

# POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 20, No 6

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Nov/Dec 2002

## **REMEMBER TO VOTE NOVEMBER 5**

As you likely know, this November 5th the voters of Virginia will have the opportunity to vote for the first state park bond in 10 years. And, Fairfax County and Arlington County both have bond issues that would benefit local parks. Statewide, voters will determine the fate of a \$119 million bond proposal for state parks and natural areas. Virginia's natural heritage is rich and unique, a biodiversity "hotspot" in the Nation. Yet less than three percent of the areas identified as critical by biologists are protected. The state bond will provide \$36.5 million to purchase special sites for park and natural areas throughout Virginia. We need your help to spread the word and get people to turn out to vote for parks. This year there are few contested elections; therefore, voter turnout is expected to be low. **Show your support for conservation. Please take the time to vote.** (For more information on these bonds, see page 3.)



## **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9: ACCOTINK STREAM VALLEY WALK**

Registry Chair, **Rod Simmons**, will lead a walk along the **Accotink Stream Valley in Mill Creek Park, Fairfax County**, on Saturday, November 9 from 10:00am to 2:00 pm. This event is co-sponsored by the Maryland Native Plant Society.

Accotink Creek is one of the largest and most picturesque streams in Fairfax County. This walk will focus on a diverse, wooded area of parkland along the beltway (495) that has been proposed by roadway expansion advocates as a place to build additional beltway lanes. This area contains the oldest rock outcrops in the local piedmont region, good stands of mature oak-hickory forest, numerous fern seeps, a diversity of herbaceous species, and beautiful views of Accotink Creek. In addition, we will see a variety of oaks; American chestnut; large colonies of heaths, including mountain laurel, pinxterflower, black highbush blueberry, and fetterbush; and many species of ferns.

**Bring:** Water and snacks or lunch. Wear sturdy shoes. **Note:** Moderate walk. **Questions? Contact:** Rod Simmons 703-256-7671

**Directions:** From Route 50 or the Washington Beltway (495) exit at Gallows Road. Make a left onto Gallows Road at light and immediately move to far right lane to turn right onto Holly Road (Exxon gas station at corner). Take Holly Road a short distance to Saxony Drive. Turn left onto Saxony Drive and proceed a short distance to Camelot Drive. Turn left onto Camelot Drive and proceed short distance to Balin Court. Turn right into Balin Court and park under cherry trees along white curb (also park along white curbs on Camelot Drive). We'll meet at Balin Court.

## **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14: "THE LONGLEAF PINE, THE TREE AND ECOSYSTEM, FROM TEXAS TO VIRGINIA"**

**Julie Moore**, now an Endangered Species Specialist with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, will present a program on the forces that created and maintained the longleaf pine ecosystem, the extent and condition of those forests today, and the distinctive and diverse plant and animal species that they support. Learn why it is vital to protect additional habitat in Virginia for this important species. The program will be at 7:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens Park.

Ms. Moore has been a conservation biologist in Mississippi, North Carolina, and Florida, with expertise in endangered species, wetlands, native timber, and conservation easements. She also compiled and edited the North Carolina Wildflower Preservation Society's "Wildflower Propagation Handbook."

**Directions to Green Spring Gardens Park:** From Interstate 395, exit at Route 236 West (Little River Turnpike) in Alexandria, turn right at Green Spring Road and proceed 1 block north to the park entrance.

**PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:**

Leaves are falling and plants are going dormant as the season fades to winter. But we'll still be carrying on, offering indoor programs this winter and a walk on November 9. Our board is exploring the idea of offering small conservation grants to people working in the field of native plant research and conservation. We've recently donated money to our state board, which has been pressed for funds. With membership and donations their only source of funds, their expenses in joining all the chapters together can be draining. Please think about donating to the state or chapter when making your year-end donations. Our work may not be on the grand scale of large conservation organizations, but we reach directly out to our members and the public to raise awareness of our often-neglected local flora.

Marianne Mooney

**ARLINGTON COUNTY COMES TOGETHER TO CREATE WILDLIFE HABITAT**

The Arlington Community Wildlife Habitat Project (ACWH), a new initiative in Arlington County, is helping to provide habitat for urban wildlife. The goal of the team working on the project is to create 1,000 wildlife habitats in Arlington within the next few years.

“Working on the creation of these landscapes will teach the young and old alike about the plants and wildlife around them and expose them to the beauty of nature right in their own backyards,” according to Elenor Hodges, executive director of Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, one of the groups involved in the project.

Other members of the ACWH team include county residents, staff from the local nature centers, the Arlington Wild Birds Unlimited Store, and members of the Virginia Native Plant Society.

