



Rivanna Naturalist News

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

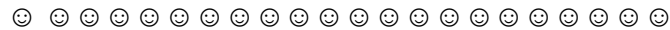
Volume 2 No. 3

Sep-Nov 2009

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
Va Native Plants Virginia Native Plant Society.
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 browsers address line.

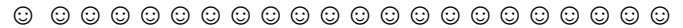


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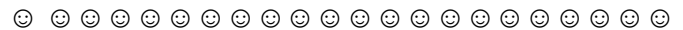
Chapter Advisors: Peter Warren & LoriAnne Barnett

Committee Chairs:
Volunteer Service Projects: Dorothy Tompkins
rivannamn.info@gmail.com
Programs: Rose Brown and Tina Strealy-Colom
Recruitment Committee: Dede Smith
Curriculum: Tony Russell
Hospitality: Rachel Bush



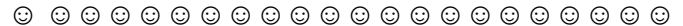
Volunteer Opportunities

Designated below by this green color



Upcoming Meetings

Designated below by this purple color



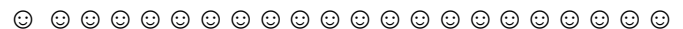
Upcoming Education Opportunities

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



June Meeting

The June meeting was our most attended one yet! Each of our tables had about 6 to 8 people, who represented (roughly) every RMN class. Here're Ida comments on it, worth repeating: 'Many, many thanks to Tina, Rose, CJ especially and everyone else who made yesterday's June general membership meeting so great!! It was our best turnout ever! Thanks to Tom Dierauff for his usual amazing walk (please someone, forward this to

him!). SPECIAL thanks to Michelle Prysby, Tucker Rollins and the rest of their great band for the wonderful music. We hope you can come back again (and let us know where else you'll be playing so we can listen again!). It was wonderful to see so many of you- - and enjoy the great munchies you brought.

Congratulations to our newly certified members. You should be receiving your pins soon. (More on this coming soon from Susan Pleiss.) Don't forget to send Susan your hours. You can email them or mail them to the MN post office box. If you are having any trouble reporting them, feel free to ask me.

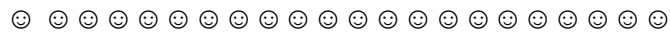
Hope to see you all again in December for the annual election meeting.'

Here's the band that was perhaps instrumental in encouraging us to come. They were good. Congrats to the committee. We heard that one band backed out, and this one stepped forward.



They are: Lori Rollins on guitar, John Woodell on banjo, Michelle Prysby on fiddle, Sheila Scott on upright bass, Tucker Rollins on mandolin.

Ralph Hall/Ida Swenson



Hike with Mary Jane

On Saturday, Aug 22, professional biologist and naturalist Mary Jane Epps led a nature walk at Ivy Creek and several chapter members attended.



Mary Jane is an expert on mycology and highlighted several species found at Ivy Creek including the baby Amanita which is a member of one of the most toxic groups of mushrooms. She also provided fascinating details on the morphology of many native and invasive plant species and highlighted the relationships of plant species, including the native Spicebush and Sassafras which are within the same family as avocado-producing plants of Mexico, Central and South Americas. She invited the group to smell, touch and view the special and unique characteristics of many plants and insects including scented liverwort and the wooly aphid while highlighting each species impact and significance within the ecosystem. She provided an abundance of information on the local wildflowers, insects and animals at the nature preserve and a great time was had by all.

Tina Streal-Colom



Secluded Farm Walk

Here are a couple of pictures from our Secluded Farm Walk.



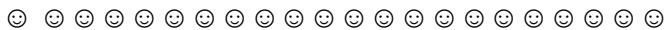
Above are Clemmie (dog), Rose, Ruth, Repp, Marjie, Tina, Mike Kelly, Tana.

These are some paw paws that we saw during the walk.



Here are the directions to it, in case you want to do this one yourself. The first picture is just out of the parking lot. Saunders-Monticello Trail to Secluded Farm trail -- Meet in the parking lot that is across from the entrance to PVCC. From Rt 53, get on Rt 20 northbound (toward the I-64 interchange) and take the first right into the parking lot. If traveling south on Rt 20, make a U-turn at the Rt 53 traffic light, go north on Rt 20 and take the first right into the parking lot since there is no left turn on Rt 20 into this parking lot. At the end of the parking lot, there is a trail that will take you to the Saunders-Monticello trail head (which goes under Rt 53).

