

The Leaflet

Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve Walk by Emily Southgate

AUTUMN 2016

On June 12, three botanizers braved the 90° heat to visit the Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve. We had two excellent guides: Wynn Tucker, the resident naturalist, and Robert Stuart, the reserve ranger, who stayed for a short while to explain some efforts at the Preserve to control invasive species.

The Bull Run Mountains are part of the chain of low mountains that continue from Virginia into Maryland as the Catoctin Mountains. As the easternmost mountain range in Virginia, they provide special habitat for plants, and because of their steepness and rocky soil, they have maintained a large diversity of plants to the present day. Currently the Bull Run Natural Area Reserve consists of about 2500 acres which is owned and managed for conservation and education by the Virginia Outdoor Foundation. A five mile trail system is open to the public from the trailhead and visitor center on Beverley Rd. near The Plains. In addition to beautiful forest, the area includes the remains of an old mill and several other old foundations, with ample interpretive signs.

We focused on the ferns along the fern trail. Because of the heat and our slow, botany pace, we did not complete the 3 mile trail. We saw ten species of ferns, with Southern Lady Fern (*Athyrium asplenoides*) and Christmas Fern

(*Polystichum acrostichoides*) most common. New York Fern (*Parathelypteris noveboracensis*) was also abundant. We saw all three of the *Osmundas*: Royal Fern (*O. spectabilis*), Interrupted Fern (*O. claytoniana*) and Cinnamon Fern (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*). Our guide Wynn was very good at pointing out features of the ferns that would help identify them. For example, differentiating Cinnamon Fern from Interrupted Fern is difficult when they do not have spore-bearing fronds, but he pointed out that the pinnules of Interrupted Fern are less pointed than Cinnamon Fern and do not have reddish hairs at the bases of the pinnae. I can remember the pinnule shapes using a sort of mnemonic: “interrupted” has a “u” and so does “blunt” and “cinnamon” has an “i” and so does “pointed”.

(continued on page 2)





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.

The Leaflet is published quarterly by the Piedmont Chapter of VNPS. Permission is granted to reproduce material with credit to the source.

The Leaflet can be seen on-line 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

Brenda Crawford

brendacrawford90@gmail.com

Ellie Daley

pedaley@verizon.net

Ron Hughes

ron.hughes@dgif.virginia.gov

Lil Ledford

ljledford@gmail.com

Marie Majarov

mariemilanmajarov@gmail.com

Jocelyn Sladen

jocelyn616@gmail.com

Emily Southgate

ewbsouthgate@gmail.com

Richard Stromberg

risy@embarqmail.com

Ed Tobias

edwintoo@hotmail.com

Blanca Vandervoort

blanca@nelsoncable.com

Kristin Zimet

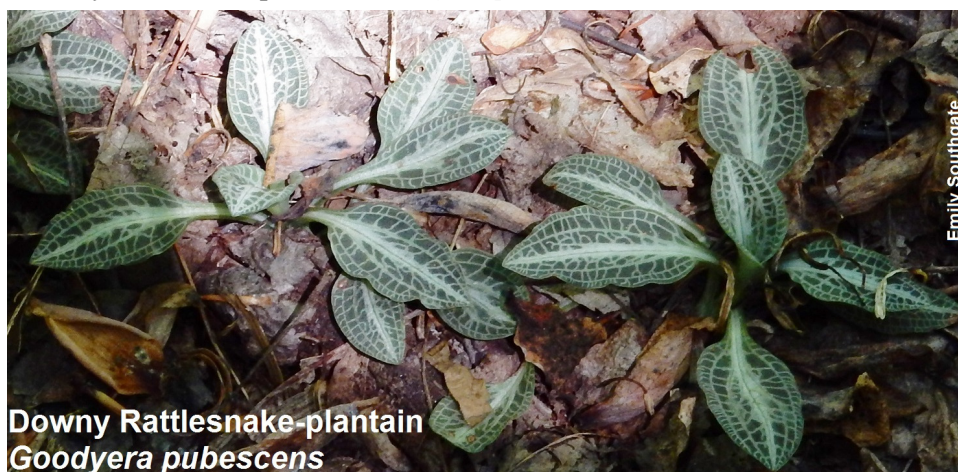
kristinzimet@yahoo.com

Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve Walk (continued)

We also saw some quite large Broad Beech Fern (*Phegopteris hexagonoptera*). Other ferns were Rattlesnake Fern (*Botrypus virginianus*), Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*) and Northern Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*).



