Wildlife Management Area boat launch site off Mission Road. The walk will last about two hours, and cover about two miles of moderately even ground. There will be no fee, and anyone with an interest is invited to attend. This is intended as a family-friendly event, and children are welcome.

Pre-registration for the walk is encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available the PVAS website. Those who participate should be sure to dress for the prevailing weather conditions, wear sturdy footwear, and bring drinking water and insect repellent.

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



May 24 Audubon Program Will Focus on Pollinators

PVAS will sponsor a morning program in Berkeley Springs on Wednesday, May 24. The program will be held at 10:00 a.m. at the Morgan County Board of Education building at 247 Harrison Avenue. It will feature a presentation entitled "Pollinators: The Simple Truth, We Can't Live Without Them." Admission is free, and everyone is welcome to attend.

The speaker will be Larry Stritch, a recently retired U.S. Forest Service Botanist. He will provide an overview of the process of pollination and the role of pollinators, discuss the current status of different pollinators, and provide an introduction to developing pollinator gardens.

Stritch is an expert in native plant identification, propagation, and gardening with native plants. He is also an expert in pollination ecology and recently served as staff to President Obama's Pollinator Health Task Force where he helped author *A National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators and Pollinator Friendly Best Management Practices for Federal Lands*. In addition, he has served on the Federal Interagency Monarch High Level Working Group.

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

Sign Up Now for May 25 First Aid/CPR Training Session

PVAS will offer a one-time, three-hour training session in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) the evening of Thursday, May 25. Those who successfully complete the session will earn a standard first aid/CPR certificate through the Emergency Care Safety Institute.

The session will be held from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. at our Cool Spring Nature Preserve, which is located at 1469 Lloyd Road, about six miles southwest of Charles Town. The session will be led by Brian Kearney, a certified first aid/CPR instructor. It is open to anyone with an interest but enrollment will be limited to 10 people and pre-registration is required. To register and get directions go to the PVAS website.

PVAS has organized the session as a Natural History Workshop. The skills learned from it will be valuable for everyone but PVAS is particularly interested in training Master Naturalists and other individuals who lead groups of people in outdoor activities like hikes and natural history field trips. There will be a fee of \$70 for PVAS members and \$75 for nonmembers.

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

PVAS Events

16th Annual Race for the Birds

Once again, the trails at Wild Goose Farm did not disappoint. Participants enjoyed the blue skies, plentiful wildflowers, and challenging trails on Saturday, April 8th for PVAS's 16th annual "This Race is for the Birds." The generosity of Wild Goose Farm's new owners, Jay Clemens and Carolyn Seen, allowed runners and walkers alike an opportunity to register in the picturesque barn, run along the banks of lily pad ponds, up rocky hills, through grassy pastures and winding woodland trails.



Edward Schrank, owner of 5 Runners Racing Timing Company, provided the timing for a 3rd year in a row. Talented M.C., James Munnis, entertained us with music, race announcements and sponsor recognition. Lucia Valentine, who has just released her first record, was gracious enough to come out on the cool, early morning to beautifully sing the National Anthem. Antietam Photographic Society's troupe of volunteer photographers did an amazing job of capturing the event with hundreds of photos taken throughout the course.



A total of 248 runners, joggers and walkers crossed the finish line in the 10K and 5K races. Many participants were from the eastern panhandle and Washington County, MD, however some runners traveled from further locations including Washington DC, Morgantown WV, Rockville MD and Leesburg VA.

The overall winner of the 10K race was Jared Matlick of Shepherdstown WV who had a time of 40:20. The 1st female in the 10K was Jasmine Marks of Shepherdstown with a time of 41:29. The overall winner of the 5K race was Alexander Tice of Fredrick MD with a time of 22:47. The 1st female in the 5K was Annie Didden of Shepherdstown with a time of 27:22. Full results and the link to race photos are available on the Race website: raceforthebirds.org.

This year's race grossed over \$12,000 thanks to the generosity of sponsors and runners alike. (And this does not count the in-kind contributions that were made, which were valued at well over \$5,000!). We can't thank sponsors and participating runners enough for their support.

