



# Virginia Native Plant Society

Conserving Wild Flowers & Wild Places

July 22, 2015

400 Blandly Farm Lane, #2  
Boyce, VA 22620  
1-540-837-1600  
www.vnps.org

Dear Native Plant Lover,

Each year our board asks our members to fund a special project that furthers the Society mission. Your positive responses have helped us fund work to conserve wild flowers and wild places, true to the Society's motto. This year, we are emphasizing the second half of that guiding principle with a commitment to the protection of land. Our project this year is "Expanding and Protecting The Cedars, a Botanical Gem in Southwestern Virginia."

The Commonwealth's Department of Conservation and Recreation has the opportunity to purchase key additions to **The Cedars Natural Area Preserve**. The tracts contain several rare plant species, and even more may be discovered as the botanical inventory continues.

First, a bit of background on the preserve as it currently exists, the unique landscape it helps protect, and how the Society can make its mark by contributing to this expansion. The 1,773-acre preserve (a.k.a. The Cedars) is located west of Jonesville, in Lee County—in one of the most biogeographically significant areas of Virginia. Populations of 11 rare vascular plants, as well as several rare vertebrate and invertebrate species, are known from this area of relatively flat, rolling, limestone rock land. Additionally, several significant plant communities have been documented there, and important karst features dot the landscape. Of the botanical highlights, the globally rare Running Glade Clover (*Trifolium calcaricum*) and Yarrow-leaved Ragwort (*Packera millefolium*) stand out among many rarities. This remarkable clover is a true Cedars specialty; the only other known population is in central Tennessee.

The two tracts proposed for acquisition total a little more than 70 acres. The properties have not been subject to a thorough botanical inventory, but those areas explored in the early 1990s were found to contain at least three rare plant species: Wild Hyacinth (*Camassia scilloides*), Canada Bluets (*Houstonia canadensis*), and False-Aloe (*Manfreda virginica*). A population of Running Glade Clover (*Trifolium calcaricum*) grows less than 35 meters outside the tract boundaries meaning the species will likely be found on the site as well. Additional inventory of the property by DCR botanists is under way this season.

This marks an outstanding opportunity to expand The Cedars, improve its viability and integrity, and enhance DCR's ability to actively manage for the rare flora, fauna, and natural communities there. Threats to these natural heritage resources include habitat fragmentation, altered fire regime (i.e., fire exclusion), invasive species, and altered hydrology and impacts to karst systems generally. The targeted properties about a DCR tract to the south, making the proposed land purchases key to linking the patches of protected land in the preserve.

The cost of annexing these tracts to The Cedars is relatively small and the biological value great. At an estimated \$2,000 per acre, such tracts represent one of the best conservation deals in Virginia. To further the purchase of these properties, we have set a fundraising goal of \$20,000. Aside from contributing directly to the cost of 10 acres of the land, funds raised will enable DCR to leverage the other funding needed to complete the acquisition of the full 70 acres.

DCR has been protecting land at The Cedars for 25 years, but, given the size and significance of the area, much work remains. Please help conserve a unique piece of Virginia with your donation. For more information or to give online, visit our website at vnps.org.

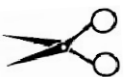
For the VNPS Board of Directors,

*Nancy Vehrs*

VNPS President

*Cathy Mayes*

VNPS Treasurer



## VNPS ANNUAL FUND APPEAL 2015

Please give generously to help expand and preserve **THE CEDARS!**

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

\$1,000    \$500    \$100    \$75    \$50    Other \$\_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Want to pay by credit card? Circle one: Discover   MasterCard...   Visa...   American Express

Card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **VNPS** & mail to: **VNPS The Cedars Fund Appeal, 400 Blandly Farm Lane #2, Boyce VA 22620.**

Thank you! VNPS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.