

The



Leaflet

Calmes Neck Walk– Carla Overbeck & Kristin Zimet

SUMMER 2015

April 12th proved to be a picture-perfect day for our annual walk at Calmes Neck in Clarke County, a VNPS registry site. About 20 VNPS members and Calmes Neck residents joined Kristin Zimet for a walk through two natural communities in the area. Blanca Vandervoort gave a good introduction to the history and natural history of the area.

Tons of Virginia bluebells are usually a startling sight on the lower elevations on this weekend every year. Because of the late spring, Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) were a little behind their usual abundance, but still beautiful. We saw many of our old favorites and the beginnings of some others.



Cut-leaved toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*), Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), Harbinger-of-spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*), and Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) graced the sides of our mostly level path through the cove forest on the way to the Shenandoah River. We were a little early for Delphiniums on the hilly areas adjacent to the path but were treated to Sessile Trillium (*Trillium sessile*), Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), Round-Lobed Hepatica (*Anemone americana*) and quite a bit of Twinleaf



(*Jeffersonia diphylla*) in bloom.

Moving to the bluffs overlooking the Shenandoah River, we saw Rue Anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*), Plantain-leaved Pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*), Smooth Yellow Violets (*Viola pennsylvanica*), Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), Early Saxifrage (*Micranthes virginiensis*), Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), and a variety of Cliff Stone Crop (*Sedum glaucophyllum*). We did not see much Walking Fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*), a favorite among Calmes Neck devotees, but the bluffs amazed me with their wide variety of spring flowers. Hiking up the bluff seems a little more difficult every year, but every time the workout is well worth the effort.



Kristin pointed out the blooming Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) trees and the budding leaves of many trees. She discussed the folklore and healing powers of some plants which native Americans and others have used. Kristin has a knack of drawing the eye to plant features many of us would otherwise overlook, and Calmes Neck residents were eagerly drinking in the information about how special their own area is.

It was a good day for both seasoned Piedmont chapter members and our neighbors at Calmes Neck.

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

OFFICERS

Sally Anderson, *President*
rccsca@comcast.net
Robin Williams, *Vice Pres.*
robinspony2@gmail.com
Mary Keith Ruffner, *Secretary*
cootehillfarm@aol.com
Cathy Mayes, *Treasurer*
mayesCD@aol.com

DIRECTORS

Carrie Blair
horseblanketcb@yahoo.com
Cindy Blugerman
ecokid.wv@gmail.com
Lil Ledford
ljledford@gmail.com
David Roos
davidmroos@aol.com
Jocelyn Sladen
jocelyn616@gmail.com
Emily Southgate
ewbsouthgate@gmail.com
Richard Stromberg
risy@embarqmail.com
Blanca Vandervoort
blanca@nelsoncable.com
Kristin Zimet
kristinzimet@yahoo.com

The Leaflet

Our Civic Project: The Marjorie Arundel Trail—Cathy Mayes

Formerly known as the Trillium Trail, The Marjorie Arundel Wildflower and Birding Trail in the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area, was adopted by the Piedmont Chapter when we noticed Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) overtaking this world-class stand of White (or Large-flowered) Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*). The trail was formally dedicated on May 4, 2008, during the height of the trillium bloom.

Late each winter, volunteers from Piedmont Chapter pull tiny garlic mustard plants from the margins of the trail. At that time of year, few other plants have surfaced, so it is easy to clear a large area of all garlic mustard plants without disturbing desirable natives.

Garlic Mustard is a biennial, so it is green through the winter. In the first year of growth, plants form clumps of round shaped, slightly wrinkled leaves, that smell like garlic when crushed. The second year, plants flower in spring, producing cross shaped white flowers in dense clusters. As the flowering stems bloom they elongate into a spike-like shape. When blooming is complete, plants produce upright fruits that release seeds in mid-summer. Deer avoid the plant, so it quickly out-competes native wildflowers in the forest.

We are not aware of any studies of the specific impact of Garlic Mustard, but in areas where VNPS has been pulling it regularly, Trillium is clearly more prevalent and Garlic Mustard far less so. In other places in the Wildlife Management Area where the plant is uncontrolled, Trillium is in severe decline. This year a small number of volunteers were able to clear the Arundel Trail in a morning. When hikers returned in late April and early May, they were greeted with a spectacular show of native wildflowers, reminding us of what the woods once looked like.



