

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society

Volume 34, Issue 3

November 2015

President's Perch

by Jane Vanderhook, PVAS President

As I write this, the fall bird migration is at its peak back home, and I am sitting on a beach in the Outer Banks of North Carolina trying to figure what kind of gulls I am looking at. For me, gulls are hard to identify at any time of the year but as they get their winter plumage, they are even more difficult. I'm pretty sure we have Ring-billed and Herring, but I think I'm seeing Great Black-backed Gulls also. And then there are the terns... Unless you can catch them hovering over the water, they rarely hold still long enough to get a good look at them; but it is fun to try. Both Royal and Forster's Terns seem to be present -- but are there others?

Some birds are easier to identify than others. I have a male Boat-tailed Grackle on the chair next to me now, while a female is investigating the detritus on the sand nearby. I wish all birds made it so easy. I am less certain of the scores of swallows I am seeing. Tree? Bank? I can't tell. The Osprey and the Bald Eagle were easy, but thrilling nevertheless.

After many years of observing birds at various times of year along the coast, you would think I would be a lot better at it than I am. I was able to quickly identify the Sanderlings and the Willetts, but the only way I will ever be certain with some of the winter shorebirds is if they are wearing nametags. Perhaps that is the allure. Each new sighting presents you with a challenge, maybe even a mystery, that defies solution but spurs you into research and an expansion of what you know. It's not always the destination; it's the journey.

Don't forget: PVAS bird walks, classes, trips, monthly programs, and experts can help you enjoy the journey.

Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

Things happen...

We put together a budget with "best guess" scenarios every year, based on past experience and the plans for the year ahead.

But things happen. As you'll see in this newsletter, through no fault of their own, NCTC can no longer host our annual "This Race is for the Birds!" - a significant source of revenue for PVAS.

We are also putting a composting toilet at Yankauer Preserve. Tony Irwin, a local excavator, is generously volunteering his time and equipment. We're now 6 days in because, guess what? We hit rock. BIG rock. We had to pay over \$2,000 to rent a rock hammer to get the job done. Ouch. We still have a little wiggle room in the grant from the Division of Highways, but we were not anticipating that kind of expense.

Through partnerships, staff and volunteer dedication, grants, and generous donors we'll figure out alternatives, but without the magical combination of those listed elements on which we depend, I admit - I'd be losing a lot of sleep.

We are so fortunate to have an incredible network of people and agencies in our midst, on which we can call when the need arises. We can move forward with cautious confidence knowing that our members, and friends, and partners will help us survive and thrive. Solutions are in the works - I'll share details next month - but I know we'll be okay.

Many thanks to ALL who make PVAS the adaptable and resilient organization it is today. We couldn't do what we do without the incredible network and stability YOU provide.

Birdseed Pick-up Reminder

Don't forget birdseed delivery day at Gower's Williamsport and at the Hunter Hardware Warehouse is on Saturday, November 7, from 10:00 am until Noon.

Pick-up for Gower's Ranson will begin on Monday, November 9. If you have any questions or issues, please contact Diana Mullis at dianamullis@aol.com or by phone at 304-754-3753.

Our birdseed profits send kids to summer camps.

Thank you for supporting PVAS!

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

Field of Dreams in Hagerstown

by Sandy Sagalkin

“If we build it, will they come?” This is the question I asked Dave Kaplan last August. We are co-founders of the Monarch Alliance, and we were looking over the new Kiwanis Park in Hagerstown, where the City of Hagerstown had just agreed to install a Monarch Waystation. I wasn’t talking about Shoeless Joe Jackson, the figure in the 1989 film “Field of Dreams” with Kevin Costner. I was talking about Monarch Butterflies.

Few Monarch Butterflies have passed through Hagerstown in recent years, and we were concerned. The city, with additional funding from the Washington County Soil Conservation District, would be spending public funds on what we hoped would be a spectacular, but most importantly, productive Monarch Waystation: one that would attract both Monarch Butterflies and the public to see them. The eastern population of the Monarch Butterfly has been in serious decline since their populations were first monitored in their over-wintering areas in central Mexico in the mid-1990s.

