

Virginia Master Naturalist



Southwestern Piedmont Chapter

THE VINE



SPRING, 2012
VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1

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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)

2012 OFFICERS

President, Dottie Haley
Vice President, Tamara Poles
Secretary, Mavis Rice
Treasurer, Denny Casey
Past President, Kathy Fell

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Host, tba
Membership, Christy Deatherage
Newsletter/Web Page, Ashby Pritchett
Outreach/Publicity/Historian, Lynn Pritchett
Program, Tamara Poles
Training, tba
Volunteer Service, tba

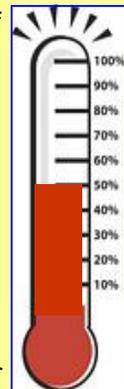
Southwestern Piedmont Master
Naturalists C/O VMNH
21 Starling Avenue
Martinsville, VA 24112
Phone: (276) 634-4184
Dr. Dennis Casey, Chapter Advisor
denny.casey@vmnh.virginia.gov

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This has already been a very busy year for our local chapter. Much preparation and planning are taking place for the training activities scheduled in the summer and fall. The State Conference committee is in full swing and we also have a group preparing the outline for the basic training class which will begin in August. If you know anyone who is interested in becoming a Master Naturalist, have them contact someone on the board so that we can add their names to the roster for basic training. There have been several additions to the list of projects that qualify for volunteer service hours. To find a brief overview of each eligible project, click "Projects" under the "General Information" heading on the Master Naturalist Website. If you have ideas for projects that are not already listed, please contact someone on the board for information on submitting a new project proposal.

There will be several volunteer service hour opportunities available in April during Earth Week. You will receive notification as the details are finalized. For information on more upcoming events, click on "General Event Calendar" under the "Event Calendar" heading on the Master Naturalist Website.

We set a goal of 2000 volunteer hours for the chapter in 2011. We only achieved about 50% of that goal. We have set the same goal again for 2012. Please report all of your volunteer service hours electronically on the Master Naturalist Website or turn in your hardcopy report at the end of each quarter. I urge you to find a project that interests you and get involved. For updates on how we are performing against the goal, the last page of the newsletter has a summary of volunteer service hours versus our goal. Let's work together to reach our goal of 2000 volunteer hours and positively impact our community.



2011

Dottie Haley

Annual Recognition Dinner Report of Mavis Rice

The Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists held its annual recognition dinner at the Virginia Museum of Natural History at 6:00 p.m. on January 19, 2012. The buffet meal was catered by Quality Catering and The Gallery, Inc. Dottie Haley, President, greeted the members and guests and invited them to the buffet line. After the meal, the meeting was called to order by Dottie.

The following were recognized for having been recertified as Master Naturalists in 2011: Evelyn Chapman, Kathy Fell, Dottie Haley, Jesse Powell, Lynn Pritchett, and Gael Chaney (who was not present). Paul May and Jim Tobin were recognized for having completed the requirements for becoming Master Naturalists in 2011.

Kathy Fell, outgoing President, presented the President's Award for Exceptional Service to Ashby Pritchett for his work as the Newsletter Editor and to Lynn Pritchett for her work as Historian and Chairman of the Outreach Committee. They were both thanked for their outstanding work.

Dottie introduced guest Craig "Rocky" Rockwell, Philpott Lake Operations Project Manager, who spoke briefly about his work at Philpott Lake and the Philpott Lake Interpretive Program. He thanked the Chapter for their volunteer work there and spoke of his hope for future projects.

Lynn Pritchett reported that she is writing a project for approval for volunteers to work with the "Back to Nature Music Camps" for area youth which are planned to be held this summer at Philpott Lake.

Michelle Prysby, Virginia Master Naturalist Program Coordinator, congratulated the chapter members on their work and encouraged everyone to continue looking for new projects and reaching out into the community with volunteer projects. She announced that travel time for volunteer work can now be counted toward your hours for volunteering. However, travel time should be listed separately so the records will identify how much volunteer time is for travel.