Garlic Mustard in winter



SUMMER 2015



Garlic Mustard going to seed

Richard Stromberg



Gary Fleming Draws A Crowd—Jocelyn Sladen

From Virginia's Atlantic coast to the spruce-fir forests at 5700 feet on Mount Rogers, the landscape of our state encompasses an extraordinary range of landforms, topography, and biological habitats. Ecologist Gary Fleming's unsurpassed knowledge of this landscape's geology and natural plant communities reflects over 35 years of field work, principally as a vegetation ecologist for the Virginia Natural Heritage Program. It was hardly a surprise when an overflow crowd sought the last available chair for his March 29 presentation at "The Barn" on the Fauquier campus of Lord Fairfax Community College.

In a fascinating illustrated talk, "The Ecological Regions and Natural Communities of Virginia", Gary explored five physiographic provinces which intersect Virginia and are generally defined by their relative elevation. Samples of flora of the various regions and subregions included the superb photography that has become a hallmark of Gary's work. Our Piedmont chapter particularly enjoyed seeing our chapter logo, Curlyheads (*Clematis ochroleuca*), splendidly displayed up there on the large screen.

The presentation included notes on changes to flora by humans from early times, when forest covered 93% of the landscape, to the present with negative impacts of urbanization, habitat loss, invasive species, and deer, but these are somewhat offset by an encouraging increase in conservation awareness. He stressed the importance of our increased efforts in this area.

Piedmont Chapter takes particular pride in Gary's connection with our chapter, knowing that he spent years surveying the plant communities of our region, compiling information and collections of significant value, before hiking off to Richmond. It was a special privilege to host his presentation.



Curlyheads
Clematis ochroleuca

Blanca Vandervoort

Thompson WMA Walk—Sally Anderson

On a brilliant spring day in late April, a group of about 15 VNPS members took an earlier-than-usual trip to the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area. Our leader was Gary Fleming, Vegetation Ecologist with the state Natural Heritage Program. As we began, Gary explained that the Thompson is a special plant area because of its soil type, the Clifton stony silt loam. Not only is this very localized soil rich in nutrients for plant growth, but it is too rocky to have ever been cultivated. While famous for its spring display, the area is very productive throughout the growing season. The vegetation resembles that of rich cove forests in the central and southern Appalachian Mountains, but continues all the way to the top of the ridge.

We came to see some of the earlier spring plants, but even then we were seeing the last of the Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) in bloom. Although some of the Great White Trilliums (*Trillium grandiflorum*), for which the site is famous, were already in bloom, our target plants were different. First, we stopped at the parking area north of the usual one and took a short walk in an area that holds many Trout Lilies (*Erythronium americanum*), Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) and Ramps (*Allium tricoccum*). Then we explored a second and very interesting spot—a 30 acre seepage swamp, similar in some ways to the seep we usually visit along the fire road, but larger, more diverse, and decorated with the bright yellow of Marsh Marigolds (*Caltha palustris*). The greens of the Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) and other fresh vegetation positively glowed in the sunshine. (continued on page 4)



Thompson WMA Walk (continued)

Exactly 25 years ago a group of VNPS members, including then-president Nicky Staunton, Jocelyn Sladen, and Gary met at the Thompson with James Remington, then director of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. In Jocelyn's recollection, Remington and about five other camouflage-garbed DGIF officials came out to discuss the protection of the Trillium slopes, then being heavily logged. Gary had been studying the area and had all the needed background, and he was a part of the strategy leading to the first memorandum of agreement for protection of the area. It was before Gary joined the Natural Heritage Program, so as a private citizen he could be an activist in the matter. In Jocelyn's words "the Trillium were at peak when the DGIF contingent poured out of their official vehicle, and there we were, this pathetic little group of plant people in jeans and ratty cars. It was gently raining. But we did the circuit and they were truly



