

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Volume 27, Issue 2

October 2008

Don't Miss Event!!! November Wine Tasting and Strawbale House Tour

PVAS will hold a unique, new fundraising event in mid-November—a “Wine Tasting and Strawbale House Tour.”

The event will be held from 1:00-4:00 p.m., November 15, at the innovative “green” home that our Executive Director, Kristin Alexander, and her husband Jeff Feldman completed last year near Whiting’s Neck in Berkeley County. The home is one of the first in the area to use straw bales for insulation, and it has many other cutting-edge green features as well.



This event is being planned in lieu of our usual fall arts festival, which is not being held this year. Proceeds will be used to support the Society’s education programs for local children.

In addition to tours of the home, the event will feature a wine tasting with light food appropriate for pairing with the wines. Non-alcoholic beverages will be available as well, and musical entertainment will provide background.

There will also be a closed-bid silent auction featuring a wine-lovers basket, gourmet food basket, a “green goods” basket and much more.

Tickets to the event are required, and space will be limited.

Basic tickets are \$45 per person. Those who pay \$150 for two people will be recognized as Donors, those who pay \$200 for two will be recognized as Patrons, and those who pay \$250 or more for two will be recognized as Supporters.

All ticket costs will be fully tax deductible.

To reserve tickets, please call 304-676-3397 or e-mail PVAS-mail@aol.com and provide your name, address, and phone number.

Kristin and Jeff’s home was designed by architect Sigi Koko, who has offices in the Washington, DC, and Philadelphia, PA, metropolitan areas. *Strawbale House Tour* continues on page 7 column 1

FLOW Grant Renewed for Watershed Program

PVAS is pleased to be the recipient for a second year of funding from Project FLOW (Future Leaders of Watersheds) to support its 4th grade Watershed Education Initiative. Project FLOW is a program of the West Virginia Commission for National and Community Service.

The grant will provide PVAS with \$45,789 to pilot an expanded version of the program that will include the entire year instead of the traditional February – May format. This will allow us to spend more time in the classroom with all the participating 4th grade classes, and will allow students to explore the topic of watersheds in more depth with additional hands-on experiences. This year-long program will be piloted with 19 classrooms of 4th graders in Jefferson and Berkeley County from Potomack Intermediate, Tomahawk Intermediate, and TA Lowery Elementary. The program will also be offered in its traditional format in the spring for all other schools who participated last year as well as additional schools who choose to participate. We also hope to expand the program to include Morgan County Schools in the spring.

Remember United Way/CFC Fund Drives

We want to remind PVAS members that the annual fundraising campaigns of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) are underway.

Both campaigns will last through December 15.

PVAS receives funding from United Way and CFC each year and encourages its members to give to their campaigns.

CFC is, of course, the mechanism for federal employees to contribute to their local United Way. PVAS members who are federal employees can designate PVAS as the recipient of all or part of their CFC contribution by entering PVAS’s CFC number (29061) on the CFC form that they file with their employing agency.

If you have any questions about this, please contact Kristin Alexander at pvasmail@aol.com or 304-676-3397.



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

President's Perch



Hello Everyone:

Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll see that we're once again partnering with the Potomac Conservancy's "Growing Native" seed-collection program.

Last year, we hosted one seed-collection event, at our Eidolon Nature Preserve. This year, we're doubling that effort, hosting seed-collection events at both the Eidolon preserve (on October 25) and our Yankauer Nature Preserve (on October 11).

The Growing Native program is a good program that's having a real impact on the quality of life in our region, and we're happy to support it in this way.

The program evolved out of a need for greater numbers of native hardwood seedlings to support expanding reforestation and restoration efforts in the Potomac watershed.

The thousands of pounds of seeds that Growing Native volunteers collect and deliver to state nurseries each year are not only helping to meet this need, they also help ensure diversity in the nurseries' tree stocks.

The result is more and better forest cover along the Potomac and its tributaries, which translates into improved water quality and increased wildlife habitat.

All in all, since the program's inception, volunteers have collected more than 119,000 pounds of seeds and helped restore hardwood forests along nearly 800 miles of streamside land. Those are pretty impressive numbers—particularly since the program is only in its eighth year.

We hope you'll seriously consider participating in one or both of the seed-collection events we're hosting, especially if you have young children or grandchildren.

These events are not only fun, wholesome family outings, they're also a good way to get kids more involved in nature and to help them understand the importance of environmental stewardship.

