

FIELD NOTES

PENINSULA CHAPTER



Transitioning From VMS To BI

BY LAURA MARLOWE, PMN VMN/BI ADMINISTRATOR

During May of 2020 the Virginia Master Naturalist (VAMN) office notified the membership that the Volunteer Management System (VMS), used to record our volunteer activities and store our documents, was being discontinued. It would be replaced with a new system called Better Impact (BI) for all Virginia Cooperative Extension volunteer programs. Thus began a herculean effort to contact, verify and update the contact information of over 150 chapter members. We started this effort in July and completed it in October.

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Summer Showcase

Peninsula Master Naturalists are resilient and dedicated to improving the environment.

This issue is filled with transitions and Pandemic Passage Stories, personal accomplishments of Members, showcasing the unwavering spirit of service and volunteering.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Field Notes this year. Please continue to share your photos and articles with Meera Rao, Newsletter chair. Email articles and photos to pmnfieldnotes@gmail.com



Photo:Meera Rao

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Transitioning From VMS To BI

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All members were directed to keep records of their volunteer and continuing education hours on a calendar or notebook or somewhere off line starting 1 January 2021 until the new system was ready.

The PMN Board and chapter purchased a terabyte hard drive in December 2020 on which to store all the files from VMS. VMS reports were run and saved to the hard drive in January 2021.

The Virginia Extension program has four other volunteer programs besides the Master Naturalists, including the Master Gardeners, that will use BI. Each program in turn would configure it for each chapter, which customized it further with their individual projects and files.

Better Impact can be found at MyImpactPage.com. There is also an app for iPhones and Androids called My Impact that can be downloaded from the app stores.



Member Home Page

BI was rolled out to the membership and new usernames and passwords were emailed to each member of all the VAMN chapters along with the website to access the new system on 4 March 2021.

Virginia Cooperative Extension created a member training video included in the email to help people get started using BI. It can be found at:

https://video.vt.edu/media/Better+Impact+Volunteer+Management+System+training+video+for+Virginia+Cooperative+Extension+Master+Volunteers/1_nv1o3maq

A member logging in for the first time, will have to reset the password, entering the password that was emailed and then a new password twice, in order to get to the Home Page. The PMN BI account was set up with the activities listed in the Hours tab to closely match what had previously been in the Projects drop down menu. All documents were loaded into the Files document library. Previous meeting minutes and reports are available on the PMN hard drive.

We are currently in the process of trying to get all PMN Members logged into BI to complete their profile. Only basic contact information and members' historical volunteer service hours were imported into BI. We need emergency contact and demographic information and member VAMN Agreements completed. Any member not logged into BI and cannot find the email that was sent by Stephanie Collins at vt.edu, contact chapter BI administrator, Laura Marlowe, at laura_marlowe@hotmail.com. She can locate your username and reset the password.



Congratulations

2021 Mid-Year Awards

New Certificates

Lorrain Austin*
Christiana Wilson

*In Memoriam

Milestone Awards

Marilyn Adair 2500 Hours
Anne Owens 500 Hours
Mark Spoko 250 Hours
Jim Frances 250 Hours
June Hartzler 250 Hours
Maria Nissen 250 Hours
Sally Young 250 Hours



Pandemic Passages

PICNIC IN PARKS

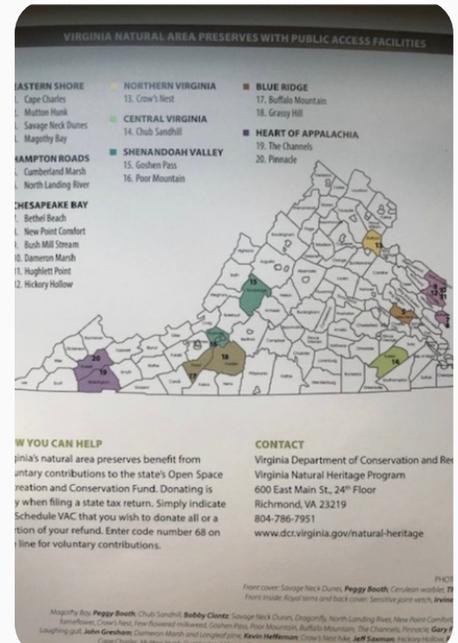
BY
Helmut Walter

March 15 2020, we are in lockdown! No more social activities-Rotary, PMN, Church, Aerobics class, Women's Club, or leading tours at VIMS. Family and Friends to be avoided! My wife and I have been walking for our exercise for years and occasionally we would take a picnic lunch to places like the Noland Trail. During the early days of the Pandemic we made it a priority to get out for a picnic at least once a week in a different park.



Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve, Mathew's County.

Hughlett Point Natural area Preserve, Near Kilmarnock



We had been to the Savage Neck Dunes Natural Area Preserve on the Eastern Shore a few years ago and always had in mind to explore the other Natural Area Preserves in Virginia. It turns out there are half a dozen of these within about an hour ride of our Yorktown Home. We've been to most of them. Usually you have the place to yourself.

Spending a few hours at these gems enjoying what mother nature has made for us and what thankfully has been saved from development were great outings that helped tremendously during the isolation of the lockdown period.



Pandemic Passages

CLOSET CONUNDRUM

By
Shirley Chirch

So by month three, I had cleaned every closet, and collected three garbage bags of clothing I no longer needed or wanted. Many of them still had tags and had never been worn, just "outgrown". Surely that was time well spent, wasn't it? To my surprise, everyone in America must have had the same idea because our local DAV, Goodwill, Salvation Army, and other thrift stores were no longer accepting clothing donations. They were full! I called a few numbers of businesses who would pick up donations but, just as the others responded, no such luck. It was an interesting time in our nation when our brains all registered the same thoughts: clean out and clean up! My overall impression of this was shock. I've never known thrift stores to turn you away but they did. Everyone had the same idea a few months into a forced stay at home quarantine. It was a productive few months and time well spent but my hopes are that we don't have to experience this again. I'm trying hard not to fill those closets so quickly!.

GO NATURE!

By
Jacqueline Spencer

Most everyone with an interest in Renaissance art is aware of the fragile future of Venice and other historic Italian seaports. Human impact has included stirring up of murky waters plus super flooding with unusually high tides due to climate change. Passage of huge cruise ships among the delicate islands making up the city of Venice are not helpful either - all pointing to a possible eventual demise of this and other historic Italian seaports.

An unexpected happy result of the Covid-19 pandemic was the lack of cruise ships and other sources of pollution. Flooding decreased and aquatic wildlife moved back into their old habitats. The British "Guardian" newspaper website and other news organizations like ABC Worldwide News published videos of the Italian canals in which fish and dolphins could be observed swimming freely and clearly in the network of waterways. Other YouTube videos showed wildlife roaming European city streets.

As a VMN, I had to think that maybe there was an obvious lesson in all of this – was a global tragedy for the human species becoming a global boon for many species of wildlife? Is this the "take home" message - we really are the cause of so many problems on our planet? A small part of me wanted to cheer "Go Nature – Stay Home People!"

<https://youtu.be/jv0DLTVfwlc>

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/venice-canals-clear-fish-coronavirus-halts-tourism-city/story?id=69662690>

Pandemic Passages



Fowler's Toad

FROG WATCH USA

BY
Jane Berry



Green Frog

I wanted to jump for glee!! There in my email were those two words I have missed the most for over a year. Two words that are seldom said together. Two words that put an instant smile on my face! Frog Watch!! Yea!!! I am invited to the Chapter Frog Watch event, on Friday 13, 2021 at Newport News Park!! Our group last got together in March of 2020.

Newport News Park is magical at night. We are all alone on the trails! The entire park is ours alone. All kinds of creatures are on the move that would be hidden away during the day time. Tonight we give the right-of-way to the dozens of millipedes that want to share our path. We often pause as we walk along the bridge to admire our surroundings; the ever-changing night sky, the moon as it plays hide and seek behind the clouds, the beautiful reflections on the lake. Our task is such a simple thing to do. Our fearless leader, Travis Land, Chapter Coordinator from NN Park, guides us to 3 nationally registered observation sites where we follow a protocol to gather information about the types, and numbers of frogs we hear calling during a specific amount of time.

Our collected data is then compiled by Travis, and posted to the national online database, FrogWatch USA, where it is available to be used in research. As PMN citizen scientists, we benefit the most from these outings which emphasize scientific literacy, inspire conservation actions, and increase our knowledge of amphibians.

Sadly, we are nearing the end of the frog calling season. If you are interested in joining us early next Spring, to hear the peepers, training is offered online via Canvas. Please email for sign-up info to VLMFrogWatch@gmail.com. Once enrolled in the course, use canvas.instructure.com to log in. Spend the short winter months getting ready for our first outing. Hope to welcome some new members in 2022!

