

**Virginia  
Master  
Naturalist**  
Southwestern Piedmont Chapter



*THE VINE*



SUMMER, 2011  
VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2

**IN THIS ISSUE**

- [Earth Week Activities](#)
- [Herp Bioblitz](#)
- [John Muir Documentary](#)
- [Wilson Park Cleanups](#)
- [Wild About Turkeys](#)
- [Living off the Land Family Festival](#)
- [Jamison Mill Appreciation Day](#)
- [2nd Annual Rivers and Bugs Summit](#)
- [How to Use the VMN Volunteer Management System](#)
- [Volunteer Hours & Events Calendar](#)

**CHAPTER DUES ARE PAST DUE!**  
See last page of newsletter.

**OFFICERS**

President, Kathy Fell  
Vice President, John Hollandsworth  
Secretary, Evalyn Chapman  
Treasurer, Dennis Reeves  
Past President, Christy Deatherage

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Advisor/Development, Denny Casey  
Host, Carolyn Turner  
Membership, Christy Deatherage  
Newsletter/Web Page, Ashby Pritchett  
Outreach/Publicity/Historian, Lynn Pritchett  
Program, John Hollandsworth  
Training, Rachael Wingfield  
Volunteer Service, tba

**Southwestern Piedmont Master Naturalists C/O VMNH**  
21 Starling Avenue  
Martinsville, VA 24112  
Phone: (276) 634-4184  
Dr. Dennis Casey, Chapter Advisor  
[denny.casey@vmnh.virginia.gov](mailto:denny.casey@vmnh.virginia.gov)

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Summer is in full swing! I've been eating in the sun-room so I can watch the excitement at the feeding station in the front yard. The little birds take turns darting inside the cage. The larger birds and a squirrel search around for any seeds that fell to the ground. There is even an occasional dip in the bird bath. I've noticed a lot of other wildlife in the yard; bees guarding their nests, praying mantis babies getting bigger, little snakes in the mulch pile and an exciting visit by a box turtle who marched up the driveway for a conversation. I hope everyone is looking forward to the canoe/kayak trip and a chance to observe nature from the water!

**Kathy Fell**



Kathy's Visitor -Photo by Kathy Fell

**REPORT EASTERN BOX TURTLE SIGHTINGS**

The Virginia Herpetological Society is starting a long-term, eastern box turtle monitoring project. To report box turtle sightings, use the link to the form on the VHS website: [vaherpsociety.com](http://vaherpsociety.com) or [virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com](http://virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com)

**2011 BASIC TRAINING COURSE INFORMATION SESSION**  
July 21, 2011 at 6:00 P.M., at the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Help us spread the word!

## EARTH WEEK CELEBRATION AT VMNH—APRIL 15-23, 2011

Volunteers from the SWPC of the Virginia Master Naturalists organization joined with Virginia Museum of Natural History staff and other volunteer organizations to conduct the 2011 "Earth Week Celebration", Friday, April 15 through Saturday, April 23. Events were held at local parks, nature preserves, and other community locations, to engage the audience and increase participants' awareness of nature and the many benefits of spending time outdoors. Activities focused on concepts related to water conservation, ocean environment, recycling and environmental harmony.

"It's so much fun to celebrate Earth Day with so many children," said Robin Jensen, youth education coordinator at VMNH. "It was a collaborative event. We had people from the **Master Naturalists**, the Danville Science Center, Fairy Stone State Park and the Laurel Park FFA all working with the museum to make this event a success. I hope that the kids had a good time and that we inspired each of them to help the Earth in their own special way."

Right, Patrick Henry Elementary School kindergartner Nasir Price (front left) puts a finger into oily water to see how it feels during an Earth Day program Friday at the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Leading the program was **Rachel Wingfield (right), a Master Naturalist**. More Earth Week events are planned in the coming days, including a community festival Saturday at the Smith River Sports Complex.

