

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 21, No 5

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Sept/Oct 2003

CHAPTER PLANT SALE GREEN SPRING -- SEPTEMBER 6 (See Page 2 for details)

SUMMER WILDFLOWER WALK AT RUNNYMEDE PARK – SEPTEMBER 7; 10AM – 3PM

Runnymede Park in Herndon is a VNPS Registry Site, notable for its wealth of flora; over 450 plant species are listed in the Runnymede Flora. Much of its diversity is due to the diabase soils and the variety of habitats, many of which are rare to uncommon in Virginia. Dozens of summer wildflowers should be in bloom and grasses, trees and shrubs will be in bloom and in fruit. This easy walk, led by Rod Simmons, will be on trails bordering meadows, through forested areas and along wetlands and streams. After the walk, there will be spicebush and other herbal teas offered at the Carroll House in the park. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a bag lunch and water. Co-sponsored by Friends of Runnymede, Town of Herndon and Reston Association. For more information, call Shirley Gay (703-920-1913) or Rod Simmons (703-256-7671). Directions: *Fairfax County Parkway (or the Dulles Toll Road to its Fairfax County Parkway exit), make a right at the parkway end in Herndon; next right onto Herndon Parkway; proceed a short distance across Elden St., and look for the park entrance on the right.*

THE FLORA AND THE FAUNA FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE TIDEWATER VNPS ANNUAL MEETING REMINDER: MANASSAS SEPT. 13, 14, AND 15

Join VNPS members statewide for the annual meeting in Manassas, which will include interesting speakers and excellent field trips, including the recently acquired Bull Run Mountain area bordering Fauquier County and Prince William County. The State VNPS organization recently mailed detailed information on the meeting to all members. See also www.vnps.org for registration information.

TRI-STATE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY FALL CONFERENCE UPDATE: OCT. 4 AND 5

Highlights of the conference include a field trip on Friday, October 3, to Snavelly's Ford Trail, Antietam National Battlefield and a ghost tour at Harpers Ferry. Saturday's speakers include Avery Drake – Overview of the Geology of the Blue Ridge Province, Gary Fleming – Diverse Natural Communities and Flora of the Blue Ridge, and Cris Fleming – Rare Plants of the Harpers Ferry Area. A fern ID workshop and field trips are planned for the afternoon. Sunday morning will feature a panel discussion inviting folks to share ideas regarding "The Role of Native Plant Societies in Conservation" with Stan Shetler, Rod Simmons, and Leslie Sauer. Field trips Sunday afternoon include: Yankauer Preserve (very near conference site)– Joe Metzger; Shanondale Wildlife Management Area, outside of Charles Town, WV – Larry Stritch and the G Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area, Appalachian Trail, Fauquier County, VA – Bob Pickett. *Our July/August newsletter had conference registration details. Also see www.wvnps.org for a conference brochure and registration form. For more information, please contact: Meghan Tice, 2003 Regional Conference Chair, cecropia13@msn.com or 301-809-0139.*

POTOWMACK CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING AND WALK – OCTOBER 23 & 25

Our heightened awareness of the loss of magnolia bogs in our area and the preciousness of those which remain led us to choose these special areas as the focus of our annual meeting in October. Join us on Thursday, October 23 at 7:30pm at Green Spring Gardens Park for a brief business meeting to vote on new officers, followed by a presentation by Jim Long, coordinator of Friends of Mattawoman Creek on "Magnolia Bogs - Gems of the Fall Line." Rod Simmons, our Registry Chair and noted field ecologist, will lead a magnolia bog walk at the magnolia bog in Franconia/Springfield, VA, on Saturday, October 25 from 10am - 1pm. For more information call Rod Simmons 703-256-5671 *Directions to Green Spring Gardens Park: From Interstate 395, exit at Route 236 West (Little River Turnpike) in Alexandria, turn right at Braddock Road and proceed 1 block north to the park entrance.*

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.” John Muir

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

It sometimes seems as if conservationists are the silent majority. Surveys done by various organizations, including a recent one by the Department of Conservation and Recreation in Virginia, show that the majority of respondents prefer passive recreation. That would include walking, picnicking, birding, and maybe even botanizing. Unfortunately, conservationists are not a well-organized majority as most people pursue these activities on an individual or small group basis. Hence, when it comes time to speak out about land use, organized groups (sports clubs, etc.) are often the most vocal and listened to people. I encourage all our members to take note of conservation issues in your neighborhoods, county and state and speak out as often as you can for preservation of open space. Not many people notice plants, it's all green to most, so we ask you to speak for the plants.

