

The Naturalist

July 2024 Newsletter | Volume 20, Number 07
Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists

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Feature Photo: Purple Passionflower bloom (*Passiflora incarnata*) at Yorktown Battlefield on 7/27/24, by Claire White.

A Message from the President

by Janet Harper

I hope you're all enjoying this nice summer! Our Seattle kids and grands were here for 10 days, and we were able to have them and our Virginia Beach group all together for a week at the beach. It was a bit of organized chaos, but a lot of fun. I hope you've all been able to have some family and friends time over the summer.

Since we don't have an August chapter meeting, I wanted to pass on some information. The chapter has donated \$300 to Evelyn's Wildlife Refuge which was earmarked for Julie Wobig's Tidewater Wildlife Rescue. The **Historic Rivers Chapter Operating Handbook** revisions were approved, and the new version is available in Better Impact.

Basic Training has accepted 16 new trainees to start in September. You may have met some of them already as some attended the bio-blitz or wildlife mapping. Please welcome them as you see them out and about.

The Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) State Conference registration is now open. If you haven't checked out the **presentation topics** yet, they look interesting! And remember since it's virtual, your registration fee gives you access to **ALL** the Zoom recordings after the event, even for

the sessions you weren't able to attend. *Chapters are being encouraged to offer individual or group activities on Saturday and Sunday afternoon, so if those of you who lead projects such as trash pickup or wildlife mapping, etc would like to offer that activity on one of those days, or if anyone has an idea for a different activity we could do, please contact me.* The theme this year is "Connections: Humans, nature, and Their Mutual Impacts", so it would be nice to invite our nearby chapters to attend any activities we set up. VMN is also offering to let us have a "Virtual Booth" there if we like. *If you have ideas of projects or information to include for this virtual booth, please let me know.*

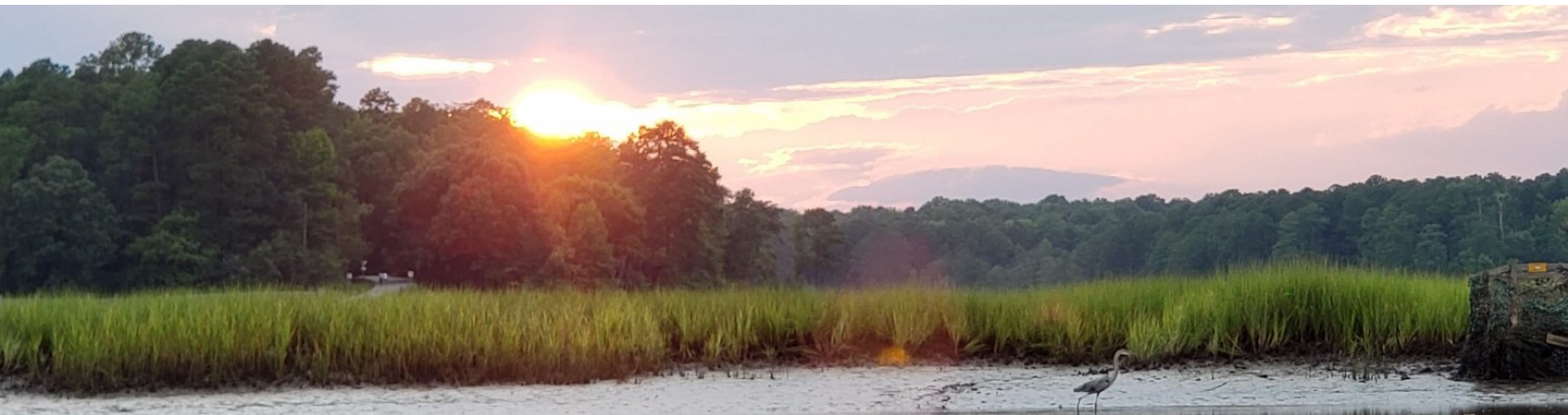
Budget requests for projects will be due to Marc Moyers by October 15 for next year's budget. Please include the name of the project and what the money would be used for in your request,

so the board can make an informed decision regarding the request.