Michelle was in town for a meeting of the planning committee for the VMN State Conference which will be held in Martinsville on September 7-9, 2012. Note that the date has changed from that earlier reported.



At the conclusion of the meeting, a "2012 Program Interest Survey" was handed out and each person was encouraged to fill out the form before leaving and hand it in.

Above, Rocky Rockwell. Left, Chapter members enjoy dinner with guests. Photos submitted by Ashby Pritchett.

Right, Michelle Prysby, VMN Program Coordinator, and (from left to right) recertified Master Naturalists Dottie Haley, Lynn Pritchett, Evalyn Chapman and Kathy Fell.
Not pictured are Jesse Powell and Gael Chaney, who were also recertified.



Left, Michelle Prysby (center) with newly-certified Master Naturalists Paul May (left) and Jim Tobin (right).

Right, Kathy Fell (left) presents President's Award for Exceptional Service to Lynn Pritchett and Ashby Pritchett.



Photos submitted by Ashby Pritchett.

“Focus on Food-From Field To Table” 3rd Annual Master Gardener Day at Virginia State University

Submitted by Kathy Fell

In February, I attended Master Gardener Day at Virginia State University. Two of the sessions I attended were talks on Native Pollinators by Dr. Nancy Adamson. I thought Master Naturalists might benefit from a few of the things I learned!

Virginia native pollinators include bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, beetles and birds. Dr. Adamson spent most of her talk on bees.

There are about 4000 species of native bees in North America. 500 of these are native to Virginia. Native Bees all have pollen carrying hairs (scopa) on their legs or abdomen and have two pairs of wings and long tongues.

Most Virginia native bees are solitary. The only native social species in Virginia are the bumble bees. Each solitary female bee will build a nest, provision it with a ball of pollen, lay an egg on the pollen ball, then seal the nest cavity and repeat the process. 70 % of our native bees nest underground, the rest are tunnel or cavity nesters. Cavity nesting bees can be found in spaces dug out by beetles or old mouse holes. They also will take up residence inside the hollow stalks of plants.

Bee eggs hatch into larva. Larva feed off the pollen ball, then spin a cocoon and enter the pupal stage. When the adult bees emerge from the cocoon, they are ready to begin the cycle again. Different species of our native bees are active at different times of the year.

Our native bees work harder and longer than the introduced honey bee. They are out foraging earlier in the day and later at night, as well as earlier in the spring and later in the fall. They do not create honey or store food supplies for themselves. Dr. Adamson spoke about the need to plant habitat to support our solitary bees. Bee habitat consists of a minimum of nine suitable plant species for pollen collection, providing continuous bloom from early spring through late fall and appropriate sites for nesting. The Xerces society provides a number of resources on native bees and plant selection for native bee habitat. <http://www.xerces.org/bees/>

Right, Bumble Bee - *Hymenoptera, Apidae*. Photo from Virginia Cooperative Extension, <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/3104/3104-1572/3104-1572.html>



BATS, Be Afraid!

Submitted by Mavis Rice

The Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists met in the Claude Moore Classroom at the Virginia Museum of Natural History at 6:00 p.m. on February 16, 2012. There were approximately twenty-five people in attendance.



Tamara Poles, Vice President of the Chapter, introduced Bonnie Miles of the Central Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists. Bonnie gave a very interesting presentation on Bats, entitled "BATS, Be Afraid." She emphasized that we are not to be afraid of bats, but afraid for their declining numbers since bats play a great part in keeping down the insect population.

Bonnie had a sampling of bat houses which can be mounted on a tall pole (not to be mounted on trees) for people who would like to attract bats to the area.

After the presentation, Tamara presented Bonnie with a small gift and invited everyone to have some refreshments.



For Master Naturalists in attendance, this presentation qualified for one hour of advanced training.



Photos:

Above left, the presentation attracted a full classroom of Master Naturalists and public guests.