The Monarch Waystation, a butterfly garden with at least two varieties of milkweed, is an idea that has been gaining in popularity across the country. Monarch Watch has been promoting Monarch Waystations for the past ten years, as a way to compensate for the loss of milkweed habitat across the country. Milkweed is the only plant on which the Monarch Butterfly will lay eggs, and upon which the caterpillar will feed. At last count, over 6,000 public and private Monarch Waystations in the United States were registered with Monarch Watch. The City of Hagerstown wanted to be in the forefront of this effort, and has worked closely with the Monarch Alliance on the planning, and the planting.

In early October, most of the planting was completed. Although, at this writing, we are still waiting for the Butterfly Weed, Ironweed, and asters to arrive, they should have been planted by the time this article is published. During the initial planting in early October, five Monarch Butterflies, on their way south to the mountains of central Mexico, agreed to stop and nectar on Purple Coneflowers and other plants; and subsequent to the planting, additional Monarch Butterflies have been seen at the site. This has been very heartening, and shows the value of Monarch Waystations, whether at large public sites such as Kiwanis Park, or small, private home butterfly gardens.

The Monarch Alliance is working with a local nursery to hold a milkweed sale next spring.

To get to Kiwanis Park, take Eastern Blvd north from Rt. 40 and turn right on Professional Court. Turn left at Cameo Drive and continue to Imperial. Turn right on Imperial, and then turn right again past the last Trilogy Building parking lot. Continue to the designated parking area, and walk down to the pavilion, the site of the Monarch Waystation. The park is handicapped-accessible.

For more information about The Monarch Alliance, contact Sandy Sagalkin at sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com or visit us at www.themonarchalliance.org. For information about Monarch Waystations, contact Sandy or visit www.monarchwatch.org.



Photos by Elmer Weibley, Washington County Soil Conservation District

American Tree Sparrow — *Spizelloides arborea*

by Wil Hershberger

From early November through early April our area is host to a special northern visitor — the American Tree Sparrow. Small flocks can be found foraging on the ground in weedy fields and perhaps at your bird feeders, especially during snowy weather. These plump sparrows have long tails, a rusty cap and eyeline, and a small dark spot in the middle of a gray breast. Their bills are two-toned — the upper part of the bill is dark and the lower is corn-yellow colored. American Tree Sparrows can be confused with Chipping Sparrows; the latter have all dark bills, no central spot on their breasts, and the eyeline is dark, not rusty.

American Tree Sparrows breed far to the north, at tree line. Their nests are placed on, or near, the ground in areas where there are some scattered stunted trees and shrubs, but well north of the boreal forest. Females lay one egg a day, or so, until the clutch of 4-6 eggs is complete. She then incubates her eggs continuously until they hatch. Amazingly, all the eggs hatch within about an hour of one another and may hatch in a different order from which they were laid. The young are only in the nest for 9-10 days. They fledge at the same time and the family remains together for about 2 weeks as the young are fed, taught to forage, and avoid danger. As summer progresses, families of American Tree Sparrows come together forming large flocks in anticipation of fall migration.

During the winter months, American Tree Sparrows move south and remain in an area from southern Canada south to southern Virginia, Tennessee, northern Oklahoma, Colorado and west. Our area is at the southern limit of the zone where you are likely to see this species on any trip to appropriate habitat during the winter months. During this time they eat the seeds of grasses, wildflowers, and weeds as well as berries. They are fond of white millet provided on the ground or other flat surfaced, open feeders.

During their visit with us they do not sing, but they do call incessantly. Winter flocks are easily found by listening for these calls, the quality of which has been likened to the sound produced by a wind-chime made of icicles gently stirring in a breeze. <http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/509481>. The open fields at the north end of Stauffer's Marsh, the weedy fields along Puffenburger Road, and weedy fields along Norman Silver Road in Berkeley County are good places to search. In Jefferson County, the lower fields of Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area, the open weedy areas at Altona Marsh, and weedy fields along Cattail Road are often productive places to find wintering flocks.

It is certainly a shame that American Tree Sparrows do not sing while they are visiting us; their songs are crisp, musical, and plaintive. Here is a 1954 recording made by the Cornell Library of Natural Sounds founder, Arthur A. Allen, while he was in Churchill Manitoba, Canada. <http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/15389>.

