

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society

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President's Perch

by Jane Vanderhook, PVAS President

Our theme this month seems to be "What's New?" We began the new fiscal year on July 1 with many newly elected board members, a new set of officers and a newly adopted revised set of bylaws. We thank all of you who voted by ballot or on-line to make this election official. Your new board is Clark Dixon; Diana Gaviria, Secretary; Kara Klein Gibson; Tanner Haid; Joe Hankins; Susan Jones; Lex Miller, Treasurer; Matt Patterson; Lou Scavnicky; Michael Sullivan, Vice-President; Jane Vanderhook, President; Lainie Weber; Diana Mullis, Immediate Past President and Jean Neely, Board Member Emeritus. Brief biographies of all board members may be found at our website, <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/board>.

We revised our bylaws last year because we found ambiguities and gaps in the 2006 version of the bylaws. Among other things, the revised bylaws clarified the role of the Immediate Past President, changed the term of office for Board Members to two years and established three committees: the Executive Committee, the Board Development Committee and the Finance Committee, as essential. The newest version of the bylaws may also be found on our website at <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/gov>.

We can't talk about what's new without a grateful nod to what has gone before. Last year marked the departure of several members of the board, Don Briggs, Leigh Jenkins, Amanda Whitmore, Mina Goodrich and Peter Smith. We will miss them and sincerely thank them for their service.

Some things aren't new. What hasn't changed over the years is the incredible loyalty and support of our membership. You have given us your time, your energy, your advice and your financial support and for that we thank you and are very grateful.

Birdseed Sale 2014

It's that time of year again, so be looking for your Birdseed Order Form in next months' (October) issue of Valley Views. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact Diana Mullis at DianaMullis@aol.com or 304-754-3753.

Hope for Pollinators

by Wil Hershberger

Pollinators of all kinds (native bees, honey bees, birds, bats, and butterflies) are in serious decline. All of these pollinators provide more than \$25 billion in value to the agricultural industry each year in the U.S. The value of the environmental services that these pollinators provide is incalculable. Of greatest interest to food safety and economics is the honeybee. Honeybees were introduced to the U.S. to Virginia in 1622 for the production of honey. From there they swarmed freely and eventually made their own way to Illinois by 1800. Heroic efforts were required to introduce honeybees to the west coast in 1853. As honeybees moved west they helped to expand the range of white clover and European grasses in their wake.

Honeybees that are trucked around the country in man-made hives pollinate most of the North American crops that require pollination. Over \$15 billion of crops are produced annually thanks to these busy honey-makers. However, there has been a steady and accelerating decline in the winter survival of these hives. Recently, beekeepers are seeing 30% declines per year in their hives – this is not sustainable. Finding the culprit of this decline has been an arduous task.

A new class of pesticide was introduced in 1994 based on the toxicity of nicotine. These neonicotinoid pesticides (neonics) target the nervous systems of insects and were hailed as being extremely effective at controlling insect pests while not being toxic to non-target wildlife. Starting around 2004, the rate of application of neonics rose exponentially. By 2013 more than 740,000 pounds of neonics were applied to crops in Iowa alone. This application is in the form of a seed coating, which is taken up by the plant as it grows. These systemic insecticides make all parts of the plants toxic, including the pollen. Neonics also accumulate in surface and ground waters and can take years to break down to "harmless" levels. However, recent research shows that chronic, low level exposure to neonics can cause death and or immune system suppression in numerous species of insects, including honeybees and aquatic invertebrates. This immune system suppression is what is being linked to honey bee declines, a phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder (CCD). USGS (U.S. Geological Survey) studies have found that many prairie

Pollinators continued on page 2

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

Pollinators continued from page 1

potholes, streams, and rivers of the Midwest are contaminated with high levels of neonicotinoid pesticides. In fact, many scientists are now warning of a new “silent spring,” as Rachel Carson warned us about over 50 years ago, as a direct result of these persistent and dangerous chemicals.

Research in Europe has implicated neonics in the decline of farmland birds as a result of the near total lack of aquatic invertebrates and other insects that these birds require to raise their young.

Hope is on the horizon. On June 20, 2014 President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum to establish a task force to enhance and restore pollinators of all kinds (native bees, honey bees, birds, bats, and butterflies). The task force is to be co-chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. The task force will be composed of the heads of the Dept. of State, Dept. of Defense, Dept. of the Interior, Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Dept. of Transportation, Dept. of Energy, Dept. of Education, Council on Environmental Quality, Domestic Policy Council, General Services Administration, National Science Foundation, National Security Council Staff, Office of Management and Budget, Office of Science and Technology Policy, and others as designated.

The task force has 180 days from the date of the memorandum to develop a National Pollinator Health Strategy that is to include explicit goals, milestones, and metrics to measure the progress of actions taken to restore and improve pollinator populations. The Strategy includes a Pollinator Research Action Plan, a Public Education Plan, and a Public-Private Partnership Initiative. All of the agencies involved are to improve pollinator habitat on their lands and facilities.

Perhaps as a direct result of this Memorandum, in August 2014, the U.S. banned the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and bee-killing pesticides in all wildlife refuges until further research can be conducted to determine the long-term effects of these chemicals to wildlife, including aquatic invertebrates.