The ACWH project became a registered community project within National Wildlife Federation’s Backyard Wildlife Habitat program earlier this spring. Wildlife habitats provide food, water, shelter and places for wildlife to raise young. The benefits of the project include beautifying the community, enriching and improving the local environment, and providing community residents with a substantive way to complement the area’s growing urbanization. It will also lead to the creation of sustainable landscapes that promote neighborhood beautification and resource conservation.

As part of the initiative, the ACWH team is organizing educational and outreach opportunities for individual citizens, families, local schools and a broad range of civic and community organizations. These opportunities will include workshops and other resources to educate and train those interested in creating habitat landscapes.

Residents of Arlington interested in helping the ACWH effort can contact Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment at 703-228-6427 or [office@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:office@arlingtonenvironment.org), or visit their website at [www.arlingtonenvironment.org](http://www.arlingtonenvironment.org). If you don't live in Arlington County, the National Wildlife Federation can help you certify a habitat in your neighborhood. For more information, check out NWF's website at [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org).

BOARD OFFICERS		
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Garden Tours	Billie Trump	960-1476
(All numbers should include the 703 area code, unless otherwise noted.) <i>Potowmack News</i> 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 Mary Ann Lawler for more information or e-mail her at <a href="mailto:malawler@aol.com">malawler@aol.com</a> .		

**VIRGINIA PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS BOND ACT OF 2002**

By Nikki Rovner (*reprinted with permission of the author*)

On Election Day, Nov. 5, 2002, Virginians will have the opportunity to vote on a \$119 million Virginia Parks and Natural Areas bond referendum.

If approved, bond funds will be used to conserve Virginia's important natural resources and provide more recreational offerings. Virginia has been called an "ecological crossroads" for its vast range of distinctive natural communities, physiographic regions, and natural features. The state's natural area preserve system protects lands that harbor some of the best examples of natural communities and rare plant and animal species in Virginia and around the world. To preserve sensitive natural habitat land, the bond would create ten new natural areas preserves and expand eight existing preserves.

The bond measure would also buy land for three new state parks as well as additional land for eleven of Virginia's existing parks. In total, over \$36 million will be allocated towards land conservation. Under the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement, the bay states are committed to permanent protection 20% of the land area of the bay watershed from development by 2010. Increasing the land base of the state parks and natural area preserves is an important component of this goal.

The remainder of funds provided by the bond will pay for facility upgrades at nearly all of Virginia's 34 state parks. This money will be used for additions and improvements, and not to pay for current operating costs. Projects include construction of trails, cabins, campgrounds, and other offerings throughout the state parks, and protection of park land from severe shoreline erosion. It is important to Virginia's economy to have well-maintained parks and recreational facilities. Virginia's state parks provide more than \$140 million dollars to our economy.

Virginia's parks and natural areas are clearly worthy of state investment. The state park system is a National Gold Medal award winner for excellence in park and recreation management. This award was presented by the National Sporting Goods Association's Sports Foundation Inc. in cooperation with the National Recreation and Park Association. The Nature Conservancy recognized Virginia's natural areas program in 1994 as the best in the Western Hemisphere.

A similar bond referendum received strong voter approval in 1992. That was a presidential election year, however, and voter turnout is expected to be much lower this year. **It is therefore extremely important that conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts head to the polls on November 5 to vote yes on the bond referendum, and encourage their friends to do so.**

*[Nikki Rovner is Director of Government Relations for The Nature Conservancy of Virginia, 490 Westfield Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901, phone: 434.295.6106 fax: 434.979.0370, email:nrovner@tnc.org.]*

**LOCAL PARK BONDS**

In addition to the state bond issue, Fairfax County and Arlington County will both have bond issues on their November 5 ballots that will benefit parks and natural areas in those counties. If Fairfax voters approve their county bond proposal, the Fairfax County Park Authority would receive \$20 million to invest in its park system: \$15 million for acquisition of land and \$5 million for development of park facilities. This would be in addition to \$950,000 for improvements at Mason Neck State Park that is included in the State bond proposal. Arlington County, too, has \$20.5 million in its overall bond proposal that would benefit parks. Of that total, \$8.5 million would be to acquire land and facilities consistent with the Open Space Master Plan. The remainder would be for development, improvements, and rehabilitation of parks and open space. **Let's support these bonds, too.**



**HIGHWAY ROBBERY: SALES TAX MEANS MORE SPRAWL, MORE TRAFFIC, MORE POLLUTION** by Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director, Coalition for Smarter Growth

“Road Projects Wouldn’t End N.VA’s Misery,” said a recent Washington Post headline about the sales tax. Induced traffic will fill up 50 to 90% of new road lanes in as little as 5 years. I-270 filled-up in less than eight years after its widening to 12 lanes. The amount we drive is rising three times the rate of population growth due to suburban sprawl – the scattering of development such that people are given no choice but to drive.