I certainly hope that you will make an effort to search for the American Tree Sparrows that visit our area this winter. During snowy weather be sure to place white millet out on a flat tray feeder. Keeping the feeder clear of snow or having a roof over the tray will certainly increase your odds of getting birds to visit and feed during those challenging times. If you are lucky, you might have one of these winter visitors, from the far north, right outside your window.



Notes from the Preserves

Yankauer Preserve Toilet Progress

We have a HUGE hole at Yankauer and the toilet will be delivered on October 27th at 8am. Hero/volunteer excavator Tony Erwin has been literally hammering and scooping away for six days as of the writing of this article and he's not quite done. PVAS volunteer Lou Scavnicky has also been there each of those six days helping Tony with whatever is needed. Both have been incredibly generous with their time and expertise and we can't thank them enough. And we would be remiss if we didn't thank the United Way for access to Mr. Erwin through its Day of Caring.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the toilets should be in place and (dare I say it?) usable!!! Come on out and give it a try!

The well drilling has not yet been scheduled, but we hope to be done with that part of the project in its entirety very soon.



Field Trips to Stauffer's Marsh in October

Have you visited Stauffer's Marsh? If you have not, make plans now because fall is the perfect time! In October, many students in our area have been able to visit the marsh thanks to a grant from the WV Division of Natural Resources.

Each of the grades visiting (kindergarten through fifth) have learned about wetlands in their own school classroom and then visited the marsh for a continuation of the activities. All the students have been able to explore the area, looking for birds, turtles, frogs, and aquatic plants and insects. Some fourth grade classes have used Stauffer's Marsh and Back Creek to practice water testing, which they have learned about in their watershed classes. Other grades have learned how ordinary objects can be metaphors for wetlands (ex: a sponge absorbs water like a wetland does). Kindergarten classes have been able to learn about monarch butterflies through a StoryWalk® posted on one of the trails. All groups have been able to enjoy an art activity, too, either using the wetland water to paint nature murals, or making fish prints (the Japanese art form gyotaku).

When we are finished with this round of visits in late October, over 450 students will have visited Stauffer's Marsh! The marsh is open every day, however, so other schools can arrange visits anytime. And you should visit too!

Of course, PVAS could never do programs like this without the help of some fantastic volunteers! Mary Etta Boesl, Mary Lynn Robinson, and Mary Beth Ross (known at the "three Marys") have spent multiple days helping with programs there. They have been joined by Bridget Tinsley, Mary Duke, Lou Scavnicky, Melanie Snyder, and Rick Allison. Thank you all!



Family Outdoor Adventures

This summer and fall, families were able to build forts at Yankauer Preserve, went caving in Whiting's Neck Cave, and a Letterboxing event will be held in Shepherdstown in early November. But what else would you like to do in the out-of-doors with your family?



Are you interested in exploring the wetlands at Stauffer's Marsh? How about a winter walk at Yankauer Preserve? Are you up to a day hike on the AT? Maybe a family day to learn about birds?

PVAS is eager to arrange more adventures, but we'd like your ideas! Email us and let us know what family adventures you'd like! (Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org)

Rescheduling of Letterboxing Workshop

The Family Outdoor Adventure, Letterboxing, has been rescheduled from its original date due to heavy rains. The workshop will now take its place on Sunday, November 8th from 2:00-4:00 PM.

This is a fantastic event for families with children all ages. Expect an overview of Letterboxing followed by clue reading and searching for Letterboxes hidden along the Towpath.

Participants should meet at the C&O Canal large parking across the bridge from Shepherdstown. The event will take place along the C&O Canal. Please wear sturdy walking shoes, dress for the weather and bring along drinking water.

For more information about Letterboxing, go to www.letterboxing.org. For more information about the October 4 event, contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 703-303-1026. Please visit www.potomacaudubon.org to register and for more details.

Youth Programs

Fall Children's Programs

Earlier this fall, we were pleased to be able to provide Shepherdstown Library with new carriers for our PVAS Nature Explorer Classroom Kits. These two kits, one on birds and one on insects, supply teachers with a classroom set of everything needed to teach about insects or birds. Field guides, children's stories, activity ideas, binoculars, bug boxes, insect nets, posters, and more can be found in the kits, depending on the theme. The kits had been stored in large bins, which were hard to transport, but those have been replaced with rolling duffel bags! Teachers can check out Nature Explorer Classroom Kits from the Shepherdstown Public Library with just your library card! (Call Christy Hagerty at 304-876-2783 to reserve one.) They are also available throughout the state through interlibrary loan. Most activities are geared for grades K-5, but can be adapted for all ages. Scout leaders and homeschool associations might also find them useful!