Also, the European Commission has banned and restricted the use of many neonics for a period of two years in order to conduct further research on the toxicity of these chemicals to the environment.

Perhaps we are witnessing the beginning of a new age where a precautionary approach to new chemicals will be adopted rather than the age-old practice of releasing them first, and then later determining their long-term effects and trying to mitigate the damages they have caused.

Berkeley Springs Birding Festival Off For This Year

The Berkeley Springs Fall Birding Festival, which was slated to be held the weekend of September 19-21, will not be held this year after all. The primary reasons are scheduling difficulties and the unavailability of key presenters. PVAS has sponsored this event for the last five years and hopes to sponsor it again in September 2015.

Director’s Report: Monthly Programs are Moving!

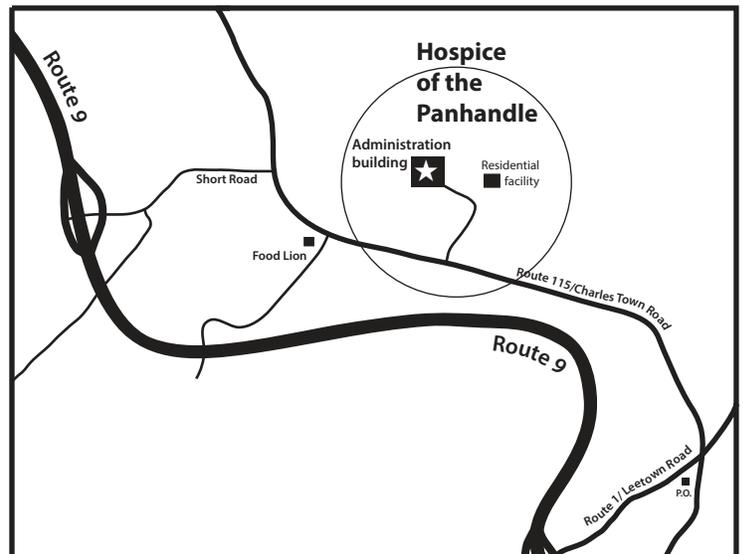
by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

PVAS has been fortunate to hold its monthly meetings at the USFWS National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) since September 2007. A great deal has happened since then and government agencies have had to adapt, NCTC along with the others. Security has become a concern. Because our monthly meetings are open to everyone and pre-registration is not required, we are not able to provide NCTC with a list of attendees. This poses enough of a security issue that we need to move our monthly meetings elsewhere.

The good news? Hospice of the Panhandle has a new location that is conveniently located for the majority of our membership right on the Jefferson/Berkeley County line, just off the “new Route 9.” Even better, they have generously offered to host PVAS’s monthly meetings free of charge. They have a beautiful program space, lots of parking, and brand new Audio Visual equipment that we are welcome to use. We are very grateful to Margaret Cogswell, the Executive Director of Hospice of the Panhandle, for opening Hospice’s doors to us.

We continue to have a wonderful relationship with NCTC, whose mission is so compatible with ours, and PVAS is very pleased that NCTC will continue to host “This Race is for the Birds,” Master Naturalist Courses, Natural History Workshops and bird walks.

We are grateful that NCTC generously hosted our meetings for seven years. And we are very happy to have a new home with Hospice. See you there in September!





Summer Camps Were Amazing

It seemed like a blur! Our summer camps seemed to be over too quickly, but they were some of the best sessions ever. 221 campers attended a session at Yankauer Preserve, CraftWorks, or the Peter Burr Farm. Some campers attended more than one session and a few were with us all summer. Another 25 campers attended Photo Camp or volunteered as junior staff, so our summer camper total was 246 youth!

Campers built forts and explored the woods as they learned survival skills during two sessions of *Camp Survivor* at Yankauer Preserve. During *Mystery Week*, campers went on a scavenger hunt, experimented with an egg drop, and played a “real estate” habitat game focused on animal habitats. At *Deep Woods Detective* campers explored the plants and animals of Yankauer up close and personal—really personal! One group created an “ant buffet” with various types of food and watched all day to see what the ants preferred. (For the record, it was dried fruit.) *Tales in the Woods* at Craft Works had campers using puppetry and live drama to present folk tales from around the world. They even made up a few folk tales, too! *Back in the Good Ol’ Days* at the Peter Burr Farm gave campers the chance to focus on old time crafts and activities like weaving, butter making, and bread baking and they also perfected their square dance skills!

One of our most popular sessions was *Outdoor Adventurer* for older campers entering middle school. This group spent the week in and around Shepherdstown. Each morning began with an hour of archery instruction, then the group spent time looking for geocaches and letterboxes in the immediate area. Each camper made their own personal stamp for imprinting in the letterboxes.

One day was spent biking to the Killiansburg Cave on the C&O Canal and the final day found the group exploring Ferry Hill Plantation, on the hill just across the Rumsey Bridge.

Fifteen middle and high school aged campers served as Junior Staff this summer and did a fantastic job helping with projects and assisting the staff. It’s always fun to see campers grow up through our programs and then keep coming back to spend time and serve as role models with younger campers!

