



Virginia
Master
Naturalist

The Vine

The Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists

Quarterly Newsletter—Winter 2017-18 Edition

President's Message

As I look back on 2017, I am thankful for a number of people who stepped up to make a big difference for our chapter this year.

- Thank you, Dr. Moore, for stepping up to be our new advisor. I have appreciated your support and ideas. I am looking forward to another trip to Kittiewan next year as well as more Archaeology help days.
- Thank you, Ashby Pritchett, for stepping up to take on the newsletter, again. I love your ideas about interviewing people and look forward to the coming issues.
- Thank you, Eric Tichay, for running a successful

Basic Training class, as well as for planning a number of advanced training opportunities.

- Thank you to our graduated students for making the trip to the museum every week from places as far away as Greensboro and Floyd. I am looking forward to working with you in the coming years! I especially appreciate that two students, Ken Miller and Ivan Hiatt, completed both basic training and certification! Wow!
- Thank you to all the board members for helping run the chapter this year.
- Thanks to all the members for putting in your time

and energy this year. As of December 13th, we have logged 2,412 hours of volunteer service and 279 hours of continuing education. 11 folks have certified for 2018 and I think a few more may make it before the year is up. Thanks again for all you do!!

Congratulations are also in order, as this is our 10th anniversary as a Master Naturalist Chapter. The first class graduated in December of 2007. Lynn and Ashby Pritchett, Christy Deatherage and Gael Chaney were all part of the original class. Thanks to you for staying active for 10 years!!

Top photo from https://www.google.com/search?tbm=isch&q=winter+in+martinsville+va&chips=q:winter+in+martinsville+va,online_chips:jefferson+cir&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj08sC2_YrYAhXyQt8KHcmBDQgQ4IYILSgG&biw=1280&bih=647&dpr=1#imgrc=3Ez7PsNYarCPmM:

VMN logo obtained from <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/>.



Some of our Basic Training Course Graduates

From left to right, Joe Miller (Ken's son), Ken Miller, Lee Jarrett, Carey Westerman, Terri Cooke, Tiffany Morton, Janice Walker, Ivan Hiatt and Marlene Woods.

Pot Luck Dinner for Basic Training Course Graduates.

In lieu of an Annual Meeting, the Chapter chose December 5th, the last night of the current Basic Training Class, to host a Potluck Dinner event for our new graduates.

After dinner, Kathy Fell informed those gathered of Chapter priorities for 2018. Chapter dues were collected. Attendees were asked to fill out a written Survey to help Kathy and the Board chart its future course of action for the Chapter and its membership.

Graduates were encouraged to

attend future Chapter activities, and specifically to sign up for Chapter Committees. Volunteering to serve on one or more committees is one of the best ways to collect volunteer hours and to retain enthusiasm for Chapter activities.

Committees are (1) Outreach, (2) Basic Training, (3) Advanced Training, (4) Volunteer Service Projects, (5) Program, (6) Membership, (7) Hospitality, (8) Newsletter and (9) Historian. Committee duties are described in the Chapter Operating Handbook on our Volun-

teer Management System site under Administration-Newsletters/Documents.

Most of these committees are chaired by an experienced Board or Chapter member, but our Basic Training Course graduates are encouraged to select one or more committees to serve on. If you have not already signed up, contact Kathy Fell!

Current Committee volunteers spoke briefly on current events involving each committee, again soliciting assistance from

Top photo by Kathy Fell, taken on December 5, 2017 at Walker Lecture Hall, VMNH. The Volunteer Management System link is <https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>. Login is required to access site content.

And
so the
adventure
begins

The Vine

Winter 2017-18 Edition

Basic Training Course Graduates 10 .

Eric Tichay, Chair of the Basic Training Committee, has confirmed that ten individuals have completed the training requirements to be promoted to the Virginia Master Naturalist Member level. Each individual who successfully completes the training will receive a certificate indicating that he/she is now a "Virginia Master Naturalist Member".

Our new Master Naturalists are:

- Patricia Bentley
- Teresa Cook
- Sharon Bushnell
- Ivan Hiett
- Franklin (Lee) Jarrett
- Kenneth Miller
- Tiffany Morton
- Janice Walker

- Carey Westermann
- Marlene Woods

One of the prerequisites to successful completion of the Basic Training Course is delivery of a live presentation during Basic Training class. The current class gave their presentations on Tuesday, 28 November at VMNH.