We've also been trying to keep our Lifebridge AmeriCorps volunteer, Rick Allison, busy this fall. He's been learning to teach the fourth grade watershed program (and is now solo in several classes). In addition, Rick represented PVAS at the Potomac Intermediate School PEP (environmental) program for fifth graders where he led an activity focused on the migration of Monarch butterflies. On November 8, he will be leading the Letterboxing Family Event in Shepherdstown.

Volunteers help us expand the number of programs that we can offer. Master Naturalist candidate Chrissy Lewin has had the pleasure of presenting a new elementary level program on Bats to students at Rosemont Elementary and Berkeley Heights Elementary Schools. Thank you, Chrissy, for presenting the program and for recommending PVAS to the teachers!



StoryWalks®

Thanks to the Nora Roberts Foundation, PVAS has continued to be able to provide StoryWalk® books during special events around the Eastern Panhandle. Each book is divided up page by page, laminated, and then pages are posted on yard signs so that families can walk from sign to sign reading the story as they walk. It combines literacy with healthy activity!

We were pleased to be able to share one of our newer StoryWalk® books this fall. The Howard County (MD) Conservancy used "Hurry and the Monarch" at their Fall Harvest Festival earlier in October. North Jefferson Elementary School borrowed the same book for a special all-school focus on migration. (Hurry is a Texas tortoise who meets a Monarch butterfly and learns about its life history through the story.) The story was also used with kindergarten classes during field trips to Stauffers Marsh.

The next scheduled StoryWalk® will be at BooFest in Shepherdstown at the end of October, but there will be others posted around the Eastern Panhandle as we get closer to the winter holidays. We'll be able to purchase some new books in 2016 so that we can continue the PVAS tradition of sharing nature with families in new ways!

If you would like to schedule a StoryWalk® for your school, library, or community event, contact Ellen Murphy (Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org)

Watershed Growing Native Program Update

In 2014, PVAS began a collaborative program with Cacapon Institute to develop and provide a multi-session, fifth grade follow-up to our popular fourth grade watershed program. This fall, we are again offering the program to several schools in West Virginia and Maryland. Over 200 fifth grade students at St. Joseph's Parish School, North and South Jefferson and Ranson Elementary Schools in West Virginia and Sharpsburg, Pleasant Valley, and Fountain Rock Elementary in Maryland are all participating in the program.

The students have been learning about tree structure and how to use dichotomous keys to identify leaf shapes, but the most important part of the program has been a seed collection and planting. Students were encouraged to collect a few native tree seeds (often acorns), which were then planted as a class activity. The seeds will remain at each school, overwintering outside, in hopes that they will sprout. The new tree seedlings will continue to be nurtured at "grow-out" stations until they are large enough to be planted, serving as buffer zones that can help protect rivers and streams.

In our fourth grade watershed program, more than 700 students have been participating this fall and other schools will begin the program in January.



Youth Programs

Experience with School Programs (Thus Far)

by Rick Allison

Hello fellow Audubon enthusiasts! I am Rick Allison, your AmeriCorps Volunteer through LifeBridge and Volunteer West Virginia. I have been retained to assist in teaching PVAS's Watershed program to 4th graders. Ellen Murphy assigned me classes at Orchard View and Tomahawk Intermediate schools.

Needless to say, this has been a daunting, sometimes challenging, yet always enjoyable assignment. I am amazed by the general intelligence, good behavior, and plain "niceness" of West Virginia 4th graders. In these classes, I get to work with and learn from children from many walks of life. Some are from tough backgrounds, some have developmental learning issues, and some are emotionally immature. Conversely, there are also students who are very bright and a few who are mature beyond their years. Every day I learn more about the area and state from the kids, ranging from how to pronounce Opequon, (Oh-PECK-in) to how I should write with larger letters on the board. Blackboard writing should be a basic class for adults.

There are lots of cool events that happen in every class. One of the most poignant experiences is when the student "gets it", that "aha!" moment when a new idea or concept is recognized and grasped.

