



# Virginia Native Plant Society

Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places

October 25, 2017

Dear Native Plant Lover,

Each year our board asks the membership to fund a special project that furthers the Society's mission. Given the enthusiasm for our 2015 effort to purchase additional land for The Cedars Natural Area Preserve, this year we are focusing again on the most basic conservation tool: land acquisition. Your contributions will support efforts by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage to protect rare species and ecosystems, creating a more resilient Natural Area Preserve system. Virginia's imperiled landscapes are not saved after a single effort. These are biological systems, and size is the key to making them sustainable for the long term. Natural Heritage staff are always exploring opportunities for purchasing land contiguous to preserves, but often the funds are lacking. Having funding in hand—even if only a small portion of the purchase price—can make the difference in obtaining the balance through grants or other means. Thus, every dollar VNPS contributes toward Heritage's Natural Area Preservation Fund not only helps underwrite land acquisitions, but will also enable Heritage to pursue these protection projects more efficiently. Many of us have visited a Natural Area Preserve. These irreplaceable landscapes are located throughout Virginia and feature the plants and animals we all enjoy. The properties surrounding or bridging these preserves become acquisition targets for several reasons, including the presence of rare species and communities, the need to buffer previously acquired tracts, and the ever-present wild card of opportunity. A few of the focus areas now receiving attention by Heritage demonstrate the diversity of opportunities we can help them pursue:

- Additions to Antioch Pines Natural Area Preserve are slated for protecting rare plants, providing buffer lands for prescribed burns, and allowing for the continued restoration of Longleaf Pine—once the dominant tree over vast areas in the Coastal Plain. Centuries of intensive harvesting and mismanagement have left only a few core areas to work with, making preserve expansion an urgent need. VNPS trips to Antioch Pines and neighboring Blackwater Ecological Preserve have provided a glimpse of how Longleaf can once again dominate on a grand scale in its old Virginia stronghold.
- In the southern Piedmont, Difficult Creek Natural Area Preserve and its immediate surroundings harbor a unique assemblage of species in a highly modified landscape. Difficult Creek has also hosted a number of VNPS field trips, showcasing the extraordinarily diverse flora, including a striking species (Tall Barbara's-buttons, *Marshallia legrandii*) known *from only one other place on earth*. Urgent needs for prescribed burning here mirror those at Antioch Pines, and other rare plant populations are in need of purchase and protection. Exciting discoveries have been made many times over as the preserve has grown and the renewing effects of fire have encouraged species to reveal themselves.
- West of the Blue Ridge numerous properties are on the radar, many of them already destinations for the plant enthusiast. Some of particular interest are the rich hardwood slopes of Red Rocks Natural Area Preserve with their displays of spring wildflowers, the odd and fascinating flora of Shenandoah Valley sinkhole ponds at Mount Joy and Deep Run Ponds natural area preserves, the continuing effort to preserve the extensive Cedars landscape—benefited by our 2015 fund-raiser.

This list of targets is ambitious, but half measures will not keep our natural heritage intact. Please consider contributing to this continuing effort. DCR has been protecting land in Virginia for decades, but given the size and diversity of the state, much work remains. Please help conserve a piece of Virginia with your donation. For more information or to give online, visit our website at [www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org).

For the VNPS Board of Directors,

Nancy Vehrs, President

**400 Blandly Farm Lane, #2, Boyce, Virginia 22620, 540-837-1600, [www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org)**

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## VNPS ANNUAL FUND APPEAL 2017

Please give generously to SUPPORT CREATING RESILIENCY IN NATURAL AREA PRESERVES!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:  \$1,000  \$500  \$100  \$75  \$50  Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

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Make checks payable to VNPS and mail to: Support Creating Resiliency in Natural Area Preserves, 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.