A synopsis of each presentation follows:

Terri Cooke and Carey Westermann gave a presentation on "Dragonflies". Using skills obtained from "Save Our Streams" training, they completed a screening test for macroinvertebrates at Waqua Creek in Brunswick County, Virginia. Results returned an abundance of dragonfly nymphs, giving rise to the presentation, in which they described the design,

growth and unusual mating behavior of dragonflies, identifying them as "voracious, fearless predators", "indicators of clean water", "controlling the pest population", and "absolutely not harmful to humans".

Lee Jarrett spoke on "Virginia's Native Trout". The Brook Trout is the only native trout of Virginia. Lee described the optimal habitat in which it thrives (cleaner, colder water), and the danger of habitat degradation affecting its survival (silted streams and decreased food availability).

Patricia Bentley and Janice Walker created an interactive knowledge game for the audience, called "Virginia: Fact, Fiction, Fantasy and First Aid". The presenters proposed state-

And
so the
adventure
begins

The Vine

Winter 2017-18 Edition

Basic Training Course Graduates 10 .

(continued from previous page)

Tiffany Morton, Marlene Woods and Sharon Bushnell presented information on “Blue Ridge Aquaculture”, an environmentally-friendly business in Henry County, Virginia. Involved in the production of tilapia fish since 1993, using no hormones or antibiotics, and recycles 85% of water used in production. Blue Ridge Aquaculture raises and sells four million pounds annually. No processing is performed on site; the tilapia are shipped live in tank trucks.

Ivan Hiett spoke on “Wildcrafting Safety – Poisonous Plants and Drug Interactions”, pointing out that the therapeutic efficacy of a useful plant varies by its parts, by the season of the year in which it is taken, and upon the “phase of its cycle”. “Wildcrafting” involves collecting plants from their native habitat. Providing a handout explaining the active constituents in herbal medicines, he pointed out that many desirous plants have poisonous lookalikes. He suggested that plants

should be purchased or ordered by reference to its Latin name, noting that many different plants are sold by a “common name”. Purchasing by “common name”, you could receive an entirely different item than what you desired to acquire.

Ken Miller gave a presentation on “Identifying Three Wild Virginia Mushrooms and their Evil Twins”. He contrasted the structure, color, odor and location of the mushroom to differentiate (1) the Honey Mushroom vs. Deadly Galerina, (2) the Morel Mushrooms vs. Beefsteak Mushroom and (3) the Chanterelles vs. Jack O’Lantern Mush-



The Vine

Winter 2017-18 Edition



Chapter Volunteers Clear Civil War Site

In October, Master Naturalists were invited to two days of volunteer service and an overnight stay at Kittiewan Plantation in Charles City County Virginia. Kittiewan is a Tidewater Plantation house, built in the 18th century and is managed by the Archeological Society of Virginia.

Dr. Moore and I made it there on Friday, where we met up with Patrick O'Neill. The three of us hopped onto the "wagon" and headed off to the civil war trenches, armed with a long handled axe, hand saws and clippers. During the Civil War, the plantation was occupied by Union Troops. Afraid of being

cornered by the Southern army, they dug defensive trenches across the fields. Today, these trenches have been overgrown by forest. We were there to clear brush and small trees away, so people can see what remains of the trenches. We wore ourselves out, then returned to the Visitor Center for a look around and to check out the sleeping quarters on the 2nd floor. For dinner, we cooked foil dinners around an open fire and feasted on the large supply of Hickory nuts that had recently fallen to the ground. It was a great end to an interesting day.

The next morning we were joined by Lynn and Ashby Pritchett. We 're-armed', and headed back into the woods for a second day of clearing out brush. We made significant progress, both in removing brush and in wearing ourselves out. We headed back to the Visitor Center for lunch and a tour of the Plantation House.

I'm looking forward to a return trip to Kittiewan, possibly in the spring. I hope more chapter members will be able to join us. There are many projects that they could use our help with.