As part of the first session, "Wonders of Water," we do a demonstration to illustrate surface tension by floating a paper clip. Up to this point in the session, we have seen the concept of water's surface tension by seeing the water surface stretching to contain itself on a penny.

"Floating" a paper clip on water is difficult to do and grasping the concept of surface tension is even harder, especially for 4th graders. To help with understanding, I draw a large "cootie"-looking water bug on the board. I call him Wally the Wonderful Wizard of Walking on Water bug. Then we discuss water surface and how it's mostly flat when still or undisturbed. I draw a blue horizontal straight line up to each of Wally's feet, draw an indentation under each foot, then continue the lines a short distance.

The students eventually are able to float a paperclip in the water bin. When they have one floating, I ask them to look sideways at the paperclip, then look at Walleys' feet and then back at the paper clip. Usually after two or three observations, a student will say, "the paperclip is pushing the water down." Then another will say that both are stretching the water surface. That's when the "aha" occurs. Their faces actually light up, and they smile. I get a warm and fuzzy feeling inside.



Shepherdstown Library Hosts New Program

by Rick Allison

Fellow Audubon folks, we have something new for 2015 and 2016 at the Shepherdstown Library: "Outdoors in the Library," a story-time and activities program. The program is a monthly read-aloud session for Pre-K thru age 5. The library is located at 100 W German Street in Shepherdstown, WV, 25443 (304-876-2783). Each Saturday session will be from 11 am to 12pm. The books are reserved for the program, and will be available before each session to be read and reviewed. Generally, two books are read at each session: one geared towards Pre-K, and the other to elementary school-aged children.

We are looking for six adult or high school volunteers to read the stories and provide a fun activity based on the theme or on one of the books. The activities can be anything from an art project, a game, pretending to be something, or whatever the reader thinks would be fun for ages Pre-K to 5 years old. Let your imaginations soar! You can dress up as one of the characters, wear special clothes to help express the theme, or just be yourself and have fun. If you are interested, contact Rick Allison, rick@potomacaudubon.org with the date (or dates) you would like to participate. Session dates and themes are:

- November 14th: Theme: National Parks; Volunteer: Rick Allison; Activity: animal prints
- December 12th: Theme: Winter animals; Suggested activity: draw a den, or a winter animal
- January 30th, Theme: Cold weather animals; Volunteer: Kate Adams; Suggested activity: walk like a penguin
- February 27th: Theme: The Chesapeake Bay and the water cycle; Activity: Open to the leader
- March 19th: Theme: Springtime critters; "Diary of a Worm" (the storyteller could dress in all-brown)
- April 23rd: Theme: Insects and bees, "Diary of a Fly"
- May 21st: Theme: Flowers, butterflies, and birds

Thanks, and I hope to hear from you soon!

Bob Dean Will Lead Early November Owl-banding Trips

PVAS is sponsoring two nighttime field trips in early November to watch an expert catch, band, and release migrating owls. The first trip will be held on Monday, November 2; the second will be on Thursday, November 5.

The destination for both trips will be an owl-banding station operated by West Virginia birding expert Bob Dean near Hedgesville. Both will last from 5:00 p.m. to about 10:00 p.m. The owls being banded will be Northern Saw-Whet Owls, the smallest owl in eastern North America. These trips offer unique opportunities to see these birds up close and learn about their life history.

The trips are family friendly, and everyone is invited to participate. There is no fee, but pre-registration is essential for both trips as space is very limited. Participants should bring flashlights and be sure to dress warmly. Owls do not fly if it is raining, so these trips may be cancelled if conditions warrant. To pre-register and get full information, go to the PVAS website. Or contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 703-303-1026.

South Mountain Owl-banding Trip Set for November 14

PVAS is again sponsoring a special nighttime field trip to watch an expert catch, band, and release migrating owls on South Mountain, in Washington County, MD. The trip will be held on Saturday, November 14. It will start at about 9:00 p.m. and last until approximately 11:30 p.m.

These trips have long been a favorite for whole families, and interested members of the public are invited to participate. There is no fee but a donation of \$5 or \$10 to the South Mountain owl banding station is suggested. This will help support the station's work.

The expert who will conduct the banding is Steve Huy, who has been banding owls on the mountain for many years as part of Project OwlNet. The owls he will be banding are the Northern Saw-Whet Owl, the smallest owl in eastern North America. Visits to his banding site offer a unique opportunity to see these birds up close and learn about their life history.

