

# VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac  
Valley  
Audubon  
Society

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## President's Perch

by Jane Vanderhook, PVAS President

Oh how we have grown! Our founding members must be very gratified to know that the society they founded 33 years ago has developed into today's thriving organization.

In just the last fifteen years, the Potomac Valley Audubon Society's budget has increased astonishingly, growing from just \$17,466 for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2000 to an impressive \$233,348 for the year that just ended on June 30, 2015. We have added programs and three preserves, members and staff. We now have school programs, Discovery Camp, the Master Naturalist program, many more natural history programs and outings, Yankauer, Eidolon, and Stauffers Marsh, just to name a few. How has all this been possible?

Significantly, in 2001 PVAS hired Kristin Alexander. She began as Director of the Yankauer Preserve and served in that position until 2007 when she then became Executive Director of PVAS. The impact of her energy, her vision, her leadership, and her charming persuasiveness should not be underestimated. She has been a tremendously important part of the growth PVAS has experienced. At the beginning of 2016, we will celebrate the 15th anniversary of her hiring. When you see her, be sure to congratulate her on all she has accomplished.

And she was not alone. Fortunately for us, another dynamic person came along. Ellen Murphy joined us in 2007 as Youth Education Director. Under her guidance, the youth programs have flourished, reaching more young people every year as she expands and refines the programs we offer. Between school programs, the Discovery Camp and everything else she does, I'm not sure how we ever got along without her.

These two people by themselves have made substantial contributions to our growth but they needed support. Even with the invaluable assistance of our paid staff, we remain a largely volunteer organization. Without the scores of volunteers who give their invaluable time and energy, we simply could not accomplish so much. As we continue to grow we will need more people who are willing to say, "I can do that! I can help!" Every bit of help is appreciated – whether it is an hour or dozens of hours. We thank all past and future volunteers.

We would be short sighted indeed if we failed to acknowledge the vital financial support we have received from our members and friends. Without you, there would be no growth. We could not continue to provide the programs that we do.

So thank you everyone for your contributions. May the next 33 years be even better.

## Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

Best Laid Plans...

Volunteers are priceless for organizations like PVAS. Truly — the greatest asset imaginable! This was made clear to me once again this year when I realized the Day of Caring had been moved back one week due to the late Labor Day.

I had just scheduled my vacation (and purchased plane tickets) to take place right AFTER Day of Caring in an attempt to be responsible and be on hand for the biggest volunteer day of the year. Oops. The event was shifted to avoid the Labor Day holiday.

But, as usual, the PVAS volunteers had it covered. "Don't worry! We'll be fine! Go have fun!" Eesh. It was with guilt that I left, but I wasn't worried.

The cadre of volunteers that take on these huge volunteer days are amazing. Nan Johnson, Alice Barkus, Steve Hartmann and Melanie Snyder are incredible. Their dedication, hard work, competence and "can-do" attitude make them undaunted and successful. I truly thank them for taking on the enormous and rather overwhelming task of coordinating the Day of Caring – at two sites, no less.

When you visit the Yankauer or Stauffer's Marsh Preserves in the next month or so, you'll appreciate the facelift this volunteer day provides. What you can't necessarily see is the lift it provides the volunteers and staff who have the weight of preserve management on their shoulders on a regular basis. This "lift" is truly a magnificent feeling.

My sincere thanks to all who led the effort, and to all who participated in this amazing volunteer event. Hats off to all of you.

A heart-felt thank you also goes to the United Way for coordinating the Day of Caring for the entire community. We are just one organization that benefits. The web of service cast upon the entire community through this event is truly a gift.

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

## 13<sup>th</sup> American Conservation Film Festival Announces 2015 Schedule; Five Films Feature Feathered Friends

By Jennifer Lee, ACFF Development & Communications Director

Three films at this year's American Conservation Film Festival will make their world premier and four their US premier among the 46 compelling films screening from October 23 to 25 in Shepherdstown. The Festival brings together the finest conservation films and filmmakers from around the world. The weekend also features discussions with scientists and educators, professional workshops, family programming, and social events — all with the mission of engaging, informing, and inspiring its audience through the power of film.

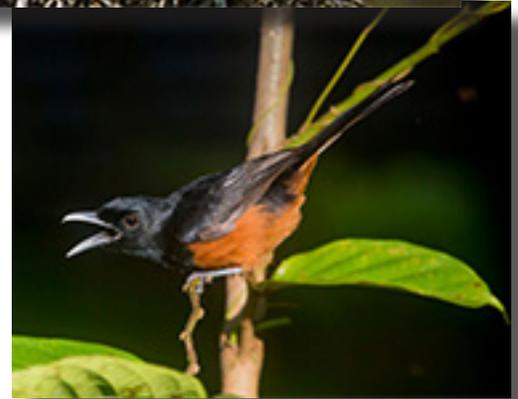
This year's Festival will present films with a wide range of environmental and conservation themes. Among those that may be of particular interest to bird-lovers are five films featuring a diversity of birds across the globe: flamingos in Tanzania; the snowy owl in Washington, DC; the monarch flycatcher in the Solomon Islands; vultures in Tibet; and ospreys around the world.

