



WILD NEWS

Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2009-01

January-February 2009

Join Us! Monday, January 19th for the PWWS Annual Member Slideshow

Location: Bethel Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, Plantation Lane (opposite the Prince William Hospital), Manassas, Virginia. Time: 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served; the meeting is open to all members and nonmembers. If you are interested in sharing slides with others, please contact Helen Walter, president of PWWS, at helenwalt43@verizon.net or call (703) 330-9614. See Helen's letter, just below this notice, for more details on the presentation lineup to date. Equipment will be provided, so you need only bring slides or a flash drive. Or just come and enjoy some delicious treats, good company, and great pictures.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy 2009, everybody! Has it really been nine years since we were all stressing over what the new millennium would do to our computers?

Our January 19 meeting will be our traditional members' pictures night, a tradition we started years ago to avoid canceling a speaker if we got hit with a winter storm, which hasn't happened since we started doing it that way. Global warming? So far, we have Charles Smith and Betty Truax showing pictures, and Marion Lobstein usually has something from her travels. Anybody else?

Two important dates at the state level are March 9 and May 2. The VNPS 2009 winter workshop focusing on mountains will be held at the University of Richmond on March 9, with a great list of speakers: *Elizabeth Byers*, a vegetation ecologist with the West Virginia Natural Heritage Program; *Chris Ludwig* speaking on state and federal lands of southwest Virginia; *Tom Wiebolt* describing two new plant species from southwest Virginia; and *Laura Neal*, president of the Virginia Wilderness Committee. Then on May 2 VNPS is teaming up with the Virginia Master Naturalists under the direction of *Ruth Douglas* for Virginia's first-ever statewide invasive plant removal day. I expect *Kim Hosen* can use a team of weed pullers at Merrimac farm, so look for more about this in the next newsletter.

The Prince William Conservation Alliance also has two dates for your calendars. On Feb. 5 the First Thursday Nature Tales at the Bull Run Unitarian-Universalist Church presents *Alonso Abugattas* describing frogs, toads, and other local amphibians, and he'll have some live critters to show us. April 11 is the annual Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm, a fun day of wildflower tours and other nature activities.

Our state organization is looking for ways to grow our membership, so bring a friend to the next meeting. No point in keeping all this good stuff to ourselves.

Your president, *Helen Walter*

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
P.O. Box 83 - Manassas, VA 20108-0083
Chartered: January 10, 1983
Logo: *Mertensia virginica* - Virginia Bluebells

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November 17, 2008

Prince William Wildflower Society Meeting

Outgoing PWWS president *Charles Smith* served three two-year terms, and in appreciation he was presented a pewter Jefferson cup with the following inscription: PWWS President, 2002-2008. He was also given the book, *Illustrated Companion to Gleason's Vascular Plants of the Northeastern United States and Canada*.

Prince William County arborist, *Julia Flanagan* was the speaker and gave an interesting talk on saving trees on land that is being developed. She spoke on what goes into creating the laws and proffers, as well as how to read the blueprints to be certain developers are adhering to saving the proper amount of protected trees. Since saving the roots is important also, she showed pictures of how far out tree roots actually do extend.

Incoming PWWS president *Helen Walter* opened the business meeting about 9:15 PM. She thanked Julia for her stirring talk about saving trees from overzealous development. She mentioned this would be our last meeting until January and asked everyone to prepare any slides or pertinent information they might have for the January meeting, at which members usually show slides of wildflowers or interesting sights taken during recent travels.

Rosemary Luckett shared that she had some pamphlets on planting trees in remote areas like Africa, Haiti, and Guatemala. The program is called "Trees for the Future." They plant fast-growing, beneficial trees as a first step in restoring habitats, creating food sources, and reestablishing badly degraded land sites. The pioneer trees help rebuild worn-out soils, and some of the benefits for planting these trees are

- High sustainable food production
- Animal forage for the dry season
- Replenishment of ground water aquifers
- Windbreaks and living fences
- Soil and humus and organic fertilizer
- Habitat for threatened wildlife
- A cooler and cleaner community

To volunteer or make a donation contact: Trees for the Future, PO box 7027, Silver Spring, MD, 20907. Email: info@treesftf.org or make a donation at www.PLANT-TREES.org.

Marion Lobstein reported that The Flora of Virginia Project is nearing completion, although economic cut backs present new concerns for completion. Chris Ludwig and Marion are so near to completing this comprehensive study of native and naturalized Flora of Virginia and continue the work, despite the lack of funding. They have documented and are cross-referencing 3,700 species with local herbariums, literature and illustrations dating back to 1762. They have 85 percent of the writing completed and 90 percent of the illustrations. This was one of the goals envisioned by the Native Plant Society from its inception. It has taken 10 years, starting right before Sept 11, 2001- and is projected for completion by 2011

Finances: Treasurer *Diane Flaherty* reported that PWWS' Certificates of Deposit will come due in January. She found some that offer 3-4 percent interest, which in this current economy isn't bad, and she is hoping for maybe one more percentage point when the CDs are renewed.