If you can't make the events you and your family can still participate by collecting seeds on your own and dropping them off at one of the Conservancy's drop-off sites. You can find detailed, step-by-step instructions on exactly what to do on the Growing Native website at www.growingnative.org.

—Peter Smith

Master Naturalist Workshop Rescheduled

The workshop "Astronomy with Binoculars", being sponsored by the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists, has been rescheduled for October 4 from 7-11 p.m. at Cacapon State Park. Don Henry, Master Naturalist Candidate, will be leading the workshop. It will begin in the classroom, but will mostly take place outside. Bring binoculars and come learn more about where to look and what to look for in the autumn skies. The original workshop for September had to be rescheduled due to weather. The workshop is \$10 and reservations are required. If you're interested, please contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or PVASmail@aol.com.

Rain Didn't Slow Day of Caring Efforts

On September 9, volunteers braved sometimes heavy rain to help with projects at our Yankauer and Eidolon nature preserves as part of the 14th Annual United Way of the Eastern Panhandle Day of Caring.

At the Yankauer preserve, more than 60 volunteers from across the Eastern Panhandle joined to weed gardens, remove stilt grass and Ailanthus, clean signs, trim and mulch trails and clean up and trim the parking lot area.

The volunteers came from many businesses and organizations including Berkeley County Junior ROTC, Gardeners Exchange Group, ITW Sexton, Master Gardeners, Potomac Valley Master Naturalists, Office of Personnel Management, Sir Speedy.



Berkeley County Junior ROTC students and adult volunteers work on trails at Yankauer

A special thank-you to Tim Murphy for coordinating our Yankauer Day of Caring effort, to Cam Tabb for donating and delivering an enormous pile of mulch for the trails and garden, and to Alice Barkus, Sue Kennedy, Diana Mullis, and Jane Vanderhook for providing a delicious hot lunch to those 60 plus volunteers in the pouring rain.

At Eidolon, a smaller but no less dedicated group led by Joe Gentile, of Berkeley Springs, cleared brush and small trees that have been crowding the roadway within the preserve.

Shown in the photo below are from left to right, Debbie Missell, of Spotsylvania, VA, who was in the area visiting family; John Lehman, of Shepherdstown; Mary Youngblood, of Great Cacapon; Marcyanna Millet, of Berkeley Springs; Clark Dixon, of Ranson; and Joe Gentile.



One footnote to this story: as part of this year's Day of Caring, Panhandle Builders and Excavating donated its services to fix an erosion issue at Potomack Intermediate School for PVAS.

The issue was a large erosion ditch discovered on the school grounds by Potomack Intermediate Fourth Graders enrolled in PVAS' Watershed education program (the program's assignments include a student-led assessment of the school's impact on its watershed).

This ditch was cause for concern because it was carrying soil and parking lot runoff containing oil and other pollutants into the Opequon Creek, which in turn affects the Potomac River and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay.

The project was too big for PVAS to tackle alone, so we appreciate the willingness of Panhandle Builders and Excavating to help.

Funding by Nora Roberts Foundation Continues

PVAS is very pleased to be the recipient of another grant from the Nora Roberts Foundation. This will be the third year of funding from the foundation.

The first year funded the Nature Explorer Backpacks, now available at the children's libraries in Martinsburg, Shepherdstown, Berkeley Springs, and at the Cacapon State Park's Nature Center.

Based on positive feedback from the first year when teachers and librarians saw the kits, the second year's project, now "under construction" are two teacher kits that can be loaned out. Similar to the backpacks, one kit will be about birds and one will be about insects, and each will have activities appropriate for each subject. Unlike the backpacks, the kits will have supplies enough for an entire classroom. Details about the loaning process are still being worked out.

The third grant, just received, is \$5,000. A portion of the grant will continue the expansion of the backpack program while the majority will be used to expand the Audubon Discovery Day Camp. PVAS is grateful for the Foundation's continued support.

PVAS Sponsoring Cacapon State Park Talk on Grassland Birds

PVAS is sponsoring a talk at Cacapon State Park the evening of Friday, October 17. The speaker will be Dr. Frank Ammer, an Assistant Professor of Wildlife Biology at Frostburg State University, in Frostburg, Maryland.

His topic will be "Conservation and Management of Grassland Birds in the Eastern U.S."

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

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

Grassland birds, which rely on grasslands for nesting, include various species of waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, upland gamebirds and songbirds.

