



Rivanna Naturalist News

A newsletter for Master Naturalists of Albemarle and surrounding Virginia counties.

Volume 2 No. 4

Dec 2009-Feb 2010

The majority of you can access the internet. Some of the information is on the following websites. If you cannot get onto the internet and/or want it categorized, read about it all below.

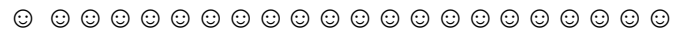
- Our web site vmn-rivanna.org/index.html
- Va Naturalists [Va Naturalists](http://VaNaturalists.com)
- Va Native Plants [Virginia Native Plant Society](http://VirginiaNativePlantSociety.org).
- Monticello Bird Club link from vmn web site above
- ICNA ivycreekfoundation.org/

The auto links may not work for you, particularly when using Firefox. Right click on the site name and select Edit. Copy the web address into your browser's address line.



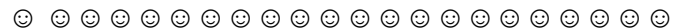
Volunteer Opportunities

Designated below by this green color



Upcoming Meetings

Designated below by this purple color



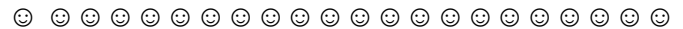
Upcoming Education Opportunities

First Saturday bird walks @ ICNA, 7:30 am. Beginners always welcome. Meet in parking lot.

Va Native Plant Soc. - Normally 2nd Wed nights @ 7:30 pm, ICNA

Monticello Bird Club - Normally 2nd Th nights @ 7:30 pm, ICNA.

Third Thursdays Brown Bag Lunch Forums
Bring your lunch to the forum and learn about a variety of topics important to the Rivanna River. When: Third Thursday of each month @ 12:00PM - 1:00PM
Where: Jefferson-Madison Regional Library (MAP), 201 E. Market Street



December Meeting

RMN Holiday Gathering - save the date of Saturday, December 5, from 5 to 8 PM to get together with your RMN buds. Family members/guests are welcome! Official RMN business (i.e. awarding of certificates and a brief vote or 2) should take no more than a few minutes mid-way through the festivities. It's at Virginia Cooperative Extension on 5th St extended, room A (e.g. south of I-64 at exit 120, 4th left hand turn; room A is the big room to left side of front).

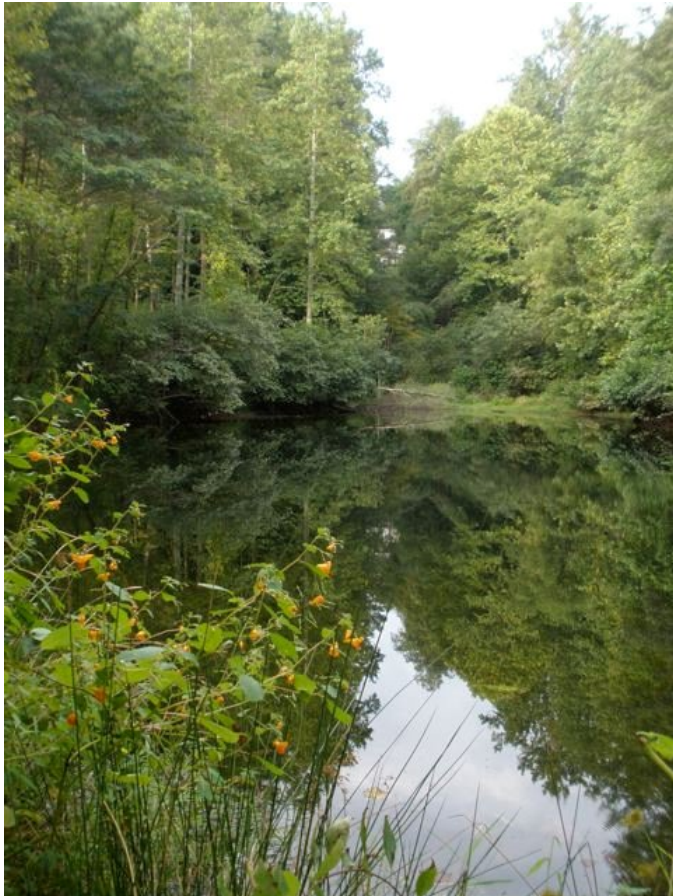
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Chapter Advisors: Peter Warren & LoriAnne Barnett

Committee Chairs:
 Volunteer Projects: Dorothy Tompkins
rivannamn.info@gmail.com
 Programs/Hospitality: Rose Brown and Tina Streatly-Colom
 Curriculum: Bill Feeney

On this hike which my wife and I take every day, we end up coming up the hill (100' drop from the ridge to the creek overflow area) and walk along the dam to this pond. It was especially reflective that morning.



