

Valley Views

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October/November 2017

President's Note

by Michael Sullivan, PVAS President

Fall is taking hold. We see migrating birds on their journey south; we see falling leaves swirling in attenuated light; and, cruising along local byways, we see the rural beauty of the Eastern Panhandle and Western Maryland on display in all of its autumnal glory. What a great time of the year!

Last year, on October 1, Linda Case and the Board of Directors at CraftWorks generously gave PVAS the property that we now call Cool Spring Preserve. As the new owners of this wonderful property, it was our intent to build on the achievements and legacy of CraftWorks in a meaningful way that would inspire conservation and celebrate the intersection of art with nature. We had visions of children learning about and drawing trees, insects, and amphibians; 4th graders wading in Bullskin Run; campers exploring nature; families taking a hike; musicians performing on summer evenings; and bird watchers adding to their life list. We have realized all of these and more over the past twelve months, and we made Cool Spring our home. It is very gratifying to see the Cool Spring Preserve being protected and enjoyed year round.

Our extensive fall programming – Wee Naturalist activities, hawk watching, owl banding, nature book lovers' discussions, natural history workshops – is underway all across our four-county geographic area. The depth and range of programs that we are able to offer in every season is testimony to the generosity of our members and donors, and we are most grateful for your support.

Please consider celebrating with us and helping to support such programs by attending our fall fundraiser at historic Clay Hill in Ranson, West Virginia, on Sunday, October 29. Clay Hill is a recently restored historic home situated on several hundred acres of open fields with a wonderful panoramic view of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the gap at Harpers Ferry. More detail on this important event is provided elsewhere in our newsletter.

Celebrate One Year at Cool Spring Preserve

On Saturday, November 4, 1:00-4:00 p.m., join PVAS at Cool Spring for an Open House to celebrate our one-year anniversary at Cool Spring Preserve!

This has been an amazing year of getting our feet wet (literally) in Bullskin Run and settling into PVAS's new home in the nature center. Lots of feet, large and small, have been exploring the forests, fields, stream and trails of PVAS's newest nature preserve over the last year.



Come celebrate with us! We'll have activities for young and not-so-young alike. Learn how to use binoculars, toast a marshmallow over a fire, make a fairy house, go on a scavenger hunt, or take a quiet walk along the Bullskin and the beautiful marsh beside it. Refreshments

will be provided, and the event is free and open to everyone.

If you've not see the property yet, this is a great opportunity to learn more about the building, the trails, and the ecology of this precious gift PVAS received from CraftWorks at Cool Spring one year ago. We hope to see you there!

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

Singing Insect Symphony at Cool Spring Preserve and a New Instrumentalist in the Orchestra

by Wil Hershberger

The singing insect walk that I led at Cool Spring Preserve on Saturday, August 5 was well attended and the participants full of enthusiasm. Little did we know what the evening held in store for this intrepid cadre of bug-hunters. As we listened for singing insects in the parking lot, our ears were first treated to the rhythmic chirping of Fall Field Crickets that were calling from their gravel margin homes. Just beyond the gravel, in the mowed grassy areas, we heard Allard's and Carolina Ground Crickets trilling from their hidden borrows and crevices. As the light was fading, the last of the Scissor-grinder Cicadas pulsated his loud song into the night's purpling hues.

We walked behind the center and were greeted by the low-pitched droning of a chorus of Two-spotted Tree Crickets as we neared the taller trees near Bullskin Run. These singers were hidden in the leafy canopy well above our heads. The fading light then spurred Davis's Tree Crickets to join the Two-spotted Tree Crickets in a mellow, off-key symphony of trills from the trees. As we rounded the corner and headed west toward the darkening woods, we were surprised by the loud, noisy buzzing of a Nebraska Conehead singing off toward the marsh. Pausing to listen more carefully, we also heard Northern Mole Crickets doing their best to sound like late-season frogs singing from the moist soils around the marsh's margins. Slightly Musical Coneheads were easier to hear when we moved farther from the Nebraska Conehead and his aural hogging voice.



Insect walk participants and Wil Hershberger at Cool Spring ©Paul Koehler

at Cool Spring there were dozens of singing males. How did they get here? Were they introduced somehow, or did they make it over the Appalachians on their own? We may never know for certain, but we now know that there is a healthy population of Long-spurred Meadow Katydid at Cool Spring Preserve for everyone to study and appreciate.