Breeding bird surveys indicate that populations of many of these birds have been declining more than other bird populations in recent decades. Various reasons are cited for this, but loss of grassland habitat is thought to be critical.

Preserving and properly managing grassland can help maintain and increase local grassland bird populations, as well as populations of other wildlife species that use these habitats

Dr. Ammer coordinates the undergraduate wildlife and fisheries and interpretive biology and natural history programs at Frostburg State. His research has focused on the ecology, conservation, management, and population/conservation genetics of vertebrate populations, especially fish and birds.

He has a B.S. in biology from Carlow University in Pittsburg, PA; an M.S. in biology from Clarion University of Pennsylvania; and a Ph.D. in wildlife and fisheries ecology from West Virginia University.

Birdseed Orders Due October 15

It's that time of year again—

Your birdseed order form is enclosed

Please note the delivery day is **November 1**
(the first Saturday in November).

Birdseed prices have been affected (like everything) by gas prices and floods, and we have done our best to keep our prices down. Volunteers are needed to assist with the distribution at Gower's Feeds in Williamsport, MD, and Ranson, WV, and Hunter Hardware Warehouse in Berkeley Springs.

Birdseed Questions:

Call Diana Mullis at 304-267-3482

Don't Miss Cathedral State Park Trip!

PVAS is planning a field trip to West Virginia's Cathedral State Park on Saturday, November 1.

Anyone with an interest is welcome to participate.

Located in southeastern Preston County, WV, Cathedral State Park contains the only stand of mixed virgin timber left in West Virginia.

The park gets its name from its many ancient hemlocks, which reach majestic proportions and form spectacular natural cloisters. These trees reach up to 90 feet in height and 21 feet in circumference. They are one of the last remnants of a vast virgin hemlock forest which once flourished in the Appalachian highlands.

In all, the park encompasses a total of 133 acres. The terrain is gently sloping with an elevation varying from 2,460 to 2,620 feet.

In addition to its hemlocks, the park contains over 170 species of vascular flora, including 9 species of fern, 3 species of club moss, over 30 tree species, and over 50 species of wildflowers.

The drive to the park from the Eastern Panhandle is about two-and-a-half hours long.

Field trip participants will meet at the Food Lion supermarket parking lot on Route 51 in Inwood, just off I-81, and depart from there at 8:00 a.m.

They will drive down I-81 to Route 50 at Winchester, and take Route 50 west to the park.

A guided tour of the park by a park ranger is scheduled for 11:00 a.m.



Cathedral Trip continues on page 7 column 1

YARD WORK -**AS VIEWED FROM HEAVEN**

(overheard in a conversation between God and St. Francis):

God: Francis, you know all about gardens and nature; what in the world is going on down there in the U.S.? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistles and the stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought, and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honeybees, and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of color by now. All I see are patches of green.



St. Francis: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. They are called the Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

God: Grass? But it is so boring, it's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, bees or birds, only grubs and sod worms. It's temperamental with temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want grass growing there?

St. Francis: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it has grown a little, they cut it....sometimes two times a week.

God: They cut it? Do they bale it like hay?

St. Francis: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

God: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

St. Francis: No sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

God: Now let me get this straight...they fertilize it to make it grow and when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

St. Francis: Yes, sir.

God: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

St. Francis: You aren't going to believe this Lord, but when the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

God: What nonsense! At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep the moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. Plus, as they rot, the leaves become compost to enhance the soil. It's a natural circle of life.

St. Francis: You'd better sit down, Lord. As soon as the leaves fall, the Suburbanites rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

God: No way! What do they do to protect the shrubs and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

St Francis: After throwing the leaves away, they go out and buy something called mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

God: And where do they get this mulch?

St. Francis: They cut down the trees and grind them up to make mulch.

God: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. Saint Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

St. Catherine: "Dumb and Dumber," Lord. It's a really stupid movie about...

God: Never mind -I think I just heard the whole story from Saint Francis!

The humor piece above has been floating around the Internet for some time without origin source credit. In researching the source we found no evidence of copyright. Bill Brown at New Mexico Global Warming published it on the Web and gave us his permission to use it in Valley Views.

October Meeting Will Focus on Declining Bird Species

Our October meeting will feature a presentation about declining bird populations in the U.S.

The speaker will be Greg Butcher, Director of Bird Conservation for the National Audubon Society.

He will discuss National Audubon's latest "State of the Birds" report and the organization's "Watch List" of species that are declining in number.

