

# Field Notes

Virginia  
Master  
Naturalist



The monthly newsletter of the Peninsula Chapter  
Virginia Master Naturalist Program

[www.vmnpeninsula.org](http://www.vmnpeninsula.org)

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## Editor's Message

### What does it mean to be a Virginia Master Naturalist?

Our new chapter has been meeting for six weeks now, and in that short time I have been privileged to meet some exceptional individuals. Some I know a little better than others, but I am hoping that our mutual appreciation of nature and our environment will help form lasting bonds between us all. We are a diverse group and the question I ask is, "What brings us together?" It's easy to say that we all want to be better stewards of our natural resources, or help others understand and appreciate nature, but for many of us it boils down to "service." Becoming a Virginia Master Naturalist gives us the opportunity to serve others.

I am not surprised with the number of instructors and teachers among us, nor that several of you either serve our country or support spouses who do. Several others are public servants with local or state agencies. Many just want to become better citizens of our community. The VMN program draws in people of public service.

There is a certain joy in serving others. When we promote the importance of stewardship, we serve others by ensuring that the future of our natural resources will be there for our children. When we serve as "citizen scientists," we serve the men and women that will answer those important

research questions concerning our ecological health. When we educate, we empower others to serve.

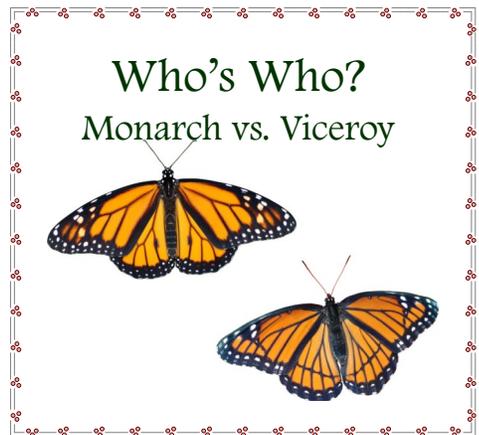
Service is an unselfish and self-sacrificing act. As volunteers we give our time and resources to make our world better. John Burroughs eloquently stated that, "For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is always work, patience, love, self-sacrifice - no paper currency, no promises to pay, but the gold of real service." When we serve others, we put what we believe in and what we value in action.

What do we gain from being a VMN volunteer? The service that you give will be returned to you with the satisfaction that you made a difference. I know it sounds like an old adage, but the fact of the matter is that it's true. Through the years I have come to realize that serving others and volunteering is more valuable to me than anything that I could have been compensated for. When one finally realizes the satisfaction gained from providing service, it is like being old Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas morning. It is heartfelt and rewarding.

Let us all come together to set an example for our friends, families and our community. Let us reach out and show that one person can make a difference. In the era of global warming, ecological decline and loss of natural habitat, we will never ask ourselves, "Could we have made a difference?" Regardless of the future, we can be proud in the knowledge that we championed a cause and we acted.

I leave this final quote with you, but especially with our very own Captain Compost (Bill) in mind, "Kings and cabbages go back to compost, but good deeds stay green forever."

A.D. Hanline -Newsletter Editor



#### Note from the Editor

Please be involved, and submit your articles, notes, photos and materials to:  
[VMN.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:VMN.newsletter@gmail.com)



#### Field Facts:

The red fox of the U.S. has long been recognized as its own species, but recent studies have indicated it to be the same species as, or a hybrid of, the Old World red fox. The red fox in the southeastern U.S. (including Virginia) was introduced from Europe for foxhunters in the 1700s.

## Peninsula Chapter Coordinating Committee

### Coordinating Committee Chair

Carl Shirley

### Chapter Advisor

Megan Ketchum

### Committee members

Debbie Blanton  
Sheila Kerr-Jones  
Clyde Marsteller  
Kim Powell  
Sandy Graham  
A.D. Hanline



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Virginia Cooperative Extension  
A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University [www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)



VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

## VMN Class Schedule for Spring-2009

Classroom provided  
by our local partner:  
Thank you



- 2/17 INTRO TO VMN  
RISK MANAGEMENT  
Michelle Prysby
- 2/24 BIOLOGY  
Dr. Turner Spencer