Julia Flanagan said when they have located a tree doomed for destruction, volunteers are asked to join them, and they dig up the roots and find out just how far they extend. She hopes

to invite our group to a root-searching event, and everyone seemed excited to participate. Taproots in Virginia are almost non-existent; most roots extend far from the tree near the top of the soil- due to heavily compacted, dense clay soils and aquifers close to the surface.

The meeting ended around 9:50.

Those in attendance: Charles Smith, Helen Walter, Helen Rawls, Joann Krumviede, Mary Sherman, Julie Dougheily, Marion Lobstein, Theresa DeFluri, Rosemary Luckett, Jeanne Fowler, Deanna High, Charlotte Cochard, Nancy Vehrs, William Hendrickson, Diane Flaherty, and speaker Julia Flanagan.

--Submitted by Theresa DeFluri

In Memoriam

Sad News on Two Fronts

PWWS mourns the December 11 loss of member *Pat Thompson*, beloved mother of charter member and past president *Claudia Thompson-Deahl*. Funeral services were held December 15; she rests in Arlington National Cemetery.

More sad news from PWWS member *Tiana Camfiord*. Her dear mother, *Katharine Gillespie*, passed away on December 19th. A memorial service was held January 3rd in Falls Church. Our deepest sympathy goes to Tiana, her brother Philip, and the family.



Virginia Native Plant Society announces 2009 VNPS Wildflower of the Year: *Symplocarpus foetidus* or Skunk Cabbage. "Pungently malodorous and possessing only modest beauty, skunk cabbage offers its quirky blooms in winter when there is little else to attract the attention of devoted wildflower enthusiasts. Skunk cabbage is a member of the arum family. Skunk cabbage is an obligate wetland plant. It grows in the muck soils of wet meadows and swampy woods, extending to regions of shallow water or upward along the lower reaches of adjacent hillsides, presumably where its roots can still reach the water table. It flowers in winter (commonly in January), a phenomenon permitted, in part, by the fact that the plant is thermogenic (generates significant metabolic heat, a rare phenomenon in plant biology)." W. John Hayden, author of the brochure quoted above, also notes that skunk cabbage is a member of the arum family (Araceae) and is related to jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema*), arrow-arum (*Peltandra*), and golden club (*Orontium*). The full article is accompanied by some

very nice photographs and is available for download or viewing on the VNPS Web site, www.vnps.org. [Photo: Albert F.W. Vick, NPIN Gallery Image Id 10065 (1989); www.wildflower.org]

Alert: EMERALD ASH BORER

PWWS Treasurer *Diane Flaherty* asked to pass along this alert from the Nature Conservancy. The emerald ash borer has turned up in Fairfax County, in both Herndon and Newington. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has imposed a quarantine to prevent human activities that could spread the pest even further. The quarantine covers the



counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, and Prince William; and the independent towns or cities of Alexandria, Fairfax City, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park. The Conservancy recommends three basic actions to avoid spreading pests and disease: (1) Don't move firewood; (2) Sign the Union of Concerned Scientists pledge; (3) Ask the seller of the firewood you are buying if it is from local trees.

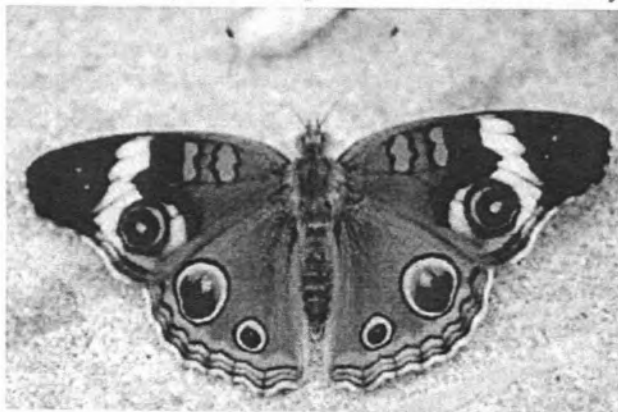
The Nature Conservancy has funded a Web site, www.dontmovefirewood.org, to try to educate young people about reasons not to move firewood. It has some good, basic information that may be useful to adults, as well. It contains links to the pledge, lists additional action steps, and details other alien pests that are a threat to our forests. [Photo: David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org]

--Diane Flaherty

JANUARY DREAMIN' or JUST BUTTERFLIES ON THE BRAIN?

