



SHENANDOAH SAW-WHET

ISSUE #14: FALL
2023

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.

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FROM THE EDITOR

BY TIM KOPPENHAVER

This edition of the Saw-whet includes a wonderful story of corporate volunteering at the Sensory Explorers Trail written by **Sue Bailey**. Her efforts to arrange such a special event for her fellow employees is inspiring!

Also in this edition is a profile of our newest board member **Rosemary Wallinger** from Shenandoah County. Her background is impressive and will be a valuable resource to our chapter administration.

One of the great things about being editor of this newsletter is the discoveries made when researching potential content or reading articles others have submitted. For this edition, I became fascinated with Cincinnati's Emma Lucy Braun, our featured Famous Naturalist. As you'll see when reading that feature, she was a dedicated naturalist who contributed greatly to the field of plant ecology. But what really caught my fancy was her involvement in the creation of the Edge of Appalachian nature preserve system in southern Ohio.

"The Edge" as it is known represents the other side of the Appalachians from where we all live. It's the intersection of the Appalachians and Great Plains of the Midwest. Where ecosystems like this intersect, biodiversity is amplified. A few weeks ago, I took a trip to The Edge and found exactly that — amplified biodiversity. It was a naturalist's delight. If you're ever in that part of the country, it's definitely worth a visit.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY MARY BETH YARBROUGH

“This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it what I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”

— George Bernard Shaw

This quote resonates; I find it a good life credo. Shaw was a satirical, Nobel-prize winning playwright. (Man and Superman, Pygmalion). As far as I know he wasn't a naturalist, but his work was “marked by both idealism and humanity.”

As I pen this message heading into my final months as President, I find the sentiment especially meaningful when I consider our VMN Shenandoah Chapter Volunteers, whose passion and joy are to be “a force of nature,” and serve their community mightily. We strive to educate and hand off this splendid torch to future generations, and along the way help the current generation see the importance of human impact on conservation, environment, and nature.

It's tempting to note all that is wrong with our world. But in our little corner of the Ridge and Valley of the Shenandoah, I have been privileged to meet VMNs who are putting themselves out there with their bright torch, to make things better, and to educate and encourage people to do things better.

Shenandoah Chapter VMNs have been burning the VMN torch at many outreach or education events this year: Outdoor Afro at Lake Frederick; Sky Meadows 40th Celebration; Blue Ridge Wildlife Center WildFest. Blue Bird and Vernal Pool monitors have collected hundreds of pages of data. Bags of invasives have disappeared to make way for native species to return. Cool Springs Project has monthly workdays, and the Sky Meadows Outdoor Lab is flourishing and recruiting so we can continue this vital project. A class of nineteen was held in the Spring. Chapter liaisons work to connect members with partner projects.

We joined VMN not just to learn, but to do. If you are a member who hasn't found your VMN “niche” or “passion” yet, opportunities abound! The Outreach and Education Committees, and the Sky Meadows Outdoor Lab, are seeking to train up new volunteers. The active and dynamic leaders who built this chapter are hoping to pass the torch. On-the-job training and support are a guarantee. Regularly check our Better Impact Opportunities calendar for ideas of how to volunteer. Attend Chapter Meetings and attend a board meeting or two to hear what we do to keep this chapter running.

What will you do to be “used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one?” Talk to a board member and we can help you find your perfect place!

MEMBER PROFILE – ROSEMARY WALLINGER



A big THANK YOU is owed to Shenandoah County’s Rosemary Wallinger – the most recent addition to our chapter’s board as a member-at-large representing the class of 2023. We greatly appreciate her willingness to volunteer time for our chapter’s administration. According to Rosemary, she “found it an honor to be asked, as well as a means of returning the trust put in me when I was accepted to the training program. I am hoping to serve as a conduit for an exchange of ideas and concerns between board members and the members of my class.” From a recent written interview in which we asked for much more detail about her background, Rosemary provided the following.

What prompted you to join VMN?

Growing up in a family of serious gardeners and careful hunters instilled in me a lifelong interest in the natural world. A life of observing and caring for plants and the creatures they depend on and nurture, without the use of chemicals, has enriched my life in immeasurable ways. I have always sought to understand why some things work and others don't, which involves a great deal of paying attention, but also a basic understanding of how the various sciences of the natural world interact with one another. When I learned of VNM from a friend it seemed a logical next step in my quest to understand and find ways to contribute within my community to the sustainability of our increasingly threatened planet.