The Smithsonian Channel's *Islands of Creation* is this year's Broadcast Award winner and takes us to the Solomon Islands on a journey to catch evolution in the act with the speciation of the monarch flycatcher. The world premier of *Osprey: Marine Sentinel*, featuring beautiful footage of this iconic raptor, will screen on Saturday, October 24, at 4pm at the Shepherdstown Opera House.

At five venues in and around Shepherdstown, ACFF invites its audience to explore the world through the stories, images, and people that create this diverse offering of films. Several filmmakers and subject matter experts will be present during the festival and will participate in discussions following the screening of their films. Jacob Steinberg will introduce his film *Osprey: Marine Sentinel*; Amanda Stronza will be visiting from Africa to introduce *Pathways to Coexistence* about the people and elephants of Botswana; and student filmmaker Sam Sheline will be on hand for his film called *Add One Back* about oyster farming in the Chesapeake Bay.

Rounding out the schedule are films on environmental issues facing West Virginia, wildlife and wild places, agriculture and food sustainability issues, and adventure-conservation stories. After the films on Friday, ACFF invites you to get stirred and shaken at Tito's night at Domestic restaurant, sponsored by Tito's Handmade Vodka. Our annual wrap party on Saturday night takes us to local favorite Blue Moon Café, sponsored by Younis Orthodontics and Fallon Insurance. Discuss the films, mingle with filmmakers, and enjoy great drinks and free hors d'oeuvres. There is something for everyone to enjoy at this Festival! And volunteers are always needed and welcome.

On Sunday, November 1 at the Shepherdstown Opera House, ACFF will present its four awards winners at an encore event: Student Award winner *White Earth*; Broadcast Award winner *Islands of Creation*; Green Fire Award winner *Merchants of Doubt*, and the yet-to-be-determined Audience Choice winner.



Get a sense of the Festival here: <https://vimeo.com/114801522>

Film descriptions, schedule, and ticket info here: [www.conservationfilm.org](http://www.conservationfilm.org).

Follow on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

Questions? Please write [info@conservationfilm.org](mailto:info@conservationfilm.org).



## A Case of Invisibility

By Wil Hershberger

Every year a minimum of 100 billion birds fall victim to fatal collisions with glass windows (that's billion with a "b"). From skyscrapers to rural summer cottages, they all possess this one element in common — glass windows. It isn't the glass per se that is the problem; it is the reflection of the environment in the window that the birds appear to perceive as a continuation of their living space. They are faked into believing that they can escape a predator or other danger by flying in the direction of the reflection and the apparent open habitat beyond. Unfortunately, they hit the glass at high speed often breaking their necks or suffering severe concussions. Most of the birds that perish this way are never found. Neighborhood cats and other wildlife collect the victims before we find them.

There are a number of ways that we can reduce the risk of bird-window collisions at our homes and businesses, many of which are very inexpensive. Feeder placement, barriers, window marking devices, and reflection-reducing treatments are all successful means to this end.

Placing feeders very close to windows (within 3 feet) or more than 30 feet away seems to reduce collisions. Making windows appear as something other than a tunnel to another open space is one of the best methods to keep birds from hitting windows. Simple streamers of cloth or plastic that are hung on the bird's side of the window present an apparent obstacle to their flight. Similarly, decals that are applied to windows so that they are visible from the outside seem to work. The best of the decals are those that appear clear to us, but fluoresce in the UV part of the spectrum. Birds are able to see that portion of the spectrum and will see these decals as bright patterns on the window, again creating an apparent barrier to flight. There are also films that can be applied to the outside of the entire window that reduce or eliminate the reflections of the sky and trees almost completely.

High-rise buildings create a unique hazard. These tall structures can be a direct obstacle to the bird's flight, or they may attract the birds if there are lights on inside or shining on the exterior of the building. For a yet unknown reason, nocturnally migrating birds are attracted to lighted windows or buildings. Keeping these tall structures dark at night, during spring and fall migration, will greatly minimize the risk of collisions and death.

