

The Leaflet

August Second Sunday Walk at Goose Creek—Carrie Blair

FALL 2013

A sunny Sunday morning greeted the group of ten at Goose Creek Stone Bridge. A 10am start insured a nice temperature for a leisurely stroll over the 200 year old arched bridge where Civil War skirmishing 150 years ago had just been celebrated and reenacted in June as “The Prelude to Gettysburg”. Significant 1864 war action occurred in Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville surrounding the Alexandria-Winchester Turnpike, later US Route 50.

The Fauquier Loudoun Garden club has made this architecturally noteworthy historic bridge the focal point of a charming wayside with a history plaque and a driving lane to a lovely viewing area overlooking a twelve acre floodplain full of summer wildflowers. A few native trees, Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*) and Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), have been planted. This low, protected meadow is a great habitat for birds, bees, butterflies and the full gamut of wetland plants. Teasel flowers (*Dipsacus fullonum*) were abuzz with pollinators. Wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*), Joe-Pye Weed (*Eutrochium*) and New York Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) will predominate over the Goldenrods (*Solidago*) at the end of summer. We were excited to discover a Ladies’ Tresses orchid (*Spiranthes* spp.).

After driving a mile south of Route 50 to a 1919 bridge on Crenshaw Road, we enjoyed the Goose Creek wildflowers, Winged Monkeyflower (*Mimulus alatus*), Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Southern Water-Plantain (*Alisma subcordatum*), next to the Goose Creek Polo Field. The Polo Field was leveled in the mid-20th century by Hubert Phipps, famous newspaper publisher, one of the largest landowners of the northern Fauquier County’s Hunt Country, and a skilled polo player.

Most people followed leader Carrie Blair the remainder of a lovely, shaded country road, eulogized by John Trott in his book [The Virginia Naturalist](#), to Rectortown, and on to Carrie’s garden, quite pink with

three foot tall Naked Ladies (*Lycoris squamigera*) by the hundreds. Plants were shared with members from her overflowing meadow and flower beds. The Cup Plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*) often has a dozen Tiger Swallowtail butterflies on it



and has continued to bloom since June at seven feet tall. It is a source of many seeds given away at VNPS events throughout the year.



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 geographically defined subgroup 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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The Leaflet can be seen online in color at www.vnps.org/piedmont

The Chapter's email address is piedmontvnps@gmail.com

Come Join Us—Carla Overbeck

In glancing over lists of our chapter Second Sunday Walks, plus other walks, over the past nine months, I see that we have offered two walks in Shenandoah National Park, a tour of the Morven Park grounds in Leesburg, a guided tour of Tudor Place and its gardens in Georgetown, a walk at the C. M. Crockett Park in Fauquier County, our annual walk at Calmes Neck, a walk at Dargan Bend on the C&O Canal near Sandy, MD, an evening walk at the Marjorie Anderson Trillium Trail at the Thompson WMA, a walk at the Cedar Creek Battleground area, a walk at the George Washington National Forest, and a walk at the historic Goose Creek Bridge area.

This is an amazing variety of locations with something for everyone: a mansion and its grounds; a Civil War battlefield area with many spring flowers; formal gardens and woodland trails, including some basically undisturbed areas; and a National Park, National Forest, and community park.

Several years ago the board made a commitment to organize a walk every second Sunday of the month, generally beginning at 1pm. If you have not yet gone on a Second Sunday Walk, you have missed a lot of camaraderie, chances to see interesting and sometimes rare plants, and the opportunity to see new areas and to ask questions of the knowledgeable guides. We are an informal, approachable group, and our guides on these walks are eager to answer your questions. Besides our tree and flower experts, we also have current and former board members who are into birding and butterflies. While our focus on these walks is native plants, we also end up identifying birds, butterflies, toads, etc. The board is open to suggestions about different times and days if second Sundays don't work for you. E-mail the chapter (see the address in the column on the left) with your suggestions for days, time of day, and/or places to visit.

