

Northern Neck Master Naturalists

November 2013

CHAPTER ELECTS NEW OFFICERS



At the November second combined bird walk, potluck breakfast and general meeting, the chapter elected its officers for 2014. Cindy Baliles is the new chapter president. Bonnie Wilson was elected vice president. Nancy Garvey and Carol Hammer will be co-secretaries, and Lise Maring is treasurer. Here is what the new officers had to say about themselves.

Cindy Baliles Qualifications: I am not qualified. Previous experience: I was a police officer and a youth minister, so you people don't scare me.



I accepted the nomination: Duh, didn't want to be secretary.

Reason I'm a Master Naturalist: I grew up being outside as much as possible, on the back of whatever pony or horse I

had at the time, and I wanted to learn more about God's green earth, especially here in the NN.

I would like to see the chapter grow, by reaching more families, maybe having a NNMN Day/Open House with activities and stations. I would like us to develop a theme, mantra, not steal Water to the Woods from BayFM, but steal it from some other organization, not from around here. The more we educate and involve, the better we leave this place.

How 'bout that, I ended it on a serious note.

Bonnie Wilson I spent most of my working life in office environments, and I could hardly wait till I reached retirement age so that I could

spend more time outdoors, which is where I most feel my spirit filled. Although I'm only semi-retired now, my schedule allows me to take part in



many nature-related activities. I'm a Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, and birder, and am currently on the Board of Directors of both Northern Neck chapters of Audubon and Virginia Native Plant Society. I created and maintain the websites for the Northern Neck Audubon Society, the NN Native Plant Society, and the Northern Neck Master Naturalists chapter. I've been program chair for Audubon and have edited its newsletter for the past four years. One of my hobbies is foraging for wild edible plants, some of which I find in my 30 foot by 90 foot vegetable and herb garden. I love the NNMN programs because I delight in learning more about the plants and animals that inhabit the world around me. I accepted the nomination to be Vice President of NNMN because I believe members get more from groups if they are involved and engaged. I would be happy to take my turn serving NNMN.

Nancy Garvey I have no qualifications for this job or most other board positions. However, I have been able to muddle through being secretary for NN Audubon Society and am currently secretary for the Interfaith Service Council Board.



I became a MN because I love being outdoors, and enjoy the opportunity to work with other MNs in the many projects they do. I accepted this nomination because I wanted do something to

support the MN administration and you caught me at a weak moment.



Carol Hammer My interest in all things natural has been avid since childhood. Living in the Northern Neck, I have found time to explore more of the natural world and as a Master Naturalist, help in various capacities to promote nature

and wildlife. I am an ex-president of the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, current Co-Education Chair with Nancy Garvey and Speaker Chair. I accepted the nomination to work with Nancy in this position as we work well together and are currently sharing a position with the NPS. My keen interest is in photographing all things natural.



Lise Maring I became a Master Naturalist in 2010 and am enjoying it immensely.

I am currently semi-retired as a contractor employee of the NASA Langley Research Center,

Hampton, VA. In my many years with various contractors I have served as Program Manager, Project Manager, Documentation Specialist, Programmer/Analyst, and Technical Writer.

I served as treasurer in the past for the Phoebus Volunteer Rescue Squad in Hampton, VA, for two years.

I currently live in Heathsville (since 2006) with my husband, Jeff, and our six cats, who adopted us after being abandoned by their owners. On the up side, mice are not a problem in our home.

I am looking forward to serving the Northern Neck Master Naturalists as the new treasurer.

STATE CONFERENCE

The 2013 Statewide Volunteer Conference and Training was held 18-20 October at the Wyndham Virginia Crossings Hotel & Conference Center in Glen Allen, Virginia and at Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield. The three building Wyndham complex, with on site lodging and dining and spacious meeting rooms, was an excellent venue for Friday and Saturday's activities, and Pocahontas Park provided a lovely setting for Sunday's outdoor training events.

On Friday, early arrivers participated in pre-conference field trips in the Richmond area. These included a tour of Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and a Montepelier Working Woods Walk, among others. The conference was officially kicked off by the new State Coordinator, Alycia Crall, with her pre-dinner Needs Assessment Presentation. The Needs Assessment was done in phases starting with interviews and focus groups of randomly selected volunteers, advisors and sponsoring groups and partners. The results of this process were used to craft surveys that were sent to all Virginia Master Naturalists, their advisors, sponsors and partners. Alycia's



State Coordinator, Alycia Crall

presentation with the Assessment results is under Other Documents on the State web site, <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/documents.html>. You can see some of the proposed actions in the "Further Directions for Virginia Master Naturalists" article on the next page.