Long-spurred Meadow Katydids are extremely handsome: entirely green except for their red-orange eyes, red-brown backs, and bright yellow cerci. Most meadow katydids have long antennae, but Long-spurred's antennae are exceptionally long and slender. Perhaps their habit of stealing away in the dark recesses of shrubs and tree thickets requires these longer feelers to keep aware of food, friend, and foe. They can be very difficult to see even though you know one is singing right in front of you; they like to hide under leaves and behind stems. They are fast jumpers too, leading you on a merry chase through the brush if you pursue.

The song of the Long-spurred Meadow Katydid is a quiet purring or shuffling introduced by a series of double-noted pulses, all at a somewhat high pitch. When other insects are singing in earnest, it can be hard to be certain that you are hearing the delicate song of this species. The purring portion of the song can last from a few to many seconds, as some males seem to drone on indefinitely: <http://songsofinsects.com/katydids/long-spurred-meadow-katydid>.

As the last of the light disappeared from the sky, we found ourselves out in the meadow past the Old Orchard Trail. Jumping Bush Crickets, Broad-winged Tree Crickets, Common True Katydids, and the first sounds from a Greater Angle-wing Katydid reached our ears from the darkness. Making our way back the same trail, we encountered an ever-increasing number of singing Lesser Angle-wing and Oblong-winged Katydids. Two silent species were seen in our flash light scannings, a Restless Trig and a Carolina Leaf Roller Cricket.

The late summer and fall chorusing of our singing insects is a testament to the abundance of summer. As we discovered, there is no finer place in Jefferson County to explore and appreciate this beautiful symphony than at Cool Spring Preserve.



Orchelimum silvaticum ©Wil Hershberger

It was here, near the intersection with the Blackberry Path Trail that I first became aware of a different singer in the brush and shrubs. I could tell that there were several singing males nearby, but all were well off the trail and in thick vegetation. As we ventured farther west, nearing the Flicker Flyway Trail, I heard one of these new singers very close at hand. A brief search with a bright flashlight revealed the singing male in all his splendor – a Long-spurred Meadow Katydid (*Orchelimum silvaticum*)! “What is he doing here?” was my first thought. Fortunately, he remained on his perch as everyone filed by to see this handsome singer.

This is a new species of katydid for Jefferson County, WV. One male was seen and heard singing near Baker Heights two years ago, probably a stowaway on a car that had just returned from Ohio, where this species is common. However, here

PVAS Events

Adult Programs

Pumpkin season, otherwise known as fall, is just around the corner! At PVAS, that means we have hawks and owls on the brain. A variety of adult programs in October and November provide multiple opportunities for PVAS members and guests to learn more about these birds and see them in action.

PVAS has already hosted several Hawk Watch events in September at Harper's Ferry and South Mountain, and these will continue in October. Bob Dean is hosting his annual Saw-Whet Owl Banding trips in November. An owl prowl will be held in October at Cool Spring Preserve, and owl banding can be witnessed in October and November at banding stations at South Mountain and Hedgesville.

Upcoming monthly programs include a discussion of environmental change in the Potomac Watershed by ecologist Jim Cummins, and the songs of the Vesper Sparrow by PVAS' own Wil Hershberger in October and November, respectively. PVAS will also host a program in Morgan County in November led by Larry Stritch, following an open house for the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist program.



A series of "Monarch Discovery Days" were held throughout September across the Eastern Panhandle and Washington County. Many of you were part of these tagging events and participated in the milkweed and native plant sale held in September. All of these events were hosted through Monarch Alliance, which is now an official part of PVAS. If you missed out, make sure to watch for these events next year, which can be found

on the Monarch Alliance page under the Conservation Initiative tab: <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/Butterflies-and-Pollinators>.

To find out more about these and other programs, check the calendar insert included in this issue of *Valley Views*, subscribe to our biweekly *Heads-Up PVAS!* e-newsletter, and check our website (www.potomacaudubon.org) regularly. We are adding programs and events all the time, so the website is the best way to keep up to date.



Northern Saw-whet Owl © CJ White

Welcome, New AmeriCorps Members!

PVAS is excited to introduce Emily Noël and Garrett Wren, our new Lifebridge AmeriCorps members. Over the next year, Garrett and Emily can be found surrounded by children in classrooms, at libraries, and facilitating outdoor exploration as they support the PVAS youth programs.

Emily recently moved from Rhode Island, where she was an assistant professor at the Community College of Rhode Island. Emily holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in Music and has performed widely as a singer and actor, including singing leading roles at the Kennedy Center and Shakespeare's Global Theatre in London. She brings over eleven years of teaching experience to the position, as well as a background as a national park interpreter. This summer Emily married Harris, and they have recently added a dog to their family.