July Second Sunday Walk in George Washington National Forest

—Richard Stromberg

As we gathered in the Bear Wallow Parking Lot off VA678 in Fort Valley, we noticed a Wild Lettuce plant (*Lactuca canadensis*) at the edge of the woods in front of our cars. It was ten feet tall with a ladder of alternating, deeply lobed leaves up the stem, topped with a panicle of tiny, dandelion-type flowers, ridiculously small (1/4 inch) for such a large plant. We were surrounded by white umbel plants, identified as Spreading Hedge Parsley (*Torilis arvensis*). We walked the gate onto Mud Hole Gap Trail, which at this point is a fire road, and took the left fork. We saw Hoary Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum incanum*). Along this section we saw tiny, pale blue flowered Spiked Lobelia (*Lobelia spicata*) and several yellow flowers: Dwarf St. Johnswort (*Hypericum mutilum*), Yellow Starflower (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), and Wild Indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*).

As the left fork turned right to go back to the main trail, we stepped off the trail. As we entered the dark woods we encountered another yellow flower, Seedbox (*Ludwigia alternifolia*), a sure indicator that we were coming to a wet area. Beyond the Seedbox, a small stream emptied into a pond, maybe ten feet across. At streamside we saw Yellow Fringed Orchids (*Platanthera ciliaris*), not yet open, but the buds were hinting yellow.

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July Second Sunday Walk in George Washington National Forest (continued)

Walking around the pond, we found the damp ground covered with Peat Moss (*Sphagnum*). In various spots orange mushrooms poked through the Peat. They looked like Chanterelles (*Cantharellus cibarius*) to me but somewhat strange, with grayish striations underneath stopping at a smooth, yellow stem. Research at home led me to Trumpet Chanterelle (*Cantharellus tubaeformis*), confirmed by a statement in National Audobon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms that a habitat is “on sphagnum moss in bogs”. (I tried them that night with some *C. cibarius* that I had found further up the trail, and could not taste any



Trumpet
Chanterelle
*Cantharellus
tubaeformis*

Richard Stromberg

difference. We saw several more Yellow Fringed Orchids in bud and lots of single-leaf plants. We could not identify the many large, deeply lobed, single leaves that sprung from the ground through the Peat Moss. If you know what it is (pictured at the right), send an email to piedmontvnps@gmail.com.



Unknown leaf growing in
Peat Moss (*Sphagnum*)

A little way up the stream, out of the Peat, we saw the largest Pink Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) leaves I have ever seen. A few of the plants had fruit. Nearby was a Downy Rattlesnake Plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*) with its beautiful blue-green basal leaves with its vein patterns outlined in white and a flower stalk with many white balls ready to open. We also saw a yellow and orange American Caesar's Mushroom (*Amanita jacksonii*) and White Coral fungus (*Clavulina cristata*).

Back on the dry trail we saw St. Andrew's Cross (*Hypericum hypericoides*) with its oddly angled four petals that give it its name. We saw Pea family (*Fabaceae*) leaves including a mass of the pointed-tipped, round-bottomed leaflets of Hog Peanut (*Amphicarpaea bracteata*) looking for something to climb on and three different Tick Trefoils (*Desmodium*). Naked-flowered Tick Trefoil (*D. nudiflorum*) was flowering and identifiable because there were no leaves on the flower stem but came up from the ground nearby. Panicked Tick Trefoil (*D. paniculatum*) was clearly identified by its narrow, stalked leaflets. The third one had wider leaves and we could not pin down the species. The earliest of the Asters was blooming, Toothed White-topped Aster (*Sericocarpus asteroides*). As we decided we should turn around we saw a vine with leaves that looked like a Mickey Mouse silhouette—Wild Potato Vine aka Man of the Earth (*Ipomoea pandurata*). We had been out for over two hours, but had stopped to see so many things, we had only walked a little more than a half mile.



Wild Potato Vine
Ipomoea pandurata

(I went back to the Peat Bog with my wife three weeks later. We counted a dozen Yellow Fringed Orchids in full bloom.)