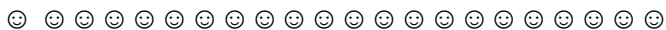
Tina Streal-Colom, RMN 2008



The following picture is from our fern hike at Wintergreen on the 11th of July, led by Chip Morgan, RMN 2007.



Jackie Heath, RMN 2007



State Conference in Fall

I am pleased to report that we are ready to take registrations for our upcoming Statewide Volunteer Training and Conference, **October 30-November 1, 2009** in Leesburg, Virginia! I want to especially thank our conference committee from the Banshee Reeks Chapter. They have been working hard behind the scenes to show you all a wonderful time in Northern Virginia.

All Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers who have enrolled in or completed a basic training course are invited to attend. Chapter advisors are encouraged to come as well. We hope to see at least a few representatives from each of our 25 chapters, and the more the merrier.

Current information about the conference is posted at www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/conference2009.html. We will be updating this page periodically as we finalize our sessions. From this page, you can link to the online registration, which is being handled by Virginia Tech. From the online registration, you can also choose to print a copy of the registration form and mail it in, if you prefer. Note: Registration for our option pre-conference field trip and Saturday field trips is limited, so register soon to ensure that you get your first choice!

The first night of the conference will be our Chapter Poster Session and Share Fair, a time for you all to show each other the great things you are accomplishing. I hope every chapter will put together a poster/display for that.

I'll also do another slide show of chapter activities, so you'll hear from me soon about how to submit photos for that.

Please help me get the word out to all of your chapter members, including those folks who are new trainees in your fall courses. It's hard for me to communicate with all of our 700+ volunteers, so I rely on you to make that happen through your Google/Yahoo groups, Web sites, chapter meetings, and other opportunities.

Thanks so much, and I hope to see you in Leesburg!

Michelle D. Prysby



VNPS Meetings

No information on VNPS September meeting topic.

Wednesday, October 14, 7:30 pm
Chip Morgan is tentatively scheduled to speak about conservation measures being taken by Wintergreen Resort.

Wednesday, November 11, 7:30 pm
Hear Dennis Whetzel from the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historical Plants give a presentation on "Herb Use in American Kitchens and Door Yard Gardens during Colonial Times."

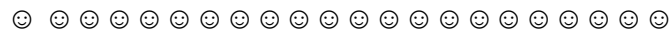


Monticello Bird Club Meetings

Thursday, September 10, 7:30 pm
Come see Reese Lukei, Jr.'s slide presentation on "The Osprey and Bald Eagle of Hampton Roads." We'll learn about their habits, location, feeding, population and problems.

Thursday, October 8, 7:30 pm
Lou Verner will show the effects of urbanization on wildlife in tonight's program.

Thursday, November 12, 7:30 pm
Come learn from Mike Hayslett about the ecology and conservation of vernal pool wetlands and the importance to local wildlife.



Entomology Workshop

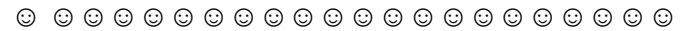
On **September 18 and 19**, at the Claytor Nature Study Center of Lynchburg College, we will host an Entomology Workshop. This will include collecting from many different terrestrial and aquatic habitats; practice identifying, storing, and mounting your collections; and information on ecology, K-12 educational activities, and working with formal museum collections.

This qualifies for Advanced Training for Virginia Master Naturalists, and will be a great natural history learning experience for students of all ages. The cost will be \$50. On-line registration will be available soon at the following link, which is also where you can learn more about the agenda. Lodging information for those travelling from out-of-town will also be posted soon. I'll post another email to these lists when that is ready.

www.lynchburg.edu/x19567.xml

The number of participants allowed will be very limited in order to provide individual attention by experts in the field. Please register early, when registration becomes available. If you are EXTREMELY interested and nearly guaranteed to attend, you may reply by email to me, and I will make sure you get on the registration list.

Dr. Greg Eaton, 434-544-8360 (office), 434-661-8360 (cell), 540-587-6740 (CNSC phone)
eaton.g@lynchburg.edu, www.lynchburg.edu/claytor



Volunteer or Ed Opportunities

Third Thursday Brown Bag at the Market Street Library August 20 noon – 1pm (All are invited to participate)

RCS Annual Meeting Saturday Sept 5 noon to 4pm (All are invited to participate)

Friday Sept 11 (ID checking at the Pavilion) (8 people needed)

Third Thursday Brown Bag at the Market Street Library (Sept 17 noon to 1pm) (All are invited to participate)

Ida Swenson, RMN 2006



New Rivanna River Web Site

Check the new website for many fun activities that can benefit the River we are named for!!