Saturday morning and afternoon were devoted to indoor training sessions that ran the gamut

from honeybees to keeping bears wild, amphibians to Virginia's vernal pools, air pollution and light pollution and of course everyone's favorite "DGIF Permits, What You Need to Know". Saturday evening brought a fine buffet dinner and the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Caren Cooper, PhD. Dr. Cooper is Research Associate at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology where she studies bird life history, ecology, and conservation through the use of citizen science. The focus of Dr. Cooper's presentation was the importance that citizen science plays in research. In ornithology, for instance, citizen scientists provide data on year round bird activity in rural and urban areas that would be impossible for one person or a research team to gather. Her presentation also touched on some historical examples of citizen science, such as Matthew Maury's whale chart of the 1840s in which he collected data from whaling captains on whale location and migration patterns. By compiling individual data from these "citizen scientists" Maury was able to create a comprehensive global chart that could be used by all captains in their pursuit of whales.

Saturday night's fog and drizzly rain with a local TV weather forecast of rain on Sunday did not bode well for the next day's field sessions at Pocahontas State Park. Fortunately the forecast was wrong and Sunday morning was clear and sunny. Highlights of Sunday's activities were "Birding by Canoe" on Swift Creek and the "Herpetology Hunt". The park, like all of Virginia's state parks is a real treasure and deserves a visit if you are in the Richmond area.

As in previous conferences, this year's event was a great opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and experiences with Master Naturalists from throughout the state. The presentations were enlightening and the training provided something for every interest. Next year's

conference will be September 26-28 at the Virginia Living Museum in Newport News.

FURTHER DIRECTIONS FOR VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

The following action areas were identified by the Statewide Needs Assessment.

TRAINING

Basic Training

- Complete basic training manual
- Develop online trainings to be used by chapters as needed

Advanced Training

- Monthly online advanced training option starting January 2014
- Develop list of available speakers across state for diverse topics

Available Projects

- Add statewide projects to VMS
- Add list of available projects to statewide website

COMMUNICATIONS

Develop statewide communication plan

Revamp VMN statewide website

Assist local chapters

- Developing local communication plan
- Developing chapter websites

CHAPTER AND PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Chapter Best Practices

- Monthly conference call
- Begins October 22
- Fourth Tuesday of each month
- Recorded and made available online
- Development of manual

Annual Advisors Meeting

VOLUNTEER RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Professional Development Opportunities

- Reaching new audiences

Increase social media engagement

Submit grant in January

- Engagement and diversity

CAROL HAMMER SCORES AGAIN AT STATE CONFERENCE

Following up on her first place finish in the flora category at last year's state photo contest, Carol Hammer took third place in the new "Other" category this year with her photo "Moored in Reedville" which earned first place in the chapter's "Other" Category. Congratulations Carol!



Moored in Reedville by Carol Hammer

Carol also took first place in all three categories in the chapter's local contest.



NNMN First Place Fauna, Dragonfly at Chilton Woods by Carol Hammer



NNMN First Place Flora *Mitella repens* by Carol Hammer

MENTORS WANTED FOR NEW NNMN CLASS

FRIENDS - WHERE ARE YOU?

That was the lament of our two and a half year old as she stood in the center of our front yard after her first "Navy" move. Unfamiliar place, new experience, no old friends.

A few of us have had similar feelings on the first day of our Master Naturalist classroom adventure. So - - a few of us have thought it would be a great idea to have an instant friend - a mentor.

A mentor would contact a "newbie" sometime before the first class on February 20, 2014.

- By phone,
- By email,
- By getting together.

A mentor would answer a "newbie's" questions about taking the three month course.

- What's involved?
- Are there tests?
- How did you find the time to do everything?

(Ad infinitum!)

A mentor would encourage a "newbie."

- Don't worry about the final,
- If you can't do all the reading, wing-it,
- You'll meet compadres of a like mind-set.

(And, so much more.)

Mentoring is a great way to increase camaraderie, set a positive can-do atmosphere and increase group retention.

Please let

Nancy Millar, 804-529-9870,

nnmillar@gmail.com

Pam Narney, 804-224-0014,

pnarney@verizon.net

Gail Sigler, 804-472-2409,

gsigler@toast2.net

know by November 30 so we can get together, talk about mentoring and receive the name of your "newbie" to contact. There will be 25 trainees in next year's class. Twenty five mentors to help bring them into the group would be wonderful! Let's start them off with a warm NNMN welcome.

THE ONLY GOOD SNAKE, IS A LIVE SNAKE!

This is the motto of the Virginia Herpetological Society. Of course, we all learned in basic training that the only snake you can kill in Virginia is none. All snakes are protected and most snakes are harmless. Snakes serve a useful purpose. They eat rodents and play important roles in the food chain as predator and prey.

To participate in Citizen Science, Master Naturalists can go to:

www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/county/county-herps.htm or go to



<http://www.vafwis.org/fwis> to see what herp (native reptiles and amphibians) species occur in your county. If you compare numbers of species of snakes listed as residing in the different counties in the Northern Neck, you will notice discrepancies, probably because no one has reported sightings of these snakes. You can set the scientific record straight by reporting sightings of snakes not on the list.

The VHS website www.vaherpsociety.com provides descriptions, range maps, and photos of all species of snakes, lizards, turtles, frogs & toads, and salamanders in the state, along with identification guides and keys.