This race would not be the success that it is without all of our generous sponsors and volunteers. The amount of work that went in to this year's race was tremendous, and we could not have done it without the support of numerous volunteers who helped with pre-race work: clearing the trails, marking the course, creating maps, setting up registrations, and delivering supplies, as well as day-of activities: parking, registration, course marshals, and cleanup crews. The Race Committee deserves special thanks for their service, as does Nan Johnson, volunteer Race Director, who is the glue that keeps this race together.



Photos courtesy of the Antietam Photographic Society

Save the Date!

Please mark your calendars and save the date for our Annual Spring Fundraiser. The event will take place Saturday, June 10, 2017 from 3:00 to 6:00pm at Graycliff Hall at Shepherd's Cove, between Shepherdstown and Martinsburg. This unique building is located high above the Potomac River and the view is spectacular. You really must see this unique home and explore the grounds.

You will be treated to your choice of champagne, wine, beer, or lemonade on the terrace overlooking the Potomac. Our extraordinary cooks of the Special Events Committee are preparing an elegant array of delicious savory and sweet bites for your pleasure.

Please join us! Ticket prices begin at \$50 per person and all proceeds go to support PVAS programs. Invitations will be mailed out soon. For more information visit www.potomacaudubon.com.



Family and Youth Programs

Spring School Programs Wind Down

As you read this, our spring school programs and field trips will be finishing up for this year. Classes from Wee Disciples School will end their year-long nature experience with a visit to Cool Spring Preserve in late April. Classes at Back Creek Elementary and St Joseph's School will visit Stauffer's Marsh in early May. In the past few weeks, Program Specialist Ellen Murphy visited Valley View Elementary, a new school where we had not presented programs before, to teach kindergarten classes about insects, and a second grade class about bird eggs and nests. In addition, she visited all the kindergarten classes at Opequon Elementary for the seventh year in a row!

Over 850 students in 40+ classes participated in a PVAS classroom presentation this year. Almost 100 students visited Yankauer Preserve. And there were over 2000 more students

who participated in a Fourth Grade Watershed program, Fifth Grade Alternative Energy Program, Wee Naturalist program, homeschool program, or library programs. All our staff has been busy!

Unfortunately, two other schools approached PVAS too late in this school year to be accommodated. We were out of available dates and had exhausted our school financial assistance grant funds! Still, we'll resume in September and we hope other schools will contact us then to set up classroom visits or trips to one of our nature preserves.

Contact Ellen Murphy (Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org) if your class would like arrange a program or field experience.



Watershed Education Trips Continue!

The Watershed Education Program completed its second month of Spring field trips in April. More than 320 fourth grade students from Jefferson, Berkeley and Morgan counties worked alongside PVAS staff and volunteers to demonstrate their knowledge about healthy watersheds.

For students these excursions are a rare opportunity to learn outdoors, by putting on water boots to find, see and touch macroinvertebrates in the stream, or to use chemical testing equipment to measure water samples from a flowing creek. Students collect data and record observations about the landscape around them to determine how healthy the local watershed is. They play games to learn about the water cycle, and use their creativity to construct water filters.

Rain or shine, these events are jam-packed with high-energy fun: all in the name of watershed conservation! Thank you to our volunteers and our participating schools.



Family and Youth Programs

Wee Naturalists

PVAS's Wee Naturalists programs are designed to introduce preschoolers (ages 3-5) to the natural world through walks, circle time, games, crafts, and activities!

Upcoming Program: **Flowers Are Calling**, Tuesday, May 16, 2017; 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. at Yankauer Nature Preserve. The wildflowers are blooming, so we're going on a wildflower hike! Our book for the month is *Flowers Are Calling*.



Conclusion of PVAS Programs at Burke Street After-School Program

At the end of April, PVAS AmeriCorps volunteer, Alison Zak, wrapped up PVAS's involvement in the Burke Street Promise Initiative, a collaborative project of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and Shepherd University. The school, located in Martinsburg, has a high number of families living in poverty and in need of community support.

During the last PVAS program, kids learned about snakes and played the 'Rattlesnake Hunter', a game similar to like Marco Polo that encourages the use of senses other than sight. The blindfolded rattlesnake hunter has to listen very carefully for the rattle of the snake, and the snake must sneakily avoid getting caught by the hunter. After a few boisterous rounds of the game, Alison demonstrated how to make origami paper snakes that the kids adorned with googly eyes, a bead for a rattle, and a blue tongue!

