

Field Notes



The Newsletter of the Peninsula Chapter - Virginia Master Naturalist Program

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Winter 2019

New Beginnings and Great Expectations

Spring is here! A new cohort has started their basic training. Peninsula Master Naturalists have numerous projects, outreach events and continuing education opportunities awaiting them. It's time to get up, get out and volunteer!

At the first class for the new cohort President Daina Henry advised the trainees to look for their passion and follow it. This is good advice for all of us. What projects appealed to you in the past? Do you like working with the public at **Education and Outreach** events? Do you feel the pull of **Stewardship** projects that help to conserve our local natural spaces? Or does the lure of contributing to the greater knowledge through participating in **Citizen Science** call you? Most of us find fulfillment in participating in a variety of projects and events. Be sure to check the calendar on VMS often to look for ways you can contribute.

EVERYONE CAN HELP WITH THE NEWSLETTER!

When volunteering please take a minute to get a picture or two that can be included in the next issue! Email your photos to me at pollinator.partners@gmail.com or to PMNFieldNotes@gmail.com. Let's have the next issue chock full of photos that show all the good work you are accomplishing this spring! Thank you to everyone who submitted photos used in this issue!

Greetings Cohort XIV!



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Peninsula Chapter



Virginia Master Naturalist Peninsula Chapter

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of trained volunteers providing natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship in their communities.

2018 Accomplishments

113

Active Volunteers

11,179

Hours of Service

\$299,038

Monetary Value



92 Volunteers achieved Certified Virginia Master Naturalist status



11,866 Contacts made through 3,848 hours of education & outreach



13 Scientific Studies supported through monitoring of water quality & bird & butterfly populations.



10 Outdoor Sites improved through stewardship activities at parks and natural areas

2018 Project Highlight: Oyster Restoration



Volunteers contributed >300 hours to oyster restoration in the Chesapeake Bay & nearby waterways. Oysters help keep the water clean & provide habitat for other animals.



Volunteers collected & washed oyster shells from restaurants to build new habitat, tended oyster gardens, & helped distribute oyster spat onto new reefs.

Oyster image courtesy of the Integration and Application Network, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (in.umces.edu/symbols/)

Virginia Master Naturalist programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Peninsula Chapter

Ethnobotany

By Ashley DeCarme, Cohort 4

The following is a summary of the topic I presented for continuing education in November of last year—a short introduction for those who couldn't make it, or a review for those who did.

Ethnobotany is the study of the ways people use plants. It is such an incredibly broad subject that ethnobotanists normally constrain themselves to studying the use of wild plants only, and usually focus on one or more wild plants of a certain region at a certain time in history. The Society of Ethnobiology is a good source for further research, at ethnobiology.org.

Worldwide and through time, humans have used wild plants for food and drinks, shelter and furnishings, clothing and dyes, and well-being and medicine. We have used plants for fuels and resins, latex and oils, and cosmetics and art. Plants are used symbolically in culture and metaphorically in language, and play roles in our spirituality and/or religious traditions. Humanity took root(!) in a world of plants.

Let's take a closer look at two of these ethnobotanical uses: food and dyes. If you choose to collect wild plants yourself, please remember: **MANY PLANTS/PLANT PARTS ARE TOXIC AND MAY CAUSE SEVERE INJURIES IF TOUCHED, OR ILLNESS OR DEATH IF CONSUMED.** The Old Rag Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists has published an introduction to some of the poisonous plants in Virginia; find it online by searching for "The Socrates Project" or at the website <https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/CNRE/CNRE-13/CNRE-13NP.html>.

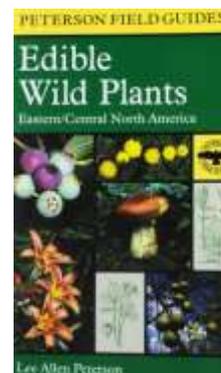
Food

American Indians in Virginia hunted, fished, and cultivated several crops, but also gathered foods from the wild, such as strawberries, persimmons, prickly pears, acorns, and tubers like ground-



nut (*Apios americana*). They seasoned with plants such as sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) and drank a tea made with the caffeine-containing yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*).

