

**Virginia Master Naturalist Program
Statewide Conference and Volunteer Training
September 20-22, 2019**

Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center; Harrisonburg, VA

**Printable List of Sessions and Agenda Items
for Full Conference Registrants**

(This schedule is subject to change.)

Friday, September 20, 2019

Pre-Conference Sessions (optional, additional fees apply)

Raft Trip Down the South Fork of the Shenandoah River

Date/time: Friday, September 20 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Location: South Fork of the Shenandoah River. Note that transportation is on your own, there will not be an organized carpool or van.

Price: \$25

Description: This will be a 7-mile float trip down the historic Shenandoah River. Rapids are mild, and the rafts will be guided by veteran river guides. We go with the flow of the river, and participants will be introduced to riparian flora and fauna. Bring camera and binoculars!

Logistical notes: Instructor will meet the group at the Island Ford Boat Ramp, Rockingham County. Go to Google Maps and type in "Island Ford Bridge, Elkton, VA". Participants should bring a dry bag that includes a water bottle, lunch, rain jacket and sunscreen. Note that you need to bring your own lunch! Also, bring a hat and sunglasses. Wear clothes that can get wet and are quick to dry. River shoes or sandals are perfect for your feet. This trip will be cancelled in the event of high river flows or dangerous weather!

Instructor(s): *Paul E. Bugas, Jr. is a Fisheries Manager with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) based in Verona. He graduated from Virginia Tech in 1975 with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Forestry and Wildlife (Fisheries Option), immediately starting his career with VDGIF. He currently oversees fish stock assessments, habitat improvement, fish stocking, environmental impacts, fish health, and water quality projects in 29 counties. Bugas has received awards from the American Fisheries Society, Garden Club of Virginia, Trout Unlimited, the Izaak Walton League of America, and others for his outreach efforts in aquatic education. In 1990, Paul organized the Virginia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society and served as its first president. He also served as the chapter advisor for the Headwaters Chapter of the VMN program for many years.*



Pollinator Habitat Field Day

Date/time: Friday, September 20 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Location: Classroom portion at Massanetta Springs Conference Center; field portion at Lake Shenandoah; then return to classroom (2 miles/5 minutes)

Price: \$5

Description: Learn about the value of a native plant meadow habitat to bees and other pollinators through interactive discussions with field biologists and hands-on activity stations. We'll begin at Massanetta Springs Conference Center with an overview about bees and bee diversity by T'ai Roulston of UVA-Blandy. Then we'll caravan to Lake Shenandoah, just minutes from the Conference Center, to see diversity in action at the pollinator habitat next to the Lake. Here we'll describe how the meadow was established, and then we'll divide into teams that rotate between three stations: 1) Native Plant ID of pollinator host plants; 2) Insect ID and observations of foraging behavior; and 3) Fire Management (the effects of fire on the forb/grassland ecotype) & Seed Collection techniques. Note that we'll include time on the agenda for a picnic lunch at the Lake. Later in the afternoon we'll return to the Conference Center with some of the insect specimens we've collected, in order to observe more identifying features under the microscope. At the end of the day, participants will receive a packet of materials from the DGIF Habitat Partners© Program, including resources about Virginia bees, pollinator habitat, and a field guide to Northern Virginia Butterflies and Skippers by Robert Blakney (must attend the full day to receive materials). [Field Trip Difficulty Level: very easy path, short walking distances through tall meadow plants.]

Logistical notes: Meet at Massanetta Springs Conference Center (Room TBA). Please plan to arrive between 9:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., as we'll begin instruction at the Conference Center promptly at 10:00. Note that the field day will be held RAIN OR SHINE, so please plan accordingly, and WEAR long pants and boots or sturdy shoes, as we'll be walking through tall meadow plants/ grasses. BRING your own LUNCH (make this portable and easy to carry in a day pack); water; insect repellent; field notebook; and a magnifying loupe if you have one. (We'll provide clipboards, pencils, insect nets and magnifier 'bug boxes'.) After the introductory presentation at the Conference Center, we'll caravan to Lake Shenandoah for the field portion, where we'll spend a good portion of the day. When we've completed the field activity stations, we'll return to the Conference Center for a final lab session, to view specimens under microscopes.

Instructor(s): *Ta'i Roulston, PhD, Research Associate Professor, UVA-Blandy: Ta'i is Curator of the State Arboretum of Virginia, where he maintains a diverse plant collection and works with graduate students to study the feeding ecology and basic biology of insects, including pollinators and plant-insect interactions.*

Tyler Urgo, Shenandoah Valley Region Steward, DCR: Tyler's background is in wildlife science and environmental resources, and he manages nine Natural Area Preserves in the Shenandoah valley region for the Natural Heritage Division.

Jason Hallacher, Assistant Fisheries Biologist, DGIF: Jason manages the public fishing resources in and around the Shenandoah valley and has led the effort to restore and maintain the meadow surrounding DGIF's Lake Shenandoah. He also serves on the DGIF Fire Crew to assist with prescribed burning and wildfire suppression, and he is an avid beekeeper.



Carol A. Heiser, Habitat Education Coordinator, DGIF: Carol coordinates the Habitat Partners© Program and provides programs and events for the general public and volunteer trainings for Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners. She represents DGIF on the Board of the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council and on the Steering Committee of the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional initiative, and she is Co-Coordinator of the Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership.