Charles Brown Park is having another family movie night Saturday August 24 if you'd like to represent our chapter there. Bill Harper, Claire White and I met some nice people there in June. Working with this park is part of the diversity, equality, inclusion (DEI) initiative. We're trying to make our presence known in the area.

I look forward to September's general meeting to see everyone again! Please come in person if you can. In the meantime, Happy Naturing!

Photo below: Sunset along Queens Creek from New Quarter Park dock on July 25, by Claire White.



On the Calendar

See Better Impact and HRC Google Group monthly Continuing education (CE) emails for more opportunities.

Ongoing thru Aug 31	HRC Photo Display at Williamsburg Library Theatre Gallery
Ongoing thru Sept 16	Registration for VMN Statewide Conference Fully Virtual for 2024
August 9,19,23,26 & 30	CE: VIMS Behind the Scenes: Mollusc Monday & Fishy Fridays Register
Saturday Aug 10	Litter pickup at Greensprings Trail 8:30-9:45am Contact Suzanne Stern
Sunday Aug 11	Litter pickup at College Creek 9am See email for recommendations
Thursday Aug 15	CE Training for Birdability Project 6:30-8pm VMN Zoom Registration
Sunday Aug 18	CE Bird Walk 7am with Hampton Roads Bird Club at Newport News Park
Monday Aug 19	Deadline for VMN Recertification Pin Artwork Contest Guidelines online
Saturday Aug 24	Butterfly Count for Middle Peninsula Contact Susan Crockett if interested
Saturday Aug 24	CE Bird Walk 8-10am with Williamsburg Bird Club at New Quarter Park
Saturday Aug 24	Pawpaw Festival 10am-4pm at Historic Endview with Peninsula VMN chapter
Thursday Aug 29	CE VIMS After Hours "Adult Summer Camp!" 7-8pm Registration required

Odonata Field Trip to Colby Swamp

Photos by Jeanette Navia, Shirley Devan, and Martha Moss

On July 2nd Dr. Amanda Whispell, Education and Outreach Specialist with the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) led a field trip for the Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) of Virginia Master Naturalists in Colby Swamp, located in Freedom Park, James City County. The field trip focused on the Odonata, the order of flying insects that includes dragonflies and damselflies. Dr. Whispell, who has a doctorate in entomology, had spoken a few weeks earlier at the June 12th general meeting on the same topic. She brought nets to help capture the insects and requested that all participants were free of insecticides.

If you have any suggestions for future field trips, contact Brad Glasebrook, HRC field trip coordinator.



Photos above, left-right: (1) Dr. Amanda Whispell grasping a dragonfly while Keith Navia looks on. Photo by Shirely Devan. **(2)** Amanda grasping an Ebony jewelwing (*Calopteryx maculate*) damselfly. Photo by Jeanette Navia. **(3)** Amanda grasping a Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*) dragonfly. Photo by Jeanette Navia. **(4)** Jeff Honig with insect net trying to catch Odonata. Photo by Jeantte Navia. **(5)** Blue dasher (*Pachydiplax longipennis*). Photo by Martha Moss.



Photos left-right, top-down:

(1) Dr. Amanda Whispell emerging from the swamp with nets. Photo by Shirley Devan. **(2)** Amanda showing an “ode” to Janet Harper and Martha Moss. Photo by Jeanette Navia.

(3) Group photo: Amanda Whispell, Jeff Honig, Brad Glasebrook, Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscole, Janet Harper, Ken Lorenzen (friend of the chapter, entomologist), Bill Harper, and Shirley Devan. A few HRC members including Martha Moss, Marie Robertson, and Joanne Sheffield left before the photo was taken by Jeanette Navia. **(4)** Common whitetail (*Plathemis Lydia*), photo by Martha Moss. **(5)** Eastern Pondhawk (*Erythemis simplicicollis*), photo by J.Navia.

Bluebird Twins by Stephanie Schmuck



Photos left to right: (1) Five Bluebird eggs on June 21, photo by Deena Obrokta. **(2)** Six Bluebird chicks, 7 days old, on July 12. Hard to tell which are the twins. Photo by Janet Harper. **(3)** Six Bluebird chicks, 14 days old, on July 19. Bright eyed and almost ready to fledge. **(4)** Empty nest on July 26. All six fledged.

