



**Virginia  
Master  
Naturalist**  
Southwestern Piedmont Chapter

# THE VINE

FALL, 2012  
VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3



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**DON'T FORGET TO LOG YOUR  
VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR 2012!**

[https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/  
UniversalLogin.cfm](https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What an awesome weekend! I have never been around so many other people who share my enthusiasm about our natural treasures. The Master Naturalist State Conference was held September 7 through September 9 at VMNH and Fairystone State Park.

The committee from our local chapter responsible for putting it all together consisted of Kathy Fell, Ashby Pritchett, Lynn Pritchett, Denny Casey, Lynn Regan, Caroline Pilson, Teresa Prillaman and Jim Tobin. There was so much planning that had to be done in advance. It started months ago and included monthly teleconferences with Naturalist leaders in other counties to coordinate all of the activities. This group did a great job. Thanks for all of your efforts.

I was able to take part in one of my favorite activities during the Friday session of the conference - a Herp Blitz lead by Larry Turner and Jason Gibson. There were about 12 of us who spent five hours scouring the woods for whatever we could find. We looked at and tried to identify it all.

The Naturalist Volunteers who went along served as eyes and ears to help locate the species. Jason Gibson, who is a member of the Virginia Herpetological Society identified, logged and submitted the results on all of the herps that we found to the VHS database. We found a total of 12 different species and a total of 51 individual herps.

(continued on next Page)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued)

The first two hours of the morning were spent wading in the creek looking for salamanders. The most abundant find of the day was the Red Spotted Newt seen below. This is the red eft stage of the red spotted newt. They have three distinct life stages- aquatic larvae, terrestrial adult (red eft) and aquatic adult. Their skin secretes a toxic substance when injured and for this reason, predators soon learn that they are not a preferred source of food. Because of this, they move around freely on the ground. At one point of the hike, we saw as many as five on the ground in one place. We found a total of about 20 during the day, including some that had been run over on the nearby roadway.



Right, red eft stage of the Red Spotted Newt.  
(Photo by Dottie Haley)

The most significant find of the day was a six lined racerunner. This species had never been documented in the Turkey Cock Mountain area. We ended up finding three different ones. The first one was spotted as we ate our lunch in the parking lot. Jason quickly abandoned his sandwich to chase it down, identify it and get some confirmation photographs. We spotted another adult before we left the parking lot and found a juvenile of the species at the edge of the parking lot as we were leaving. Jason noted that finding multiple life stages of the species was a good sign.



Eastern Six lined Racerunner (photo from Virginia Herpetological Society website - <http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com>)

There are already plans being made to hold a Herp Blitz next spring. If you have never taken part, consider doing so. In addition to spending a beautiful spring day outside in the woods, you might be a part of a group that makes a significant biological find.

Dottie Haley

## **JOIDES RESOLUTION Provides “Exciting, unexpected discovery” July 19, 2012**

Dr. Denny Casey participated in the Deep Earth Academy’s 2012 “School of Rock” workshop. From May 23 to June 2, proponents of selected pilot projects from the Ship-to-Shore Science kickoff meeting sailed aboard the JOIDES Resolution as it transited from Curaçao to Bermuda. During the expedition, the “Rockers” were immersed in geology, marine engineering, and the culture of scientific ocean drilling. The group spent significant time crafting their pilot projects, conducting live video-broadcasts, touring the ship, and discussing informal science education.

In a public lecture at the Virginia Museum of Natural History on July 19, 2012, Dr. Casey related a brief history of sea floor drilling for scientific discovery. Cores taken from the sea floor have confirmed Alfred Wegener’s theory of continental drift, and provided evidence to support plate tectonics proposed by W. Jason Morgan and Xavier Le Pichon. Scientists have concluded from analysis of samples that the ocean floor is probably no older than 200 million years. Deep sea sediments show shifts between glacial and warmer climates that are periodic and predictable.

The JOIDES Resolution (Joint Oceanographic Institutions for Deep Earth Sampling) is a scientific drilling ship once used by the Ocean Drilling Program, then by its successor, the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program. It is the successor of the Glomar Challenger. The ship was launched as Sedco/BP 471, an oil exploration vessel. It was later converted for scientific use and began working for the ODP in January 1985. The “JR” returned to active service in February 2009 following an extensive renovation of its laboratory facilities and crew quarters.

Dr. Casey provided several Internet links for further study:

- Integrated Ocean Drilling Program: <http://iodp.tamu.edu/>;
- Consortium for Ocean Leadership: <http://www.oceanleadership.org/>;
- Deep Earth Academy—School of Rock: <http://www.oceanleadership.org/education/deep-earth-academy/educators/school-of-rock/>; and
- JOIDES Resolution: <http://joidesresolution.org/>.