Any further questions can be answered by PMN member, and FrogWatch Chapter Co-ordinator, Larry Lewis, at larrywlewis@cox.net.

Photo Credit : Larry Lewis.

Pandemic Passages

Virginia Master Naturalists Volunteering in the Time of the Coronavirus

By
Elizabeth Danielle Hernly

I joined Virginia Master Naturalists (VMN) on February the 19th of 2020 for Basic Training to become a VMN, and am very grateful to have the opportunity to volunteer with VMNs. I had wanted to join Virginia Master Naturalists since 2017, yet due to the timing I did not have the opportunity until February 2020. I attended Basic Training meetings through March 2020, and then the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, sidelining training for a bit. I also attended VMN member meetings throughout the pandemic, and was able to gain CE hours by the CE presentations after member meetings. Later, toward the fall of 2020, Basic Training resumed via Zoom, and I was able to complete my VMN training. In December of 2020, I graduated from the Virginia Master Naturalists training program and received my Virginia Master Naturalist Certificate.

Earlier in March 2020, Ms. Shirley Chirch had emailed me, introducing me to Project Zooniverse. I joined soon after, volunteering many citizen science hours in species counts and mitochondrial mapping. I have completed 1847 classifications as of today, a little more than a year from when I began volunteering. Citizen Science Projects that I have contributed to include: Frogson, Monkey Health Explorer, Snow Spotters, Maturity of Baby Sounds, Science Scribblers Placental Profiles, Etch a Cell VR, Wildwatch Burrowing Owl, Seabird Watch, Etch a Cell ER Mapping, Floating Forests, Ocean Eyes, and Etch a Cell Powerhouse Hunt (mitochondrial mapping).

Tracking mitochondria, the Powerhouse of the cell, holds importance for nature and humans. The health of the environment affects humans and human actions affect the environment that may influence hormones of both animals and humans, impacting mitochondrial functions and diseases, such as cancer and diabetes. Studying mitochondrial function may help support healthy living and cures, as well as yield greater insight into the importance of the health of natural ecosystems and human habitations. Zooniverse provided a good opportunity for virtual volunteering, because I have low immunity and I needed to limit going out until I had a COVID-19 vaccine. Virtually, I was able to assist in species tracking in the Zooniverse projects Ocean Eyes, Seabird Watch, Floating Forests, and London Bird recordings.

Curiously, I later happened to hear some nature sounds like the frog and bird species I had helped count in the Zooniverse projects, while visiting Sandy Bottom Nature Park. Other volunteer projects I have worked on during the pandemic include litter cleanup at the park and the beach, watering dry plants, and taking nature photos. In the future, I would like to join water testing with the Virginia Master Naturalists, begin CocoRaHS, and try out some tree species and tree height tracking apps. I would also really like to become involved with shoreline buffering projects in the future. Journeying with VMNs represents a great opportunity to contribute to crucial organismal health and environment initiatives, and I am so glad to continue my membership with Virginia Master Naturalists.

Pandemic Passages

Nature's Peace and Tranquility During the Pandemic

By
Jane Berry

As a result of the pandemic, I, like everyone else, spent more time at home. I am lucky to live on a lake, and lucky to have a deck that overlooks the lake. I had had a particularly stressful day for which I cannot remember the reason now, but no doubt having something to do with cooking 21 meals a week, plus dozens of cookies or granola bars every few days. So, I went out on the deck with the purpose of relaxing. I needed to see something green. I desperately needed to get out of the kitchen. I needed to get off my feet. I needed to recharge. I settled into my deck chair ready to melt into nature. It felt good. The world was bearable again. I closed my eyes.

My eyelids had barely closed, when there was a sudden assault on my eardrums!!! I wanted to cover my ears and scream too! Two geese suddenly were having it out! Screeching, honking noises that would not stop! What was this about? Why now? Stop! Not only were they having an argument, but they were trying to drown each other! The two geese chased each other first one way, then in the other direction, bullying each other until one would try to escape by going underwater. The other goose would sit high on the water, surveying the lake to see where a head would pop up, and he would attack again! When the head came up for air, the other goose was on top of him, pushing him down under!!

The fight went on and on! Finally, one of the geese managed to make it to the edge of the lake and waddled up the bank of the lake. He had escaped with his life. I thought to myself, well surely that ends that. But no! The other goose followed up the bank too, screeching and honking all the way. The chase continued up a hill and into a neighbor's yard. The two took their disagreement into a wooded area further and further away, as gradually, and thankfully, the noise level dropped. After a few more moments, silence won out.