The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m., October 8, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center on Shepherd Grade Road, just north of Shepherdstown. It will be held in Room 161 of the Center's Instructional West Building.

The program is free and anyone is welcome to attend.

The National Audubon Society's research indicates that 20 common American birds—including the northern bobwhite, the field sparrow and the boreal chickadee—have lost more than half their populations over the past 40 years.

One of the most dramatic declines is in the population of northern bobwhite quail, which has dropped an estimated 82 percent during the period—from 31 million to 5.5 million. Other species on the list of diminishing bird populations are ruffed grouse, common grackle and rufous hummingbird.

The Society cites many reasons for these declines, including changes in farming practices, other loss of habitat, pesticide use, the spread of invasive species, and global warming.

The Society is promoting a variety of legislative actions to deal with these problems but also encourages individual landowners to do their part by taking steps to improve wildlife habitat.

These steps can be as simple as not cutting down flowers in the fall, so their seeds will be available as a food source through the winter.

More cultivation of native plant species is also very helpful, the Society says.

For more information about this aspect of the National Audubon Society's work see the "State of the Birds" section of their website at <http://stateofthebirds.audubon.org>.

Calendar

- October 4: Master Naturalist Workshop
- October 8: PVAS Monthly Meeting
- October 11: "Growing Native" seed-collection at Yankauer
- October 11-12: Berkeley Springs Apple Butter Festival
- October 17: PVAS Program at Cacapon State Park
- October 18: NCTC Open House
- October 18: Field trip to Sky Meadows State Park
- October 25: "Growing Native" seed-collection at Eidolon
- October 25: Evening field trip: Owl-banding
- November 1: Field trip to Cathedral State Park
- November 9: Bird Banding Demonstration

Annual Owl-banding Trip Set For October 25

PVAS is once again sponsoring a special nighttime field trip this fall to watch an expert catch, band, and release migrating owls on South Mountain, in Washington County, Maryland.

The trip will be held on Saturday, October 25. It will start at about 8:30 p.m. and last until about 10:30 p.m.

These trips have long been a favorite for whole families, and anyone with an interest is invited to participate. There is no fee.

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 20 persons.

To pre-register or get more information contact PVAS Board member Carolyn Thomas at 304-267-3115 or webethomas@aol.com.

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.

The trip will be cancelled if it is raining.



Fall – Full of Programs!

The fall season is going to be busier than ever thanks to several grants that are funding curriculum-based activities at Yankauer for 2nd and 3rd graders at four elementary schools in Berkeley County which have the highest percentage of free or reduced lunches for students.

With the help of this grant from the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation's Jane P. Snyder Fund and the C. Scott and Eliza-

beth C. Shade Youth Fund, all 2nd and 3rd graders from Tuscarora, Berkeley Heights, Burke Street and Winchester Avenue Elementary Schools will have the opportunity to take advantage of the outdoor classroom at Yankauer and the curriculum-based, hands-on activities we lead there. The grant pays for both the transportation and the program fees, so no fees will be passed along to the families in order to participate.

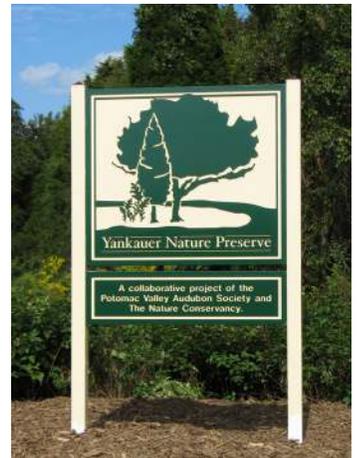
The City of Ranson has sponsored the program fees and transportation costs of all Ranson Elementary students in grades 1-5. Those students will be coming to visit Yankauer and enjoy the programs there this fall as well.

North Jefferson Elementary also has a very high ratio of children receiving free and reduced lunches. We will be applying to the National Audubon Society for the funds to sponsor this remaining school through their Collaborative Funding grants.

These programs, along with the year-long Watershed pilot program mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, will make this fall busier than ever. If you'd like to help with any of these programs, please contact Ellen Murphy. With this increased demand, we'll need lots of volunteer help! Ellen can be reached at 304-676-3397 or pvasprograms@comcast.net.