Youth Library Program

This month PVAS hosted a week of spring break programs at libraries in Jefferson and Berkeley Counties. Kids listened to stories about nature from different continents and made crafts related to each day's theme.

To kick off the series at the South Jefferson Public Library, we read a story about wombats and kids made aboriginal dot paintings to take home. Later in the week, at the Charles Town Library, kids listened to a story about how people in the Arctic live among and use nature for food and shelter. Then they made edible igloos out of marshmallows and white icing. Art projects you can eat are always a hit! Repeat travelers filled their 'nature passport' with stamps and stickers from each program, and fun was had by all!

Homeschool Adventures

Our monthly homeschool programs are designed for children ages 5 through 10. Programs are offered at both Cool Spring Preserve and Yankauer Preserve, and include science-based activities that reflect on specific nature-based themes.

Upcoming program: **Spring Wildflowers**, Friday, May 5; 1:30 – 3:30 p.m., at Yankauer Nature Preserve.

Camp Programs

Summer Camps

Camp sessions are over ¾ full! If you have been thinking of registering, now is a good time! Sessions run from **June 5 to July 28** and are offered at both Yankauer Nature Preserve in Berkeley County and at Cool Spring Preserve in Jefferson County, WV. This year, for an additional fee, we will be offering both before and after care for all sessions held at Cool Spring Preserve.

The following camps still have openings:

Camps at Yankauer Nature Preserve

Camp Survivor: June 12-16 and July 17-21
Nature Detectives: June 26-30

Camps at Cool Spring Preserve

Mud Pies and Dragonflies: July 10-14
Blast from the Past: June 26-30
Birds, Bugs, and Bats! And family overnight: July 5-7 (3 days)

Preschool Camps (Ages 3-6)

Nature Buddies: June 5-7 (3 days)
Out of the Nest: July 24-28

Camps for Teens and Pre-teens

Teen Photo Camp at Shepherd University: June 19-23
Outdoor Adventurer: June 19-23

Details about camp sessions, session dates and online registration can be found at: www.PotomacAudubon.org/discovercamp.

There's Still Time To Sponsor a Camper!

Have you heard about camp scholarships? PVAS received a record number of requests for financial assistance to attend camp this year! Twenty applications asked to attend one of our Audubon Discovery Camp sessions. Eight campers requested assistance in attending a sleep-away camp. Seventeen of the applications were from students whose family qualifies for a free or reduced fee lunch.

This year, our scholarship funds were reduced because the Fall Birdseed Sale was lower than many years. All of the proceeds from this sale are used to support camp scholarships. We want every child to have the opportunity to spend a week at camp, regardless of their family's circumstances and you might be able to help!

Your donation of \$50 will help send a kid to camp! A donation of \$100 will help even more... and a donation of \$150 will sponsor a child for an entire week of Audubon Discovery Camp, or for an entire week at the WV Junior Conservation Camp! Donations can be sent to Scholarship Donations, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV, 25443. Our camp scholarship committee will make sure your funds are well used to send a kid to camp. And a huge thank you to the individuals and local garden clubs who have already made a donation to the financial assistance fund this year!

Birding News and Events

Birdathon all month long!

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society (PVAS) will hold its eighth annual “Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon” the entire month of May. Registration will remain open during the first week of May, though earlier registration is preferred. Everyone is welcome to participate, regardless of experience or expertise at birding. The Birdathon offers several options for joining friendly competitions to see who can identify the highest number of bird species.

This year our Birdathon event is slightly different, as it allows participants to pick any day during the month of May, and there is no restriction on region! No matter where you are or if your schedule is hectic, we hope that you’ll sign up for Birdathon and get in on the fun! This event is very family friendly and is great way to get children more interested in birds and the natural world in general. All activities are free, and PVAS is holding several birdwatching events during May to encourage birdwatching.

Those who participate are encouraged to seek pledges from neighbors, family, and friends, to help support conservation programs at PVAS. This year, all funds raised will be used to improve Chimney Swift habitat on the Shepherd University campus.

If you would like to sponsor a team, or to sign-up please visit: <http://potomacaudubon.org/birdathon.html>.

Full details about Birdathon are available on the PVAS website. You may also contact Bridget Tinsley at (304) 261-6016 or bridget@potomacaudubon.org.

