

# Peninsula Chapter

# Field Notes



The Newsletter of the Peninsula Chapter - Virginia Master Naturalist Program

Volume 10/Issue 1

Winter 2018

## Message from the President:

Another year has come and gone. January is a month to review the past and the accomplishments and prepare and plan for the future and new year. I am immensely proud to



be the president of this very active, vibrant and passionate organization. So many of you give so much time and effort to so many different activities. This is good and healthy. Just as in nature, diversity is good.

The Annual Report gives me an excellent opportunity to review all that we have done as Master Naturalists. We have **120** active members (recording at least one volunteer hour last year). We have trained (since the beginning) **231** members. Our board consists of 18 very dedicated volunteers, my thanks to them for all their work. They have made the job of president so much easier.

We have become more educated – **1767** continuing education hours this year. We have supported our sponsors: DEQ water monitoring (1130 hours), DGIF schoolyard pollinators (264 hours), VCE school yard habitats and Rarequest (159 and 40 hours), VIMS outreach and stewardship (203 hours) and DOF New Kent (21 hours.) We have reached out to **13,908** individuals. We have helped increase knowledge through our citizen science efforts (**2906** hours). We have served our communities compiling **3443** hours. You have helped run this organization offering **2293** hours of your time to keep us running.

We have offered so much to many efforts: to Virginia Living Museum 3126 hours by 41 members; water quality monitoring 1130 hours by 39 members; bird counts/observations 1023 hours by 17 members (go birders!!!); sandy Bottom Nature Park 446 hours by 3 members (what a dedicated bunch!!!); and Endview Nature Trail 285 hours by 16 members (thank you so much.)

With that as our past, I know I can rely on all of you to keep up the good work. Our diversity is our strength: initiate a new project, try something different (I am going to get out of my rut and try something new this year), learn, engage, educate. Thanks so much for your kindness and words of encouragement. They are appreciated. See you out there.

\*\*\*\*\*

SAVE the DATE for the **Great Backyard Bird Count**, February 16 -19. Only 15 minutes of bird watching needed to submit a checklist to this important citizen science project. Learn more at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

## In This Issue

Message from the President - page 1

Hong Kong's Kowlong Park- pages 2 and 3

Fisherman's Island- page 4

Updates - page 5

Silent Auction and TREX collection - page 6

Book Review [The Reason for Flowers](#) - page 7

PMN Board and chapter schedule - page 8

# Peninsula Chapter

## Hong Kong's Kowloon Walled City Park

By Daina Henry, Cohort 6

Kowloon City within the city of Hong Kong has been in existence since the Song Dynasty (960-1279) when it served as a fort. In 1842, Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain, and a wall was built around the fort to separate Kowloon from it. In the picture it is noted in red as Chinatown at the upper right.



For many years, the Walled City was considered Chinese territory surrounded by British land. Eventually there was no government enforcement by either the Chinese or the British and the Walled City became a haven for drugs and crime. At one point, it was the most densely populated spot on earth, with 30,000 people in 300 buildings occupying about 7 acres.



In 1987, Hong Kong announced plans to demolish Kowloon City, and by 1994 the area was demolished. In 1995, Kowloon Walled City Park opened. It is a remarkable revitalization of green space within a city no larger than Virginia Beach, with a total of 7 million citizens.

Citizens are found there at all hours, enjoying the green space in a city that towers with skyscrapers. They have preserved portions of the buildings and gates into the city as a reminder of the history of the City within a City.



The park has numerous walking trails, biking trails, fitness areas, basketball courts, and historical sites of the original Kowloon City. Even at 6 in the morning, there were numerous people of all ages enjoying and using the park. Groups engaging in Tai Chi or meditation were common. The climate of Hong Kong is equatorial/tropical. But the influence of British formal gardens was ever present, creating an interesting combination of Eastern and Western style gardening.

There were educational signs in both Mandarin and English to explain the different plants and trees. Some can find relatives in Virginia – they have a version of Crape Myrtle, Magnolia, Rose of Sharon, and Iris. Most plants were exotic and found only in their equatorial climate.