This summer has brought an exciting and rare nesting experience on the McReynolds Sports Complex bluebird trail. It all started in May when one of the boxes with a nest was leaning like it had been hit by a mower. There were five eggs initially, but one of the eggs looked dented, possibly from being jostled when the pole was knocked over. On June 9th the dented egg was still in the box but one of the other eggs was missing. By June 14th all the eggs were gone but with a wasp flying around we didn't remove the nest that week. Little did we know that things were about to get a lot more interesting.

When Deena Obrokta went to remove the nest the following week, on June 21st, there were five eggs in the nest, which was completely unexpected. She was so surprised she took a photo and thank goodness she did. The following week there were still five eggs. Then, on July 7, the box had six babies that looked 2 days old. What an amazing discovery. We had to double check the previous week's report that there had only been five eggs. The only explanation for 6 babies was twins. When we went back and looked again at the egg photo from June 21 the egg in the center looks bigger than the other four. Sometimes it's hard to tell if eggs are different sizes because they are all sitting at different angles. The only other time I ever noticed a different egg size was years ago on the Grafton Bethel trail where there was a very small egg. Unfortunately, that nest was predated before we could find out if the tiny egg would hatch.

The first report of twins in bluebirds was in 2013 from a Nestwatch observer. The article published as a result of this finding can be read here: <https://peerj.com/articles/273/>. In this case the twins only made it to 11 days. In reading about this observation, the article went on to describe how twinning has been observed in other wild bird species, but it is a very rare event for both chicks to survive hatching, even rarer for both chicks to make it to fledging. This prompted us to pay close attention to the box.

When Janet Harper checked the box on July 12, she confirmed that there were six healthy chicks which all looked to be about the same size. The following week brought extremely high temperatures, so we were pleased to see all six chicks growing well on July 19th. When we checked the box on July 26 all the babies had fledged. We've never been so happy to see an empty nest.

This trail has had its share of interesting finds in the boxes through the years: white bluebird eggs, tree frogs, paper wasps, mud daubers, ants, and a flock of babies fledging every year, but this was definitely a very special once in a lifetime nest to remember.

Brickyard is Blooming

By Judy Kinshaw-Ellis

Brickyard Landing is getting more beautiful each day. The rain and warm temperatures are encouraging more plants to bloom, and it is looking more like a garden. The Bermuda grass is giving the natives a big challenge, but our dedicated and determined volunteers are working to eradicate this nasty invasive.

Here is our good news:

- Grant funding is on the way for more trees and woody shrubs, a dry riverbed, and meadow plantings.
- Plans have been submitted for the paths through the garden.
- Plans for proposed trails through the woods are in the works.
- Volunteers are racing to defeat the weeds.
- Mowing and weed treatment for the meadow are planned for late summer.
- Scouts have expressed interest in developing Eagle Scout projects in the park.

We have grant money earmarked for seeds and plugs for the meadow that will be planted this fall. Want to help? If you have seeds to donate from your garden, please save them for us. Also, we are hoping to have people donate some plants to the meadow when we put in the plugs that we will order. This will be a great way to contribute to the process and get those native plants you love into the meadow.

Thank you to everyone who has watered, weeded, mulched, planted, or contributed in any way. We appreciate every minute you give us. We are always looking for extra hands as this first year is labor intensive.

If you have any questions, contact co-leaders Donna Benson or Judy Kinshaw-Ellis, or come on out and see this beautiful spot on the Chickahominy River.

Workdays: Mondays and Thursdays from 8 am to 11 am., 990 Brickyard Road, Lanexa

Photos top down: Flowers in bloom at Brickyard landing.

(1) Monarch butterfly (*Danaus Plexippus*) on Joe Pye (*Eutrochium purpurem*) with view of Chickahominy River in background.

(2) Spotted Bee Balm (*Monarda punctata*), **(3)** Orange blooms of Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*).