We also saw some flowers: Fringed and Whorled Loosetrife (*Lysimachia ciliata* and *L. quadrifolia*), Summer Bluets (*Houstonia purpurea* var. *purpurea*), Indian Cucumber-root (*Medeola virginiana*), and Pale-spoke Lobelia (*Lobelia spicata*). Another non-fern highlight of the walk was a large 5-lined Skink on a tree. Finally, Wynn promised a special treat at the end of the walk, which he had specially marked for us, the VNPS plant of the year, Downy Rattlesnake-plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*).





Shenandoah National Park Fire Recovery—Cathy Mayes

The Brown Mountain Trail in Shenandoah National Park starts down steeply then goes over a saddle and back up to a rock outcrop at the crest of Brown Mountain. It goes through a rather uniform, back-country forest of Chestnut Oak, Table Mountain and Pitch Pines, a few Black Birch, and a lot of Mountain Laurel.

The morning of April 15 somebody started a fire. The fire raged for 9 days and burned more than 10,000 acres, 5% of the park property. This area of the park had not burned for 85 years, so the amount of fuel on the forest floor was unnaturally high. But the species growing there were at least fire tolerant, and many were fire dependent.



Steve Paull discussing the burn

On Sunday, July 10, SNP Fire Ecologist Steve Paull led a walk sponsored by the Piedmont Chapter along the Brown Mountain Trail to see the miraculous return of plant and animal life to the charred acres. While it was eerie walking among charred tree trunks growing out of blackened, bare soil, the number and variety of wildflowers on the forest floor made for great botanizing. On many slopes, the tree canopy was intact because

fire did not burn through the bark. On other slopes, especially those with a lot of Mountain Laurel, the fire was so hot it killed the trees by burning through the bark at ground level, but Mountain Laurel was already sprouting from the roots.

Invasive plants are a threat after a disturbance like this. Along the edges of the burned area, we saw an eruption of *Ailanthus* (*Ailanthus altissima*). There was also a dense crop of Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) seedlings. Sassafras loves fire.

(continued on page 4)



Regenerating Pitch Pine



Sassafras sprouting



Shenandoah National Park Fire Recovery (continued)



Some of blooms we saw were Dwarf Spiraea (*Spiraea corymbosa*), the “fairy candles” of Black Cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*) and Spreading Dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*), not the Indian Hemp (*Apocynum*

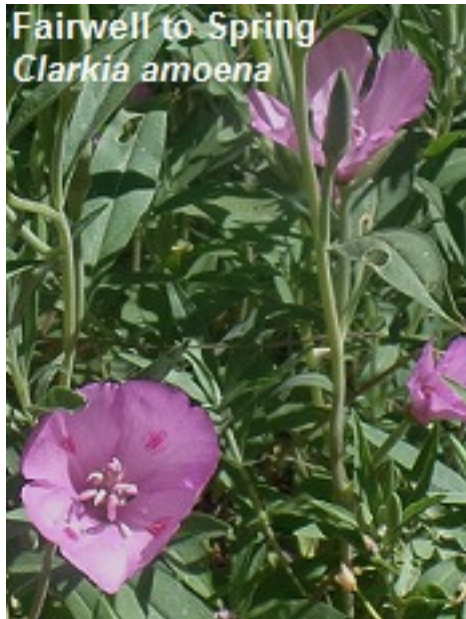


cannabinum) we commonly see in fields. It was nearly defoliated by Shiny Dogbane Beetles.



Oregon Flowers—Richard Stromberg

I went to Eugene, Oregon, at the beginning of July to watch the Track and Field Olympic Trials. With the event spread over that amount of time, I had time to do other things. Four mornings I walked around gardens or natural areas. Walkways line both side of the Willamette River and go past some impressive flower gardens. Hendricks Park was more natural with some huge trees and a native plant garden. Skinner Butte offered views of the city. Fern Ridge Wildlife Area east of the city includes a large lake and several wetland bird watching spots.



I saw some beautiful flowers belonging to genera that are native to the western United States, but not the east. *Clarkia* has some beautiful species. The one I saw, *Clarkia amoena* has a pink, poppy-like flower with a dark spot in the middle of each petal. It is called “Fairwell to Spring” because it blooms in summer. Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea*) is like a miniature Hollyhock. California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) offers orange flowers, not a common color in the plant world. It has escaped



gardens to naturalize in several locations in the east. In this damp, coastal area stringy lichens often drape the trees. Pears hanging amongst the lichen fringes was strange. In one wetland area European Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*) had formed a large swath of purple.