- 3/3 MAMMALOLOGY  
Bo Baker
- 3/10 URBAN ECOSYSTEMS  
STREAM ECOLOGY  
Dawn Currier
- 3/17 BOTANY  
Anne Tucker  
DENDROLOGY  
Dr. Stewart Ware
- 3/24 ENTOMOLOGY  
Dr. Barbara Abraham
- 3/31 HERPETOLOGY  
Tim Christensen
- 4/7 ORNITHOLOGY  
Bill Williams
- 4/14 GEOLOGY  
Dr. Jerre Johnson
- 4/18 FIELD TRIP – GEOLOGY
- 4/21 ICHTHYOLOGY  
Instructor TBA
- 4/25 FIELD TRIP -COASTAL ECOLOGY  
Dr. Ben Cuker
- 4/28 ECOLOGY  
Dr. Stephen Living
- 5/2 FIELD TRIP – YORK RIVER STATE  
PARK – WETLANDS ECOLOGY
- 5/5 CITIZEN SCIENCE  
Shirley Sypolt  
INTERPRETIVE SKILLS  
John Gulick
- 5/12 GRADUATION



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Virginia Master Naturalist Peninsula Chapter

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## Chapter Committees

### Membership Committee

Responsible for maintaining applications and membership records and tracking volunteer hours and eligibility status of chapter members.

Dawn Currier, Libby Carmines, Jessica McKinnon and Sandy Graham

### Volunteer Service Projects

Responsible for the planning and coordination of chapter service projects. Includes working with chapter partners to discover and create opportunities.

Kristine James, Shirley Sypolt, Charlotte Boudreau and Kim Powell

### Training Committee

Responsible for the planning and coordination of annual basic training classes. Includes planning schedules, recruiting instructors, securing locations, and creating a curriculum that meets the standards of the VMN Program.

Jenny Russell, A.D. Hanline and Debbie Blanton

### Community Outreach and Development

Responsible for the coordination of community outreach, including publicity, organizing chapter participation in public events and fundraising.

Maria Page, Bill Garlette and Jackie Roquemore

### Hospitality Committee

Responsible for the planning and implementation of chapter social events such as graduations, picnics and parties.

Bonnie Baffer and Chris Ausink

### By-laws/Handbook Committee (Temporary)

Responsible for creating chapter by-laws and operating handbook.

Bill Garlette, Teri Jennings, Shirley Boyd and Charlotte Boudreau



## Field Trips: Coastal Plain Depression Wetlands



This diverse group of poorly-drained basin wetlands are characteristic of flat Coastal Plain terraces with fluctuating, seasonally perched water tables. Similar wetlands are scattered throughout the mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain. The best-documented examples of this group in Virginia are the Grafton Ponds, located on The Peninsula in York County, but other sizeable complexes occur on Coastal Plain terraces in Dinwiddie, Surry, Isle of Wight, Gloucester, and Matthews Counties. Also included are the seasonally exposed shores of Lake Drummond, a 1,287 ha (3,180 ac) basin in the Great Dismal Swamp. South of the James River, two community types in this group extend into the eastern Piedmont, where they are associated with hardpan soils. Most of these wetlands are seasonally flooded and are believed to be sinkhole features that formed through dissolution of underlying carbonate-rich, shell marl deposits. The marl deposits are too deep to influence soil or water chemistry of the depressions, which are strongly acidic in most examples. A few depressions in extreme southeastern Virginia appear to have originated from deep peat burn-outs. Although the term "vernal pond" has been applied to some of the communities in this group, that name is rather restrictive and is a poor descriptor of the more extensive occurrences.

Vegetation in this group varies from nearly forested to entirely herbaceous, representing a sizeable number of distinct community types. Depth and duration of seasonal inundation are apparently the most important factors influencing community composition and the degree to which woody species become established. Dry-season fires in adjacent uplands may spread into ponds and may be another factor limiting the invasion of woody species, although fire frequencies throughout the region have been much reduced in recent decades. Typical trees occurring in wooded ponds are red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), swamp tupelo (*Nyssa biflora*), blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), overcup oak (*Quercus lyrata*), and bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). Shrubs that dominate some ponds include buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), swamp loosestrife (*Decodon verticillatus*), persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), and fetterbush (*Leucothoe racemosa*). Herbs characteristic of these communities are well adapted to

long periods of submersion. Included are glaucous sedge (*Carex glaucescens*), cypress-swamp sedge (*Carex jorii*), pocosin sedge (*Carex striata* var. *brevis*), long-tuberclad spikerush (*Eleocharis tuberculosa*), squarrestem spikerush (*Eleocharis quadrangulata*), creeping rush (*Juncus repens*), eastern narrowleaf seedbox (*Ludwigia linearis*), globe-fruited seedbox (*Ludwigia sphaerocarpa*), tall flat panic grass (*Panicum rigidulum* var. *rigidulum*), warty panic grass (*Panicum verrucosum*), mermaid-weeds (*Proserpinaca palustris* and *Proserpinaca pectinata*), short-bristled hornedrush (*Rhynchospora corniculata* var. *corniculata*), slender plumegrass (*Saccharum baldwinii*), woolgrass (*Scirpus cyperinus*), and pale mannagrass (*Torreyochloa pallida* var. *pallida*).

