



SHENANDOAH SAW-WHET

ISSUE #17: SPRING
2024

A NEWSLETTER OF THE *SHENANDOAH CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS* PROGRAM.

OUR NEWSLETTER IS NAMED IN HONOR OF THE NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL — A SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

IN THIS EDITION

President's Message

Page 2

Volunteer of the Year

Page 3

Member Profile:

Page 4

A Portal Into Curiosity

Page 6

Virginia's Diversity

Page 9

Meet Your New Officers

Page 11

Volunteers in Action

Page 12

Photo Stories

Page 15

Places of Note

Page 18

Photo Group Happenings

Page 19

FROM THE EDITOR

BY TIM KOPPENHAVER

In the spring of 2019, I began training to become a Virginia Master Naturalist, and this spring, another class will as well. I came to the program with no scientific background or work experience; my career entailed insurance company management. The outdoors though, became an antidote for a mostly indoor career. Hitting the trail and enjoying nature has offset countless office hours.

Before VMN training, I saw the generic in things: a tree was a tree, a bird was a bird, and I only paid attention to the surface of a stream. But after VMN training, a tree tells a soil story, a bird is a phenological indicator, and beneath the surface, a stream is full of an amazing array of life.

As newsletter editor, so many of the folks interviewed for our Member Profile have noted how equally transformative the VMN training has been for them. I'm certain that, like me and so many other members, our newest class will feel a transformation as well.

In this edition of the *Saw-whet*, our Volunteer of the Year is celebrated. Our Member Profile features a retired professor. We include the story of a former student turned PhD candidate and welcome our new chapter officers. We also recognize several important volunteer hours achievements, thank two very dedicated project leaders who are stepping down, and recognize a new VMN kiosk at Sky Meadows.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"Think Globally, Act Locally"

Rob and I have just returned from a truly magical journey into the Amazon Rainforest. The Amazon River Basin, from its Andean headwaters in the west flowing over 4,000 miles to the Atlantic Ocean encompasses a third of South America. While the second longest river compared to the Nile, it is the largest river by volume due to the thousands of miles of tributaries. This complex ecosystem is truly the "lungs of the earth"!

While we anticipated seeing all kinds of colorful birds, plants, and other wildlife, including the elusive pink river dolphin, I was most inspired by the indigenous river communities that call this challenging habitat home. They welcomed us into their villages and took great pride in showing how they care for their homeland. Whether by raising bees or butterflies, growing sustainable crops or reforesting native trees, you could feel their sense of pride and stewardship for the river and the land. I couldn't help but compare their work to what we do as Master Naturalists, caring for our "little piece of heaven" here in the Blue Ridge Mountains/Shenandoah Valley committed to sustainable stewardship of this beautiful place we call home.



If you have looked at the Chapter's Better Impact calendar, you can see there is a lot going on with many volunteer and continuing education opportunities. Thanks to the VOC for doing such a great job seeking out these opportunities, but remember, they can't post what they don't know. If you see a potential activity that you think would be a good volunteer opportunity for our members, let VOC Chair **Susan Galbraith** know.

Spring is almost here and that means our Basic Training Class begins on March 16. We have twenty new members enrolled and are excited to get started on their VMN adventure. Thanks to those who have stepped-up to mentor our new members in navigating the Chapter. I know you will join the Education Committee in welcoming the Class of 2024.

Speaking of training, this is just a friendly reminder that as a VMN, you are required to take both the state's VMN "Risk Management" and "Civil Rights" on-line modules attached to your Better Impact page. Alex has sent out instructions on how to access these two training modules. It is easy; even I can do it! Together, both take about an hour to complete and count towards your continuing education hours. While both are required and important, the Risk Management module is an especially good refresher for Chapter/Project/Activity Leaders as you are responsible for participants under your supervision and direction. You want to make sure your safety/risk management training is up-to-date, and you are prepared in case someone is injured during a VMN activity. You will be issued the current Emergency Contact card once you have completed your training. Please have these two training modules completed by March 31.

The BOD is still looking for an Outreach Chair. If anyone "thinks" they might be interested in this Board position, please contact me to discuss the responsibilities. The position description is outlined in the Chapter's Handbook. Tim has graciously agreed to continue as Editor of the Chapter Newsletter (Thank you, Tim!), but we do need someone to coordinate the scheduling and staffing of the Chapter's exhibit & educational materials. Several members have stepped-up to coordinate the display at specific events this Spring. Again, thank you for the help, but we still need an Outreach Chair to oversee the entire program. Please think about it and let me know if interested.

I look forward to seeing you all out and about as we volunteer in our communities in the care of our natural resources. Happy Spring; Happy Earth Day, and remember "Think Globally, Act Locally" just like our neighbors and colleagues in the Amazon.

CHAPTER VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Every year our chapter selects its Volunteer of the Year. The process for making this selection has changed this year such that our members now make the final decision through an online voting process.