Garrett grew up in Chicago, and has a degree in Literature from Wheaton College. Garrett previously completed one AmeriCorps service with City Year at Garfield Elementary in Washington D.C. Most recently he worked as an ESL assistant for Korean students. When not mentoring and teaching, Garrett spends his time devouring bluegrass music and playing the mandolin. Garrett placed third in a national mandolin championship in 2015, and performs locally and nation-wide. Garrett and his wife, Elizabeth, reside in Harpers Ferry with their dog.

Both Emily and Garrett are eager educators and offer a vested interest in the natural world. We are proud to have them join our PVAS family and look forward to discovering how their talented backgrounds will inspire and enrich our educational programs.



PVAS Events

Fall Fundraiser, “Oktoberfest at Clay Hill,” Sunday, October 29

Join PVAS on October 29, 4:00-6:30 p.m., for “Oktoberfest at Clay Hill” in Ranson, West Virginia. Bill Strider has generously agreed to open his recently restored historic home for the event.

This event will support the programs and preserves of PVAS, allowing us to continue providing educational programs for youth and adults and manage over 500 acres of preserved green space for habitat, education, and recreation. The event will also support PVAS’s new Cool Spring Preserve as we continue efforts to create a community nature center at the site, just south of Charles Town, on Bullskin Run.

The infamous Events Committee will be catering the event, which will include delicious German fare and a variety of seasonally appropriate beers and wines. Live “Newgrass” music will be provided by Garrett Wren (our AmeriCorps Volunteer) and friends! (Did you know he’s a talented mandolin performer?) Ticket prices will begin at \$45 for individuals, but guests may also choose to be Donors (\$150/couple), Patrons (\$200/couple), or Supporters (\$250/couple).

Constructed circa 1828, Clay Hill is one of five “sister” houses in Jefferson County that include LaGrange, Woodlawn, Snow Hill and Roxley. Built in the Federal style, Clay Hill is a stunning example of Pre-Civil War architecture. Aside from a brief period when the home was vacant or rented, members of the Strider-Fulk-Sechrist family have lived at Clay Hill for the past 136 years. In 2007, the Strider family undertook an ambitious 24-month renovation, restoring much of the house to its original condition.

The property totals 279 acres, and has been used as a dairy farm, orchard, pasture, and grain farm over the years. Amidst the expansive acreage, Clay Hill sits on the exact East-West center of Jefferson County. This advantageous position aligns the house and sun to the minute, affording spectacular sunrise and sunset views every day of the year.

With a little luck, the weather will provide the opportunity to witness one of these sunsets at Clay Hill on October 29. We hope to see you there!



Birdseed Sale

It’s that time of year again: time to think about stocking up to feed our feathered friends over the winter, and into spring.

We are again doing a birdseed delivery to Berkeley Springs and offering storage at Gower’s in Williamsport and Ranson, a nice option for those who don’t have a good mouse-free place to store it.

The seed we acquire through Gower’s is fresh and high quality, and profits from our sale send local kids to summer camp.

Use the Birdseed Order Form insert in this edition of Valley Views or print a hard copy from the PVAS web site: <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>.

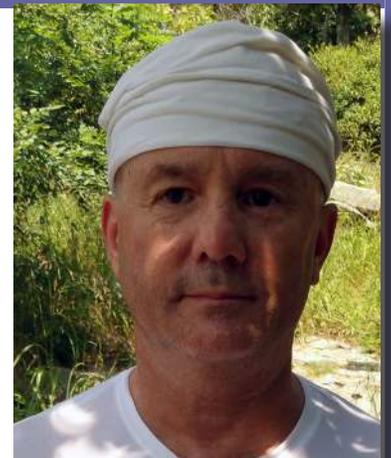
Birdseed Sale coordinator Diana Mullis can be reached at 304-754-3753 or dianamullis@aol.com.

Orders are due on October 15. We appreciate your support of PVAS and our feathered friends!

Have You Met Mike Wiltshire?

Mike has been our go-to, multi-talented handyman at Cool Spring Preserve. From getting the Cool Spring internet up and running to fixing benches, unclogging sinks and hanging cabinets, there really is nothing Mike can’t do. He also was a key force in getting the Cool Spring cottage habitable. Mike wowed us with his diverse skillset as he tackled projects such as the installation of countertops, setting up sink plumbing and repairing dry wall. At the Nature Center, he was a huge help getting the classroom ready for summer camp. Mike is always willing to help no matter the task, and we feel so fortunate to have him around! Mike is also a member of the PVAS birding committee and a Birding 101 alumnus. When he isn’t volunteering his time, you may find Mike on a walk at Cool Spring, enjoying the birds.