Participating in Birdathon is easy and rewarding: you can join a team or fly solo. Either go out in the field, as part of a team or as an individual, and actively seek to identify as many birds as possible during any 24-consecutive-hour-period during the month. Birdathon teams should be two to five members in size and can be made up of friends or family members. If you don’t have a team of your own, PVAS can help you find one.

The second way to participate is to initiate a “Big Sit,” in which you choose any location and identify all the bird species you can see or hear from within a 50-foot diameter circle - again, within a 24-consecutive-hour-period. You can locate your circle outside your porch or deck, in your yard, or in some favorite local spot. Here, too, you can do this on your own or invite friends and family to join you and make it a special event. This is a much easier option, and well-suited for anyone with mobility issues, and families with small children.

Those participating in the field and in individual or small-group Big Sits are asked to register; registration is free and easy on the PVAS website. PVAS’s annual Birdathon is named in honor of Ruth Ann Dean, who was a founding member, and ardent supporter, of PVAS. Each year, it is part of a series of local activities commemorating International Migratory Bird Day.

May 20 Leetown Bird Walk

Join Bob Dean and Heather Walsh for PVAS’s first birding trip to the grounds of the US Geological Survey’s Leetown Science Center on Saturday, May 20.

Participants should plan to meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Center’s Fish Health Laboratory, which is the large building with brown paneling on the east side of Leetown Road. (To search for it on Internet mapping sites, enter “407 Reservoir Road, Kearneysville, WV”).

The trip will focus on the property associated with the Laboratory. The property is not large, but it includes a mix of ponds and woods that host a wide variety of bird species, and it should offer excellent birding.

The walk is free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of birding skills. It will involve easy walking over level ground, and children and families are welcome.

Pre-registration is encouraged but not required. Registration is available on the PVAS website. Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring insect repellent and drinking water. Binoculars will be provided if needed. For more information, contact Krista Hawley at 703-303-1026, or adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org.

Birding the Shenandoah River by Boat!

On Monday, June 5th at 10am, Elliot and Nancy Kirschbaum will be leading a bird watching trip down the Shenandoah River with Shenandoah Riverkeeper as part of Potomac Riverkeeper Network’s RiverPalooza 2017. The group will put in at Andy Guest Shenandoah River State Park for a gentle and beautiful float down the Shenandoah River to the Karo Landing.

This section of river allows participants to glide past a large Great Blue Heron rookery. Easy riffles and deeper pools that are perfect for anyone wanting to wet a line in pursuit of smallmouth bass characterize this stretch. The event will be held rain or shine, as long as the river conditions permit safe paddling.

For details and registration, go to <http://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/?event=riverpalooza-june5-birdwatchingfloat>.

Milkweed Sale!

Preorder today!

Butterfly Weed, Swamp Milkweed

Quart pots for \$5

Pickup May 20 at the Native Plant Sale, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

All proceeds benefit PVAS conservation initiatives!

Preorder at <http://potomacaudubon.org/store>

Birding News and Events

Join May 31 Visit to Purple Martin Colony

Join local birding expert Joette Borzik on a visit to a very active and successful Purple Martin Colony in Jefferson County, on Wednesday, May 31. The visit will begin at 7:30 a.m.

The colony is located on a residential property owned by Chip Hussion. Mr. Hussion has 26 nesting cavities for the martins on 3 separate poles, as well as several other nesting cavities which usually house a handful of tree swallow pairs, a couple of blue bird pairs, and some wrens.

Come with your questions; Mr. Hussion will be on hand providing answers and stories. After discussion and observation, Joette will lead a bird walk along a short stretch of Evitt's Run and in the surrounding area. This event is open to the public and everyone is welcome regardless of birding skills, however registration is strongly encouraged. Register on the PVAS website.

Participants should plan to meet at Mr. Hussion's house. The address is 95 Terrace View, Charles Town. Some GPS systems may not recognize this address; if that's the case with yours, try 103 Eastland Terrace. The property is located in the Eastland Subdivision off Old Cave Road, which runs east off Route 340 about 1 mile north of Washington High School. Please note that Terrace View is the 3rd Eastland street and is to the right off Old Cave Road (up a hill) when coming from 340.