The care and treatment of injured birds should be left to professionals. However, if a bird has just collided with a window and is stunned, it should be carefully placed into a dark container (a shoe box or paper bag), brought inside, and left in a dark, quiet space until the bird appears to be fully awake. This can take from a few minutes to an hour or more. Be careful not to release the bird into your home, as this creates another set of problems. Release the recovered bird outside in a safe location well away from windows and potential predators.

There are numerous vendors that sell products designed to address the bird-window collision problem. Further resources can be found at the following websites: <http://www.collidescape.org>

<http://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/featured-stories/15-products-that-prevent-windows-strikes/>

[http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/notes/BirdNote10\\_Windows.pdf](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/notes/BirdNote10_Windows.pdf)



## Visit the PVAS booth at South Mountain Creamery's Annual Fall Festival!

PVAS has the pleasure of running an informational booth with two children's activities for the first time at South Mountain Creamery's Annual Fall Festival. The festival will have a wide variety of fun activities for all ages, along with tours of the facilities, and access to their delicious ice cream and other products!

The festival will take place on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> from 10am – 5pm, and Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup> from 11am – 5pm. PVAS will have a booth only on Saturday. The address to the Creamery is 8305 Bolivar Road, Middletown, MD 21769. The festival is a fun and popular fall event, and PVAS is happy to be part of the festivities. If you are interested in helping PVAS run the booth on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, please email Mary Etta Boesl at [meboesl@yahoo.com](mailto:meboesl@yahoo.com). Hope to see you there!

Notes from the Preserves

United Way’s Day of Caring at Yankauer and Stauffer’s Marsh

Both Yankauer and Stauffer’s Marsh Nature Preserves benefited from the September 15<sup>th</sup> United Way Day of Caring. About 50 volunteers participated in giving these preserves needed attention on a beautiful day!

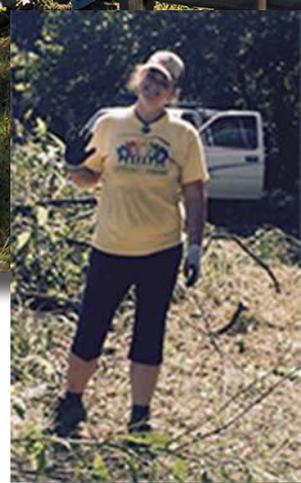
At Yankauer, volunteers performed needed maintenance work, as well as tackling some bigger projects such as clearing out the brush around the entrance and parking lot. Walt Eifert had refurbished the big Yankauer entrance sign the previous week, allowing volunteers to set it back up, looking better than ever. The Geyer family replaced and added cedar rails to better define the trails. The family continues to support Yankauer after Ethan Geyer completed his Eagle Scout project earlier this year by mulching the South Trail. The group from Charles River Laboratories once again participated at Yankauer by weeding, pruning, and cleaning and treating benches in several waysides along the trails. The local Master Gardeners reclaimed the butterfly garden by thinning the overgrowth and providing volunteers with plants to take home.

At Stauffer’s Marsh, volunteers consisting of PVAS Members, Master Naturalists, and WV Promise VISTAs helped to put up a fence along the north property line, which will discourage ATVs from crossing into the marsh and destroying habitat. Volunteers also erected trail signs and an entrance sign (provided by a grant from the WV Department of Natural Resources), cleared the Marsh Trail of overhanging brambles, and started clearing a meadow of invasive species.

Volunteers at both locations received t-shirts and enjoyed wonderful lunches: at Yankauer, provided by the PVAS Events Committee, and, at Stauffer’s, by Master Naturalist Wanda Miller.

On a special note, as many members know, PVAS has been working for years to install a composting toilet and hand washing station at Yankauer, and it is finally happening! As part of the Day of Caring, though not on the day itself, PVAS is receiving help from many local craftsmen in getting the work done. PVAS wants to say THANK YOU to: Anthony Erwin, excavation; Scott Todd of Todd Electric, Tom Utterback, plumber; and L.L. Brannon, well-drilling, for all of their care and hard work on this long-awaited project!

Special thanks to the PVAS Events Committee and Wanda Miller for providing lunch for everyone. Thanks to Nan Johnson, Yankauer’s volunteer caretaker, and to Steve Hartmann, Stauffer’s volunteer caretaker, for tirelessly organizing the volunteer projects. And, of course, many thanks to all the volunteers for their time and efforts on the day!



## Youth Programs

### Field Trips to Stauffer's Marsh in October

Thanks to a grant from WV Division of Natural Resources, PVAS has been revising our elementary curriculum to focus on wetland habitat education. Our existing program's focus has been more on forest habitats. In order to make sure the programs are effective and age-appropriate, we pilot the programs in various classrooms, and include a field trip to Stauffer's Marsh. These pilot programs are offered to teachers at no cost.