Colonial World Nature Conservation Day BioBlitz at New Quarter Park by Various



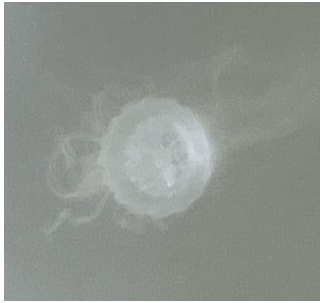
Photos: (Top left) Linda Cole and Shirley Devan with HRC display. Photo by Jeanette Navia. **(Top right)** Linda Cole, Kim Owens, Claire White, Jennifer Smith (back), Michele Garrard (kneeling), and Jeanette Navia. Photo by Shirley Devan. **(Bottom)** Insect bottles created by insect guide Adrienne Frank. Photo by Claire White.



On a rainy July 20th volunteers and participants gathered for a BioBlitz hosted by the Colonial Soil Water Conservation District (CSWCD) in New Quarter Park, York County. The shelters kept all involved in good spirits when the short rain showers occurred during the earlier part of the 4-hour event. Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) Virginia Master Naturalists (VMN) were found manning the HRC display table, leading insect, plant, and bird walks, as well as hosting a marine station by the dock. Results from the first annual Colonial World Nature Conservation BioBlitz can be found on the CSWCD website in an article written by Dr. Amanda Whispell, the organizer (<https://www.colonialswcd.org/post/cwncd-bioblitz-2024-results>), and on the designated iNaturalist project page.

Robert Ambrose, a HRC fishing volunteer at the park dock had this to say about the event: No matter what life throws your way it's up to us to make the best of it. And that is what I did today. In between the heavy downpours I had the opportunity to help our visitors to 'fish'. Even though our visitors were few, for me the day was special in a few ways:

I had the opportunity to chat with other VMN members and learn more about them which was nice.



Being fairly new to Virginia, brackish water remains a thrill to me to see all the fish and creatures in our rivers and creeks. Not expecting to see anything new in the water today, wow was I surprised. Floating and swimming around the docks were of all things JELLYFISH! And for me this was amazing as our creeks and rivers in New York State don't contain these creatures. I had a lot of fun watching them float in the water and this was truly special for me.

Finally, my son, his wife with my 3 grandchildren came to check out the expo and they spent time fishing with me and looking at the jellyfish, the crabs, the oysters and a visit by a water snake! That was a good way to end my time helping people fish.

Looking forward to more of these events, and I hope to see you there!

Photos: (1, above) Jellyfish (*Chrysaora chesapeakei*, aka Bay Nettle), photo by Robert Ambrose. **(2)** Marine tank with species from Queens Creek including fish, mollusks, and anemones. **(3)** Judy Tucker, Robert Ambrose, and Lisa Cumming under marine tent. Photos 2-3 by Claire White. **(4)** Youth fishing under supervision of Robert. Photo by Lisa Cumming. **(5)** Adrienne Frank with BioBlitz participants examining insects. Photo by Brian Taber.





The Williamsburg Regional Library Seed Exchange Is Growing!

by Cynthia Ferentinos

If you've visited the James City County Library in the past year or so, you've likely noticed the large wooden cart near the front doors. In addition to a few potted plants, the cart holds three small cabinets (repurposed card catalogs) labelled "flowers," "herbs," and "vegetables." These are part of the Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) seed exchange program, which offers free seed packets to those who are interested in learning more about growing plants from seed or who want to try different varieties. There's also a propagation station with test tubes full of stem cuttings that are starting to grow roots for those who enjoy bringing some vegetation inside via house plants.

The seed exchange concept encourages people to "borrow" seeds and grow plants from them. In an ideal world, once the plants mature, some of the seeds will be harvested and returned to the library. Of course, there are no guarantees in nature. Seeds may fail to germinate; plants may be felled by disease, and sometimes seeds are devoured by wildlife (and that's okay!) before they can even be harvested.

However, when everything goes well, the seed exchange cycle serves to continually expand the offerings of plants available to the community. And although seed catalogs and garden stores sell lots of non-native plants and cultivars, it can be challenging to find seeds of native species.

Therefore, the WRL seed exchange offers a wonderful opportunity for us as master naturalists to help our neighbors provide a healthier habitat for pollinators. (Home grown vegetables and herbs can also benefit the environment, through the decreased use of fertilizers and pesticides, as well as eliminating the need for fuel consumption to transport produce.)

Over the summer, the WRL seed exchange expanded to a second location-the Williamsburg Library. This seed cabinet is located on a table between the checkout desk and the book sale area. The drawers are currently empty but hopefully they will soon be filled with a variety of seed packets for the fall planting season.