(Bulletin photo by Mike Wray)



Reference: Martinsville Bulletin article April 19, 2011.



## CACHE-IN TRASH-OUT— APRIL 20, 2011

**Master Naturalist Lynn Pritchett** hosted the 3rd Annual Earth Week Support 4 Parks Cache-in Trash-Out event on the Dick & Willie Passage. Participants collected trash along the trail while either walking or biking. The Dick & Willie Passage is a 4.5 mile paved walkway located in the heart of Martinsville. The participant who collected the most trash between 10 and 12 was awarded a CITO Geocoin. A "Geocoin" is a special coin created by individuals or groups of geocachers as a kind of signature item or calling card, and in this case is awarded for both finding the site of the event and for best performance during the event.

Left, Lynn Pritchett and Ayden Pickett, winner of the 2011 Cache-In Trash-Out Geocoin.

(Photo submitted by Lynn Pritchett)

## HERP BIOBLITZ—APRIL 30, 2011

The weather was beautiful and the assembled group was large and well-prepared. Chapter members gathered at Snow Creek Elementary School with herpetologist Jason Gibson and a few guests to search for amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders, newts) and reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles, terrapins, tortoises). The group consolidated into fewer cars and drove to Chestnut Mountain for a morning trek along its creeks and hills. After a picnic lunch at a church shelter, some of the group moved to Turkeycock Mountain and continued the search. Using snake hooks, searchers peered under rocks and logs. Although several fine specimens of salamanders, newts, lizards and terrapins, a rat snake and hognose snake were found, no vipers were discovered.



Rat Snake with cloudy eyes—ready to shed skin.  
(Photo by Kathy Fell)



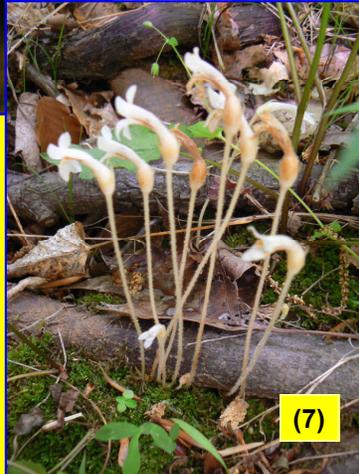
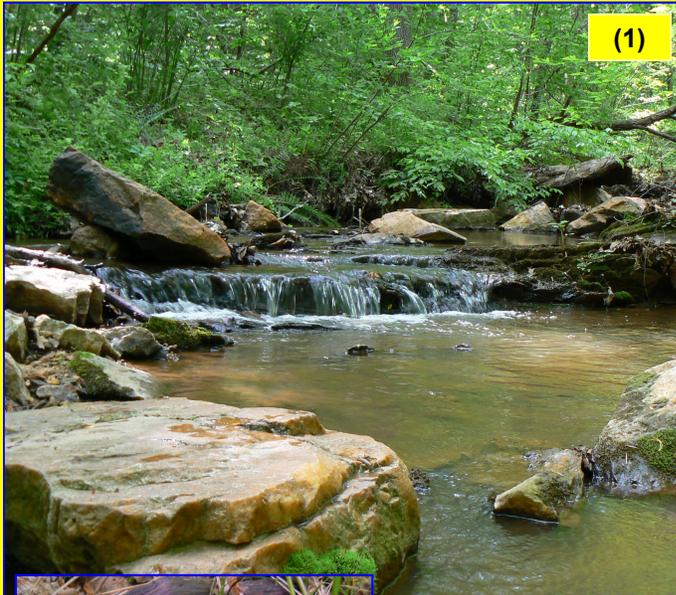
Fence Lizard watching us!  
(Photo by Brian Williams)



Our group assembles.  
(Photo by Brian Williams)