Marianne Mooney

PLANT SALE GREEN SPRING SEPT 6

The annual fall native plant sale for the Potowmack Chapter is scheduled for September 6 from 9AM to 3PM at Green Spring Gardens Park. Be looking for some changes in the arrangements this year.

Note that the new entrance to the park at Braddock Road will be opened by then. This new entrance comes with additional parking spaces, which will make attending the park's Fall Garden Day even more attractive.

Second, the chapter will be selling its native selections at the propagation beds as it did in the Spring. Remember that those beds are located behind the horticulture center, so look for us there. You'll be able to see where many of the plants we offer are raised.

We need your help. As you know, many of our plants are donated by kind members who face the hot weather to divide their choice natives to share with other members. Please consider donating extra natives you may have. Woody plants are always needed. Call us if you want to check on a possible donation or with any question.

Also consider helping us at the plant sale and at our regular work sessions on Wednesday or Saturday mornings. Hope to see you at the sale, and on work days. You'll enjoy learning about plants as we have.

Laura Beaty 703 534-8746 or Beth Smith 703 644-1760

CELEBRATE OUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES!

The National Wildlife Refuge System celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. The Refuges are great places for viewing wildlife and their native plant habitats. Visit one of the Refuges in Virginia:

Back Bay NWR
 Chincoteague NWR
 Eastern Shore of Virginia
 Fisherman Island NWR

Great Dismal Swamp NWR
 James River NWR
 Mason Neck NWR
 Occoquan Bay NWR

Plum Tree Island NWR
 Presquile NWR
 Rappahannock Valley NWR

For more information on refuges including directions go to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website:
<http://refuges.fws.gov>

BOARD OFFICERS		
President	Marianne Mooney	534-8179
Vice President	Rob Aldrich	526-0535
Secretary	Liz Nalle	698-7606
Treasurer	Vivian "Dusty" Dukes	938-7912
COMMITTEE CHAIRS		
Botany	Cris Fleming	301-657-9289
Conservation	Lisa Palmer	526-0535
Awards/Recognition	Anne Crocker	437-0355
Membership	Sylvia Orli	528-5618
Newsletter	Mary Ann Lawler	684-8622
Programs/Education	Shirley Gay	920-1913
Propagation/Plant Sales	Laura Beaty	534-8746
	Beth Smith	644-1760
Publications	Vacant	
Publicity	Roberta Day	560-5528
Site Registry	Rod Simmons	256-7671
Garden Tours	Billie Trump	960-1476

(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 Mary Ann Lawler for more information or e-mail her at malawler@aol.com.

BALLOT 2003/2004 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Nominating Committee of the Potowmack Chapter VNPS is presenting the following slate of officers for the 2003-2004 year, which begins on November 1. This slate will be voted on at the Annual meeting on October 23.

President: Marianne Mooney Vice President: Rob Aldrich
Secretary: Lee Ann Kinzer Treasurer: Vivian (Dusty) Dukes
Nominating Committee: Jessica Strother, Urban Forester, Fairfax County, former VNPS Conservation Chair
Jan Ferrigan, Invasives Species Program Coordinator, Arlington County

Lee Ann Kinzer is a new candidate. Her biography follows:

University of Oklahoma for B.A. in journalism and M.S. in political science. Worked as copy and managing editor, mostly in historic preservation. Free-lanced and did newsletters for PTSA's, drama groups, crew, Girl Scouts, and others. Handweaver, principally a rug weaver. Currently teach rug weaving and run the supply shop at Springwater Fiber Workshop, Alexandria. Master Gardener in 2000. Habitat Steward in 2000. Volunteer at Hidden Pond Nature Center with group of 4-5 Stewards; the "Community Backyard Wildlife Habitat" was certified in 2002. On Parks Committee of Hollin Hills (with 30 acres of mostly wooded flood plain and stream sides, divided into several locations and full of invasive exotic plants).

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2003-2004 Potowmack Chapter Ballot

(For use of spouse in family membership)

_____ I approve of the slate of nominees

_____ I approve of the slate of nominees

Signature _____

Signature _____

IF YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 23, PLEASE FOLD, SEAL, STAMP, AND MAIL THIS BALLOT BY OCTOBER 20 TO THE CHAPTER SECRETARY.