# Peninsula Chapter



Queen Crape myrtle, *Lagerstroemia speciosa*



Chinese croton, *Excoecaria cochinchinensis*



Southern Magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora*



Rose of Sharon, *Hibiscus syriacus*

The park has 8 floral walks named after the flowers planted along the path. In a short 20 years, the area has been transformed. The paths are environmentally friendly and porous - stones surrounded by dirt.



Travellers palm, *Ravanala madagascariensis*



Dragon juniper, *Juniperus chinensis*

Kowloon Walled City Park is a model for green space revitalization.

Pictures of map of Hong Kong from Wikipedia - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kowloon\\_Walled\\_City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kowloon_Walled_City) - picture of old Kowloon City by Ian Lambot - Ian Lambot. City of Darkness - Life in Kowloon Walled City (ISBN 1-873200-13-7). 1993., CC BY 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?>

# Peninsula Chapter

## Fisherman Island Winter Tour Eastern shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge

By Phyllis Kohlman, Cohort 6

I have passed this bit of land, just north of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, on trips to New York, never giving it further thought. Looking over the to the shoreline, it seems so calm and beautiful. It was with great excitement when I learned that a tour of the site was offered every Saturday from October to the first weekend in March. Since it is a natural bird refuge, once the birds return for the winter, the tours are stopped. My photography club had arranged a tour for our group to be privately lead on the trail

If you want to go, it is best to call ahead and schedule with the facility for your tour, especially if it is a group of people going. The toll for crossing the Chesapeake Bridge Tunnel is \$15.00 and should be \$5.00 return if done within 24 hours. When you go on the Fisherman Island Winter Tour, if you are not going to extend your stay on the Eastern Shore, you are given a toll pass for the return cost.

Bob Toner and Thor Gromley, both Virginia Master Naturalists, greeted us in the parking lot of the Welcome Center. There are hiking trails around the Welcome Center. The trails at the center are named the Wildlife and Bunkertop viewpoint and the Marsh Overlook. There is also a biking trail. This three hour tour could be counted towards continuing education points.

The Fisherman Island habitat is located back down the road. So we follow the tour guides out to the main road and back toward the bridge where they turn into a small parking area and proceed to unlock a security gate. This is where the tour begins and the two MN start teaching right at the start, showing us a native holly shrub and explaining the characteristics of this holly with the smooth leaves and those with the thorn sticky leaves. We have been given an information sheet with list of trees, plants, and shells that we might see today. On the

On the back of the sheet is some history of the site where a military camp had been as far back as 1890. Ruins of the previous buildings can be seen with nature growing up and over many of the fallen walls.

**Some of the trees discussed were:** *Sassafras*, former source of flavor for root beer which is now it is artificially flavored. *Eastern Cottonwood*, a non-native that has become invasive to the site. *Black Cherry*, which was highly sought for its beauty in woodwork.

**Some of the plants discussed were:** *American Beachgrass*, its long roots helps it stabilize the sandy soil when there is an influx of salt water, such as during a hurricane. *Yaupon Holly*, which has been used by native Americans as a tea drink. Birds love the red berries in the fall. *Seaside Goldenrod*, which helps prevent sand erosion and is important for small nesting birds.

There is a collection of items that have been found washed up on the island. These include many pieces of plastic in various forms from bottles, ropes, to larger items. There are pieces of bones from whales, dolphins, sea turtles, etc. Included in this collection are some shells of various sizes.

For further information about Fisherman Island, see the refuge website. Another resource worth checking is "A Flora Of Fisherman Island", Virginia, by Allen Belden, Jr., a study by Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation done May- October 2005 of 256 plant species found on the island, 30% were non-native with a few being invasive, top one identified as the Common Reed.



MNs Bob Toner and Thor Gromley

# Peninsula Chapter

## Virginia Naturally School Recognition

By Susan Walton, Cohort 2

Virginia Naturally Schools is the official environmental education school recognition program of the Commonwealth, administered by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Department of Education, Department of Environmental Quality and other resource agencies. This program recognizes the efforts of many Virginia schools to increase the environmental awareness and stewardship of our youngest citizens.