**MORE PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE.**

## HERP BIOBLITZ PHOTOS



**A few of our finds on Turkeycock and Chestnut mountains:**

**(1) waterfall, (2) black phase hog nose snake, (3) flat head salamander, (4) three-lined salamander, (5) male red-spotted newt, (6) green frog, (7) Cancer Root, and (8) Squawroot. (Photos submitted by Lynn Pritchett)**

## JOHN MUIR DOCUMENTARY AIRED AT CHAPTER MEETING May 5, 2011

*The Southwestern Piedmont Chapter viewed the award-winning PBS American Masters Documentary on America's first nature preservationist, John Muir, in the Lecture Hall of the Virginia Museum of Natural History. The public was invited to attend this 80 minute documentary. Master Naturalist Dottie Haley contributed the below article for The Vine.*

### **PBS Documentary on John Muir**

John Muir is considered to be one of the first conservationists. His vision of and deep appreciation for the things of nature changed America and eventually resulted in the formation of the Sierra Club, an organization that he co-founded and served as president from the time it was created until his death in 1914. This club would serve as a way of passing his zeal for the Yosemite Valley on to others. He saw nature as a means of reviving man's soul and was often quoted as saying "civilized man chokes his soul". The Sierra Club advocated escaping to the great outdoors.

Muir was born in Scotland (1838) but immigrated with his family to the new world in 1849. His father bought 80 acres and started a farm in Wisconsin. Muir's father was a strict Calvinist who lived for the hereafter and did not share his son's appreciation of the natural world. These differences would prove to be a lifelong source of conflict between the two. Because the children were required to help with the farm work, John received no formal education, although his mother helped teach and encourage him. He loved to work at fixing his father's equipment which led to him becoming an inventor. Being restless on the farm, he left at the age of 22 to display his inventions at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Later, he applied for and was accepted at the University of Wisconsin. It would be the wife of one of his professors, Jean Carr that became his lifelong teacher and mentor. After college, he began working in an Indiana factory and quickly became dissatisfied. During his recovery from an industrial accident involving his right eye, he decided that he would follow his heart's calling and become an explorer. In Sept 1867, he set out on a 1,000 mile walk to the Gulf of Mexico.

He kept a journal along the way and sent pressed plants and notes to fellow botanists. He finally felt like he was doing what God had called him to do. He contracted malaria near the end of his journey which could have been a huge turning point for him. This was the first time he had experienced nature doing something bad to him, but his beliefs remained unshaken. After his recovery, he headed west to the mountains of California. He made a living working at a saw mill but took breaks to travel the Sierra Nevadas for weeks at a time. By studying the rock formations, he began to devise a theory of how the valley had been formed by glaciers. In December 1871, he published an article entitled "Glacial Origin of Yosemite Valley". This would be the first of many articles about Yosemite published by Muir.

His lifelong mentor, Jean Carr arranged for his introduction to Louisa Strentzel, the daughter of Polish immigrants, in 1874. Muir proposed to her in 1879 and left for Alaska the day afterwards on behalf of the San Francisco newspaper. He (age 42) and Stentzel (age 33) married in 1880. During his first Alaskan adventure, he developed a respect for the native people who served as his guides and performed extensive glacial studies.

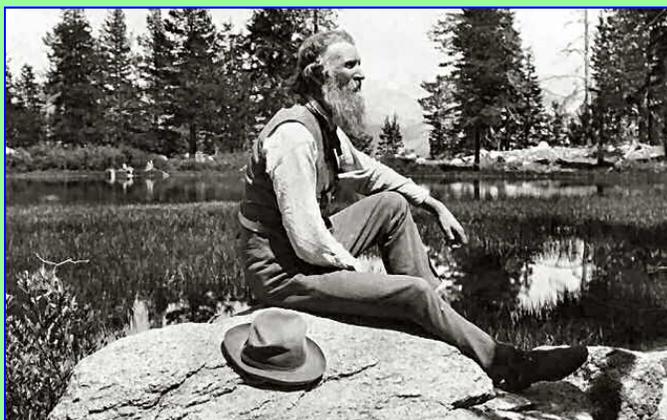
(continued on the next page)

