

New River News

August 2019

New River Chapter, VNPS

Fall/Winter Programs

Please mark your calendars now. **ALL** of our meetings for fall/winter 2019 will be on the **2nd Tuesday of each month and start at 7 pm**. Keep in mind we do not hold a meeting in January. We will be meeting at the **Karr Activity Center** which is located at 2603 Warm Hearth Drive in Blacksburg. Drive past the Village Center for about .3 of a mile and you will see a sign for Karr. Turn left and park in that parking lot.

We welcome any suggestions for topics or speakers for next spring. Please contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com.

September 10 – Tree Islands at Alpine Zones of Glacier National Park, Montana (Dr. Lynn Resler)

Dr. Resler is in the Geography Dept. at Virginia Tech. She has research sites scattered around the U.S., including in the Dolly Sods area of West Virginia. Her talk for us will focus on research at Glacier National Park. Clusters of trees surrounded by a dissimilar type of vegetation are known as ‘tree islands’. Vegetation patterns at ecotones, including alpine treelines, are often comprised of tree islands. In this talk she will examine the flora, biodiversity, and pattern–process relationships of tree islands at alpine treelines in Glacier National Park, Montana, where trees are close to their environmental limits.

October 8 - Stroubles Creek Restoration Project (Dr. W. Cully Hession)

We have been hearing about a Stroubles Creek restoration project for a few years now, so we decided to have a program about it. A cooperative of four different entities is working together to try to improve the quality of the creek. Dr. W. Cully Hession (Biological Systems Engineering at VT) heads the group, which is called the Stroubles Creek Improvement Partnership (SCIP).

He will discuss their efforts, including the StREAM Lab, about 85 acres of land along Stroubles Creek that is the current focus. They are just now starting to address the issue of invasive species. Dr. Hession will tell us how NPS members can help.

November 12 - ReFraming the Ditch:

Considering the importance and application of native plants as an aesthetic watershed management tool

Nicole Hersch studies how native plants can be used to improve water quality and provide habitat, while meeting our aesthetic landscaping needs. Her thesis work at VT applied Doug Tallamy's research

on the presence of lepidoptera on woody species to green streets, which are roadside drainage corridors at the top of the watershed. She currently manages a native plant propagation program at Virginia Tech in partnership with Stroubles Creek Coalition and works as a Regional Planner for the New River Valley Regional Commission, managing the New River Valley Watershed Roundtable.

December 10 - Learning from Each Other

Each December we invite members and nonmembers to take a few minutes to share something they think will be of interest to other plant lovers. It can be photos from a trip, an interesting website or app, a new book, etc. There is no schedule. We just take turns. Even if you have nothing more advanced than the old 2x2 slides, you can still join in because we have a projector that can handle them.

Fall/Winter Outings

Why is this list so short? We can only schedule outings when we have volunteers to lead them. Walks can even take place in the winter to id trees. Think about a favorite place of yours ie. your own land or a neighbors, one of the county parks, a Nature Conservancy park, a state park or natural area, or a federal area. Contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com

August 24 – Wildflower walk at Deborah Hamilton's property (see details in Events section)

Volunteer projects and Outreach Programs

The mission of the VNPS is to save wildflowers and their habitat in Virginia. To this end our chapter is spreading the word to the public by various means. Our monthly meetings are open to the public. We have donated copies of the Flora of Virginia to our local libraries and have contributed money to the digital version of the book.

In the coming months, Brenda Graff will provide information on how chapter members can volunteer with local projects at pollinator gardens and with invasive plant removal. And how we can partner with local organizations ie. Virginia master naturalists and public schools and libraries to give presentations, lead hikes or offer other help.

If you know of a local organization that is interested in knowing more about wildflowers or native habitat, please let Brenda Graff (graff_brenda@hotmail.com) know before April 1 and she will develop a list of these organizations and pass them along to the chapter members.