Coastal Plain depression wetlands are relatively rare, small-patch communities that provide important habitat for the state-rare chicken turtle (*Deirochelys reticularia*) and three state-listed amphibians: Mabee's salamander (*Ambystoma mabeei*), tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*), and barking tree frog (*Hyla gratiosa*). In addition, the globally rare plants Harper's fimbriistylis (*Fimbristylis perpusilla*) and pondspice (*Litsea aestivalis*) are confined to these habitats in Virginia.

### Grafton Ponds Natural Area Preserve

Grafton Ponds represents Virginia's best remaining example of a coastal plain pond complex. The many ponds here were formed by dissolution of the underlying calcareous marine deposits of the Yorktown Formation. This wetland complex supports several rare plants and animals for Virginia including Harper's fimbriistylis, pond spice, Cuthbert turtlehead, Mabee's salamander and barking treefrog.

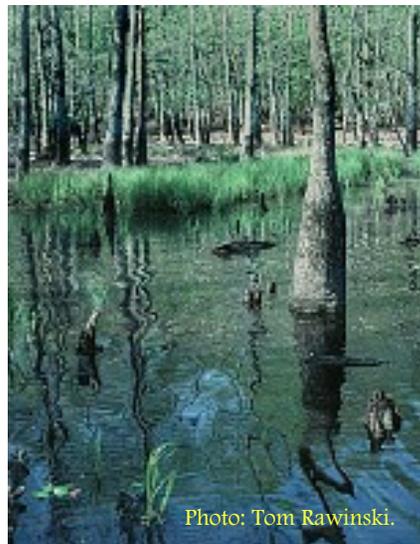


Photo: Tom Rawinski.

### Fort Lee Military Reservation, Prince George County



Photo: Nancy Van Alstine.

Coastal Plain Seasonal Pond, dominated by plume-grasses (*Saccharum baldwinii* and *S. giganteum*), in flatwoods at Fort Lee Military Reservation, Prince George County

### Powhatan County



Photo: Gary P. Fleming

Five acre, isolated wetland dominated by willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), fetterbush (*Leucothoe racemosa*), and cypress-swamp sedge (*Carex jorii*). Near Beaumont, Powhatan County

### Disputanta, Prince George County



Photo: Irvine Wilson

Squarestem spikerush (*Eleocharis quadrangulata*) dominating a flooded Coastal Plain pond near Disputanta, Prince George County.



Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural\\_heritage/ncPIIIa.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/ncPIIIa.shtml)

# American Naturalist:

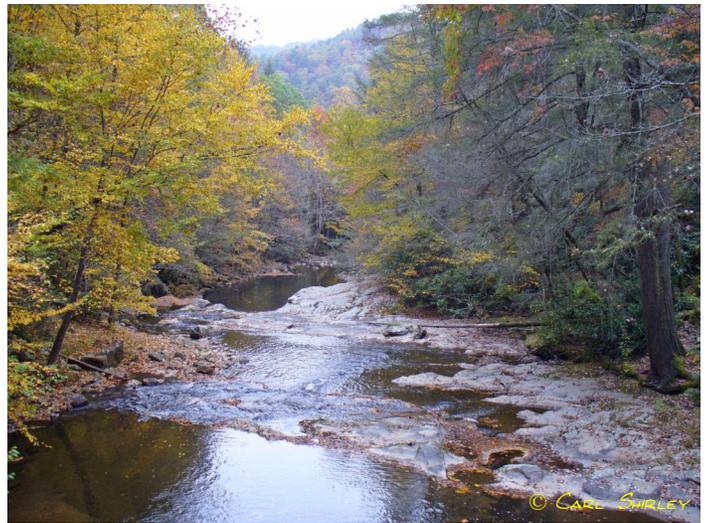
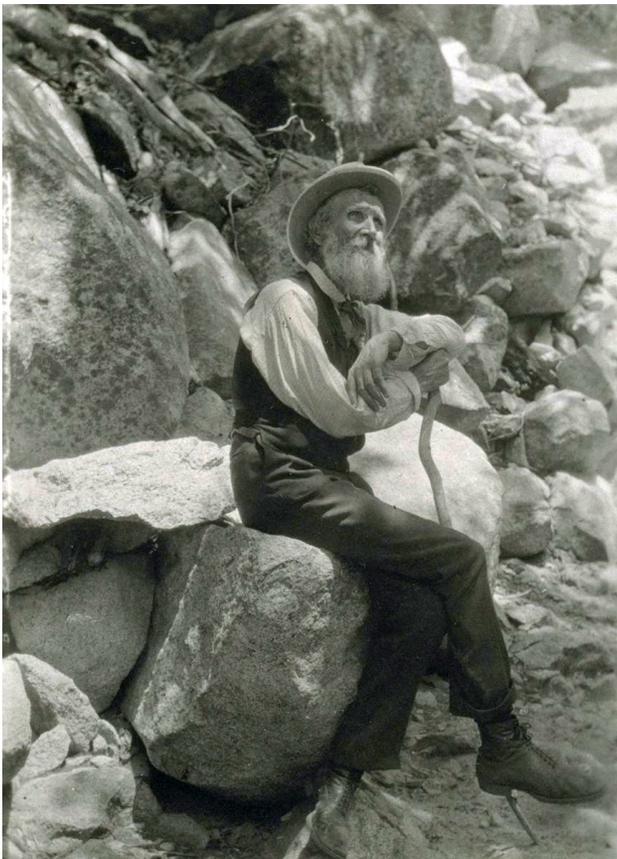
## John Muir