Pre-registration is essential because space for the trip is limited to 30 persons. To pre-register, go to the PVAS website. For more information, contact Carolyn Thomas at crthomas25443@gmail.com or 304-267-3115.

This trip involves a walk over uneven ground and it is therefore not recommended for anyone who needs assistance. Participants should bring a flashlight and be sure to dress warmly.

Owls do not fly if it is raining, so the trip may be cancelled if conditions are not favorable.



November 11 Program Will Focus on Christmas Bird Count

Our monthly program for November will feature a presentation entitled "History and Tales of the Christmas Bird Count." The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 11, at the Hospice of the Panhandle facility in Kearneysville. Admission is free and everyone is welcome to attend.

The speaker will be Jay Sheppard, who is retired from the Endangered Species Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He has also worked in the Bird Banding Lab at the Patuxent Wildlife Center. He lives in Laurel, MD. The Christmas Bird Count is a massive, citizen-science project that has been conducted throughout the western hemisphere every winter since 1900 under the auspices of the National Audubon Society. The purpose is to monitor the status and distribution of early-winter bird populations.

The count is conducted entirely by volunteers, who spend a day every year around Christmastime recording all the birds they see within a designated area. The data they collect are folded into what is now the longest-running database in ornithology, representing over 100 years of continuous information. This database is used to help spot trends in bird populations, which in turn can help identify shifts in environmental conditions. Locally, two counts have been conducted in the Eastern Panhandle since the early 1950s: one in the Charles Town area, and another that is centered in Inwood.

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.

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

Join November 11 Shannondale Springs Bird Walk

PVAS will sponsor a birding trip to the Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area, on the east bank of the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County, on Wednesday, November 11.

The trip is free and anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of their birding skills. Children will be welcome. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available on the Society's website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

Participants should plan to meet at 7:30 a.m. at the WMA parking area by the boat launch site, off Mission Road.

The 1,361 acre Shannondale Springs property is managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources; it includes a mixture of forest, brush land and open fields covering rolling hills. The trip will involve walking about three miles over moderately even ground. Possible species to be sighted include Bald Eagles, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, vultures, waterfowl, and woodpeckers.

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

For more info, contact Jim Farley at jamesfarley@frontiernet.net or 540-686-2056.

Antietam Bird Walk Set for November 28

PVAS will sponsor a fall bird walk along the Final Attack Trail on the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, MD on Saturday, November 28.

The walk will be free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of their birding skills. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available on the PVAS website.

Participants should plan to meet walk leader Sandy Sagalkin at the Burnside Bridge parking area at 8:00 a.m. To get there from Sharpsburg, head northeast towards Boonsboro. Take the first right turn after leaving Sharpsburg onto Rodman Avenue, which takes you into the battlefield. Turn left at the "T" and follow the road up the hill to the parking area. The walk will last about 2 1/2 to 3 hours, and cover mostly level terrain.

Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water and insect repellent. PVAS will provide binoculars for those who do not have their own. Various trip details could change depending on weather or recent bird sightings.

The trail the walk will follow is in the area where the Union Army made its final advance to drive the Confederate Army from Maryland on September 17, 1862, only to be turned back by A.P. Hill's final Confederate counterattack.

It is also the site of an extensive effort by the Antietam National Battlefield to restore and preserve native grasslands on the Otto Farm fields in the Battlefield's southwest corner. For more information, contact Sandy at monsansagalkin@myactv.net or 240-291-6465.

Harpers Ferry Bird Walk Set for November 18

PVAS will sponsor a birding trip to the Virginius Island section of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on Wednesday, November 18.

The walk will begin at 8:00 a.m. and be led by Deb Hale. It will be free and anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of their birding skills. Children will be welcome.

Registration is required and participants will need to sign a waiver of liability because the walk involves crossing some railroad tracks. To register, go to the Society's website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

Participants should meet in the parking area on Shenandoah Street just below the intersection with Route 340.

The walk will focus on the riverfront and old canal areas of Virginius Island. Birds likely to be sighted include waterfowl and arriving winter birds. The trip will be about 3 miles total. Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along drinking water. Binoculars will be provided if needed.

The trip may be canceled or postponed if weather conditions are poor. For more information go to the PVAS website or contact Deb at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-2346.