All of our PVAS volunteers are great! If you know someone who deserves a shout out, please contact Bridget Tinsley at bridget@potomacaudubon.org.



Family and Youth Programs

Homeschool Programs Are Growing Can You Build a Better Nest than a Bird?

Last spring, PVAS started offering homeschool programs at Cool Spring Preserve. It started with just one private homeschool group requesting a program, but once the word spread, we needed to offer more sessions to keep up with the demand. That one program turned into monthly programs, and this fall we are further expanding by offering two programs a month with separate sessions for both younger and older elementary-aged students. We will further branch out by targeting some programs specifically at middle school-aged homeschool students.

Many families were not familiar with PVAS prior to attending one of our homeschool programs, so these programs offer an opportunity to attract new people in our community and give them exposure to all the wonderful things PVAS has to offer. According to Annie Young, a local homeschooling parent, parents look for alternative learning environments and resources to help provide lessons about topics such as environmental education that they are knowledgeable about but still value: "Nature is important because the more I know about it, the more I care and the more it gives back to me. I want to pass these gifts and responsibilities for stewardship on to my daughter."

Our programs are helping families realize an interest in certain nature topics that they may choose to study in more depth in their homeschool lessons. They also provide parents with an example of how to use the natural world as an outdoor classroom and hopefully inspire them and give them confidence to continue this approach on their own.

As for the students, our nature-based programs provide opportunities to meet new people, engage in outdoor exploration, heighten their sensory awareness - and most importantly, develop a love for the outdoors.



One major issue of concern among environmentalists is that today's children are not spending enough time in nature. This is bad for kids in many ways. It's also bad for nature: there may be fewer people among tomorrow's adults who care about nature and want to conserve and protect our natural heritage.

Library programs are one of the many ways that PVAS works to reach children and provide opportunities for them to learn about nature. This summer more than 181 students were served at the following area libraries: Bolivar-Harpers Ferry, Sharpsburg, Smithsburg, Martinsburg (main), Brunswick, Hedgesville, Keedysville, Boonsboro, Williamsport, and Clear Spring. This was our first year to be invited to the libraries in Maryland, so we were able to reach even more children.

The question we asked the children: can you build a better nest than a bird? Participants were first given the opportunity to see real birds' nests and listen to a book about building nests (*Mama Built a Little Nest* by Jennifer Ward). Then they were encouraged to try building a nest with foam pool noodles. Although the noodles bend and can be woven together, the activity demonstrated the challenges of making a secure structure. Finally, everyone was given a supply of dry spaghetti and mini-marshmallows to form a structure, then filled it in with a variety of natural materials. Everyone agreed, at the end of each program, that birds are master builders and nest building is much more difficult than it sounds!

In addition to these programs, PVAS coordinated with the Bolivar-Harpers Ferry Library to offer a Green Energy program at Cool Spring Preserve. Despite stormy weather, those who attended learned about the green construction of the Cool Spring building as well as comparing the energy needed to power an LED light bulb versus an incandescent one. Additional activities included ideas for Home Energy Audits and a challenge to kids to build a wind-powered car using a variety of materials.

Another important aspect of these programs is the opportunity for PVAS volunteers and children to work together and learn from each other. Special thanks go to all the volunteers who helped out this summer!

Camp Programs

Birdseed Sale Customers Support Camp Scholarships

As you consider your 2017 birdseed order, the PVAS Camp Scholarship Committee is thrilled to remind you that proceeds from the sale provide scholarships for young people to attend summer environmental camps. Last year's generous customers sponsored 26 deserving and fortunate youngsters to attend environmental camps in Summer 2017.

Sera Ann Hawley (age 12) and Max Hawley (15) of Shepherdstown attended the re-envisioned Mountain Institute's *Experience Learning* at Spruce Knob. Three happy campers went to the WV *Junior Conservation Camp*: Cecelia Bayles (12) of Ranson, Christopher Harder (12) of Ranson, and Nicholas Zitacuaro (13) of Charles Town. Noah Alcantara (12) of Charles Town attended Oglebay Institute's *Junior Nature Camp*, and Allison Fogle (16) of Hedgesville attended the *PVAS Nature Photography Camp*. Finally, Isaac McCarthy (15) of Gerrardstown participated in the *Student Climate and Conservation Congress (SC3)* at NCTC, which draws campers from around the world. Birdseed Sale proceeds also helped support eighteen children at PVAS' own expanded and popular Audubon Discovery Camp.