What do you feel is important for the public to know about VA’s natural resources?

First and foremost, that they are finite. It is critical that we develop ways to teach others how our existing natural resources are dependent on our involvement, through understanding how they work, as well as the practice of conservation measures and protection, to insure their sustainability. Our programs with young people are critical to this endeavor.

Rosemary’s education included a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Mary Baldwin University. Additionally, she studied Environmental Negotiation and Mediation at UVA which focused on the nature, sources, and expression of contemporary public conflict and the collaborative processes designed to resolve and transform such conflict. This study led to a scholarship from the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute (VNRLI) whose principal goal is to develop leaders who can help groups involved in contentious natural resource issues move beyond conflict toward consensus building and problem solving. Out of her involvement in VNRLI, Rosemary became a founding member of the Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, an organization that works to ensure the Valley’s rural character, scenic beauty, clean water, and vibrant communities are protected by providing accurate and timely information to community members and decision makers.

What other interesting hobbies or information do you care to share?

I am particularly interested in the African American History of the Valley of Virginia and work when time allows to research and share this mostly lost history in ways that make it more widely known.

I love to birdwatch and contribute to e-bird as time allows.

I initiated and oversaw with my husband’s (and David Carr’s) invaluable help a field restoration of 24 acres of my home property, originally a field of fescue, home to a colony of ground hogs and little else. Where birds flying over once needed to bring a lunch for the crossing, there are now populations who not only fly by, but who stay through the summer season feeding on the native grasses, forbs, legumes, and those who live among them, for example, towhees, indigo buntings, and cedar waxwings, not seen in number here before, as well as the occasional screech owl. The ground hog population remains, more content than ever having acquired mats provided for the USDA’s Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program as part of the restoration for their living quarters.

Again, THANK YOU Rosemary for stepping up. Your experience will be invaluable to our chapter’s administration.

FAMOUS NATURALISTS

Emma Lucy Braun was a pioneering botanist, ecologist, and conservationist who made significant contributions to the field of plant ecology. She was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1889, and grew up in a family that encouraged her love of nature. Her parents took her and her sister on wildflower hikes, and her mother even had a small herbarium.

Braun attended the University of Cincinnati, where she earned a bachelor's degree in botany in 1911 and a master's degree in 1912. She then went on to earn a Ph.D. in botany from the University of Chicago in 1914. After completing her doctorate, Braun returned to the University of Cincinnati, where she taught botany and ecology for the next 37 years.

During her time at the University of Cincinnati, Braun conducted extensive research on the forests of the eastern United States. She published numerous papers on the subject, and her book published in 1950 Deciduous Forests of Eastern North America is considered a classic in the field of plant ecology.

Braun's book describes in detail the forests of KY, TN, OH, VA, WV, and PA by dividing them into ten associations based on the dominant tree species and provides detailed descriptions of each association including the climate, soils, and other vegetation. The book is not just a catalog of plants, however. It also provides thoughtful analysis of the ecology of deciduous forests, including how climate, soil, and fire affect plant distribution.

Braun was also a strong advocate for natural area conservation, helping to establish several protected areas in Ohio including what is now The Nature Conservancy's 20,000-acre Edge of Appalachia Preserve System in southeast Ohio. "The Edge", as it's known, is one of the most biologically diverse natural systems in the midwestern U. S.

In 1950, Braun was the first woman to be elected president of the Ecological Society of America. She was also awarded the Mary Soper Pope Memorial Award, the highest honor given by the American Society of Plant Taxonomists. Braun died in 1971, but her legacy continues to inspire botanists and conservationists around the world.



SKY MEADOWS STATE PARK - 40TH ANNIVERSARY



CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING AT SENSORY EXPLORERS' TRAIL

By Sue Bailey

One of our chapter's remarkable initiatives is the Sensory Explorers' Trail (SET) at Sky Meadows Park. I'm sure most of you know of it and may have been involved with it since it's vision and creation in 2019!

The trail provides visitors a way to engage their senses in the exploration of the natural world. In addition, it has special adaptations for the visually, hearing, and mobility impaired visitors. The trail offers .3 miles of discovery with eight stops along the way to guide visitors so that they can enjoy the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of the environment.

After volunteering on the SET, a couple of years ago, I wondered if this might be volunteer opportunity for a newly formed group at my employer, Micron Semiconductor. The Micron employee group is called *Capable*. Its vision is *to foster a workplace where seen and unseen disabilities are embraced*. So, I approached **Laure Wallace** about the Capable team helping with the SET and she embraced it. In working with Laure, **MK Ruffner** & **Ed Tobias**, a plan was developed to have the Micron Capable team assist with the removal of invasive species along the trail in April 2022.