Our camps could never happen without the active participation of PVAS volunteers. Thanks go to Clark Dixon and Carol Del-Colle who helped with staff training, Werner Barz who taught archery at *Outdoor Adventurer*, Kathy Dilley and Paula Donohue who offered first aid training, Susan Fluharty, David Miller, Darlene Kestler, Mary Etta Boesl, Wanda Miller, Wayne Braunstein, and Cherie LaFleur (who came from Ft Worth TX to volunteer her time!)

Our Camp Director this year was Suzi Taylor who did a wonderful job supervising the staff and making sure we had a quality program. Three of our staff this year, Amy Adams, Jenny Adams, and Carl Thomas served as AmeriCorps Summer Associates, volunteering their time to provide a quality outdoor experience for children. Dana Bateman and Linda DeGraf were also in staff positions. Special thanks go to Shepherdstown Elementary School for the use of their property during *Outdoor Adventurer*, the Jefferson County Historical Landmarks Commission for the use of the Peter Burr Farm, and Craft Works for the use of their property.

Photo Camp Was Picture Perfect

Over on the Shepherd University campus, our Teen Photo Campers spent a fabulous week learning about photography from artist and photographer Ben Schonberger and volunteer Sarah Butt.

Some of the campers were brand new to photography while others returned for their second year. Much of each day was spent out and about in the local area, taking photographs and using the composition and technical skills they had learned about from the instructors.

Later, the campers downloaded their images in the Shepherd University photo computer lab and experimented with manipulation and cropping techniques using PhotoShop.

On Wednesday, the group traveled by van to the Washington County Museum of Art to view an exhibit of original Ansel Adams photographs and learned more about the images from the museum's curator of art. Afterwards, they spent time in Hagerstown's City Park as another venue for subjects.

On Friday, the campers chose two of their best or favorite pictures to be printed and displayed at an exhibition for family, friends, and members of the community on the Shepherd campus.

Although the subjects and styles of their photographs varied from documentary to avant-garde, in a word, their work was "stunning!"

PVAS is so appreciative of the support that Asbury United Methodist (which provided the van) and Shepherd University (which provided the space) give this program and we look forward to working with them again next year! Thanks go to Kristin Kaineg, Assistant Professor of Art for all her help with arrangements this year.



September Program Will Focus on Amphibian Population Declines

Our monthly program for September will feature a presentation entitled "Disappearing Frogs: Global Amphibian Declines and the Chytrid Fungus."

The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. September 10 at a new location: the new Hospice of the Panhandle facility in Kearneysville. Admission will be free and everyone is welcome to attend.

The speaker will be Laura Robertson, who teaches Microbiology at Shepherd University. She will review the latest data on amphibian population declines, explain why these declines are a cause for concern, and explore possible causes.

Dr. Robertson has been an Assistant Professor in Biology at Shepherd since August 2013. Before that, she worked as a Research Geneticist at the US Geological Survey laboratory in Leetown for eight years, investigating the effects of contaminants and environmental perturbations on the expression of genes involved in the immune system and reproduction in a variety of aquatic organisms including freshwater mussels, fish, and frogs. Prior to that, she was a Senior Editor for Curation Science in the Proteome Division of Incyte Corporation; there, she curated molecular information and developed hierarchical phenotype ontologies for fungal model organisms and pathogenic species. She has a PhD in Biology from MIT and an MS in Genetics and a BS in Mathematics from the University of Georgia.

This will be our first program at the new Hospice facility, and we are excited to announce that we plan to hold all of our monthly programs at this facility in the future. We think you'll be pleased with its central location for our service area and convenient parking. PLEASE NOTE: Do NOT use the Internet to find the new Hospice location! Please use the directions and map found in this issue. The facility is new enough that Google and other web maps do not yet have the correct location.

The Hospice facility's address is 330 Hospice Lane, Kearneysville. The Audubon programs will be held in the main meeting room of the facility's Main Office building. Directions are as follows: From WV Route 9, take the Short Road exit. If traveling east, take a left off the exit. If traveling west, take a right off the exit. Follow to the stop light at Sheetz. Turn right. Take the next left across from Food Lion onto Hospice Lane. Follow the road back. The Main Office building will be on the left. The door to enter for the PVAS Program will be to the right of the building's main entrance; we will have a sign there. There is plenty of parking at the facility.

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

Don't Miss the September 19-21 Nature Photo Workshop

PVAS is sponsoring a nature photography workshop the weekend of September 19-21. The workshop will be held at Cacapon State Park outside Berkeley Springs. It will be led by Wil and Donna Hershberger, who are both accomplished nature photographers. It will be aimed at beginners but will also be useful for more experienced photographers.

The cost to participate will be \$150 for the entire weekend. The fee is modest for the intensive training provided. The workshop will begin with a 6:30-9:00 p.m. session Friday, September 19; continue with all-day (6:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m.) sessions Saturday; and conclude with a 6:30 a.m.-12:00 noon session on Sunday.

