

RIVERINE MASTER NATURALIST NEWS

Volume 3, Issue 2

February 2009

2008 – A Productive Year for Riverine MNs!

A HUGE thank you to all who made the extra effort to submit Activity Reports by the end of the year! Here's the list of our recently certified Riverine Master Naturalists:

- Nancy Clari
- Larry Olson
- Sally Stockslager
- Shannon White
- Keith Wylie
- Suzanne Willis - first of the 2008 class certify!!!

Also, we must give a shout out to Emily Gianfortoni, who has contributed over 750 Lifetime service hours! While the official Lifetime milestones are 250, 500, 1000 and onward, we felt 750 was certainly worth noting! And with all her efforts for the new 2009 class, she will most likely reach 1000 hours in no time flat. Way to go Emily!

Our 2008 Annual Report, submitted to the State in January, showed some impressive numbers:

- 18 Certified Master Naturalists (we've grown to 20 as of this writing)
- 468 hours of Advanced Training obtained by Riverine members
- 557.5 hours of Education/Outreach service
- 318.75 hours of Stewardship service
- 263 hours of Citizen Science service
- 1683 contacts were tallied by Riverine members
- 860 administrative hours donated to keep our Chapter running smoothly

Looking back over the three years of Riverine's existence, the Chapter has accomplished much:

- 1938 hours of Basic and Field Training obtained
- 771.5 hours of Advanced Training obtained
- 1370.75 hours contributed to Education/Outreach, Citizen Science, and Stewardship projects in 2007 and 2008
- 1993.25 hours of administrative service accumulated since 2006, when the Local Coordinating Committee formed to begin planning the first Basic Training class. *Administration makes the world go round – please consider helping out with the Chapter's necessary administrative tasks!*
- **3364 hours - Riverine's Lifetime service contribution to our communities**

WOW! We are building a truly dedicated, well trained Chapter, and making positive, visible contributions to our communities. Keep up the enthusiasm and all the hard work!
-submitted by Karrin Gordon



2009 Officers

President

Ron Smith

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Michael Larkin

Secretary

Anne Joseph

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(look under Riverine Chapter)

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FIELD TRIP TO POCOHONTAS STATE PARK

On Jan. 24 members of our group were treated to a great history hike at Pocahontas State Park. We started at the nature center, home to a surprising number of specimens in a small space.

Park Naturalist, Christen Miller led us on a leisurely 3 mile hike. After a short stop in the CCC Museum, we headed out to the remains of a homestead, one of many that were in the area before the park was transformed by the CCC Camps of the 1930's. We then came to an old cemetery, overgrown and long forgotten, but we could still make out the crude field stones that were used as head and foot stones. We moved on to the remains of the dam and mill that were once part of a thriving community, preserved in the stream they once controlled.

We saw first hand evidence of the beavers as we explored the area around their lodge. Chewed trees and various tracks and trails told their story.

We saw woodpeckers including Downey, Red Headed, Red Bellied and a Yellow Bellied Sapsucker. We saw Blue Jays and Morning Doves and a lot of "little buggers" in the brush. The lake was partially frozen but there were Canada Geese, Mallards and Buffleheads swimming in the icy waters.

Christen, with her great interpretive skill, made this an enjoyable morning for all involved. Pocahontas State Park is a great beauty, with many hidden treasures that shouldn't be missed.

-article and picture below submitted by Mary Ellen Stohr



Reminder from Mary Ellen Stohr –

Don't forget – our emblems are here! Each member in good standing will receive one emblem – additional emblems are available at \$1.00 each. If you do not want to wait until the next meeting for yours you can send a self addressed stamped envelope to:

Mary Ellen Stohr, 10740 Trailwood Dr., Chesterfield, VA 23832

Calendar of Events

Creating Backyard Bird Habitats

Tuesday, February 10, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Maymont
Register by Feb. 9 at 358-7166 ext. 310, \$15

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 13-16

Contact: www.birdsource.org/gbbc

Three Lakes Nature Center-Exhibit & Presentation on Naturalist James Bellwood

Saturday, February 21, 9:30 a.m.

Contact: Mary Ellen Stohr at mestohr1@comcast.net or (804) 790-1656

Wildlife Rehabilitation Classes

Wildlife Capture, Restraint, Handling & Transportation

Wednesday, February 25, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Tonsler Park Community Meeting Room
Charlottesville

\$20 Fee, Contact: Wildlife Center of Virginia at (540) 942-9453 or email outreach@wildlifecenter.org

Virginia Biological Farming Conference Community Based Food Systems

February 27 & 28

Sheraton Richmond West Hotel

Contact: Marilyn Buerkens at (540) 291-4333 or vabfconference@live.com, www.VABF.org

Good Gardening Symposium

"Enrich the Environment-Go Native"

Saturday, March 14, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Prince George High School, \$10 fee

Contact: B. Geer at keano@rcn.com or Prince George Cooperative Extension Office

Vernal Pools Program

Monday, March 16-19, Sweet Briar College

Contact: Mike Hayslett at mhayslett@sbc.edu or (434) 381-6439

Spring Garden Fest

Saturday, April 25, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College-Goochland

