

# *The* *Leaflet*

## Piedmont Chapter Annual Meeting

WINTER 2023

The 2023 Annual Meeting was held at The Oak Spring Garden Foundation Pavilion in Upperville, arranged by Charlotte Lorick. After attendees ate the lunches that they had brought and desserts provided by the chapter board members, president Mitzi Fox reviewed the chapter's accomplishments and handed out grant checks for projects in Fauquier County (see page 2). Several door prizes were given out. Then the officers and board for the coming year were elected (see the box at the bottom left of page 2). Then the group went outside where Charlotte showed the native plant garden they are creating.







The Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS), founded as the Virginia Wildflower Society in 1982, is a non-profit organization of people who share an interest in Virginia's wild plants and habitats and a concern for their protection.

The Piedmont Chapter is a sub-group of VNPS in the northern point of Virginia east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It includes Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper, Rappahannock, Warren, Clarke, and Frederick counties.

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Editor **Richard Stromberg**  
[richsybi@gmail.com](mailto:richsybi@gmail.com)

*The Leaflet* can be seen online in color at  
[www.vnps.org/piedmont](http://www.vnps.org/piedmont)

The Chapter's email address is [piedmontvnps@gmail.com](mailto:piedmontvnps@gmail.com)

#### OFFICERS

**Emily Southgate** *President*  
[ewbsouthgate@gmail.com](mailto:ewbsouthgate@gmail.com)  
**Mitzi Fox** *Vice President*  
[fox57va@gmail.com](mailto:fox57va@gmail.com)  
**Sally Anderson** *Treasurer*  
[rccsca@comcast.net](mailto:rccsca@comcast.net)  
**Kristin Zimet**, *Secretary*  
[kristinzimet@yahoo.com](mailto:kristinzimet@yahoo.com)

#### DIRECTORS

**Ed Clark**  
[edwardalbertclark@gmail.com](mailto:edwardalbertclark@gmail.com)  
**Paula Conrow**  
[paulaconrow@gmail.com](mailto:paulaconrow@gmail.com)  
**Phil Daley**  
[pedaley@verizon.net](mailto:pedaley@verizon.net)  
**Natalie Izlar**  
[natalie.izlar@gmail.com](mailto:natalie.izlar@gmail.com)  
**Ed LeGrand**  
[edmundlegrand@gmail.com](mailto:edmundlegrand@gmail.com)  
**Charlotte Lorick**  
[charlotte.lorick@osg.org](mailto:charlotte.lorick@osg.org)  
**Laurie Denker MacNaughton**  
[Laurie@middleburgreverse.com](mailto:Laurie@middleburgreverse.com)  
**Mary Keith Ruffner**  
[cootehillfamr@aol.com](mailto:cootehillfamr@aol.com)

## Winners of VNPS Piedmont's 2023 Grants by Mitzi Fox

Our 2023 Grant was made possible by Emily and Tim Faltemier, owners of Three Fox Vineyards & Brewery in Delaplane. They are enthusiastic supporters of native wildflower growth and preservation, particularly in Fauquier County, as evidenced by the plantings at their Winery. After careful evaluation the impressive grant proposals we received, we made awards to the following organizations:

### Weston Foundation (Warrenton Antiquarian Society (WAS)).

(<https://www.historicwestonva.org/>) The Grant funds will support identification, documentation, and pamphlets/brochures on Weston's native plant population. Weston is a very interesting historic farmhouse and property in Fauquier County. It is home of the Warrenton Antiquarian Society and adjacent to the Weston Wildlife Management Area (<https://dwr.virginia.gov/wma/weston/>). Our initial flora surveys of this property revealed a wide range of species, providing an excellent opportunity for education and sharing with Weston's many visitors.



### Fauquier County Parks and Recreation.

The grant will support interpretive signage for the amazing variety of native plants at the new Riverside Preserve, along the Rappahannock River near Orlean. The County already offers nature programs and classes at this site which provide a great conduit for native plants information. Several trails exist and others are planned, which will strive to balance both access to *and* preservation of these valuable native species.



Interpretive signs will be a fantastic addition which will support the County's efforts at this amazing site.

(<https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments-h-z/parks-and-recreation/parks/riverside-preserve>)

### Clifton Institute.

For some time now Clifton has been working hard to be a source of hyperlocal native plant seeds for our area. They have put in an astounding amount of effort and we are thrilled to see them have success,



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## Winners of VNPS Piedmont's 2023 Grants (continued)

including hosting a plant sale late this past summer. To support their efforts, we are providing funds to build a much-needed shade structure. We hope the weather is more cooperative next year, but having more shade will be a help. (<https://cliftoninstitute.org/>).

Congratulations to all our winners! And we are proud to say we will offer another Grant this coming year, thanks to the generosity of the Faltemier's and the amazing response to our 2023 Grant. Stay tuned!