Instruction will cover all aspects of nature photography and include classroom and outdoor field sessions. It will focus on 35mm format equipment (film and digital), but point-and-shoot photographers are also encouraged to participate. Topics of discussion will include light, composition, equipment, workflow, and finding suitable images. Participants should bring their own cameras and lenses, and a tripod and flash if they have them.

Full information and on-line registration are available on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org. Or contact Krista Hawley at 703-303-1026 or adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org.



Wil and Donna Hershberger operate Nature Images and Sounds in Hedgesville, WV.

Wil is a former PVAS president, a former first vice-president of the Shenandoah Photographic Society, and a former moderator of the flora and macro forum at NatureScapes.net. He is also a member of the American Ornithologists Union, the Society of Field Ornithologists, the North American Nature Photographers Association, the Professional Photographers Association and the North American PhotoShop Professionals.

His nature photographs have been published widely. He is coauthor of *The Songs of Insects*, a book and audio CD published in 2007 by Houghton-Mifflin Company.

Our Watershed Program is Expanding

Thanks to a cooperative partnership with Cacapon Institute, our fourth grade watershed program is expanding to fifth grade in some schools. PVAS has been teaching fourth graders about watersheds and how our local area is connected to the Chesapeake Bay since 2003. This new program will provide a review for fifth graders, include information on tree structure, and help the students grow native tree seeds in their classroom (see related article).

Cacapon Institute is coordinating the *Growing Native* program, which encourages everyone to collect viable native tree seeds so that they can be propagated in nurseries and eventually planted as buffer zones along local streams. The classroom portion of the program will help fifth graders learn how tree cover has changed over the past 400 years, explore tree structure and photosynthesis, practice with dichotomous keys for trees, and learn more about how trees as buffers help filter pollutants before water run-off enters rivers and streams. As part of the program, the students will plant native seeds or tree whips, and watch as they grow over the school year. At the end of the year, the seeds will either be passed on to nurseries for continued growth or taken home by the students and planted in their yards.

A grant from Cacapon Institute is covering the costs of this program at pilot schools in the Eastern Panhandle and Washington County MD although most schools will not participate until the fall of 2015. PVAS will provide classroom instructors for the multi-part program and Cacapon Institute will help students plant and propagate the seeds. PVAS members are being asked to help with seed collection for the students.



Liriodendron tulipifera, Tulip tree

Introducing New Valley Views Editor: Charlotte Fremaux

PVAS is so fortunate to have so many talented and generous volunteers in its midst. In response to our plea for a new Valley Views editor, Charlotte Fremaux, a Master Naturalist, generously volunteered. This is her first issue!

She admittedly had big shoes to fill after Don Henry, but we all believe she is up to the task. Don has graciously offered to coach her along the way and provided her with lots of great materials to get her started.

We are grateful to Don for his help thus far, and so glad Charlotte has agreed to take Valley Views forward! Please welcome Charlotte when you have a chance!

Bolivar Heights Hawk Watch Set for September 18

PVAS is sponsoring a hawk watch in the Bolivar Heights section of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on Thursday, September 18. The watch will begin at 9:30 a.m. and last two to three hours. It will be led by veteran birder Deb Hale. The trip will focus on migrating hawks but migrating songbirds may also be seen.

The event is free and open to anyone with an interest. Children will be welcome. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

Participants will meet at the Bolivar Heights parking area. From the Route 340 traffic light at the entrance to the National Park, turn north onto Washington Street and follow it for about ¼ mile, then turn north again (left) onto Whitman Avenue; the parking area is at the top of the hill.

Participants will watch and count hawks from a specific area near the parking lot. Since not much walking will be required this will be a good birding opportunity for those who are not able to participate in longer birding hikes.

Participants should dress appropriately for prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water and insect repellent. This trip will be cancelled in the event of rain.

For more information go to the PVAS website or contact Deb at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-2346.



Regular Weekly Hawk Watches Set Through Fall

PVAS and the Washington County (MD) Bird Club are teaming up this fall to co-sponsor regular weekly hawk watches at Maryland's Washington Monument State Park on South Mountain.

The watches will be held every Wednesday morning, starting September 17 and ending November 5. These dates roughly encompass the period of the annual fall hawk migration, and the

Washington Monument park offers an excellent vantage point to view these magnificent birds as they wend their way south for the winter. The September 17 and 24 dates, in particular, should make for good viewing because Broad-winged hawks usually pass through this area in large numbers around that time.

All the fall hawk watches are free and open to anyone with an interest. Children are welcome if accompanied by an adult. However, space at the best viewpoints is limited and pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Easy registration is available on the PVAS website.

Participants should plan to meet Sandy Sagalkin, the watch leader, in the upper parking lot of the Park at 9:30 a.m. Each day's watch will go until 12 noon, although participants will welcome to stay longer if they wish. Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions and bring along drinking water and insect repellent. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them.

Hawk-watching is very weather sensitive because these birds do not fly in bad weather. If it is certain that weather will force cancellation of any particular watch, those who have pre-registered will be notified of that cancellation by email no later than 6:00 p.m. the evening before.

For more information, contact Sandy at monsansagalkin@myactv.net or 240-291-6465.

Raptors Workshop Starts September 11

PVAS will sponsor a Natural History Workshop on raptors this fall.