## PBS Documentary on John Muir (continued from previous page)

He set out on a second Alaskan mission in 1881 with the goal of finding two missing whalers. Although the whalers were never found, it was on this journey that Muir witnessed firsthand the danger and power of nature. They discovered many bodies of native Alaskans who had fallen victim to a cruel, harsh winter. It is believed that this discovery had a lasting influence on Muir's beliefs and values concerning the natural world. Upon his return from this journey, he took over the operation of his father in laws farm in Martinez, California. He enjoyed teaching his two daughters the names of plants and flowers on the farm and would ask "how would you feel if people didn't call you by your name?"

After 8 years, he had made a small fortune on the farm and again became restless. In 1888, he traveled back to Yosemite with Robert Johnson, editor of Century magazine. Much to their dismay, they witnessed the modernization of the area. Trees were being cut down and herds of sheep were destroying the wild flowers. They launched a national campaign to preserve natural areas. Muir's belief was that the government had to be responsible for saving wilderness areas. Muir published an article "Treasures of Yosemite" in August of 1890 which was influential toward congress creating Yosemite National Park in September 1890. It was also during this time that Muir co-founded the Sierra Club whose purpose was to stimulate interest in the outdoors. President Theodore Roosevelt asked Muir to personally guide him on a four day journey through Yosemite. It was after this trip that Roosevelt enacted legislation protecting 230,000 acres of federal land, including Yosemite.

The great San Francisco earthquake in 1906 later proved to be detrimental to his efforts to preserve Yosemite. Many groups argued that if there had been a better water supply in place, the devastation from the fires resulting from the earthquake would not have been so great. They began a movement to build a dam in the Hetch Hetchy valley of Yosemite to provide a better water supply. Muir fought long and hard against it. The nation was divided. In Dec 6, 1913, Congress voted to allow the building of the dam and Woodrow Wilson signed it into law. Although it appeared at the time that he had lost the fight, there has never been another dam built in national park lands. Muir contracted pneumonia in December, 1914 and died on Christmas Eve. His story will always serve as an inspiration to others who share his opinion that the natural world posses a divinity and that all forms of nature are important and should be accepted.



*Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.*

~John Muir

Left, photo from  
[http://www.nps.gov/yose/historyculture/images/john.muir.rock.2-web\\_1.jpg](http://www.nps.gov/yose/historyculture/images/john.muir.rock.2-web_1.jpg)

## WILSON PARK CLEANUPS— MAY 7 & June 11, 2011

On Saturday, May 7, **Southwestern Piedmont Master Naturalists** joined with the Friends of Wilson Park for a day of **stewardship projects** to benefit J. Frank Wilson Park. Activities involved invasive species removal, spreading of mulch, and trash pick-up.

This was the first event resulting from the recently received grant from Keep Virginia Beautiful. Participating in this event were W.C. Fowlkes, Jim Tobin, Denny Casey, Glenda Hairston, Kathy Fell, Christy Deatherage, and Robin Jensen and her children.

On Saturday, June 11, the second work session was held at the park, where work continued on spreading mulch and making needed improvements in the appearance of park grounds.



Photos contributed by Denny Casey



**DOES THIS MULCH PILE  
HAVE A BOTTOM?**

## **“WILD ABOUT TURKEYS” - June 3, 2011**

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) presented a “Wild about Turkeys” workshop on Friday, June 3rd from 8:30-12:30 at VMNH in the Distance Learning Classroom.

This workshop was open to educators, interpreters, and master naturalists. NWTf staff presented an overview of the wild turkey, wildlife conservation, as well as several activities from their “Wild about Turkeys” Curriculum and Activity Guide. This workshop provided an excellent opportunity to learn about wildlife, conservation, forestry and natural resource management principles while focusing on the wild turkey.