Above Right, Bonnie Miles and Tamara Poles.

Left, lecture attendees look at handouts and display items brought by Bonnie Miles.

More photos on next page.

BATS, Be Afraid! (continued)

Right, Bonnie Miles' display case of *Hipposideros bicolor* (Red Leaf Nosed Bat), native of Papua, New Guinea. The Virginia big-eared bat is smaller, about 3.5 - 4 inches long, and dark brown.



Left, Chapter President Dottie Haley talks to Evalyn Chapman after the lecture.



Right, a bat box, brought by Bonnie Miles to illustrate the features necessary to create a chamber imitating a natural roost.



Left, Bonnie Miles describes bats as the "most unique, amazing and adorable creatures on the planet".



Photos submitted by Ashby Pritchett

More than 300 VMN volunteers re-certified for 2011, meaning they completed another 40 hours of service and 8 hours of advanced training in 2010. All volunteers eligible for 2011 re-certification received a limited edition pin of Virginia's state bat, the Virginia big-eared bat, based on an illustration by Spike Knuth. Each year, We will offer a new re-certification pin showing a Virginia native species.

Source of photo and description:
http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/downloads/VMN_annual_report_2010_low_resolution.pdf



MONITORING BLUEBIRD NESTS

Submitted by Ashby Pritchett

On Saturday, March 3, at Raywood Landscape Center in Danville, Vickie Fuquay gave a lecture on the Virginia Bluebird Monitoring Project operating in this region. The purpose of the presentation was to encourage participation in Bluebird nest box monitoring on public trails.



Fuquay demonstrated the technique needed to open a Bluebird box and clean it of pests and dangers that damage the nest or hurt the birds. She provided written materials detailing how to keep accurate records of incubation and fledging, and timetables for each nesting stage.

Fuquay supplied copies of an extensive brochure prepared by The Virginia Bluebird Society, a copy of which can be obtained from its website:

http://www.virginiabluebirds.org/forms/vbs_brochure_11x14_may_2011.pdf .



Above, Vickie Fuquay standing beside a Bluebird box; Dottie Haley and Kathy Fell; arrangement of nests pulled from a bluebird box; the “perfect” bluebird nest containing eggs that were not incubated.

Photos submitted by Ashby Pritchett

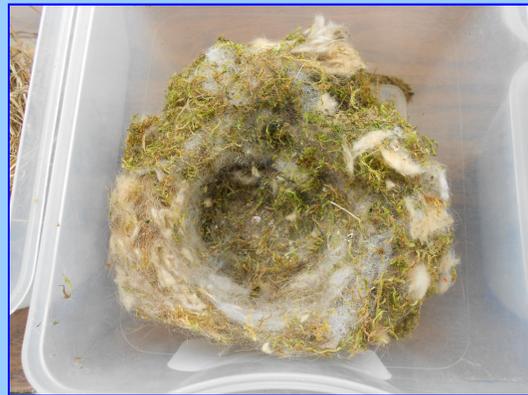
WHAT BIRD SAT ON THIS NEST?

Submitted by Ashby Pritchett

I may have trouble identifying a sparrow from a swallow, but after attending a presentation on how to care for bluebird boxes, I can now identify the nests of many different types of birds, thanks to samples provided by Vickie Fuquay during her presentation on Bluebird Box Monitoring. Below are pictures of different kinds of nests removed from bluebird boxes. A description of each nest is provided with each photograph.



Bluebird (left)—Neat cup of pine needles or dry grass. Eggs are blue and rarely white.



Chickadee (right)—Neat cup of green moss lined with animal hair. Eggs are buff colored and speckled with reddish brown, more heavily on the larger end.



Tufted Titmouse (left)—Sloppy gathering of moss and leaves, animal hair, and sometimes a snake skin. Eggs are white with fine speckles of purplish red.

House Wren (right)—nests are made of sticks that fill the box with a grassy cup down the back of the box. Eggs are white with heavy brown spots.