The development industry is the biggest source of the \$1.5 billion in funding for the campaign to boost the sales tax. Central to their support is the inclusion in the tax package of two new highways west of Dulles Airport as part of their plan for a Western Bypass and a Techway across the Potomac. Nearly 65,000 acres are held for speculative development near these roads in Loudoun and Prince William alone. Development will explode and consume thousands of acres of natural habitat. It will pave over large portions of Goose Creek, Beaverdam Creek and Occoquan River watersheds. Meanwhile, expanding the Beltway to 12 lanes and I-66 to at least 10 lanes will lead to increases in driving, take parkland, create more impervious surface, damage creeks and generate more air and water pollution.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation has established that current patterns of development will consume 800,000 acres in the region by 2030. American Rivers reports that sprawl is reducing groundwater and surface water recharge, exacerbating drought conditions and harming species requiring a minimum summertime flow. Air pollution will be worsened by the addition of hundreds of lane-miles of new highways.

Meanwhile, transit earmarks total just 22.6% of the entire \$5 billion package. Of this, \$350 million for Dulles Rail would go to reduce contributions promised by commercial landowners for the project. Only \$12.5 million per year would go toward the \$6.2 billion in essential maintenance and railcar needs of Metro.

Instead of blindly increasing capacity, it’s time we turned to better land use planning and other measures to reduce the amount that people have to drive. This has the important benefit of consuming less land while protecting natural habitats, watersheds, groundwater recharge and drinking water supplies.

The Coalition for Smarter Growth’s Blueprint for a Better Region ([www.smartergrowth.net](http://www.smartergrowth.net) and [www.nosprawltax.org](http://www.nosprawltax.org)), supports continued revitalization of DC; development and jobs for Prince George’s 13 empty Metro stations; land conservation; more walkable communities with real town centers; focusing offices at empty transit stations in Fairfax; and making Tyson’s Corner more walkable.

The sales tax hike is being pushed by developers as a permanent tax to fund another round of highways and sprawl. It will make traffic worse, not better. It will harm our natural environment. It’s time we did better. We can start by VOTING NO on the transportation sales tax increase.

**MEADOWLARK BOTANICAL GARDENS, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA**

**Meadowlark Botanical Gardens** new web site is up thanks to Washington Academy of Science. The address is [www.washacadsci.org/meadowlark-gardens/](http://www.washacadsci.org/meadowlark-gardens/) The Potomac Valley Native Plant Collection is described in the Conservation section. A more detailed look at the collection and Meadowlarks conservation program on Potomac Valley floristics is found in this summer’s issue of Wildflower. As always, an admission fee waiver is in effect for all VNPS members.

**WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV?**

Send an e-mail to Sylvia Orli at [stone.sylvia@nsmh.si.edu](mailto:stone.sylvia@nsmh.si.edu) and in the message section write subscribe to vnps-pot, your e-mail address, and your full name. Or visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vnps-pot/join>

### **FALL PLANT SALE REPORT by Laura Beaty and Beth Smith**

In contrast to the cold, rainy and windy weather for our Spring sale, the Fall sale did not require any rain gear. In fact, it was hot and sunny. With about 1,200 plants to sell, we are grateful to the many volunteers who donated, potted and sold the plants at the September 21 sale at Green Spring Gardens Park. Special thanks to our dedicated propagation bed volunteers who nurtured the plants during a very stressful summer. Extra hours of watering were needed to keep the plants alive. Thanks to these people the plants were potted for the sales table: Vivian Attermeyer, Edith Bradbury, Margaret Chatham, Susan Crawford, Roberta Day, Dusty Dikes, Eleanor Kask, Mary Ann Lawler, Marianne Mooney, Louis Nichols, Neal Sigmon, and Billie Trump. Not all of the plants we sell are from our propagation beds. We rely on donations from our members for plants that we are not able to grow at the beds. We want to thank these members for their donations: Vivian Attermeyer, Margaret Chatham, Mary Ann Lawler, Marianne Mooney, Beth Smith, Jody Marshall, Edith Bradbury, Tiana Camfiord and Laura Beaty. Thanks also to those who left us plants and pots but whose names we did not get.

Finally, we want to thank the members who participated in the sale. The customers really appreciated the extra help in picking out suitable plants and having questions answered by those who have experience with specific plants. This joint effort makes the sale lots of fun for those who participate. Please join us if you can, and learn as you go. Mega-thanks for those who gave their time and talent for the sale: Rob

Aldrich, Vivian Attermeyer, Edith Bradbury, Tiana Camfiord, Margaret Chatham, Roberta Day, Dusty Dukes, Sharon Jaffu, Eleanor Kask, Chris King, Paul Kovenock, Mary Ann Lawler, Marianne Mooney, Louis Nichols, Sylvia Orli, Lisa Palmer, Del Ray, Jane Taylor, and Billie Trump.