This year, **Margaret Wester** has been recognized as the 2023 Shenandoah Chapter Volunteer of the Year.

Margaret joined our chapter in 2008; the second year after it was formed. Since 2011, Margaret has led the Bluebird Trail at Sky Meadows State Park, one of the first projects created by the Shenandoah Chapter with the objective of aiding in the reproduction and survival of the Eastern Bluebird.

Margaret has worked with Sky Meadows in designing and managing the trail, trained volunteers, collected and analyzed scientific data for Eastern Bluebirds and other cavity-nesting species. Margaret also dedicates time to Audubon Christmas Bird Count, pollinator plots at Sky Meadows, invasive plant removal, chapter outreach booths, and butterfly counts.



Congratulations Margaret, and thanks for all you do for the Shenandoah Chapter!!

MEMBER PROFILE – JOHN COPENHAVER

Whether hiking the Appalachian Trail, paddling the Shenandoah River, trekking the Camino Portuguese, or teaching at Shenandoah University, **John Copenhaver's** journey has intertwined faith, ecology, and community service.

While studying European history at Washington & Lee University, John became particularly interested in comparative religion, and followed that interest all the way to ordination in the United Methodist Church and a PhD in religious studies from The Catholic University of America. He currently is Professor Emeritus at Shenandoah University after a twenty-seven-year career as Professor of Religion and Philosophy.

Along his journey, John developed a love of nature as well as a passion for creation-care. Creation-care draws inspiration from religious teachings that promote responsible stewardship and highlight the interconnectedness of all living things. That love and inspiration led John to lead some dynamic and impressive projects at Shenandoah University.

Shenandoah Sojourn is a multi-year program designed to draw attention to issues of water quality and river health by uniting the watershed community. It was sponsored by the Pure Water Forum. Each year for five years, the group paddled a new portion of the Shenandoah River for a week. John was the captain or "Paddle Bearer" in 2005 and had the responsibility for planning the itinerary, securing logistical support, working with local and regional governmental bodies, and getting press coverage such as arranging for a reporter from WMRA (an NPR station) to paddle along for a day.

In 2009, John was the faculty director of a joint project of The Downstream Project and Shenandoah University. The project was titled the *Shenandoah EcoVenture* and involved a month-long outdoor educational trek on the Appalachian Trail hiking south through the Shenandoah National Park and paddling north on the Shenandoah River - a total of 170 miles. Through short video clips and articles posted by The Downstream Project, the group drew attention to issues involving forest health and the Shenandoah River. (View videos [here](#).)

John understands and respects the reasons the VMN program is not the place for political advocacy around issues of the environment and climate change. That said, he has found other outlets for this important work with Virginia Interfaith Power and Light and the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy where he served several years as Vice-Chair of its Board of Directors. Due to John's experiences on the Shenandoah River, he's developed a passion for protecting watersheds and bringing awareness to the concept that we all live downstream. The way we travel, the way we build, the way we care for our yards and lawns, and the way our farmers manage their cattle and orchards all have powerful effects on the health of our streams, rivers, and bay.

For the past three years, John (VMN class of 2015) has been participating in the Mason Bee Studies directed by **T'ai Roulston** and **Ariel Firebaugh**. He's been fascinated to participate in a citizen science project and to learn about what is buzzing around in his backyard.



John Copenhaver holding passport-like booklet with stamps of places visited along the Camino Portuguese.

Photo courtesy Brian Brehm, Winchester Star

The author, Wendell Berry, taught John about the importance of being rooted. John moved to the northern Shenandoah Valley from Roanoke, but now feels deeply rooted and committed to the region having hiked its trails, cycled its country roads, paddled its river, and joined with others in projects for its well-being.

In October 2023, John and his son walked a portion of the Camino Portuguese. Over twelve days, they walked 160 miles on the ancient pilgrimage route from Porto, Portugal to Santiago, Spain. A key theme along their journey was celebrating creation, and frequently they began each day with a walking quote. The whole journey affirmed the sacredness of each day of everyone's pilgrimage through life.

"Pursue some path, however narrow and crooked, in which you can walk with love and reverence."
– Henry David Thoreau

FAMOUS NATURALISTS – ANNIE DILLARD



For Virginia Master Naturalists who seek to understand the natural world around us, inspiration can be found in the poetic words and observations of Annie Dillard, a nature writer whose works, in part, features the Virginia landscape we steward.

In *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, her Pulitzer Prize-winning work, the meandering Tinker Creek of Roanoke becomes a microcosm of existence. She dives into the icy water, witnesses a dragonfly's metamorphosis, and contemplates the vastness of time against the backdrop of a Virginia mountain. She invites us to do the same, to see through the eyes of a heron hunting, or to feel the sun warm a patch of moss on a familiar trail.

Dillard was born in 1945 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her youth was filled with exploring, rock collecting, bug collecting, drawing, piano and dance classes, and reading books from the public library, much of which focused on natural history. Specifically, the reading she did focused on a wide variety of subjects including geology, entomology, epidemiology, and poetry, among others.