<http://www.rivannariver.org/home.html>

Ida Swenson, RMN 2006



Historical Explorations

The Virginia Natural History Society is presenting a symposium entitled: Historical Explorations into Virginia's Natural History on **September 26**, 2009 in the new Natural History Museum in Martinsville, Va. Click on "Symposium" in this link to download information and registration form. This symposium will present the contributions of the leading naturalists over the past 400 year history of Virginia in the fields of: Fossils, Marine and Estuarine Invertebrates, Mussels, Spiders, Insects, Marine and Freshwater Fish, Amphibians, Reptiles, Birds, Plants, Mammals, Caves. Plus a presentation on the contributions of Thomas Jefferson to Natural History.

Costs: \$10 for the symposium only or \$25 for the Symposium plus Banquet on Sept. 26. Lunch will be available at the Museum's cafeteria

<http://fwie.fw.vt.edu/vnhs/>

Thelma Dalmas, Evington
Submitted by Devin Floyd, RMN 2009



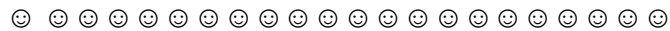
Wetlands Workshop

You'll discover how to build naturally appearing and functioning wetlands for only \$900 that could last for 900-years by attending the Sweet Briar College Isolated Wetlands Conference and Vernal Pond Building Workshop in Amherst, Virginia from September 11-13, 2009. The attached document contains an agenda and registration form.

If you can't make it to Virginia, the next Hands-on Wetland Restoration Workshop will be in Sevierville, Tennessee from October 12-14, 2009. Registration materials will be available soon.

Hope to see you there.

Tom Biebighauser
Office: (606) 784-6428 ext. 102, Cell: (606) 356-4569
www.wetlandsandstreamrestoration.org



Rainbarrel Workshop Help

Next opportunity: Saturday, September 19 – Pen Park Shelter #3 @ 12:30 to 4:30 PM

Garnett Mellen of the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District would like volunteers to help with the following rain barrel workshops. Participants learn about the importance of rain barrels, how to install them and then make their own for a minimum cost. The volunteers help with preparation, registration and construction of the barrels. It is fun and a valuable contribution to the community. You do not have to be trained, and you can count the half hour or so of instruction at the beginning of the workshop for advanced training (one time only).

Send your offer to help to Garnett at garnett.mellen@vaswcd.org or call the number below.

Garnett Mellen, Phone: 434-975-0224, Website: tjswcd.org



On Being a Guide

Contrary to traditional guiding technique, I believe guiding effectively is mostly about following and asking, not leading and telling. The interests of the participants are of utmost importance, from moment to moment. We learn most about things that interest us. As da Vinci said, " study without

desire spoils the memory, and it retains nothing that it takes in."

An artfully crafted question, one that is free of rhetoric, surpasses all else as a tool for facilitating inquiry and fostering understanding and awareness.

In my experience with children and adults alike, there is another important factor in retaining knowledge. That is, allowing for thinking, pondering, and deep observation prior to the imposition of a fact, label or name. So hold back that desire to spill forth the name of everything that presents itself. Allow yourself and others to explore the details, the attributes, qualities, and subtleties. The endgame is understanding...not labeling.

Devin Floyd, RMN 2009



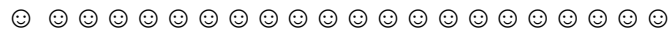
Do Not Feed Deer

As you are traveling about your area of responsibility to interact with clients, now would be a great time to pass along a reminder about the regulatory prohibition on feeding deer that soon will come back into effect. Several years ago, the VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) promulgated a new regulation that prohibits the feeding of deer between September 1 and January 2 inclusive. The specific language states that "...it illegal to place or distribute food, salt or minerals to feed or attract deer from September 1 through January 2, statewide. This prohibition does not include the planting of agronomic crops or wildlife food plots." Although the clear intent of this restriction was to reduce instances of hunting over bait (which includes mineral blocks or licks) and thus maintain the concept of "fair chase," it also makes enforcement of illegal baiting cases much simpler. There still remains some confusion among clients as to what constitutes feeding, though, particularly among those individuals who do not necessarily hunt. The regulation makes no distinction between hunters and non-hunters. Thus, **if a client maintains a large and active bird feeding station in a suburban neighborhood that deer can access and gain resources from, such an operation would constitute "feeding of deer" and citations have been issued in the past in response to complaints received about such conditions.** This does not mean that people should refrain from feeding birds; it means they must take appropriate measures to prevent deer from gaining access to the food (e.g., elevate feeders out of reach, don't place more feed directly on the ground than will be consumed by birds in one day, change the type of seed provided [i.e., don't distribute cracked corn], etc.).