So far this year the chapter has had outreach programs at the National Forest Appreciation day on June 29, the SEEDS nature center spring festival in Blacksburg on April 27, annual conference of the Virginia society of Ornithology on May 3 and Heritage Festival day on August 24. As a result we have had interest from several members of the public who have been added to the list-serve.

Just Around the Corner: Board of Director Elections

Terms for all three board of directors are up in October. Our current officers are: David Darnell and David Jones. They have served their two years and we need fresh blood to give suggestions on what the chapter could be doing. The board meets twice a year, usually in January and July, which is not that much of a commitment. So please consider becoming a member of the board of directors. Let Brenda Graff (graff_brenda@hotmail.com) know if you are interested in helping since the fall election for them will be at the October 8 chapter meeting.

Fall Picnic and Plant Sale on September 17

We will once again have a potluck picnic at Wong Park (the least known park in Blacksburg) located at 303 Wilson avenue. There is no sign at the entrance but it is on the left side of the road just before it appears to dead end. This year it will be held on Tuesday, September 17 from 4 to 6 pm. Both members and friends are invited.

The picnic will be located in the shelter to the right of the of the parking lot. Please bring a dish to share. Please be kind to the environment and bring your own plate, utensils and glass. We will have some disposable items in case you forget. Drinks will be provided.

This year for the first time we will have our first annual “Fall is for Planting Native Plants” plant sale after the picnic. One of our members, Carol Schwobel, will dig up some excess wildflowers from her garden and offer them for sale to the chapter members. She will have spiderwort and celendine poppy in pots for either \$2, \$3 or \$4, and bare root mayapple and wild ginger ready to plant for \$1 per node/root cluster. So bring your cash and stock up on plants that will make you smile next spring. **(Plants are free to current and future Chapter Board members!)** Plants have been responsibly propagated and not gathered from the wild.

All of the money for this plant sale will go into the chapters coffers. Board members will listen to what the members would like the money to be used for, possibly towards funding educational grants to establish local pollinator gardens. If this sale goes well, next year we may broaden selling to the public like the Blue Ridge wildflower chapter and the master gardener’s do.

After the picnic and plant sale, if anyone is interested, you are welcome to visit the flower meadows below the shelter. David Darnell will be available to identify the fall flowers in bloom. He is also working on a bulletin board to display at the park in the near future.

Membership figures as of June 30, 2019

Last year at this time, we had a total of 72 members. This year we have 80 members so far. We have had 19 new members join during 2019 which is great. As expected over half live in Montgomery county with smaller amounts in Bland, Carrol, Floyd, Giles, Pulaski, and Wythe (the seven counties that comprise our chapter area). Other counties include Roanoke, Craig, Franklin, Albermarle, Fairfax, Rockbridge, and Richmond. Twenty eight percent are also Virginia master naturalist members and an unknown amount also belong to the NRV bird club and the NRV master gardeners. So there is a lot of overlap between these four clubs.

Events for August thru Dec 2019

Monday, August 12 – Master naturalist nature hike at Cherokee Flats, 9 am to 12:00

Meeting time: 9:00 a.m. at the Food Lion on North Main St. Blacksburg.

Bring a lunch, water, bug repellent, boots to get a little wet.

This area is located in Giles County. Cherokee Flats is on the way to Glen Alton, clearly marked with a sign and hard to miss, about 11 miles on the left on Rt 635.

We will caravan along Rt. 635 and make several stops to see cotton grass, spotted coralroot, Bentley's coralroot, fringed orchid, sundew, and cardinal flower to name a few.

Leader is Butch Kelly. More details can be see at: <http://gilescounty.org/glenalton.html>

Saturday, August 24 – Heritage day festival 10 am to 3 pm

One of our members, Beth Umberger, is in charge of the pollinator garden at the Montgomery county museum of art and hisory. She would welcome anyone that would either like to sit at our display and talk about our chapter or help her show off the garden. Any amount of time would be appreciated.

Please contact her at either 540-382-1580 or fredandbeth@verizon.net for more information on how to volunteer for this event.