Dillard attended Hollins College in Virginia receiving both B.A. and M.A. degrees in English. She declared that in college, she "learned to learn from other people...I didn't come to college to think my own thoughts, I came to learn what had been thought." After graduation, she was a scholar-in-residence at Western Washington University in Bellingham from 1975 to 1978 and on the faculty of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, from 1980 to 2002, when she retired as professor emerita.

Though *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* is her most famous work, she's published other books and essays focused on nature. *Teaching a Stone to Talk* includes 14 short nonfiction narrative and travel essays and was declared "Best Books of the Decade" by the Boston Globe. *The Abundance* - a collection of essays looking back on four decades of fascination with the natural world. And "Nature Writing" - an essay published by the magazine *Antaeus*.

Dillard's books have been translated into at least ten languages and she has won numerous awards. Of course, the Pulitzer for *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, but also, in 1997, Dillard was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame for Writing and Journalism. In 2007 The New York Times named *Maytrees* among the top ten books published that year. And in 2015, President Barack Obama awarded her the National Humanities Medal.

Beyond ecological insights, Dillard inspires personal growth and compels us to delve into the fascination of the natural world. Her influence and dedication to place-based learning aligns perfectly with the Virginia Master Naturalist ethos. She inspires us to become stewards of our local landscapes, to advocate for their protection, and to share our knowledge with others.

A PORTAL INTO CURIOSITY

HOW VMN TRAINING INSPIRED A 2016 GRADUATE



A mother's intuition is a powerful thing.

When **Willow Lovecky** was young and being homeschooled, she developed a real interest in biology, especially genetics. But her mother's reaction was this, "You are not a lab person". Still though, wanting to continue fostering Willow's interest in biology, and to infuse new content into her child's homeschooling curriculum, Willow's mother suggested she sign up for the Shenandoah Chapter's Virginia Master Naturalist training course in 2016.

At the time, Willow was a high school sophomore and one of our chapter's youngest training participants from any class in its history. Willow immediately became fascinated with all-things naturalist, but the strongest pull came from T'ai Roulston's entomology sessions. To go even deeper with her interest in entomology, Willow began volunteering at Blandy helping T'ai on research projects.

Every day was different, and she learned a variety of foundational skills that built a strong base for an entomological career. Upon graduating high school, she spent her final summer at Blandy as a field technician working to understand the rate of pollen depletion by bumble bees which solidified her passion for working with and devotion to understanding insects.

She attended the University of Wisconsin (UW) and received a B.S. in entomology along with a certificate in American Indian Studies. Willow notes that one of the most exciting research experiences she had during her undergraduate career was spending a summer immersed in the National Science Foundation's Research Experience for Undergraduates program at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory. She was part of a small team surveying bees and vegetation across an elevation gradient. The project sought to understand how climate change influences reproductive success. Through this experience, she independently conducted fieldwork, built and analyzed large data sets, and reported her findings both through a research paper and oral presentation to peers. She also presented her research as a poster at the 2021 Entomological Society of America Annual Meeting.

During her final year at UW, Willow participated in a project researching the founding of the American Indian Studies program at the university. She was one of two students tasked with archival research and oral history interviews – an experience that gave her the opportunity to experience leadership and mentoring roles. In her final year, she also was the lead field technician at the Cariveau Native Bee Lab where she learned to work with a diversity of personalities, how to problem solve, and carry out unfamiliar molecular techniques.

Willow's studies at UW provided her with a very strong set of core skills and experiences as an interdisciplinary academic which have instilled a desire to let curiosity and passion guide her. She feels she has become a well-rounded researcher.

Most recently, as a University of Virginia PhD student working with T'ai, she's hoping to explore the relationship between parasitoid wasps and solitary bees. Additionally, she's researching how wasps select a host and how the provisioned pollen may influence that decision.

The future is very bright for Willow. She clearly loves doing research but is also interested in community building and outreach. She hopes to someday work in the outdoor education field. She also wants to re-engage with the Virginia Master Naturalist program, perhaps even rejoining our Chapter.

Her interest in entomology has been a lifelong passion - from her homeschooled youth, to her 2016 VMN training, and now as an academic pursuing a PhD. In her words, "insects are a portal into curiosity." And they have certainly led her down a truly meaningful and curiosity-filled path.



Photos by Willow Lovecky

SHENANDOAH CHAPTER AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Milestone Recognition

The following members have achieved their next volunteer milestone pin.

250 service hours

Sue Bailey
Diana McHenry
Ursula Sherill

500 service hours

Karl Dydak

2,500 service hours

Belinda Burwell
Kaycee Lichliter
Mary Keith Ruffner

Re-Enrollment and New Members

In the second year of the re-enrollment process, our chapter had 107 members (87%) completed the re-enrollment process. Our membership at the end of December 2023 was 123 members. We have also had three new members join us in the past few months. Please welcome **Ali Fogle** and **Jay Mitchell**, who transferred to us from the Old Rag Chapter. Please also welcome **Toni Robinson** who now has dual membership in both our chapter and the Arlington Regional Chapter.