To complete the grant, PVAS has arranged for classes from Opequon Elementary School (kindergarten), North Jefferson Elementary (2<sup>nd</sup> grade), St. Joseph's Parish School (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades), Tomahawk Intermediate (4<sup>th</sup> grade) and Pleasant View Elementary (K-5<sup>th</sup> grades) to visit the marsh after a classroom presentation. Throughout October, these students will be boarding buses and traveling to Stauffer's Marsh for a day exploring the wetlands. After their trip, teachers will be asked to evaluate the experience for age-appropriateness, connection to WV learning standards, and connection to the specific theme. Once we have used the teacher's comments to revise the activities, the program will be provided to DNR for their use.

We can always use extra volunteers at the field trips! If you have time to help on these dates (October 9, 12, 13, 16, 23, 26, 28, or 30), please let Ellen Murphy know ([Ellen@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:Ellen@potomacaudubon.org))! This volunteer opportunity is MN Re-cert eligible for volunteer hours.



are teaching 29 fourth grade classes and more are expected during the spring semester! Some schools choose the semester (10 hour) program and others prefer the longer program that covers the entire school year. Most schools also choose to participate in a field experience that allows the students to put into practice what they have learned in class.

In addition to the existing watershed program, we have expanded a pilot program to fifth grade classes through a collaborative grant with Cacapon Institute. The fifth grade program helps students understand how watersheds have changed since the arrival of European colonists, then uses sessions on tree structure, dichotomous keys, and nonpoint source pollution to emphasize how trees create buffer zones that protect rivers and streams. As part of the program, students collect and plant native tree seeds that are placed in "grow-out" stations at the school. The fifth grade program is being taught in four West Virginia schools and three Washington County schools this fall.

### PVAS Welcomes Rick Allison!

If you've noticed a new face at PVAS events and activities, it might just be our new Lifebridge AmeriCorps volunteer, Rick Allison. Rick joined Lifebridge AmeriCorps in September 2015, bringing with him over 20 years of outdoor skills and environmental experience.



In the past, Rick developed and led age-appropriate programs at Maryland parks — including wildlife and plant identification, wilderness survival, bald eagle habitat management — and has participated in fox and deer censuses. He has also been involved with the Boy Scouts of America for many years, serving as an outdoor mentor, merit badge counselor, and Commissioner. He's also done hands-on and first person historical interpretation as a frontiersman and has experience with pioneer crafts.

In 2013, Rick completed the Camino de Santiago, a 500-mile backpacking trip across Spain (through snow, rain, sleet, winds, and heat!) He and his wife, Kate, and their cats live in Myersville MD. In the next several months, Rick will be teaching PVAS's watershed program to fourth graders, working on plans for a "spring break camp," talking with local youth agencies about ways PVAS can collaborate to introduce more kids to the outdoors, and helping plan for next year's summer camp...among other things!

### Watershed Programs Are Underway

Since 2003, PVAS has been teaching fourth graders in this area about watersheds and how they connect us in the Eastern Panhandle to the health of the Chesapeake Bay. This fall, we

## This Year's Berkeley Springs Birding Festival Blessed With Fine Weather

This year's Berkeley Springs Fall Birding Festival was blessed with beautiful fall weather throughout, which made for excellent birding conditions.

The Festival was held over the September 19-20 weekend. Attendance at its Saturday and Sunday morning walks, Saturday afternoon workshop, and Saturday evening program totaled about 120.

As usual, the attendees included a mix of people, with some coming from the Eastern Panhandle, some from nearby Maryland and Virginia, and some from the Baltimore and Washington areas.

Shown in the accompanying photo are those who turned out for the Sunday morning bird walk at Sleepy Creek retreat near Cacapon State Park.



The festival is sponsored by PVAS, but two Morgan County women, Judy Webb and Helen Herlocker, do the hard work of organizing it, and they deserve the community's thanks. Thanks are also due to Rene Fincham, the naturalist at Cacapon State Park, for facilitating the workshop for beginning birders; to Janet Ardem and Jon Boone, for helping to lead the Saturday and Sunday morning walks; and to the festival's evening presenters: Marcy Heacker and Steve Huy.

Next year's festival will be held around the same time in September. Anyone interested in helping with it should contact Judy Webb at the Nature Niche store at 304-258-0992, or [judy@naturenichewv.com](mailto:judy@naturenichewv.com).

## Don't Forget Cape May Trip

This is a reminder that PVAS is sponsoring a hawk-watching trip to Cape May, NJ on Columbus Day weekend, October 9-13. Anyone with an interest is welcome to participate and there will be no fee. However, participants will be expected furnish their own transportation and arrange for their own accommodations.

The trip will be led by Sandy Sagalkin, and co-sponsored by the Washington County Bird Club.

