

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 18, No 4

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Jul/Aug 2000

BOX TURTLES SAVE NATIVE PLANTS by Barbara L. Farron

Since it's no secret that I am interested in reptiles and amphibians, I received an e-mail in late May about a box turtle rescue in Herndon, Virginia. Jennifer C. Stone lived near the 12 acres to be developed into 200 townhouses and had seen box turtles coming to her yard from this property. When she learned that work on the wooded land was to begin June 1, she organized a box turtle search-and-rescue for Memorial Day. Yes, there were people willing to give up their holiday in an effort to remove turtles from the path of "progress"!

I asked why rescue efforts should be limited to only one type of fauna or flora, and the volunteers agreed that we should relocate both animals and plants. Once we began searching the heavily wooded acres, we realized the task needed many more volunteers, and we each notified organizations of which we are members. The Potowmack Chapter of the VNPS responded immediately, and my daughter and I ran into other VNPS members at the property. I think we were all a bit discouraged when we first saw the undergrowth of poison ivy and greenbrier covering much of the land; nonetheless, most people (after arraying themselves in long sleeves, jeans, hats, gloves and insect repellent) bravely continued rescue efforts. Within a few days we were notified that the developer would not begin work until June 21, giving us additional time to assist threatened wildlife. Ms. Stone plans to offer the workmen \$10 for each live turtle or other animal they catch on the property and bring to her.

Among the plants saved from bulldozers were:

<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i> ,	Jack-in-the-pulpit
<i>Chimaphila maculata</i>	Spotted wintergreen
<i>Cypripedium acaule</i>	Pink lady's-slipper
<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Boneset
<i>Gaylussacia</i> spp.	Huckleberry
<i>Hydrophyllum virginianum</i>	Virginia waterleaf
<i>Lysimachia quadrifolia</i>	Whorled loosestrife (not the alien purple loosestrife)
<i>Mitchella repens</i>	Partridgeberry
<i>Monotropa uniflora</i>	Indian pipe
<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>	Solomon's seal
<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Christmas fern
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	Solomon's plume/false Solomon's seal
<i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i>	Lowbush blueberry
<i>Vaccinium stamineum</i>	Deerberry
<i>Viburnum</i> spp.	

For the fauna rescued, the last report was 16 *Terrapene Carolina*, box turtles; 2 *Plethodon cinereus*, red-backed salamanders; and 40 *Bufo americanus*, American toad tadpoles (already become land-dwelling, insect-eating toadlets), which were donated to Long Branch Nature Center's pond project.

Upcoming rescues will be announced on our listserv. If you have not yet signed up for this e-mail notification system, contact Sylvia Orli at stone.sylvia@nrmnh.si.edu. If you have never participated in a plant rescue, please consider doing so. It can be hard, hot, dirty work--although most properties are not as overgrown as this one was--but it is so rewarding to save native plants from destruction. And while we are assisting wildflowers, let's not forget some of our other forest-dwellers, such as reptiles and amphibians; they, too, cannot fly away from the bulldozers. After all, if it hadn't been for the box turtles, the lady's-slippers and many other native plants would not have been found and relocated.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

As we slide slowly into summer, wildflower activity slips from the woods into wetlands and meadows. Swamp rose and lizard's tail perfume the air while butterflies belabor buttonbush. Meadows and marshes are the place to be to witness summer's glory. "Enjoy the summer, flower by flower."

Marianne Mooney

SPRING PLANT SALE REWARDS EFFORTS OF PARTICIPANTS by Beth Smith

The spring 2000 plant sale was another resounding success. Without the help of our plant donors (Don Humphrey, Billie Trump, Laura Beaty, Marianne Mooney, Gerry Pratt, Margaret Chatham, Shirley Gay, Joann Krumviede, Beth Smith, Kathy Cochrane, Lori Markoff, Vivian Attermeyer, and Tiana Camfiord) and faithful sale workers (Marianne Mooney, Gerry Pratt, Dust Pratt, Bill Kreitz, Shirley Gay, Roberta Day, Beth Smith, Billie Trump, Margaret Chatham, Lori Markoff, Joann Krumviede, Laura Beaty, Deborah Crabtree, Eleanor Kask, Patti Burch, Bob Schmidt, Vivian [Dusty] Dukes, Gladys Quintero, Helen Biggs, Tiana Camfiord, Anne Crocker, Vivian Attermeyer, Sally Sieracki, and Mary Ann Lawler) we could not have done it. The enthusiasm and hard work exhibited by our core of propagation volunteers never ceases to amaze me. These are the people who love to get their hands in the dirt, to learn which plants grow in the sun or shade. Even the hardest of all tasks-- learning the botanic names of our collection--does not daunt them. Well, maybe it does daunt some of them, but their willingness to learn and their eagerness to help is quite evident to any one who happens to stop by the propagation beds on Wednesday or Saturday mornings. Please contact Laura Beaty (703 534-8746) or me, Beth Smith, (703 644-1760) if you are interested in becoming one of these invaluable volunteers willing to prepare for our fall sale, which will be held on September 23 this year.