With adequate research and consideration, we can still make meals of wild plants. Peterson's Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants is one source of ideas and guidelines (make an asparagus-like vegetable with the young shoots of greenbrier, for example, or nibble the flowers of redbud right off the tree). For safety reasons, however, **I suggest consulting at least two quality sources before deciding to eat a new wild food.** In addition, consider whether plants may have been sprayed with chemicals, or if they are threatened or endangered. If possible, leave most of the plant to regrow. Ensure you are harvesting the correct part of the correct plant during the correct season, and follow any steps prescribed to prepare it (such as boiling in several changes of water). Plants with known medicinal value are often some of the most toxic if consumed as a food, and understandably so. One pill from the medicine chest is beneficial, but we know not to make lunch with an entire bottle.



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Dyes

Before the world's first synthetic dye was developed in 1856, people used dyes made primarily from plants. Globally, there are plants that confer stunning and lasting color, but the dyes available from Virginia's native flora create relatively muted tones that fade. Plant dyes can be extracted from the leaves, roots, twigs, bark, or fruits of certain species, and the color and intensity of the dyed product will vary widely depending on the amount of plant material used, the season the plant material was gathered, the time allowed for dying, and the use or omission of a mordant (a chemical that helps dye bind).

The first American flags were made of fabrics dyed using madder (*Rubia tinctorum*, red), from the Mediterranean region, and either woad or indigo (*Isatis tinctoria* or *Indigofera tinctoria*, blue) also from abroad. Notice that the specific epithet of a plant used for dyeing is often "tinctoria," "tinctorium," or "tinctorum." Virginia has three native plants that use this name and have been used for dyeing: common sweetleaf (*Symplocos tinctoria*, yellow), yellow wild indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*, blue), and three-lobed bedstraw (*Galium tinctorium*, red).



bloodroot

Dyes can also be obtained from the more well-known bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*, red) and black walnut (*Juglans nigra*, brown). Among American Indians of the eastern United States, the dyes would not have been used to color fabrics, but instead, such things as skin or porcupine quills.

Today, Americans know fairly little about using wild plants for food or dyes, because this knowledge is no longer critical to survival or culture. Despite this loss, more and more of us are adding to our ethnobotanical knowledge in a different category, as we learn about and use plants to support environmental health with pollinator gardens, rain gardens, native species in our home landscapes, and ecological restoration projects.

Another good article on ethnobiology can be found on the Virginia Tech website at the following link:

<https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/CNRE/CNRE-13/CNRE-13NP.html>



Yellow wild indigo



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**Arrtoberfest!
At the
Mariners
Museum**



At the Canon Environmental Fair with Canon president Toru Nishizawa

**Fall
Festival in
Newport
News**



**Recent work
at Endview**



**Outreach at Bluebird
Gap Farm**

**Endview
after the
microburst**



Peninsula Chapter



Susie gives a talk



At the holiday party



At the Virginia Master Naturalist State Conference



Planting!

