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"2014 A Year of Learning & Exploring."
Opportunity to Earn Volunteer Hours:
Monitoring Blue Bird Nest Boxes
Pick the # of boxes you want to monitor weekly.

**Southwestern Piedmont
Master Naturalists**
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Chapter Webpage
<http://www.vmnh.net/virginia-master-naturalist-program>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Master Naturalists,

In 2010, I started the program to become a Master Naturalist. During these years, I have learned many exciting and informative lessons. I feel so blessed to be a part of this organization that has given me more than I ever expected. I have made new friends and had the opportunity to attend and participate in so many events.



If you had told me in August of 2010 when I was still attending class all I would be doing, I would not have believed you. I have attended conferences, bio blitzes, kayaking trips, Chesapeake tours, Weather Spotter training, black bear training from DGIF, animal tracking, invasive insects and plants training, beekeeping, and Wildlife Mapping to name just a few wonderful events and projects. I had the chance to reflect on how fragile life is and how important it is to help nature when we can.

I volunteered at the Virginia Museum of Natural History. It was fun spending time with children and seeing the world through their eyes and how excited they get to learn about the past and animals. As my experience demonstrates, time spent volunteering can be as diverse and exciting as you want it to be. Your expertise and life experiences can always benefit projects that our partners are planning and completing. Being a Virginia Master Naturalist has given me incredible volunteer opportunities and a great sense of accomplishment.

To the Class of 2015, I ask that you volunteer at every opportunity and attend every training session available; you will not be disappointed. And to the members who have not been able to attend our meetings or volunteer for a while, come back and meet our many new members. You will find it a rewarding experience just as I have through the past four years.

I'm happy with our accomplishments during my term as President and the projects and accomplishments achieved. In a large part, this is due to having such a helpful and enthusiastic team to work with from volunteers, members of the board and Dr. Denny Casey.

As this year comes to an end, so does my time as President of this remarkable Chapter. It has truly been a privilege and an honor to have that responsibility, and it has enriched my life in so many ways. Thank you everyone for your friendship and support along the way. I give best wishes to the Officers and Directors of the new Board.

- I'll be there to cheer you on!

Teresa Prillaman, President

Reptile Day - Student Day

Several members of our chapter participated in the student day activities for the Reptile Day event at the museum in October. Whenever one of the special Saturday events is held at the museum, the local schools are given the opportunity to bring their students to the museum on the Friday before to take part in a series of related activities. The students are rotated through 5 different 20 minute sessions consisting of discussion, displays and hands on activities. There are two different sessions of activities, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Sanville Ruritan club sponsored Sanville Elementary school to attend the Reptile Day Student Day event. The afternoon session consisted of grades 2, 3 and 5 for a total of 124 students.

By acting as a volunteer in the education department, members of our chapter can serve in several ways to help with these events. Guides are needed for each different group of students to make sure they stay on schedule and can locate all of the event stations. Chapter members can also lead the presentations that are given at each different station. If you are

interested in being a presenter but don't want to create the presentation material, the education department has material already prepared that can be used.



Presentation by Dottie Haley

Dottie Haley discusses material from the Virginia Herp Society's website with students during Reptile Day Student Day.

Article submitted by Dottie Haley

Photos submitted by

Christy Deatherage



Sanville Elementary students work on a take home lizard craft during Reptile Day— Student Day.

<http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/>

Martinsville Blue Bird Trail

2014 has been a learning experience with care for all the Nestboxes we have on the Martinsville Blue Bird Trail. Jimmy Doyle had the trail for over 30 years and was very diligent in caring for the Blue Bird population. After all those years the nestboxes started showing a lot of age and predators were making the best of it by getting into the nests and removing eggs, and hatchlings. A few times they went for the adult birds; trapping them inside the boxes.



I had told Dottie Haley, Henry County Coordinator, I would like to give all the homeowners a letter asking for donations to help replace those boxes that were actually starting to fall apart. Dottie drafted a letter for me and I dropped it off to those on the trail with boxes. I was surprised by the number of donations we received: \$480.00. We had enough to replace 16 nest boxes with complete set-ups and a second predator guard (Noel guard) to keep snakes, and the most likely problem: cats from sticking their paws into the boxes to get at the Blue Birds and their eggs.