The 2022 event was such a success that it was held again this past April. The word success does not capture the true essence of this event. Yes, a lot of invasive plants such as garlic mustard, Japanese stiltgrass, and barberry were removed. Yes, the event drew the largest number of volunteers for any Micron Capable team community volunteer event. These are great but, what is most incredible is that the VMN team also created a truly amazing learning event, sparked interest in native plants & the natural world, and fostered a strong desire to be a part of something bigger than us!

I can't begin to explain the number of times that Micron volunteers have expressed their appreciation of the event, Sky Meadows State Park, and the VMN team for their knowledge, their time, and their excitement about the ecosystem. Team members continue to stop me in the hallway to ask questions about nature; to note that they are now researching & planting native plants; to share a cool sighting; to mention they saw a butterfly (which triggered their memory of MK showing them a pawpaw tree & teaching them that the tree is host for the zebra swallowtail butterfly); or, to recall other memories such as the number of jack-in-the-pulpits or filling the back of Laure's car full of "weeds" (garlic mustard). This is inspiring to me, and I want to express my thanks again to Laure, MK, Ed, **Bill Moore, Rob Williams, Erin Clark**, and Sky Meadows State Park for all their efforts and for making such a positive difference. In my mind, this is what being a Virginia Master Naturalist is all about!



NATURALISTS IN ACTION

Spring House Farms

On July 10th, 2023, five Virginia Master Naturalists part of our chapter's Photo Group visited Spring House Farms west of Woodstock, Virginia. The restored prairie at Spring House Farms was featured in our Winter 2022 edition of this Saw-whet newsletter. **Jeff & Ali Carithers** were gracious hosts and allowed **Gael Shaffer, Liz Harrington, Alice Findler, Alex Newhart,** and **Tim Koppenhaver** to wander the property on a beautiful sunny day to study the unique 72-acre environment. The photo group's goal is to photograph the natural resources of Virginia while improving photography skills, and Spring House Farms provided the ideal setting for this goal.

The Carithers bought the farm in the late 1990s and have been managing it as open prairie since 2002. If any Shenandoah Chapter VMNs are interested in visiting the farm, please contact Tim Koppenhaver at tkopp1201@gmail.com.



Left:
Jeff Carithers leads a tour of
Spring House Farm. Photo by
Tim Koppenhaver

Below:
Photo by Liz Harrington. Canon
EOS 90D, 27 mm, f/8, 1/200 sec.



Spring House Farms



Photographer:
Tim Koppenhaver

Canon EOS Rebel T3i
55 mm lens
F-stop f/6.3
Speed 1/100
ISO 100

Photographer:
Alex Newhart

Nikon Z8
Nikkor Z 24-120mm f/4 S
Focal Length 71mm
F-Stop f/10
Speed 1/125 sec
ISO 64



SAD NEWS

It is with great sadness that Sustainability Matters announces the passing of their founder and Executive Director, **Sari Carp**. Affectionately known throughout the Shenandoah Valley as “The Flower Lady” for her work to plant pollinator-friendly flowers and other native species in the unlikeliest of areas, Sari spent the final and happiest decade of her life in the Valley, establishing and building an environmental non-profit.



What began as informal gardening and conservation workshops led by Sari and a few like-minded friends grew into Sustainability Matters, a non-profit dedicated to building community through conservation education, or “seriously making sustainability fun.” The organization’s flagship initiative, **Making Trash Bloom**, plants native meadows at landfills, which then become sites of community education and citizen science. Sari considered Sustainability Matters’ educational work to be “much more meaningful than anything else I have ever done” and increasingly steered the organization to reach beyond the choir and make the conservation field more inclusive. In her final weeks, Sari was comforted by the knowledge that Sustainability Matters had grown to encompass a staff who could carry on her life’s work without her.

She is survived by the rescue animals she shared her life with, a wide international circle of friends, and the organization she passionately developed.

MUSEUM OF THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY TREE SURVEY

By Susan Galbraith

Within Winchester City boundaries are 214 acres of land owned by the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley (MSV). The MSV recently opened trails for public use on this property. The trails run through old cow pastures, wetlands, and forests. The Shenandoah Chapter of VMN has adopted the trail system as a project, under the guidance of VMN project lead **Charles Uphaus**. Part of the project, along with invasive species removal, was to identify all the trees within the trail system and to write up the results as an educational product.