Sunday	September 8	1pm	Second Sunday Walk
Tour the Deer Enclosure at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute near Front Royal. See the astonishing difference between areas where deer browse freely and a ten acre fenced area where deer have been excluded for 25 years. Leader Erica Gonzalez. For inquiries contact Sally Anderson @ rccsca@comcast.net or 540-722-3072.			
Wednesday	September 18	7pm	Presentation of the <i>Flora</i> to Shenandoah University
Presentation of a copy of the <i>Flora of Virginia</i> to Shenandoah University. Co-author Chris Ludwig will speak about the <i>Flora</i> and Professor Woodward Bousquet speak on <i>Restoring the Flora of Abrams Creek</i> . Reception to follow. Contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com for details and to let us know you are coming so we have enough chairs.			
Saturday	September 21	9:30am-12:30pm	Ecology and Management of Native Prairie
Learn about the steps required for the ecological development of a native "prairie" during this field trip to Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. This is a multi-year project which VNPS will follow. Ron Circe, Manager of Banshee Reeks, will give us a presentation on the work thus far, and lead us to the site after the end of its first season of growth.			
Sat-Sun	Oct 12-13	9am-4:30pm	Arborfest at Blandy
We encourage you to visit the VNPS booth during this annual event. Knowledgeable volunteers will offer expert advice on how to select and grow native plants in your special location. There will be handouts with useful information for you to pick up. For more information about Arborfest visit http://blandy.virginia.edu .			
Sunday	Oct 13	11am	Second Sunday Walk
This walk is co-sponsored by VNPS Piedmont Chapter and State Arboretum of Virginia. Join VNPS President Sally Anderson for a leisurely, informal tour of meadow and wetland to enjoy and identify native plants and grasses. Meet at the VNPS tent. During Blandy's Arborfest there will be a \$10 per car admission. To request more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sunday	October 20	Noon	Piedmont Chapter Annual Membership Meeting
Details will follow. Please join us! We look forward seeing you there! Contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sunday	Nov 10	1pm	Second Sunday Walk
Shenandoah University Professor Woodward Bousquet will lead a walk around the University's recently acquired Cool Springs Battlefield conservation property in Clarke County. Contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com for details.			

Video Shoot at Sky Meadows State Park—Carla Overbeck

Piedmont chapter present and past board members were asked to participate in videotaping at Sky Meadows State Park on June 29th. Having a relatively free Saturday, my husband Julius and I decided to volunteer as hikers for the shoot. Park staff and other state park officials were on hand to assist SmellyCat Productions with the videotaping, which included individual segments with bikers, horseback riders, bluebird monitors, fishermen, children in an interpretive hearth cooking episode, beekeepers, volunteers in period dress at the Mount Bleak house, and back-country campers, as well as hikers. Mary Keith Ruffner acted as a bluebird monitor, while Ramona and Doug Morris, who are the park beekeepers, also participated. We were all free to stay (or come) for lunch and to leave after our segments had been filmed.

Around 11am we rode to our staging area, a trail with a small wooden bridge I had never been on before. We were instructed to not look at the camera but to focus on the stream under the bridge and to act as naturally as possible. We pointed out to each other various plants in the area, and Julius pretended to take a picture overhead at one point. We found out later that Woodpecker Lane, very near our staging area, has many red-headed woodpeckers, and volunteers staged in that area all got pictures of what to me is an elusive bird. But now I know where to go next time I am at the park.

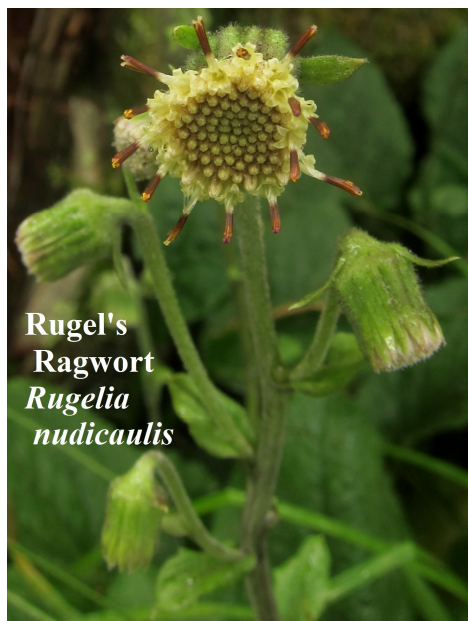
All of the state parks have been involved in this type of video-taping, and three to six months from now videos should begin to be available at each state park to orient visitors. The videos do not include sound, which made it particularly easy for us to ask questions during the videotaping and to discuss with each other what to focus on.