John Muir (1838-1914) was America's most famous and influential naturalist and conservationist. He is one of California's most important historical personalities. He has been called "The Father of our National Parks," "Wilderness Prophet," and "Citizen of the Universe." He once described himself more humorously, and perhaps most accurately, as, a "poetico-trampo-geologist-botanist and ornithologist-naturalist etc. etc. !!!!!" Legendary librarian and author Lawrence Clark Powell (1906-2001), said of him: "If I were to choose a single Californian to occupy the Hall of Fame, it would be this tenacious Scot who became a Californian during the final forty-six years of his life."

As a wilderness explorer, he is renowned for his exciting adventures in California's Sierra Nevada, among Alaska's glaciers, and worldwide travels in search of nature's beauty. As a writer, he taught the people of his time and ours the importance of experiencing and protecting our natural heritage. His writings contributed greatly to the creation of Yosemite, Sequoia, Mount Rainier, Petrified Forest, and Grand Canyon National Parks. Dozens of places are named after John Muir, including the Muir Woods National Monument, the John Muir Trail, Muir College (UCSD), and many schools.

His words and deeds helped inspire President Theodore Roosevelt's innovative conservation programs, including establishing the first National Monuments by Presidential Proclamation, and Yosemite National Park by congressional action. In 1892, John Muir and other supporters formed the Sierra Club "to make the mountains glad." John Muir was the Club's first president, an office he held until his death in 1914. Muir's Sierra Club has gone on to help establish a series of new National Parks and a National Wilderness Preservation System.



### An excerpt from "Our National Parks"

by John Muir

The forests of America, however slighted by man, must have been a great delight to God; for they were the best he ever planted. The whole continent was a garden, and from the beginning it seemed to be favored above all the other wild parks and gardens of the globe. To prepare the ground, it was rolled and sifted in seas with infinite loving deliberation and fore-thought, lifted into the light, submerged and warmed over and over again, pressed and crumpled into folds and ridges, mountains, and hills, subsoiled with heaving volcanic fires, ploughed and ground and sculptured into scenery and soil with glaciers and rivers,--every feature growing and changing from beauty to beauty, higher and higher. And in the fullness of time it was planted in groves, and belts, and broad, exuberant, mantling forests, with the largest, most varied, most fruitful, and most beautiful trees in the world. Bright seas made its border, with wave embroidery and icebergs; gray deserts were outspread in the middle of it, mossy tundras on the north, savannas on the south, and blooming prairies and plains; while lakes and rivers shone through all the vast forests and openings, and happy birds and beasts gave delightful animation. Everywhere, everywhere over all the blessed continent, there were beauty and melody and kindly, wholesome, foodful abundance.



VMN-Peninsula Chapter's own naturalist Charlotte Boudreau standing in front of a champion Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) tree.

# A Born Naturalist

By Clyde Marsteller , Virginia Master Naturalist

*[Clyde's stories take place in the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton area of the Lehigh Valley and the Delaware Water Gap region of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Pennsylvania from 1943 to 1961.]*

I grew up loving the outdoors. Even as a toddler I remember posing with fish Dad caught and game he shot. When I got big enough to tag along he & I would walk from Miller Heights to the Lehigh Canal in Freemansburg. At that time the canal locks were still in place and the Nancy Run Creek ran into the canal. As a result there were long stretches of deep pools. The water was absolutely clear and you could see schools of sunfish, bass & the occasional pickerel from the tow path.

