

HIGHLIGHTS

- 2011 Classes Offered
- Hawk Watch
- Birdhouse Workshop
- Naturalists Graduate
- Chapter Officers
- Committee Duties
- VMN featured on Virginia Outdoors

MASTER NATURALISTS CENTRAL PIEDMONT CHAPTER JANUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER



Master Naturalist Class Offered in 2011

Do you enjoy identifying trees, plants, birds, and other wildlife? Would you like to share you love of nature with others?

Make a difference in your community by becoming a certified Virginia Master Naturalist. The VMN program is a statewide corps of volunteers that provide educational, outreach, and stewardship service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

We provide basic training about our own Central Piedmont Region of Virginia including geology, dendrology, entomology, ornithology, herpetology and basic concepts of ecology and resource management principles.

The next course will begin on May 11th and conclude in July, 2011. Classes will be held some Wednesday evenings with Saturday field trips. Stay tuned for the schedule of speakers. The anticipated cost of the course is \$100.

The sessions will be held primarily at the Prince Edward County Extension Office and at Bear Creek Lake State Park.

We would love for you to become a part of our corps of volunteer educators and citizen scientists.



Volunteer assists youth at Bluebird House Workshop



The Rock Fish Gap Hawk Watch 2010

Fall Broad-winged Hawk migration numbers submitted daily to Listserve.com (*a submission service of daily bird sightings throughout Virginia*) caused such excitement throughout the Commonwealth that three Richmond area residents decided to make the trek to Rockfish Gap in Waynesboro. Wendy Ealding, a birder for over 30 years and currently mentoring Patty Elton, Master Naturalist and Mary Anna Wilcox, Master Naturalist In-training, made the two-hour trip west on the morning of September 21st.

To their delight, 426 Broad-winged Hawks migrated overhead. This is nothing compared to the floodgates of the prior week when numbers went from an amazing 3,000 to an astounding 7,500 in a single day. "It was quite the learning experience being able to get that up-close view especially when the raptors kettle overhead" says Mary Anna Wilcox.

In addition to the 426 Broad-winged Hawks, the day's counters reported a total of 444 raptors including three Osprey, one Bald

Eagle, one Northern Harrier, eleven Sharp-shinned Hawks and one Red-shouldered Hawk. The group also observed a small flock of silky brown Cedar Waxwing plucking berries from a nearby shrub.

Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch was established in 1976 and is currently run by volunteer counters. Their support comes primarily from three area bird clubs – Augusta, Monticello and Rockingham Bird Clubs.

Submitted by Patty Elton

“IT WAS QUITE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE BEING ABLE TO GET THAT UP-CLOSE VIEW ESPECIALLY WHEN THE RAPTORS KETTLE OVERHEAD.”

MARY ANNA WILCOX



Rock Fish Gap Hawk Watch in Living Color



Mary Anna Wilcox and Wendy Ealding are ready for the watch!



Birdwatchers enjoying the Rock Fish Gap Hawk Watch

Blue Bird Workshop



The Cartersville Garden Club, Central Piedmont Virginia Master Naturalists and Bear Creek Lake State Park joined to sponsor The Bluebird House Family Workshop at Bear Creek Lake Hall on Saturday February 27 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. The workshop, which was supported by the Cumberland 4-H, Cumberland Boy Scouts, and the Cumberland Cub Scouts, was a great success. According to participant, Connie Pepper, “It was fantastic. We had children, mothers, grandmothers, fathers and friends hammering, drilling and putting boxes together.

Participants came from all over Cumberland and from other counties also. Stephanie Osl made sure there were plenty of tasty cookies to eat and cider to drink. Luke Fleishman cut out 50 houses, the extras to be used at the Lake for Bluebird trails. All materials and labor were donated. Bluebirds will be happy to have so many new homes in the area. Thanks to everyone who made the project a great success!

Submitted by Maria Baber

2010 Master Naturalist Graduation

The Central Piedmont Chapter of Master Naturalists held a graduation, picnic, and advanced training session on Sunday, July 18th in Sabot, Va.. The chapter had the honor of awarding nine certificates to the 2010 class of Master Naturalist in Training. In addition, five former graduates were awarded the title of Certified Master Naturalist. The chapter members and their guests enjoyed a picnic along the James River which was followed by an interesting presentation given by Mr. William H. Street, Executive Director for the James River Association, JRA.