These young people were excited to have these opportunities and grateful to us for helping to provide them. Many thanks to our loyal birdseed customers, and to other generous individual and community donors. You all make it possible for young people in our membership area to experience the life-changing fun and adventure of camp, while learning to be conservation leaders of the future.

Conservation

Environmental and Conservation Support Fund

Using an anonymous initial gift of \$85,000 received over the summer, PVAS established an Environmental and Conservation Support Fund. This extremely generous gift and the new fund it supports will allow PVAS to advance its work to understand, defend, and improve the natural world. Threats to wildlife and habitat abound, and there is plenty of work to be done. Our forests, fields, and waterways need protection, preservation, and restoration. PVAS is already engaged in habitat enhancement and protection at our nature preserves, and in meaningful projects like the Grassland Birds Initiative, the Chimney Swift Tower project, and the Monarch Alliance. This fund gives PVAS the financial wherewithal to coordinate our staff and volunteer resources more effectively, and the ability to take on new conservation projects that will really make a difference. It also allows us to provide matching funds for conservation grants when needed.

We are very appreciative of this charitable gift and the donor who made it happen. Establishment of the Environmental and Conservation Support Fund brings energy and strength to our mission: “People dedicated to preserving, restoring, and enjoying the natural world through education and action.” We expect this fund to grow as our organization becomes increasingly engaged in consequential conservation activities. Members who are particularly interested in supporting environmental and conservation work are encouraged to donate to this fund so that we can continue our efforts in a sustainable manner from year to year. Inquiries can be directed to our Executive Director, Kristin Alexander (kristin@potomacaudubon.org).

By the Numbers: Let’s Get Batty

As the days get shorter, and the leaves begin to fade and fall, bats are more easily observed. These magnificent mammals play an important ecological role as nighttime insectivores and pollinators. Here are a few fun facts to leave you feeling batty and boisterous about bats!

14 species of bats reside in WV, **7** of these species are cave-dwelling.

It takes **1** month for a newborn bat pup to fly.

125,000 little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) live in a single cave in Pendleton County, WV.

21 caves in WV are closed part of the year to protect endangered bats.

25% of North American bat species are endangered, **2** of them live in West Virginia.

1 fungus, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, known as “white nose syndrome” is responsible for killing over **6,000,000** bats in eastern North America since 2006.



Eastern Red Bat © C. Fremaux

7 Tips Towards Energy Efficiency

- Plant trees and shrubs around your house.** Properly planted landscaping can help insulate your house from the heat of the summer and during the cold winter, while providing beauty and wildlife habitat.
- Replace incandescent lightbulbs** with LED, halogen or compact florescent lights for a longer lasting, more energy efficient and environmentally friendly way to light up your life.
- Unplug electronic chargers and devices when not in use.** This can cut your annual energy use by 10%.
- Go wireless!** Personal electronic devices are replacing desktop computers and televisions, resulting in an overall downward trend in national energy consumption.
- Insulate windows, walls and attics.** Several affordable and easily installed products can help seal off drafts, save money and maintain a comfortable temperature indoors.
- Use alternative energy sources.** Solar panels and geothermal energy systems are becoming more affordable and available.
- Go outside and explore!** Spend less time indoors and get off the grid. Take advantage of the daylight, go camping, and entertain yourself with the endless wonder of the natural world we live in.

Conservation

Chimney Swift Tower Update

Ground breaking news is on the horizon for the Chimney Swift Tower at Shepherd University. Multiple efforts are currently underway, including signing contracts, ordering materials, and delegating stakeholder responsibilities. All of this behind-the-scenes planning is critical to ensuring that the project operates smoothly and that all partners agree on and work collaboratively to achieved desired outcomes. It is expected that construction on the tower will begin this fall.

In addition, we are receiving sustained community investment and media interest in the project. We are pleased to report that the WV Department of Natural Resources has offered financial, technical, and media support for the Chimney Swift Tower. The project will also be featured on the WV Wildlife TV show this fall.

Monarch Alliance Monarch Waystation Grant Program

Monarch Alliance, a program of PVAS, is pleased to announce our Monarch Waystation Grant Program. This grant program awards vouchers of up to \$1,000 for the purchase of Monarch Waystation plants during one of Monarch Alliance's native plant sales (held in May and September) at Sunny Meadows Garden Center in Boonsboro, MD.