Our favorite fishing spot was at the set of locks where the creek ran into the canal. You could sit on the locks and the water was about 6 feet below. Dad would tie me to him with a piece of clothes line just in case I might fall in. He would cut a willow switch and tie a fishing line on it that had a hook & float attached. We would catch grasshoppers, caterpillars and salamanders for bait.

The first fish I ever caught was a "Sunnie". The railroad ran along the opposite side of the canal & the Lehigh River was on the other side. The towpath was wild and overgrown with trees & bushes. It was filled with all kinds of critters and was a little boy's idea of heaven.

The Nancy Run Creek was an overgrown spring fed creek that held an occasional native brook trout. The reason it didn't have as many fish in it then as it does now was because Willow Park would drain its' swimming pool into it once a month. The warm heavily chlorinated water would always kill a number of trout. I'm surprised that any survived at all.

I caught my first Nancy Run trout when I was 12 yrs old. My Boy Scout troop was helping cleanup the creek along the Freemansburg Road. I had brought a fishing pole along and during our lunch break I was fooling around with it. I remember casting a worm to the opposite bank and as it tumbled past a muskrat hole something long & black shot out and suddenly I was hooked up to a foot long brookie. I ran backwards pulling it out of the water and fell on it. I was the hero of the day. I carried it home at the end of the pole for everyone to see. Shortly after I got home we got a visit from the local Game Warden. Someone had called him because trout season had closed the week before. He gave me a warning but let me keep the trout.

The very first fish I caught by myself was in North Bangor. It was 1946 and I was 8 years old. We were visiting Uncle Mike & Aunt Mary over the weekend. I had a metal "telescope" rod (one section slid into the other). Mike suggested I try fishing in the small meadow creek behind his country store. I dug up some worms (and small water melon plants he had just planted) put them in a can.

With SNAFU following me I walked down the lane to look for the creek. There was a culvert where it ran under the road. It had cement parapets on both sides. I remember the side facing upstream has a big crack in it. I baited the hook and let the line float into the culvert. I set the rod in the crack & walked to the other side to see if I could spot any fish. I heard SNAFU barking and when I looked back I saw my pole bouncing up and down. When I tried to reel in the line I could feel a fish tugging on the other end. I finally pulled out a silver fish about 10 inches long. The head had a number of barbs and bumps on it. I found out later it was a horned creek chub.

The next day one Mike's neighbors, Put Lambert, told me I should fish behind his house. I walked down a dirt lane to the creek. It was

crystal clear and about a foot deep. There were several pools in it. As I walked up to the first I could see a beautiful fish about 6 inches long, hovering in the water near the tail end of the pool. I crept up and dangled a worm in front of it. As quick as a wink it grabbed it and ran upstream. I lifted my pole and pulled out a thrashing native brook trout. That was 50 years ago and I was still catching trout out of the same creek in the 1990s.

After many summers of exploration I found the springs that fed that little stream and I believe they in turn are fed from the slate mine hole that dominates the area. Dad and I spent many a misty summer morning and hazy lazy summer evenings sneaking along that meadow stream stalking those little brookies.

One summer I heard a story that a couple of years previous someone had dumped some goldfish into the mine hole. Now I was strictly forbidden to fish or climb the mine hole and slate dump because of its sheer sides and its depth. It was reputed to be at 300 feet deep. The thought of catching a gold fish intrigued me so much that I finally snuck away to the only access to the mine hole a tiny flat area near the road. It was filled with hundreds of tiny sunfish. It was almost impossible to get bait more than a foot below the surface. I finally threw a couple of worms to one side and quickly threw my line in on the opposite side. It sunk out of sight probably 10 feet deep. Suddenly my line tightened & started to move. I hauled back and something big pulled back. After a few minutes I landed a silver and black goldfish (carp) about 15 inches long and 21 pounds in weight. I threw it back because I knew Uncle Mike would never believe I caught it in the creek.

The next time Dad came up I begged him to take me up to the mine hole to see if we could catch one of those "gold fish". We walked around the perimeter and at a drop off about 30 ft above the water we tied ourselves to a tree and started fishing. It wasn't too long before we both hooked into foot long beautiful white and gold goldfish. They were huge with gossamer tails & fins. We had taken a bucket with us and we took the fish back to Mike's. We finally released them back into the minehole. I'm sure they're still swimming there to this day.