Volunteer “seed librarians” place donated seeds in small seed packets, which are labelled with the following information to help gardeners select and nurture their seeds into plants that will thrive.

- 1) Plant name and type (flower, herb, vegetable and annual or perennial);
- 2) Preference for sun or shade;
- 3) When to plant;
- 4) Seed depth;
- 5) Days to maturity.

If you'd like to help by donating flower, herb, or vegetable seeds to the WRL seed exchange, please place them in an envelope with the plant name and if possible, basic planting instructions as listed above. You can hand them to the librarians at the checkout desk at either library location or place them in the donation box at each seed exchange table. For assistance with seed collection, you're also welcome to contact Cynthia Ferentinos (HRC VMN and WRL seed librarian) at chf2virginia@gmail.com.

Tunnel of Vole by Tracy Matthew Melton

“But this house is haunted and the ride gets rough”
 —Bruce Springsteen, *Tunnel of Love*

Over the last year, I've been working to remake our landscaping. We inherited a front yard filled with nonnative and invasive plants—crape myrtles, Chinese hollies, Japanese hollies, and also a scraggly, old patch of juniper. We had planted mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*) along our driveway several years ago. It protects a slope from erosion and attracts pollinators by the thousands. We love the pollinators and wanted to plant some less aggressively spreading, pollinator-friendly, wildlife-friendly shrubs and wildflowers in the front yard.

Over the winter, I removed a lot of the existing nonnatives, including the crape myrtles, which were infested with bark scale. This spring, I planted American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), lanceleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), pink tickseed (*Coreopsis rosea*), heath aster (*Symphoricarum ericoides*), wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), hyssop-leaf thoroughwort (*Eupatorium hyssopifolium*), rough blazing star (*Liatris aspera*), obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*), Culver's



root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*), wild wood aster (*Eurybia divaricate*), and other natives. The plantings went well, and everything seemed to take root nicely. **Pictured are some of the native plants bloom.**

I kept an eye out for rabbits and deer. One rabbit, which I nicknamed Jojo after my favorite movie, came every day through the spring but seemed very content just to nibble on my grass. A couple of other pink-tickseed-curious rabbits came around but didn't do any significant damage. I saw a deer among the plantings one morning, but she bolted when I stepped outside. Little did I know that the real threat was below.

We had seen vole tunnels in the yard last year and put out some of those solar-powered noisemakers designed to annoy them. We tamped down some of the tunnels, and the vole activity seemed to disappear. When I planted, I added a few more noisemakers. After a month or more, the wildflowers started to disappear, especially the lanceleaf coreopsis. At first, I thought that deer were getting them, pulling out the new plants and leaving just a hole in the ground. I tried to spray more diligently with Liquid Fence repellent. The plants, though, continued to disappear.



I realized that voles were the culprit when I came back home and saw one of the coreopsis adjacent to the road spinning around like a top on a windless afternoon. I found that every hole led to a vole tunnel approximately 2" in diameter and 2" to 4" deep. I would not poison or kill the voles, that would defeat the larger purpose of supporting wildlife. I didn't want a cat (or more precisely, a litter box). I could trap and relocate them but didn't really want to do that. I just wanted to encourage them to move on.

A neighbor, who is a master gardener, recommended several measures, including VoleBloc, small, ground-up pieces of slate that voles don't like to encounter. I filled the holes and tunnels with that. I covered it up with dirt and pine bark nuggets. Plants continued to disappear. I stuck with the same process, substituting cheaper gravel for the VoleBloc in most locations. My thinking shifted.

I wanted the voles to move along and decided that depriving them of their tunnels would be the best strategy. After all, if I killed or removed the voles, the next one to wander into our yard would find a network of existing tunnels conveniently designed and engineered to reach our plants.

