

# FIELD NOTES

PENINSULA CHAPTER



## CLEAN THE BAY DAY

BY  
MEERA RAO

The first Saturday in June every year is *Clean the Bay Day* in Virginia. It was founded in 1989 by Robert Dean, Beth Richardson and Steve Pahno. The annual litter cleanup day of the Chesapeake Bay watershed was interrupted for two years during the height of the pandemic and returned to its traditional format this year. Even though the official clean the Bay Day was on Saturday, June 4th, the event was extended to the week leading up to it and May 30-June 3 was set aside as a DIY week.

According to the [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#) web page: "*This year, more than 3,000 volunteers gathered at nearly 200 sites all over Virginia on foot and by boat, removing 66,000 lbs. of litter and debris over roughly 250 miles of shoreline.*" And: "*This year besides plastic, glass bottles, aluminum cans, plastic bags and cigarette butts, participants also found many larger items including a recliner, a cash register, and a car door. Unusual items included a 19th century horseshoe and a homemade drone.*" Highlighting the debris removed during the event leads to promoting positive disposal, reusing, and recycling items where and when possible. Everyone has to do their part to maintain safe, healthy and clean waters that is key to all life.

Many members of the Peninsula Chapter Virginia Master naturalists volunteered in the cleanup efforts to make the world a better place. Please check out on page 2, their efforts, photos, and some of unusual debris found. Collecting and recycling plastic is also an ongoing effort by our Peninsula Chapter. Jim Francis, our chapter president announced that 465 lbs. of plastic has been recycled to date. Hampton Master Gardeners donated 81 lbs. to the collection. The challenge is to collect 500lbs total by July 1st, 2022. For Peninsula Master Naturalists, *Clean the Bay Day* is not just one day of the year!



### Summer Delights

This Summer issue of Field Notes is full of articles and photos of nature, service and volunteering as our members continue to make a difference in the world around them.

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 (as separate attachments) to [pmnfieldnotes@gmail.com](mailto:pmnfieldnotes@gmail.com)



Resilience photo by Meera Rao,

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# Clean the Bay Day



## LUCAS CREEK



Daina Henry and Laura Marlowe



collected 26 pounds of trash from Lucas Creek on Sunday June 5th for Clean the Bay Day. The most unusual item found was a baseball bat. We also found several balls of varying types. The rest of the trash consisted of plastic bottles, cans and Styrofoam

Photos and Submission by Laura Marlowe



## DENBIGH PARK/BOAT RAMP



Many thanks to Jim Francis, Barbara Waring, Chris Gwaltney, Kevin Barry and Ray Thurnes for helping cleanup Denbigh Park/Boat Ramp. We collected about 90 pounds of trash. Clean the Bay Day was once again a success for the Peninsula Master Naturalists.

Photo and Submission by Daina Henry

## MENCHVILLE MARINA



Gary Wright and June Hartzler cleaned up the shoreline and parking lot area at Menchville Marina for Clean the Bay Day June 4, 2022. They picked up over 150 pounds of trash in 2 hours including a tire, glass bottles, cans, plastic bottles and food containers, fish bait containers and fish line, and miscellaneous junk and trash.

Submitted by June Hartzler



June Hartzler

## VIRGINIA LIVING MUSEUM



For Clean the Bay Day, the regular Lake and Stream Volunteers Laura Marlowe, Christy Gardner, Anne Graber and Susie Engle were joined by Bo Baker, Brad Halcum and five additional volunteers filled 3 huge reusable pop-up bags from the VLM property. The trash weighed a total of 62.8 pounds. Unusual items included a shoe, and Christmas ornaments. There were also the usual plastic bags, plastic bottles, beer and soda cans, candy wrappers, chip packages, Styrofoam, straws, cigarette butts and Fireball bottles.

We had five teams that got both sides of the stream from the property fence to the bobcats, along the vultures, eagles, wolves to the aviary, from the foxes up to the deer and down to the area by the front deck and beaver. In addition, we got the shoreline behind the education building, the parking lot and dinosaur dig area.

Many thanks to Bo and the two volunteers with him, who picked up the parking lot and dinosaur area, and to Dylan, Daphne and Melissa who joined us under the boardwalk along the stream and along the lake behind the Ed center.

Submitted by Laura Marlowe



Anne Graber, Larry Lewis and Laura Marlowe with the trash collected for Clean the Bay Day at the VLM. Susie Engle and Christy Gardener also participated and are not pictured.



Volunteers at the Virginia Living Museum



# CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE HERP KIND

BY  
DAVID BOEHNLEIN



This issue, I want to talk about reptiles and amphibians. After all, everybody loves reptiles and amphibians. Well, almost everybody. My mother doesn't care for them. When I was a kid, I once came home with a garter snake in each hand and, if you can believe it, she wouldn't let me in the door. But I still like reptiles and amphibians, and these are a few recent encounters.