-----Then fold over here-----

From:

Place stamp here

Liz Nalle, Secretary
3900 Malcolm CT.
Annandale, VA 22003

▼ (Please seal using tape)

TARGETING CONSERVATION PRIORITIES IN OUR AREA

This past year the Potowmack Chapter of VNPS sponsored a small grant project for

DCR's Division of Natural Heritage to conduct vegetation surveys and plant community classification work in important natural areas in northern Virginia. Botanists from DNH were scheduled to do survey work in our area but had only limited funds for this work. The board felt we could enhance their work and our knowledge of local plant communities by helping their efforts with a \$5,000 grant. The surveys were done this spring and have shown that the variety of flora in Fairfax County is among the highest in the state, although the threat to open space in Fairfax shows no signs of diminishing.

Gary Fleming, State Vegetation Ecologist, was the lead botanist in charge of the surveys and was accompanied by field ecologist Karen Patterson as well as by the chapter's Site Registry Chair, Rod Simmons, who generously donated his time to this effort. Charles Smith, President of the Prince William chapter, was also present at surveys that took place at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, which Charles manages. Molly Botts, Fairfax County Parks intern, assisted as well. Despite the rainy weather, much was accomplished, many state-rare plants were found and natural plant communities were well-documented, some that are globally rare. A total of 41 plots (400 square meters each) were surveyed at sites that included Holmes Run and Sugarland Run Stream Valleys, Runnymede Park, Phelps WMA, and the 1,600 acre Hunter-Hacor Tract (Elklick Run Natural Area) in western Fairfax County. Natural communities studied included upland depression swamp, piedmont-mountain alluvial and swamp forests, outcrop barrens and many woodland types. Considerable field time was spent hiking through sites searching for the most representative plots in which to conduct research. Topographic and

geologic maps were indispensable in seeking good plot examples.

Natural communities, particularly diabase ones within the Triassic Basin, were chosen as the focus of this study because most are located in areas that are experiencing tremendous loss of land from development. Diabase is an intrusive volcanic rock that erupted into ancient lake sediments during the Triassic Era. Over millions of years, uplift and erosion have exposed diabase bedrock and boulders in many places. This large area of ancient lake sediments is called the Triassic Basin; in northern Virginia this area is also called the Culpeper Basin. It is a fairly flat area of low relief in the western piedmont that is lower in elevation than areas to the immediate east and west. Diabase rock itself is rich in calcium and magnesium and weathers into a rich soil.

Diabase communities harbor wide floristic variety but in our area are becoming increasingly rare due to development pressures. One of the diabase plots surveyed at Cub Run yielded the most plant species (124) ever documented from several thousand plots of assorted natural community types in Virginia. It is our hope that this survey work will lead to a greater understanding of diabase communities and its associated flora and wildlife, helping land managers and stewards at the federal, state and local level better protect sensitive areas and more effectively target conservation priorities.

INVASIVES PRIMARY THREAT TO U.S. BIRDS: A new report by the National Audubon Society, "Cooling the Hot Spots," states that "invasive species are the leading cause of bird extinctions, having entirely or partially caused the majority of all extinctions since 1800." The primary threat to more than 1/3rd of the 200 species on Audubon's WatchList of birds in danger of decline is loss of habitat from invasive species. For example, exotic Chinese tallow trees have transformed more than 55,000 acres of grassland habitat into woodlands at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, impacting millions of migratory birds and depriving the imperiled short-eared owl of wintering habitat essential to its survival.

WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV? Send an e-mail to Mary Ann Lawler at malawler@aol.com 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>

ARLINGTON'S RiP PROJECT

Sat. Sept 13 Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park 9am-noon Neighbors and RiP volunteers will continue to meet at Bluemont Junction Park on second Saturdays. Come help out for an hour or two. Park near bike trail at the bottom of Illinois St. Enter Illinois St. from Wilson Blvd. Meet at "the rocks" next to the bike trail. Contact John Huennekens at 703-524-3853, or jhuenn@gwu.edu,

Sat. Sept 18. NVETalk: Invasive Species – Working at the National Level. 7-9pm Guest speaker Lori Williams, Executive Director of the National Invasive Species Council will shed light on efforts by Federal agencies to combat the impacts of invasive species on the environment and the economy. What are the connections between invasive plant problems in Northern Virginia parks and national efforts to address these concerns? Aurora Hills Community Center, 735 So. 18th St., Arlington. Near Pentagon City metro station.