The workshop will begin with a two-hour evening classroom session on Thursday, September 11, at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown. This session will provide an overview of the subject.

Participants will then join in three field trips on September 20, October 12 and November 1. The field trips will all be single-day trips, confined to locations within a two-hour drive of the Eastern Panhandle.

The workshop will be led by three local birding experts: Wil Hershberger, Bob Dean, and Matt Orsie. It will focus on raptor behavior, migration patterns, identification techniques, behavior, distribution and population trends, and conservation goals.

The workshop is part of PVAS's Advanced Birding Series, so it is not intended for beginning birders. Participants must be graduates of PVAS's "Birding 101" class or have commensurate birding experience. Enrollment will be limited to only 12 persons, so pre-registration is essential. A fee will be required.

Registration and more information are available on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org. Or contact Krista Hawley at 703-303-1026 or adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org.

The fee for the workshop will be \$75 for PVAS members

Raptors continued on page 7

Raptors from page 6

and members of the Society's Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program, and \$100 for the general public.

PVAS's Natural History Workshops are intended for people who are interested in learning about particular natural history topics in considerable depth but cannot commit to pursue the much more comprehensive natural history education available through PVAS's Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program, which can take a year or more to complete.

Sign Up Now for Mid-October Cape May Trip

PVAS is sponsoring a hawk-watching trip to Cape May, NJ on Columbus Day weekend, October 10-14.

Anyone with an interest is welcome to participate and there will be no fee. But participants will be expected furnish their own transportation and arrange for their own accommodations.

Hotel and motel reservations should be made now, because Cape May is a very popular destination in October. Those planning to use the Lewes-Cape May Ferry also need to make reservations early for the same reason.

The trip will be led by Sandy Sagalkin, and 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. Their offerings include such events as a Mini-Hawk ID workshop for beginners, a Hawk-banding demonstration, a Monarch tagging demonstration and bird walks that are open to the public.

The Cape May Bird Observatory website 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 in Cape May that offers discounts to members of the Cape May Bird Observatory. Rooms can be booked there through their website at <http://www.leithhall.com> or by calling 609-884-1934.

Those who wish to participate should pre-register on the PVAS website. For more information, contact Sandy by phone at 240-291-6465 or by email at <mailto:monsansagalkin@myactv.net>.

Four Master Naturalist Classes Available September 20-21

PVAS will offer four Master Naturalist classes during the weekend of September 20-21 at the National Conservation Training Center near Shepherdstown. Two classes will be offered each day.

The first Saturday class will be held from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. It will focus on mushrooms. The instructor will be West Virginia University faculty member Alan Biggs. The class will cover the structure, classification and ecology of the larger fungi. Participants will learn how to safely collect mushrooms for eating and how to properly collect them for study.

The second Saturday class will be held from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m. It will focus on mammals. WV Division of Natural Resources biologist Sue Olcott will provide an overview of West Virginia mammals, their diversity, classification, status, behavior, and adaptations.

The first Sunday class will be held from 8:00-11:00 a.m. It will deal with West Virginia's terrestrial habitats. WV forester Herb Peddicord will review the major types of habitats and their distribution, their characteristic flora and fauna, and the ecological processes that create and maintain them.

The second Sunday class will be held from 1:00-5:00 p.m. It will focus on trees, shrubs and woody vines. Shepherd University biologist David Pennock will provide an introduction to the classification, diversity, ecology and importance of these plants.

All four classes are open to anyone with an interest but pre-registration is required and there will be a fee. Easy registration and more information are available on the Society's website at www.potomacaudubon.org. Or contact Krista Hawley at 703-303-1026 or adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org. The fee for each of the Saturday classes and the first Sunday class will be \$20 for members of the public and \$15 for PVAS members. The fee for the second Sunday class will be \$25 for members of the public and \$20 for PVAS members.

PVAS's Master Naturalist classes are intended for primarily for people who are enrolled in PVAS's Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program but they are also open to others on a space-available basis. Therefore, they offer good opportunities for individuals who are interested in learning about particular natural history topics in considerable depth but cannot commit to pursue the much more comprehensive natural history education available through the Master Naturalist Program.



June Fundraiser a Great Success!

Our "Celebration of West Virginia" fundraiser took place June 23rd at the home of Bob and Tia McMillan. By any measure it was an exceptionally successful event. We have been doing this kind of event twice a year since 2008 and every one has been well received and financially rewarding. However, this event exceeded all expectations: more people attended, more money was raised and we also had a very good time. Financially, we did very well indeed. We took in close to \$10,000. With expenses at less than 6.5%, PVAS netted a profit of \$9,342, far exceeding our budgeted goal.

The morning of the 23rd was drizzly and as we set up, we worried that this outdoor event would be water-logged but luck and Mother Nature were on our side and the weather was fine. We carried the West Virginia theme into the menu highlighted by pepperoni rolls, city and country ham biscuits, smoked trout and too many desserts to name. There was beer donated by our incredibly generous hosts, the McMillans, and wine and lemonade were also available. We were pleased by the number of people who attended, around 130, and grateful for the donations given by those who were unable to be present. Those in attendance were able to take the West Virginia Trivia Challenge, a true test of your knowledge of all things West Virginia. The winner of this very difficult quiz was Neal Barkus.