Woodland Box Turtle

In early May, I found a Woodland Box Turtle in my yard, eyeing me from the fresh mulch beside my house. The eye it was eyeing me with was black, which means it was probably a female, since the males tend to have bright red eyes. May is nesting season for these turtles, so I'm hopeful that somewhere nearby, there's a nest of box turtle eggs waiting to hatch. That would be great because, under Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan, the Woodland Box Turtle is a Tier III species, meaning that the population is in decline and extinction is possible, though not imminent. I reported my sighting to the Virginia Herpetological Society's Eastern Box Turtle Census Project. If you should see a specimen of *Terrapene carolina carolina*, I encourage you to report it as well. Note that the Woodland Box Turtle is also known as the Eastern Box Turtle, but I prefer to use the Linnaean name because that makes me sound like an expert.

My next encounter was in West Virginia, while I was visiting New River Gorge National Park. The New River is actually a very old river and the gorge reaches down through a vast stretch of geological time, to 300 million years ago when some of the earliest amphibians crawled among giant seed ferns, lycophytes, and other things that have long since turned into coal. I encountered one of their modern descendants on a hike along the rim of the gorge, walking in a light rain through a forest of rhododendrons, tulip trees, and multiflora. I stopped short when I spied a tiny, bright orange figure on the path. It was a red eft, the juvenile stage of the Eastern Newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*). Only two inches long, it looked like a toy dropped by some careless child, especially because of the brilliant color.

The eft's color conveys a simple message to other woodland creatures: I am poison: 'Don't eat me.' Although I considered the rain an inconvenience when I started out, I was glad of it when I spotted the eft, because it probably wouldn't have been out in dry weather.



Red eft, the juvenile stage of the Eastern Newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*).



copperhead snake

The last encounter came while I was bicycling on the Virginia Creeper Trail near Damascus, in western Virginia. A snake was crawling across the path, but I didn't take its picture. I had taken a picture of such a snake the first time I encountered one, many years ago. I walked right up to it with my camera. I didn't know what kind of snake it was. I didn't realize what it meant when the snake raised itself up to stare right back at me. I didn't even know that its Linnaean classification was *Agkistrodon contortrix mokasen*. Afterward, I showed my picture to a herpetologist, who told me "That is a copperhead." I was lucky to walk away from that first encounter. In this last one, I just steered around the snake and kept on pedaling. If you see a snake that looks like this one – Leave. It. Alone.

Photo credits: David Boehnlein

I guess that's all for now. Happy scales to you, until we meet again.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS WELLNESS FAIR

Many thanks to the volunteers Loye Spencer, Chris Gwaltney, Milda Begovich, Daina Henry, Francoise Veland, Gayle Phillips and Amber Miller for their help with manning our outreach table at the City of Newport News Wellness Fair on May 5, 2022 – our focus was on the wellness aspect of nature and hiking/walking through woods.

Submitted by Daina Henry



Phyllis Kohlman  
Photo by Daina Henry

## EARTH DAY CELEBRATION AT TRADITIONS BREWERY.

We had a great turnout at the first ever Earth Day Celebration at Traditions Brewery. Many thanks to Phyllis and Fred Kohlman, Christiana Wilson and Daina Henry (and husband John – who helped set up and take down) for their volunteer outreach about the importance of clean water. We spoke to over 100 folks. The food trucks and live music was an added bonus.

Submitted by Daina Henry

## SPRING PENINSULA MASTER NATURALIST PLANT SALE

After many days of rain and rescheduling, the Spring Peninsula Master Naturalist Plant Sale took place on May 15, 2022, on the front lawn of the Mariners' Museum. Many thanks to all those who donated plants. Also, many thanks to the volunteers for their time and help: Chris Gwaltney, Ken Carroll, Charlotte Bourdreau, Anne Graber, Laura Marlowe, Barbara Waring and Christy Gardner, June Hartzler, Gary Wright, Daina Henry. Graham King helped us set up the tables and Erica Deal from the Museum provided an outreach table. There was a great selection of plants and lots of helpful advice to our visitors. Bringing the Live Oaks added a lot to the sale! We also recruited some new trainees. In all it turned out to be a great day! It was nice to be able to chat with so many members in person. We had the most customers during the afternoon and made about a \$1000. The museum took the left-over plants and Graham and several members helped put the tables away.

Submitted by Charlotte Bourdreau



pictured l to r Chris Gwaltney, Ken Carroll, Charlotte Bourdreau, Anne Graber, Laura Marlowe, Barbara Waring and Christy Gardner. Photo by Daina Henry



*"It is our collective and individual responsibility ... to preserve and tend to the world in which we all live."  
~Dalai Lama~*

# PLANTING A GARDEN



## MARINER'S MUSEUM LILLY GARDEN.

Spring has sprung and our volunteers were out helping at the Mariner's Museum Lilly garden. Many thanks to Charlotte and Dennis Boudreau, Gayle Phillips, Larry Lewis and Daina Henry (not pictured) for their efforts.