Eidolon Nature Preserve Fall 2015 Hunting and Hiking Protocols

The land now known as the Eidolon Nature Preserve has been hunted by neighboring families for generations, and when Marguerite Zapoleon willed the land to the Nature Conservancy, she stipulated that hunting should be allowed to continue there.

Accordingly, and also in the interest of maintaining a healthy forest and viable animal populations, the Nature Conservancy and PVAS are permitting hunting on the property.

To balance the safety of hikers and the interests of deer hunters, we ask all visitors to observe the following rules during deer season:

- Hunters must be licensed by the state and follow all applicable state laws and regulations.
- For their part, hikers should exercise appropriate caution during hunting season and wear at least one item of blaze orange clothing.
- In accordance with state law, no hunting will be permitted on Sundays.
- The Eidolon Nature Preserve will close its trails to hikers for the entire first week of the firearm season for buck deer (November 23 through 28 this year), on the last day of buck season, December 5, and during two the antlerless deer seasons in December.
- On all other days during the firearm seasons for deer, the trails will be open to hikers from 10 am until 3 pm only.

Please see the schedule below for specifics.

2015 Hunting and Hiking Schedule At-a-glance

Monday, November 23 through Saturday, November 28:
First week of firearm season for buck deer; trails closed to hikers every day

Sunday, November 29:
 No hunting

Monday, November 30 through Friday, December 4:
 Trails open to hikers 10am-3pm only

Saturday, December 5:
Last day of firearm season for buck deer; trails closed to hikers all day

Sunday, December 6 through Wednesday, December 16: No hunting

Thursday, December 17 through Saturday, December 19:
First antlerless deer hunting season; trails closed to hikers every day

Sunday, December 20 through Sunday, December 27: No hunting

Tuesday, December 29 through Thursday, December 31:
Second antlerless deer hunting season; trails closed to hikers every day

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

Master Naturalist Update and Annual Meeting From PVMN: Did You Know?

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist class of 2015 has successfully completed their year-long program. The students began their program with a two-day workshop in March and continued with classes once a month through September. The workshops were held at a variety of locations including the National Conservation Training Center, CraftWorks and Cacapon State Park.

Certified Master Naturalists and the students from the 2015 class will be gathering on Saturday, October 31 for the Annual Meeting, Potluck and Silent Auction. This Annual Meeting is a wonderful way for Master Naturalists to connect as well as a way to raise money to support the scholarships for the incoming class.

Did you know that in October The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WV DNR) certified 12 additional PVAS members as Master Naturalists?

Classes begin with a two-day session in March, continue one weekend day per month through the summer, and end with another two-day session in September. Training includes classroom time, as well as fieldwork where students apply what is learned in class.

As the program is limited to 20 participants and fills up quickly, do not let time slip by; use the following link to enroll: http://www.potomacaudubon.org/MN_Application.pdf.

Become a Master Naturalist in 2016!

Enroll in the 2016 Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program and become a part of the 10th Anniversary year! Potomac Valley Audubon is proud to sponsor the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program for a 10th year in a row. The Master Naturalist program is one of our most popular programs for people ages 16 and up and we have an amazing year ahead! Anyone interested is invited and encouraged to apply for the 2015 class which will begin in March 2016. Applications for the program can be submitted at any time through January 31st 2016. The class is limited in size to 20 students so early application is encouraged.

Master Naturalist candidates in the program receive 64 hours of natural history instruction in a classroom and field/lab environments in a wide variety of topics. Our Master Naturalists come from all around the eastern panhandle and Washington County, Maryland and have one thing in common, an interest in the natural history of West Virginia. Each class seems to form a special bond among its members and participants enjoy learning in a casual, but challenging way. There are no tests, just opportunities for adults to learn from experts in the field. To complete certification, students have 2 years to complete all classes and 30 hours of volunteer work in the area of natural history. Many of our members volunteer at WV State Parks, in citizen science projects, and for PVAS programs. Volunteer work must be completed within the state of West Virginia.

Classes are generally held one Saturday each month, March through October, at a number of locations including the National Conservation Training Center near Shepherdstown, Cacapon State Park in Berkeley Springs, Yankauer Nature Preserve in Berkeley County, and CraftWorks in Jefferson County. Instructors include college professors, natural resource and wildlife biologists, and Master Naturalists who have developed expertise in a chosen field of interest.