## The Wonders of Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve Mitzi Fox

On a sunny morning in early September, a group of nature enthusiasts gathered at Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve in Winchester, Va., to embark on a walk led by Shenandoah University Professor Emeritus of Environmental Studies Woody Bousquet, a longtime expert on this location. His deep understanding of this Preserve's flora and fauna was evident as he pointed out the many plant species that make this ecosystem so unusual. A spur at mile 4.25 of Winchester's Green Circle Trail provided the perfect route to explore this Preserver's rich biodiversity and unique geology.

This array of plant species and wildlife thrive in the calcareous muck fen. It is largely ground-water fed and has cool temperatures, high pH, and calcium-rich soils, and supports many diverse habitats. The Preserve has over 300 plants species, 20 of which are on the Virginia Rare Plants list, and two of those rare species are found nowhere else in Virginia. You will find some plants more typical of Northern climates due to the cooler groundwater temperatures. Over 180 bird species live in this 25-acre Preserve!

As we walked our guide also explained the complex geology of the region, including the important role of karst landscapes in shaping these wetlands. The unlaying rock formation is the Conococheague formation from the upper Cambrian period about 500 million years ago. Karst landscapes are formed by the dissolution of soluble rocks, such as limestone, creating underground drainage systems and sinkholes.

This first Preserve in Winchester was formed by impressive cooperation between developers and the community starting when development of this area was just beginning.

From the Winchester website:

Efforts of Shenandoah University's environmental studies students and faculty to promote the Abrams Creek Wetlands...helped to prompt residential developers to donate 10 ha (24.7 ac) of the wetlands and portions of surrounding uplands to the city as open space. The Winchester City Council dedicated this property as the city's first formally protected natural area in October 2013. ...owners of wetland and adjacent upland tracts in the county have offered buffer zones to help reduce the impacts of future...development.

My favorite plant was Spotted Joe-pye-weed. While common in the North, it is rare in Virginia.





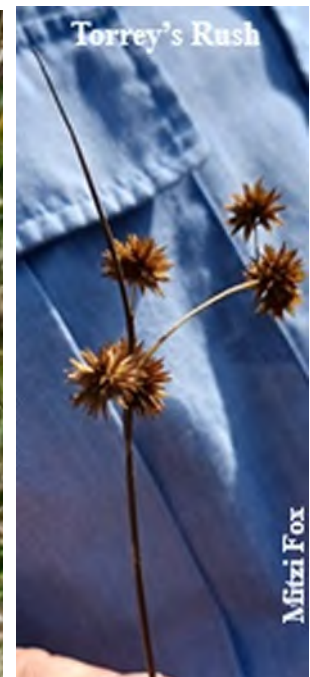


## The Wonders of Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve (continued)

Among the countless plants we saw on our walk:

Spotted Joe-pye-weed ( <i>Eutrochium maculatum</i> )	Water Horsetail ( <i>Equisetum fluviatile</i> )
Canada Golden Rod ( <i>Solidago canadensis</i> )	Awl-fruit Sedge ( <i>Carex stipata</i> )
Knotted Rush ( <i>Juncus nodosus</i> )	Swamp Thistle ( <i>Cirsium muticum</i> )
Dark Green Bulrush sedge ( <i>Scirpus atrovirens</i> )	Virginia Mountain Mint ( <i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i> )
Torrey's Rush ( <i>Juncus torreyi</i> )	Dudley's Rush ( <i>Juncus dudlei</i> )
Perplexing Tick Trefoil ( <i>Desmodium perplexum</i> )	Willowleaf Aster ( <i>Symphotrichum praealtum</i> )
Boneset (Boneset) ( <i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i> )	Marsh Skullcap ( <i>Scutellaria galericulata</i> )

Overall, our walk at Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve was a memorable experience that provided a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving and protecting these unique ecosystems. It was a reminder of the rich biodiversity that exists right in our backyard and the vital role that wetlands play in maintaining ecological balance.





**Burn Recovery in Shenandoah National Park** text and photos by Richard Stromberg

February 19, 2011, was as windy as it gets around here without a hurricane or tornado. I hiked with a group that day starting at Browntown in the valley below the west side of the north section of Shenandoah National Park (SNP). We planned to climb up to the Appalachian Trail (AT), turn north, and then descend another hollow back to the cars. As we climbed, we noticed a plume of smoke north of us. When we reached Skyline Drive, we encountered a swarm of rangers. The north section was closed because of the fire, and the rangers wanted us out of the Park. One ranger drove our drivers back to our cars while the rest of us hiked south on Skyline Drive until our cars reached us.



I went back two weeks later and went down Lands Run Gap Road and back up Jenkins Gap Trail, the hollows on either side of the hill in the picture above. As usual with fires in SNP, the fire stayed pretty much on the ground, burning the undergrowth and fallen logs. (continued on page 6)







## Burn Recovery in Shenandoah National Park (continued)

November 11, 2023 a dozen of us met in SNP at Jenkins Gap to see how the forest has recovered. We had to look closely to see signs of fire: scorched logs on the ground and blackened spots in the crevices of Chestnut Oak (*Quercus montana*) bark. The undergrowth had completely recovered. Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) shrubs maybe denser than before the fire.

