



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

March 2015



**Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM,
Thursday March 5, 2015**

**at the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
in the Lab**

The room is available at 6:30, come early and Socialize

This month's topic will be

Feral Swine: Virginia, We Have a Problem

What do pigs have to do with native plants? Come to the Pocahontas Chapter Native Plant Society meeting and find out. Aaron Proctor, District Wildlife Biologist with the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, will discuss how the increase of feral hogs is endangering Virginia native plant and animal species. He will also address the state and regional response, which includes participation in a feral hog committee comprised of wildlife biologists and conservation police officers from partner state and federal natural resource agencies.

Chapter Events - Field Trips

Sundays Strolls at Dorey: Exploratory Nature Walks to see how the season progresses at Dorey Park.

Sundays March 8, April 12, May 17 at 2:00 PM at Dorey Park, 2999 Darbytown Road, Henrico VA 23231

Please join Pochahontas Chapter VNPS at Dorey Park in Eastern Henrico for nature walks this Winter and Spring. Walks will be on paved, gravel and dirt pathways. Dorey is a 400 acre park that was previously a dairy farm. The group will be meeting in the parking lot near the Soccer Field, near the head of the nature trail, marked on map as accommodating 28 cars. Please contact Leslie Allanson at 804-248-1578 for more information.

Chub Sandhill Natural Area Preserve, Wednesday, March 25: This preserve features a series of low sandhills and adjacent riparian wetlands along the Nottoway River. Much of the original sandhill vegetation in the region has been lost, but this outstanding woodland remnant supports rare and unusual plants such as Queen's delight, golden puccoon, and hoary scurf-pea. We will meet at the Martin's at the intersection of Rt 1 and Rt 10 in Chester at 9am. Bring a bag lunch, and be sure to wear clothing appropriate for hiking the sandy terrain. If you plan on going, please contact trip coordinator Andy Wichorek at awichorek1@verizon.net, or 804-337-2707. A printable site map and description can found at http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/pgchub.pdf.



Photo: © DCR-DNH, Gary P. Fleming

Privet Removal work days at Lewis Ginter: Come help remove invasive plants along the creek at Lewis Ginter. There has been great progress made along the creek and we need to continue to be persistent in conquering this area. We are planning two dates in March. One during the week and one on a Sunday. We are hoping for some warm spring weather and good participation.

Meet in the lobby at Lewis Ginter

Tuesday, March 10 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Sunday March 22 from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Any questions please contact Beth Farmer beth16085@hotmail.com or Caroline Meehan at cjrtmeehan@juno.com

Other Events:

Carolyn's Garden, in Mechanicsville will have a 50 percent off sale on all plants starting Saturday, March 7th and will be held each Saturday after that until inventory is reduced. Address is: 9379 Sarah Shelton Lane, Mechanicsville, VA 23116. They do have some native plants and a good selection of good pollinator plants.

The Presidents Message

As I type this, it's National Invasives Awareness Week. Reminders arrived in my email from very different sources: The Washington Post, VA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). Since the mission of the Virginia Native Plant Society is to preserve both native plants and their habitats, paying attention to these reminders is important in several ways.

The Washington Post listed a "dirty dozen" invasives, none of which were plants. Not even kudzu or privet! However, two organisms listed, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and feral swine, are significant threats to our native species and habitats. EAB attacks native Ash trees (5 species native to VA) and has been reported already in counties around metro Richmond. Research from Ohio has shown that members of the genus *Fraxinus* are affected, but so too is the related fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), a native shrub or small tree found throughout Virginia. Loss of these trees over time will alter the character of various habitats. Feral swine, on the other hand, create immediate damage by rooting, trampling and ploughing up habitat, just inviting invasive plants like Japanese stilt grass to move in.

DCR just announced a revised list of invasive plants in Virginia. The press release is entitled "Kudzu and Bamboo and Privet! Oh My!" The web link to this list is provided on page 4 in this newsletter. Privet is in the same family with ash trees, but I haven't heard that EAB could help rid us of this invasive. Read on!

Aaron Proctor, DGIF District Biologist, will present "Virginia We Have a Problem: Feral swine destroy habitat" at our March 5 meeting. He has presented this program to audiences at Science Museum of Virginia, Virginia Master Naturalists, and others. Whether or not you are aware that these feral animals present a significant threat to native plants and their habitats, come hear Aaron's informative and entertaining talk.

All this leads me to thoughts of our continuing project at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, removing honeysuckle,

ivy, privet, oriental bittersweet and any other invasives we encounter along the creek in the northeast corner. We can do it in stages, and every little bit helps, including removing seed sources. Caroline and Beth have scheduled two more work days in March. I hope everyone will consider us whether you can spend one hour or four. Their contact information is in the announcement below. See you March 5!

Catharine Tucker

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.