Tuition for the entire program is \$300 and a limited number of scholarships are available. No money is required with the application. Applications and scholarship information can be downloaded at <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>

“This Race is for the Birds!”... Major Changes Afoot

The race planners are facing some significant changes for 2016. Unfortunately, the USFWS National Conservation Training Center is no longer able to host the race at its facility. Due to policy interpretation by a new ethics committee for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, outside organizations can no longer hold fundraising events on USFWS Federal properties. The leadership at NCTC has looked at every possible option that would allow the race to continue, but no matter the scenario, the agency's ethics policy does not allow for fundraisers at the training center's campus.

We can't thank NCTC enough for allowing us to use the campus for so many years. We couldn't ask for a more generous and gracious host and partner! We had a great run. (Pun intended...) PVAS and NCTC continue to be strong partners on many other initiatives, including several that involve the use of the training center's campus for Master Naturalist courses, Board meetings, and scheduled bird walks.

While very disappointed, the RACE WILL GO ON! Those who know us know we are not the kind of organization to give up easily. We've made some good lemonade over the years. After a couple of weeks of brainstorming and lots of conversations among members of the Race Committee, we have hatched a plan. The plan is still in its infancy, so we're not ready to divulge everything... yet! Stay tuned and we'll share more next month.

Sign Up Now for November 14 Workshop on Medicinal Plants

PVAS will sponsor a Natural History Workshop on medicinal plants the morning of Saturday, November 14.

The workshop will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the West Virginia University Health Sciences Center, 2500 Foundation Way, Martinsburg. It will be held in the Center's Mountaineer Room. The workshop will be led by Dr. Wendell Combest, an expert in the field, and Professor of Pharmacology at Shenandoah University. He will explore past and current medicinal uses of plants and discuss their potential for the future.

The workshop is open to anyone with an interest, but space will be limited and pre-registration is required. Register on the PVAS website. There will also be a fee of \$10 for PVAS members and \$15 for nonmembers.

In addition to teaching at Shenandoah University, Dr. Combest is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at the National Center of Natural Products Research at the University of Mississippi and Adjunct Professor in Plant Biology at the University of Vermont. He received his Ph.D. in pharmacology at the University of Arizona School of Medicine. His research interests are in Complementary/Alternative Medicine with specialties in the safety and efficacy of medicinal plants and the therapeutic benefits of gardens. He is also a certified Master Gardener.

Since 1999 he has maintained a medicinal plant garden at the Shenandoah University campus in Winchester. The garden features more than 200 species of medicinal and culinary plants many of which are on the United Plant Savers endangered species list. Plants from the garden are used in several ongoing faculty and student research projects and for herbal compounding of lotions, salves, and other preparations.



This event is one of a series of Natural History Workshops on different natural history topics PVAS is sponsoring this year. These Workshops are intended for people who are interested in learning about particular natural history topics

in considerable depth but cannot commit to pursue the much more comprehensive natural history education available through PVAS's Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program, which can take a year or more to complete.

For more information, contact Debbie Maiorano at 540-535-5145 or debbiem58@aol.com.

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:

- Access to a wide variety of PVAS programs and events for adults and children, including field trips, special events, workshops and courses, and environmental projects. *And discounts to most programs that require a fee!*
- A subscription to Valley Views, the PVAS newsletter
- E-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest
- Satisfaction of supporting conservation efforts, youth and adult nature education, individual and family recreation, and a wide array of programs in your community.

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.

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

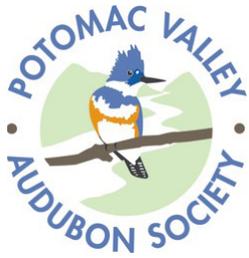
Shepherdstown, WV 25443



Thank you for your support!

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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MAIL TO:

November 2015

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper

Volume 34, Issue 3

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please contact any of the board members listed here or see <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD

PVAS Board meet-
 ings take place the
 first Thursday of
 the month (Sep-
 tember through
 June). Meetings
 are open to all
 PVAS members.
 Please contact
 the President or
 Vice President if
 you would like to
 attend.

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

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

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 Tanner Haid (2016) Tanner.Haid@gmail.com
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