BOARD OFFICERS		
President	Marianne Mooney	534-8179
Vice President	John C. Magee	478-9428
Secretary	Mary Ann Lawler	684-8622
Treasurer	Bill Kreitz	620-4415
COMMITTEE CHAIRS		
Botany	Cris Fleming	301-657-9289
Conservation	-open-	
Green Spring Liaison	Gerry Pratt	323-1094
Awards/Recognition	Anne Crocker	437-0355
Membership	Linda Haller	938-8504
Newsletter	Sally Sieracki	978-5865
Labeling/Mailing	Markoff family	573-7121
Programs	Shirley Gay	920-1913
Propagation/Plant Sales	Laura Beaty	534-8746
	Beth Smith	644-1760
Publications	Roberta Day	560-5528
Publicity	Sylvia Orli	528-5618
Site Registry	Rod Simmons	256-7671
Garden Tours	Billie Trump	960-1476
Immediate Past President	Norma Vermillion	451-0572
All numbers should include the 703 area code unless otherwise noted.		

EFFORTS TO REMOVE LOOSESTRIFE ONGOING AT FOUR MILE RUN

Chapter members Kathleen Kust, Roberta Day, Alice Petree, and Mary Ann Lawler have been among those who have been clearing purple loosestrife plants from sections of Four Mile Run between Alexandria and Arlington. Scheduled pulls have been held on Saturdays and will also continue on weekday evenings. According to Kust, bloom time has arrived, which should make it easier to visualize cleared

areas and strategy. Potowmack Chapter is providing iced drinks for participants. Anyone wanting to get involved may call Kathleen at 703-836-5868 or e-mail her at Treemusic@aol.com. Waterproof boots are a help. Schedules are updated on the chapter listserv; to get your name on the list, send an e-mail to Sylvia Orli at stone.sylvia@nmnh.si.edu, and in the message section write the following: subscribe to vnps-pot, your e-mail address, and your full name.

CONGRESSIONAL REPORT LANGUAGE PROMOTES CONTROL OF INVASIVE PLANTS

by Mary Ann Lawler

In March of this year, Potowmack Chapter President Marianne Mooney provided written testimony to the House Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations. The testimony reiterated the problems of invasive exotic plants and supported increased funding for Federal land management bureaus for their efforts to eradicate invasives and to educate the public about native plants. Mooney also wrote Congressman Jim Moran asking his support again this year. The Subcommittee was unable to provide increases to current spending levels in the 2001 appropriations bill, because the funding allocation for the total bill was less than last year's level. However, we are thankful to Subcommittee Chairman Ralph Regula and Mr. Moran for including the following language in the report on the bill:

"Invasive Species Control and the Use of Native Plants

In several hearings this year, the land management agencies testified regarding the widespread and very serious problem of invasive exotic species. Many individuals and non-governmental organizations echoed those concerns in public witness testimony. In addition, numerous members of Congress voiced their support for increased efforts to control invasive species. Although a funding allocation lower than the fiscal year 2000 enacted level precludes the Committee from recommending expensive new initiatives, the Committee does recognize that controlling invasive exotics is important for natural resources management throughout the country.

The Committee is pleased with the efforts of the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Forest Service to address the issues of invasive non-native plants in their strategic plans and to eradicate or control these species. The Committee urges the land managing bureaus to be pro-active in providing their field managers and the public with information on acceptable native alternatives to non-native plant material, to increase public awareness of these issues, and to emphasize partnerships in the eradication of invasive non-native plants. Successful efforts to manage lands to protect native fauna should likewise be continued and expanded where possible. The Committee also urges all other entities that receive funding for facilities under this bill to increase their use of native plants in landscaping."

We can hope that the final outcome of the appropriations process this fall will allow some additional funding for 2001 over the current fiscal year.