Kathy Fell

The "Virginia Master Naturalist Program Volunteer Handbook and Policy Guidelines" are located at http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/uploads/2/1/8/6/21860850/vmn_volunteerpolicyhandbook_2017.pdf .

Photo of Kittiewan Plantation house from Kathy Fell.



Virginia Master Naturalist Leadership Day

Four Board members attended the Virginia Master Naturalist Leadership Day events in December.

The purpose of Virginia Master Naturalist Leadership Day is to provide training and resources to increase the capacity of our local volunteer leaders. In 2017, four regional Leadership Days were held at which Michelle Prysby, Program Director, Tiffany Brown, Project Assistant, and Terri Keffert, Volunteer Coordinator, provided training on effective management of VMN chapters, strategies for decision-making and conflict resolution, and plans for creating and organizing impactful service projects.

Intended results of this

training are described in the VMN articles at <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/> :

In the short term, our project will increase volunteers' willingness to take on and stay in leadership roles, and it will increase their efficacy in those roles. In the long term, our project will result in more robust Virginia Master Naturalist chapters that are better at recruiting, retaining, and managing volunteers and partnerships so that they have more positive impacts on Virginia's woods, wildlife, and waters.

Tiffany Brown discussed Certification, Recertification, and Pin Procedures, and Form W-9 submission requirements. Important

guidelines are located on the VMN website at <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/volunteer-management.html> .

Terri Keffert explained that the VMN is not a 501 (c)(3) organization, and relies on the Virginia Tech Foundation as its arm for donation and financial operations. She informed attendees of Volunteer Management System updates coming in 2018, and explained that the Volunteer Enrollment Form is a contract that must be permanently retained. This form is located in the Risk Management section at <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/risk-management.html> .

Michelle Prysby discussed

Photo located on Virginia Master Naturalist web site at <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/> .



The Vine

Winter 2017-18 Edition

Master Naturalist Volunteers Needed for Adopt-a-Trail Program



Virginia has an amazingly large and diverse network of Birding and Wildlife Trails (VBWT). Most trails are in and around parks – state, city, county, or national parks – but they need not be. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has partnered with the Virginia Master Naturalists for help in managing this sprawling system (<http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/virginia-birding-and-wildlife-trail-adoption.html>). Our Southwestern Piedmont Chapter of the VMN has taken on the challenge of reviewing and updating the Birding and Wildlife Trails in our region as part of the Adopt-a-Trail Program. I chair