Eight Master Naturalists from our Chapter attended this popular workshop, conducted as part of the preliminary events culminating in the opening on June 4th of the new “Living off the Land” exhibit at the Museum. Christine Rolka, the federation’s director of education was the main teacher. She was supported by Sam McDuffie and Patrick “Cully” McCurdy.



Left, Christine Rolka (in blue vest) gestures to Master Naturalists Jo Carter, Lynn Pritchett, Christy Deatherage, John Hollandsworth, Jesse Powell, and others attending the workshop.

(Photo submitted by Denny Casey)

Right, Christine addresses the class.

In this photo are Jo, Christy, and Tamara Poles from our Chapter, and other attendees.

(Photo submitted by Denny Casey)



## LIVING OFF THE LAND FAMILY FESTIVAL AT VMNH—JUNE 4, 2011

The Living Off the Land Family Festival was held on the opening day of the Living Off the Land exhibit, on June 4, 2011, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

The festival was part of a new exhibit of the same title that runs through Jan. 14 at the museum. The exhibit focuses on wildlife and things usually done outdoors, such as hunting, fishing and conservation of resources.



**The Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist organization set up an information tent at the event, informing visitors about the upcoming Basic Training class and passing out organization literature.**

One exhibitor, Nancy Basket of Walhalla, S.C., uses kudzu vines to make crafts such as animal sculptures, paper wall ornaments, cloths and baskets. She also uses kudzu to make soap, uses the edible leaves in salads and turns the blossoms into jelly.

Another exhibitor was Smith Farms of Stoneville, N.C., which grows fruits and vegetables certified organic by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Other exhibitors included a taxidermist, wooden bird statue carvers and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Alton Dooley, associate curator of paleontology at the museum, showed archaeological findings from across southwest Virginia, including bones.



Nancy Basket of Walhalla, S.C., uses kudzu vines to create baskets, paper and more. Above is a woven Teratorn bird — a “thunderbird” in the Cherokee language — made from the vine. (Bulletin photos by Mike Wray)



Emily Garnes holds a corn snake at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries booth. (Bulletin photos by Mike Wray)

## JAMISON MILL APPRECIATION DAY—JUNE 11, 2011

In celebration of the American Hiking Society's 19th Annual National Trails Day, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers offered a National Trails Day Hike, Bike, Paddle event at Jamison Mill Park on Philpott Lake. This event was sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Carilion Clinic, Creek Freaks, Dan River Basin Association, Franklin County Parks & Recreation, Franklin Freewheelers, Friends of Philpott, Henry County Bike Club, SVMBA, and the **Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists**.

Jamison Mill Appreciation Day included activities to showcase the newly developed trail system and park amenities: Interpretive hike, bicycle ride, and a paddle trip. "National Trails Day" is designed to promote healthy lifestyles, connect the general public with trails in their area and build partnerships to protect trails.



The theme for National Trails Day 2011 was ***Made With All Natural Ingredients***.

Below, photos from Friends of Philpott Facebook page:  
<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150173621179724.308113.35319784723> and  
<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150202497294724.316832.35319784723>



## 2ND ANNUAL RIVERS AND BUGS SUMMIT—JUNE 25, 2011

The 2nd Annual Rivers & Bugs Summit was held at the Patrick Springs Pentecostal Church in Patrick Springs, Virginia. The Summit was made possible through support from the Virginia Environmental Endowment, The Harvest Foundation, Market America, Patrick Springs Pentecostal Church, Workshop Presenters, and DRBA members.

Presentations and demonstrations addressed the geography and history of the greater Dan River Basin, issues of environmental stewardship and responsible uses of its natural resources. Sessions included discussions of the headwaters of the Mayo River, "Virginia Green Tourism", an art workshop using natural objects found in nature, Organic Gardening in Schools, "a day in the life of a wildlife rehabber", a discovery workshop of the aquatic insects found in rivers and streams.

Environmental educator Brian Williams conducted a session on "Our Longbellied Friends", a discussion of the importance of snakes in the environment.