Great Smokies, Another View—Richard Stromberg

You have read articles about the April VNPS trip to Great Smoky National Park by Marjorie Prochaska in the last *Leaflet* and Marcia Mabee Bell in the state newsletter. I got a different view at a later time of year (July) and elevation (over 5,000 feet) when my wife and I attended the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Conference. The Conference was headquartered at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC, the week after the annual Cullowhee Native Plant Conference. We did four hikes on the Appalachian Trail.

The first day in Great Smoky National Park we hiked to Charlie's Bunion, an outcrop protruding from a cliff face, offering one of the most spectacular views I have seen. All along the trail I encountered a flower I did not know. I knew it was *Asteraceae* with no ray flowers. It is the biggest disc-only flower I have ever seen. I wondered how I was going to track down what it is. I got lucky. On our last day Jane Trentin, member of the Georgia Native Plant Society was on our hike. We exchanged notes as we went along. She said, "Have you seen Rugel's Ragwort?" and I had my identification. It is endemic to the high ridges of the Smokies. It is also known as Rugel's Indian Plantain. It is *Rugelia nudicaulis*, the only species in its genus. It originally was classified as *Senecio rugelia* and then as *Cacalia rugelia*, reflecting the common names. (Now all Eastern *Senecio* have been reclassified as *Packera* and *Cacalia* as *Arnoglossum*.)



Rugel's
Ragwort
*Rugelia
nudicaulis*

Many plants were familiar from the mountain trails back home. We saw Turks-cap Lilies (*Lilium superbum*) and Northern Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*) every day. *Clintonia* were abundant but with no flowers and green berries. The only way to decide whether it was White (*C. umbellulata*) or Yellow (*C. borealis*) was the shape of the berry cluster. I think we saw both. We saw lots of Great Laurel (*Rhododendron maximum*) blooming, a few Flame Azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*) flowers, and one flower of Smooth Azalea (*Rhododendron arborescens*). The latter two do not grow as far north as the Piedmont Chapter area. Splashes of bright red were provided by Fire Pink (*Silene virginica*) and Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma*).

In two hikes in Nantahala National Forest we saw two trees with white-flowering panicles: Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*), and Mountain Silverbell (*Halesia tetraptera*). Neither grows in our area, nor does the white-flowered Hairy Alumroot (*Heuchera villosa*) we saw, compared to our green-flowered Alumroot (*Heuchera americana*). Another southern plant we do not see here was Galax (*Galax urceolata*). We saw Wild Hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*), which is common in our area, and also Silverleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea radiata*) with its large, sterile, outside florets and which is endemic to the southern Appalachians. On our way back to Stecoah Gap we stopped for a Garter Snake. It wriggled away out of my picture before I could snap it. When I looked down again, I saw I was standing next to a Yellow Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera ciliaris*), full of unopened buds.



Silverleaf Hydrangea *Hydrangea radiata*

**False
Hellebore**
*Veratrum
viride*



On the last day we went to back to the National Park to Clingman's Dome, highest point on the Appalachian Trail and second highest in the eastern U.S. (6,643 feet). We saw a Smokies endemic, Mountain St. Johnswort (*Hypericum graveolens*) identifiable by the conspicuous veins on the leaves and two Hedgenettles (*Stachys*) that do not grow in our area: Broadtooth Hedgenettle (*S. latidens*) and Clingman's Hedgenettle (*S. clingmanii*). The whole trail was wet, but I noticed False Hellebore (*Veratrum viride*) leaves every so often, probably indicating seeps. I looked for flowers each time but did not see any until late in the day we stopped at an open place for a view. Seeing some False Hellebore leaves, I looked for flowers, and turning to my right, there was a flower stem towering over me full of green flowers. (More pictures can be seen at <http://risy.smugmug.com/Travel/Cullowhee-2013-ATC-Conference>.)

Flame Azalea
Rhododendron calendulaceum



**Yellow
Fringed
Orchid**
*Platanthera
ciliari*



**Broadtooth
Hedgenettle**
Stachys latidens



The view from Charlie's Bunion