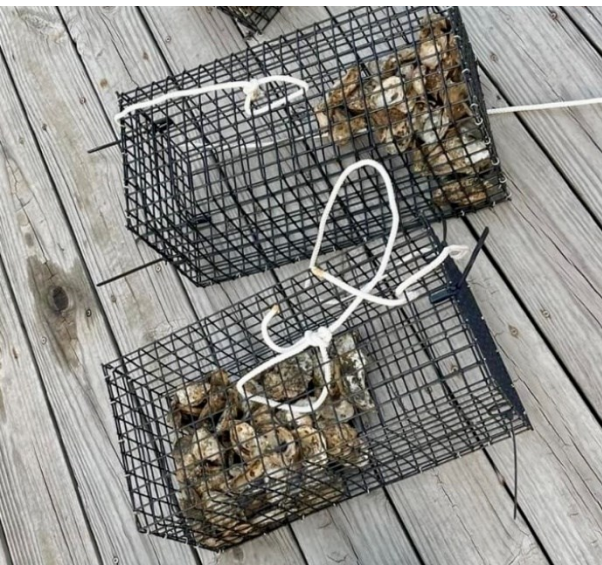
I would be tunnel focused, not vole focused.

I learned that vole tunnels often begin under the cover of existing greenery and found that the network in our front yard, which rivaled the DC Metro system in complexity, mostly spread from an area under some tall ornamental grass and adjacent boxwood shrubs and another one under some (nonnative) hellebores. I used a trowel to dig up the tunnels and the ground around these plants and then **filled the resulting trenches with rocks (pictured left)**. I dug trenches around several plants and patches that I especially wanted to protect. Fortunately, the soil is loose and the work relatively easy.

The idea is that these rock trenches will encourage voles to move on, and plenty of suitable habitat is nearby (and not just my neighbors' yards). They will also establish long-term barriers to vole activity. While doing this work, I have not seen any voles and don't believe that I have directly harmed any. Will it work? I don't know. But I feel like I've made great progress. I understand that I will have to continue to monitor the landscape, but that's a joy in itself, especially as we are already seeing many more birds, bees, butterflies, and dragonflies.

In the Springsteen song quoted at the start of my article, he is writing about the joy and challenges of love. The same applies as we embrace nature with all the commitment that it deserves and needs.

Spatacular Oyster Gardening Project by Mary (MJ) O'Bryan



I jumped into a new [Virginia Master Naturalist \(VMN\) project](#) last year when I heard that we could grow oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation on our waterfront property. After all, my favorite way to gain VMN hours is to do it in my own backyard. We picked up our oyster spat on-shell July 26th, 2023 and split them into two cages (pictured left) right away and tied them to our dock on Goose Creek, off the Chisman in Seaford VA.

They grew very slowly at first and stayed oh so dirty! We cleaned the cages and the oysters at least every other week. The blue crabs (*Callinectes sapidus*) eating our friends were plentiful in those early months of caring for the oysters. We were worried we were failing!

We decided to move them to one cage until they were big enough to split into two cages and that helped crowd out the hungry crabs. Then, one day, my husband had an epiphany and put floats on the cages, and it made all the difference in the world. They grew faster,

didn't have to be cleaned that much and the barnacles didn't accumulate like they had in the past. Photos of our float system are below. The center picture shows the cage submerged, with the floats above the water.

We ended up with 493 oysters at turn in on 24 July. The two blue buckets on the bottom right shows our haul. Of course, me being the math queen that I am, did the math and at 50 gallons per day, that means that those little guys filtered up to 24,650 gallons a day. Of course, we were thrilled that we aced the oyster raising game and are on our next batch of spats already! Some of our neighbors are even doing it with us so it's a win-win for the entire creek! If you are fortunate to have waterfront property, I encourage you to take the leap and join me in helping to clean the bay and restore the oyster population!



Interested in Oyster Gardening Part Time? Learn more about working with a team of fellow VMN at the HRC sponsored oyster cages at New Quarter Park under the [Oyster Restoration project listing in Better Impact](#).

Shorter Shares from HRC Members and Beyond



BugFest Prep Underway

If you're interested in helping with BugFest contact Marie Robertson and Claire White via the Signup link sent through Google Groups. Volunteers needed for assembling materials for our cicada themed booth, as well as volunteers during the September 28th event, hosted by York County Mosquito Control at Grafton Middle School (405 Grafton Drive, Yorktown 23692) from 10am-2pm.