Of course with an event this size, we have many people to thank; first and foremost our wonderful hosts, Bob and Tia McMillan, who are charming and gracious and generous. The Speakeasy Boys, whose music was the perfect backdrop to the day, donated their talents and were great to work with. Many others contributed food, auction items and their time and energy: Kristin Alexander, Neal Barkus, Susan Carney, Jeff Feldman, Melanie Files, Erin Gealy, Kara Klein Gibson, Jen Jones, John Mayhew, Shawn McGowan, Ellen Murphy, Geo Rittenmyer, Lou Skavnicky and Gary Sylvester. Finally special thanks to the Events Committee who work so hard to make these events successful: Alice Barkus, Susan Brookreson, Gretchen Meadows, Diana Mullis, Deb Patthoff and Jane Vanderhook.

This fall we will not have a fundraiser; instead we will host a Thank You event to recognize outstanding volunteers and donors. Planning has already begun for our next fundraiser, which will take place in June of next year so please watch for announcements and plan to join us.

Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics Trainer Workshop

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society will sponsor a Natural History Workshop on "Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics" October 25 & 26. Space is very limited, and pre-registration, which is available on the PVAS website, is required before September 26. The cost is \$30 for members, and \$35 for non-members, and includes an overnight camping experience and some hiking. The workshop will be led by two LNT Master Educators, Clark Dixon and Blaine Eckberg, and will be conducted at the Blackburn Trail Center, located on the Appalachian Trail in Jefferson County. This workshop is intended for those who want to become LNT trainers; those who successfully complete it will be so certified. They will be fully grounded in LNT principles and ethics, and learn tools and techniques for educating others.

The LNT concept was initiated by the US Forest Service in the 1960s in response to increasing recreational pressure on public lands, and was intended to promote hiking and camping practices that respect the environment and minimize human impact. The program has expanded and is now led by a non-profit agency working closely with state and federal agencies.

Participants should be in good physical condition, and familiar with basic backpacking and camping skills. Each is required to provide his/her own tent, camping gear, and food. For more information, see the PVAS website: <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/event-1729221> or call Clark Dixon at 304-725-9634 or dixonconsultants@aol.com.



Shepherd Service Project at Yankauer

As part of the First Year Student Orientation at Shepherd University, the University organizes an annual Day of Service so students get to know their new community. PVAS is fortunate to be one of the many organizations to benefit from this service day, and this year 3 students came to the Yankauer Preserve.

The PVAS project was organized by volunteer and Master Naturalist, Eldon Winston. Eldon led the charge by recruiting PVAS volunteers to orient the students to the Preserve as well as our biggest challenge: INVASIVES! Specifically, the students helped to fight back autumn olive that is taking over the front portion of the Preserve. They enjoyed a hot lunch provided by PVAS in return for their hard work, but we all know there's no such thing as a "free lunch!"

Many thanks to Eldon for taking the lead on this volunteer effort, and to the helpers: from PVAS, Master Naturalists, and Shepherd University!

PVAS Receives DNR Grant Focused on Stauffer’s Marsh

If you’ve been to Stauffers Marsh, you know what a jewel it is! Wetlands are disappearing at an alarming rate, but this 45-acre marsh in Back Creek Valley is owned and protected by PVAS. Now PVAS has received funding from the WV Division of Natural Resources to provide wetlands education, focused on the nature preserve, for elementary students!

Our Kindergarten through Fifth Grade programs will be revised to focus on wetlands while still keeping their current themes. The kindergarten program addresses habitats, first grade deals with senses and living things, second grade focuses on plants and animals, third grade explores animal adaptations, fourth grade concentrates on food chains and webs, and fifth grade will explore the marsh up close and personal. Each program includes a classroom session, a visit to Stauffers Marsh, and follow-up activities for the teachers to do on their own.

The pilot programs will be offered first to the schools that are closest to Stauffers Marsh including Back Creek Valley Elementary, Pleasant View Elementary, and Tomahawk, but if other schools are also interested, we may be able to accommodate the classes. Ellen Murphy is revising the lesson plans and will be teaching the classes. A program assistant is being hired to help facilitate the programs and, of course, we will use our wonderful PVAS volunteers on the field trips!

It is expected that most of the programs will take place after the first of the year so that visits to the preserve will occur when the insect population is mostly absent and the waterfowl population is up.

United Way/CFC Fund Drives Coming Up

The annual fundraising campaigns of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) get underway this month. Both campaigns will last into the winter. PVAS receives funds from both agencies and encourages its members to give to their campaigns. Because PVAS is an IRS-qualified non-profit agency, individuals who contribute to either United Way or CFC can designate all or part of those contributions to PVAS, if they wish.

To designate United Way contributions to PVAS, look for the section of the United Way contribution form that asks how you want your donation invested and indicate that you want to make a “Restricted Contribution” to “Potomac Valley Audubon Society, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV.” To designate CFC contributions to PVAS, enter PVAS’s CFC number (29061) on the CFC form that you file with your employing agency. Please note that United Way and CFC deduct a percentage from all designated contributions to cover their administrative costs.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or Kristin@PotomacAudubon.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:

- 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.
- A subscription to Valley Views, the PVAS newsletter
- E-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest
- Satisfaction of supporting conservation efforts, youth and adult nature education, individual and family recreation, and a wide array of programs in your community.

