

POTOMACK NEWS

Volume 19, No 3

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

May/Jun 2001

APRIL 29 BIG DAY FOR POTOMACK CHAPTER

❖ Spring Wildflowers At Banshee Reeks

On Sunday afternoon, April 29, from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m., Dr. Stanwyn Shetler will lead a spring wildflower walk at Banshee Reeks. Loudoun County's newest park is also the county's first nature preserve. This 695-acre tract with a 2-mile frontage on Goose Creek includes a variety of habitats and plants and animals. Come join Dr. Shetler to explore some of these habitats at the height of spring and discover their vernal flora. Bring your binoculars for the birds. (See p. 6 for a description of the park.)

Space is limited to 20, **reserve now** by calling 703-920-1913 or e-mailing cgay1153@aol.com. Please include your telephone number with any message.

Directions: Take Route 7 or the Dulles Toll Road and the Greenway to Leesburg. Go south from Leesburg on Route 15 about ¼ mile from the Leesburg Bypass. Turn left onto Route 621, Evergreen Mill Road, and go about 5 miles. Approximately a half-mile past the Landfill Road (not well marked), turn right on Route 771, the Woods Road, and go about 1 mile to the entrance to Banshee Reeks on the left. Follow the long drive to the big house (Education Center) and other buildings.

❖ Spring Garden Tour

Also on April 29th is the Chapter's Spring Garden Tour, from 11 to 4 p.m. See inside for flyer with details and map for all three locations. It will also point you on in the direction of Banshee Reeks.

DR. WELLS TO LEAD CHAPTER PLANT WALK AT ACCOTINK BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE

On Saturday, May 5, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., join George Washington University botanist **Dr. Elizabeth Wells** on a walk in the Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge at Ft. Belvoir. More than 700 acres of tidal marshes and forested wetlands with many different habitats are preserved in the refuge. There will be opportunities for photography. Wear mud tolerant shoes, as we will walk along Accotink Creek. To reserve a place, call Marianne Mooney at 703-534-8179 or e-mail her at moosfy@webtv.net. Be sure to include your telephone number in all messages. The trip will be canceled for heavy rain but not for drizzle. (See p. 5 for a description of the refuge.)

Directions from Fairfax County Parkway: Take the Parkway east of I-95 to US Rt. 1. Go left at Rt. 1 for .3 mile to first light (Backlick/Pohick Rds). Turn right into Ft. Belvoir (Tulley Gate) and proceed .7 mile to the 2nd refuge parking lot on the right. **From Alexandria:** Take the George Washington Parkway south past Mt. Vernon, turning left at Rt. 1. At the 3rd light (Backlick/Pohick Rds), turn left into Ft. Belvoir (Tulley Gate) and proceed .7 mile to 2nd refuge parking lot on the right.

DON'T FORGET THE LADY SLIPPER WALK AND LECTURE WITH DR. DOUGLAS GILL

ON THURSDAY APRIL 26 The walk begins at 6:30 p.m. and the slide show is at 7:00, at Hidden Oaks Nature Center on Hummer Road in Annandale. For complete details, see *Potowmack News*, March/April 2001.

AND THE PLANT SALE, MAY 19

If you haven't done so already, mark your calendars for our semi-annual plant sale this May 19, 2001 at Green Spring Gardens Park from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Plant donations will be accepted no later than May 9 and can be delivered to the propagation beds for potting up by our corps of hardworking volunteers. If you would like to help out with this exciting task or any others prior to the sale, please contact Laura Beaty (703-534-8746) or Beth Smith (703-644-1760). We'd love to hear from you.

Green Spring Gardens Park is located at 4603 Green Spring Road, off Rt. 236 in Alexandria. Turn north at the Salvation Army/Jerry's Ford intersection.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

Coming out of the cold brown of winter into the beauty of spring is an ephemeral but delicious pleasure. It's prime time for wildflower enthusiasts—the best time of the year and it always seems too short. But it's time to get out and enjoy, don't wait too long because some of the flowers will be gone in the blink of an eye. And while you're out there looking at nature's wonders, please keep in mind the impact that even the best intentioned people have on nature. As birders have a code of ethics, so should botanizers. The number one rule should be to stay on trails and keep habitat disturbance to a minimum. In other words, don't step on one plant in your enthusiasm to see another. And, as always, donate where you can to protect, join "Friends of" groups, and participate in Chapter events. We have them for you.