7/26: Huge litter hauls continue at College Creek

165 pounds of litter were bagged and removed by 8 HRC members on a hot Friday morning at College Creek Beach along the Historic Parkway. Fishing gear and food and beverage trash continue to be pulled from the wooded area adjacent to the sandy beach. **Pictured above** are Claire White, Dave Watt, Bill Weldon, Jeanette Navia, Marie Robertson, Martha Moss, and Bob Kaplan at the end of their cleanup. Not pictured: Ginny Broome.



7/27: HRC at Bird Walk

Scott Helmer (left) led 4 HRC members and 2 others on the monthly Williamsburg Bird Club Walk at New Quarter Park on Sunday, July 27th. **Pictured next to Scott** are Thad Hecht, Babs Giffin, Sue Mutell, and Claire White. Walk highlights included 40 egrets viewed from the dock along Queens Creek. Check out the [eBird list](#) for more species.



This is how we roll... shared by Babs Giffin

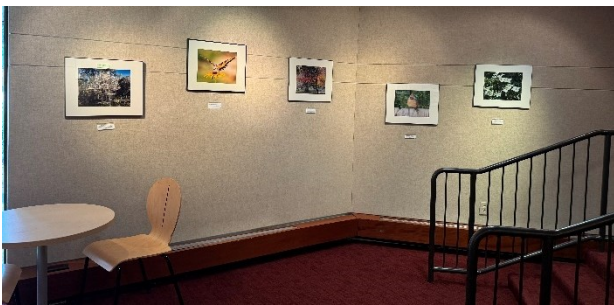
Bluebird (BB) monitors at Kiskiack Golf Course use a golf cart to access the 20 boxes on site. It takes about 2 hours to complete the maintenance. **Pictured above** is Donna Benson moving one of our boxes to a new location. Karen Wilson and Nancy Barnhart are the other BB team members.



Bodacious Butterfly by Tony Picardi

This zebra (*Eurytides marcellus*) showed up in my yard on July 15th. We have a small bunch of pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) here at Williamsburg Landing, according to Justin, our grounds keeper, but I do not know the exact location.

Editor's note: Pawpaw is the host plant for Zebra Swallowtail butterflies (*Eurytides marcellus*).



7/19: Photo Display Opens

On July 19th the exhibit “**Through the Eye of a Naturalist**” officially opened at the Williamsburg Library Theatre Gallery (515 Scotland Street, Williamsburg). The display features photos by Historic Rivers Chapter members of various state species including *Cornus florida*, *Papilio glaucus* Linne, and *Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*. It will greet Cohort XVIII at their informational meeting in late August before training starts. Be sure to check out the display yourself before it closes on August 31.



7/27: Bassett Trace guided tour highlights *Franklinia*

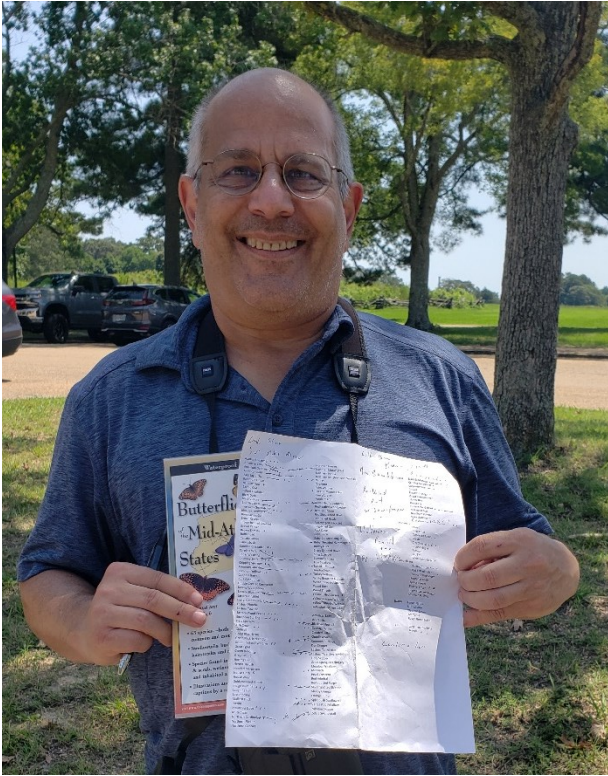
Cheryl Roettger led the 10:30 Saturday **guided tour along Bassett Trace Nature Trail** in Colonial Williamsburg on July 27th. Newer to Cheryl's guided tour is a spotlight on the Franklin tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*), pictured above, native to Georgia and extinct in the wild. Cheryl shared the history of how this species was saved from total extinction by being sent to Europe and the intervention of the Bartram family. She recommended the book *The Brother Gardeners: Botany, empire, and the birth of an obsession* by Andrea Wulf to learn more.