The application package includes a detailed report of school activities, a letter from the principal, and a letter from a community member who has supported the environmental goals of the school. This is an award upon which schools may build and achieve additional recognitions each year of participation.

The following schools for the past school year have schoolyard habitats or environmental projects supported by Peninsula Master Naturalists:

- Sedgefield Elementary, Newport News
- Nelson Elementary, Newport News
- Abingdon Elementary, Gloucester
- Achilles Elementary, Gloucester
- Peasley Middle, Gloucester
- Ware Academy, Gloucester

\*\*\*\*\*

PMN Tony Bonavita was featured in the December Oyster Grower newsletter. Here is a quote that show this naturalist's care for the environment. *I love taking care of my oysters! They provide excellent habitat even in cages. I have found so many juvenile blue crabs and fish, even an American eel after a pretty good storm came through. I also love the opportunity to bring my niece closer to nature. She may be too young now to understand just how important oyster restoration is for our Bay, but growing up around it with conservation minded parents and family will hopefully instigate her to get involved and be a steward of our environment too!*

## Wreath Making Workshops at Endview

By Daina Henry, Cohort 6

Newport News Master Gardeners, along with Peninsula Master Naturalists, offered three workshops at Endview Plantation on natural wreath making Dec 2 and 10<sup>th</sup>. The workshops offered by Endview were a hit and sold out quickly. Thirty three participants from Virginia, Michigan, and Rhode Island learned how to make grape vine wreaths, and learned about the native plants that would have been used in creating wreaths. Many thanks to the many volunteers who helped prepare and present the workshops. For many it was their first time at Endview.



PMN volunteers at Endview wreath workshop

\*\*\*\*\*



Water quality training



Jeanette DeBartolo water quality testing at Denbigh



# Peninsula Chapter

## Silent Auction 2018

By Susan Walton, Cohort 2

The December meeting was another successful potluck and silent auction fund raiser. The food assortment was amazing and delicious. The company was festive. And, Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus made an appearance, greeting each and every member. Members were generous with their donation of items for the auction as well as their bidding, raising over \$800.00 for the treasury. Three truck loads of plastic were collected for recycling. Thanks to for and everyone else who helped to make this event possible!



## TREX plastic collection

By Susan Walton, Cohort 2

The PMN TREX plastic recycling project has gotten off to a superb start, thanks to the leadership of Diane Peters. With the TREX program organizations can collect and recycle plastic bags and shrink wrap to earn a TREX recycled lumber bench. Our first 500 pounds of plastic was collected by the end of 2017. Our first bench will be placed at the Virginia Living Museum.

The TREX Yacht Club 48 bench, shown at right, retails at \$529.00. Thanks to TREX this is major upgrade from the benches they donated previously. Even better, think of ALL the plastic we kept out of the landfills!!!



If you haven't started collecting, we are working on our next bench and already have 200 pounds towards it. Remember, bags must be CLEAN and cellophane cannot be recycling. Please don't put trash in with your plastic.

Contact Diane if you wish to deliver your collected plastics to her directly.



# Peninsula Chapter

Book Review –

**The Reason For Flowers** by Stephen Buchmann

By Phyllis Kohlman, Cohort 6

As spring comes in a few weeks, we get excited seeing the first hints of the promise of green leaves and then the colorful flowers that will appear shortly after. This book explains the importance of those shapes and colors that draw our attention. However, flowers were not made for man's enjoyment, but to reproduce and continue their species. We have the benefit of delighting in their beauty and sometimes their fragrance.

Many of us remember studying how flowers help in pollination, but plants didn't start out with flowers. They evolved into their current complex functions. This book reveals details in how flowers evolved to help the plant kingdom to diversify and to migrate to other locations. It discusses the movement of pollen by various insects and the "tricks" that flowers employ to lure the insects into carrying the pollen. Some of these techniques are extremely clever and once you know what the flower is trying to accomplish, you then understand it's particular shape, and possibly that unique fragrance.