Yankauer Preserve Boasts New Entrance Sign

If you visit Yankauer, you'll see it sporting a new entrance sign with the Yankauer Preserve logo. The logo was developed by Jen Rolston of Eden Design several years ago. Volunteer Tim Murphy installed the sign in early September in time for the Day of Caring. The sign was done by Sensel Signs in Martinsburg. It replaces the original sign placed when PVAS entered into the management agreement with The Nature Conservancy in 1994.



NCTC Open House, October 18

The 11th annual Open House at the National Conservation Training Center (Shepherd Grade Road, Shepherdstown), has been scheduled for 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, October 18. This is the one day during the year that families can visit the facility and participate in numerous family-friendly activities. This year's theme is *Lets Get Outside*.

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalists will be offering several activities at the event that are part of the new Junior Naturalist program. This program is designed to encourage children of all ages and their families to spend active time out-of-doors. A special *Lets Get Outside* Junior Naturalist passport will be available at the event so that children can track their progress as they visit activity stations at NCTC. Passports will be stamped at each station and children will also receive a corresponding bead.

A similar Junior Naturalist event will be held at Oglebay Park in Wheeling, West Virginia, early in November.

Two “Growing Native” Seed-collection Events Set for October

The Potomac Conservancy is partnering with PVAS to hold two “Growing Native” seed-collection events in the Eastern Panhandle this fall.

One of the events will be held October 11 at our Yankauer Nature Preserve in Berkeley County and the other will be held October 25 at the our Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County.

The Conservancy’s Growing Native program is aimed at improving water quality in the Potomac River.

It recruits volunteers to collect seeds of native trees and delivers the seeds to state nurseries where they are nurtured into small tree seedlings.

The seedlings are then planted along streams and rivers in the Potomac watershed to help restore forests that filter pollution and run-off.

The Conservancy’s seed collection events are open to anyone who would like to participate. A state forester is on hand to aid with tree identification, and seed-collection bags are provided.

The events are very popular with children and make good family events.

The October 11 Yankauer Preserve event is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The October 25 Eidolon Preserve event will be from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

For those who cannot attend either seed-collection event but would like to help, the Conservancy has installed seed-collection kiosks at the Yankauer Preserve and the Farmers Market in Inwood. Families and individuals can gather seeds on their own at their own pace and drop them off at either of these locations anytime through October 31. Full instructions on procedures for gathering and dropping off seeds can be found on the Growing Native website at www.growingnative.org.

For more information about the program or to register for either or both seed-collection events, contact Kate McNamee, the Conservancy’s Outreach Coordinator, at mcnamee@potomac.org or 301-608-1188, extension 211.

Eidolon Nature Walk Will Follow Seed-collection Event There

Right after the 1:00 p.m. conclusion of the October 25 Growing Native seed-collection event at the Eidolon Nature Preserve, volunteer Joe Gentile will lead a general nature walk at the preserve.

One need not have participated in the seed collection to join the walk, and anyone will be welcome. No pre-registration is required.

The walk will begin at the main gate to the preserve and last a



Volunteers at Last Year’s Eidolon Growing Native Event

couple of hours.

The fall colors should be excellent at the preserve that weekend, so this will be a good time to visit.

Directions to the preserve are on the PVAS website. Or call Peter Smith at 304-876-1139.

Yankauer’s Cedar Loop to be Accessible

PVAS just received word that we will receive \$31,350 in funding to make the Cedar Loop Trail at Yankauer wheelchair accessible. Governor Manchin announced the award on Friday, September 5, while in Martinsburg. Peter Smith and Kristin Alexander accepted the award on behalf of PVAS at the event.

The project will be funded through the West Virginia Recreational Trails Program, administered by the West Virginia Department of Transportation and funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The trail will be about 0.2 mile and will feature interpretive signs, benches, and a permeable but wheelchair-friendly surface.

This new feature at Yankauer will allow visitation by and programs for patients from the VA hospital, the local Senior Centers, special needs students from local schools, day care centers/preschools and families with strollers, and any visitor in a wheelchair. We are very pleased to be able to make this addition to the preserve and allow a more diverse audience the opportunity to visit and explore it.

We look forward to getting the project underway as soon as the funds are made available.

Field Trip to Sky Meadows Park

PVAS is sponsoring a field trip to beautiful Sky Meadows State Park near Paris, Virginia, the morning of Saturday, October 18. Anyone with an interest is welcome to attend.

Participants will join a three-hour general fall nature walk that will be led by a park ranger. The walk will leave from the park’s Visitor’s Center at 10:30 a.m. Because of the nature of the park’s terrain, the walk will be rather strenuous and it is not recommended for people who need assistance.