Photo and Submission by Daina Henry



## PLANTING A RAIN GARDEN

The rain garden path at Hampton Big Bethel Landfill is set. I delivered two dozen green cone flowers, and two dozen blue flag iris for planting. (Replants from Knollwood Meadows Elementary School garden removal.) Can't wait to see the plants blooming.

Submitted by Daina Henry



## KNOLLWOOD MEADOWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GARDEN

Friday April 8, Charlotte Boudreau, Gayle Phillips, Melanie Marois and Daina Henry (not pictured) were joined by a couple of teachers in work on the Knollwood Meadows Elementary School garden. The garden originally had a plot for each of the grades. This year the plots for the youngest grades were being removed. Many of these plants were donated to the upcoming may plant sale and to the planned rain garden at Big Bethel Landfill.

Submitted by Daina Henry



*"A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust."*  
~ Gertrude Jekyll ~



# CLIMATE CHANGE, SOIL SUBSIDENCE AND SEA LEVEL RISE

## 2022 SUMMER COURSE: CLIMATE CHANGE, SOIL SUBSIDENCE AND SEA LEVEL RISE

Wednesday Evenings, 6 – 8 pm, to be held on “Zoom”

June 8: **“Weather & Climate: What is the Difference and What You Need to Know”**  
Jeff Orrock, MIC, National Weather Service Wakefield

June 22: **“Plants and Climate Change: The Winners, the Losers, and the Workers”**  
Dr. Janet Steven, Christopher Newport University

July 6: **“Where Will All the Flowers Go? The Impact of Climate Change on Flora”**  
Dr. Ann Evans, Thomas Nelson Community College

July 20: **“Relative Sea Level Rise and Virginia’s Coastal Resilience”**  
Karen Duhring, Virginia Institute for Marine Science

August 3: **“Microbes in our Lives: What a difference One Degree Makes!”**  
Jackie Spencer, Thomas Nelson Community College

Submitted by Melody Avery



## WEATHER & CLIMATE

Weather and climate describe the world outside the window - whether it's hot or cold, humid or dry, sunny or cloudy. Weather is the short-term conditions present in the moment that let people know what to wear today and whether or not to bring an umbrella. Climate describes the long-term conditions that let people know what clothes to keep in their wardrobe all year long and whether they need to own snow boots, flip flops or both.

Both weather and climate are the result of the interaction of several Earth systems:

- the movement of moisture in the water cycle that evaporates ocean water into the air where it condenses into travelling clouds or storms that eventually cause rain or snow;
- the movement of heat that begins at the sun-soaked equator and moves warm air toward the north and south poles;
- the movement of the oceans that takes icy-cold water from the poles to the tropics, warming or cooling the air above the water.

These and many other factors, including greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, combine to form the high and low pressure systems you hear about on the weather report, and over time add up to the climate of the location you live in.

To understand the complex interactions and patterns of weather and climate, scientists collect as much observational data as they can on precipitation, temperatures, humidity, and other atmospheric conditions. They then use that data and the relationships between the different pieces to create computer models of local, regional, or even global weather and climate.

From : <https://gpm.nasa.gov/education/weather-climate>

# PENINSULA CHAPTER

## 2022 Peninsula Chapter Board of Directors

President	Jim Frances
Vice President	Shirley Chirch
Secretary	William Boeh
Historian	Maria Nissen
Treasurer	Christy Gardner
Chapter Advisors	Megan Tierney & Meghan Mulroy-Goldman

## 2022 Committee Chairs

Basic Training	Rex Holmlin
Better Impact Coordinator	Laura Marlowe
Continuing Education	Yukari Hughes
Community Outreach	Kimberly Prisco-Bagget
Fund Raising	Charlotte Boudreau
Hospitality	Merry Kennedy
Membership	Cindy Moore
Newsletter	Meera Rao
Projects	Chris Gwaltney
Property Manager	Jeanette and Ray Yoh
Public Relations	Nate Brauner
Web Master	John Berry
Past President	Charlotte Boudreau

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



## 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 2366  
(Currently held on Zoom until further notice)

## Upcoming Meetings and CE are listed in VMS-BI Calendar

- Date: Tuesday, June 14, 2022 (Zoom link on BI Calendar)  
Time: 6:00 p.m. Member Meeting at Blue Bird Gap Farm  
7:00 CE: Blue Bird Gap Farm Tour
- Date: Wednesday, June 22, 2022, CE: Summer Series on Climate Change  
Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (Zoom link on BI Calendar)
- Date: Saturday, June 18, 2022 CE: Forest Immersion/Nature Healing (MM)  
Time: 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM contact info in BI Calendar
- Date: Wednesday, July 06, 2022 Summer Series on Climate Change  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (details: BI Calendar) CE

## 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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