



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

December 2016



**Chapter Holiday Party,
Sunday, December 4, 2016
at the home of Leslie Allanson
6194 Hines Road, Henrico VA 23231
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

Please join us for a potluck meal at Leslie's home. Bring a dish to share. Leslie will provide tea and punch, and feel free to bring your favorite “holiday spirit” if so inclined. If you have any questions, call Leslie at 804-795-7191

NOTE: We will not meet at Lewis Ginter in December

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## **Chapter Meetings:**

|                  |                                                                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 12, 2017 | Johnny Townsend on "Discovering Mosses and Liverworts, The Unsung Flora of Virginia" |
| February 2, 2017 | John Hayden, speaker                                                                 |

**Notice: We have a few first editions of the Flora of Virginia for sale. If you are interested in purchasing them, they will be available at the party.**

## **President's Message**

Hi all. Where did November go? I blinked and it was over. I hope you each had the opportunity to gather with family and friends and give thanks and create new memories last week. Continuing in fellowship, I hope we have a nice turnout this coming Sunday for our annual Christmas Potluck. I will be hosting this year. Please join us Sunday, December 4th at 2:00 pm for a potluck meal, concluding at 4. I will provide tea and punch, feel free to bring your favorite “holiday spirit” if so inclined. My address is 6194 Hines Road, Henrico VA 23231. If you have any questions, call me 804-795-7191. We do still have some copies of the first Edition of the Floral for sell, as well as Piedmont Native Plants, a guide for landscapes and gardens, if you need to do any holiday shopping J They will be at the potluck. Speaking of books, for whomever wants to participate, we are going to do a “book swap”. Bring a native plant, garden essay, field guide related book or books and swap....we can all get something new to read by the fire in the coming months.

Not going to talk politics, will just say wow....but did want to let you all know that due to help from our chapter, Marcia Mabee meet with Delegate O'Bannon and reports “he was most responsive to the trying to provide at least some increased funding for Natural Heritage, if not the whole 2.48 million”

I am looking forward to 2017 and ask you to join me in a resolution...no, not the one about losing weight....but let's all try to promote the VNPS and our chapter...pick up a few membership brochures and share with a neighbor, kids teacher, church members, classmates, etc. Invite them to our meetings and walks. Our dues go to saving habitat and land throughout the Commonwealth, the more members the more funds the bigger the difference.

Be blessed,  
Leslie

## Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS Meeting November 3, 2016

**Welcome:** Leslie Allanson called the meeting to order with about 30 persons present.

**Program:** Catharine Tucker introduced the program presenter, Ashley Moulton. Ashley is an Agricultural and Natural Resources Technician/Master Gardener Coordinator for the Virginia Extension Cooperative Office in Chesterfield. The title of Ashley's program was "Fertilizing Nature: Short Term Effects of Nutrients on a Barrier Island Grassland Community." Ashley, a graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University's Coastal Plant Ecology Laboratory, based her program on her thesis defense.

Drawing on her job experiences with urban nutrient management led Ashley to question how plant communities that historically have limited plant growth in coastal barrier islands respond to nutrients. Her research took place on Hog Island, a barrier island off of the Delmarva Peninsula. This area is part of the Virginia Coastal Reserve, founded by the Nature Conservancy and the longest coastal wilderness on our country's East Coast. Focusing on twenty plots, Ashley's research involved applying nitrogen, phosphorous, or both nitrogen and phosphorous, as well as a control with no added nutrients. These four options were repeated five times. The response of grasses and forbs to the applications was studied. Plots with added nitrogen resulted in more productivity, especially with grasses. Leaf area, variety of plant species, and more competitive species interactions increased with added nutrient availability. This research is part of a larger, multiyear study. The chapter was grateful that Ashley took time from her busy work and academic schedule to enthusiastically share with us her research.

### Business Meeting:

Leslie announced the following community events:

Clean-up project, Glendale Battlefield, 8301 Willis Church Road 23231 – November 12, 9:00 am - noon.

Texas Beach Clean-up, 1912 Texas Avenue 23220 – November 12, 10:00 am - noon. Contact - Elizabethherrman.sc@gmail.com.

Tree planting, Powhatan State Park – November 12, 10:00 am -3 pm.

**Treasurer's Report:** Richard Moss reported \$5,146.50 in the treasury. Outstanding expenses include about \$120 for Rubyjane Robertson and Pat Brodie and \$250 for Dr. Joan Maloof. Let Richard know if you'd like to receive only the electronic version of the newsletter. This will save the chapter money and will save Richard labor.

**Membership Report:** Dabney Robinson announced the chapter has 125 members.

**Outreach Education:** A meeting is needed for the group. On the state level, a task force for Outreach Education has been formed to consider reaching out to students.

**The Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society**  
serves the counties of: Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King William, New Kent, Powhatan and the cities of Ashland, Hopewell, Petersburg, and Richmond. It meets the first Thursday of September through April at 7:00 PM in the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, unless otherwise stated.

#### Chapter Officers

**President.....Leslie Allanson**

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**Chapter Website**

pocahontaschapter-vnps.org

As announced at the October meeting, the chapter discussed funding a participant to attend Nature Camp. Catharine, who attended Nature Camp during the summers of 1951-1958, provided an overview. Suzanne Jenkins moved that the chapter provide \$500 to partially fund a student for Nature Camp. The motion was seconded by Catharine and passed.