Of those of you who, like me, have vowed to create a more intensive butterfly garden this year, there is a relatively new book (2005) that may be of interest (while we are waiting for Cole Burrell's latest on the subject!) *Caterpillars in the field and Garden*, by Thomas J. Allen, Jim P. Borck, and Jeffrey Glassberg (Oxford University Press, 240pp.) is the first field guide to the butterfly caterpillars of North America, and "it stresses that butterfly offspring generally have very limited food preferences" according to the *Avant Gardener* newsletter of July 2008. I hear echoes of Doug Tallamy's recent groundbreaking book, *Bringing Nature Home*, which although different in scope and subject, also focuses on the less sexy cycle of life of these and other captivating creatures. *Caterpillars in the Field and Garden*, however, is a comprehensive field guide, with each species section describing how to identify the caterpillar. "To make for easy field use, each caterpillar's key physical features, abundance, habitat, and major hostplants are listed on the same page as its photo. The book also contains a special section on butterfly gardening, offering valuable information on how to set up a butterfly garden and raise healthy butterfly caterpillars, and provides a thorough list of the plants butterflies most like to feast on." As an essentially wild and messy sort of gardener, I'm happy to hear from the authors that leaving gardens a bit untidy at the end of the seasons will "benefit local butterflies who spend the winter under fallen leaves or loose bark or in piles of brush." The book can be purchased through the North American Butterfly Association at www.butterflybuzz.com/store.

[The photograph above is of a Common Buckeye butterfly, courtesy Sara Edwards, NW Tennessee, www.whatsthatbug.com]



* +
over
for books

But where else to start? Right here at home, of course, with "Wildflowers for Butterfly Gardens," by PWWS founding members *Nancy Arrington and Nicky Staunton*, a concise, useful, free brochure that is available from the VNPS Web site, www.vnps.org/resources/butterfly.pdf. The condensed two-page brochure lists caterpillar food sources, gardening tips for butterfly gardens, nectar flowers for butterflies, and resources.

And if you're still hungry for more... Check out the current issue of *Horticulture* (Feb-March 2009). "Winged Wonderland," by Paul deMarrais, offers advice on supporting all stages of a butterfly's life cycle through strategic planting. Here's where "weeds" come in, such as wild cherries, hackberries, and willows. Beautiful photographs of both butterflies and plants are featured, and the author specifies which species feed/host on which plants. He also includes "6 top nectar plants for butterflies," which list, alas, is not all native. Nonnatives include *Buddleia*, of course, as well as *Verbena bonariensis* (South American native) and *Zinnia*, but natives are well represented with ironweed, coneflower, and milkweed, specifically *Asclepias tuberosa*. My only quibble? The author claims that milkweed is easy to grow from seed, which is not my experience at all. I struggled with germinating it last year but will try again this year — it's worth the effort as the ultimate Monarch hostplant. I've since read that many of the milkweeds need cold, moist stratification, including *A. incarnata* and *A. purpurescens*. While browsing for butterfly pics on my favorite, "What's That Bug" Web site, I stumbled onto www.Butterflyencounters.com, which recommends sowing milkweed seeds that need stratification — they tell you which ones do — in November or December. Since it may be too late for that now, an alternative method is to place the seeds in a baggie, along with some damp perlite, and refrigerate for 5-6 weeks until the weather warms up. I may try both methods to see if either works, or, if I'm lucky, which method works better. The butterfly encounters site has very nice photographs of many different milkweeds, plus seeds are for sale. I intend to try these instead of the usual Thompson & Morgan or Park seeds, mainly because they offer a lot more varieties.

And still more...if you like to read and browse:



Butterflies Through Binoculars: The East, by Jeffrey Glassberg (Oxford University Press, 1999)

Butterflies of North America (Kaufman Focus Guides), by Jim P. Brock and Kenn Kaufman (Houghton Mifflin Co., 2003)

The Butterflies of North America: A Natural History and Field Guide, by James A. Scott (Stanford University Press, 1992)

The Butterflies of West Virginia and Their Caterpillars, by Thomas J. Allen (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998)

Milkweed, Monarchs and More: A Field Guide to the Invertebrate Community in the Milkweed Patch, by Ba Rea, Karen Oberhauser, and Michael Quinn (Bas Relief Publishing Group, 2003)

[Thanks to BugGuide.net for the reference list. Photo of Monarch on blue mist flower, courtesy of Mike Quinn, TexasEnto.net]

--Deanna LaValle High

EVENTS and NOTES

January 14. Sustainable Horticulture: Using Native Plants (Hort.295, 3cr.) will be offered this semester at the NOVA Loudoun campus. The class takes a natural history approach to using native plants in the landscape to promote ecological balance and increase biodiversity in highly

urbanized settings. *Bringing Nature Home* by Doug Tallamy is the text. Meets Wednesday evenings 6:30 to 9 pm in the Horticulture Building beginning January 14. For further information, contact Keith Tomlinson at (703) 255-3631 x102.

