



Newsletter

New River Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society

February 2012

Stadium Woods Gets Temporary Reprieve

The preservation of Stadium Woods, a 14-acre tract of old-growth oak forest located behind Lane Stadium on the Virginia Tech campus, has been the focus of an intense letter-writing and petition drive over the last few months, and a key concern of our chapter. Along with several other local conservation organizations, we donated funds last Fall for interpretive signage that would educate the public about the diversity and value of this area. Thus, we were quite surprised to find out only a few weeks later that about half of the woodland was being considered for the site of new indoor football practice facility. Thanks to Jeff Kirwin, Rebekah Paulson and the many people who signed the online petition, wrote letters to the Roanoke Times and Virginia Tech officials, the project has been referred to a committee of constituents for more careful evaluation of its environmental impact, with a report due Vice-President Sherwood Wilson by June 1st.

While the letter-writing campaign to the Board of Visitors has been temporarily suspended, as this item is no longer on the agenda of their March meeting, we strongly urge people to continue spreading the word about preserving this important resource. If you have not already done so, please sign the online petition (www.ipetitions.com/petition/vtstadiumwoods). Our chapter is sponsoring a field trip to Stadium Woods on Tuesday, May 8th; please encourage anyone interested in preserving this rich biological and educational resource to come along. Meet in the parking lot at the south end of Lane Stadium at 5:30 PM.

Chapter Campaign for Flora Project

As most of you know, the new *Flora of Virginia* is nearing completion and is scheduled to be published this Fall. Several of our members have donated generously to this important project, and our chapter has thus far contributed \$200.00. Donors of \$1,000 or more (cumulatively) by May 1st, 2012 will be listed in the first edition of the *Flora* and receive a complimentary copy. To show the New River chapter's support for the *Flora*, I would like to challenge our members and supporters to collectively donate \$800.00 through our Chapter so that we can be listed among the \$1,000 donors. Please bring a check made out to VNPS-New River

Chapter and marked "Flora project" to an upcoming meeting or mail to our Treasurer, Carl Hansen – 500 Harvey St., Radford, VA 24141. Thank you for supporting the Flora of Virginia project—250 years in the making!

Meetings

We meet at 7 pm in the Virginia Tech Greenhouse Classroom, located on the campus in the red-brick building just west of the traffic circle on Washington Street. Parking is available on the street or next to the green houses.

Tuesday, February 14. *The Mountain Treasures of Virginia*, a video presentation by Sherman Bamford about areas in the Jefferson Forest that have been identified as the wildest and least-roaded tracts remaining in Virginia.

Tuesday, March 13. *Use of Fire on Natural Area Preserves in Virginia*, Ryan Klopf, Regional Steward with the Division of Natural Heritage. He oversees many natural area preserves in our area, including the Poor Mountain Preserve where piratebush grows, and Pedlar Hills Preserve in Shawsville, home to several rare plants. To read about the natural area preserve system, go to the VA Division of Natural Heritage website and click on the Natural Area Preserves link.

Tuesday April 12. *Using Geologic and Topographic Clues in Botanical Exploration*, Philip Prince.

Saturday, June 2, 11:30 am. Annual picnic at the home of Carl Hansen, 500 Harvey St., Radford, phone: 639-0625. Bring a potluck dish to share, drinks will be provided. Afterwards, we will go for a wildflower walk in nearby Wildwood Park.

Field Trips

Saturday, April 7, 10 am. Wildwood Park in Radford. Meet at the entrance off Main St, near National Bank. Leader Gary Cote, email: gcote@radford.edu.

Saturday, April 14, 9:30 am. Blake Preserve Walk. A wildflower walk to a new Nature Conservancy area. It consists of a sparkling creek (Mill Creek), waterfalls and wildflowers. Bring sturdy shoes and a bag lunch. The walk will be preceded by a brief talk about the history of Mill Creek. This is part of series

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of programs featured by the Catawba Landcare group. Directions from Blacksburg are as follows: Follow Roanoke Street off Main St. and continue on to Harding Ave and Catawba Rd. Rt. 785. It is on the left off Rt. 785. There will be signs. Mill Creek Rd. is 5.5 miles from the corner of Main and Roanoke Streets in Blacksburg. Contact Butch Kelly 384-7429 if there are questions. The hike will be from 10 am to 1:30. Due to limited parking, we will carpool, meeting at 9:30 am in Wong Park, 303 Wilson Ave. in Blacksburg.