It will focus on several hawk-watching sites in the Cape May area. It will offer good opportunities to see Peregrine Falcons, Merlins, American Kestrels, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Coopers Hawks, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers and other raptors.

Those who participate will also be able to take advantage of a variety of free educational opportunities offered by the Cape May Bird Observatory and the New Jersey Audubon Society. The Cape May Bird Observatory website ([www.birdcapemay.org](http://www.birdcapemay.org)) contains a list of Cape May hotels and motels which offer discounts to birders who are members of the Observatory. The savings can be significant enough that trip participants who are not already members may wish to join; this can be done easily online.

Sandy will be staying at Leith Hall, a Victorian B&B that offers discounts to Observatory members. Contact the Hall through its website at [www.leithhall.com](http://www.leithhall.com) or by calling 609-884-1934.

Those who wish to participate should pre-register by contacting Sandy at 240-291-6465 or at [monsansagalkin@myactv.net](mailto:monsansagalkin@myactv.net).

## Join October 7 Harpers Ferry Bird Walk

PVAS will sponsor a bird walk in the South Schoolhouse Ridge section of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on Wednesday, October 7. It will begin at 8:00 a.m. and last about three hours. The walk is free and anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of their birding skills. Children are welcome. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required; easy registration is available on the PVAS website.

Participants should meet at the South Schoolhouse Ridge parking area. From Route 340 west of Harpers Ferry, turn south onto Millville Road (County Route 27); proceed 7 tenths of a mile to parking area. If the gate is closed, pull off and park along the road. The trip will involve about 3 miles of walking through woods and fields, with some hilly terrain. We expect to see raptors, woodpeckers, lingering migrating birds, and returning winter birds.

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 will be cancelled in the event of bad weather. For more information go to the PVAS website or contact walk leader Deb Hale at [debhale72@gmail.com](mailto:debhale72@gmail.com) or 304-535-2346.

## PVAS Helping With Butterfly Education Program at Hagerstown Park October 3

The Monarch Alliance, with the support of PVAS, will hold a Monarch Butterfly educational program at the City of Hagerstown's newest park, Kiwanis Park. The program will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, October 3, right after an 11:00 a.m. ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the Park.

The butterfly education program will be a free, family-friendly event, and everyone is welcome. It will provide homeowners with practical information on actions they can take to help attract and sustain Monarch Butterflies, which are a species in decline.

These steps include planting butterfly gardens with milkweed plants that give Monarchs important habitat during their annual migration. These plantings can be an excellent educational opportunity for families with children. They can be registered as "Monarch Waystations" with the Monarch Watch organization, and they also attract other butterflies, pollinating insects and hummingbirds.



The University of Maryland Extension Master Gardeners of Washington County will share information on protecting Monarchs and other pollinators. Free packets of seeds for butterfly gardens will be available from Burpee's, along with free native perennial plant plugs compliments of Boonsboro's Sunny Meadows Garden Center.

There will be children's activities, including face painting, free gift bags for children, and children's books for sale, including "Monarch Come Play With Me," by naturalist Ba Rea. The Kiwanis Club of Hagerstown will be supplying refreshments.

Later this fall, the Monarch Alliance, working with the City of Hagerstown, the Kiwanis Club, and possibly a local Boy Scout Troop, will be installing a Monarch Waystation at the Kiwanis Park.

Each year, the Monarch Butterfly leaves its wintering grounds in central Mexico flying north in search of milkweed, the Monarch's sole host plant. Its first stop is Texas. Subsequent generations continue to move north in search of milkweed, moving as far north as the northern United States and southern Canada. The fourth generation each year enters "reproductive diapause" before heading south on a journey of over 2000 miles to the wintering grounds in central Mexico. The following spring, that wintering population will head north to Texas, starting the annual cycle anew. There is no migration like the Monarch's in the entire animal kingdom.

The Monarch Butterfly has been in serious decline as a result of human and environmental pressure ever since its wintering site in central Mexico was discovered in the mid-1970s. The pressures it faces include overuse of herbicides and pesticides, drought, disease, poaching of the Oyamel Fir tree in Mexico, and other causes.

In the winter of 2014-15, the Monarch's wintering population was estimated at less than 5 percent of its historical numbers. Recently, Lincoln Brower, a noted Monarch Butterfly researcher, the Xerces Society, and others have filed a petition to review the butterfly under the Endangered Species Act.

Kiwanis Park is adjacent to Antietam Creek near Imperial Drive, east of Eastern Blvd, City of Hagerstown. From Hagerstown, take Eastern Blvd. north to Professional Court. Turn left on Cameo and continue north to Imperial Drive. Turn right on Imperial Court and turn into the park just past the Trilogy Building. The park is handicapped accessible, but check the city's website before coming to make sure the handicap ramp has been completed.

