

**Virginia
Master
Naturalist**
Southwestern Piedmont Chapter



THE VINE

SUMMER, 2010
VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2



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**Southwestern Piedmont Master
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denny.casey@vmnh.virginia.gov

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Its been a very busy three months with lots of opportunities for advanced training, volunteer service projects and getting together just to have fun. My thanks to all the committees who worked so hard to organize and publicize all these wonderful events and opportunities and to the members who gave their time to learn and to contribute. Keep up the energy!

Kathy Fell



From the Martinsville Bulletin June 14, 2010

Above, Jim Allen (far left), a Southwest Piedmont Master Naturalist, leads families on a nature walk Saturday June 12, on the trail at J. Frank Wilson Park in Martinsville. The walk was part of the Outdoor Fun Festival held at the park. (Bulletin photos by Mike Wray)

VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROJECTS

Active Citizen Science Projects

Water Quality Monitoring

Project Leader: Lynn Pritchett
lynnpritchett@comcast.net

Research and Collections Volunteer

Project Leader: Kathy Fell
kathyfell@yahoo.com

Frank Wilson Park Eco-Survey

Project Leader: Christy Deatherage or
Tamara Poles
Christy.Deatherage@vmnh.virginia.gov
Tamara.poles@vmnh.virginia.gov

Bio-Blitz Project

Project Leader: Larry Turner
ltct59@comcast.net

Active Stewardship Projects

Frank Wilson Park Clean-Up

Project Leader: Christy Deatherage
Christy.Deatherage@vmnh.virginia.gov

Invasive Species Removal Day

Project Leader: Kathy Fell
kathyfell@yahoo.com

Gravelly Nature Preserve Stewardship

Project Leader: Denny Casey
denny.casey@vmnh.virginia.gov

Collection of Acorns for seedling stock

Project Leader: Lynn Pritchett
lynnpritchett@comcast.net

Riparian Buffer

Project Leader: Kathy Fell
kathyfell@yahoo.com

City Park Beautification

Project Leader: Kathy Fell
kathyfell@yahoo.com

Active Education Projects

Publicity & Communication Net- working

Project Leader: Lynn Pritchett
lynnpritchett@comcast.net

Area Pocket Naturalist Guide

Project : Denny Casey
denny.casey@vmnh.virginia.gov

Education Department Volunteer

Project Leader: Gael Chaney
Gael.chaney@alumni.duke.edu

Basic Training Course

Project Leader: Rachael Wingfield
Rachael.wingfield@vmnh.virginia.gov

Trout in the Classroom

Project Leader: Rachael Wingfield
Rachael.wingfield@vmnh.virginia.gov

Grassy Fork Creek, Franklin County, Virginia:

"...probably no other location of comparable size in Virginia is so biologically distinctive." -
Dr. Richard Hoffman

Admitting to having an "evangelical feeling about the place", Dr. Richard Hoffman described an ecosystem along Grassy Fork Creek on Turkeycock Mountain as "an astonishing community of organisms more typical of the higher uplands to the west than the surrounding lowland oak-pine forest." Located in a small crescent-shaped drainage basin about 500-600 feet in width and one-half mile long, the terrain is low and boggy, with cold springs and seeps. The dominant tree in the area is *Magnolia acuminata*. The small valley presents a diversity of life that is 100 miles to the east of its known range and at least 1000 feet lower in elevation.

Speaking to SWP Master Naturalists on April 15 at the VMNH. Dr. Hoffman promoted permanent protection of the area, either by inclusion into the adjacent Wildlife Management Area or by conservation easement.

Bioblitz on Turkeycock Mountain

SWP Master naturalists joined herpetologist Jason Gibson and entomologist Dr. Richard Hoffman at Turkeycock Mountain on April 17, 2010. Larry Turner obtained permission from landowners to get to Grassy Fork Creek, for a bio-blitz. Chapter members who attended this meeting earned advanced training credit.



Jason Gibson tallies up the bio-blitz species count. (Photo by Kathy Fell)

Bioblitz Photo Gallery (Photos by Kathy Fell)

(1) Jason Gibson looks for snakes in a fallen tobacco barn.

(2) Master Naturalists look over Grassy Fork Creek.

(3) Lynn Pritchett searches the edge of the creek.



Discovering the Archeology Lab

On May 14, 2010, LEAD Virginia visitors at a reception in the VMNH's Great Hall curiously peered through the windows of the Archeology Lab into a laboratory filled with Master Naturalists. That evening, the SWP Chapter sat listening intently to Dr. Elizabeth Moore, Curator of Archeology, who described her daily work identifying, measuring and cataloging thousands of bones, potsherds and other artifacts recovered from a number of sites on the east coast.