Initial Certifications

The following members have completed the requirements for their initial certification as of the end of 2023. Your certificate and initial members pin will be available at the June 17th chapter meeting:

Charles Chapin
Sue Collins
Kathy Drummond
Jenn Flitton Adams
Laura Fogle
Elise McCabe
Loretta Michaels
Jay Mitchell
Erik Price
Michelle Sims
Hilary Sorter
Rosemary Wallinger

EXPERIENCING VIRGINIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL DIVERSITY

By Tim Koppenhaver

Over the past decade, I've been on a property-collecting quest visiting one hundred locations either managed, worked in, or established by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). This quest has taken me all over the country, and once even led me under the sea off the coast of Mexico. But the state in which I've visited the most properties (31) is my home state of Virginia.

Some TNC properties in Virginia are publicly accessible, like Fraser Preserve in Fairfax County or Fortune's Cove in Nelson County. Others have been turned over to varying entities to ensure their protection. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, for instance, now manages Ogden's Cave near Middletown as a Natural Area Preserve. Others, like Greenbriar Park in Charlottesville are protected by The Park Authority Act of Virginia which places them in the hands of county governments.

The thirty-one Virginia properties visited represent an amazing mosaic of varied environments – from soaring mountain tops to sea-level barrier islands. Being a trained Virginia Master Naturalist made this quest even more rewarding. During our VMN training, we all learned about Virginia's magnificent environmental diversity, and this quest really brought that understanding into clear focus. As naturalists know, Virginia's diversity is characterized by its five physiographic provinces, and TNC has worked in each one.

Along the Coastal Plain, *Parramore Island* is part of the vital barrier islands located in Northampton County and is Virginia's largest Natural Area Preserve.

In the Piedmont, TNC along with help from DCR, DWR, the City of Charlottesville, and Albemarle County helped establish *Ivy Creek Natural Area* - a place of beauty and ecological significance in a rapidly urbanizing section of Albemarle County.

In the Blue Ridge, *Buffalo Mountain* in Floyd County is one of the state's most significant areas whose high-elevation, wind-exposed openings, and magnesium rich soils make it unlike any place in Virginia.

In the Ridge & Valley province, *Cowbane Prairie* in Augusta County protects a remnant of what the Shenandoah Valley once looked like when wet and mesic prairies and calcareous spring marshes were common.

And near the Appalachian Plateau, *The Pinnacle* in Russell County protects towering cliffs, limestone ledges, and waterfalls near the Clinch River - home to fifty species of mussels, which is more than any other river in the world.

Protected lands like these and so many others are critical protectors of Virginia's diversity. According to NatureServe, Virginia is the country's 12th most diverse state in terms of plants and animals (8th in fishes and 3rd in amphibians). To learn more about Virginia's diversity, DCR's [Conservation Lands Database](#) includes a robust interactive map which helps better understand all the layers of protection in the state. The database includes state, federal, private, and locally managed lands, and conservation easements. It shows that of Virginia's 25 million acres, over four million - or about 17% - are currently protected.

The Conservation Lands Database is loaded with a plethora of data and provides all VMN's ample opportunity to craft their own property-collecting quest to help foster an even deeper understanding of our state's magnificent diversity.

Reprinted with permission from the state VMN's Laurels newsletter.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP

Two long time project leaders are stepping down.

Ed Tobias

Ed has been in the role as Sky Meadows Outdoor Lab Chairman since August 2019. During his tenure, some key accomplishments include being the design & construction lead of the Sensory Explorers Trail, co-lead of volunteer days by the Micron group, assistance with the vision of the Outdoor Lab, and implementation of the VMN kiosk at the Sensory Explorers Trail.

Ed has also participated in several outreach events at Sky Meadows as well as being a Bluebird monitor. Ed is a skilled craftsman, so he's been especially valuable working on the variety of constructions projects he's overseen as Outdoor Lab Chairman. Thanks for your many volunteer hours and leadership Ed!



Ed Tobias (left) at Sky Meadows State Park

Hannah Bement

Hannah joined the Shenandoah VMN's training class of 2014 and shortly after completing the course work **Alex Newhart** approached her about a new project opportunity. He noted her experience with amphibians and vernal pools through her research at Yale and Mississippi State Universities, and Hannah agreed to take the lead.

The Vernal Pool Cooperative of Virginia is a citizen science project with the goal to document and monitor vernal pools on public lands across Virginia. It began in 2013 as a joint project of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Virginia Commonwealth University's Rice Rivers Center, mostly focused on Southern Virginia to start but with the aim of spreading statewide.