Tana Herndon
Ann MacLeod-Lambert
Chip Morgan
Susan Parry
Ruth Douglas
Tina Strealy-Colom
Cindy Westley
Tex Weaver
Rose Brown

Brenda Hyson
Leslie Middleton
Janet Paisley
Tom Walsh
Tony Russell
Amy Gilmer
Rebecca Barnes
Keggie Mallett

If your name is on the list, please feel free to stop by the Cooperative Extension Office to retrieve your pin during business hours (8:00 am until 5:00 pm). Lottie or Cathy in our front office can give it to you if you let them know why you are here. Otherwise, I will bring them to the next regularly scheduled general meeting.

LoriAnn



Weed ID

Many of you solved this one for me. What I found growing near Ivy Creek on the Wing Stem is bur cucumber, *Sicyos angulatus*, [Missouri web site](http://www.missouriweb.org). A master gardener was the first and also suggest this as a reference, but 2 or 3 RMNs got it, too. This next site from Minnesota Extension suggests that there are two distinct plants- wild cucumber and bur cucumber. I'll let you figure out which one you have. Probably doesn't make much difference, since I'm not sure I'd want to cultivate either one, and eradication is probably much the same - dig and burn!
<http://www.extension.umn.edu/yardandgarden/ygbriefs/h524cuke-wild-bur.html>

Thanks to Rose for the pictures. I told the group ahead of time that we'd not ever seen any copperheads. Well, about 2 weeks after this, we ran into a copperhead on the far reach of the trail (near where the group picture was taken). He didn't flare and hiss or roll over and play dead like an Eastern hog nose is want to do. He just made nasty striking motions with his triangular-shaped head. He had the coloring of a hog nose, however.

Ralph Hall/Rose Brown



New Name Tags, as of June, 2009

Congratulations again to the following folks for completing their volunteer hours and being awarded their volunteer name tag:

Christine Bowlen

Ralph Hall



Leaf, fruit and flowers all grow from separate stems that come off the main long stem. The fruit shown below is just below the leaf.



The flowers grow either singly, as a staminate one or in groups as a pistillate.



These may come off the fruit?

Ralph Hall



VNPS Ed. Meetings

Meetings are free and open to all plant enthusiasts. Meet at ICNA Ed Center.

Wednesday, December 9, 7:30 pm. Native plant/seed exchange and informal holiday gathering. Visit with friends old and new a relaxed festive setting.

Wednesday, January 13, 7:30 pm. Tony Russell, a Master Naturalist and Jefferson Chapter, VNPS member, will speak on "Human Impacts on Our Forests".

Wednesday, February 10, 7:30 pm. Jake Hughes, from the Shenandoah National Park's staff, will speak on public participation in propagating native grasses within the Park.



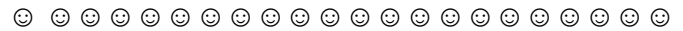
MBC Ed. Meetings

Thursday, December 10, 7:30 pm. Enjoy John Spahr's program on the Birds of Paradise from his two trips to New Guinea.

Saturday, January 2, 7:30 am. Come join Leigh Surdukowski of the Monticello Bird Club for an early morning bird walk.

Thursday, January 14, 7:30 pm. Hear Wil Hershberger's talk on "An Appreciation of Bird Song." A seasonal journal through the cycle of bird song in our area with an in depth look at the complexity of the songs of certain species detailing all of the rich information that these birds are conveying to one another.

Thursday, February 11, 7:30 pm. Come learn from Ann Harman how to help the flowering plant pollinators.