Marianne Mooney

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**❖ Your Knowledge Wanted**

Potowmack Chapter member Steve Dryden is working on an historical and environmental map of the Pimmit Run stream valley. The poster-sized map will be published by Fairfax Trails and Streams, a non-profit group working with Fairfax County to complete a Pimmit Run hiking trail. Steve would like to hear from chapter members about general areas of interest in the Pimmit watershed for native plant enthusiasts. This includes both the main stem of the Pimmit and its many tributaries, whether in Arlington or Fairfax Counties. He's not planning to identify sites where particularly rare or endangered plants can be found, but he would like to provide a guide on the map to where the more common species can be seen. You can reach him at jsdryden@bellatlantic.net.

❖ Garlic Mustard Eradication At Riverbend

You can help reduce the amount of garlic mustard that is trying to take over parts of the park and crowd out the native wildflowers. We need knowledgeable people to assist groups of young people in identifying the garlic mustard so they can pull it up without disturbing other plants. If you can help, please contact VNPS member Carol Shuh. If you know of a scout troop, church group, school club, or other group or individuals (of any age) that would like to participate in this one-day event, please pass the information to them.

Date: Saturday, April 28, 2001. Time: 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

Place: Riverbend County Park, near Great Falls National Park, west of I-495 in Virginia. Meet in the parking lot near the Visitor Center

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Carol Shuh at ShuhCD@state.gov, or call her at 202-663-1020 (days) or 703-903-9046 (evenings and weekends).

EXPANDING OUR PUBLICITY

The Potowmack Chapter would like to expand its publicity of plant sales and monthly programs. If you know of any publication where you would like to see VNPS events advertised, please e-mail Publicity Chair Sylvia Orli at stone.sylvia@nrmn.si.edu and provide the name and address of the publication. Publications should be at least weekly and circulate in Arlington and Fairfax Counties.

BOARD OFFICERS

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(All numbers should include the 703 area code unless otherwise noted.)
Potowmack News is published 6 times per year, in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov. The deadline for submissions is the 15th day of the month prior to publication. Call Sally Sieracki for more information.

CALENDAR OF COMMUNITY EVENTS

Saturday, April 28. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. **Native Plant Sale.** Sponsored by the Friends of Riverbend Park and held in downtown Great Falls. Purchases support the park. Call 703-759-9018 for information.

Tuesday, May 1. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. **Trillium Trek.** Head to Linden, VA, for the display of trilliums and other spring wildflowers. Bring a bag lunch and wear hiking shoes. Moderate hike on rocky trail.

Reservations required by 4/28; call Hidden Oaks Nature Center at 703-941-1065. \$10.

Saturday, May 4. 8:30-4:30 p.m. **Trillium Trek** to Linden, VA. Adults. Travel to Linden to see one of the largest and most impressive great white trillium displays in the east and a Registry Site of the Virginia Native Plant Society. The van will leave from the Lubber Run Recreation Center parking lot, 300 N. Park Dr., Arlington. Dress for hiking and bring a bag lunch. Reservations required; call Long Branch Nature Center at 703-228-6535. \$15.

Saturday, May 5. 9-11 a.m. **Wildflower Walk-Lilies and Bells.** Adults. Search the riverside for a lovely display of trout lilies, bluebells, trilliums, and other jewels. Reservations required; call Riverbend Visitor Center at 703-759-9018. Canceled if rain. Free.

Sunday, May 6. 12-3 p.m. **Wetlands Awareness Day.** Celebrate the beauty and importance of wetlands at Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax County's premier wetland sanctuary. Stroll along the boardwalk and learn about beavers, wood ducks, and water quality. Look through a spotting scope at a great blue heron and meet a raptor up close. Enjoy games, music, and face painting at the Kids Fun Fair. There is a small fee for some activities. Call the park visitor center at 703-768-2525 for information.