Since 2015, Hannah has led the program as it has located and monitored almost one hundred pools in nine public parks in Clarke, Frederick, Warren, and Shenandoah counties. The program has documented the presence of all five obligate vernal pool species that are relevant to our region: spotted salamanders, Jefferson salamanders, marbled salamanders, wood frogs, and fairy shrimp. Hannah has trained over 50 volunteers and led dozens of public education walks and other events. She has also worked with the Sensory Trail project at Sky Meadows to create new vernal pools and integrate them into the trail.

Though Hannah is stepping down as leader, she looks forward to continuing to work with the project in a smaller role and will still be monitoring pools and leading educational walks. She is grateful for **Jodi Davis** who has stepped forward to help run the administration of the overall project which has freed her up for a better balance between volunteering, a full time job teaching biology to gifted high school students at Mountain Vista Governor's School, consulting with local conservation non-profit Sustainability Matters, spending time with her two amazing children, and her newest adventure - running a toy store with her husband! Be sure to thank Hannah for her years of dedication to the Vernal Pools project and visit her at Play Favorites in Front Royal! She has lots of frog and salamander toys!

MEET YOUR NEW OFFICERS

In January, three of our chapter members have assumed new officer roles.

Julie Pineiro – Chapter’s new Vice President and VMN Class of 2021 graduate.



As a VMN, Julie’s especially interested in birding (Christmas Bird Counts and Project Feeder Watch), grassland restoration (Virginia Working Landscape surveys), and vernal pool monitoring (Shenandoah River State Park).

Julie is an avid hiker having recently completed the *Shenandoah 500* and enjoys backpacking with her husband Rodrigo. This summer, they’re looking forward to exploring Isle Royale National Park on Lake Superior. Julie spends a lot of time in the old pastures around her house endeavoring to eliminate invasive species and increase native plant biodiversity.

Erik Price – Chapter’s new Secretary and VMN Class of 2023



Erik Price is both a new VMN and a new officer, having joined our Chapter as part of the 2023 training class. We greatly appreciate Erik jumping right in! His specific interests include vernal pools, habitat restoration, and freshwater ecology.

As a father of four, Erik utilizes the outdoors as a source of release and family bonding. He and his family have hiked, camped, and visited over three hundred miles of trails in Virginia since 2015

Sue Bailey – Chapter’s new Treasurer and VMN Class of 2019



Like many others in the chapter, Sue is very thankful to her parents for passing on their love of nature to her. They encouraged her and her siblings to observe, explore, wonder, identify/research, and to respect the natural world. At an early age, they hiked, fed the birds, & went to a variety of wonderful habitats.

One of Sue’s passions is birds, as evidenced by the picture to the left showing her bluebird monitoring at Sky Meadows State Park.

Sue’s goal as a naturalist is to pass on her excitement, connection, & reverence to others!

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

New Kiosk at Sky Meadows State Park



A team of Master Naturalists conceived and installed a new interpretative kiosk at Sky Meadows State Park in February. The kiosk is located beside our chapter's Pollinator Plot and close to the Sensory Explorers' Trail. The idea for the kiosk came from **Mary Keith Ruffner**, who thought it would be beneficial to share important information about our Pollinator Plots, but the concept soon grew to include the SET and the whole Outdoor Lab.

A permanent sign at the top of the front panel explains the purposes of the Pollinator Plots and the SET and the work of the Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists. The rest of the front panel showcases a changing array of seasonal interpretive pieces about native and invasive plants, birds, animals, trees, and species associated with the SET's vernal pools. The interpretations will highlight ecosystem connections.

Current pieces focus on birding in winter, how wood frogs can freeze in winter and thaw in Spring, and how skunk cabbage can warm its way up through snow and ice. The other side of the kiosk displays photographs taken in the Outdoor Lab and features such as a list of plants in the Pollinator Plots.

The team of **Kristin Zimet, Laure Wallace, Margaret Wester, Mary Keith Ruffner, Janet Rigoni, and Ed Tobias** began planning last year. Funding came from a variety of sources – the Sensory Explorers' Trail and Pollinator Plot project funds, the Friends of Sky Meadows, the 2023 state grant, and of course, the dues and generous donations paid by our chapter members.

Congratulations and a big thank you to all who helped establish this wonderful new kiosk!



STATEWIDE VMN YEAR IN REVIEW

Each year, VMN chapter leaders work hard on annual reports that compile their membership and volunteering statistics and describe some of their most impactful projects from the year. Below is a summary of how Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers are continuing to make important impacts in their communities and to benefit Virginia's waters, woods, and wildlife.