Great Backyard Bird Count

The next [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) (GBBC) takes place Friday, February 12 through Monday, February 15, 2010. The [National Audubon Society](#) and the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) are calling on everyone to "Count for Fun, Count for the Future!" During last year's count, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous

snapshot of bird populations ever recorded. We hope you'll join us again and help spread the word, since the success of the count depends on people tallying birds from as many locations as possible across the continent.

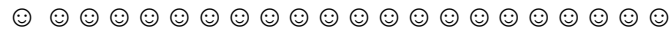
From Tina Stealy



Streamwatch Training

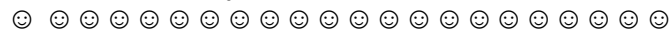
Saturday, January 16, 10:00 am

In this StreamWatch introductory training, learn the fundamentals of benthic invertebrate sampling to gauge water quality and stream health. Reservations are required due to limited class size. Contact Rose Brown at rose@streamwatch.org or 962-3527 Meet in the Education Building at Ivy Creek. No charge.



Mars Rising at Ivy Creek

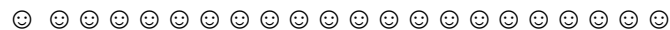
Saturday, February 28, 7:30 pm. Get close to the planet Mars at Ivy Creek. Charlottesville Astronomical Society will help you visit the red planet without leaving Earth. Following a short presentation in the Education Center on the recent discovery of Martian caves, we will view the sky from the open mowed area next to the barn. Bring your own telescope or look through the scopes set up by the Charlottesville Astronomical Society. Use low beam or red flashlights only. Free and open to the public. Cloudy skies will cancel this event.



Learning the Native Trees of Virginia

Sunday, February 21, 2:00 pm. Learn to identify trees in the dead of winter using bark, branching, seed, and other distinguishing characteristics. Join Ellen Powell of the Virginia Department of Forestry on a Winter Walk in the Ragged Mountain Natural Area. Meet in the RMNA parking lot.

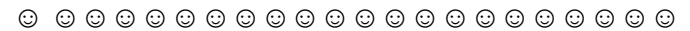
Note: There's also a **PVCC course (HRT 201)** on this coming up: Ian Robertson is teaching about landscape material (e.g. trees). at PVCC on Tuesdays 6-9pm beginning 1/19/2010



Field Ornithology Class

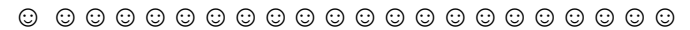
Saturday, February 20, 8:30 to 11:30 am. Come to the first of a series of classes on field ornithology sponsored by Piedmont Virginia Community College and taught by Dan Bieker. Registration

required by January 25th. Meet in the Education Center.



Natural History of Virginia

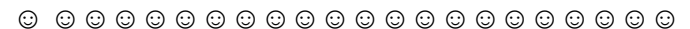
Monday, January 25, 6:30 pm. Join us for the first class of PVCC's Natural History of Virginia. Meet in the Education Center.



Tree Steward Course Coming Up

Included is a flyer describing the Tree Stewards' Spring 2010 training class. I took the class last year and it is an excellent complement to the Master Naturalist training. Like the Master Naturalists, it requires volunteer hours; however you only have to do 25 hours and you can count advanced training, meetings, etc. (Unfortunately, though, you can not count the same activity toward both Master Naturalist and Tree Steward volunteer hours.) If you have any questions about the program, I'll be happy to try to answer them.

Mary Lee Epps



Free Survival Workshop

Come spend a few hours in the woods. Learn how to make a survival shelter, do primitive fire making, make cordage, traps and more. (Rain or shine).

Wear comfortable clothes.

Sponsored by: Friends of Scheier

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2009 , 2:00pm-4:00pm at the

SCHEIER NATURAL AREA, 917 LONG ACRE ROAD, Palmyra, VA 22963

For more information contact RCS, (434) 97-RIVER or email us at rca@rivannariver.org

FROM CHARLOTTESVILLE

Take Rt. 64 East to Exit 136. Take Rt. 15 South toward Palmyra and Fork Union

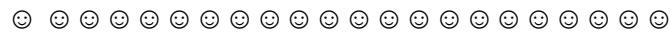
Go through the town of Palmyra and go over the bridge that spans the Rivanna River.