Sat. Sept. 20. Public Lands Day. Celebrate National Public Lands Day (NPLD) 9am to 12pm at Gulf Branch Nature Center! Remove invasive plants and help with native plant restoration. Bring your camera to compete in the NPLD Photo Contest. Volunteers across the country are encouraged to submit photos taken at a NPLD event for the chance to win prizes (see www.npld.com for details). Gulf Branch Natural Area is located at 3608 N. Military Rd. Contact Jan Ferrigan at 703 228 7636 or jferriga@vt.edu to register.

Sat. Oct 12. Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park 10 to 1 (See above for details)

Sat. Oct 25 Countywide Make a Difference Day. 9 to noon. Help remove invasive plants; meet between 9 and 10. Locations:

- Alcova Heights Park, (6th St S. and Quincy St.) Meet by back entrance near split rail fence.
- Barcroft Park, 4200 S. Four Mile Run Dr. (enter parking lot entrance immediately north of DMV). Meet in park on the far side of the footbridge.
- Hillside Park, 1601 N Pierce St (at the corner of Pierce St. and 16th Rd., enter Pierce St. from Clarendon Blvd) Limited parking. Meet at bottom of hill near the trail.
- Douglas Park, 1718 S Quincy St. (corner of S. Quincy St. and 16th St.) Meet on grass near the corner.
- Fort Bennett Park, 2220 N Scott Dr. (near N. Scott Dr and 21st Rd. N) Meet near the park entrance at the end of Scott Dr.
- Glencarlyn Park/Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S Carlin Springs Rd (North of Columbia Pike near hospital) Meet at the Nature Center.
- Lacey Woods Park, 1200 N George Mason Dr. (corner of George Mason and Washington Blvd). Meet at the playground.
- Spout Run/Lorcom Lane County Property. (where Spout Run and Lorcom Lane intersect). Park in shopping plaza parking lot off west side of Spout Run just south of 66 bridge over Spout Run.
- Swanson Park, (Patrick Henry Dr. near Washington Blvd) Meet near school trailers.
- Ohio St. and Hwy 66 County Property (on the south side of Ohio St bridge over 66) Meet on property adjacent to Ohio St.
- Zachary Taylor Park, 2900 Military Rd. (near Military Rd. and 30th St.) Meet near the park sign

For information contact Jan Ferrigan, Invasive Species Program Coordinator, at 703 228 7636 or jferriga@vt.edu

LOCAL EVENTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

Aug 30 Annandale Invasives Removal 10am – Noon. Help protect Annandale Community Park by removing English Ivy. Meet in the Packard Center parking lot off of Hummer Road. Please bring loppers and gloves. For further information, call Emily Hamner at 703-354-5093 or e-mail Information@NVCT.org. *Directions: 4022 Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003. Take Beltway Exit 6 (Little River Tpk., Rt. 236) east to left at first light at Hummer Rd. to park entrance on left.*

Sept 13 Tree Planting and Trail maintenance, Main St. Clifton 9am - 1pm Help plant 150 native trees and 100 native shrubs to provide wildlife habitat and improve the quality of Pope Creek. Starbucks will provide coffee. Lunch provided. Bring shovels, clippers and gloves. For further information e-mail Information@NVCT.org.

Sept. 17 – Nov 5. Fall Woody Plant Identification USDA Graduate School; Capital Gallery (L'Enfant metro), Wed. 6:30 to 8:30. Classes plus field trips: \$295. Instructor, Stan Shetler. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

Sept 21 – Plant ID at Wolftrap 1-3 or 4pm Help develop a plant list for Wolf Trap Farm Park with Joe Metzger. Bring water. For more info: email: jmetzger50@hotmail.com

Sept. 22 – Dec 1. Deciduous Forest Ecosystems USDA Graduate School; Capital Gallery (L'Enfant metro), Mon. 6 – 8 pm. Classes plus field trips: \$295. Instructor, Gary Evans. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

Oct. 18. Get Nuts for Clean Water! On Saturday, October 18, 2003, people throughout the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay region will be helping to restore native forests, one acorn at a time. Join thousands of *Growing Native* volunteers who will collect native tree seeds, which will be used to grow seedlings for restoration projects throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Native forests ensure cleaner water far in the future. For more information, visit www.growingnative.org.