Gary Fleming



Sheryl Pollock

impressed. Somehow, the plants were even lovelier in the misty rain. Anyhow, we all met after the hike in a little cabin owned by a friend and drafted the first memorandum of agreement that day." This memorandum became the VNPS Registry Program, and the Thompson was it's first site. (See more about the registry at

<http://vnps.org/conservation/virginia-native-plant-registry-sites/>)

As a tribute to Gary 25 years later, Jocelyn presented an inscribed copy of the new book *The Curious Mister Catesby*, just published by The Catesby Memorial Society. The book is about a plant collector who traveled to Virginia in 1712, and returned to England after seven years of documenting the flora and fauna through paintings as well as descriptions. He returned to Americas the following decade to document flora and fauna in the south. We thank Gary for our special outing, and hope to explore the Thompson in all seasons.



Shenandoah's Wildflower Weekend

—Marjorie Prochaska

May 9 & 10 was Shenandoah National Park's 29th annual Wildflower Weekend. Several of us from the Piedmont Chapter were pleased to be invited to lead hikes: Richard Stromberg, Kristin Zimet, Cathy Mayes, and myself. Working with Ranger Mara Meisel was wonderful. We were pretty much allowed to choose a hike we were familiar with. I led a new hike down Jeremy's Run in the North Section. Jeremy's Run is one of the most beautiful stream valleys in the Park, and along with pointing out the trail's botanical treasures, I made certain we hiked downhill one mile to reach the confluence of the two streams which join to form Jeremy's Run.

I had a dozen or so people including a family. It is nice see what children are absorbing. Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*) was particularly abundant, and my group was charmed by the hanging pairs of blooms. We saw a wonderful native azalea, probably a Pinxterflower (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*). We saw a few Celandine (*Chelidonium majus*), Wild Pinks (*Silene caroliniana*), and unbelievably tall Canada Violets (*Viola canadensis*). New for me, and which I didn't see the day I scouted the trail, was Twisted Stalk (*Streptopus lanceolatus*), but there was no rosy bloom to the immature buds. Another first for me, and one I used Newcomb's to key for the group, was Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*).

I hiked this trail once a week for three weeks, and each time, the flowers changed. They went in and out of peak bloom. They rose and then they declined, but rather than be disappointed, I found that there is always something equally delicious to take the place of what has just passed. One of the most memorable sights in the Park this spring was the blossoming of the apple trees there, remnants of human habitation and the Park's farming history. The apple trees that I saw were so heavily blossomed that they rivaled the cherry blossoms around the Tidal Basin. Mara predicted a bountiful crop of apples this year. I will keep my eye out for apple trees on future hikes to see how the trees are managing such an abundance of fruit.

—Robin Williams

The weather for the SNP Wildflower Weekend was sunny and beautiful, the timing just about perfect this year. Sunday morning's Mill Prong trail led by Kristin Zimet had 20 very enthusiastic attendees. The flowers and various species were abundant from the tiny Miterwort (*Mitella diphylla*) to both Yellow and Pink Lady's Slippers (*Cypripedium parviflorum & acaule*). Lovely Rose Twisted Stalk (*Streptopus lanceolatus*), Marsh Marigolds (*Caltha palustris*), Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*), numerous Violets (*Viola*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*), Wood Betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*), Large Flowered Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) and more were in full bloom. The birds were also very much in residence, many warblers heard along with a pair of very noisy barred owls. It was a great day to be out on the trail.

—Richard Stromberg

Six people joined me for a two mile loop using the Appalachian, Dickey Ridge and Springhouse Road Trails in the North Section of the Park. The unlobed leaves of Common Violet (*Viola sororia*) next to the lobed-leaved Wood Violet (*Viola palmata*) led to looking for comparisons like the male Early Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum dioicum*) with its dangling stamens (someone once told me it looks like a Victorian lamp shade) and the unobtrusive female plant. We saw the much taller Appalachian Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum coriaceum*) which had not yet unfurled its buds and the beautiful white flowers of Rue Anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*) with its swirl of leaves beneath the flower. It was once known as *Anemonella thalictroides*, which means "Anemone that looks like a Meadow Rue", but taxonomists have decided that it really is a Meadow Rue, so now its scientific name means "Meadow Rue that looks like a Meadow Rue". At the end we lifted some leaves to find the flower of a Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) to find a flower.