The survey is extraordinary and singlehandedly was created by **Paul Guay**, even though he gives some of us credit. Paul’s tree survey is beyond the ordinary; within this comprehensive survey he has melded humanity with nature. Not only are detailed descriptions including photos of each tree and its parts provided, but Paul included art, literature, poetry, history, wildlife, and medicinal connections in his survey. Paul took most of the photographs or searched for just the right photo and yes, gave credit to the photographer. In the on-line version of the survey, Paul has provided numerous internet links for the curious to find further information. Paul estimates that he spent over 8,000 hours or one full year’s worth of time on this project, and it is obvious.

The Chapter was fortunate to have Paul show a brief overview of his recently completed survey at the June Chapter meeting, and anyone can download it from the chapter's website:

https://www.vmnshenandoah.org/uploads/2/9/4/6/29460567/msv_tree_id_guide_with_links6272023.pdf

[This article was originally published in the summer edition of VMN’s Laurels newsletter.]

CONTINUING EDUCATION

DID YOU KNOW...

In a recent Virginia Tech multi-year program studying the effect of climate change on frogs and toads, as much as 46% of the data used came from citizen scientist using platforms like i-Naturalist and HerpMapper. Additionally, since 2000, the US Fish & Wildlife agency offers grants to states based on their State Wildlife Action Plans which, in part, also incorporate citizen science data. Your contributions to i-Naturalist, HerpMapper and other data collecting sites are making a difference!

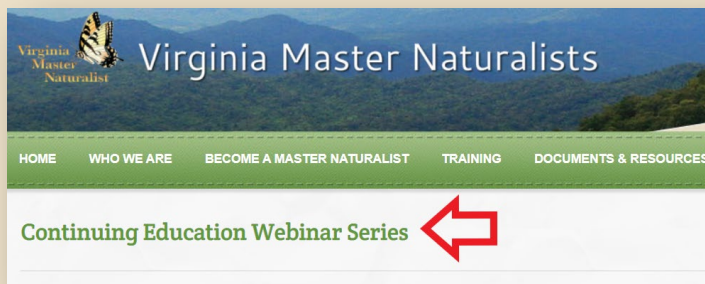


Cliff chirping frog



Brimley's chorus frog

Find out more by watching the “Community Generated Data Informs our Understanding of the Vulnerability of Frog and Toad Species to Climate Change” webinar at the state VMN website. VMNs are required to accumulate eight hours per year of continuing education training. You can find continuing education webinars here:



BETTER IMPACT TIP

Entering Your Hours in Better Impact

When entering your volunteer and Continuing Education (CE) hours, please use increments that are no smaller than 15 minutes, e.g., 30 min, 2 hr. 15 min, 3 hr. 45 min, etc.

Also, remember that when entering your volunteer hours (other than CE hours), you may, within reason, include your travel time as part of your volunteer hours.

NATURALIST RESOURCES OF NOTE

WILDFLOWER CALENDAR

Shenandoah National Park:
www.nps.gov/shen/learn/nature/upload/WildflowerCalendar_Web

(NEW) 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

PHOTO STORIES

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



PHOTOGRAPHER: Richard Hayden **SPECIES:** Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*)

CAMERA: Nikon D7500 with Sigma 150-600mm lens f/6.3, 1/640s, ISO 200

LOCATION: Lake Frederick, Virginia



PHOTOGRAPHER: Paul Guay

LOCATION: Clarke County, VA

SPECIES: Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)

CAMERA: Samsung SM-A426U, F1.8, ISO 40 (top)
FOLVI MD5 Digital Microscope at 25 X mag (bottom)

Chicory is native to Egypt and the Mediterranean and relishes the heat of summer, but who knew, when magnified 25x, the interior of the flower offers us such a beautiful cooling refuge of ice blue and flecks of snowflake-like white pollen grains! The unusual arrangement of the stamen and pistil are noteworthy. Each organ consists of four darker blue, male stamen (and their anthers) that are fused into a tube that envelopes the lower half of the female pistil's stem-like, bifurcate style. Carl Linnaeus named this arrangement of parts polyadelphia, (from the Greek word for brother, adelphos), or 'many brothers'. Linnaeus might have said of this flower, "4 brothers embracing a single maiden".

All this beauty from an often overlooked and very humble wildflower!