The museum is located at 300 Pepper Street in Christiansburg. This year the main activities will be on East Main Street but there will be a shuttle bus to the museum so there may be fewer visitors there this year.

More details about the 2019 Heritage Day can be found at <https://www.nextthreedays.com/FeaturedEventDetails.cfm?E=520398>

Saturday, August 24 – wildflower walk at Deborah Hamilton's 12:30 pm to 2 pm

One of our new members, Deborah Hamilton, has invited the chapter to visit her 28 acre property in

Christiansburg along Falling Branch Creek where she grows wildflowers (both cultivated and uncultivated) and has a certified wildlife habitat called Ginger Hill. There are lots of butterflies and birds too along with cohosh, wild hydrangea and maidenhair fern along the roadway.

It will start at 12:30 pm with a light luncheon at her house followed by an exploration of her field, creek side and roadside. Call or email Deborah Hamilton at 540-613-0975 or dshamilt@vt.edu if you will be attending so she has an estimate of people for the light luncheon.

If you are unable to attend, she is most eager to host any members (individually or as a group) at a convenient time to both herself and yourself.

Bring bug spray, hat, water. Binoculars, single scope, and/or loop will be useful. There are walking paths in the field and, in general, this is easy terrain to navigate, but a walking stick is always prudent.

Wednesday, September 4 – volunteering at Pandapas Pond pollinator garden, 8:30 am to 11 am

Barbara Walker (contact her at 540-577-9334 or brwalker@earthlink.net) of the Virginia master naturalists has been the coordinator for this pollinator garden in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. You can either adopt a bed or come when you like. Bring gardening tools to weed, plant or move mulch. You will learn about native wildflowers and pollinators and the many birds and insects found there. Go three miles north of Blacksburg on route 460. Turn left across from SR 621 (Craig Creek Road) into Pandapas Pond Day. Follow the road until you get to the parking lot at the very end. Go to the right of the bulletin board and walk about ¼ mile. She will have volunteer sessions every Wednesday through October 16. There are lots of other trails and the pond to visit while you are there.

September 9 and ongoing dates – Volunteer at the Hahn garden on the VT campus

Volunteers are needed on Monday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 pm or on Thursday mornings from 10 am to 12 pm. Meet the horticulturist at the pavilion at 200 Garden Lane. Both native flowers and exotics are grown there.

Tuesday, September 10 – monthly chapter meeting

Tuesday, September 17 – fall potluck picnic and plant sale (see article earlier in the newsletter for details)

Friday thru Sunday, September 27-29 - VNPS annual conference, Front Royal

Did you know you don't need to be a VNPS member to go to this conference? That's because your extra conference fee will make you one! There will be lots of terrific nature topics through field trips and lectures. I always learn and see many new ideas and meets lots of great friends. For details and to register visit: <http://https://vnps.org/annual-meeting-2019-registration/>

Tuesday, October 8 – monthly chapter meeting

Saturday, October 5– Hokie bugfest, 10 am to 5 pm

The chapter has had an exhibit there for several years. More details will be provided in the future on how you can volunteer but to get general details about the event itself go to:

https://www.ento.vt.edu/4-H_Entomology/hokiebugfest.html

Saturday, October 19 – Going Native symposium, 9 am to 4 pm

The Central Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association is proud to announce the second annual Central Shenandoah Valley Garden Symposium! This year's speakers include: Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*; Heather Holm, author of *Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide*; Ian Caton of Wood Thrush Native Plant Nursery; and Kevin Conrad of the U.S. National Arboretum. This event promises to provide both a fun and informative focus on the important role of native plants in our everyday life, preserving native plants, insect and animal species, and how to maximize the use of native plants in your landscape.

Registration is \$65 for the general public and includes lunch.(before Aug 31, limited seating.)

Location: **Blue Ridge Community College, Plecker Center: 1 College Lane, Weyers Cave, VA.** For more details visit: <https://csvmga.org/event/central-shenandoah-valley-garden-symposium-going-native-3/>

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