There will be a \$2 per person fee for the walk and a \$4 per car fee to enter the park.

The park, which is managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, encompasses about 1,800 acres on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge. Its highest elevation is 712 feet. Its slopes include woodlands and rolling pastures with sweeping vistas of foothills below. There are about 14 miles of hiking trails.

The park supports a variety of wildlife. Red-headed woodpeckers are frequently seen. Shrikes can sometimes be sighted. Raptors should be plentiful. The fall foliage at the park should be near its peak at the time of the trip.

Directions to the park are as follows: From the Charles Town area, take Route 340 South through Berryville and Boyce to Route 50. Turn left (east) on Route 50 to Route 17. Take Route 17 south to State Route 710 (Edmunds Lane) on the right. Follow Route 710 about one-half mile to the park.

For more information about the trip, contact Peter Smith at 304-876-1139 or pvsmit@frontiernet.net. For more information about Sky Meadows Park, see the park’s website at www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/sky.shtml.

Strawbale House Tour continues from page 1

tan areas, and who specializes in strawbale construction.

The home utilizes a post and beam framework, with locally grown bales of straw as infill. The exterior is covered with a lime plaster that is extremely strong and fully weatherproof, and the interior is finished with an earthen plaster.

One of the main advantages of this method of construction is the energy-cost savings it offers. Studies have indicated the insulating value of the straw is so great that it cuts heating and cooling costs by 75 percent annually. The thick walls also provide excellent soundproofing.

Other innovative features that can be seen on the house tour include a massive wood-burning masonry stove (also known as a Russian stove) for heat; countertops made of recycled paper; cabinets of wheat board and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified wood; recycled plastic decking; concrete floors with in-floor radiant heat; passive solar design; a grey water system that utilizes wetlands to clean water from sinks and showers; and composting toilets.

Businesses featuring green products are being invited to sponsor the event. All business sponsors will be recognized at the event and in PVAS's December newsletter. For sponsor information, please contact Kristin Alexander at the phone number or email address shown above.

Winchester Birding Festival

PVAS members and friends are invited to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society's Seventh Annual Birding Festival, which will be held in Winchester, Virginia, on November 1.

Most of the festival's events will take place in and around the War Memorial Building in Winchester's Jim Barnett Park, which is located on Pleasant Valley Road, just north of the Shenandoah University campus, on the southeast side of the city.

Those events include morning sessions on basic bird identification and using binoculars and field guides, morning and afternoon live raptor presentations, and an afternoon presentation on bluebirds.

There will also be bird walks; bird seed, feeders and other items for sale; a bird-carving demonstration; free crafts for children; various exhibits; and a silent auction.

For more information go to the Society's website at www.audubon-nvas.org or contact Judy Hagan at 540-667-6778 or hagansan@yahoo.com.

Cathedral Trip continues from page 3

Afterwards, the field trip group will travel to nearby Blackwater Falls State Park for a 1:30 p.m. lunch before departing for home.

Because of the distances involved, carpooling is encouraged. Those willing to have their cars, SUVs, or vans serve as pool vehicles are asked to contact the trip coordinator, PVAS Board member Clark Dixon, at 304-725-9634, beforehand so he has an idea of the number of pool vehicles that will be available.

Trip participants should wear comfortable walking shoes and be prepared for cold weather. Because of the park's altitude, air temperatures there are likely to be significantly cooler than in the Eastern Panhandle.

For more information about the trip, contact Clark at the number shown above. For more information about the park, see its website at www.cathedralstatepark.com.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

We now offer two kinds of memberships:

1. PVAS Local Membership

Here's what you get:

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

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

2. Dual Membership with National Audubon

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

Membership Form

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

Membership Type (check one):

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

Dual Membership with National Audubon _____

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

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

Clip and mail this form to:

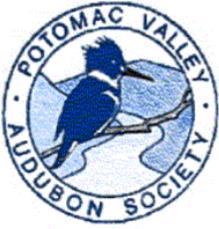
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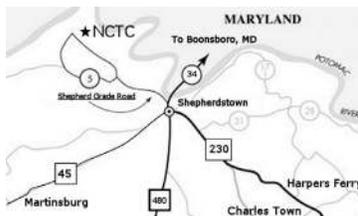


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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, at the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV, in the Instructional West Building. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please call any of the board members listed her or see <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

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

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