We invite you to use your creativity and knowledge about gardening to tailor your site to help monarch butterflies. Simply incorporate Monarch Watch Waystation requirements - at least 100 square feet in size, sunny location, native milkweed and nectar plants, and maintenance plan – into a new garden design or to enhance monarch butterfly habitat in your existing garden.

This opportunity is open to Monarch Waystation projects in Washington and Frederick Counties in Maryland, and Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan Counties in West Virginia. Preference will be given to schools, universities, nature centers, and other organizations planning to use the Waystation to involve students in outdoor learning.

More details and an application form can be found on the Monarch Alliance website at: <https://www.themonarchalliance.org/grants>.

Monarch Discovery Days

In September, the Monarch Alliance held a Monarch Discovery Days Tagging Event at the Briggs Animal Adoption Center, located south of Charles Town, WV. Joette Borzick and Tracy McCleaf led the event, which included a walk around the two pollinator fields that were recently created by the National Humane Education Society, the parent organization of the Briggs Animal Adoption Center.

Twenty butterfly enthusiasts participated in the activities, which included viewing live monarchs and caterpillars, as well as displays and educational materials. The highlights of the afternoon included the enthusiasm of the children that attended and watching them try to net a monarch. We tagged two monarchs that were hand reared and missed netting a few wild ones. Of course, monarchs weren't the only creatures at the Center that day; Chuck Parker was fortunate to observe a Magnolia Warbler on the property.



Nature Notes

By Joette Borzick

In this new feature, writers will describe their enjoyment of one little corner of the natural world - or their concern about an issue of importance to all of us.

In September, the Monarch Alliance, a program of PVAS, hosted a monarch butterfly tagging event for the public in the wetland fields of the Claymont historic mansion, a few miles south of Charles Town. The weather wasn't perfect for butterflies, but it was perfect for being outside and enjoying nature. I have never seen the Claymont wetland look better. The fields were full of blooming New York Ironweed, Joe Pye Weed, Swamp and Common Milkweed, Jewel Weed, and so much more. The 31 different bird species sightings were incidental, and we did pretty well building a bird list without trying.

Upon my arrival, Wood Ducks were swimming with Mallards in the wetland. A Green Heron flew by, vocalizing on the flight. Two Belted Kingfisher females rattled for at least one hour while we were working. One of the most impressive bird sightings was a large flock of about 250 Tree Swallows that lined up for us on the power lines near the wetland. We would occasionally see them flying in a tight circle high above us, feeding on insects. Then, a moment later, they were gone. When they were high overhead, they looked to me like numerous Monarch butterflies dancing in the sky at the Mexico Monarch sanctuaries.

We saw five or six monarchs total, which is a good indication that the population is not like it used to be, even in the best habitat. We had not mastered catching them in nets so only tagged one. It was a great learning day, as we identified as many flowers, butterflies, birds and plants as we could. We found a number of monarch caterpillars in the last instar, so were hopeful that, in a few weeks, more would be heading to Mexico.



Conservation

“Pap, What’s That?”

by Suzanne Offutt, Vice President of the Board of Directors

As soon as I read the name on the list, I was transported back to another time and place, sitting on the porch of my grandfather’s house in the late afternoon. He uttered a fairly constant low-volume, high-pitched whistle between terse observations on his day, the year, or a lifetime of wisdom. He shared stories about growing up in Calhoun County just after the Civil War and the changes in technology he had witnessed, the arrival of cars and telephones. What he deeply valued was the land and the creatures with whom he shared it. On one occasion, he couldn’t wait for me to arrive for our daily watch on the front porch. He told me that I had to sit quietly, watch, and listen. I was going to be scared at first, but I wasn’t to be afraid. With that, he pulled up his pants leg to show me that he had a big ol’ black snake wrapped around his leg, just resting quietly. He instructed me to look closely at it, to feel the smooth scales and learn about the snake. Another time, I persistently asked him the name of the bird that I could hear but never see, and he insisted that I figure it out for myself. He believed in firsthand, experiential learning.

Just as my grandfather shared the natural world with me, PVAS serves a pivotal role in our larger constituency. Through the collective wisdom of the people associated with it, PVAS shares the wonders of and threats to our natural world in our community. Thirty-five years ago, I attended the organizational meeting for an Audubon chapter hoping to meet with kindred spirits who shared my love for the outdoors and the flora and fauna with which we share it. PVAS provided me with ample opportunities to develop leadership skills in the environmental arena through serving as an officer and environmental educator, and helping to found the WV Audubon Council and the statewide Environmental Council, a coalition of activists from all over the state. I gained many personal resources in those early days with PVAS. When I took on the job of Principal in the local elementary school, I shifted my primary focus to education but never let PVAS stray from my mind.