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check for \$20 (\$15 for seniors and students). Make the check out to “PVAS.” This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____

Phone (optional): _____

E-mail: _____

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

Clip and mail this form to:

**Membership Chair, PVAS
PO Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443**

Thank you for your support!



If you’d rather join the National Audubon Society:

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

Day of Caring at PVAS Nature Preserves

Please save the date of September 9, 2014 for the 20th annual Day of Caring, through the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle! PVAS is hosting volunteer activities at two separate Nature Preserves this year and we could use your help!

First, Yankauer Nature Preserve is in need of volunteers to perform various activities including: Pruning and trimming of the trails, parking areas and butterfly garden; Invasive plant removal; Cleaning of the interpretive signs and wayside benches. Help is also needed early to setup, greet and register volunteers and pass out T shirts. We also need some folks willing to lead small groups on maintenance activities. If you are interested in volunteering at Yankauer, please contact Nan Johnson at gabbyvanv@frontier.com.

Also, Stauffer's Marsh is in need of volunteers to help with mulching trails, pulling out invasive plants, planting native species, clearing trails of overhanging plants and digging fence postholes. If some volunteers are unable to do physical labor, we are also looking for help with set-up, greeting and registering volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering at Stauffer's Marsh, please contact Melanie Snyder at 703-973-5419 or email at admin@potomacaudubon.org.

For these nature preserves, this once a year 'burst of energy' helps tremendously to keep the trails and parking areas maintained for visitors to enjoy, as well as helping to sustain the habitat for the birds, mammals, and other critters that call the preserves home.

The volunteer activities will be from 9am – 4pm, and lunch will be provided to all volunteers at both locations! The United Way provides breakfast and dinner for interested volunteers as well. Volunteers will also receive a Day of Caring T-shirt (T-shirts are ordered by Aug 21st if you want to reserve a size).

We look forward to seeing you out at the Preserves!

Student Climate and Conservation Congress (SC3) at Yankauer

For the last several years, the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) has hosted a Youth Conference called "Sc3." As their website states, "Sc3 recognizes and empowers the next generation of conservationists and supports them to become global leaders in their own community. Sc3 Fellows learn from world-renowned experts, grow to understand environmental, social and economic interconnections, and create year-long commitments to meet 21st century challenges."

These outstanding youths come from around the country to NCTC for one week in the summer. Over the past six years PVAS has been providing scholarships for local area high school students to attend, and lending other support as needed. One of the many activities in which youth participate that week is a service project.

The last two years PVAS has been the recipient of a service day at the Yankauer Preserve. This year 15 students came to Yankauer to remove autumn olive under the expert guidance of Eldon Winston and other PVAS volunteers. The students split into several small groups with a PVAS mentor leading each in the battle against the invasive shrub.

A huge dent was made in the autumn olive population that day thanks to the hard work of these outstanding youths. Many thanks to the PVAS volunteers who spearheaded the effort, and best wishes to the Sc3 participants in their conservation efforts back at home!

Two New Grants Support Our Youth Programs This Year

PVAS is pleased to be the recipient of two separate grants for the 2014-15 school year that will help provide environmental education programs in some elementary classes.

The City of Ranson has again provided \$1000 for classes at Ranson Elementary School. This funding will allow classes to participate in the watershed program or perhaps take a field trip to Yankauer Nature Preserve. Teachers at the school are already scheduling with us!

The Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation has also provided generous funding this year that will provide scholarships for Title 1 schools in Berkeley County.

In the past, we have had more requests for programs than we could handle and this \$3000 grant will help us serve even more students!

Title 1 Schools often serve students from families that struggle with finances, language, and cultural limitations and PVAS is pleased to be able to provide these students and teachers with quality environmental education programs.

By going to the schools and using the schoolyard as an outdoor learning lab, we're reinforcing the concept that nature is everywhere and helping close the nature-deficiency gap between lower and higher achieving students.

We Have a Job For You!

PVAS is an active organization, but everything depends on volunteers. If you, or anyone you know, are interested in volunteering for PVAS, we have a job to please just about anyone!

We need people to:

- Represent us at contact booths at local fairs and festivals.
- Weed the gardens at Yankauer Preserve.
- Trim and repair trails at Yankauer, Eidolon, and Stauffer's Marsh.
- Lead nature and birding walks at locations all around the Eastern Panhandle.
- Help with PVAS events like the Wildflower Walk and Race For The Birds.
- Present workshop programs to Master Naturalists.
- Support fundraisers by stuffing envelopes, providing refreshments, or helping plan the events.
- And, especially, help with educational programs at Yankauer Preserve

We offer training for every job. Please contact us via phone, email, Facebook, snail mail, smoke signal, carrier pigeon, or in person! We will be happy to hear from you.