Please be sure to dress appropriately for the prevailing weather and bring drinking water. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them. For more information, please feel free to contact Joette at pep4223@comcast.net, or 240-440-4221. For questions regarding directions, please contact Mr. Hussion at 304-400-77098.

PVAS Sponsoring Memorial Day Bird Walk at Antietam Battlefield

PVAS will sponsor a Memorial Day bird walk along the Final Attack Trail of the Antietam National Battlefield, in Sharpsburg, MD on Monday, May 29. The walk is free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of 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 at 7:30 a.m. 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 water. 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 sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com, or 240-291-6465.



Bird Watching Field Trip to Northern WV

Join the grand finale of the month-long Ruth Ann Dean Birdathon by visiting two of the best bird watching spots in the region! PVAS and the Mountaineer Audubon Society have collaborated to organize a field trip to Cranesville Swamp Preserve and Cooper's Rock State Forest. This guided bird watching tour is a rare opportunity to visit two unique ecological areas, enjoy spectacular bird watching, and meet the members of the only other Audubon Society in West Virginia.

Everyone is welcome to attend regardless of experience. This event is free, but pre-registration is required. PVAS will have binoculars for those who don't have their own. Please pack a lunch, bring drinking water and insect repellent, and dress appropriately for hiking outdoors.

The field trip will take place on Saturday, May 27th. The group will meet at 5:45 a.m. at the Food Lion parking lot in Shepherdstown, and will leave at 6 a.m. We may designate a second meeting location that is convenient for people driving from more distant locations. We expect to meet at Cranesville Swamp Natural Area at 9 a.m., move on to Coopers Rock State Forest by 12 noon, and return to Shepherdstown at 5:30 p.m. This is an all-day event. Participants can choose to drive alone, or carpool from Shepherdstown to the Cranesville Swamp Preserve in Terra Alta, WV. Carpooling is suggested, as parking is limited at both sites.

Please visit www.potomacaudubon.org for more information and to register. Please contact Lynne Wiseman at 304-676-2725 or lewiseman@aol.com with any questions you may have.



Birding News and Events

Migratory Bird Day Events Scheduled for May

PVAS has put together a special series of events during May to mark the 25th annual observance of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD). The events will include a month-long Birdathon and a variety of birding trips between May 6 and May 14.

The IMBD is an international program that aims to promote greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of migratory birds in North, Central and South America. It was initiated in 1993 by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

All the PVAS events will be free, and anyone with an interest is invited to participate. Pre-registration is required for the Birdathon; it is encouraged but not required for the birding trips. To register for events and get directions and other details go to the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

For each trip, participants should dress for the weather, wear comfortable walking shoes and bring drinking water and insect repellent. Binoculars will be provided if needed. For additional information about specific events, contact the individuals mentioned in the event descriptions, or Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org, or 703-303-1026.

The schedule of events follows below:

May 1-31: Eighth Annual Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon. Teams and individuals will compete to identify the highest numbers of bird species they find in Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, and Washington counties and on the Potomac River bordering those counties within any 24-consecutive-hour-period during the month of May. Free and open to anyone who is interested, but all must pre-register. This year, those who participate are encouraged to seek pledges from neighbors and friends to help raise funds to improve Chimney Swift habitat on the Shepherd University campus. Contact Bridget Tinsley at bridget@potomacaudubon.org

Saturday, May 6: Bird walk at the National Conservation Training Center outside Shepherdstown. 7:30-11:00 a.m. Free and open to everyone but space is limited and registration is required. Register on the PVAS website by May 1.

Sunday, May 7: Bird walk at the Cool Spring Nature Preserve in Jefferson County. Will begin at 7:30 a.m. and last two to three hours. The Preserve is located at 1469 Lloyd Road, about six miles southwest of Charles Town. Contact Lynne Wiseman at 304-676-2725, or lewiseman@aol.com.

Sunday, May 7: Bird walk at the Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County. Meet at the preserve parking lot inside the preserve gates at 7:30 a.m. A good opportunity to see the rare Cerulean Warbler, a species of concern, that can be found in considerable numbers at Eidolon at this time of year. The walk will be led by Jon Boone and other local birders. For more info, contact the Nature Niche Store in Berkeley Springs at 304-258-0992, or natureniche@earthlink.net.