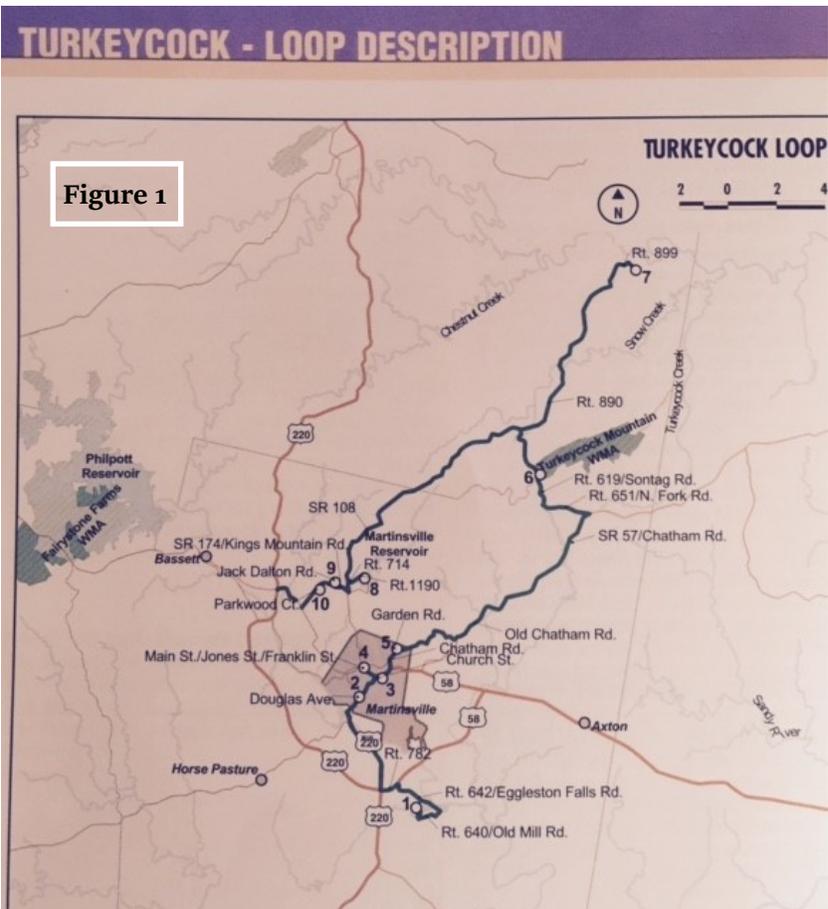
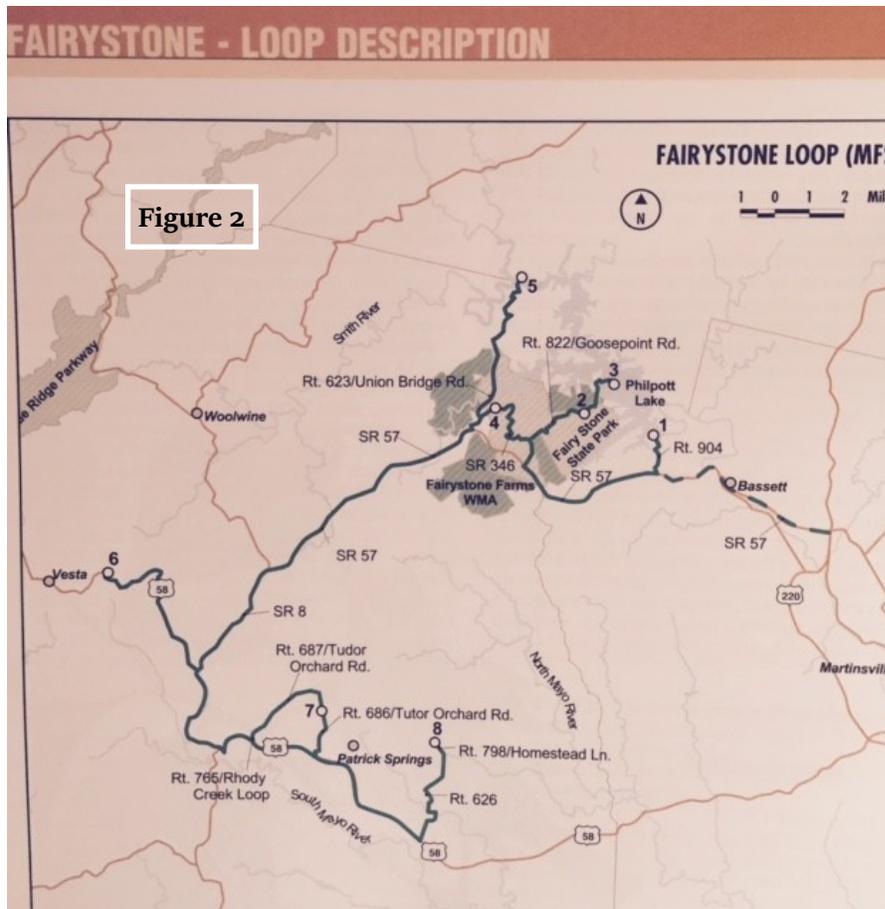


Figure 1

Figures 1 through 3 supplied by Noel Boaz. Images from DGIF



Phase I tasks are to: 1) review the signage at the site, 2) review and revise for accuracy the site's entry in VBWT Guidebook and webpage (<https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/vbwt/>), 3) make contact with the site's owner or manager to check accuracy of webpage data, and 4) note any major access issues at the site. Phase I reports for the five existing Birding and Wildlife Trails in Martinsville and southern Henry County (Fig.1) have been undertaken during 2017 by a team



The Chapter's goal for 2018 is for the members of the Volunteer Service Committee to complete the Phase I reports for the remaining five sites in northern Henry County on the "Turkeycock Loop" and the eight sites on the adjacent "Fairystone Loop" (Fig. 2). This ground work will map out the territory that VMN volunteers, who have completed the necessary advanced training, can visit and record seasonal observations on eBird.org and iNat-

Figures 1 through 3 supplied by Noel Boaz.. Image from DGIF website.