The most vivid memories of North Bangor and Uncle's store and house are sitting on the front porch in the spring time and as it begins to get dark the mountains would suddenly ring with sound. It would swell and roll down the slopes. It was so loud you could feel it hit you. It was the sound of millions of frogs – spring peepers, wood frogs, leopard frogs and bull frogs singing at once. I'm told they are almost all gone now killed by acid rain and global warming.

During late summer about the time they would cut and bale the hay I would wait for the thunderstorms. They would roll off the mountain and you could see the sheets of rain rushing at you like a gray wet curtain. I would run up the street to the Twarning's dairy barn and climb up into the hay loft and laid on the fresh hay and listen to rain cascade off the slate roof. The barn had lightning rods and in my young mind I knew I was absolutely protected from the lightning. If I lay quiet for a while the barn rats would come out and run up and down the rafters. I would lay on my back and watch the swallows fly in and out feeding their babies. If I was really lucky I could spy the big old resident barn owl high in the ceiling blinking at me. The sweet smell of hay was like perfume and shortly I would fall asleep listening to the lowing of the cows & the thunder rolling over the sound of the rain.

In the winter time I would lie in bed under a warm feather tick and listen to the sound of the wind blow around the house rattling the windows. Then just as I was starting to doze off I would hear the lonely whistle of the steam engine train in the distance. As it approached the road crossing it would sound its deep horn and pretty soon it would come thundering down the track. Its huge headlight would sweep into my window and as it passed the whole house would shake. The sound of the wheels would click clack by and I would snuggle deep into the feather tick and dream of riding the



rails to faraway places.

Mike had a Purple Martin house on a pole in the backyard. The birds would arrive like clockwork in the late spring. They are beautiful big swallows and will dive at you if you walk too close to their home. I loved to listen to them sing a sort of burbly song and watch them swoop gracefully over the meadows. At the base of the pole the ground was covered with wings & parts of the insects they captured. They were partial to dragonflies and beetles.

There was an apple orchard next to the store and in the late summer I would gather them and Aunt Mary turned them into wonderful apple pies, dumplings, and apple sauce. She baked & I ate like a little piggy.

I'm convinced that when God calls me home, I'm going to find that Heaven is really North Bangor and the frogs are still going to sing, the martins are flying, the creek will be filled with trout. There will be the smell of apple pies baking and the trains run forever.



### White Bean Chicken Chili - Crock pot Recipe

- 4 cooked chicken (*Gallus gallus*) breasts, diced (I use a frozen seasoned variety, like hickory or Italian)
- 1 pack McCormick white chicken chili seasoning (calls for mixing with water, but I use chicken broth)
- 1 8-oz pack shredded sharp cheddar cheese (or however much you want)
- 1 8-oz container of sour cream
- 1 large can of white navy beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) or cannelloni beans -undrained
- 1 8oz can black beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris* sp. *Lectin*) - drained
- 1 8oz can sweet kernel corn (*Zea mays*) -drained
- 1 small can green chilies-undrained (*Capsicum frutescens*)
- 1 cup chopped green onions (*Allium cepa*)
- 1 can diced tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*) - drained
- 1 cup diced yellow/orange/red/green peppers (*Capsicum annuum* var. *annuum*)
- Tabasco Chipotle' (*Capsicum annuum* var. *glabriusculum*) -season to taste
- Red wine vinegar (just a few dashes)

Place chicken broth (or water), seasoning packet, chilies and onions to crock pot, heat on high for 1 hour.

Add chicken, beans, corn, peppers and chilies to broth mixture and cook for 1 hour.

Add tomatoes, sour cream and cheese, mix well.

Use Tabasco and vinegar to season to taste, simmer on low for 2 hours.

Allow to cool, refrigerate overnight or for at least 4 hours (this allows the flavor to really saturate and be "um um good!")

Reheat on low for 1-2 hours, then serve with green onion/tomato/lime slice garnish, or with a dollop of sour cream.

Really good with cornbread salad and cranberry/orange iced tea or spiced hot tea.

Cynthia Harris

### This Compost *by Walt Whitman*

(submitted by Bill Garlette)

Something startles me where I thought I was safest,  
I withdraw from the still woods I loved,  
I will not go now on the pastures to walk,  
I will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my lover the sea,  
I will not touch my flesh to the earth as to other flesh to renew me.

O how can it be that the ground itself does not sicken?  
How can you be alive you growths of spring? How can you furnish health  
you blodd of herbs, roots, orchards, grain?  
Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses within you?  
Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour dead?