Another area of some confusion relates to the exemption for food plots and agricultural cropping. The intent behind this part of the regulation is to allow individuals the opportunity to continue to develop and maintain food plots as part of a purposeful, objective driven management plan. However, how those plots are utilized or manipulated may place someone on the wrong side of the regulation. You are allowed to create food plots for wildlife, but the vegetation in the plot must remain in its natural condition throughout the entire season. Thus, if you bush hog the plot to place the resource on the ground, that would constitute "baiting." The plot must remain in its natural state and should not be mowed or artificially modified in any way until after the hunting season closes. Regarding agricultural cropping, anything that would not be deemed "normal agricultural practice" places you in potential jeopardy of baiting regulations, not just for deer, but for upland game birds and waterfowl as well. Thus, harvesting a small grain or corn field the day before the opening of dove season or purposefully leaving excess grain in the field would be viewed by federal enforcement agents as baiting. It can get pretty technical determining what constitutes "normal agricultural practice" and the feds have gotten much more stringent in their interpretations in this arena in recent years; it's an area to very cautious.

If clients have specific questions about interpreting any aspects of the baiting regulations, either at the state or federal level, it is best to advise them to check with the local conservation police officer (game warden) who serves the county in which the activity occurs; these are the folks who will be making the call and, because of subtle differences of opinion on how the regulations are implemented in each county, it's best to get it directly "from the horse's mouth" from those doing the enforcement.

James Parkhurst, PhD



Hike at the Halls

Wednesday morning, Sept 9th, 7:30-8:30 am
 Directions below.

See what good stuff Hurricane Isabel did for us on Ivy Creek. Hear of wildlife sightings, and just enjoy the bird calls and other trail nature. The number of each item is noted on the map below. Ralph will not have copies of this note available on the day of the hike. So, if you want to refer to it, please bring the copy I am sending you now.. Not mentioned on the list are the numerous rat and hog-nose snakes which have been seen on or beside the trails. Thankfully, we have never seen a copper head here.

Ralph DID recently see a bear cub. So, watch out for it and Mom and the Blue Heron on the creek.

Agenda (the agenda item numbers are on a map on the last page of the newsletter):

- 1) Parking is available in the guest area, in front of the carriage house and on the cul-de-sac.
- 2) Please meet in area in front of the carriage house.
- 3) Head out across back lawn and then down the trail through the trees. Just before the big gully is where a Red Fox was observed coming out of the gully.
- 4) Go downhill, 100' drop. Observe wildlife area between my and my neighbor's property. Small orchard on left is set on an ideal N/E facing slope.
- 5) Cross the old road into town. It came from Garth House (on Stillhouse), down Ivy Farm Drive, our driveway, down where there is a dam to the pond and then across our property.
- 6) Walk over the roots of a fallen tree and past some very large sycamore trees.
- 7) See Isabel Beach on the right. Before Isabel, we had no access to Ivy Creek. The banks were all just sheer cliffs. Hurricane Isabel covered this whole area 6' deep with water and left sandy beaches on the inside of the curves. This is one of two beaches on our property.
- 8) Ralph has sat on Isabel Beach and watched wildlife. He's seen a muskrat just downstream. The muskrat apparently lived underneath the tree roots on our side of the creek. Another time the tiniest fawn ever seen was having a restful time just piddling around in the creek. Yeah, he did piddle. The faun was NOT this tiny.



© Jeff Moore

- 9) Further along is where a young skunk was recently spotted. We had to back off and wait for him to be comfortable enough to lower his tail and disappear into the grass and weeds.
- 10) Next right is the 2nd beach that Isabel left.
- 11) Go past a native grove of persimmons. Most of these trees are sprouts from the largest "mother" tree. They were thinned out a few years back and are now kept thinned back. Does anyone have a trained monkey who'll pick the persimmons? They really don't fall until they're about dried up.