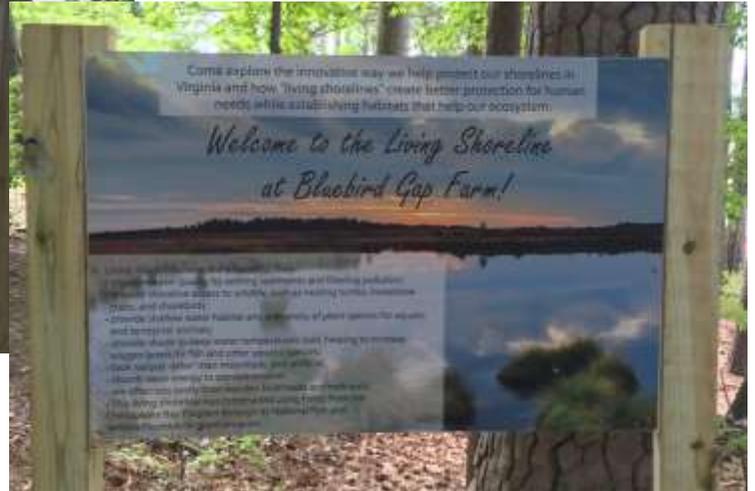


SPCA mural and pollinator garden

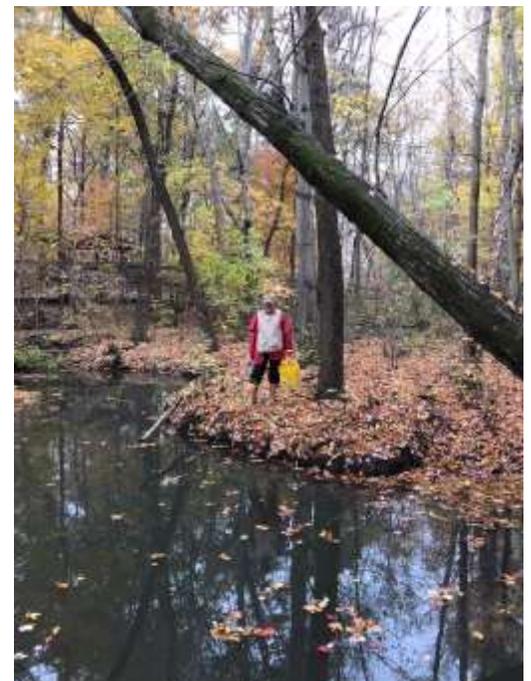


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Living Shoreline Bluebird Gap Farm



Water Quality Training



Cleaning the Stream at the VLM

Peninsula Chapter

What to do for injured wildlife

Spring is here! And, love is in the air for wildlife. That means that the chances are increasing for animals to be injured while crossing the road.

What do you do if you find an injured animal?

The best option is to call **Wildlife Response**. An organization based in Virginia Beach, Wildlife Response has a hotline number. Leave a message and they call you back with advice or will connect you with one a volunteer who will help get care for the animal you have found.



This box turtle was hit by a lawn mower. I took it to my vet. Fortunately, it's injuries were not serious and after several days we released it was originally found.

Remember your own safety first. An animal in pain is sure to lash out and bite. VDGF recommends that one should **never attempt to rescue skunks or bats**. In fact, rescues of any mammals are discouraged. Most baby animals that are "rescued" are not orphans at all, but were carefully left by the parents while they find food.

The number for the Wildlife Response hotline is 757-543-7000



Wildlife Response www.wildliferesponse.org

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
<https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured/>

iNaturalist update

Recent Continuing Education at the monthly meeting offered a review of iNaturalist are a good reminder how allows us to provide important data that is used worldwide.

iNaturalist is the platform for our Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries citizen science effort, known as Virginia Wildlife Mapping. While iNaturalist accepts data on all living things, Wildlife Mapping only accepts animals. Once you join the project from the pull down menu at the top of your login page, you only need to select "add to project" from your observation to participate. A box will pop up requesting a very short description of the location where the species was found.



So, what's stopping you? If you are worried about your images being copied, go to your preferences on the login page. This is under the person icon in the very top right hand corner. Pull down to the very bottom account settings. Here you can adjust several facets of your profile, including the licensing of your images. The licensing choices are almost at the end of this menu.

Don't want the locations made public? You can adjust your contributions so that the location is obscured to the public when you upload your photo.

You can also set up your account so that you are notified whenever someone uses your data. I guarantee that you will feel a little surge of pride when your data is used for someone's research!

Peninsula Chapter

Peninsula Chapter Board of Directors

President	Daina Henry
Vice President	Laura Nusz
Recording Secretary	Diane Peters, Bonnie Baffer
Corresponding Secretary	Yukari Hughes
Treasurer	William Boeh
Historian	Loye Spencer
Chapter Advisor	Megan Tierney



Committee Chairs

Basic Training	Sandy Graham, Gary Wright
Continuing Education	Maria Nissen
Community Outreach	Chris Gwaltney, Daina Henry
Hospitality	Jeannette Yoh
Membership	Nancy Ivey
Volunteer Service Projects	David Singletary
Public Relations	Ella Reilly
Fund Raising	Jim Francis
VMS Coordinator	Laura Marlowe
Property Manager	Ann Hageman
Newsletter	Susan Walton
Web Master	Larry Lewis

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: April 8, 2019
Time: 6:00 P.M. Annual member awards ceremony

Date: May 14, 2019
Time: 6:00 P.M. General meeting
7:00 P.M. All About Tea, Daina Henry

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)

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