Christine Boran , State Coordinator, Virginia Bluebird Society along with Dottie came up with some folks to build the nestboxes and provide the set-up which included the pole to mount the boxes and a predator guard with all the hardware.



The trailer is full!



Linda Drage, Ellen Jessee, and Pam McMillie.

Photo by Christine Boran

(Continued on next page)

(Martinsville Bluebird Trail - continued)

We made a trip to Charlottesville to Clark Walter's (master naturalist) place where he made the set-ups based on VBBS standards. With the use of Ellen Jessee's, trailer. We were able to pick up both Christine's and Martinsville's set-ups in one load. Another master naturalist Paul Davis made all the Noel guards and made me several extra complete set ups also as a donation to the Martinsville Trail.

Overall we had a lot of successes as well with the leadership of Dottie Haley, and help from my backup Lynn Pritchett (master naturalist). Any master naturalist who would like to see the trail and how beautiful it is to see the new life coming out of their eggs or how well the parent birds care for their hatchlings, let me know.

Noel Guards made & donated by Paul Davis.

Photo by Christine Boran .



<http://www.thebackperch.com/Articles.asp?ID=252>

Blue Birds

Nest attempts: 60

Number of eggs laid: 224

Number of eggs hatched: 166

Number of baby fledged: 151

Number of unhatched eggs: 28

Number of missing/destroyed eggs: 32

Number of dead/missing chicks: 19

Number of dead/missing adults: 2

House Wrens

Number of Eggs Laid: 3

Number of Eggs Hatched: 3

Number of chicks fledged: 3

- Submitted by Linda Drage

Happy Counting Stink Bugs!



According to the Chinese zodiac it's almost the end of the year of the horse and will soon begin the year of the ram. Well, I feel that maybe the year of the stink bug would have been more appropriate. I should have learned to hate these stinky little things that run around both my garden and my home, eating crops and releasing their ever so unpleasant smell. But I do kind of enjoy watching them meander around, entertaining my pets.

Thanks to the USDA and our chapter, I have gotten the chance to turn my weird fascination with the brown marmorated stink bug into volunteer hours for the last two years. It's a super-easy job! All you need to do is go out daily between September 15th and October 15th, and count the number of stink bugs on each side of your house. Even if you're not counting for the USDA Stink Bug Count or counting outside of that time period you can always log your findings with your trusty smartphone using the Stink Bug Scout or SEEDN app.

Happy Counting!

Submitted by Jessica Driver

<http://apps.bugwood.org/stink-bug-scout.html>

<http://apps.bugwood.org/seedn.html>



Brown Marmorated Stink Bug:

<http://www.stopbmsb.org/>

2014 A YEAR OF LEARNING & EXPLORING.



VOLUNTEER HOURS for 2014

Reported January 5, 2015:

Categories -

- Administration 258.1
- Advanced Training 357.85
- Citizen Science 1,061.8
- Education 520.05
- Stewardship 126.25

2014 CHAPTER GOAL:
1000 VOLUNTEER HOURS



Reported Total– 1,997.20 hours or 200% of Chapter Goal.

Total traveled miles: 14,333

Thank you, volunteers!

Jessica Scott Phillips, Chair of Membership Committee



FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 15 Annual Dinner & Election

Jan. 20 New Class starting

Jan. 23-24 Dino Days

See Chapter Calendar for more

DON'T FORGET TO LOG YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR THE 1st QUARTER 2015!

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

Have a new Volunteer Project in Mind?

Download a Volunteer Project Proposal Form from our Chapter's VMN **Volunteer Management System:**

<https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/users/documents/20Forms151.doc>

Southwestern Piedmont Chapter Website:

<http://www.vmn.net/virginia-master-naturalist-program>

Click on "Calendar of Events" to see what other things we are doing!