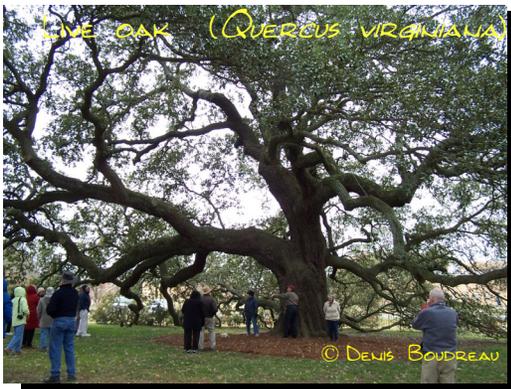
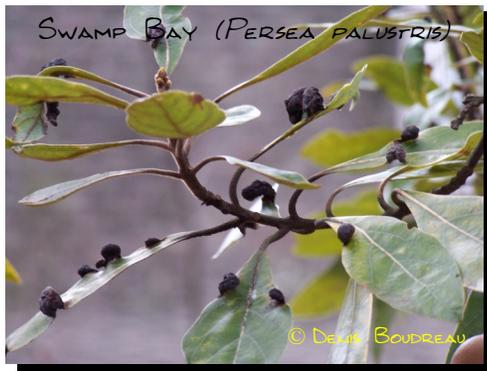
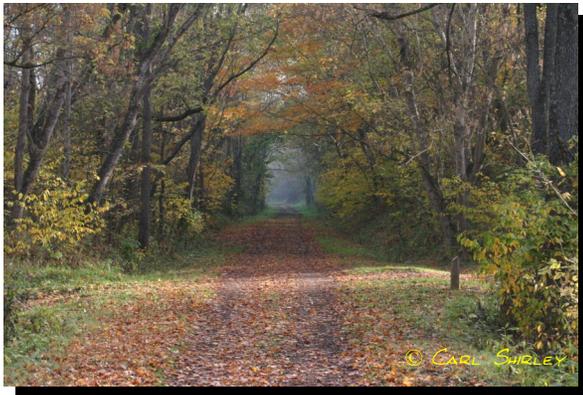
Where have you disposed of their carcasses?  
Those drunkards and gluttons of so many generations?  
Where have you drawn off all the foul liquid and meat?  
I do not see any of it upon you to-day, or perhaps I am deceiv'd,  
I will run a furrow with my plough, I will press my spade through the sod  
and turn it up underneath,

I am sure I shall expose some of the foul meat.  
Behold this compost! behold it well!  
Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick person; yet behold!  
The grass of spring covers the prairies,  
The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the garden,  
The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,  
The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,  
The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage out of its graves,  
The tinge awarades over the willow-tree and the mulberry-tree,  
The he-birds carol mornings and evenings while the she-birds sit on their  
nests,  
The young of poultry break through the hatch'd eggs,  
The new-born of animals appear, the calf is dropt from the cow, the colt  
from the mare,  
Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark green leaves,  
Out of its hill rises the yellow maize-stalk, the lilacs bloom in the door-  
yards,  
The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above all those strata of  
sour dead.

What chemistry!  
That the winds are really not infectious,  
That this is no cheat, this transparent green-wash of the sea which is so  
amorous after me,  
That it is safe to allow it to lick my naked body all over with its tongues,  
That it will not endanger me with the fevers that have deposited them-  
selves in it,  
That all is clean forever and forever,  
That the cool drink from the well tastes so good,  
That the blackberries are so flavorful and juicy,  
That the fruits of the apple-orchard and the orange-orchard, that melons,  
grapes, peaches, plums, will none of them poison me,  
That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any disease,  
Though probably every spear of grass rises out of what was once a catch-  
ing disease.

Now I am terrified at the Earth, it is that calm and patient,  
It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,  
It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such endless successions of  
diseas'd corpses,  
It distills such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor,  
It renews with such unwitting looks its prodigal, annual, sumptuous  
crops,  
It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings from  
them at last.

Field Shots:



Advanced Training:  
Leave No Trace Program



The *Leave No Trace* (LNT) program promotes a consistent, minimum impact message for visitors to the outdoors. It emphasizes skills and techniques essential to LNT minimum impact outdoor ethics and education. The organization is dedicated to the responsible enjoyment and active stewardship of the outdoors by all people worldwide. Since its founding in 1994, Leave No Trace has provided training in every state in the U.S. and over 25 countries. There are more than 25,000 active volunteers and members who help provide trainings and outreach that impacts more than 22 million people annually in the U.S. alone.