Over the years in school leadership, I readily took advantage of anything that PVAS had to offer to share with students, including camp scholarships, watershed programs, grants for wetlands protection, songbird plantings, Monarch habitat, and nature programs at Yankauer. In my mind, PVAS has stepped in to fill the role of my grandfather in the next generation, who must first learn to treasure, then protect our natural world.

Oh, and the bird on the list was the quail who calls the name “Bob White.” Motivated to restore that birdsong to our soundscape, I helped PVAS write a grant to the Patagonia Company for additional resources to save habitat for the Bobwhite quail and other grassland birds. I am deeply grateful for the continued presence of PVAS in our communities and look forward to future opportunities to serve in the world of nature first shared with me by my grandfather.

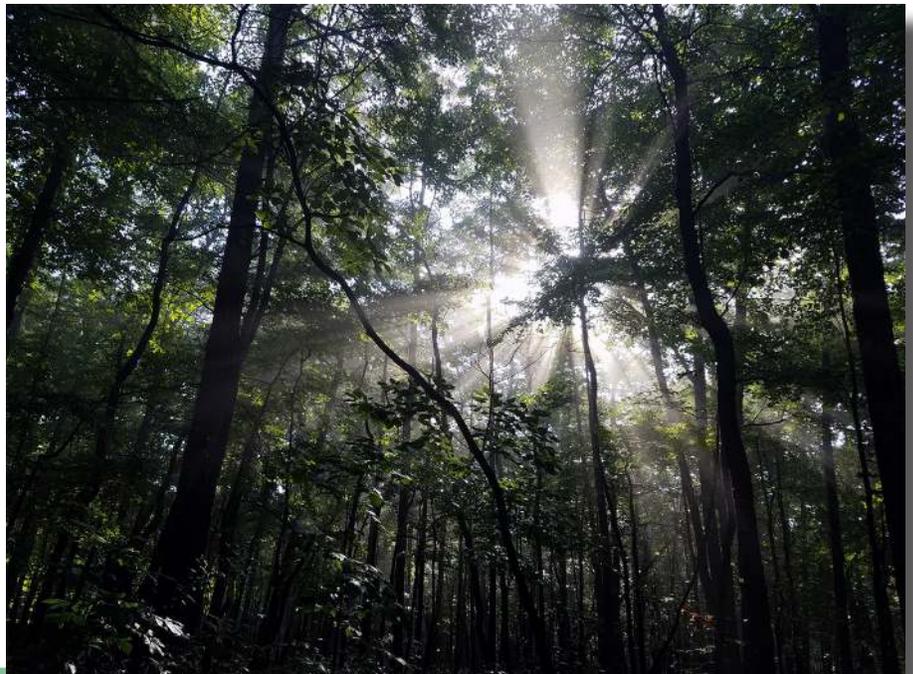
The Preserves

Nature in Focus

The essence and ethereal beauty of Eidolon was captured by Phil Folk during an August volunteer event at the preserve. Phil is a certified Master Naturalist, who spends a lot of time exploring and volunteering at PVAS nature preserves.

Eidolon is the largest Nature Preserve managed by PVAS. With 350 acres spanning Sidling Hill, this preserve offers spectacular views of Morgan County, and is also an important historic site. Eidolon is one of the four PVAS nature preserves that are open to the public during daylight hours 365 days a year.

If you have a photo from a PVAS nature preserve that you would like to share, please email bridget@potomacaudubon.org.



PVMN

PVMN to Host 2018 Master Naturalist Annual Conference

Each year more than 100 Master Naturalists from all over the state of West Virginia meet in June for classes, events, fun, and an opportunity to visit one of West Virginia's exquisite state parks. In 2018, the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist chapter, which is part of PVAS, has the pleasure of hosting the group. The conference will be held June 15-17 at Cacapon Resort State Park in Berkeley Springs.

Stay tuned for upcoming information about this event and the wonderful opportunities it will present to learn more about the natural world.

Did You Know...?

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist program has updated its guidelines for certification to bring them in line with state guidelines.

Students now have four years to complete all 64 hours of classes required for certification. The required 30 volunteer service hours should be completed within two years of beginning the program. Once you have initially certified, keeping up your certification requires only a minimum of 8 hours of continuing naturalist education and 16 volunteer service hours each year.