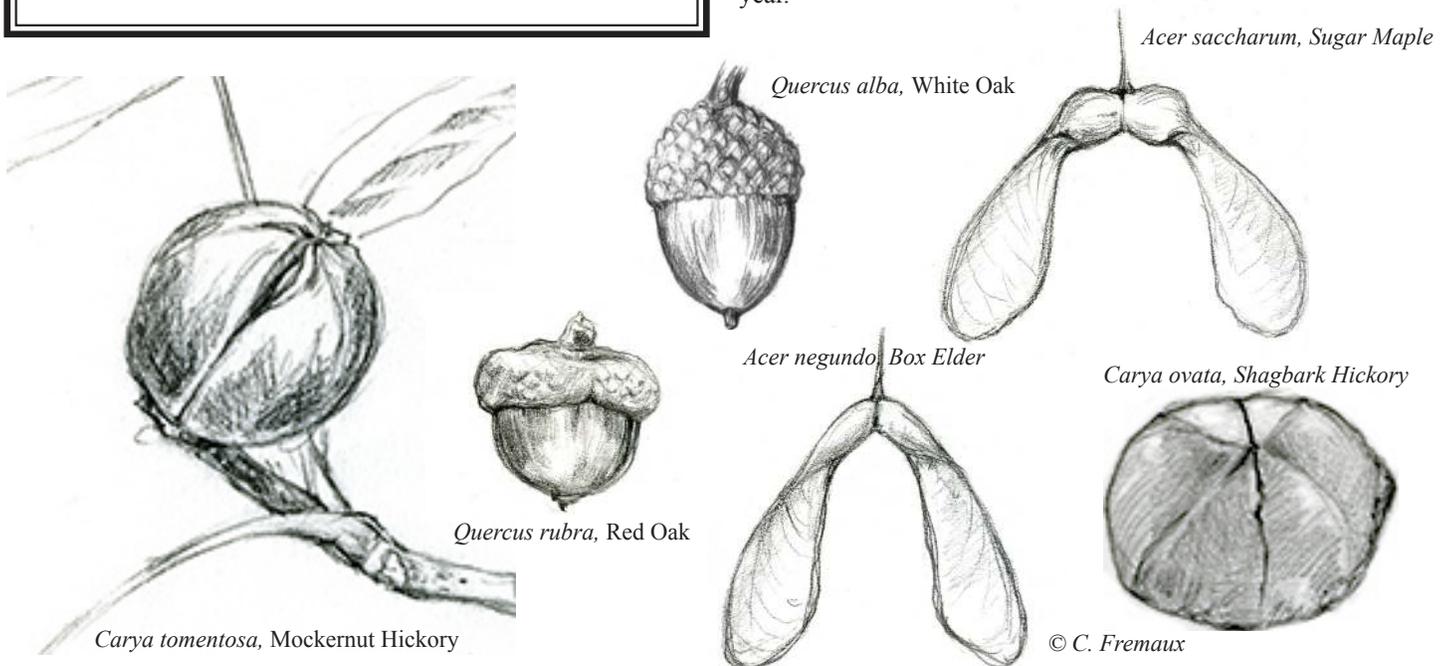
We Need Some Seeds And You Can Help!

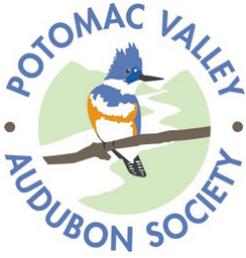
In a cooperative program with Cacapon Institute this year, PVAS is including the *Growing Native* seed collection in our fourth grade watershed program and a new 5th grade program. This addition will allow students to plant native tree seeds or whips in their classrooms and cultivate them through the school year. In the spring, the sprouted seeds will either be provided to nurseries for continued growth and eventual planting as buffer zones along local streams or taken home by the students and planted there.

In order to make this happen, we need your help! PVAS members and Master Naturalists are asked and encouraged to collect specific seeds in the local area so that we can provide students with a viable seed to plant. Targeted species for fall collection include red and white oak, sugar maple, walnut, hickory, American dogwood, sassafras, box elder, sycamore, sweet gum, and yellow (tulip) poplar. We are looking for quality seeds that have a high chance of germinating, rather than quantity.

All seeds must meet certain criteria to increase their chance of germination. PVAS can provide information about what to look for, how to collect and store the seeds (some need refrigeration), which need to be planted quickly and which can wait a few days, and suggested hotspots for collection. Please be aware that collection on National Park Service property is prohibited; and Harpers Ferry, Antietam Battlefield, and the C&O Canal are totally off limits!

If you would like to help with the project, email Melanie Snyder at Admin@PotomacAudubon.org and she will get you further information, information about collection bags, and when and where to deliver the seeds. In the past, a collection station was at Yankauer Preserve, but this is not a collection site this year.





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 bined Federal Campaign.
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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 Suivan (2016)..... msullivan@limno.com
- Secretary: Diana Gavia (2016) jpikester@comcast.net
- Treasurer: Lex Miller (2014)..... pamandlex@frontiernet.net
- Board Members-at-Large:
 - Clark Dixon (2015)..... 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
 - Lou Scavnicky (2015)..... captainlou@comcast.net
 - Lainie Weber (2016)..... lainie_weber@fws.gov

- 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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