Contact: gpmga.org or 804-556-5841

Get Green Expo

April 25-26, Greater Richmond Convention Center

Contact: www.getgreenexpo.org

Advanced Training Rally

May 8 – 10

Sweet Briar College

The following article & pictures were submitted by Michael Larkin:

Help, Help I'm Caught

One bright sunny day while on a hunt for dragonflies, we visited a relatively new pond on a golf course. The developer/contractor designed the pond as a hazard for a golf hole, especially for golfers that sliced the ball. It lies to the right of a green and is nicely landscaped. Pre-grown sod was used to line the edges of the pond. One of the practices used by sod farmers to assure that none of the sod breaks into pieces as it is being handled is to use plastic netting that reinforces the sod.

The sod used to line the edges of the pond is of that type. Whoever applied the sod was a little generous with it and some excess arrived under the water level of the pond. Hence it became what you can refer to as a "hazard" for wildlife and not golfers. Many times we learn from the news about a whale being caught in a fish net, or a duck with a beverage loop around its neck, and similar stories about plastic and its problems for wildlife.

Well in this case it was plastic netting and a frog. See photo. The white object is the handle of the dragonfly catching net.

I learned about its plight after seeing its attempts to free itself. I originally thought it was a fish that had jumped out of the water after being pursued by a Heron. But I was wrong. The frog was caught by the netting just above its back right leg knee and since it was unable to jump, it was stirring and splashing the water. Remembering that I had used sod once, I reached into the water found the netting and brought it to shore. What had been sod was now just plastic. The grass and earth had washed away. Once ashore the frog was able to breathe properly and continued to try to jump until I was able to restrain it. His attempts to free himself had wrapped the netting quite a few times around his leg as you can see in the photo, but persistence prevailed and I was soon able to free him. Then he made one long leap to freedom and probably croaked happily for the rest of the summer.



Upcoming Trip –

Three Lakes Nature Center, Henrico County Department of Recreation and Parks
Saturday, February 21

We will meet at 9:30 a.m. and it will last approximately an hour and a half depending on questions, etc. There will be a brief introduction to the Nature Center followed by a self-guided exploration of the exhibits. Next, we will meet in the classroom for a presentation on James Bellwood of Chesterfield County. If time allows we can learn about the research being performed at Three Lakes. Call Mary Ellen Stohr if you have any questions or need directions at (804) 790-1656 or mestohr1@comcast.net.

It's a New Year: Activity Reporting in 2009

Each year we've worked hard to improve our Activity Reporting process, and 2008 helped us settle in to a good groove. We prepared our 2008 Annual Report with confidence because we had a pretty solid reporting and record keeping process (and thanks again to all members who regularly submitted monthly reports, allowing us sufficient time to meet the deadline for our Annual Report to the State.

We began the year with monthly report templates, each customized for the given month's activities. During the summer, we switched to a generic "Any Month" template, and shifted the burden of identifying eligible hours to the members themselves. This approach worked well, and we plan to do the same for 2009.

Shortly, we'll be distributing the Jan. 2009 Activity Report template, along with the generic "Any Month" template. Some folks have already submitted a Jan. 2009 report using last year's 2008 Any Month template – I'm going to have to start awarding gold stars to these Johnny-on-the-spot members!

We will also be re-distributing the document explaining Riverine's Initial Certification and Certification Renewal requirements. Here's a brief summary of requirements for each class:

2007 Class members

- By 12/31/08, should have completed all 30 hours Basic and 10 hours Field Training, 8 hours Advanced Training, and 40 hours of service.
- Because you are now certified for the calendar year of 2009, you must spend 2009 completing your Renewal requirements, which will allow you to be certified for the year 2010:
 - o 8 hours Advanced Training
 - o 40 hours of service (you can count a maximum of 10 Admin hours toward the 40, but all Admin hours will count toward your Lifetime service).

2008 Class members

- By 12/31/08, should have completed all Basic and Field Training in 2008.
- You must spend 2009 completing your initial certification requirements:
 - o 8 hours Advanced Training
 - o 40 hours of service (you can count a maximum of 10 Admin hours toward the 40, but all Admin hours will count toward your Lifetime service).
- Most of you have already begun accumulating Advanced and Service hours, and that's fantastic. However, any 2009 hours accrued that exceed the 8 and 40 WILL NOT CARRY OVER to next year. All service hours will be credited toward your Lifetime service, but in 2010, you must begin earning another 8 Advanced and 40 services to achieve your certification Renewal.

2009 Class members

- Are you completely confused?!
 - o Don't worry, I'll be explaining our Certification Requirements and Activity Reporting process to you in person at the Feb. 19 class.
 - o When you receive the email containing the monthly report templates and the Certification document, look them over, and plan to ask your questions on Feb. 19 ☺

As always, please contact Kathleen at Kathleen.Ogilvy@dof.virginia.gov at or me at karringordon@yahoo.com, with any questions about certification requirements and activity reporting.

-submitted by Karrin Gordon