



Coastal Plain Talk

Newsletter of the South Hampton Roads Chapter

Summer 2021

President's Column

Our summer has been good, we got to see both grandsons in Atlanta and the newest one in Fairfax County, VA. The latest round of Covid19/Delta discouraged a plan to join Kathleen's Aunt Delores 100th birthday in Monterey, CA, however, as many enroute states are struggling with increased transmittal.

As a group, VNPS needs to be cognizant of the local status and requirements by both City of Norfolk and Norfolk Botanical Garden regarding masks, meetings and attendance. We will keep everyone apprised. Our next meeting will feature Dr. Lytton Musselman, professor at ODU, about the Blackwater Ecological Preserve, part of the Zuni Pine Barrens Natural Area. The meeting will be on Thursday, September 23 at 6:30pm at Norfolk Botanical Garden. Mark your calendars, this may be the most interesting program we have had in recent memory.

We had the opportunity to tour Westminster Canterbury on the Chesapeake Bay with Janet Pawlukiewicz and see their gardens, much of which is populated by native plants. Over the past three years, under Janet's watchful eye, they have converted over two and one-half acres of turf grass to native species! The challenge for them is to meet residence desire for beauty and make a natural setting for pollinators, birds and other wildlife. It's a work in process but I would say they have thus far

done a wonderful job at meeting the needs of all concerned. I have some ideas for adding on at my shady yard!

We are planning to have a tent at the Virginia Beach Master Gardeners Fall Fest at the Virginia Tech Agricultural Exchange on Diamond Springs Road on October 2. We may be selling plants. We have several hundred left over from the April sale and have added a couple hundred more. It's a great opportunity to meet others in the gardening game too!

Enjoy the rest of your summer! This past week has been moderate but next week it is back into the high 80s and 90s! Some of the fall bloomers are starting to pop, including blue mist flower, obedient plants and goldenrods.

—Steve Stasulis, S HR VNPS President



Southern Plains Bumble Bee (Bombus fraternus) on Joe Pye Weed

Westminster Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay

Report from Janet Pawlukiewicz
Chair, Westminster Canterbury Landscape
Committee
VNPS member

Over the last three years, Westminster Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay has converted considerable amounts of turf to native plant gardens. The primary goal of this transformation has been to create wildlife habitat while beautifying the campus. Recently, a Southern Plains Bumble Bee bore witness to our success (a bee expert from USGS confirmed this ID). The species has experienced dramatic decline in both population (abundance down to about 14% of historic numbers) and distribution (range reduced by approximately 30%) over the past decade. As a result, the Commonwealth of Virginia lists it as an “imperiled” species. Despite the vulnerable status of its species, this individual turned up to take pollen and nectar from the Joe Pye Weed planted in the new wildlife gardens. (Check out the bright yellow sac of pollen on its leg.) And, it is not alone. Numerous species of butterflies and other native bees draw sustenance from the gardens (see Monarch on Coneflower and Common Buckeye on Seaside Goldenrod). Just goes to show that planting natives really can help preserve our natural heritage!



Monarch on Purple Coneflower

Our Coastal Plain Places

We are going to start a series of short columns about those multiple places we can visit in our area.

Some of them are parks, some of them nature preserved areas or other kind of area with some interesting points to lean and appreciate natural habitats.



Lake Drummond (Credit: Miriam Jones, U.S. Geological Survey. Public domain.)

This first series is going to be started with largest preserved area that it is the range of our chapter: Great Dismal Swamp. The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is the largest intact remnant of a vast habitat that once covered more than one million acres of southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. Formal protection of this resource began in 1973, when the Union Camp Corporation (a local forest products company) donated 49,097 acres to The Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy conveyed the donated land to the federal government, which, combined with additionally purchased land, was used to establish the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in 1974.

The refuge is located in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina, contained within the intersections of Virginia Highway 58, North Carolina Highway 158, and U.S. Routes 32 and 17. The headquarters and main trail heads are located on the western boundary in Suffolk, VA.

This refuge has over two hundred species of birds have been identified on the refuge; ninety-

six of these species have been reported as nesting on or near the refuge.

Interest in butterflies and skippers has lured amateur and professional entomologist to the Dismal Swamp for some 80 years. There have been 96 species recorded within the boundaries of the refuge.

At least forty-seven species of mammals can be found in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, representing most mammals found in Virginia. Visitors often see the white-tailed deer. Other large and medium sized mammals present, but seen less often, include black bear, bobcat, river otter, mink, beaver, grey fox, red fox, raccoon, and ground hog.