	2023
New Basic Training Graduates	516
Total Enrolled VMN Volunteers	3,345
VMN Volunteers Reporting Service Hours	2,682
Volunteers Certified or Re-certified for 2024	1,561
Continuing Education Hours	31,820
Service Hours: Education and Outreach	52,184 (by 1,630 volunteers)
Service Hours: Science	79,923 (by 1,907 volunteers)
Service Hours: Stewardship	60,870 (by 1,782 volunteers)
Service Hours: Chapter Leadership	42,281 (by 1,457 volunteers)
Total Service Hours	235,258
Monetary Value of Service	\$7.67 M
Sites Improved Through Stewardship	697
Number of new habitat sites planted/restored	46
Number of Direct Educational Contacts Made	424,503
Number of Indirect Educational Contacts Made	305,230
Number of Citizen Science Studies Supported	60+

CONTINUING EDUCATION

DID YOU KNOW...

Skyscrapers only account for about 5% of all bird-window collisions worldwide? And that some estimates show the total number of annual bird-window collisions at one billion annually? Find out more, including recommended actions for homeowners, by watching the “*Bird-window collisions and what we can do about them*” webinar by Dr. John Waddle from William & Mary at the state VMN website. VMNs are required to accumulate eight hours yearly of continuing education training. Continuing education webinars found here:

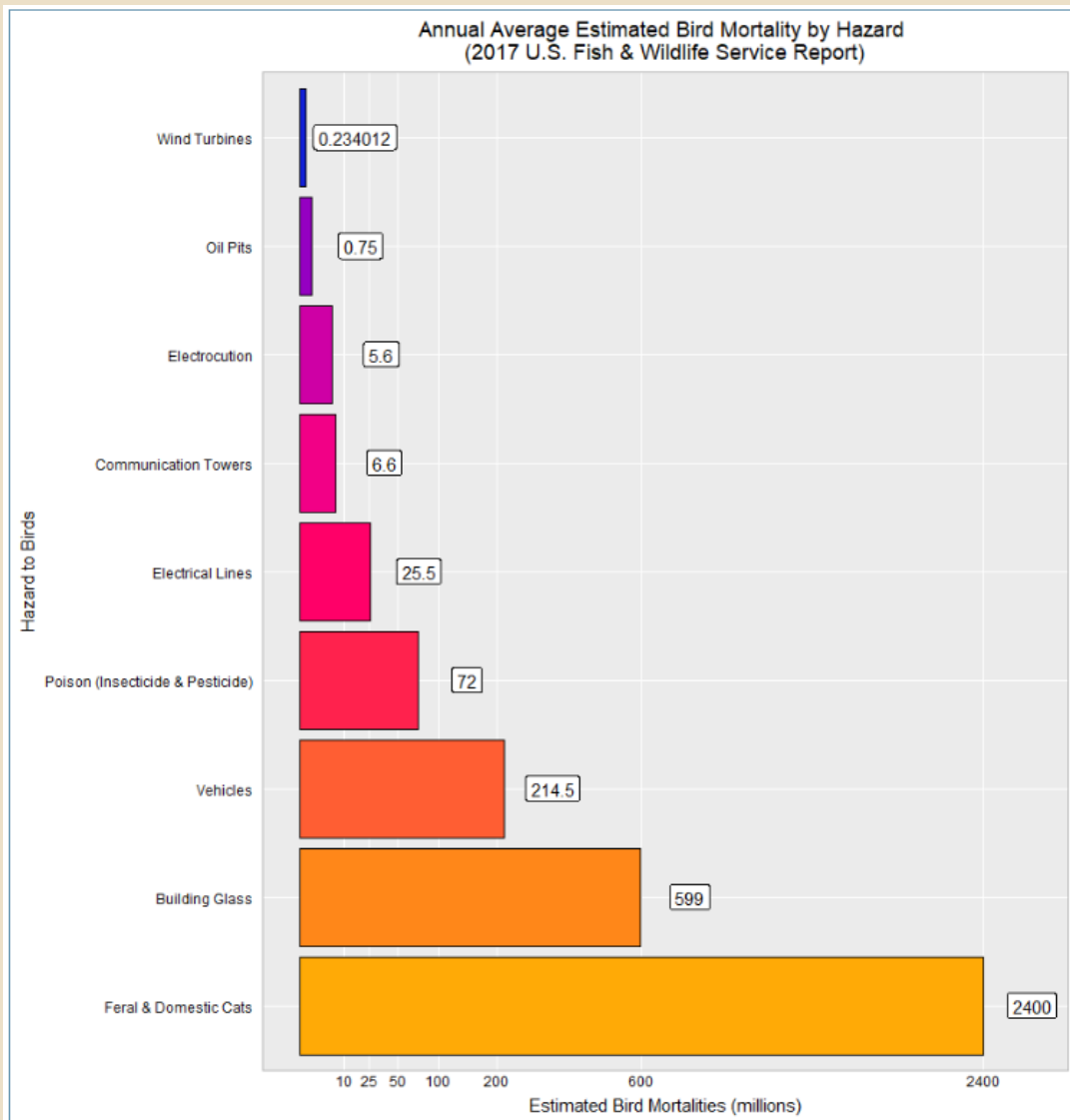


PHOTO STORIES

IMAGES CAPTURED BY SHENANDOAH CHAPTER VMNs ALONG WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SPECIES, PHOTO TECHNIQUES, AND OTHER USEFUL TIPS & INFO.