Saturday, May 12. 9 a.m.-noon. Prince William Wildflower Society **Plant Sale.** Bethel Lutheran Church, Sudley Road and Plantation Lane, Manassas, VA. Call 703-368-8431 for information.

Saturday, May 12. **Benefit Garden Tour** sponsored by the Gardening for Galapagos Foundation.

Money from the tour will go directly to the Charles Darwin Research Station in the Galapagos Islands and will be used to help protect the unique and beautiful flora of the Archipelago. A guided bus tour will visit six Northern Virginia gardens featuring native plants used in shade, sun, and water settings; stone walls; patios; and a children's garden. Tickets cost \$20 and may be ordered by contacting the foundation at 1-800-283-7115, John Magee at 703-478-9428, or the Web at <http://members.aol.com/euphorbia> (click on garden tours).

Sunday, May 27. 1-3 p.m. Green Spring's **Native Plant Trail Walk.** Enjoy the native plant trail with an interpreter from VNPS and discover the spring ephemerals. Call Green Spring Horticultural Center at 703-642-5173. Reservation and prepayment required. \$18.

June 7-9. 11th Annual **Native Plants in the Landscape Conference**, Lancaster County, PA. The conference focus will be on the best plants and practices for natural garden design and habitat restoration. It will include a native plant sale, expert speakers, a variety of break-out sessions, field trips, and more. For registration information, contact the Office of Extended Programs, Millersville University, at 717-872-3030 or check its web site at <http://muweb.millersville.edu/~npitl/index.html>. Costs: \$125 for a commuter, \$170 for double room, \$195 for a single, \$40 for optional field trips.

TESTIMONY ON THE ARLINGTON COUNTY BUDGET

On March 6, Laura Beaty represented the Virginia Native Plant Society at budget hearings before the Arlington County Board. She discussed the lack of funding in the Parks Department budget for invasive exotic plant removal in area parks. County parks are overrun with English ivy, porcelain berry, and numerous other invasive plant species, many of which have crept into park areas from neighboring yards. The only money the county has spent to date has been for the publication of the brochure "Invaders in our Backyards." With Marianne Mooney's testimony last year and Laura's this year, along with support from the Urban Forestry Commission and the Park and Recreation Commission, the issue is finally getting the county's attention. While no funds were included in the original budget, the County Board has apparently agreed to add funds for park maintenance, including invasives removal.

USING LOCAL GENOTYPES by Mary Ann Lawler

A recent Plant Conservation Alliance e-mail discussion among university scientists and natural resource experts from both Federal agencies and conservation organizations poses a dilemma for those involved in planting native species. The original question was "Is it important to use local genotypes in planting natives in the landscape?"

Although plants may be the same species and can therefore interbreed, it is possible for many plants to vary genetically from one location to another, as they have evolved over time to accommodate local environmental conditions. The traits of these local genotypes are passed down. Does it matter whether we use local genotypes in planting native species? The answers are not simple.

For one thing it is not clear which plants do have local genotypes. One person suggested that wind pollinated and wind dispersed species, such as grasses, may not vary as much by location, while those pollinated by insects and spread by land animals may indeed vary. Rare species may be more likely to form local genotypes than widespread species. Without vastly more scientific study, we do not know enough. More studies on genotypes need to be done, but funds to do so are scarce.

Even without the available science, government agencies must proceed with habitat restoration and re-vegetation projects. Yet those involved don't appear to agree on use of local genotypes. Some argue that it is better to plant non-invasive exotics than to pollute the gene pool of native plants. Others argue that it might be better to plant natives from any source than to let exotics take over. They contend that we are not yet able to judge the potential invasiveness of all species. One person even suggested that the interbreeding of natives could produce healthier plants, such as occurs with animals.