Photo source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JOIDES\\_Resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JOIDES_Resolution)



## MASTER NATURALIST ATTENDS BIODIVERSITY FORUM

In September I attended the World Wide Views on Biodiversity forum in Washington DC. 100 citizens were selected from across DC, Maryland and Virginia. The mix of citizens roughly matched the population distribution in gender, age, race and background. The same selection process happened in Boston, Phoenix and Denver, as well in 24 other countries around the world!

2011 to 2020 has been named the United Nations Decade on biodiversity. In 2010, there was an international conference in Japan that adopted a strategic plan for world-wide biodiversity. The next meeting, scheduled for October 2012 in India, will focus on implementation plans for the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan. The mission of the World Wide Views on Biodiversity was to provide input to the decision makers at the October meeting.

The attendees were divided into 15 tables, each with a trained moderator. Each table was a mix of demographics. We listened to a documentary, then, we discussed a few relevant questions. The purpose of the discussion was to explore the different opinions at the table. After discussion, we completed a secret ballot. Results from each vote were shared with the room and are posted on the internet, along with all the results from around the world. It is interesting to see where views are different!

The documentaries were interesting and the questions stimulating. Here are a few topics we discussed:

- If we are to set aside more land for wilderness protection areas around the world, what should we do about the people who live in the target areas?
- What option do you prefer when considering the tradeoff between land for agriculture and land for protecting biodiversity?
- What option do you prefer when considering the tradeoff between over fishing and protecting the biodiversity in the ocean?
- Who should provide the funds to protect coral reefs?

If a plant or creature is harvested and used to develop a cure for some disease, should the country of origin of the species receive any part of the generated revenue?

After addressing the questions for the international meeting, we also spent time on a domestic question: Should the US have a national strategy for biodiversity?

All the tables voted yes. Each table developed a specific action plan to support a national strategy. These recommendations were shared with the room and will be presented to government representatives in December.

It was an honor to participate in such a global process. I will be watching for the outcome of the meetings in India and DC.

Resources and additional reading:

Convention on Biological Diversity: <http://www.cbd.int/>

Questions and results of voting around the world: <http://biodiversity.wviews.org/>

Kathy Fell

## **2012 VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALIST STATEWIDE VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE COMES TO VMNH AND FAIRYSTONE STATE PARK**

On Friday, September 7, 2012 through Sunday, September 9, 2012, nearly 200 Master Naturalist volunteers from around the Commonwealth swarmed into Martinsville and Henry County for the 4th Annual Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Volunteer Conference and Training event.

This event is an annual opportunity for VMN volunteers to share ideas and learn from each other, to participate in high-quality advanced training sessions, and to learn about a region of Virginia that may be different from their home communities. It's a time and place to recognize and reward volunteers and chapters for all their efforts. The Southwest Piedmont Chapter hosted this year's conference.

This year, the conference was divided between two venues. On Friday evening and Saturday, sessions and events were held at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville, in Frank Wilson City Park and at the New College Institute. Saturday supper and Sunday sessions were held at Fairy Stone State Park.

Special events on Friday included outdoor activities at Philpott Lake, a Herp Blitz on Turkeycock Mountain, a Nature Hike and Plant ID at the Gravely Nature Preserve, and a behind-the-scenes tour of the VMNH and Scientist/Curator open house.

Saturday concurrent sessions were held at the VMNH, in Wilson Park and at NCI. Offerings included:

- Creating An Engaging Chapter Display at community festivals and events;
- Indigenous Ecology: How to interpret modern landscapes from an indigenous perspective;
- Museum Quality Insect Collections and Curation;
- Wildlife Permits: What you need to know for you or your chapter to apply for permits to collect wildlife, collect wildlife salvage items, and display wildlife or wildlife artifacts at educational events;
- Watershed Education for Youth;
- Planning and Conducting a BioBlitz;
- Wildlife Mapping: Become certified for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Wildlife Mapping citizen science project;
- Wilderness First Aid;
- A Potpourri of Environmental Education Curricula: Activities for Teaching;
- Evaluating a Site for Habitat Improvement;
- Invasive Species: Early Detection, Rapid Response;
- Aquatic Insects in Two Parts: The life cycle of aquatic Macroinvertebrates;
- Adopting an Urban Park with Community Partners; and
- Birding By Ear: The next step in learning to ID Birds.

Sunday concurrent sessions were held at Fairy Stone State Park. Offerings included:

- Bird Identification and Wildlife Mapping practice;
- The Ecology of Topography: A hike examining topographical variation and its influence on forest communities;
- Advanced Save Our Streams Training;
- Seeing the Forest AND the Trees: "Training by Walking Around";
- Leopold Education Project: A field-based workshop—How to use the Leopold Education Project (LEP) curriculum;
- Mushroom Ecology and ID; and
- Fairy Stone Service Project: A few hours of volunteer service credit.