(continued on page 5)



Oregon Flowers (continued)

No track events were scheduled on Tuesday, so I drove with friends to Crater Lake National Park. The six-mile wide lake in the filled-in volcano crater is the deepest in the United States. Its intense blue is amazing. A third of the road around the lake was still not open because snow still had to be cleared.



The saplings on the right side the road had been cut down as we waited to get into the Park, and the trees beyond were burned in a fire (20,000 acres last October). Flowers were already blooming on that dry, pumice-based flat, so I hopped out to get some pictures while the car inched ahead. First was a Lupine. We have one native

Lupine species in the east. Oregon has fifty. I figured out that this one was Brewer's Lupine (*Lupinus breweri*). Growing with it was a pink, globular flowerhead: Pusypaws (*Cistanthe monosperma*). I figured

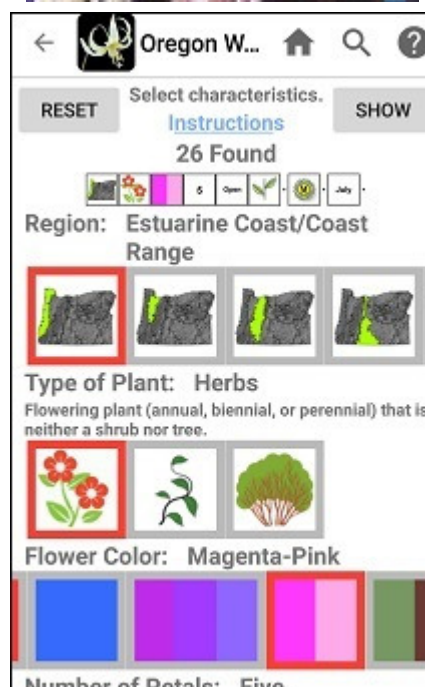


out that a blue Beardtongue I was Siskiyou Beardtongue (*Penstemon anguineus*), another tough search as Oregon has 47 *Penstemon* species.

We have six in Virginia.

After I got home, Sally Anderson reminded me that Oregon has a Wildflower app, which is being adapted to be used as the Virginia app. You pick descriptive parameters, and it shows you species that fit, including pictures. Sally and

I and others have been parsing the Flora of Virginia to provide the parameters to be used in the Virginia app. I downloaded the Oregon app to my phone. Some of the parameters are shown on the screenshot at the right. (continued on page 6)





Saturday	Sep 3	9am	Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship Field Trip
Birds, Butterflies and Wildflowers. Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a family-friendly field trip to see birds, butterflies and wildflowers that are found around the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES). BRCES is a beautiful 900-acre preserve in northwestern Loudoun County that includes diverse wildlife habitats, including meadows, streams and heavily forested slopes. Meet at the Education Center; bring binoculars if you have them. BRCES is located just north of Neersville at 11661 Harpers Ferry Road (Rte 671); detailed directions at www.brces.org Registration required: Sign Up Online. Questions: Contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org .			
Fri-Sun	Sep 9-11		VNPS Annual Meeting
Registration is now open for our 2016 Annual Meeting of the Virginia Native Plant Society. The meeting is hosted in Blacksburg this year by the New River Chapter, with field trips in and around the Blacksburg area. You can attend all three days or any one day you wish. In recognition of the 30th Anniversary of the Virginia Natural Heritage Program, the theme is "Celebrate Our Natural Heritage. There will field trips to fabulous natural areas, as well as 'in-town' sites like gardens. Please see the full description and the Registration Form in the latest issue of <i>Sempervirens</i> , the state newsletter.			
Sunday	Sep 18	1pm	Piedmont Prairie Sunday Walk
Culpeper County. The twenty foot grassland along Raccoon Ford Road has not been overtaken by woody plants because it is periodically mowed offering a unique habitat in northern Virginia. This is a level roadside walk. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sat-Sun	Oct 8-9	9am-4:30pm	Arborfest at Blandy
We encourage you to visit the VNPS booth during this annual event to get 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. We would love to have volunteers to help us staff our booth, hand out brochures, talk to people about plants, what we do, etc. Contact Cathy Mayes at mayesCD@aol.com to volunteer. For more information about Arborfest visit http://blandy.virginia.edu .			
Sunday	Oct. 16	noon	Chapter Annual Meeting, Shenandoah U. Cool Spring Campus
The chapter annual meeting is at the Cool Springs Campus of Shenandoah University, 1400 Parker Lane, Bluemont, on the Shenandoah River near Rt. 7. A Potluck lunch at noon will be followed by a brief business meeting and a presentation by Gene Lewis, who is the steward of the campus. Then we will walk around the campus. All are welcome. The property was part of the 1864 Battle of Cool Spring and most recently was a golf course. Shenandoah University acquired the property in 2013 and is transforming it into an outdoor classroom. Details of the Annual Meeting are on page 7.			
Sunday	November 13	1pm	Sunday Walk
Being planned. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			