Chapter members visited the "dirty lab". There new specimens are placed in an "anoxic bubble", where oxygen is replaced by carbon dioxide, eradicating all insects no matter what their stage of development (egg, larva, pupa, adult, etc.). In the "dirty lab", a "wet screen" mesh washes dirt off specimens, and a finer mesh called the "bridal veil" sifts plant matter, revealing bones and other items of interest.



Dr. Elizabeth Moore
(VMNH Photo)

Dr. Moore showed chapter members artifacts dating between 9,000 and 11,500 years old from the Brook Run Jasper Quarry in Culpeper County, Virginia, and some local specimens dating from 1,000 to 1,500 years ago excavated from sites in the Martinsville-Henry County area.

The Archeology lab is one of the more popular areas of the museum, where over 2000 hours of volunteer service time is received annually.

Bug Daze at VMNH—May 22, 2010

The 5th annual Bug Daze family festival was held on Saturday, May 22, 2010 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festival featured fun and educational displays of unusual insects, crustaceans, arachnids and more.

At left, Dr. Joe Keiper discusses how bugs can help forensic scientists pinpoint the cause of death of some corpses.

Chapter volunteers staffed tables in the VMNH's Great Hall showing SWP Master Naturalist information and butterfly garden displays.



May 23, 2010 Bulletin photo

Southwest Chapter Master Naturalist Basic Training Course for Teachers

A training session will be made available to area teachers the week of July 19-23 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Virginia Museum of Natural History. The entire 40 hour Master Naturalist Basic Training course will be modified so it can be presented in five days of intensive classes.

The class is offered to area teachers, providing a cost-effective professional training opportunity for participants when schools are not in session. The registration deadline is July 12.

The Virginia Master Naturalist Program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and areas within their communities.

“Cool Runnings” on the Smith River - June 19, 2010

On a cloudless sunny Saturday morning, a score of Master Naturalists and guests launched canoes into the Smith River for a five-mile trip between Fieldale and Martinsville. Being its first group outing on the river, the Chapter asked Brian Williams to serve as river guide.

Brian, Dan River Basin Association’s Education, Outreach and Conservation Coordinator, is a local expert on the Smith River. Smith River Adventure Outfitters, owned by Eric Juday, provided the canoes and equipment, and transported many of the participants from Doe Run to the canoe launch in Fieldale.

Leaving the Smith River Trails Fieldale Canoe Access, the group initially bounced over and around submerged rocks and river snags. The Smith River Dam does not release water on the weekends, so the river ran slowly at a shallow depth of between one and five feet. As the group paddled toward Martinsville, the river widened and became less shallow.

The group observed wildflowers along the banks, and particularly fixed their attention on a Barred Owl, who resolutely remained perched on a tree branch overhanging the river.

About two and a half hours after launching in Fieldale, the paddlers reached the Doe Run Canoe Access in Martinsville. Moving across the road, the group opened their lunchboxes and picnicked in the Doe Run Park.

See the Master Naturalists Canoe Trip Photo Gallery on the following pages.



CHAPTER BOARD INFO ON THE WEB

Board decisions affecting the membership will be posted in this section in future issues.

Board Minute archives are available at the Southwestern Piedmont Chapter Google Group website. For more information, send an email to Ashby Pritchett, arpritchett@comcast.net

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteer hours reported as of June 30, 2010:

Administration hours: **21** hours

Advanced Training: **37** hours

Citizen Science: **50** hours

Education: **56** hours

Total: **164** hours

Report all volunteer hours to

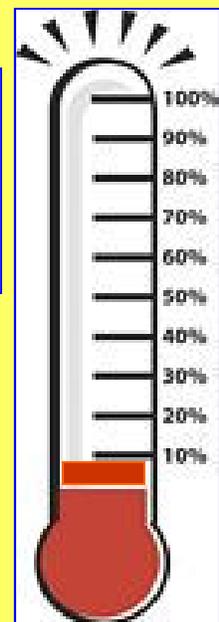
Christy Deatherage

turkeyball@comcast.net

276-627-6276

2010 CHAPTER GOAL:

2000 VOLUNTEER HOURS



Master Naturalists Canoe Trip Photo Gallery

Saturday, June 19, 2010
Commentary by Lynn Pritchett

We gathered in the parking lot at Doe Run Park, located in Martinsville on DuPont Road. Signed release forms, paid our canoe rental fees, and left our lunches in coolers.



Left, we unloaded our canoes at the Smith River Trails Fieldale Canoe Access, put on our life jackets, grabbed a paddle, and listened to Brian for helpful instructions.