Monday, May 8: Bird walk at the Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area, on the east bank of the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County. Meet walk leader Jim Farley at 7:30 a.m. at the WMA parking lot by the boat launch site, off Mission Road. Contact Jim at 540-686-2056, or jamesfarley@frontiernet.net.

Tuesday, May 9: Bird walk at a private farm in Berkeley County. Meet walk leader Bob Dean at 7:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Hedgesville Shop and Save (formerly Food Lion) at 147 Roaring Lion Drive, off Route 9. The walk group will drive to the farm from there.

Wednesday, May 10: Birding trip to Sideling Hill in Maryland. Meet trip leader Sandy Sagalkin at 7:00 a.m. in the upper parking lot of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Authority, which is located at 18306 Col. Henry K. Douglas Dr., Hagerstown, MD (off Rt. 65, just south of US 70). From there, the trip group will drive north to Sideling Hill. Contact Sandy Sagalkin at sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com.

Thursday, May 11: Bird walk at the Claymont Mansion Property in Jefferson County. Meet walk leader Joette Borzik at 7:00 a.m. at the gate to the Claymont entrance road, which is located at 667 Huyett Road. Contact Joette at 240-440-4221 or pep4223@comcast.net.

Saturday, May 13: Bird walk at the Rolling Ridge Foundation lands on the Blue Ridge. Meet trip leader Joette Borzik at 7:30 a.m. the Rolling Ridge Study Community off Mission Road. Directions are on the PVAS website. For more info contact Joette at 240-440-4221 or pep4223@comcast.net. For questions about access to the Rolling Ridge property, contact Scott DeGraf at 301-275-2009.

Sunday, May 14: Mother's Day nature walk at the Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve in Berkeley County. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking area at the north end of the preserve, which is located on the east side of Back Creek Valley Road (County Route 7), one-half mile south of Shanghai.

Sunday, May 14: Mother's Day bird walk at the Cool Spring Nature Preserve. Meet walk leader Beth Poole in the Preserve parking lot at 7:30 a.m.

Conservation

Second Annual Native Plant Sale Set for May 20



Are you feeling inspired by the abundance of colorful spring wildflowers? Find your favorites and make your own backyard a native plant haven!

The 2nd Annual PVAS Native Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, May 20, 2017. Timed to coincide with this year's Shepherdstown Back Alley Garden Tour, the sale will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., on North King Street, behind the Library, in the space where the Shepherdstown Farmers Market is held on Sundays.

The sale will showcase plants that benefit endangered pollinators. In addition to a diverse inventory of plants and garden art, the event will also feature Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and other experts who can answer your questions about native plants, habitat, birds, pollinators and the selection and cultivation of plants that help sustain them. A beekeeper will be on hand to demonstrate beekeeping and apiculture, and The Monarch Alliance, of Washington County, MD will have literature available, including sample plans for butterfly gardens. Sustainable Solutions, of Shepherdstown, will provide information about land management services, such as wildflower meadow planting, and will also have warm season grass seed for sale. There will also be garden art for sale by Shary's Garden Art, of Berkeley Springs. Children are also welcome, and our AmeriCorps member Alison Zak will lead a kids' craft activity.

Native plant vendors participating so far include: Sunshine Farm and Gardens, from Renick, WV; Bluebell Ridge Nursery, from Sharpsburg, MD; and Stadler Nurseries, from Frederick, MD. PVAS itself will be selling Butterfly Weed and Swamp Milkweed through a partnership with The Monarch Alliance. These are plants that produce copious flowers greatly favored by many species of pollinators, including butterflies; they are available for pre-order on the PVAS website, www.potomacaudubon.org. Some of our vendors also accept pre-orders, so you may choose to inquire directly.