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Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS Meeting, February 7, 2015

Welcome: Chapter President, Catharine Tucker, called the meeting to order. She welcomed the many guests, including VNPS President Nancy Vehrs, and members. The room was full with 26 persons in attendance.

Program: Chapter Vice President, Leslie Allanson, introduced Marcia Mabee, who serves as Conservation Committee Chairperson on the VNPS Board of Directors and is the property owner of the Naked Mountain Natural Area Preserve in Nelson County.

The full title of Marcia's program was "Creation of the Naked Mountain Natural Area Preserve: The Delights and Challenges of Owning One of Virginia's Natural Area Preserves." The

chronology began with the purchase of Naked Mountain in 1988 and revealed the delights that each season brought as Naked Mountain was explored. The array of wildflowers was amazing and culminated with the discovery of 300 plants of shooting stars (*Dodecatheon meadia*), a first for Nelson County. Division of Natural Heritage experts provided an inventory, including the find of a rare mint, Torrey's Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum torreyi*). In 2006, Naked Mountain was designated by DCR as the 49th Natural Area Preserve in Virginia. Yet, in addition to the delights of Naked Mountain, there are also challenges. Invasive plants (garlic mustard, ailanthus, and Japanese stilt grass) provide an ongoing battle. A natural gas pipeline presented a threat. Finally, there are native challenges including timber rattlesnakes and bears. Marcia's presentation included outstanding photography, readings from her memoir, a bird song recording, and several video clips. For those who missed the program or who would like to learn more, Marcia's blog can be found at nakedmountain.net.

Business Meeting: Catharine announced that Virginia now has a 62nd Natural Area Preserve. Dundas Granite Flatrock Natural Area Preserve is located in Brunswick County. She also reported that the Governor recently announced the rewarding of \$1.7 million in grants from the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. Various items were posted in the meeting room for members to consult for additional on-line information. There were no corrections to the January 15, 2015 minutes, which were included in the February newsletter. Marcia provided a legislative update. Increased funding for the Natural Heritage Program is possible with current House and Senate amendments being considered. Members are encouraged to express their comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regarding gas pipelines being proposed for the commonwealth and to communicate as individuals, not on behalf of VNPS.

The treasurer, Richard Moss, reported that the treasury has \$4,570.13 as of January 31, 2015.

Old Business: The VNPS Winter Workshop will be held on March 7th at the University of Richmond. RubyJane Robertson indicated that members have signed up to provide needed assistance.

Leslie reported that she and Catharine have met with Nicole Ellis, co-chair of Henricopolis Board of Directors of the Soil and Water Conservation District. The county has plans to include a rain garden and rain barrels as part of upcoming landscaping for the Tuckahoe Library. Catharine asked for the chapter's direction in moving forward with working with Henrico County toward the goal of more native plantings. No objections were voiced.

New Business: RubyJane reported that the chapter has 107 members, including six renewals.

Beth Farmer announced a privet pull at Ginter on February 9, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Additional dates will be planned.

Andy Wiechorek reported on field trips. Leslie will coordinate the next field trip on February 22, 2:00 p.m., at Dorey Park. An overnight field trip to Douthat State Park, April 26, will explore the shale barrens. Andy will head up that activity. Details for trips in March and May will be announced when plans are finalized.

Announcements: Catharine encouraged the use of electronic resources including Facebook.

John Hayden announced that a new VNPS program for research grants is underway.

The VNPS annual meeting will be held in Staunton, September 11-13.

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 5, 7 p.m., at Ginter. Aaron Proctor, biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, will speak on feral swine.

Irene Caperton
Secretary

Announcements:

VICTORY – Natural Heritage received \$500,000 in this year's final budget!!

Your letters and emails were very successful! I just learned that the Natural Heritage Division of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation secured a \$500,000 increase in this year's budget effort. VNPS led the effort to try and increase the DNH budget by a total of \$3.1 million. While we were successful in getting a budget amendment for the full amount sponsored in the Senate (Sen. Watkins) and a budget amendment for \$2.5 million sponsored in the House (Del. Kilgore), the Senate Finance Committee provided only \$500,000 in its bill while the House provided \$0. Nevertheless, the \$500,000 was very welcome. VNPS, including many of you who had

Senators and Delegates on the conference committee appointed to work out the differences between the two bills, went to work and we won! The conference committee opted to keep all \$500,000 in the final bill.

Marcia Mabee, VNPS Conservation Committee Chair

New Lists of Invasives:

Kudzu and bamboo and privet! Oh my! New list identifies invasive plants in Virginia

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/pr_relz_detail.shtml?id=2015-02-24-17-30-56-973877-SEv

This links to the article in Wash Post that includes Emerald Ash Borer & Feral Swine!

http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/02/23/like-most-invasive-species-pythons-are-in-the-u-s-to-stay/?tid=sm_fb

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