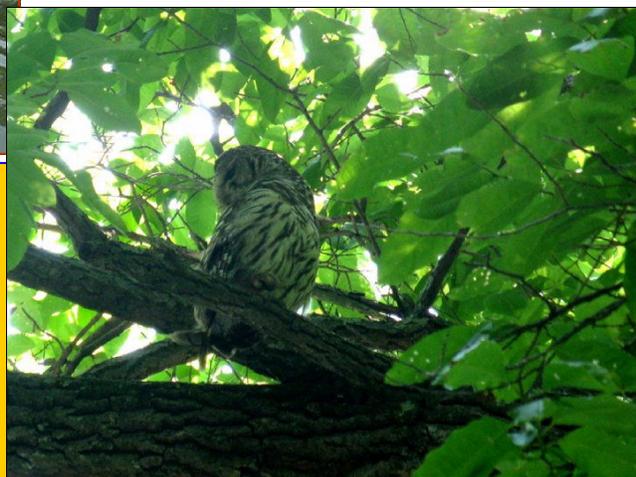
Below, there were lots of men to help the ladies to load the canoes down the access steps into the river.



Above, there were about 20 of us floating down the river. I got tired of paddling to catch up with everybody, as I would stop and gawk at flowers and wildlife and such.

Right, a barred owl not far from Lynwood County Club.

See next page for more photos.



Canoe Trip Photo Gallery (continued)



When we got closer to the reservoir, we noticed the banks were lined with clusters of blue flowers.



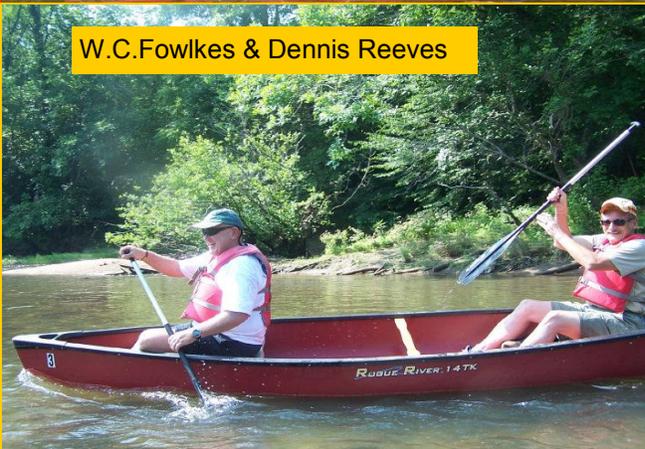
Upon closer inspection, I knew these to be called forget-me-nots. The five petaled blue flowers have yellow centers and short fuzzy leaves.



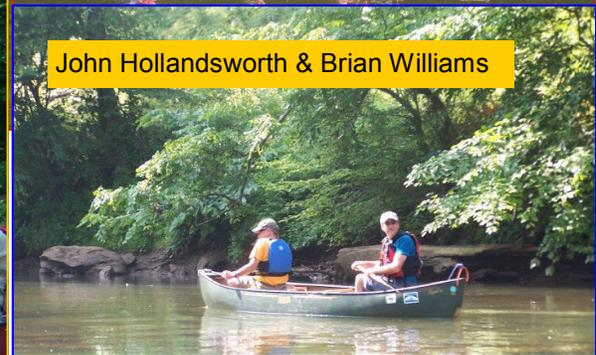
Christy & Tamara



Lora Coleman & Family



W.C.Fowlkes & Dennis Reeves



John Hollandsworth & Brian Williams



William & Terry Freeland



Rachael Wingfield & Sister



Canoe Trip Photo Gallery (continued)

We took out our canoes at the Doe Run Park canoe access.

We rested & picnicked at Doe Run Park. It was a good day!



CHAPTER CALENDAR OF EVENTS—July thru September 2010

July 7, 2010 6:00PM Chapter Board Meeting at Daily Grind.

July 19-23, 2010 Basic Training Course for Area Teachers at VMNH.**

July 24, 2010 Reptile Day at VMNH. **

July 31, 2010 9:00AM Chapter Meeting at Frank Wilson Park for Hike/Cleanup. **

August 5, 2010 Chapter Board Meeting at TBA.

August 17, 2010 VMN Basic Training Course Begins at VMNH.

August 26, 2010 6:00PM Chapter Meeting at TBA for picnic social with the new VMN Basic Training class.

September 2, 2010 Chapter Board Meeting at TBA.

September 16, 2010 Chapter Meeting at TBA for Wilderness First Aid.*

September 16-17, 2010 Invasive Species Conference at Northern Virginia 4-H Center & Smithsonian Conservation Center Front Royal VA.*

September 24, 2010 Wildlife Habitat “Train-the-Trainer” Advanced Workshop for Master Naturalists—8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Southwest VA Higher Ed Center in Abingdon (Washington County) Virginia. NO COST FOR THE WORKSHOP.*

* Denotes advanced training opportunity.

** Denotes volunteer opportunity.