Please let us know if you are interested in helping us in the beds or at the sales next year. Until then, enjoy the best planting season of the year—Fall.

### **VIRGINIA CREEPER—JUST DE-VINE! by Mary Ann Lawler**

While in North Carolina recently, I came across an Associated Press article by Lee Reich in The Sanford Herald with some interesting facts about the ubiquitous Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), whose crimson leaves are at their showiest this time of year. One is that the ivy covering the walls of Ivy League college buildings is not really ivy. It's Virginia creeper.

While Virginia creeper (which the British call American ivy) does grow dense enough to cover walls and it grows up tree trunks and dangles from their limbs, it doesn't harm the buildings or the trees. It is a fast growing vine, sending out more than 10 feet of new growth a year. And it will grow in sun or shade in almost any soil.

After its leaves fall, clusters of dark blue berries remain, to be feasted on by birds. Lee Reich reports that bluebirds are especially fond of the fruit. And the Audubon Society's book on The Bird Garden states that in addition to bluebirds, Downy woodpeckers, Rose-breasted grosbeaks, Northern flickers, and robins are attracted to its fruit. So it is a great plant for backyard habitats.

Some people may be reluctant to use it in their landscape because of its creeping tendencies, but it can be controlled. I use it to meander underneath azaleas in part sun to keep their roots cool. I do have to clip it back a couple of times during the year. I have also encouraged the vines to grow up a dead tree, where they are out of the way, but produce abundant fruit for birds. And perhaps the most creative user of Virginia creeper is our propagation chair, **Laura Beaty**, who has a very attractive, low-growing hedge of it along a sidewalk leading to her front door. So think again about its possibilities in your landscaping.

Oh, and one other item of interest from Lee Reich: "It's neither ivy nor Virginia creeper that led to the name 'Ivy League.' That name came about because there were originally only four Ivy League colleges, and four in Roman numerals is IV."



**ARLINGTON’S RIP PROJECT: INVASIVE INVENTORIES AND REMOVAL PROJECTS**

On September 8, several Arlington community members, led by Jan Ferrigan, (*in photo at left*) the County’s invasive species coordinator, tackled a major infestation of Japanese knotweed in Hillside Park near Rosslyn. This species spreads quickly along streams and is highly destructive of native habitat. For detailed information on Japanese knotweed see the following websites:

<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/documnts/polycus.html>

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pocu1.htm>

**Upcoming RiP Projects:**

**November 9:** 9 am - noon **Alcova Heights Park**, 901 S. George Mason Drive. Meet at the Alcova Heights Park sign at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and George Mason Dr. For information contact Jan Ferrigan at 703-228-7636 or [jferriga@vt.edu](mailto:jferriga@vt.edu)

**OTHER DATES TO KEEP IN MIND:**

**Dec 12 & 14 Winter Weeds and Wildflowers** (Thursday evening class 7:30-9:30pm and Saturday field trip 10am-4pm) Audubon Naturalist Society, Woodend Sanctuary; Leader Stephanie Mason \$42 (non-members). For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

**Jan 15 to Mar 19 —Winter Woody Plant Identification** USDA Graduate School: Woodend Nature Center. Evening classes plus three field trips: \$229 Instructor, Cris Fleming. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at [www.grad.usda.gov](http://www.grad.usda.gov)

*"We have only one choice: to conserve plants and live with them or destroy them and perish after them." -Statement of Ugandan representative to 6th Conference of Parties to the Global Convention on Biological Diversity, April 12, 2002.*

	<p><b>Potowmack Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society P.O. Box 5311 Arlington, VA 22205</b></p>									
<p><b><u>Chapter Events Calendar</u></b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; padding: 5px;">Nov</td> <td style="width: 10%; padding: 5px;">9</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">10am to 2pm Accotink Stream Valley Walk</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Nov</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">14</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">6:45 Board Meeting 7:30 Longleaf Pine Forests in VA Green Spring</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Dec</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">12</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Board Meeting 7:30 Green Spring</td> </tr> </table>	Nov	9	10am to 2pm Accotink Stream Valley Walk	Nov	14	6:45 Board Meeting 7:30 Longleaf Pine Forests in VA Green Spring	Dec	12	Board Meeting 7:30 Green Spring	<p><i>Please verify your address information and your renewal date on the mailing label.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Printed on recycled paper</i></p>
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