Other helpful information from the VHS sites includes: Move slowly as you search for herps in the wild, be alert for quick movements and faint sounds. Most herps like to hide under



logs, rocks, leaf piles, or other cover. DO NOT put your hands in places where you can't see. Be sure to put the rocks and logs you moved back in place so that you don't destroy herp habitat.

For herp identification assistance, or to report unusual sightings, send an email to animalidentification@virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com

REPORTING YOUR HOURS

As of October 31, only twelve members have recorded sufficient hours for recertification, 40 hours of volunteer time and 8 of advanced training. It is important to add all of your hours and check them by December 15 because the yearly report goes to state on or around



Master Naturalist 2113
Recertification Pin

January 3. If your hours are not entered, up to date, and correct, you might miss out on the pin for this year.

To check your hours for the year go to: "View Your Hours" on the Volunteer Management web site. Change the "Start Date" to 1/01/2013 and the "End Date" to 12/31/2013. Click on submit. Scroll down to see that you have the 40 and 8 necessary for recertification. More often than not we humans make mistakes when we enter information. For example, last year four people were sure that they had their 40 and 8. One had 39 hours; another had 10 hours listed for 2014, so those hours did not show up for recertification for the correct year. Please check for these simple data entry errors.

NOTES FROM CHARLENE

Belle Isle Hunt Days

Belle Isle State Park will be closed on the following days for managed hunts:

Dec 16-17, Belle Isle, deer hunt

Have you ever wanted to work in a state park?

Here are some upcoming opportunities.

Part time YCC Supervisors: The Virginia State Parks Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is a youth program that is tailored towards volunteering and making Virginia State Parks a better place. Supervisors for the Youth Conservation Corps lead a group of ten to fourteen crewmembers aged 14-17 through a three week long program where they work and live at a state park. Leaders of crews receive an \$1800 stipend and a \$350 travel stipend following successful completion of a three week program. Programs are divided into two sessions. Some supervisors may be asked to participate in two sessions. If selected, supervisors must be able to attend a mandatory training session on June 11-15, 2014 at Westmoreland State Park. To learn more about the program, visit: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/ycc.shtml. The application for the program is also located at this same site. The deadline for the application is February 1, 2014.

DCR is seeking candidates for Park Ranger and Chief Ranger law enforcement positions within the Division of State Parks. Responsible for performing maintenance of the park facilities and grounds; grounds keeping, small engine repair, equipment inventory, painting, plumbing, carpentry, and trail construction. In addition, incumbent will be responsible for

preparing reports, budget proposals and tracking payroll information, and cabin/campground administration. Also, be responsible for enforcing state laws, park rules, and regulations; and ensuring the safety of park visitors and staff. Hiring Salary Range depending on experience is: \$30,217-\$42,072. This position closes as of 5:00 p.m. on February 28, 2014. For more information visit: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/job.shtml>

Project Hours at Belle Isle State Park

- 1) Weed warriors group: Help maintain gardens at Belle Isle. Bonus: Lots of give-away plants and seeds this year!
- 2) Someone with sewing skills needed for some of our projects. Materials will be provided.
- 3) "Under the Bay" project help needed. We will be constructing a portable underwater model to use with school groups and the general public. Help will be needed with construction, painting, and assembly.
- 4) Help with school groups. Training will be provided to help Charlene with visits to schools this fall and winter. We will also be developing some new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs for middle school students.

Contact Charlene.Talcott@dcr.virginia.gov
(804) 462-5030

FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

It takes a village to keep a Master Naturalist Chapter going, so I give my sincerest THANKS to everyone in the chapter.

And a ginormous THANK YOU to each member of the chapter who gave a talk or a walk, brought a snack or convinced someone to do

so, served on a committee, ran a project, organized photo contests, or said "Yes, I will!" when asked to help. Without people volunteering to take their turn on committees and serve as officers, the chapter could not go on.

Many thanks to all who made this a rewarding experience for me.

Pam

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ADVANCED TRAINING*

Dec 7 – Holiday Party , 4:00 to 6:00 PM Polly Ward and Rod Merker's home. See invitation on the last page of this newsletter.

Jan 14 General Meeting, Time and location TBD

A program/advanced training schedule for 2014 has not been formalized at this time.

*For more details, times and locations go to the Event Calendar on the Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer Management web site.

<https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org/users/index.cfm>

Thanks to: Carol Hammer, Gail Sigler, Pam Narney, Charlene Talcott and the new administration for their input on this issue.

Please send items of interest, advanced training opportunities, news and pictures about your projects, and other future newsletter items to jnarney@verizon.net.



NORTHERN NECK
MASTER NATURALISTS
will gather
Saturday, December 7
4-6 p.m.
at the Lottsburg home of
Polly Ward and Rod Mercker
for some holiday cheer.

Bring your favorite holiday appetizer or cookie,
and wine, if you wish (there will be eggnog)

DIRECTIONS: from Rte. 360, in
Lottsburg, turn onto Glebe Road
at O'Biers Produce, take the first
left on Aaron Drive and proceed for
.9 mi straight to the end, to a
yellow frame farmhouse.