Continue on Rt. 15. Turn right on Rt. 640 (Haden Martin). Turn right onto Rt. 639 Long Acre Road (approximately 5 miles to Scheier Natural Area on the right). OR

FROM CHARLOTTESVILLE

Take Rt. 20 South. Turn left onto Rt. 53 East (past Monticello). Bear right onto Rt.795 (past Ashlawn) Sharp left curve onto Rolling Road. Follow Rolling Road through Albemarle County into Fluvanna County. When signs indicate that you have entered Fluvanna County, continue approximately 4 miles. Turn left onto 639 Long Acre Road. Scheier Natural Area is about 1 mile on left.

From Ida Swenson



Access to Pictures on Smugmug

I've had some folks asking questions about how to see our chapter photos, as well as how to do things with them. So I thought it a good time to send on a quick review for members still unaware of our cool photo galleries.

The easiest way is to use and save the following link to your favorites. virginiamasternaturalist.smugmug.com/ You can get to our site by getting on smugmug.com by itself but it's a bit difficult. (We have some privacy protections in place, which is a good thing.) Just use the above link and save that. It is so much easier.

Once into the Virginia Master Naturalist pages, you can click on Chapter images, then our Rivanna chapter without logging in. But if you want to save them, add comments or ids, add photos, etc., press login, then simply enter: masternaturalist@vt.edu for the email, and [vmnphotos](#) for the password.

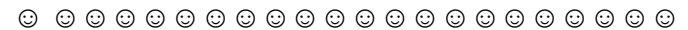
We welcome your good photos, and if I might remind all, please, please, please label them in the caption section - the event and the date, names of folks in each photo, and your own name (we want to make sure you get credit for that wonderful photo! Especially if it's one that goes in the newsletter, etc.) And if you see photos without this info, feel free to add names and places to the photos in there so we'll know years from now who these folks are and what they are doing. You'll see the icons for that near the bottom somewhere.

Once logged in, if you put the cursor somewhere over the large photo, a menu box should fade in on the right hand side with choices - "owner save" is what to click on if you want to download one of the photos to your computer for your personal use or Master Naturalist use. And to add photos, you'll see the button and menu at the top of the page.

I hope that helps. It's a cool website and we've got some great photos already on there. Have a look!

Please let me know if you have any other problems or questions with it!

Terri Keffert



Bat White Nose Syndrome

The recent (since 2007) discovery of a new fungal pathogen is associated with the deaths of possibly as many as a million bats from New York to Virginia. There are about 1,100 species of bats (mammals of the order Chiroptera) in the world, making up about 20% of the classified mammal species. Most bats are insectivores, helping nature maintain a balance in the insect population which is vital to agriculture. The quickly spreading white nose syndrome (WNS) has been recognized as a potential disaster both ecologically and economically.

WNS was found to be a new fungus and aptly named *Geomyces destructans* in early 2009. The first evidence of WNS was photographed by a caver in New York in late 2006. By the winter of 2007/2008, there were thousands of deaths in New York caves where certain bat species hibernate in large colonies, with some caves experiencing mortality rates of up to 95%. WNS has now spread to an additional seven states – Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Virginia.

Geomyces destructans is a cold-loving fungus found to invade tissue in bats, especially in their wings, interfering with heat dissipation, water control, gas exchange and blood pressure. Bats in hibernation with WNS often awaken from hibernation early with most of their stored fats dissipated. Some leave the caves in the winter, in daylight, in search of insects which aren't there in the cold, winter season. These daytime sightings of bats are often a sign that WNS has infected an area.

In October 2009, Congress approved a bill calling for \$1.9 million in aid to help study and control WNS. There are still many questions to be answered about WNS. Some of the current control measures in place include cave closings and directives on how to clean and decontaminate cave gear. Scientists will be hard at work studying WNS looking at the origins, control, containment, and resistance mechanisms in surviving bats, among other research.

You can read more about WNS on-line at several different web sites that offer lay-person explanations, technical information, current research, histories of the syndromes movements, and even specific cave information. You can find these web sites simply by

searching for "WNS". It is a truly interesting and frightening phenomenon.