Bill is responsible for overseeing the JRA's efforts to promote conservation and responsible stewardship of the James River's resources. He manages JRA's four core programs: River Advocacy, Riverkeeper, Watershed Restoration, and Education and Outreach. Prior to joining the JRA, Bill worked for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, most recently as the Director of Watershed Restoration. Bill received a Master of Environmental Management from Duke University and a Master of Environmental planning from the University of Virginia.

Bill focused his talk on the state of the James River. This is a report that is done every two years. The report examines the status and trends of indicators in four categories: fish and wildlife, habitat, pollution, and restoration and protection actions. The report gives the James River an overall score of 59% and a grade of C+ on a grading scale similar to the one that is used for the Chesapeake Bay. The score has improved 1% in two years but troubling signs indicate the need to strengthen river restoration efforts. A copy of this report can be obtained from the James River Association at www.jamesriverassociation.org.

During the question and answer period, we learned of the exciting rediscovery of the Atlantic sturgeon in the James. An artificial spawning reef was constructed by JRA in hopes of increasing the sturgeon population. Bill discussed the many volunteer opportunities with the JRA. He concluded his presentation with a demonstration in the river, measuring the health of the river, by checking water quality and plant and aquatic life.

Thank you to Bill Street, JRA and Coleman Perrin, Master Griller.

Submitted by Ginny Perrin

Committee Members

Program Committee and Hospitality: Ginny Perrin (chair), Sandy Wasson, Stephanie Osl, Patty Elton, Connie Pepper, and Mary Anna Wilcox

Training Committee: Catherine Fleischman (chair), Tom Kneipp, Maria Baber and Laura Moss

Membership and Historian Committee: Linda Eanes (chair)

Volunteer Service Projects/ Advanced Training Committee: David Smith (chair), Janet Stoner

Outreach Committee : JoAnn Jones, Beverly Hines (co-chair), Anne Mason, Lee Ann Dail, David Torrence

Executive Committee: Catherine Fleischman, President; Virginia Perrin, Vice President; Sandy Wasson, Secretary; and Connie Pepper, Treasurer

Agency Sponsors and Advisors: Tom Kneipp, Bear Creek Lake State Park and David Smith, Cumberland Extension Office

Master Naturalist Committees and Responsibilities

Program Committee and Hospitality: Responsibilities include planning and implementing up to 4 programs per year for the membership that offer opportunities for advanced training and or volunteer hours. One of these can include our annual meeting held in January.

Training Committee: Responsible for creating and implementing a training class within a two year time frame.

Membership and Historian Committee: Responsible for keeping the website updated with current member news, advanced training opportunities, volunteer opportunities, and producing a yearly news letter.

Volunteer Service Projects/ Advanced Training Committee: Responsibilities include collecting and submitting our yearly report to VMN. Maintaining chapter files at the Cumberland Extension Office, coordinating use of recorded classes and training resources by members,

Outreach Committee : Responsibilities include putting together a program with visual effects to take into the community.

Executive Committee: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Responsibilities include: Approval of projects



Check us out on the web!!!
[http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/
centralpiedmont.html](http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/centralpiedmont.html)

Virginia Master Naturalist Program Featured on Virginia Outdoors

The Virginia Master Naturalist program was featured at VirginiaOutdoors.com, a site promoting and connecting visitors with Virginia's state parks. Check out the [audio podcast interview](#) of Michelle Prysby, Virginia Master Naturalist program coordinator, by Joe Elton, Virginia State Parks Director. We discuss how the Virginia Master Naturalist program got started, what it is accomplishing today, and how our volunteers are benefiting Virginia's state parks and other public lands. We also talk a little about [monarch butterflies](#), one of Michelle's other areas of expertise. You can download the podcast and also subscribe to future Virginia Outdoors podcasts so that they are delivered directly to your email inbox by visiting the Virginia Master Naturalist web site at <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/>

by Michelle Prysby, Virginia Master Naturalist Program Coordinator

If you are interested in becoming a Master Naturalist, please contact Catherine Fleischman, President and Training Committee Chair at cfleischman@cucps.k12.va.us . For further information, contact Tom Kneipp at Thomas.Kneipp@dcr.virginia.gov or David Smith at dsmith57@vt.edu.



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