POTOWMACK CHAPTER'S DONATION TO STATE SOCIETY WILL HELP WITH OPERATIONS

In response to expressed need, the Potowmack Chapter's board of directors voted to make a donation of \$500 to the state organization recently. According to a letter received by Potowmack President Marianne Mooney from State Treasurer John Fry, "Your gift could not have come at a better time. The State Office at Blandy Farm has been successful

beyond our expectations. The down side of that success has been an unanticipated increase in the cost of mailings and communications to spread our message and serve our members. We expect more and more members and the general public to direct their inquiries to the Blandy office. Your contribution will certainly assist."

WE HAVE A NEW ADDRESS FOR CHAPTER MAIL

For reasons of convenience, the chapter mailing address has been changed. The new address is Potowmack Chapter, VNPS, PO Box 5311, Arlington, Virginia, 22205

SOUTH FOUR MILE RUN GETS A NATIVE PLANT MEADOW by Mary Ann Lawler

Picture a wide swath of bare earth on a stream bank in a long, narrow park where there is nothing but sparse grass, weeds, and a few skimpy trees. A car dealership is on one side of the stream and another one is going up next to the park on the other side. It took a great deal of faith on the part of the City of Alexandria's Landscape Architect Supervisor, Marian Clark, on a cold January day with 8 inches of snow on the ground, to envision a meadow of native plants to attract birds and butterflies. But there we were, 4 months later in 95 degree weather with rakes, spades, packages of seeds, a handful of plants, a few bales of straw, approval from the City, and lots of hope. Along with VNPS volunteers were members of Friends of Four Mile Run, Habitat Stewards from the National Wildlife Federation, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, and the Northern Virginia Senior Environment Corps.

The meadow plants will have to be able to survive with poor soil, full sun, and no supplementary water. So after some research and great advice from Rod Simmons, our Site Registry Chair, we chose little bluestem grass, *Schyzachyrium scoparius*, and the following native plants: *Aquilegia canadensis*, wild columbine; *Asclepias syriaca*, common milkweed; *Asclepias tuberosa*, butterfly-weed; *Aster pilosus*, white heath aster; *Lespedeza capitata*, round-headed bush-clover; *Monarda fistulosa*, wild bergamot; *Rudbeckia hirta* L., black-eyed Susan; *Solidago nemoralis*, gray goldenrod; *Aster novae-angliae* L., New England aster; *Penstemon digitalis*, foxglove beardtongue; and *Ceanothus americanus* L., New Jersey tea.

We've been told to be patient. To establish a meadow takes time. The rains have helped, and sprouts are sprouting. But the goldfinches, song sparrows, butterflies and other pollinators are eager, especially because lower down the stream bank along both sides of Four Mile Run the City of Alexandria and Arlington County are applying herbicide. Killing the vegetation is consistent with their agreement with the Corps of Engineers to prevent floods. Many of the plants being sprayed are invasive exotics, but here's to more native plant meadows on the tops of the banks!

HERNDON'S RUNNYMEDE PARK BECOMES NATIVE PLANT REGISTRY SITE

On April 25, Marianne Mooney, President of the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, presented a Native Plant Registry Site plaque to the Town of Herndon for its Runnymede Park. The chapter officially nominated Runnymede as a Registry Site after the town council passed a supporting resolution in September. Runnymede is significant because of its diverse native plants and habitats, occurrence of special diabase plant communities, and special potential to create awareness of natural assets and native plants in the community.

VNPS directs this Registry in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy and Virginia Natural Heritage Program.

Documentation of plants, plant communities, and habitat value in the park began in 1989. The Maryland Native Plant

Society, represented by Rod Simmons, its former president and current vice president, officially began a systematic inventory in 1995, in cooperation with VNPS. Field surveys over several years in all seasons resulted in a paper titled "Vascular Flora of Runnymede Park," which is a list of the native and exotic plant species that occur in the park. These data provide an excellent scientific basis for value decisions during site planning and for ongoing resource management, and are a reference for further interpretive and general educational materials that will be prepared. A copy of the list can be obtained from the Friends of Runnymede Park (703 471-4337) or the town's Community Forester (703 787-7380).

For more information on registry sites in general see the VNPS website at www.vnps.org/registry.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

❖ **Grants**

The National Gardening Association gives grants of supplies to support youth gardening initiatives through its Youth Garden Grant Program. The deadline for applications for next year's grants is November 1. The association gives 400 grants of gardening equipment, seeds, and garden products valued at \$750. Any group, community center, camp, school, etc., of 15 or more children ages 3-18 may apply for the program. Contact NGA, 180 Flynn Ave. Burlington, VT 05401 or www.garden.org (click on youth garden grants).