Many and special thanks to Michelle Prysby and Tiffany Brown for their invaluable assistance in developing, advertising and promoting the Annual Conference.

Conference photos appear in successive pages of this newsletter.



## 2012 VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALIST STATEWIDE VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE PHOTO ALBUM & REFERENCE LINKS

Read VMNH article on State Conference at <http://www.vmnh.net/news.cfm?ID=396>.

FRIDAY, September 7, 2012



Left, SWP Chapter volunteers at Registration Desk.  
(Chapter photo)



Right, Master Naturalists at Dinner.  
(VMNH photo)

Below, Master Naturalists mingle at Chapter Share Fair on Friday night in the VMNH Great Hall. (Chapter photo)



## 2012 VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALIST STATEWIDE VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE PHOTO ALBUM & REFERENCE LINKS

Read Martinsville Bulletin mentioning the Turkeycock Bioblitz at  
<http://www.martinsvillebulletin.com/article.cfm?ID=34543>

**SATURDAY, September 8, 2012**



Left, class listens attentively as Dr. Jeff Kirwan discusses Indigenous Ecology. (VMNH photo)



Right, Denny Casey discusses features and projects implemented in an urban park at Wilson Park. (VMNH photo)

**SUNDAY, September 9, 2012**



Left, Convention attendees join Park Ranger Sam Jensen for Fairy Stone Service Project to earn a few hours of volunteer service. (Submitted by Lynn Pritchett)

Below, left, VMN gather to look for mushrooms at Fairy Stone State Park. Bottom, Rebecca Rader moves leaf litter to uncover mushroom. (Photos from BRFAL blog at <http://brfal.blogspot.com/2012/09/amateur-mycologists-on-trail-at-fairy.html>)





## PLANT VACATION

Submitted by Kathy Fell

If you are worried about losing your favorite house plants while you go on vacation, try this!

First, check which plants dry out in under a week. A plant that is root-bound in its pot will dry out faster. Move these into larger pots. Ceramic pots with a hole in the bottom work best with this system.

Position a water-tight tub between two chairs. I use those black tubs sold at hardware stores for mixing Quickrete. Place concrete steppers or bricks in the bottom of the tub. Fill the tub so the water line is below the surface of the steppers. Then, place the plants on the steppers. Place two rods across the backs of the chairs and drape plastic over everything.

I used this system when I was gone for two weeks and not a single plant dried out. The bricks or steppers will soak up the water, which will slowly wick up into the ceramic pots. The plastic keeps the water from evaporating too fast. It is critical that the pots are not sitting in standing water or the plants will become waterlogged and the roots will rot.



Photos submitted by Kathy Fell



## VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteer hours reported as of September 30, 2012:

Categories -

- Administration
- Advanced Training
- Citizen Science
- Education
- Stewardship

Reported Total– 273.10 hours or 13.0% of our Chapter Goal.

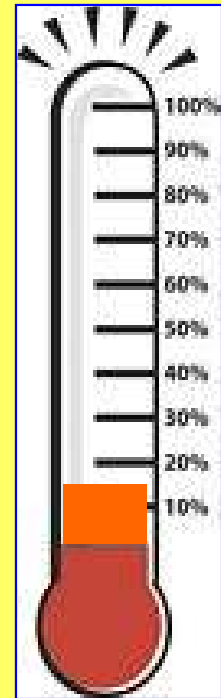
Thank you, volunteers!

Report all volunteer hours to:

Christy Deatherage, turkeyball@comcast.net, (276)627-6276, or submit hours to the VMN Volunteer Management System at <https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>

**2012 CHAPTER GOAL:**

**2000 VOLUNTEER HOURS**



### **NOTICES**

- **October 25—Star Gazing Party @ VMNH 7:30PM**
- **November 10-American Chestnut @RHEC 1:00PM**
- **November 15– Beekeeping Basics @VMNH 6:00PM**
- **December 4-Interpretive Presentations @ VMNH 6:00PM**
- **December 15-Building a Bluebird Box @ VMNH All-Day**



**Our Chapter Board.**

2012 SWP Chapter Board Members. From left to right, Lynn Pritchett, Denny Casey, Kathy Fell, Tamara Poles, Christy Deatherage, Dottie Haley and Mavis Rice. Photo by Ashby Pritchett

**Southwestern Chapter Calendar of Events:**

<http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/southwesternpedmont.html#news> ; Click on “Calendar of Events”.