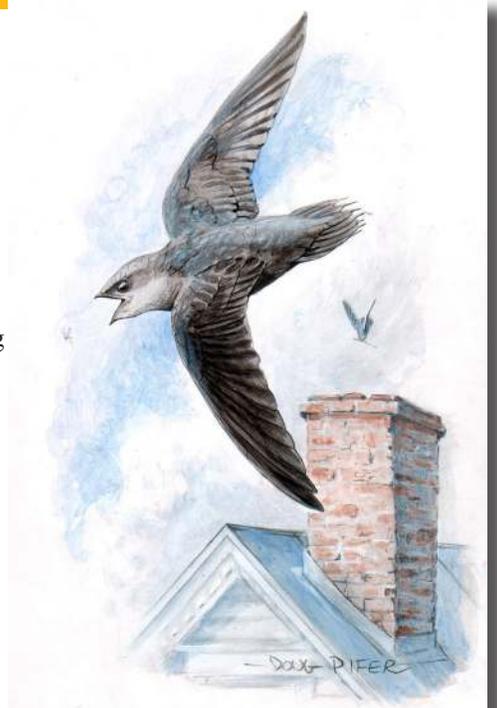
This 2nd Annual PVAS Native Plant Sale is presented in conjunction with the Back Alley Garden Tour and Tea, hosted by the Shepherdstown Community Club. To learn more, to be a vendor, or to help volunteer, please contact Bridget Tinsley at (304) 261-6016 or bridget@potomacaudubon.org.

The Return of the Chimney Swifts

Chimney Swifts have returned to our region after migrating from the Amazon Basin of South America. Several local sightings from April have been recorded online and can be found at www.eBird.org. Spring is nesting season for the Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*); each nesting site will hold one breeding pair and a limited amount of other non-breeding individuals. Currently, Chimney Swift habitat is in decline and so too is the Chimney Swift population.

Nesting habitat is important to maintaining the population of these threatened birds. Fortunately, Swift experts have determined how to provide valuable habitat by constructing nesting and roosting towers. Plans for inexpensive nesting towers can be found online at www.chimneyswifts.org. In 2014 PVAS members built a nesting tower at the Claymont Mansion in Charles Town, this tower has successfully hosted Chimney Swifts each year since it was established. Currently PVAS is leading a project to construct a large roosting tower on Shepherd University campus. To learn more about PVAS's involvement with Chimney Swifts, or to donate to the "Raise the Roost" Chimney Swift tower project please visit <http://potomacaudubon.org/ChimneySwifts>.

If you have built a Chimney Swift tower, are interested in doing so, or if you know of existing Chimney Swift nesting and roosting sites, please let PVAS know! We would like to expand our knowledge of the local Chimney Swift populations, and be a resources for others. Please contact Bridget Tinsley at bridget@potomacaudubon.org. Any sightings of Chimney Swifts should be recorded online at eBird.org, and be sure to share your photos and sightings with the PVAS community on our Facebook or Twitter!



Chimney Swift Illustration © Doug Pifer.

Notes from the Preserves

What's new at the Nature Preserves?

By Bridget Tinsley

All four of the PVAS nature preserves are valuable conservation sites that are open to the public daily from dawn to dusk. PVAS, with the help of countless volunteers, works hard to maintain the trails, and ensure that the preserves are welcoming to all. The upkeep tasks for over 500 acres can be daunting, but there are numerous reasons why working at the preserves is immensely rewarding for those who take the time.

Humility and reverence overwhelm the senses after spending a few hours outdoors. Unexpectedly discovering wildflowers in bloom, or the rare Wood Turtle found quietly resting in a creek; spotting Cerulean Warblers nesting in the trees overhead, and stepping past the tracks and scat of a curious critter that makes you urgently wish you had an identification guide on hand. These moments are sweet reminders of the value of native habitat, conservation and public lands. PVAS invites everyone to take advantage of our nature preserves and explore them with family and friends. Each month PVAS hosts several events at our preserves, to encourage visitors to learn more and get involved. We hope to see you at one of the upcoming May events:

May 6: Homeschool Adventures Program at Yankauer Nature Preserve (1:30-3:30 p.m.)

May 6: Maintenance Day at Cool Spring Preserve (9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

May 7: Cerulean Warbler Watch at Eidolon Nature Preserve (7:30 a.m.)

May 7: Bird Walk at Cool Spring Preserve (7:30-10:30 a.m.)

May 12: Maintenance Day at Yankauer Nature Preserve (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

May 14: Bird Walk at Cool Spring Preserve (7:30-10:30 a.m.)

May 16: Wee Naturalists at Yankauer Nature Preserve (9:30-11 a.m.)

May 31: Maintenance Day at Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve (9 a.m.-12 p.m.)