Another issue in restoration efforts is the adaptability of non-local genotypes. Many natural resource managers have serious questions about the long-term ability of non-local plants to survive and reproduce in an environment that may be different from their place of origin. If a genotype from a more northerly species were to be moved to a different hardiness zone, different moisture levels, and different hours of daylight, it is possible that any bees, insects, and butterflies relying on that plant to be at a particular stage in its development when they emerge would be at a loss. One example was that buffalo grass from northern Texas planted in the southern part of the State, went dormant in winter while the local buffalo grass remained green. In another example, big bluestem seed from Iowa used by the State Department of Transportation along a highway in northern Lower Michigan has failed to produce seed after 9 years.

A major part of the problem is finding sources of local genotypes, particularly for large-scale restoration efforts. Therefore, some agencies have settled for plants and seeds with "regional" or ecotype genetics. To some this means applying a 100-mile radius rule. To others it means a 50-mile radius rule. As the name implies, they use only those plants obtained from within a 50- or 100-mile radius of the restoration site. U.S. Forest Service botanists in the Pacific Northwest follow a guideline that suggests staying within 1,000-foot elevation bands within individual watersheds for sources of seeds or plant material, or at least 2- to 3,000-foot bands where availability is an issue. A much more restrictive guideline suggested that seed of herbaceous species be collected not more than 100 meters away and seed of woody species not more than one kilometer away.

The restoration of large-scale natural areas is one level of concern. Should we also be concerned about isolated patches, such as local parks, schoolyard gardens, or our own backyards even in urban areas? Some say yes, definitely, because plants in those areas will eventually come in contact with the larger gene pool, as cities try to create greenways to connect natural areas, and pollinators move freely among them.

In response to these concerns, some native plant societies have developed guidelines on the sources of native plants for home landscaping. We in the Virginia Native Plant Society may not yet know enough to set good guidelines; but we certainly need to be sensitive to the issue. One thing is very clear. We should strongly support funding for more genetic studies of native plant populations, so that we can make informed decisions.

RIPARIAN BUFFERS IMPROVE THE CHESAPEAKE BAY by Mary Ann Lawler

The topic of streamside restoration using native plants drew a large audience at the **March 8 Chapter program**. **Judy Okay**, a regional forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry, spoke about the importance of streamside buffers to the protection of the quality of water throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. She spoke about how riparian forest buffers store excess water, control erosion, provide shade and food for fish and other water creatures, improve water quality by filtering and reducing sediment, and provide wildlife habitat and corridors. She explained the importance of using diverse species in our restoration efforts. Not only do they benefit birds, pollinators, and other land creatures through each season, but the fauna in the streams as well. For example, macro-invertebrates feeding on decomposing leaves in the water benefit from the thin leaves of the cherries and maples in fall, but are sustained over longer periods of time by oak and other thick leaves which decompose more slowly. Needles from evergreens provide food supplies to the macro-invertebrates over a couple of years.

In addition Ms. Okay provided several excellent handouts, with lists of woody and herbaceous plants, which grow well in the four different riparian zones: streamside, managed buffer, shrub/grass, and upland interface. Some examples included in her slide presentation were sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), red twig dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), alder (*Alnus serrulata*), persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium fistulosum*), ironweed (*Vernonia altissima*), and numerous others.

Examples of streamside buffer restoration can be seen at Green Spring Gardens Park. Director **Chris Strand** spoke about the work there, which include three of the riparian buffer zones: (1) "waters edge, emergent," around the pond; (2) "lower flood plain, saturated soils," to create sheet flow in the Green Spring woodland; and (3) "upper flood plain, occasionally saturated soils" in a meadow area. Visit Green Spring to view the restoration work.

For more information on riparian forest buffers including a plant list, visit the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation website at: <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/native.htm>

FYI: SOME BACKGROUND ON ACCOTINK BAY REFUGE AND BANSHEE REEKS by Marianne Mooney

Hidden away in Fort Belvoir is Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge, 1,630 acres of quiet beauty used mostly by fishermen, hunters, and base personnel. Very few people hike on the 9 miles of trails or cast their gaze over Accotink Bay to see soaring bald eagles. And in the heat of August, only the hardy few bear witness to the glorious masses of *Hibiscus moscheutos* and attendant butterflies. But I'm prepared to break my silence and let you in on one of the nicest places in our area to take a walk.