Continued on next page.

WHAT BIRD SAT ON THIS NEST? (continued)

Tree Swallow (right) - Very neat cup of fine grasses lined with feathers. Eggs are white.



House Sparrow (left) - Very sloppy and trashy. Made of grass, trash, straw and leaves, usually almost filling the box running up the back side of the box. Eggs are white with brown spots.

Source of description of nests courtesy of Vickie Fuquay's handout "Nest Box Monitoring". Photos submitted by Ashby Pritchett.

Note on collecting nests:

It is illegal to collect dead birds, bird parts, feathers or nests without obtaining a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a corresponding state permit from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Refer to the publication "Educators and Virginia's Wildlife Laws", which can be found at :

<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/education/wildlife-laws-educators.pdf>

European Starling:

Only the nest of a European Starling, classified as a nuisance species in Virginia, may be taken at any time without a collector's permit.

A starling may use a Bluebird box to establish its nest. Its nest will normally lie near the back of the cavity where the cup is built and lined with feathers, fine bark, leaves, and grass. The cavity may also be filled with feathers, trash, cloth, and string. Starling eggs are bluish or greenish white.



Source: The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/european_starling/lifehistory/ac

SMITHSONIAN SPEAKER VISITS VMNH

Excerpt from VMNH Report

65 million years ago, an asteroid about 6.3 miles in diameter and traveling at about 30,000 mph slammed into the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico. An enormous mass of vaporized crust and ash was ejected skyward and a white-hot vapor cloud and shock wave raced away from the 180 km crater that formed. The global darkness and acid rain that resulted from this asteroid impact caused global mass extinctions on land and in the ocean.

On Thursday, March 15 at 6 p.m. at the Virginia Museum of Natural History, Dr. Brian T. Huber, chairman of the Smithsonian's paleobiology department and curator of planktic foraminifera, discussed the evidence for, and environmental consequences of, this global catastrophe and its influence on the evolution of life afterwards.

Fourteen Southwestern Piedmont Chapter Master Naturalists joined a crowd of approximately 50 people to hear Dr. Huber discuss “Asteroid Impact at the End of the Dinosaur Era”.



Photos submitted by Ashby Pritchett

PIEDMONT KITE FESTIVAL

Master Naturalists Help Others Enjoy the Great Outdoors

Submitted by Christy Deatherage

Several chapter members volunteered at the Piedmont Kite Festival on March 17th at Jack Dalton Park in Henry County. The event was hosted by the Virginia Museum of Natural History, through the Martinsville-Henry County Community Nature Initiative and in partnership with Henry County Parks and Recreation. The free event provided a safe and enjoyable way for children, youth and parents to enjoy the outdoors together while promoting an active, healthy lifestyle and to learn about the wonders of wind through kite flying, crafts, and live demonstrations. Chapter members assisted with educational activities and games throughout the day. Visitors also enjoyed live music, face painting and radio controlled airplane demonstrations.



Left, Jenny Spivey watches daughter Gwendolyn as her kite catches the wind.



Right, Master Naturalist volunteer Tamara Poles gets a kite airborne.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteer hours reported as of
March 31, 2012:

2012 CHAPTER GOAL:

2000 VOLUNTEER HOURS

Categories -

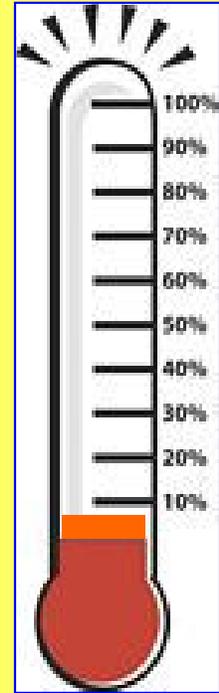
- Administration
- Advanced Training
- Citizen Science
- Education
- Stewardship

Reported Total– 105.5 hours or 6% 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>



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

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