Volunteers Needed for May Nature Preserve Work Days

PVAS is looking for volunteers to help with work days at our Cool Spring and Yankauer nature preserves during May. The Cool Spring work day is scheduled for Saturday, May 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The Yankauer work day will be held on Friday, May 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. In both cases, the work to be done will be focused primarily on removing invasive plant species. The Yankauer work day will also include some trail clearing.

Anyone willing to pitch in is welcome. Both events will be good opportunities for those who want to learn more about dealing with invasive plants and protecting native plant habitats. It is also an opportunity for Master Naturalists to earn volunteer hours. All necessary tools will be provided, along with water and first aid.

The Cool Spring Preserve is located in Jefferson County, at 1469 Lloyd Rd, southwest of Charles Town. The Yankauer Preserve is located in Berkeley County, across the road from 455 Whiting's Neck Road. Detailed directions can be found at the PVAS website.

For more information, contact Bridget Tinsley at 304-261-6016 or bridget@potomacaudubon.org.

Volunteer Opportunity at Cool Spring Preserve

We are looking for a handy person to help construct a compost bin at Cool Spring Preserve. We will provide the materials and support! Contact Amy Moore, PVAS's Cool Spring Site Manager, at amy@potomacaudubon.org if you are interested in this project. Ideally, we hope to have it ready by the start of summer camp on June 5.

Cottage and Nature Center Donations

PVAS is seeking a few more furnishings and items for the Cottage and Nature Center as we get settled in our new space:

- Vacuum Cleaner
- Saucepans, cookie sheets, pie pans, baking dishes
- Patio Furniture
- End Table/Nightstand
- Curtains or Blinds
- Yard Tools
- Desk

If you have any items that you wish to donate to PVAS for the cottage or center, email Amy at amy@potomacaudubon.org. If possible, please provide pictures of the items in your email. All donations are tax deductible.

PVMN

PVMN Welcomes 2017 Class

On opening weekend of April 1 and 2, PVMN welcomed 23 students into the program. Not only was this one of our largest classes to date, it was the first class to start off the year at PVAS' new property, Cool Spring Preserve. The class represents a diverse mix of students from West Virginia and Maryland with an exciting set of skills and interests to contribute to the work of PVMN and PVAS. Instructors and facilitators were impressed immediately by the level of enthusiasm of the students, and look forward to working with them over the next few months.

The members of the new class are: Dan Dalton, Carol DiSalvo, Denise Domian, Deb Dorn, Jo Holmaas, Tim Hull, Emma Huvos, Sam Jenkins, Dale Kirchner, Lisa Kovatch, Rachael Leahy, Susan Loonsk, Sandy Melton, JP Miller, Dotti Mozden, Kris Phillips, Bahe Rock, Steve Sensabaugh, Chad Thompson, Carol Winckler, Jabe Winnings, Colleen Young, and Alison Zak.

For those of you who still need classes in order to certify as a Master Naturalist, take a look at the class schedule on our website: <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/masternat>, and contact Amy Evrard: amyyoung4@gmail.com.



Don't forget! PVMN Art Show and Fundraiser at the Fire Hall Gallery in the Charles Town Visitor Center! Opening Reception May 5, 2017 from 5-8 p.m.

Did You Know...?

Remember receiving that bulky WVMN manual in the big, white three-ring binder? The one taking up too much space on your bookshelf, or faithfully serving as a doorstop? Well, now the binder is available in digital form on a tiny flash drive.

The PVMN Coordinating Committee can order one for you for the low cost of \$20. Please contact Amy Evrard at amyyoung4@gmail.com to place your order.

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: ____.

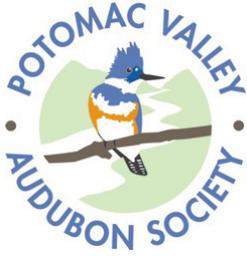
Clip and mail this form to:

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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May 2017

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Volume 35, Issue 8

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)

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 Vice President (*acting*): Jane Vanderhook (2017)..... janehook@frontiernet.net
 Secretary: Diana Gaviria (2018) jpikester@comcast.net
 Treasurer: Dan Cogswell (2017) daniel.cogswell@gmail.com

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 Tanner Haid (2018) Tanner.Haid@gmail.com
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 Stephen Paradis (2018) stephen.j.paradis@gmail.com
 Amy Evrard (2017) amyyoung4@gmail.com

Emerita Board Member: Jean Neely jeaneely@comcast.net

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