For further information about the event, contact Sandy Sagalkin at [monsansagalkin@myactv.net](mailto:monsansagalkin@myactv.net) or 240-291-6465, or Dave Kaplan at [janandavek@verizon.net](mailto:janandavek@verizon.net) or 301-331-5270. For more about Monarch butterflies go to [www.monarchwatch.org](http://www.monarchwatch.org). For more about the City of Hagerstown's parks, go to [www.hagerstownmd.org/index.aspx?NID+145](http://www.hagerstownmd.org/index.aspx?NID+145).

## Antietam Bird Walk Set for October 24

PVAS will sponsor a fall bird walk along the Final Attack Trail on the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, MD on Saturday, October 24. The walk is being cosponsored by the Washington County Bird Club.

It 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 at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org).

Participants should plan to meet walk leader Sandy Sagalkin at the Burnside Bridge at 8:00 a.m. To get to the Burnside Bridge parking area 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](mailto:monsansagalkin@myactv.net) or 240-291-6465.

## Charles Town "Tree Walk" Set For October 17

PVAS and the Charles Town Farmers Market are co-sponsoring a fall Tree Walk along the streets of Charles Town on Saturday, October 17. Local arborist Shawn Walker will lead the walk.

Participants will meet at 10:00 a.m. in front of the Charles Town Library. The walk will last about one-and-a-half hours, and will offer a close-up look at the diverse tree population that surrounds the market on Samuel Street.

The walk will focus in part on identifying evergreens, and in part on identifying deciduous trees through their fall characteristics, bark, twigs, and other distinctive features. There will be a tree-height guessing challenge at the end.

The event will be free and open to the public. Preregistration is recommended but not required; register on the PVAS website. For more information, go to the PVAS website or contact Krista Hawley at 703-303-1026 or [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org).

## Join Pre-Halloween "Owl Prowl" at Craftworks

PVAS and Craftworks at Cool Spring are teaming up to sponsor an evening "owl prowl" at Craftworks on Friday, October 30.

Come along and enjoy the brisk fall weather while looking for owls, bats and other creatures of the night with expert birder and Master Naturalist Joette Borzik. After the walk, participants can enjoy a light snack around the warmth of a campfire.

The walk will begin at 6:00 p.m. and last about three hours. It will be free and open to anyone with an interest. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required for this event and can be completed on the Craftworks website at <http://craftworksatcoolsspring.org>.

The walk will begin at the Craftworks parking lot located at 1469 Lloyd Road south of Charles Town. It will involve 1 to 2 miles of walking on uneven and rolling terrain using flashlights.

The walk will be conducted even if it is raining. Participants should wear sturdy shoes; dress appropriately for the prevailing weather; bring drinking water, insect repellent, one flashlight per person, and binoculars if you have them. A few pairs of binoculars will be available for those who don't have their own.

For more information, contact Krista Hawley of PVAS at [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org) or 703-303-1026, or contact Craftworks at 304-728-6233.

## October 14 Program Will Look at Freshwater Mussels

Our monthly program for October features a presentation about freshwater mussels. The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 14 at the Hospice of the Panhandle facility in Kearneysville. Admission is free and everyone is welcome to attend.

The speaker is Matthew Patterson, a biologist who teaches at Shepherdstown's National Conservation Training Center. He will review the conservation status and life histories of freshwater mussels, with a particular focus on the mussels of the Potomac River.

Patterson has a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Kentucky State University, and a Master's from Virginia Tech. Before coming to NCTC, he worked as a research scientist at Kentucky State, and then as a US Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Biologist at West Virginia's White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery.

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 the PVAS website or contact Krista Hawley at [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org) or 703-303-1026.

## October 11 Hampshire County Trip Will Include Bird Walk and Historic House Tour

PVAS will sponsor a special trip to an historic Hampshire County farm on Sunday, October 11. The trip will include a bird walk on the farm property from 8:00-10:00 a.m. and a tour of the farm's historic house from 10:00 a.m. to noon, led by the owners. Both activities will be free and open to anyone with an interest. Anyone may elect to participate in both or just one. Children are welcome. Pre-registration is required. Easy registration is available on the PVAS website at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org).

The farm, called Ridgedale, is located about 5 miles north of Romney. It has a long history. It was first settled in 1725 by a man named Peter Peters and then was the site of a fort that was garrisoned by militia during the French and Indian War. The property was acquired in the early 1830s by George W. Washington, a great-great grandson of President George Washington's brother, Lawrence. George W. farmed the property until his death in 1876. The property continued to be actively farmed by the Washington family until 1930.