Along with other parks and refuges in the area, Accotink Bay WR forms a continuous 15-mile forest, marsh, and wildlife corridor. One mission of the Refuge is to help enhance and protect the Chesapeake Bay by preserving the land around Accotink Bay. Last year an Environmental Education Center opened, providing opportunities for school children to learn about the area.

Within the refuge are a variety of ecologically significant habitats. Tidal hardwood swamps, shrub swamps, seepage swamps, beaver ponds, creeks, and tidal marshes are some of the "wet" habitats. Oak-hickory forests, Virginia pine forests, and great stands of beech trees (with beech drops) make up the drier portions of the refuge. Dr. Elizabeth Wells has catalogued the extensive plant life of the area including 16 species of ferns, orchids, 15 types of *Carex*, and many wetland plants like the swamp rose mallow and yellow water-lily. We are extremely lucky to have Dr. Wells herself leading our chapter there on a walk May 5. For those so inclined, there is also a refuge bird list totaling 250 species.

For a wonderful introduction to Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge, join Dr. Wells and Chapter members on a spring walk through one of the best kept secrets in our area. (Continued on p. 6.)

**The Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
Presents a
GARDEN TOUR
SUNDAY APRIL 29, 2001, FROM 11:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.**

In Fairfax

❖ **Nalle Garden**, 3900 Malcolm Ct., Annandale, VA (ADC Map 15, Grid C12)

This garden is a work in progress. So far, only the front and one side have been landscaped, with 99 percent native plants and a small pond. The garden is only 1 year old and is still settling in; some plants don't seem to be as happy as others are. The foamflower should have done well but didn't. The green-and-gold loves its area. The house is located in a mature oak/tulip poplar forest, so there are mostly understory plantings. The idea is to have a suburban landscaped yard along with the layers and flora that would be present in a second growth forest.

❖ **Pratt Garden**, 4114 Whitacre, Fairfax, VA (ADC Map 14, Grid C12)

The 35-year development of the Pratt garden was influenced primarily by two of its owners' interests: to create a habitat for wildlife displaced by suburban development and to express a love of native plants.

The high shade of many established trees on the property allowed for both these aims. The garden borders on dedicated flood plain, with a stream that attracts many different kinds of birds and small mammals. It also extends the vista of the garden.

The area naturally contained dogwoods, pinxter azaleas, and native ferns. To these, the Pratts added many native plants that they transplanted from their summer cabin in Front Royal: Virginia bluebells, twinleaves, bloodroots, toothworts, dogtooth violets, and many more. In addition to the plants, many limestone rocks were carted back to provide a natural setting for the plants and to accommodate the wildlife that thrives among the rocks.

A small fiberglass pond was added about 15 years ago, now occupied by two very large koi. In addition, a small bog was put in to accommodate an area that received drainage from the neighbor's driveway. Turtlehead, monarda, spiderworts, and other moisture loving plants grow there.

In Clifton:

❖ **Camfiord Garden**, 13025 Compton Road, Clifton, VA (ADC Map 19, Grid D7, E7)

These gardens evolved over the past 24 years, designed by trial and error, romping dogs, soccer balls, a skateboard ramp (now the back paths), the well and septic field, and fauna--including a ground hog produced "sink hole" that became a shady pond. Wide mossy paths and a naturalistic parklike feel are enhanced by over 400 species and cultivars, most of the more common in drifts and as "thugs" that are popping up all over. Areas are interplanted with hostas, primroses, daylilies, etc. Unusual plants include rue anemone, meadowsweet, golden seal, great merrybells, baneberries, goatsbeard, cimicifugas, Dutchman's pipe, Oconee bells, trilliums, *Clematis erecta*, and shooting stars in the fern bed. Others include red and bottlebrush buckeye; fothergillas; and native azaleas, including the beautiful *vaseyi*, which hopefully will be in bloom in the main island bed. There are also mistakes you might learn from...