The refuge is over 112,000 acres of contiguous forest, with the exceptions of Lake Drummond (3,100 acres), the Lateral West fire scar (6,300 acres), and a few other small marsh features. The forest is comprised of five major forest types: pine, Atlantic white-cedar, maple-blackgum, tupelo-bald cypress, and sweetgum-oak poplar. Currently red maple is the most abundant and widely distributed plant community, as it has expanded into other communities due to the lingering effects of past forest cutting, extensive draining, and the exclusion of forest fires. Tupelo gum-bald cypress and Atlantic white-cedar, formerly predominant forest types in the swamp, today account for less than 20 percent of the total cover and their recovery drive forest management activities.

For more information:

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
3100 Desert Road
Suffolk, VA 23434
(757) 986-3705
www.greatdismalswamp.fws.gov
www.facebook.com/greatdismalswamp

Dr. Lytton Musselman speaking in our September VNPS meeting

Thursday, September 23rd at the [Norfolk Botanical Garden, 6700 Azalea Garden Road, Norfolk, VA 23518](#) at 6:30 p.m. we will be honored to have Dr. Lytton Musselman from ODU as our speaker who will speak about the [Blackwater Ecological Preserve](#).

Blackwater Ecologic (or Ecological) Preserve, a three hundred plus acre site forty miles from the Old Dominion University Campus in Isle of Wight County, Virginia which includes some of the rarest habitat types in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The preserve is part of the Zuni Pine Barrens Natural Area which has recently expanded to more than 1000 acres. The Blackwater Ecologic Preserve includes the nethermost stand of *Pinus Palustris* in the United States as well as several associated species unique in Virginia.

Dr. Lytton Musselman is Mary Payne Hogan Distinguished Professor of Botany & Eminent Scholar at the Department of Biological Sciences of Old Dominion University. With multiple peer reviewed publications and honors, it is an excellent opportunity to learn about one of the most important scientist expertise in taxonomy, ecology and evolution and control of parasitic weeds.



Blackwater Ecological Preserve © Gary P. Fleming



Dr. Lytton Musselman observing a Pinus Palustris spp. at the Blackwater Ecological Preserve (Source: ODU)

Aquileia Canadiensis (Columbine)

By Cecilia Bernuy (VNPS member) Source: Missouri Botanical Gardens - Plant Finder

Family: Ranunculaceae
Type: Herbaceous perennial

I moved to Chesapeake within the past year and have been learning about the native plants to this area as I build my garden. I love seeing this flower blossom in my garden. This beautiful delicate flower is not only pleasing to look at but it also attracts many pollinators including hummingbirds. They are delicate bell-like flowers that tolerate rabbit, deer and drought. There are many other Columbine species and hybrids, however this one is

resistant to leaf miner. The picture was taken in my garden.

Zone: 3 to 8

Height: 2.00 to 3.00 feet

Spread: 1.00 to 1.50 feet

Bloom Time: April - May

Bloom Description: drooping, bell-like
red/yellow flowers

Growing conditions: Grows well in full sun to part-shade with medium-well drained water and medium moist soil. It can naturalize to form colonies by self-seeding.



Aquilegia canadensis (Columbine)

Wanted

We are always looking for knowledgeable, engaging speakers. Do you have contacts or suggestions? We also need a volunteer to be Vice President to finish out the current term. Part of their charge is finding and organizing speakers for our meetings. Email us to vnps.shrc@gmail.com

Events

Upcoming meetings:

Annual Meeting: Virginia is for Conservation Lovers

The **VNPS 2021 Annual Meeting** will be held via Zoom Video Conference on the evenings of Friday, September 17 and Saturday, September 18.

The Meeting and Presentations are free and open to the public; donations are most welcome. More information at the link below.

<https://vnps.org/events/vnps-2021-annual-meeting-via-zoom/>

Thursday, September 23, 2021

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

[South Hampton Roads - September meeting](#)

Thursday, October 28, 2021

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

[South Hampton Roads - October meeting](#)

Thursday, November 18, 2021

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

[South Hampton Roads - November meeting](#)

About us

The South Hampton Roads chapter serves Isle of Wight County (including the Town of Smithfield and the community of Zuni) and the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places.

Please join us! **We meet on the fourth Thursday of the months of September through May at the [Norfolk Botanical Garden](#), [6700 Azalea Garden Road, Norfolk, VA 23518](#) at 6:30 p.m. We do not meet during the vacation months of June through August.**

Learn which native plants would be best for your landscaped beds, naturalized areas and wetland buffers. Find out how large the plants get the color of the leaves and the seasons of interest. Find out which plants will host certain insects and small animals so you can provide a

diversity of wildlife habitats. Most native plants are very low maintenance to the gardener. Many plants just need their winter coats removed in early spring. *"If it's brown, cut it down; if it's green, let it be seen"* is an easy way to remember. If you do not know where to start, come to one of our meetings or email us your question or your concern. Our members are glad to assist you in your plant questions. Happy gardening!



Common Buckeye on Seaside Goldenrod

Contact us

Send Us Postal Mail

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Phone

Please leave a message at (757) 486-5485.

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