PHOTOGRAPHER: Sally Neff

CAMERA: Nikon D780, Lens: Sigma 105mm macro @ 105mm
1/3200, f/3 Auto ISO: 560
Mode S, matrix metering, EC: 0
Hand held

SPECIES: Zebra Swallowtail (*Eurytides marcellus*) on Short-toothed Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum multicum*)



PHOTOGRAPHER: Alex Newhart

LOCATION: Spring House Farm, Alonzaville, Virginia

SPECIES: Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)

CAMERA DETAILS: Nikon Z8, f/16, 1/500 sec, ISO 500



PHOTOGRAPHER: Tim Koppenhaver

LOCATION: Great Dismal Swamp Nat'l Wildlife Refuge,
Suffolk, Virginia

SPECIES: Pond Sliders (*Trachemys scripta*)

CAMERA DETAILS: Canon EOS Rebel T3i, f/7.1, 1/500
sec, ISO 3200

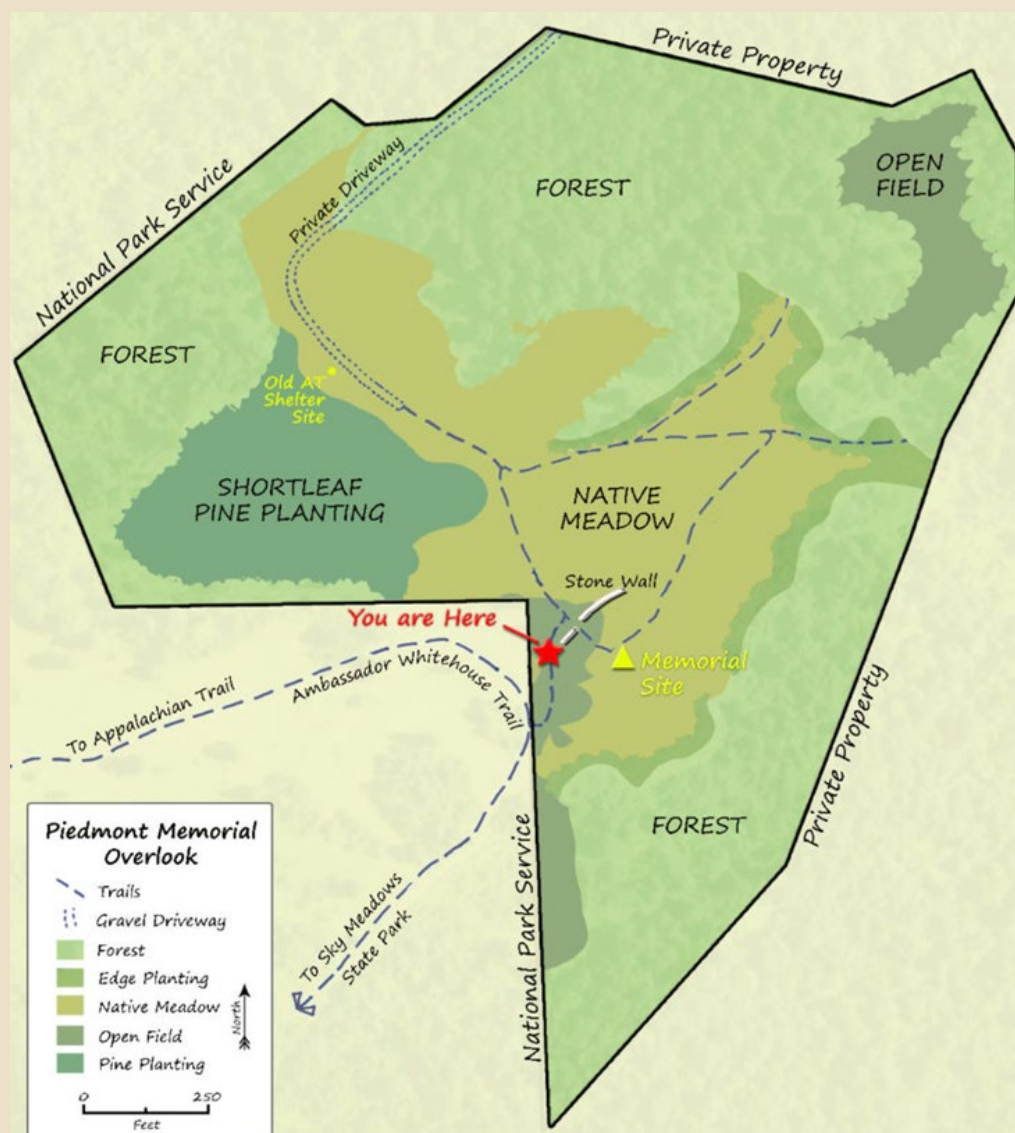
PLACES OF NOTE

INTERESTING LOCATIONS TO VISIT IN OUR SHENANDOAH CHAPTER TERRITORY

PIEDMONT MEMORIAL OVERLOOK

Overview

The overlook sits on fifty acres owned by The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) and is part of a corridor of the Blue Ridge Mountains permanently protected by Sky Meadows SP, Thompson WMA, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and private land under conservation easement. The property serves as an active demonstration site for landowners interested in viewing habitat restoration practices. It hosts a native meadow, tree and shrub plantings, and a small pine savannah. Access is via a 1.5-mile hike (somewhat steep) from Mount Bleak House at Sky Meadows.