- 12) By this time, we will have passed probably 20 black walnut trees from the time you came down our driveway. Many of these were once overgrown with oriental bittersweet. So much for juglone keeping the stuff from growing.
- 13) Go down a slope and across a swampy area. Water backs up from the little branch during high rainfall. There's a swamp jasmine on the left.
- 14) Cross the "tractor" bridge, which consists of dirt/rocks/cement on top of PVC pipes that let normal water flow by. High water flows over it. This stream has never run dry. Later, we'll come to a stream 3 neighbors' over that dries up in drought periods.
- 15) This is an old maintenance road at the base of the ridge. It was fenced on both sides.
- 16) Down this trail is where Ralph observed the most awful-sounding bleat he'd ever heard. Soon, he met up with a still-wet, newborn fawn who was hollering his head off. His mom was probably lying tired out in the weeds somewhere from birthing him.
- 17) This trail crosses two neighbors' properties to Dr. Doul's property where he maintains a large number of trails.
- 18) At about the turn-right-and-go-downhill part of Dr. Doul's main trail is where Ralph has observed a Bobcat on two separate occasions. He only saw him quickly disappearing into the trail-side brush.
- 19) Just downhill from this point is where Ralph saw the largest "looks like" cow pattie since moving off the farm. No hoof prints in sight. This was not long after one neighbor on Ivy Farm had a bear take a large bag of dog food off the porch, and Dr. Doul saw one in his back yard. It was bear scat, unlike those made up ones we've seen the tracker guys bring to ICNA. This was one large plop.
- 20) To the left is a little stream flowing. This one dries up during droughts.
- 21) At the creek, one sometimes sees canoeists upstream from ICNA. At one time for a brief period, there was a log across the little stream, and there was a rather large beaver dam within sight of this point where the little stream empties into Ivy Creek. One day, Ralph observed what appeared to be a huge increase in the flow of Ivy Creek. At the beaver dam, the source of the huge flow was revealed. There was a "V" breach in the dam!
At this dam, Ralph stopped and sat for a spell with a friend. The friend claims to have seen a beaver going underneath the stream bank near the dam.
- 22) This area is most often flooded during heavy rains.
- 23) Along the creek, we'll see a couple of other beaches which were established by Isabel.
- 24) At the big U in the creek, we can overlook the site of a beavers' dam which was probably constructed around the year 2000. There have been a couple other dams downstream, but we have not seen any more lately. Ralph once walked across the remains of the dam here and located the corner to our property, which is across the creek now. Our theory

is that someone built this U-shaped diversion in the creek many years back before such activities were illegal. This construction cut off a corner of our property.

- 25) Just past the U, a berry patch and a black walnut, there is a tree which has fallen over the trail. This is more of the work of Isabel. Isabel actually carved out a part of the old path in this vicinity; it was gone! The present trail is about 6 to 10 feet farther inland from the creek.
- 26) As we go back inland, we cross the little stream whose banks resemble Ivy Creek's, pre-Isabel.
- 27) At about the point where we head past the "tractor" bridge, Ralph once had another trail at the base of the ridge. His other bridge was located near here. However, both the trail and the position of the bridge were unworkable because of flooding. The bridge actually got carried downstream a bit in one flood. As we come upon the wooden "foot" bridge, you can see that it is now firmly anchored with wires to trees on both sides of the little stream. This is exactly the way a similar ICNA foot bridge is secured.
- 28) Now we go uphill to what is currently the dam to the pond shared by about 6 or 7 neighbors. The old road from Garth House used to go down to the south end of the dam and then downhill past the two bridges we went over and across the Hall property at the base of the ridge.

Directions to Our House

West from C'ville, take Barracks Road west, which becomes Garth.

Cross Ivy Creek and go uphill past where Oakencroft Winery used to be and then Jones' place on right with row of Bradford Pears.

Coming from west, go past Foxfields race area, around an "S" curve.

Turn onto next road (right from C'ville, left from Foxfields), Barracks Farm (see "Stud" sign, too). Then right onto Ivy Farm Drive.

Go to end, #420, on left.



Speed Camera Shots

These pictures came to me over e-mail from Betty Joyce Taylor, a friend in Baton Rouge. They can teach us something about the natural world we live in.



Ralph Hall, RMN 2007

Deadline for items to be included in the newsletter is the **28th** of the month before the next quarter (**November**). 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.

Hike at the Halls & Adjacent Neighbors