❖ **Native Plant Seminar and Sale**

The Irvine Natural Science Center in Stevenson, MD, is sponsoring a native plant seminar and sale on Saturday, August 26. Speakers begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 1 p.m.; the plant sale lasts from 9-3. Call 410 484-2413 or check the Center's web site at www.explorenature.org.

❖ **Virtual Plants on Internet**

With a few clicks of a mouse, botanical researchers and hobbyists can now identify that plant they've been wondering about, announced officials at the Bronx's New York Botanical Garden. This institution has become the first major herbarium to digitize and upload images of 2,500 representatives of its plants. The images will facilitate the identification and classification of plants without having to send actual plants through the mail—the method until now. The specimen catalog is at www.nybg.org/bsci/hcol/vasc/.

❖ **Garden in the Woods**

If you are traveling to New England this summer, consider stopping at the Garden in the Woods, sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society, in Framingham, MA. Located near Concord and Lexington off the Mass. Turnpike, this garden displays over 1,600 plants including more than 200 rare and endangered species. It is open Tuesdays-Sundays, 9-5. Call 508 877-6574 or 508 877-7630 for more information.

❖ **Witch Hazel Weekend**

Because it has been chosen to display a collection of American witch hazel, an interesting and useful native shrub/small tree, Green Spring Gardens Park will celebrate with a Witch Hazel Weekend, October 20-22. There will be lectures, a tour, and a tea as well as an ongoing exhibit featuring products made from witch hazel. Consult the upcoming Fall issue of *Gardenline*, Green Spring's newsletter, for details.

CHAPTER EDUCATES THE PUBLIC AT POTOWMAC OVERLOOK OPEN HOUSE

The skull and crossbones painted on the pots of the seemingly innocuous plants caused quite a stir at the Potomac Overlook Park's Open House on May 7. The Potowmack Chapter was present, handing out a new brochure on invasive vines and doling out a lot of explanations about the pots of porcelain berry, English ivy, and honeysuckle painted with the skull and crossbones. Luckily, examples of the vines were growing all around us, climbing over trees, shrubs, and everything else in their path.

Control of invasive plants is one of the ongoing challenges at Potomac Overlook, and public education is another in which we were happy to assist. Almost everyone said they had one or the other of the plants growing in their yards, mostly unwanted. Some folks were unaware of the damage caused by vines in natural areas so we had a great educational opportunity. Here's hoping everyone went home and got out a shovel!

WANT TO JOIN VNPS? Call Linda Haller, Membership Chair, at 703 938-8504, and she will send you an application.

CHAPTER WALK SCHEDULED FOR JULY 29 CANCELLED

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the July 29 chapter walk that was to be led by Denise Gibbs has had to be cancelled. We are sorry for any inconvenience.

IN APPRECIATION

Potowmack Chapter wishes to thank two of its members for their valuable services to our organization.

Kathleen Kust became Conservation Chair in 1996 and worked with dedication and passion in that role. She organized efforts to survey the native plants at the Lorton reformatory property as well as numerous rescues, park clean-up days, tree plantings, educative displays, and so forth. She offered her services as a native plant landscaper to members at a meeting in 1998. Other commitments demanded her recent resignation as chairperson but she intends to keep active in the organization and in efforts to promote native plants (see p. 2, for example.)

Joan Van Ryzin has resigned as Hospitality Chair, a position she held since March 1994. For the past 6 years Joan single-handedly provided the refreshments for chapter meetings. She also organized the more elaborate food service offered at the Chapter Annual Meetings and donated her own beautifully painted wildflower note cards to the chapter to use as door prizes. We truly appreciate all Joan did for the sustenance of the chapter members and thank her for her dedicated service.

We'll miss both of them!

<p><u>Chapter Events</u> <u>Calendar</u></p>	<p>Potowmack Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society P.O. Box 5311 Arlington, VA 22205</p>		
<p>Aug 10 Board meeting 7pm, Green Spring</p> <p>Sept 14 Board meeting 7pm, Green Spring</p> <p>Sept 23 Plant Sale, Green Spring Park, 10-3</p> <p>Oct 15 Chapter Annual Meeting</p>	<p><i>Please verify your address information and your renewal date on the mailing label.</i></p>		
<p><i>printed on recycled paper</i></p>			