Yes, that was enough nature for right now. The kitchen was warm and inviting, and there were cookies that needed baking.

Geese usually mate for life. Across the lake was a goose sitting quietly on a nest of eggs. Her 'man' was protecting her and the eggs.

Pandemic Passages

Grandma's Corner

By
Leigh Fenigsohn

WORMS! These wonderful wriggly under-appreciated soil boosters can provide tons of learning fun for your young Grands. How did I get interested in earthworms you might ask?

A little context: Our dive into nature learning all began during COVID when my daughter and I decided to homeschool our very active 7 year old grandson. With horror stories about the limitations of virtual school from her contemporaries who had elementary-aged children, we decided to plunge into the wild blue wonder of 'go it alone' home school. Then reality struck! What curriculum to follow, how to engage and keep motivated a bright enquiring mind? Nature learning came to our rescue! We quickly realized that nature is such an interdisciplinary subject - math, reading, science, social studies, PE nature walks, and yes, sometimes music as we tried identifying bird songs!

So back to the worm story - Worm Farming can be big business. You can check out many DIY YouTube videos on the subject. There is no disputing the important contributions earthworms make to our soil health. However, how to teach the value of earthworms to a 7-year old? To get our little learner on his journey of science observation we purchased a worm farm observation kit from Nature Gift Store which comes with a certificate for a starter supply of worms and fresh soil! I also purchased a fun book called 'Wiggling Worms at Work' by Wendy Pfeffer which has clear explanations of the important role earthworms provide our ecosystem.

I will let you know how our experiment into worm discovery goes! Stay tuned until next time..



Tree Planting



On March 10th and 11th, volunteers planted 700 Short Needle Pine Trees with beautiful weather each day. Mariners' Museum site was recommended by the Forestry Department as it had previously been an agricultural area with trees and vines that were mostly undesirable. Much effort by the Museum staff was used to clear the site before the planting so the new seedlings could get enough sun. This was a legacy project for the museum as trees haven't been planted there since the 1930s. The trees were provided by a grant from the Forestry Department.

On the first day volunteers from the museum, Forestry Department, Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners worked in pairs using Dibble sticks to plant about three-fourths of the trees. Planting sites had been marked to help in the process. The next day volunteers were asked to inspect the trees to make sure they were planted correctly and were standing up straight. After that, the rest of the trees were planted near the Long Leaf Pines behind the Crepe Myrtles on Boundary Road by one group, while another group watered the trees.



Although a lot of effort was needed for the planting, the volunteers had fun sharing conversations and making new contacts. At the end of the second day, the project was considered a huge success with all the helpers making a difference with great support from Dave Kennedy, project manager, and Graham King, landscaping assistant. This project will have a pronounced impact in the future for the museum. It will help the visitors on the trail become aware of some native trees that are less common than they used to be. The trees will also add greenery in the winter months.

Submitted by Charlotte Boudreau



During this spring PMN member David Singletary worked on an Eagle Scout tree planting project of 600 Long Leaf Pines at 5 schools and 11 trees at Menchville HS. We are watering them and they're doing well. Daina Henry and others were instrumental in its success.

Submitted by: David Singletary.



Spring Plant Sale



Anne Graber, Charlotte Boudreau, and Marilyn Adair



Dave Singletary talking to a customer .
Jim Francis in the background handled the finances.



The plant sale was held on June the 6th at the Mariners Museum on the lawn outside the new building. PMN members collected and nurtured the plants for weeks to get them ready for the sale. The sale was a successful fundraiser for PMN.

Submitted by: Charlotte Boudreau
Photo credit: Denis Boudreau

Twenty four volunteers from CNU came out to help Endview Plantation. They spent 3 hours mulching the .3 mile nature trail. Two Master Naturalists (Daina Henry and Gayle Phillips) were there to offer outreach. This was part of the CNU Day of Service for Freshmen. CNU students were volunteering on multiple locations in Newport News.

Submitted by: Daina Henry
Photo credit: Daina Henry



PawPaw Festival At Endview Plantation

Aug 21 2021



Laura Willowby welcoming everyone to the First PawPaw Festival at Endview Plantation with Daina Henry, Bill Boeh and Dave Lauthers in the background.



The PMN display about the Virginia Master Naturalists.