As we walked the AT we tried to identify the flora we saw—without flowers and missing leaves. Lots of fluffy Aster and Goldenrod seedheads were hard to pin down species, though the arching stem of Wreath Goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*) with axillary inflorescences between long leaf remnants was clear. Emily Southgate and Sally Anderson spearheaded the effort. Emily found an American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) leaf, but we could not determine which sapling it had come from. She also spotted the last species to flower in our area, Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), though its flowers had dropped most of their petals, leaving the four sepals showing. We debated over a three-foot tall, leafless, brown plant with many ovoid capsules. Emily suggested False Foxglove (*Aureolaria*), and the “Picture This” app suggested Smooth Yellow False Foxglove (*Aureolaria flava*).



Witch Hazel



False Fox Glove

Sally spotted some green leaves of forbs that will flower next spring, including Wood-betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*) and Early Saxifrage (*Micranthes virginiana*). Some ferns were still green.

When we got to the top of Compton Peak after a little over a mile and 500 feet climbing, several people turned back, but five joined me in clambering down to see the spectacular outcrop of basalt columns.



Dissected  
Grape Fern  
(*Sceptridium  
dissectum*)



<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Dec 5</b>	<b>2-4pm</b>	<b>Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting</b>
<b>Clarke County.</b> Blandy Experimental Farm Library, 400 Blandy Ln - Boyce. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Board at these Meetings.			
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Dec 9</b>	<b>10am</b>	<b>State Arboretum of Virginia at Blandy Walk</b>
<b>Clarke County.</b> Jack Monsted, Assistant Curator of the Native Plant Trail will lead a walk through the meadow and wetlands to look for emerging plants. Registration will be provided in a notice from the Eventbrite application a few weeks before the event.			
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Jan 2</b>	<b>2-4pm</b>	<b>Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting</b>
<b>Clarke County.</b> Blandy Experimental Farm Library, 400 Blandy Ln - Boyce. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Board at these Meetings.			
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Jan 13</b>	<b>10am</b>	<b>Cool Spring Poop Walk</b>
<b>Clarke County.</b> Walk along the Shenandoah River at the Shenandoah University Shenandoah River Campus at Cool Spring Battlefield looking for signs of seeds being spread. Registration will be provided in a notice from the Eventbrite application a few weeks before the event.			
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Feb 6</b>	<b>2-4pm</b>	<b>Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting</b>
<b>Clarke County.</b> Blandy Experimental Farm Library, 400 Blandy Ln - Boyce. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Board at these Meetings.			
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Feb 10</b>	<b>10am</b>	<b>Native Orchids at the Smithsonian</b>
<b>D.C.</b> We are tentatively planning this trip. A notice from the Eventbrite application a few weeks before the event.			
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Mar 5</b>	<b>2-4pm</b>	<b>Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting</b>
<b>Clarke County.</b> Blandy Experimental Farm Library, 400 Blandy Ln - Boyce. All Chapter members are welcome to attend Board Meetings.			
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Mar 9</b>	<b>10am</b>	<b>Second Saturday Walk</b>
Being planned. A notice from the Eventbrite application a few weeks before the event.			

### **Hair on Plants part 2** (continued from the Fall, 2023 issue of *The Leaflet*) by Richard Stromberg

In addition to the terms botanists use to describe a hairy surface, they use the following terms to describe individual hairs:

Acicula—A small needle-like or bristle-like structure

Acicular—Needle-shaped

Aduncate—Hooked

Antrorse—Directed forward or upward

Appressed—Lying close and flat against another organ

Bifurcate—Two-forked; divided into two branches

Colleter—A glandular hair

Forcinate—Forceps-shaped

Forked—Divided into nearly equal branches

Glochid—A barbed bristle or hair, especially those forming a tuft in cacti

Glochidiate—Barbed at the tip; bearing glochids

Implicate—Twisted together, intertwined

Inflexed—Curved or bent sharply inward

Malpigiaceous or Malpighian hair—Straight hairs tapering to both free ends and attached near the middle; pick-shaped

Piliform—With the form of a hair

Retrorse—Directed backward or downward

Scattered—Irregularly, usually sparsely, arranged

Steipilous—with star-shaped hairs

Stellate/Stelliform—Star-shaped, with several to many branches radiating from the base

Tentacle—a sensitive filament, as the glandular hairs of Sundews

Tentacular—Bearing a tentacle

Trichome—A hair or hair-like outgrowth from the epidermis

Trifurcate—Three-forked; with three branches

Uncinate—Hooked at the tip

Villus—A long, soft, shaggy hair



PIEDMONT CHAPTER  
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 336  
THE PLAINS, VA 20198



Curlyheads (*Clematis ochroleuca*)



Mistflower  
(*Conoclinium  
coelestinum*) in  
Abrams Creek  
Wetlands Preserve

Mitzi Fox

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The Leaflet



WINTER 2023



Sneezeweed  
(*Helenium  
autumnale*)  
in Abrams  
Wetlands Preserve

Mitzi Fox



Boneset  
(*Eupatorium  
perfoliatum*)  
in Abrams Creek  
Wetlands Preserve

Mitzi Fox