Refreshments will be served on the deck by the "Look into Garden." Handicapped should park in the driveway, otherwise park on Clifton Forest and enter through either gate.

Call Billie Trump at 703-960-1476 for more information. The tours are free and no reservations are necessary. See map on reverse side for additional directions to the gardens.

Key: (●) LIGHTS WITH OR WITHOUT TURN LANE
(X) NORTH

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Directions assume you will start at the Nalle Garden and end at Clifton, where you could continue on to the Loudoun Co. walk. Allow 20-25 mins. total driving time between the 3 gardens, and an additional 45-50 min. to reach Banister Rees Park if you have planned on joining Dr. Sheller's walk at 2:30. (See newsletter for specific directions for this walk.)

Brochures for the Pt. Wm. Chapter Tour will be at the Camford garden. Two additional gardens on acreage are featured. They are in the Manassas area and 25-30 min. away. Should you want to visit the Audubon facility in Clifton, it is shown on the map. There are many wildflowers there some in rugged terrain.

Directions assume you will start at the Nalle Garden and end at Clifton, where you could continue on to the Loudoun Co. walk. Allow 20-25 mins. total driving time between the 3 gardens, and an additional 45-50 min to reach Bansee Reeks Park if you have planned on joining Dr. Shelter's walk at 2:30. (See newsletter for specific directions for this walk.)

Banshee Reeks Park, 6 miles south of Leesburg, was designated a nature preserve in 1999. The park consists of 700 acres of mixed hardwood forest, meadows, ponds and successional fields. The southern border of the park is formed by a 2-mile section of Goose Creek, a State Scenic River. The Park's mission is to protect the natural habitats, conduct ecological research, and provide access to the public. The Potowmack Chapter will visit Banshee Reeks on April 29 under the guidance of Dr. Stan Shetler. The diversity of habitat promises a wide array of wildflowers and Dr. Shetler promises to help us identify them!

As for the unusual Gaelic name, Banshee is a female spirit and Reeks refers to hills and dales. On a windy night in the 19th century, after a trip to the town's pub, the farm's owner claimed to have heard a "banshee on the reeks." The only howling you'll hear on the walk will be cries of delight from Chapter members.

THE POTOWMACK CHAPTER WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

Margi Corsello, Arlington; Kurt Kratz, Burke; Edgar Smith, Great Falls; Jean Shirhall, Arlington; Arlene Stigen, Springfield; Anne Parke, Alexandria; R. Duff McCully, Wash. DC; Anne Cannizzaro, Reston; Anne Riley, Arlington; Jean Hanson, Vienna; Kimra McAfee, Alexandria; and Jean Hnarakis, Fairfax.

- ❖ WANT TO JOIN VNPS? Call Linda Haller, Membership Chair, at 703-938-8504, and she will send you an application. Already belong but want to know your expiration date? Check your mailing label below.
- ❖ WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV? Send an e-mail to Sylvia Orli at stone.sylvia@nrmnh.si.edu and in the message section write subscribe to vnps-pot, your e-mail address, and your full name. Or visit www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/vnps-pot.

<u>Chapter Events</u> <u>Calendar</u>		Potowmack Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society P.O. Box 5311 Arlington, VA 22205
Apr. 26	Douglas Gill walk and lecture, 6:30 pm, Hidden Oaks Nature Center	
Apr. 29	Garden Tour, 11 am-4 pm	
Apr. 29	Stan Shetler walk, Banshee Reeks, 2:30 pm	
May 5	E. Wells walk, 9:30 am, Accotink Bay WR	
May 10	Board Mtg, 7:30 pm	
May 19	Plant Sale, Green Springs Park, 10-3	
Jun 1-3	State Annual Mtg Winchester, VA	Please verify your address information and your renewal date on the mailing label. <i>Printed on recycled paper</i>
Jun 14	Board Mtg, 7:30pm	