The house that stands on the property today was built by George W. and his wife Sarah in 1835. It is a fine example of Greek Revival architecture, built of brick and three stories high. It has been painstakingly restored in recent years by the farm's current owners, Carol and Mike Shaw. The farmland surrounding the house offers good birding habitat. Surrounded by mountains, it encompasses 252 acres that include a mixture of fields, hedgerows, and woodland. Part of the property borders the South Branch of the Potomac.

Those who plan to participate in the bird walk should wear comfortable shoes and bring water and insect repellent. The trip will be rescheduled in the event of heavy rain.

Ridgedale farm is located at 651 Washington Bottom Road, Springfield, WV. Getting there involves a drive of about 1.35 to 1.5 hours from most locations in the Eastern Panhandle. Those who wish to carpool should plan to meet the trip leader, Debbie Maiorano, in the parking lot of the Inwood Food Lion store on Route 51, just off I-80. She will be leaving there promptly at 6:30 a.m.

For more information about Ridgedale Farm, go to <http://www.historichampshire.org/nrhp/GWW/gww-home.htm>. For more information about the trip, contact Debbie at 540-535-5145 or [debbiem58@aol.com](mailto:debbiem58@aol.com).



## Join A Letterbox Trek in Shepherdstown on October 4

PVAS will sponsor a "Letterbox trek" in Shepherdstown on the afternoon of Sunday, October 4.

The trek is part of a new series of Audubon-sponsored "Family Outdoor Adventures" that are aimed at involving whole families in interesting and educational outdoor activities.

In this case, participants will learn all about Letterboxing, and explore Shepherdstown's letterboxes. At the end of the day, they'll be ready to go Letterboxing on their own.

The trek will begin at 2:00 p.m. in Shepherdstown's Rumsey Memorial Park on Mill Street and last until 4:00 p.m. Families with children of all ages are invited to participate. There will be a charge of \$10 per family group, and preregistration is required. Register on the PVAS website.

Letterboxing is an old English tradition that was first popularized in the U.S. in the late 1990s. It is similar to geocaching and makes a fine family hobby. Letterboxes hide small, weatherproof boxes in publicly accessible places and distribute clues to finding the boxes on web sites or in printed catalogues. Each box contains a visitor's book and a rubber stamp; finders make an imprint of the letterbox's stamp in their personal notebook, and leave an impression of their own stamp on the visitors' book. Many Letterboxers keep careful track of their "find count".

There are quite a few Letterboxes hidden around Shepherdstown and more throughout the Eastern Panhandle.

For more information about Letterboxing, go to [www.letterboxing.org](http://www.letterboxing.org). For more information about the October 4 event, contact Krista Hawley at [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org) or 703-303-1026.



*Participants in the second Family Outdoor Adventure at Whiting's Neck Cave on August 22, 2015.*

## Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

### PVMN Annual Meeting, Potluck, and Silent Auction on October 31

Hello Master Naturalists!

You and your family are invited to PVMN's annual meeting, potluck, and silent auction on Saturday, October 31! The event will be held at Orchard House, just outside Shepherdstown, from 11am until 1pm.

Each year, we MNs like to get together, handle a little official business, recognize new MN graduates and those re-certifying, and eat! It's a fun occasion to see your fellow MNs, get caught up on news, and, did I mention eat?

Please bring a dish to share (we aren't picky!), and your own plates, cups, and silverware. Coffee and lemonade will be provided.

Among graduating and re-certifying MNs, there will also be a special recognition for most volunteer hours served. So, please have your hours in to Larry Smith, our Recognition Coordinator, by October 20! You can email them to [msmith19@frontiernet.net](mailto:msmith19@frontiernet.net), or mail them to P.O. Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

Also, every year we hold a silent auction. All proceeds go towards scholarships for the MN course, so please bring an item to donate. Ideas of items to donate are just about anything from t-shirts, books, food (people bid on pie!), field guides, crafts, bird items and other fun stuff. Don't forget to bring your checkbook so you can bid often! Last year we made over \$600, which was a huge help.

MNs don't get to gather often, so we hope you will join us! If you have any questions, please email Melanie Snyder at [littleowl48@hotmail.com](mailto:littleowl48@hotmail.com).

We look forward to seeing you!

### Master Naturalist 2015 Recertification

Attention all Master Naturalists!

Looks like summer is officially over. That means it's once again time to submit your verification of continuing education credits and volunteer hours for recertification as a Master Naturalist. The official cut-off date for providing recertification data to WV DNR is December 31st.