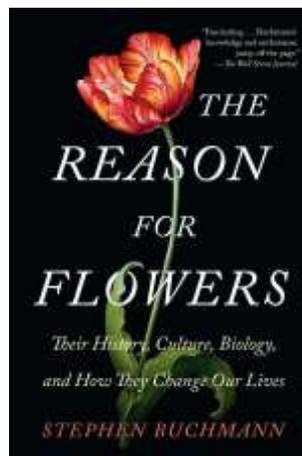
The history of many well know gardens is discussed, and some of the cultural differences exhibited by people like in their garden surroundings is explained. Current cultural view of flowers is also covered in detail. For example, the popularity and high cost of orchids is discussed and the current countries where the best flowers are grown. So, just how do those long stem roses make it to our floral shop just in time for Valentines Day?

Our "spring fever" is nothing compared to the "tulip fever" in the 1600's Holland. One of their major products for exporting was the tulip. The fancier, or newest color tulip was all the rage for the rich to own and show off to their friends. Many fortunes were made and lost on this flower.

There is also a detailed discussion of flowers in our art. Many past and current cultures have applied a significant meaning for certain flowers. This message was readily understood when someone was sent a bouquet. These meaning are also alluded to in many well know paintings, medieval illustrations found in some copies of the Bible, and even those wall tapestries and rugs to decorate ones home; and other forms of art.

Finally, there is coverage of science and the flower. We recognize Darwin's name readily, but there were others who contributed to the study of flowers. One was Gregor Johann Mendel (1822-84) and his cross-pollination study. There is discussion on current issues, such as pollen and crime scene forensics. Other scientific topics include how do we smell flowers and the potential of flower scents altering human moods.

The Appendix has some interesting tables to further appreciate the many benefits of flowers. The book is a very detailed exploration of many aspects of flowers.



After reading one gets a better appreciation in how the individual flower developed in time. In our modern world, it is amazing that just for our enjoyment, fresh flowers can be shipped anywhere.

# Peninsula Chapter

## Peninsula Chapter Board of Directors

President	Daina Henry
Past President	Brad Halcums
Vice President	Laura Nusz
Recording Secretary	Diane Peters
Corresponding Secretary	Yukari Hughes
Treasurer	William Boeh
Historian	Loye Spencer
Chapter Advisor	Megan Tierney



## Upcoming Meetings

Day: Second Tuesday of the month  
Location: Sandy Bottom Nature Park  
1255 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, VA 23666

## Meeting and Continuing Education

Date: February 13, 2018

Time: 6:00 P.M. Waster to Energy at the Hampton Steam Plant

## Committee Chairs

Basic Training	Becky Holliday, Sandy Graham
Continuing Education	Maria Nissen
Community Outreach	Chris Gwaltney
Hospitality	Jeannette Yoh
Membership	Lylliane Battle
Volunteer Service Projects	David Singletary
Public Relations	Ella Reilly
Fund Raising	Kate Bernatitus
VMS Coordinator	Laura Marlowe
Property Manager	Ann Hageman
Newsletter	Susan Walton
Web Master	Larry Lewis

## FIND US!

**Facebook:** Virginia Master Naturalist - Peninsula Chapter (@VMNPeninsula)

**Twitter:** VMN-Peninsula (@VMN\_Peninsula)

**G+ site:** Virginia Master Naturalist - Peninsula Chapter  
<https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/107015955297549201934>

**YouTube:** Virginia Master Naturalist - Peninsula Chapter  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTbIGR9RcDI62oxfJSLi3Ww>

**Pinterest:** Virginia Master Naturalist – Peninsula Chapter (VMNPeninsula)

**Instagram:** VMN Peninsula (vmnpeninsula)

*Virginia Master Naturalist Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital, family, or 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. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Interim Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State, Petersburg. If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Megan Tierney at the York/Poquoson Cooperative Extension Office, 757-890-4940 or \*TDD: 757-890-3621 Monday through Friday during the business hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.*