The Native Meadow is the jewel of the property, home to songbirds, butterflies, raptors, bees, and black bears.

It was planted with sixteen native wildflower species that provide forage for pollinators and habitat for grassland birds.

PEC manages the meadow using prescribed fire and routinely performs biodiversity surveys with partners at Virginia Working Landscapes, a program of the SCBI.

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP OPENS NEW EXHIBITS

The Shenandoah Chapter Photography Group is made up of ten of our members who have a love of photographing the natural world and sharing these images with our community. This group was originally formed in 2020 of chapter members that had taken photography classes from **Dr. Rob Simpson** at Lord Fairfax Community College. Since then, other members have joined the group. They use DSLR and mirrorless camera technology, a variety of lens types and sometimes flash equipment, to capture a wide variety of subjects found in Virginia.

Photography is an artform that involves everything from composing the image, to processing the electronic file and finally to creating a print of the subject. The Photography Group was formed to provide a place where photographers could improve their skills, work together on field trips to capture certain subjects and to share their work with our chapter and the greater community around us. Last fall, the group held it's first exhibit at Blandy. It was called *Images of the Natural World*, showing 24 pictures of a variety of subjects including birds, mammals, insects and landscapes. This exhibit was held in the Blandy Dining Room for three months. This same exhibit has just opened in downtown Winchester at a nonprofit organization called Our Health, Inc. It is planned to be there until the end of May. Our third exhibit will start soon at Blandy, again in the Dining Room. It is called Spring Wildflowers of Virginia, and will be on display through the end of May. It shows a variety of wildflowers captured in locations around our area well known by our members including Thompson Wildlife Management Area and Shenandoah National Park. In addition to showing their pictures, information is provided to viewers of the exhibit about the Virginia Master Naturalist program and how to join our chapter.

Plans for future exhibits are in progress at locations around our area. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Alex Newhart at ymnshenandoah@gmail.com.



NATURALIST RESOURCES OF NOTE

WILDFLOWER CALENDAR

Shenandoah National Park:

www.nps.gov/shen/learn/nature/upload/WildflowerCalendar_Web

GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION FACILITY

International network and data infrastructure funded by the world's governments and aimed at providing anyone, anywhere, open access to data about all types of life on earth.

GBIF.org

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION APPS

I-Naturalist: inaturalist.org for exploring and sharing your observations from the natural world.

eBird: ebird.org from the Cornell Lab - among the world's largest biodiversity-related science projects.

Merlin: merlin.allaboutbirds.org from the Cornell Lab for Step-by-Step bird ID.

BirdNet: birdnet.cornell.edu from the Cornell Lab for bird ID by sound.

WILDLIFE VIEWING TIPS

Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries:

www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife-watching/respect-wildlife

CHRONOLOG

Crowd-sourced time lapses that monitor the environment and engage communities in science.

Chrnolog.io

IUCN RED LIST (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

IUCN's Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) is a global standard for assessing risks to ecosystems.

<https://iucnrle.org/>

NATURESERVE EXPLORER

Provides conservation status, taxonomy, distribution, and life history information for more than 95,000 plants and animals in the United States.

<https://explorer.natureserve.org/>

CHAPTER PROJECTS OF NOTE

Sky Meadows: Sensory Trail, Outdoor Lab, Pollinator Plot and Bluebird Trails

Bluebird Trail at Blandy Experimental Farm

Blue Ridge Wildlife Center Volunteering

The Trails at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley

Cools Spring Naturalization & Education

If interested in helping with these projects, please reach out to any of our chapter officers or committee chairs or email us at ShenandoahVMN@gmail.com



The Virginia Master Naturalist program and the Shenandoah Chapter are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

CONTACT US

Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists

Chapter Website: vmnshenandoah.org

Chapter Email: ShenandoahVMN@gmail.com

President: Rebecca Harriett

Vice President: Julie Pineiro

Secretary: Eric Price

Treasurer: Sue Bailey

Education Committee Chair: *Rebecca Harriett*

Membership Chair: *Alex Newhart*

Volunteer Chair: *Susan Galbraith*

Outreach Chair: *open*

Program Chair: *Julie Pineiro*

Sky Meadows Outdoor Lab: *open*

Find us on Facebook by searching “Virginia Master Naturalists Shenandoah Chapter Group”