**Master Naturalist Lynn Pritchett** conducted a class on "Watershed Stewardship: Treasure Chests of the Dan", explaining the history and exceptional natural qualities of this region, and identifying examples of unique geographical formations, flora, and animal life.



Above, Brian Williams (Our Longbellied Friends), Minnie & Les Moore (Organic Gardening in Schools). Left, Jason McGhee (Headwaters of the Mayo).

~Photos submitted by Lynn Pritchett

## HOW TO USE THE “MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM”

Michelle Prysby, Virginia Master Naturalist Program Coordinator, has created the “Master Naturalist Volunteer Management System”, the new state-managed web site for Master Naturalists.

Chapter members will be able to manage their own contact information, view our chapter events calendar and log volunteer hours.

The following link will take you to the Master Naturalist Volunteer Management System. You will be asked to set your password prior to entering the system.

<https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>

If you are a new user, click on “**New User?**”. You will see the message:

*If you are a new user, or if you have forgotten your password, use this form to access the portal. After entering your e-mail address the system will send you an e-mail with access into the portal. When you access the portal you will be able to view and/or change your password.*

Click on “**Receive e-mail to access portal**”.

Go to your e-mail site and follow instructions to set your personal password. You should now be able to access the main Volunteer web page.

The Volunteer Management System will greet you with your name. *Use your browser’s Back Button to move between web pages.*

In the **Your Information** section:

In **Editing Profile** you can share your Member information or choose to hide this information from other Master Naturalists. You may upload an identifying photo of yourself. You may subscribe to discussions.

In **Add New Hours** you can log your volunteer hours, thus accounting for all categories of service and hours of Advanced Training.

In **View Your Hours** you may view a tally of all credit hours.

In the **Administration** section:

You can **Add Calendar Event**, access **Newsletter/Documents** and **Photo Albums**.

In the **Event Calendars** section you can access the Chapter’s general event calendar.

In the **General Information** section:

You can obtain **Member Roster** contact information and interests for those members who have chosen to share such information with the Chapter. Select **Projects** and click the project name to volunteer for it or to see any upcoming events connected to it. **Newsletter/Documents** and **Photo Albums** will take you to archived records of this type.

When finished click on **Logout** at the top of the web page. What a great web site!

## VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteer hours reported as of June 30, 2011:

Categories -

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

Reported Total— 278 hours or 13% of our Chapter Goal.

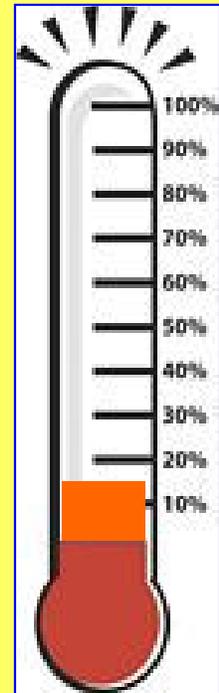
Thank you, volunteers!

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>

**2011 CHAPTER GOAL:**

**2011 VOLUNTEER HOURS**



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR JULY—SEPTEMBER 2011

To see the full Southwestern Piedmont Chapter Calendar of Events, go to <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/southwesternpiedmont.html#news> And click on “Calendar of Events”.

## SPECIAL NOTICES

**EMERALD ASH BORER ONLINE COURSE—** Approved for Advanced Training credit. Go to <http://www.hort.vt.edu/eab> . W.C. Fowlkes and Lynn Pritchett have completed this course and recommend it highly!

**CHAPTER DUES for June 1, 2011 through May 31, 2012 were due before June 30th.** If you have not paid, please remit immediately to Dennis E. Reeves, Treasurer, 106 Courtney Terrace, Martinsville, VA 24112. Make your check payable to “Virginia Master Naturalists” in the amount of \$10.00. If you decide not to pay dues, your membership will be placed on inactive status.