Gerri Carr, Piedmont Master Gardener



Next VMN Class

The Rivanna Master Naturalists' 2010 training session will be held Tuesday evenings and some Saturdays from February 16 through May 25. If you know anyone who is interested please encourage them to attend one of two information sessions in January. They will be held on Tuesdays, January 5 and January 19 from 7:00-8:00 pm in the Education Center at the Ivy Creek Natural Area. Applications and a syllabus will be available at those sessions. More information and application can also be found on our website at: <http://vmn-rivanna.org/> or by calling me at 434-296-0074.

Once again, current members will be invited to sit in on classroom sessions of your choice. Watch the web site and your e-mail for more information on the schedule of classes.

Dede Smith



Heritage Harvest Fest

We had a wonderful day at the Heritage Harvest Festival. **FORTY-TWO** people signed up for info on our program - it has to be an all time record!! And we must have referred twenty people to other groups across the state as well as in NC, WV, and MD. This is definitely a must do again!!

Thanks to the volunteers! Eleanor Butner, Marjie Giuliano, Mary Lee Epps, Nancy Gercke, Tana Herndon, Jackie Heath, Tex Weaver, and Keggie Mallett who obviously did a great job recruiting. Our table would not have looked nearly as good without the work of Cindy Westerly and Peter Duttell on the display.

Of course, all of us volunteers had the most fabulous view in Charlottesville to enjoy. What a beautiful day it was.



Tana Herndon was on hand at our chapter display for the Heritage Harvest Festival held at Montalto on September 12. We had a record number of sign-ups for additional information on Master Naturalists

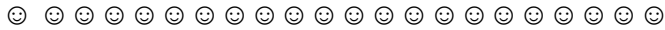


Nancy Gercke and Tana Herndon answer questions from the very large crowd. The weather was great and the view outstanding.



Jackie Heath and Tex Weaver get ready to take down the display and search for their cars.

Jackie Heath & Ida Swenson



More Views from the Conference



Our chapter on Great Falls hike, Jim and Carol Lawson, C J Arban, Jackie Heath, Dorothy Tompkins



Ginkgo trees at the State Arboretum at Blandy



Sky Meadows State Park

Jackie Heath



Great Falls of the Potomac



Smithsonian Naturalist Center in Leesburg

Deadline for items to be included in the newsletter is the 26th of the month before the next quarter (March). Please submit any announcements or articles of interest to be included in the next issue to Rivanna Naturalist Notes Editor, Ralph Hall, preferably by e-mail, by facsimile 434-297-1962 or by USPS mail to 420 Ivy Farm Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901-8841.



Tree Steward Training Course
 February 23 – May 25, 2010

What is a Tree Steward? Tree Stewards are trained volunteers whose mission is to support rural and urban forests, to increase public awareness of the value and beauty of trees, to educate about trees and tree care, and to partner with local government agencies and civic groups to improve and restore the tree canopy in the area.

Class Topics Include: Tree identification, biology, disorders and diagnosis, planting, pruning, roots, soils, and much more. Some classes will include outdoor demonstrations and hands-on participation. Additionally, there are three field trips that require walking on woodland paths.

Class Presenters: Professionals from the Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Piedmont Virginia Community College, Tree Stewards from throughout Virginia, American Conifer Society, Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation, City of Charlottesville, and other tree and forestry experts from the public and private sectors donate their services to the Tree Steward course.

To become a Certified Tree Steward, in addition to completion of the training course, 25 hours of volunteer service on Charlottesville Area Tree Steward projects or committees in a calendar year is required.

Class Details

14 Consecutive Tuesdays, 9 AM to noon, beginning February 23, 2010

*VA Dept. of Forestry, 900 Natural Resources Drive,
 Fontaine Research Park, Charlottesville, Virginia.*

Cost: \$75 (includes books)
Couples: \$115 with one set of books, or \$150 with 2 sets of books

Class Limit: 30 **Registration Deadline:** February 2, 2010

Registration: Send form with a \$75 (\$115 or \$150) check payable to **Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards** to:
 Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards, c/o Maud Henne (Treasurer), 1670 Milton Rd, Charlottesville, VA 22902
 For more information, call 434-872-4580 (Va Cooperative Extension Office)
 or email: cville.area.tree.stewards@gmail.com

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I want to become a Tree Steward!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____