The Vine

Winter 2017-18 Edition

(continued from previous page)

Future plans include extending our Chapter's Adopt-A-Trail purview to the eponymous "Southwest Piedmont Loop" (Fig. 3), thus covering the headwaters of the

To get involved, active VMN members may sign up for the Volunteer Service Committee by emailing me via the VMN website or at ntboaz@earthlink.net. This is a great way to put your VMN Basic Training skills to good use, hone your skills as a field naturalist, meet your annual 40 hours of VMN service, and make a real contribution to improving the state's fantastic Birding and Wildlife Trail system, a truly awe-inspiring way to experience Vir-

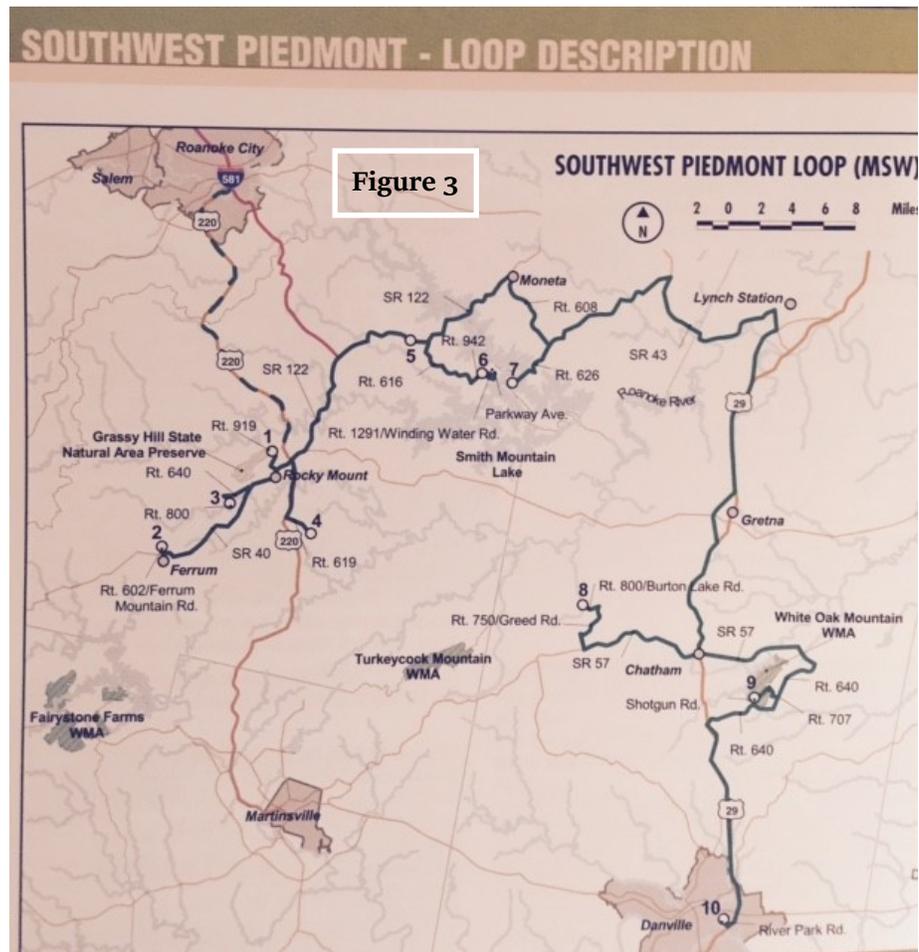


Figure 3

Figures 1 through 3 supplied by Noel Boaz.. Image from DGIF website.



Ken Miller reaps rewards of the VMN Basic Training Program

Ken Miller is a 2017 graduate of the Southwestern Piedmont Chapter Basic Training Course. Enjoy his personal journey of reminiscence and rediscovery of the natural world through our program.

