



Volume 31 No. 2

Summer 2010

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 19

Woodpecker Ridge Field Trip, "Ferns, Flowers & Butterflies."

Join Barry Kinzie for a foray through his private preserve near Troutville. Barry will share with us his family acreage. He is an accomplished naturalist. There will be a diversity of things to see. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Bojangles Restaurant at Daleville's Botetourt Commons, located off U.S. 220. Parking at Woodpecker Ridge is limited, therefore, we will carpool there. Bring a snack, bug spray, rain gear and sunscreen. There will be some walking, but with our lack of speed it should not be taxing. Call Butch Kelly at 384-7429 if you have a question.

August 7

BRWS Annual Picnic, Noon until 3:00 p.m. This year's picnic will be at 8564 Gravel Hill Road in Catawba. It will be hosted by Betty and Butch Kelly. Directions: Take Exit 141 off I81. Go north on Rt. 419 to the red light beside the Orange Market. Turn right onto Rt. 311. Go 7 miles to Rt. 785 (Blacksburg Rd). Turn left onto the Blacksburg Rd. Follow the Blacksburg Rd. for 9 miles. Turn right onto Rt. 650 (Gravel Hill Rd). Drive about 1 mile up the hill and look for the house number 8564 on a post and turn right. Go about 100 feet and turn right along the fence row. It is the only house along that lane. Bring a covered dish or dessert. Barbecue and drinks will be provided. Also, bring a folding chair. We will include a walk through a meadow and woods. Be prepared to walk if you like. RSVP 384-7429.

August 28

Paint Bank Field Trip. "Buffalo, Orchids and Roadside Flowers"

Join leader Butch Kelly at the Orange Market off Rt. 419 (Thompson Memorial Blvd. in Salem) at 9:00 a.m. This trip is always one of the most beautiful our chapter provides. We will travel to Paint Bank, VA. This trip features the beautiful mountains of Craig County. It will feature a wetland, roadside ditches and conclude with dinner at the Swinging Bridge Restaurant in Paintbank. Flowers commonly seen on this trip are Grass of Parnassus, Purple Fringless Orchid, cardinal flower and lots, lots more. Bring sunscreen, rain jacket, bug repellent and if you have boots you can wade in the wetland. (Lots can be seen if you don't choose to wade) There will be little walking and what walking we do is level. A light lunch or snack and a drink would be good. We should be back by 5:00 p.m. The trip is long, but well worth it. Contact Butch Kelly at 384-7429 if you have questions.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

What an exciting spring! This has been one of the best “springs” for this chapter that I can ever remember. We’ve had good programs, good field trips, several new memberships, and many visitors at our activities and an excellent plant sale. The purchasing and potting of plants for our annual wildflower sale helped generate some of this excitement. Also, the creation of our web site has brought lots of attention to our club. Your participation, your work and your excitement have been important to our success. THANKS TO ALL!!

We now need to be thinking about new officers for this fall. My two year term will end. I would ask that you give consideration to possibly serving. A nomination committee will be looking for candidates. If you choose to serve, do know that we will not leave you hanging by yourself—we will be there to help you!

I have given a couple programs (lectures and slides) to Master Gardeners this spring—one was in Rocky Mount and the other at the Brambleton Center. If others have given lectures or programs, please let me know for our annual report. Butch and Betty Kelly just completed leading the VNPS annual trip to Southwest Virginia. I have heard that it was very successful.

As the trees in the canopy and sub canopy and shrubs in our deciduous forest come into full leaf, the “spring wildflower” blooming season is winding down. From now on most of our flowering plants will be along roadsides, open fields and the forests’ edge where there is more light. Let’s get out and enjoy this phase of enjoying wildflowers!

Rich

BRWS News

The chapter has been real busy this spring. Here are some events we have been involved in. A big thanks goes out to all who participated.

Our chapter has grown by 17 members since May 2009. We have made \$2899 from our plant sale. We have donated \$50 to the “Flora of Virginia” project thanks to an out of town speaker who refused our honorarium. We had 6 field trips averaging 21 participants.

Our chapter members spoke to 4 groups totaling 95 people. One member led a walk at Mt. Rogers for 27 folks and another group from the Duke Gardens in North Carolina on a trip along the Blue Ridge Parkway in May. There were 12 folks on the trip.

The VNPS sponsored a 6 day trip to Southwest Virginia. It was led by Butch and Betty Kelly. Eighteen folks traveled through 8 counties and saw hundreds of flowers and many intriguing places.

Our chapter is always looking for folks to share their time and talents. Don’t be bashful.

MURDER HOLE CAVE IN CATAWBA

Betty Kelly

A group of 39 people ranging from preschoolers to seniors set off on an adventure on April 10, 2010. We met at the Catawba Community Center and carpooled to the property of Dan and Marian McConnell. Marian told the group about the “wild cave” on their property. It is a natural limestone cave. Sometime in the past the roof collapsed and the entrance is now eight stories deep. There are three levels in the cave which stays at 54 degrees year round. The cave is closed because of the “white nose syndrome” disease that is killing many bats. She then strolled through the woods with most of the group and some others went down the lane to discover spring ephemerals.

Among the blooms seen were red bud, golden ragwort, cat’s paw, large flowered bellwort, bird’s foot violet, columbine, blue cohosh, long spur violet, common blue violet, wild strawberry, star chickweed, cut-leaved toothwort, pennywort, large-flowered trillium, spring beauty, white violet, phlox, and spice bush. Others plants include may-apple, spotted wintergreen, bloodroot, trout lily, and putty root. The ferns seen include Christmas fern, ebony spleenwort and walking fern.

We traveled on to Rt. 779 near the Cement Plant and saw a tremendous display of Virginia bluebells. Tall phlox and spring beauty were, also, on display. It was a sunny day and a good time to share this wildflower adventure. Many participants in the group ended a great trip with dinner at the Homeplace Restaurant in Catawba. The trip inspired this poem.

For years and years stories of Murder Hole Cave have been told,
But leave it to Marian for them to be sold,
Her spelunking expertise was evident as we did hear,
When members and guests of the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society to
The cave stood near,
It was a wild cave made of limestone she said as she spoke to us from the edge,
One day the roof caved in and the entrance became eight stories deep on Gravely Ridge,
So that April day wildflower enthusiasts and friends looked into the hole, but could not descend.

Field Trips & Meetings

We have 2 field trips scheduled this summer so sign up and enjoy. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful area in which to botanize and enjoy. Both of the field trips are to unique places.

There will be no meetings of the BRWS until September. See the website www.brwfs.org or the fall newsletter for further details.

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*Rich Crites, President
(540) 774-4518*

*Butch Kelly, Editor
(540) 384-7429*

*Blue Ridge Wildflower Society
P.O. Box 20385 Roanoke, VA 24018*