Eastern Twisted Stalk
Streptopus roseus

Richard Stromberg

CALENDAR

Sunday	June 21	1pm	Massanutten Sunday Walk
<p>George Washington National Forest. Join us on west side of Fort Valley as we seek Tassel Rue (<i>Trautvetteria caroliniensis</i>), Skullcaps (<i>Scutellaria</i>), orchids, and other plants at the bottom of the east side of Green Mountain. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com. Note: the date has been changed to June 21st.</p>			
Sunday	July 12	1pm	Second Sunday
<p>Being planned. More information to come later. To request information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com.</p>			
July 17-24		Appalachian Trail Conservancy Biennial Conference	
<p>Headquartered at Shenandoah University in Winchester. Fun for the entire family! 180 walks/hikes plus workshops, presentations, rafting, tubing and much more. Get information at www.atc2015.org.</p>			
Sunday	August 9	10am	Second Sunday Pollinator Walk
<p>Walk the fields of Clifton farm with an expert on pollinators. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com.</p>			

Flowers in Upstate New York—Richard Stromberg

In mid-May I joined eleven Washington area hikers on a trip to New York. We stayed three nights in Ithaca and then moved southeast to Middletown, NY. Driving up there we went back several weeks in spring, based on the light green leaves on the trees and some still bare.

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Flowers in Upstate New York (continued)

The area around Ithaca is noted for gorges. So we were hiking along cliffs and tortuous gorges with rushing water. The first hike was in Taughannock State Park with a broad deep gorge and two large waterfalls. Next was Watkins Glen not as deep as Taughannock, but much tighter and twistier with walls closing in on us as the water foamed by, and more waterfalls than we could count. The wet alls offered Liverwort (*Conocephalum conicum*), which I don't often see. Then we started at Robert H. Treman State Park and walked in the gorge and along the rim before taking trails to Buttermilk Falls State Park. Lots more falls, though at one point, Nora Parmentier said, "I haven't seen a waterfall for an hour. I'm having withdrawal symptoms." Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) clung to cliffs most preciaously, and when I said I was taking too many Columbine pictures, Nora said, "You can never take too many Columbine pictures." I asked her if she wanted me to make an album of Columbine pictures, she said, "Yes." So I kept taking pictures (see <http://risy.smugmug.com/Travel/Upstate-New-York-Hiking-201505/Columbines-for-Nora/>).

From Middletown we went to Mohonk Preserve on the Shawangunk (aka "the Gunks) ridge, the rock climbing Mecca of the eastern U.S. We did some rock scrambling, but no sheer faces we saw climbers doing. Then we went to the Delaware Water Gap NRA to hike along cliffs above the Delaware River and got a couple more waterfalls. Finally, Shunnemunk State Park, where we had views of the Hudson. The trails there were mostly on exposed, aggregate rock, dominated by scrubby Pitch Pines (*Pinus rigida*) with occasional Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) showing off its typical Rose family flowers.




Most of the flowers were familiar from back home. For the most part they seemed as far along as back home. For instance, Large Flowered Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) was past blooming except for one that kept its petals for me to get a picture. A pair of Red Trilliums (*Trillium erectum*) also kept their petals for my picture. They grow in Virginia, but I have never seen one there. Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*) seemed behind as the flowers were open the week before back home but were just forming buds in New York. Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) doesn't grow in the mountains where I hike. It was plentiful in New York, often adding its plumes to Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*) and Solomon's Plume (*Maianthemum racemosum*). I encountered Threadstalk Speedwell (*Veronica filiformis*) and Germander Speedwell (*V. chamaedrys*), which do not grow in our area. Likewise, Gaywings (*Polygala paucifolia*), with its unusual shape and fantastic color, does not grow in my part of Virginia. Periodically a Starflower (*Trientalis borealis*) would appear with its seven, pointed, white petals floating above its whorl of leaves a few inches off the ground. I have only seen it in Virginia near Calvary Rocks on the Riprap Hollow Trail in Shenandoah National Park.



Gaywings
Polygala paucifolia



Starflower
Trientalis borealis

The  *Leaflet*

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



Curlyheads (*Clematis ochroleuca*)