Oregon Flowers (continued)

Using my pictures, I have started to use the Oregon app to identify some plants that I had not been able to identify from other sources and have pinned down one so far, American Bird's-foot Trefoil, which the Oregon app calls *Acmispon americanus*. The USDA Plants Database says the scientific name is *Lotus unifoliolatus* var. *unifoliolatus* with synonym *Acmispon americanum*.

The Oregon app includes 1,054 species, but the state has over 4,000. Volume of *Flora of Oregon* has been published. It contains Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, and Monocots. Two more volumes are being written for Dicots. Maybe the flowers in my pictures aren't in the app, or maybe my pictures aren't good enough.





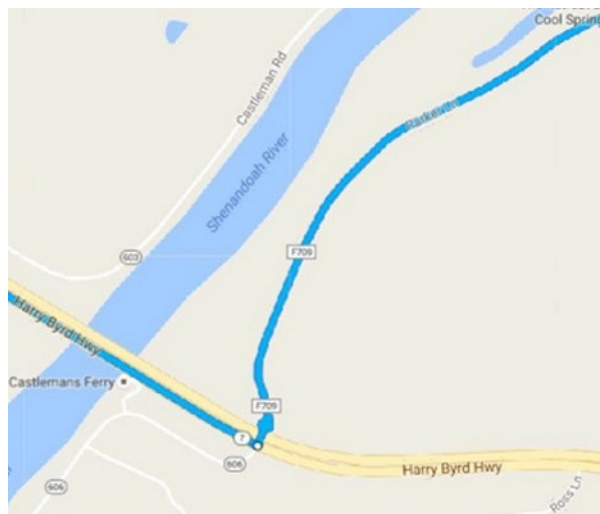
**VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
PIEDMONT CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2016, NOON**

Cool Spring Campus of Shenandoah University,
1400 Parker Lane, Bluemont VA 20155

AGENDA

- Pot Luck Luncheon
- Business Meeting
- Presentation by Gene Lewis, campus steward
- Walk around the campus

The Board of the Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society presents the following candidates for election to serve 2016-2017. Board members and Officers may be elected to two consecutive 2-year terms, but then are ineligible for reelection for one full year to assure opportunity for others to participate and contribute new ideas. We hope to have a few more nominees by the time we meet in October and invite members to come forward and add their name to the list. Nominations are welcome from the floor.



Officers:

President: Sally Anderson 2015-17, 2nd term
Vice President: Robin Williams 2015-17, 2nd term
Secretary: Mary Keith Ruffner 2014-16, 1st term
Treasurer: Cathy Mayes 2015-17, 2nd term

Directors:

Continuing: Carrie Blair 2015-17, 2nd term
Cindy Blugerman 2015-17, 2nd term
Emily Southgate 2015-17, 2nd term
Lil Ledford 2014-16, 1st term
Jocelyn Sladen 2014-16, 1st term
Richard Stromberg 2014-16, 1st term
Blanca Vandervoort 2014-16, 1st term
New: Brenda Crawford 2015-17, 1st term
Ellie Daley 2015-17, 1st term
Marie Majarov 2015-17, 1st term
Ed Tobias 2015-17, 1st term
Leaving: Kristin Zimet 2014-16, 2nd term

2016 Piedmont Chapter Ballot

For the proposed Officers and Directors
I am in favor_____ not in favor_____

Signature _____

For the proposed Officers and Directors
I am in favor_____ not in favor_____

(second person of a family membership)

Signature _____

IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND THE CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 16, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BALLOT AND MAIL BY SEPTEMBER 16 TO Piedmont Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 336, The Plains, VA 20198 or email your vote to piedmontvnps@gmail.com



Crater Lake National Park



The *Leaflet*

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



Curlyheads (Clematis ochroleuca)