PLACES OF NOTE

INTERESTING LOCATIONS TO VISIT IN OUR SHENANDOAH CHAPTER TERRITORY

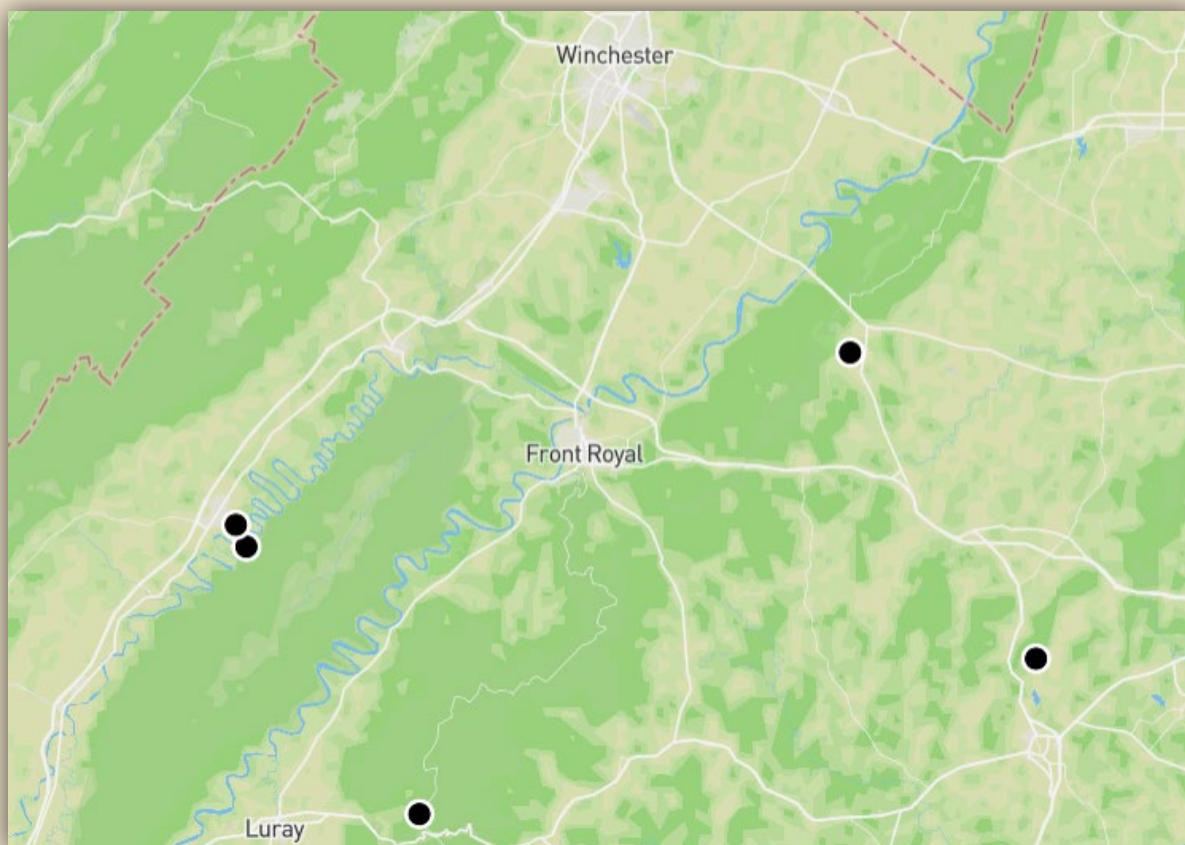
CHRONOLOG

Overview

Chronolog is used by organizations worldwide to create crowd-sourced time lapses that monitor the environment and engage communities in science. Visit Chronolog.io for more details and to explore an interactive map.

Locations in/near our chapter territory:

- LOVE sign at Seven Bends SP
- Bass Bight Trail at Seven Bends SP
- Hadow Trail Burn Plot at Sky Meadows SP
- Upper Dam at Clifton Institute
- Pass Mountain Overlook at Shenandoah NP





The Virginia Master Naturalist program and the Shenandoah Chapter are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran 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: Mary Beth Yarbrough
Vice President: Rebecca Harriett
Secretary: Hilary Sortor
Treasurer: Susan Galbraith

Education Committee Chair: *Rebecca Harriett*
Membership Chair: *Alex Newhart*
Volunteer Chair: *Susan Galbraith*
Outreach Chair: *Tim Koppenhaver*
Program Chair: *Charlie Price*
Sky Meadows Outdoor Lab: *Ed Tobias*

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