Growing up in and around the Pocono Mountains of Northeastern Pennsylvania, I have fond memories as a youth spending days with my Grandfather trout fishing and hunting the forests and fields of that beautiful countryside. No trip with my grandfather was just spent "fishing" or "hunting". No that would not do at all. His depression era practicality would think it wasteful to merely enjoy a day on the water or in the field. No less than half of every trip was spent foraging for whatever the mountains could provide. Berries and mushrooms were regularly sought. Ground cedar was harvested by the plastic bag full and became

beautiful Christmas wreaths my grandfather made and sold. It was his Christmas savings fund and he relished foraging as much as anything.

I had lost my connection to that place, and that time, when I moved to Virginia. Suburban Richmond became my life for over 25 years. My 1/3 acre lot in Chesterfield County was worked and provided for the family via a small vegetable garden, a recirculating pond, brook combo that I cobbled together and some fruit trees that lived and occasionally fruited but just barely. Rarely did I get to enjoy the beauty of the Virginia countryside, and on the occasions I ventured out, it felt foreign. I didn't recognize many of the plants. I never heard of a Blue Catfish until I pulled one out of the James River at Drewry's Bluff. A nice Hispanic man fishing with his family told me in broken

English what that fish was and he was ecstatic when I offered it to him to keep/eat.

Too much traffic, too much retail therapy. I needed to get out. So in 2014 we bought a small farm in the Blue Ridge of Carroll County. Now this was more familiar. Its 55 degrees Fahrenheit at night in the middle of July! Yes, much more familiar. But I still didn't recognize my surroundings fully. I wanted to raise my family in the countryside and that meant I needed to go back to school and learn about this area, the flora and fauna. Could it feed me? What are these healing tools the Appalachian settlers and Native Americans used when they couldn't go to the Doc in a Box? Can I eat that or will it kill me?

"You should have a look at this" said my wife to me as she peered from behind the Enterprise newspaper of Stuart Virginia one summer afternoon. There was an adver-



The Vine

Winter 2017-18 Edition

Meet our Newest
Master Naturalists

Ken Miller

(continued from previous page)

The 2017 Southwestern Piedmont Chapter Basic Training Class of 2017 could not have a more diverse or exciting group if it tried. Retirees and working professionals, educators and recent college graduates, veterans and civilians. Someone in our group started to refer to us as a "Tribe". And a Tribe we were. Classmates were engaged, entertaining and our field trips were adventures. There was learning about Virginia's forests, plants, bird and geology. But we also learned about each other.

Now that the basic training is done, volunteers hours recorded and advanced training completed....what's next? For me, I really want to take what I've learned and apply it a service to the community. I felt it was important to become a Master Naturalist and obtain the certification so that what I share with the community will be deemed credible. I want to pursue interpretations as a Master Naturalist at Virginia State Parks. I may even consider a second ca-

reer doing this if it works out well and I enjoy the interactions.

Ken Miller
Master Naturalist Volunteer
(Class of 2017)



Ken Miller and his son Joe at the
VMNH Reptile Day event.
(Photo submitted by Ken Miller)

Upcoming Events

Southwestern Piedmont Chapter

January 2018—Go to Volunteer Management System (VMS) for more complete listing of events!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Xmas Bird Count First Day Hikes	2 Xmas Bird Count Paleo Help Day	3 Xmas Bird Count	4 Xmas Bird Count	5 Xmas Bird Count	6 Paleo Help Day
7	8	9 Paleo Help Day	10	11 VMNH 2nd Thurs Science Talk	12	13
14	15	16 Paleo Help Day	17	18	19 Ice Age Student Day	20 Ice Age Festival
21	22	23 Paleo Help Day	24	25 Board Meeting	26	27
28	29	30 Paleo Help Day	31			

February 2018—VMS calendar at <https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Archaeology Help Day	7	8 VMNH 2nd Thurs Science Talk	9	10 Archaeology Help Day
11	12	13 Archaeology Help Day	14	15	16 Great Backyard Bird Count	17 Great Backyard Bird Count
18 Great Backyard	19 Great Backyard	20	21	22	23	24 Bluebird Monitor-
25	26	27 Archaeology Help Day	28			

March 2018—Look for updated Listing of Events on VMS General Event Calendar!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Annual Awards Banquet	7	8 VMNH 2nd Thurs Science Talk	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Refer to General Events Calendar on the Volunteer Management System. The Volunteer Management System link is <https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm> . Login is required to access site content.