Charlotte Boudreau, Ella Reilly, Dave Lauthers and Bill Boeh at the talk Table

The first ever Paw Paw festival at the Endview Plantation was a great success! 140 folks attended the festival. People came from Suffolk, Charles City, New Kent, as well as our local area. Some came from as far as Rockville, Maryland! The rain held off for the most part and everyone was excited about eating Pawpaw and gathering seeds. PMN had outreach tables, and kids activities and 30 minute educational Talks.

Graham King helped in the morning setting things up, Gary Wright transported our faceboard, and provided butterfly Chrysalis. Phyllis Kohlman and Loye Spencer manned the kids activities table. Fred Kohlman, Merry Kennedy and Francois Veland cut Pawpaws and offered samples. Charlotte Boudreau, Janet Tucker and Jackie Frankewicz were at the PMN outreach table.

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Loye Spencer and Phyllis Kohlman at the kid's craft table



Jackie Frankewicz and Janet Tucker at the PMN table



Fred Kohlman and Merry Kennedy the PawPaw tasting and recipe table



PawPaw Festival At Endview Plantation

Aug 21 2021



Daina Marlowe and Daina Henry.



Daina Henry giving a talk on PawPaw.



Nate Brauner giving a talk on Bees.



Roy Moats and Kevin Barry

Members Becky Holliday and Laura Marlowe lead nature trail tours. Dave Lauthers gave a talk on Butterflies, William Boeh on birds, and Nathan Brauner on Bees. Kathy Dansey helped round folks up for our talks and Barbara Waring was our official people counter. Kevin Barry and friend Roy Moats provided music, truly putting the fest into the event!

And we did it all safely, social distanced and outside.

Submitted By Daina Henry
PhotoCredits: Laura Marlowe

What Is A PawPaw?

With leaves and branches that deer avoid, and large, yellowish-green to brown fruit that is loved by all, PawPaw (*Asimina triloba*) is a fascinating tree that is native to eastern United States and Canada. PawPaw, a deciduous tree, grows in thickets in the forest understory and along woodland edges.

It's the only local member of a large, mainly-tropical plant family (Annonaceae), and produces the largest edible fruit native to North America. *Asimina triloba*, has many regional names: the American papaw, pawpaw, paw paw, paw-paw or the PawPaw fruit. PawPaw begins to ripen in late summer and peaks in September and October. Opossums, foxes, squirrels, raccoons, and birds are all known to enjoy pawpaw fruit. The fruit is nutritious and has been used in cancer therapy. Its twigs and bark contain a natural insecticide.

It belongs to the genus *Asimina* in the same plant family as the custard-apple, cherimoya, sweetsop, ylang-ylang, and soursop.



PHOTO CREDIT: NEWS.DELAWARE.GOV

Peninsula Chapter

2021 Peninsula Chapter Board of Directors

President	Charlotte Boudreau
Vice President	Shirley Chirch
Secretary	Bill Boeh
Historian	Maria Nissen
Treasurer	Christy Gardner
Chapter Advisors	Megan Tierney & Meghan Mulroy-Goldman



Member Meetings and Continuing Education

Day/Time: Second Tuesday of every month, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Location: Sandy Bottom Nature Park
1255 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, VA 23666
(Currently held on Zoom until further notice)

2021 Committee Chairs

Basic Training	Christiana Wilson
Continuing Education	Yukari Hughes
Community Outreach	Daina Henry
Hospitality	Merry Kennedy
Membership	Cindy Moore
Projects	David Singletary
Public Relations	Nate Brauner
Fund Raising	Jim Francis
VMS Coordinator	Laura Marlowe
Property Manager	Diane Peters
Newsletter	Meera Rao
Web Master	John Berry
Past President	Daina Henry

Our Address: 809 Aberdeen Road, #9263, Hampton, VA 23670

Upcoming Meetings and CE

Date: September 8, 2021 (Zoom link on BI Calendar)
Time: 6:00 p.m. Basic Training CE Taxonomy, BI, Tools

Date :September 9, 2021 (Zoom link on VMS Calendar)
Time: 7:00 p.m. CE - PMN Book Club (virtual)

Date: September 14, 2021 (Zoom link on BI Calendar)
Time: 6:00 p.m. Member meeting
7:00 p.m CE - Natural Resource Program and Projects at Langley AFB

Date: September 23, 2021 CE - Bird Walk at Woodville Park (details: BI Calendar)
Time: 8:00am-10am

FIND US!

Peninsula Chapter Website: <http://vmnpeninsula.weebly.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VMNPeninsula/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTbIGR9RcDI62oxfJSLi3Ww>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/VMNPeninsula/>

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