However, for those wishing to receive their recertification card and recognition at the annual Master Naturalist meeting that will be held October 31, 2015, a scanned copy of data verifying completion of the required Continuing Education credits and Volunteer Hours should be submitted to [msmith19@frontiernet.net](mailto:msmith19@frontiernet.net) no later than October 20, 2015. For those without access to a scanner, a physical copy of the documents may be sent to:

Recognition Coordinator  
P.O. Box 578  
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

### Master Naturalist Open House

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalists will host an open house on Wednesday, October 21, 2015, from 6:00-7:00 p.m., preceding the PVAS program on "Creating Healthy Backyard Habitats (see article below)." Certified Master Naturalists will be on hand to welcome interested participants, talk about their experiences, and share information about our exciting Master Naturalist Program.

The Open House and the PVAS program will take place at the Morgan County Board of Education Office, 247 Harrison Avenue, Berkeley Springs, WV.

Information on our PVMN Program can be obtained by going to: [potomacaudubon.org/masternat](http://potomacaudubon.org/masternat) or email Krista Hawley at [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org).

### October 21 Berkeley Springs Program Will Focus on Backyard Habitats

PVAS is sponsoring an evening program in Berkeley Springs on Wednesday, October 21.

The program, entitled "Creating Healthy Backyard Habitats," will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Morgan County Board of Education building, 247 Harrison Avenue.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Admission will be free and there is no need to register in advance.

The program speakers will be three Eastern Panhandle Master Naturalists: Susan Brookreson, of Martinsburg; Carol Del-Colle, of Summit Point; and Bruni Haydl, of Charles Town. They will provide homeowners with helpful information about creating backyard habitats that attract birds and other beneficial wildlife.

Landscaping to provide habitats for wildlife has become increasingly popular in recent years. Even small yards can be landscaped to attract birds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and small animals. Trees, shrubs, and other plants provide shelter and food for all kinds of creatures.

For more information go to the PVAS website or contact Krista Hawley at [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org) or 703-303-1026.

## New Perks for PVAS Members!

Have you visited the Member page ([www.potomacaudubon.org/member](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/member)) at the PVAS website lately? If not, go take a peek! PVAS is excited to offer some new benefits for its dedicated members. Now, along with a subscription to *Valley Views*, discounts to many PVAS programs and events, and an annual member gathering, all members will receive the following benefits:

- 1) Free or reduced admission to participating nature centers and/or their programs across the country through the Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA). Check out the list of participating centers at [http://www.natctr.org/assets/docs/public/anca\\_reciprocal\\_member\\_list.pdf](http://www.natctr.org/assets/docs/public/anca_reciprocal_member_list.pdf).
- 2) Discounts to participating local businesses: Nature Niche in Berkeley Springs, and Trees 101 and Two Rivers Treads in Shepherdstown, with more to come! Check out [www.potomacaudubon.org/Local-Business-Discounts](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/Local-Business-Discounts) for more details.

If you have any questions, contact our PVAS WV Promise VISTA, Melanie Snyder, at [admin@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:admin@potomacaudubon.org) or 703-973-5419.



Laura Fraizer shares her beautiful photo of an Ovenbird taken in her backyard in Middleway, September 13, 2015. Great spotting!

## 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:*

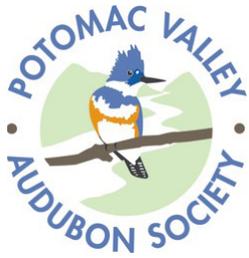
**Clip and mail this form to:**  
**Membership Chair, PVAS**  
**PO Box 578**  
**Shepherdstown, WV 25443**



**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](http://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.



Potomac Valley Audubon Society  
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 Shepherdstown, WV 25443  
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October 2015

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

**PVAS BOARD**

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

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

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

Clark Dixon (2017) ..... dixonconsultants@aol.com  
 Kara Gibson (2016) ..... KaraKlein@gmail.com  
 Tanner Haid (2016) ..... Tanner.Haid@gmail.com  
 Joe Hankins (2016) ..... joseph.hankins@gmail.com  
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 Matthew Patterson (2016) ..... tridecanone@yahoo.com  
 Don Campbell (2017) ..... treehouseview@comcast.net  
 Mina Goodrich (2017) ..... larrymina@peoplepc.com  
 Elizabeth Morningstar (2017) ..... dlglntthedlrt@comcast.net

**Ex Officio Board Member:** Diana Mullis (past president) ..... DianaMullis@aol.com  
**Emerita Board Member:** Jean Neely ..... jeaneely@comcast.net

**Special Contacts**

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 Program Director: Ellen Murphy (304-676-8739)..... Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org  
 Adult Prog. Coord: Krista Hawley (703-303-1026)..... AdultPrograms@PotomacAudubon.org  
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