January 26 – April 6. Natural History Field Studies, Winter Session. Register now for adult evening classes. See the National Audubon Web site for details and a list of winter/spring classes. <http://audubonnaturalist.org/default.asp?page=557>.

Thursday, February 4. Hop To It: Amphibians of Northern Virginia. 7:30 – 9 p.m., Bull Run Unitarian-Universalist Church, 9350 Main Street, Manassas. *Alonso Abugattas*, acting manager of Long Branch Nature Center in Arlington, will share information about the most common species found in NoVA, their importance and what you can do to keep them around. We'll also have many live species on hand for you to meet up close and personal!

Visit the BRUCE PENINSULA with VNPS

Trip dates: June 6-13, 2009. Location: Ontario, Canada. The Bruce Peninsula lies between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, northwest of Toronto. Leader: *Dr. Stanwyn Shetler*, Curator of Botany Emeritus, Smithsonian Institution.

We will stay at Wildwood Resort Lodge on the shore of Lake Huron, and will carpool to see fens, bogs, rich woods, alvars (Limestone pavements) and several lakeside habitats. The trip will include a boat trip to Flowerpot Island. The flora is rich in orchids, ferns, and many other northern and some western wildflower species. There is opportunity for birdwatching and photography too. Meals at the lodge are included, and vegetarian options are offered. Participants are responsible for travel to and from Wildwood Lodge.

Cost of the trip is \$1,050 and includes a donation to VNPS. Send your \$250 deposit by **January 31, 2009** to reserve your space. Mail to VNPS Bruce Trip, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, #2, Boyce, VA 22620. More information: Contact Sally Anderson, rccsca@comcast.net, or (540) 722-30872.

January 31 – April 19, 2009. United States Botanic Garden, Witness Trees of the National Capital Region, East Gallery. The Witness Tree Protection Program, conducted in coordination with the National Capital Region of the National Park Service, aimed to identify and document 24 historically and biologically significant trees in the Washington, D.C. area. They are extremely diverse: large and small, old and young, rare or common species, planted by famous persons or naturally established, all are memorials. The powerful collection of black-and-white photographic images is testimony that natural and cultural resources share an important common ground.

NEAR and FAR

Visitor Center Proposal Would Destroy Valuable Habitat, Occoquan Bay Refuge

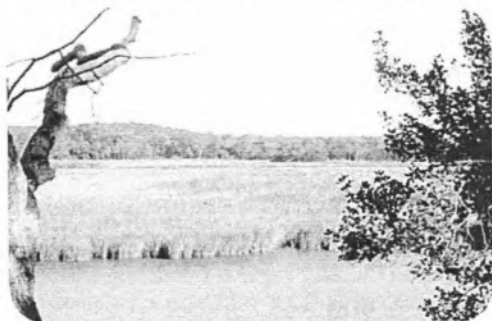
Concerned citizens should consider supporting the efforts to resist the current plans for the Visitor Center at Occoquan Bay Refuge. Please refer to the Prince William Conservation Alliance's Web site, www.pwconserve.org/issues/conservation, for more information, including PWW member Nicky Staunton's letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. See also www.pwconserv.org/issues/parks/index.html for an intelligent assessment of the issues surrounding Prince William's natural areas, parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other natural areas.

Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is the newest of four refuges that comprise the Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Established in 1996, the

goal of the Refuge is to protect 20,000 acres of wetlands and associated uplands along the river and its major tributaries. As of May 2005, a total of 7,711 acres have been purchased from willing sellers or donated by Refuge partners, including 1,033 acres of conservation easements. With help from conservation partners Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Conservation Fund, the Nature Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land, the site is well on the way toward achieving its land protections goal.

Getting There... From Tappahannock, Virginia, take US-360E (across the Rappahannock River, toward Warsaw). Follow US-360E for 4.1 miles, then turn LEFT onto Rte. 624/Newland Road. Follow Newland Rd. for 4.2 miles, then turn LEFT onto Strangeway/Rte. 636. Follow Strangeway for a quarter of a mile, then turn RIGHT onto Sandy Lane/Rte. 640. Follow Sandy Lane for 1.1 miles, then turn LEFT into Rappahannock River Valley NWR.



Shorebirds, neotropical migrant songbirds, raptors, and marsh birds rely on the Rappahannock River's corridors during the spring and fall migration periods. The Refuge, with helps from partners and volunteers, is restoring native grasslands and riparian forests along the River and tributary streams to provide additional habitat for these species. Focal species/species groups for management include bald eagle, forest interior dwelling

species (such as wood thrush and Acadian flycatcher), and a grassland nesting birds (such as grasshopper sparrow and northern bobwhite.) [Photo: USWFS]

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." —*Henry David Thoreau*

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 20108-0083



exp. 10/09

Nancy Arrington
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NEXT MEETING: Monday, January 19, 2009, 7:30 p.m. PWWS Member Slide Show