Saturday, April 14, from 1 pm to 2:30 pm.

Wildflower Walk at Claytor Lake St. Park, Mary Rhoades, leader. Directions: Take I-81 South to Exit 101, go up the ramp and turn LEFT on to State Park Road. Go about two miles and you enter the state park. Continue to the Contact Station where you will have to pay a parking fee (\$4.00/car on weekends). Go on down the road to the fork, and make a right. Then turn LEFT into the marina parking lot which is the starting point for the walk. Mary Rhoades, email: mrhoades@vt.edu; phone: 674-1294.

Saturday, April 28, 9:30, Falls Ridge Preserve. The New River Valley and Blue Ridge Wildflower Societies will cohost a wildflower walk at the Falls Ridge Preserve at 10:00 am. This is a spectacular area featuring many spring ephemerals, waterfalls and intriguing geology. It is a natural treasure in our own back yard. John Ford will be the leader. John has a keen eye and is very knowledgeable botanist. Wear sturdy shoes. A bag lunch would also come in handy. Contact John at 951-1604 if there any questions. Meet at the south end of the Blacksburg Square (1301-1425 S. Main St.) parking lot, at 9:30.

Saturday, May 5, 9 am, Glen Alton. Organized by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation and led by David Darnell. Meet at Blacksburg Community Center. Registration fee \$10/\$20, call Blacksburg Recreation at 540-961-1135 before May 3.

Tuesday, May 8, 5:30, Stadium Woods. Meet in the parking lot at the south end of Lane Stadium..

Saturday, May 19, 10 am Outing to Crystal Springs Park in Wytheville. We will explore a new park of 1800 acres just outside the town of Wytheville. A local guide will meet us there. To read about the area, go to: www.rec.wytheville.org. On the list at the left side of the page, click on "Parks and

Shelters." When the next page comes up, click on "Crystal Springs Park." Driving directions are on the website.). Bring water and lunch. There are pit toilets at the park, but no water source. The road is unpaved after you leave the town limits of Wytheville, but in good shape.

To carpool from Blacksburg: Meet at the parking lot at the far end of the First & Main Shopping Center in time to leave at 9 am. Directions to that parking lot -Go out S. Main St. from Blacksburg past Kroger's, and turn right at the stoplight at Marlinton St. (across from the Red Carpet Inn). You will enter a large parking lot. To carpool from the Radford/Dublin area, contact Mary Rhoades, email: mrhoades@vt.edu, phone: 674-1294

VNPS Florida Trip, March 25-31, 2012

The cost of the trip is \$675.00 and includes lodging (double occupancy), lunches, guides, admission fees and a donation of \$150 to VNPS.

The trip itinerary begins in the town of Marianna, about 1 hour and 10 minutes from the Tallahassee airport. While staying in Mariana we will be guided for a couple of days by the eminent botanist Loran Anderson, professor emeritus at Florida State University in Tallahassee. Here is some information about him: <http://www.bio.fsu.edu/faculty-anderson.php>

We will also visit Appalachian Bluffs and Ravines, a Nature Conservancy property south of Marianna that is adjacent to Torreya State Park, which we will also see. The Bluffs and Ravines is a Nature Conservancy property, and we will have a briefing by the director and a tour of the site.

The northern part of the tour is on upland environments. When we leave Marianna for the last time, we will venture in to lower lands in the Appalachian National Forest. There will be a combination of roadside botany and some short walks to see a multitude of plants. We'll be staying in Appalachian at the Best Western Inn. We will also see a dune habitat on St. George Island and for the lucky 13, there is a boat tour of the Appalachian Basin. We're sorry the boat only holds that many, but there are other places to botanize, and the new museum related to the estuary is a gem.

Become a Member

The New River Chapter is a member of the Virginia Native Plant Society. The Society is a nonprofit organization of individuals who share an interest in Virginia's native plants and habitats. The Society and its chapters seek to further the appreciation and conservation of this priceless heritage. To join, visit our web page at vnps.org. For information about our chapter, contact David Darnell, gary_david@verizon.net, 1607 Grove Ave., Radford. 24141 Tel.: (540) 731-4341