Oct. 18 Invasive removal/Trash Collection Dyke Marsh, Alexandria, 10am to noon Call Brooke Andrews 703 -549-1607 Ext. 141 for information.

Oct. 19 – Plant ID at Wolf Trap 1-3 or 4pm Help develop a plant list for Wolf Trap Farm Park with Joe Metzger. Bring water. For more info: email: jmetzger50@hotmail.com

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM ALONG THE W&OD TRAIL

VNPS members living along the Washington and Old Dominion Trail may want to consider applying for a grant from the Friends of the W&OD Trail. Grants for projects along the trail range from \$100 to \$1,000 for materials; and grantees are expected to carry out the installation and maintenance of the project. Please consider applying by September 15 for grants for invasives removal, in addition to other projects. Porcelain berry is only one of numerous invasive exotic plants threatening wildlife habitat along the trail. Send a funding proposal to W&OD Trail 21293 Smiths Switch Road Ashburn, VA 20147 or by e-mail to wodtrail@erols.com. For more information see www.wodfriends.org.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR FAIRFAX COUNTY PARKS

Although the Fairfax County Board announced a \$39 million dollar budget surplus, the potential for future budget cuts is still a threat to County parks, particularly to nature centers and natural resource areas. The new director of the Park Authority, Mike Kane, was only on the job for three months before drastically reducing services at Hidden Oaks and Riverbend Parks. Charged with reducing his budget, he

chose not to cut from the Park Authority headquarters but to cut services to the public at county parks. This is in direct opposition to the Park Authority’s mandate, which is to protect the natural and cultural resources of Fairfax County. Three Fairfax County parks are VNPS Registry Sites: Huntley Meadows Park, Riverbend Park and Scott’s Run Nature Preserve, which is overseen by Riverbend staff. These cuts don’t bode well for the protection of native flora at these sites. With staffing already stretched thin, programs to control invasive vegetation and monitor native plants will be difficult to manage.

These parks also provide a valuable nature education to area schoolchildren, fulfilling SOL requirements while introducing kids to the wonders of nature. In a given year at Huntley Meadows, 3,600 school children attend staffed school programs; 1,000 more children attend non-school staffed programs; 2,000 children go on self-guided tours with park-provided material and 700 children and adults visit the park on Wetlands Awareness Day alone! Riverbend and Hidden Oaks provide the same types of programs to area schoolchildren, increasing by thousands the numbers of children getting their natural history education at County parks.

For the future of County parks, it’s very important for the public to voice concerns about this funding disaster to the Board of Supervisors. Representatives Penny Gross (Mason District) and Stuart Mendelsohn (Dranesville District) have submitted a proposal to the Board to restore full funding (\$170,000) to both Hidden Oaks Nature Center and Riverbend Park for the remainder of the fiscal year, October 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004). Six of the ten supervisors must approve the motion, which will be the subject of a public hearing on Monday, September 15th, 10:00 AM, at the Board of Supervisors meeting at the Fairfax County Government Center. The Board will hear many competing interests on how to allocate the \$39 million surplus, and the resulting \$2.5 million “carry-over,” from the last fiscal year. Without strong, vocal support, prospects are dim to restore funding, programming and staffing to Hidden Oaks and Riverbend.

We ask our members to take the following actions: 1) Write or email your own Board of Supervisors representative, and Board Chairman Kate Hanley, ([Katherine Hanley, Chairman at Large: 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 530, Fairfax VA 22035](mailto:Katherine.Hanley@fairfaxva.gov)), as soon as possible requesting reinstatement of \$170,000 in carryover funds to return Hidden Oaks Nature Center and Riverbend Park to their original funding and staff levels for this year. 2) If at all possible, attend the September 15th Board meeting and please consider saying a few words. To speak at a public hearing before the Board, you are encouraged to register in advance with the Office of the Clerk to the Board at 703-324-3151, TTY 703-324-3903, or via e-mail. Lists of scheduled speakers for specific public hearings are posted inside the Board Auditorium. Go to <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/bos/public.htm> for more information.



**Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 5311
Arlington, VA 22205**

Chapter Events Calendar

- Sept 6 Plant Sale
Green Spring
- Sept 7 Runnymede
Wildflower Walk
10-3
- Sept 11 Board Meeting
7:30 Green Spring
- Oct 23 Annual Meeting and
Magnolia Bog
Program: 7:30
Green Spring
- Oct 25 Magnolia Bog Walk

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