Leave No Trace Trainer Program

This training course consists of a total of 16 hours of experiential instruction, 10 hours of which must be conducted in the field and *one night of camping*. Topics covered during the course include the role and function of an LNT Trainer; the principles and ethics of LNT; teaching skills and techniques and student learning LNT program; the role and function of LNT, Inc. Each participant will understand, demonstrate, and teach minimum impact techniques for friends, family, sponsoring organization and other community groups and lead a discussion on outdoor ethics and help others explore their own personal outdoor ethic. A student who completes this course will become a qualified LNT Trainer.

Awareness workshop

An Awareness Workshop is any formal Leave No Trace presentation that is one-day or less in length. These presentations can include a wide variety of programs ranging from a 30-minute presentation to a day-long workshop. Experiential-based training, in an outdoor setting is encouraged. These workshops are designed for educators, children, college students, Girl Scouts, outdoor professionals, Boy Scouts, trail crews, hiking club members and others interested in Leave No Trace skills and ethics. The course leader for an Awareness Workshop can be a Leave No Trace Master Educator, or a Leave No Trace Trainer.

For More Information: [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org)

Field Tips:



When hiking through natural areas, be aware that both deer and dog ticks are common throughout Virginia. These ticks are recognized carriers of the organisms that cause Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, respectively. Watch for and remove any surface ticks and thoroughly check for ticks on the body within 3-4 hours after possible exposure. Remove any attached ticks promptly and carefully by gripping the tick with tweezers as close to the skin as possible, then using a gentle pulling action.



## Upcoming Events:



### Invasive Plant Removal Day

May . 02 . 2009

Non-native, invasive plants are threatening habitats worldwide, from tropical ecosystems to polar regions. These plant invaders alter habitats and reduce biodiversity. They cause ecological and economic harm. Experts consider these plants to be the second most serious threat to the quality of our natural areas and their ability to support wildlife. Scientists estimate that 14 million acres of land (about half the size of Virginia) in the U.S. are newly infested each year!



This year, we're declaring an Invasive Plant Removal Day all over the state of Virginia. Invasives have taken a firm foothold in many parts of the state and everyone's help is needed to reclaim our natural areas. Removing invasive plants and sowing native flora is a fantastic way to restore water quality and wildlife habitat in any biome.

Join volunteers at sites throughout Virginia on an endeavor to stop the spread of non-native invasive plants.

<http://www.viriniamasternaturalist.org/invasives/index.html>

### James River NWR Volunteer Work Day

Saturday, April 18, 2009 9:00 AM

Help give a little TLC to the Wildlife Refuge in preparation for the coming season. Some of the tasks will include vegetation management, structure demolition, and sign installation. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Pre-registration is required. Contact Cyrus at (804) 829-9020 or [cyrus\\_brame@fws.gov](mailto:cyrus_brame@fws.gov) to pre-register or for additional details.

### National Environmental Education Week

**April 12-18, Nationwide:** National Environmental Education Week is the single largest organized environmental education event in the United States. It increases the educational impact of Earth Day by creating a full week of environmentally-themed lessons and activities in K-12 classrooms, nature centers, zoos, museums, and aquariums. Over the span of EE Week 2008 the combined efforts of nearly 1,850 schools, nature centers, museums, zoos, and other educational institutions taught millions of students about the importance of caring for our natural environment.

Environmental Education Week is coordinated by the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) in cooperation with thousands of outstanding schools, environmental education organizations, education associations, and state and federal agencies. The theme this year is "Be Water Wise!" More information: [www.eeweek.org](http://www.eeweek.org).

### Mountain Lake Migratory Bird Festival

May 29-31, Giles County: . More information: (540) 921-4340 or [peggy@mountainlakebirding.com](mailto:peggy@mountainlakebirding.com); Web site: [www.mountainlakebirding.com](http://www.mountainlakebirding.com).



Marine Science Day



**May 30, Gloucester Point:** . Annual open house of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. More information: (804) 684-7000; Web site: [www.vims.edu/public/marinescienceday/index.php](http://www.vims.edu/public/marinescienceday/index.php).

#### Red Bean Chili - Crock pot Recipe

- 2 lbs hamburger (Bos taurus)
- 2 Large cans of red kidney beans (Phaseolus vulgaris)
- 2 Packets of McCormick Chili spice hot or mild
- 4 Cans of Italian stewed tomatoes (Solanum lycopersicum)

- Brown hamburger with one packet of chili powder in frying pan
- Drain excess oil from hamburger
- Strain kidney beans and put in crock pot
- Pour stewed tomatoes in crock pot (do not drain)
- Add the second packet of chili spice to the crock pot
- Put hamburger in the crock pot
- Add water by pouring rinsate from stewed tomato cans into crock pot
- Stir thoroughly
- Cook 4-10 hrs depending on time constraints

Megan L. Ketchum