The Board met on October 27, 2016, and made the following plans regarding upcoming field trips. A specific Saturday of March, April, May, and June will be designated for a large field trip. In addition, local field trips will be scheduled. Outings open to the public by other groups with interests similar to those of this chapter will be put on our Facebook page a included in the newsletter. Notify Dabney (for Facebook) and Richard (for the newsletter).

Work days at Ginter will be scheduled on two Saturdays and two Sundays. These dates will be announced in the newsletter by January. In order to receive reduced room rental charges at Ginter, sixty-two hours of work are required between July 1 and June 30.

A field trip to the Rice River Center is scheduled for November 10. Trip leader is Catharine. Meet at North Park Library at noon to carpool or at the Rice River Center at 1:00 pm if traveling on one's own. Bring a lunch. Let Catharine know if you plan to attend.



Lee Bristow, a middle school teacher whose students do field work at the James River, asked if the chapter might be interested in sharing our objectives with his students. The chapter will follow up with Lee.

Leslie announced the VNPS State Board will be hosted in Richmond at the Fairfield Library on December 3, 10 am. There will be no meeting in December. The chapter will enjoy a Christmas party at Leslie's home on December 4, 2:00 – 4:00 pm. Please bring a covered dish. There will also be a book exchange.

Respectfully submitted, Irene Caperton, Secretary.

## **“In Search Of”: Botanical Adventures of a Plant Detective by Robert Wright.**

### **This month's target: *Polypodium virginianum* L. Rock Cap Fern**

Perhaps one of the most iconic plants growing on stable granite outcroppings along the James River is the evergreen, rhizomatous rock cap fern, *Polypodium virginianum*. Large, circular sori are noticeable on the underside of fertile fronds in late summer and autumn, and the sporangia manifest long sepia colored hairs. This attractive fern grows on exposed ledges, in peaty soil overhanging rocks, on tree trunks, and in crevices between boulders. The fern is found from Bellona Arsenal eastwardly through the Richmond James and elsewhere in the City where Petersburg granite rocks are exposed, often near water courses. It is found in Powhite Park, Larus Park, James River Park and Maymont. I'd like to receive any reports of it within the City of Richmond. Have you seen it?

**Left Photo:** Sori under the leaf of the fern.

**Right:** The fern on a rock outcrop.

Photo sources:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Polypodium\\_sori.JPG](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Polypodium_sori.JPG)

[http://www.missouriplants.com/Ferns/Polypodium\\_virginianum\\_plant.jpg](http://www.missouriplants.com/Ferns/Polypodium_virginianum_plant.jpg)



### **Field Trip: November 10th to the Rice Center**

The Virginia Commonwealth University Rice Rivers Center is a field station devoted to environmental research, teaching and public service. It is located on 494 acres along the historic James River, midway between Richmond and Williamsburg. For more information see: <http://ricerivers.vcu.edu/about-us/>

The Center had an open house on November 10th and we visited. Several new members joined us, plus others who expressed interest in joining. Although we had not requested a tour, Dr. Smock of the VCU Department of Biology volunteered to give us the history and future plans for the marsh restoration. Photo is of the marsh which formally was a lake and now is being restoted to its original state.



### **Plant of interest: Dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*)**

Dogfennel (photo on right taken in summer) is commonly found on roadsides and in fields the southern and eastern United States, from Massachusetts south to Florida, and west to Missouri and Texas, and also Cuba and the Bahamas. Unlike insect-pollinated plants in this genus, *E. capillifolium* is wind-pollinated. Dogfennel is rather showey in the summer and in the fall can turn redish. It has small, white, fragrant floweres in late summer. There is a sterile cultivar called Elegant Feather or Elegant Plume.

Livestock farmers consider this plant poisonous and a nuisance. Toxicity problems are not common since dog fennel has poor palatability. Even deer don't usually eat it unless there is no other food left. Juice from the plant may be useful in repelling insects.

Dogfennel is eaten by Florida's scarlet-bodied wasp moth, *Cosmosoma myrodora*. As a caterpillar, the insect feeds







on a non-toxic plant, climbing hempweed. When it becomes a moth and is ready to mate, the male changes his eating habits and visits the dogfennel plant, regurgitates on the plant to dissolve the alkaloids and then reimbibes the toxin-rich liquid. He then stores the toxins in a special pouch located on his underbelly. After injecting the toxin he is protected from his predators. He then searches for a mate and when he finds her, he releases the toxin which sticks to the female. The toxin protects her while she is mating and while she lays her eggs. The female moth then passes the toxin to her eggs. The toxin deters egg-eating insects like ants and ladybugs from devouring her young. This moth is the only insect known to transfer a chemical defense in this way. See:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2000/12/001228091049.htm>

Photos: **1.** Dogfennel in bloom with insect. **2.** Close up of seeds, photo taken in late November. **3.** Plant in late November. **4.** Scarlet-bodied wasp moth, *Cosmosoma myrodora* (not native to Virginia).

References: <https://tedmanzer.com/2012/10/19/dog-fennel/>, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eupatorium\\_capillifolium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eupatorium_capillifolium). Note there is confusion on the web with this plant and Wild chamomile, see: [www.leaf.tv/articles/uses-for-dog-fennel/](http://www.leaf.tv/articles/uses-for-dog-fennel/) which does **not** describe *E. capillifolium*.

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