Emails have been sent recently to all currently certified and certifying Master Naturalists about our new time reporting system, Track It Forward (www.trackitforward.com). If you have not received the information and are currently working towards recertification or completing your initial Master Naturalist requirements, contact our interim Data Coordinator, Paul Breitenbach (pjbreitenbach@gmail.com).

PVMN volunteers are contacting students to help them complete their certification - including those who have been in the program for more than four years. If you have not heard from us and wish to complete your requirements, please be in touch!

And don't forget to attend our PVMN Annual Meeting on Saturday, Oct. 28, 11:00-2:00, at the Hospice of the Panhandle in Kearneysville, WV. The meeting is open to all participants in the PVMN program. Come and catch up with us - and bring a dish to share and some items to donate in our silent auction.



15th Annual American Conservation Film Festival
46 Films on Wildlife, Rivers, Climate Change, Trees,
and Conservation Heroes

Film descriptions, schedule, and ticket info: www.conservationfilm.org.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

ALL of your dues will stay here to support local PVAS efforts and help us grow! And here's what you'll get:

- Member discount to many PVAS programs and events.
- A subscription to *Valley Views*, the PVAS newsletter.
- Free or reduced admission to participating nature centers and/or their programs across the country.
- E-mail alerts about events and programs (upon request).
- An invitation to a PVAS Members annual gathering.
- Discounts to participating **local businesses**.

Details available at potomacaudubon.org/member

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check for \$20 (\$15 for seniors and students). Make the check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year. For details, go to: <http://potomacaudubon.org/member>.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone (optional): _____

E-mail: _____

To save postage costs, PVAS regularly sends its newsletter by e-mail. You can be assured that we do not share email addresses with anyone. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail check here: ___

Clip and mail this form to:

Membership Chair, PVAS

PO Box 578

Shepherdstown, WV 25443



If you'd rather join the National Audubon Society:

Some people prefer National Audubon Society membership, which includes a subscription to the Society's Audubon magazine. To become a National member, go to the Society's website at www.audubon.org and click on "join." If you join National Audubon and reside in Berkeley, Jefferson or Morgan counties in West Virginia, or in Washington County Maryland, you will automatically become a member of PVAS and have access to our events, an e-mail copy of newsletter and e-mail alerts. However almost all of your dues payments will go to the National Audubon Society; only a small percentage will go to PVAS.



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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: Michael Sullivan (2018) msullivanwv@gmail.com
- Past President: Jane Vanderhook (2018) janehook@frontiernet.net
- Vice President: Suzanne Offutt (2018) suzanneoffutt@gmail.com
- Secretary: Diana Gaviria (2018) jpikester@comcast.net
- Treasurer: Dan Cogswell (2019) daniel.cogswell@gmail.com
- Board Members-at-Large:
 - Patty Bain Bachner (2018) impattyb@gmail.com
 - Don Campbell (2019) treehouseview@comcast.net
 - Laura Davis (2018) lauradavis999@hotmail.com
 - Clark Dixon (2019) dixonconsultants@aol.com
 - Amy Evrard (2019) amyyoung4@gmail.com
 - Mina Goodrich (2019) larrymina@peoplepc.com
 - Tanner Haid (2018) Tanner.Haid@gmail.com
 - Joe Hankins (2018) joseph.hankins@gmail.com
 - Susan Jones (2018) wvbagend@frontier.com
 - Louie Ocaranza (2019) j_ocaranza@yahoo.com
 - Stephen Paradis (2018) stephen.j.paradis@gmail.com
 - Rod Snyder (2019) rodsnyderwv@gmail.com

Emerita Board Member: Jean Neely jeaneely@comcast.net

Special Contacts

- Executive Director: Kristin Alexander (304-676-3397) Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org
- Program Specialist: Ellen Murphy (304-676-8739) Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org
- Land and Conservation Manager: Bridget Tinsley Bridget@PotomacAudubon.org
- Camp Director/Cool Spring Mgr:
 - Amy Moore, (240-818-4714) Amy@PotomacAudubon.org
- Adult Prog. Coord: Krista Hawley (703-303-1026) AdultPrograms@PotomacAudubon.org
- WV Promise VISTA Volunteer: Erin Shaw (304-703-2510) admin@PotomacAudubon.org
- AmeriCorps Volunteer: Erin Shaw (304-703-2510) admin@PotomacAudubon.org
- Web Master: Kathy Bilton kathy@fred.net
- PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis (304-754-3753) dianamullis@aol.com
- Valley Views editor/publisher:
 - Charlotte Fremaux (301-404-8639) newsletter@potomacaudubon.org