1,000 lb. Soft Plastics Goal

Karen Hines, our Trex Soft Plastics drive coordinator, reported on July 30 that “We're closing in on 700 lbs. of soft plastic diverted from the landfill, so keep up the great job!” If you have a pickup point to suggest reach out to Karen.

Newsletter Correction

On page 12 of the June 2024 issue in the group photo for the “June Beach Litter Pickups” Ginny Broome is misidentified as Marie Robertson. Ginny is sitting between Martha Moss and Bob Kaplan.



7/28: Wildlife Mapping at Yorktown Battlefield

On the last Sunday of each month **Jeff Honig** (pictured left with his butterfly and bird checklist) leads a 4.1-mile trek across the battlefields (pictured bottom left), along waterfront homes, and the hidden gem Wormely Creek in Yorktown. On Sunday, July 28th five HRC members joined Jeff for the sunny walk, including Mike Smith, Angier Brock, Sue Mutell, Linda Morse, and Claire White. The **eBird list** for the day included Yorktown standbys like Chimney Swifts and Eastern Meadowlarks, both whose common names live up to their behaviors. Insects were observed as well, including dragonflies, butterflies, and close-up looks at a red velvet ant (wasp) and an annual cicada. The next Yorktown Wildlife Mappings will be on Sunday, August 25th and Sunday, September 29th.



Environmental news you might have missed:

July 19, United States Geological Survey (USGS) releases publication: **Connecting conservation practices to local stream health in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

July 22, Chesapeake Bay Journal: **U.S. Senator Kaine lays out the 'Virginia Nature Triathlon' challenge**

July 30, Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District: **CSWCD Board Member Dave Beals featured in Next Door Neighbors- "Dave for Dirt"**

Bonus Pic: Bolete

On the next page is a small picture of a violet bolete mushroom spotted by Babs Giffin and photographed by Claire White. It was found on July 27th near the New Quarter Park restrooms at the conclusion of the Williamsburg Bird Club Walk. The specimen was young, with a dry velvet-like cap. It is most likely *Tylopilus plumbeoviolaceus*. Boletes have pores on the undersides of their caps. Next time you see one use your phone camera to take a peek on the underside.

The **Virginia Master Naturalist** Program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. Interested Virginians become Master Naturalists through training and volunteer service. The program is jointly sponsored by seven state organizations including the Virginia Cooperative Extension and is based in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation within the College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

Learn more about our chapter at historicrivers.org

The Naturalist is the monthly newsletter of the Historic River Chapter (HRC) of Virginia Master Naturalists. Other organizations may not publish material from the newsletter without express permission from the chapter. Newsletter contributions should be emailed to HRCeNewsletter@gmail.com by the end of the month. If you have a submission in the works, please notify the newsletter editor. Photos should include concise captions and credits to photographer(s).



HRC Executive Committee

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Vacancy as of June 2024



Historian/Publicity/Media

Jenny DeVasher

At-Large Members

Michele Garrard

Shan Gill

Bill Weldon

Chairs of Standing Committees

Membership

Judy Jones

Basic Training

Jim Leech, Tory Gussman

Volunteer Service Projects

Adrienne Frank

Continuing Education

Barb Creel

Education and Outreach

MJ O'Bryan, Barbara Boyer

Newsletter Editor

Claire White

Field Trips

Brad Glasebrook

Hospitality

Donna Benson, Marie Robertson

Appointed Committees & Teams

Risk Management Team

Roger Gosden, Patty Maloney

Better Impact Contact

Judy Jones

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)

Adrienne Frank

Basic Training (William & Mary)

Linda Morse

Webmaster

Jeanette Navia

Chapter Advisors

Megan Thomas, VA DWR

John Gresham, VA DCR