Friday Evening Activities

**All Friday evening activities will be at the Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center*

Friday Welcome Reception

Date/time: Friday, September 20, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Friday Dinner and Awards Ceremony

Date/time: Friday, September 20, 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Chapter Share Fair and Mix-and-Mingle

Date/time: Friday, September 20, 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Description: The Share Fair is an opportunity for chapters to share with each other materials or a display about their activities. Chapters may choose to bring materials and/or a display about a particular volunteer project they have accomplished in the last year, a major volunteer activity with a local partner that involves your chapter members, or even specific efforts the chapter is making on volunteer recruitment, training, or retention. Think about what activities are unusual or special in your chapter, and share those! We also invite VMN VIPs, such as state agency representatives, for the evening, so there may be projects and activities you want to share with them as well, and they will have displays from the agencies.

Logistical Notes: Chapters should contact Tiffany Brown, tiffany.brown@vt.edu, 3 weeks prior to the conference to let her know whether they will have a display. She will have table spaces for each chapter that requests it.

Organized Evening Social Activity (optional, free)

Date/time: Friday, September 20, 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Description: We will be organizing an optional evening activity for those participants who want to continue the fun! Details will be available when registration opens.



Saturday, September 21

Breakfast (optional, additional fees apply)

Saturday Morning Breakfast

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21, 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Price: \$10. Pre-registration required; you will not be able to purchase breakfast on-site.

President's Breakfast

Date/time: Saturday, September 21, 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Price: Free for invited Chapter Presidents or their designees.

Saturday Morning Onsite Long Sessions (9:00 am – 12:00 pm)

Black Bears of Virginia

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: Black bear natural history, population changes, common myths and management of human-bear conflicts will be discussed. Some hands-on exercises along with a lecture.

Instructor(s): *David Kocka is a District Wildlife Biologist with 30 years of experience dealing with human-bear conflicts. He has over 30 professional and/or popular publications including a book in 2017 entitled "Bear with Me, My Deer: Tails of a Virginia Wildlife Biologist".*

Michael Pelton is a Professor Emeritus, Wildlife Science, The University of Tennessee. From 1968 until 2008 Mike and his graduate students conducted research on the biology and ecology of black bears on 16 study areas in the Appalachians and Southeastern Coastal Plain. Other studies included research on several other mammals including raccoons, European wild hogs, river otter, coyotes, woodchucks, skunks and white-tailed deer. Mike and his wife Tamra currently reside on their mountain farm in Augusta County, VA.

American Woodcock Biology and Migration Study

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs (inside and out)

Description: This session will inform the participants about American Woodcock biology and management and current research. Participants will: view a well-done video on the life history of woodcock; learn how to sex and age woodcock using woodcock wing aging techniques; have hands on experience with techniques for capturing woodcock, such as mist nets, night lighting equipment, clover traps (in fields surrounding Massanetta Springs); and, will be introduced to the current American Woodcock Migration Study that the VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries is participating in, along with many Atlantic



Coast states. Volunteers will be shown the latest in GPS transmitters and the data these units are providing to help Biologists understand migration patterns, habitat use and timing of woodcock migrations. Volunteers will have an opportunity to assist DGIF with this study by volunteering to locate birds in their local areas and help with capturing woodcock and installing the GPS transmitters.

Instructor(s): *Al Bourgeois is a retired DGIF Biologist who has worked over 42 years in the wildlife management field. He worked 30 years for DGIF and has had a lifelong passion for woodcock. He did his MS degree work with woodcock in Michigan and has continued working with these birds in Virginia. He has a BS Degree from the University of Maine and a MS Degree from Michigan State University.*

Saturday Morning Onsite Short Session 1 (9:00 AM – 10:30 AM)

What Water Temperatures Tell Us About the Quality of Aquatic Habitats

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Location: Massanetta Springs (inside and out)

Description: The most common measurement of water quality in streams, rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water is temperature. In this session, you will learn what water temperature tells us about these aquatic habitats, how monitoring devices – way beyond the simple thermometer – collect temperatures, and where to find more information about the water quality of streams near you. The session includes a hands-on activity using programmable sensors deployed into a nearby water as an example of how the technology works and how temperature data can be collected and analyzed.

Instructor(s): *Dr. Thomas Benzing is a professor at James Madison University in the School of Integrated Sciences. His research and teaching interests are in water quality with a particular affection for trout streams.*

Soil Carbon, Nutrient Trading, and E. coli

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: In this session, participants will learn about three topics that all relate to water quality and its relationship with land use. Study the role of carbon farming in our quest to sequester carbon from the atmosphere and its relation to emerging carbon markets. Learn how Virginia's nutrient trading program for phosphorus, in place since 2005, works. And, find out what exactly is E. coli, and how we can reduce its presence in our waterways!

Instructor(s): *Robert "Bobby" Whitescarver is a farmer, award-winning writer, science educator, and watershed restoration consultant. He received James Madison University's provost award for Excellence in Teaching in 2018.*



Saturday Morning Onsite Short Session 2 (10:45 AM – 12:15 PM)

Climate Activators

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs (inside and in parking lot)

Description: Bring your curiosity and optimism as our local Climate Activators present creative and effective climate action solutions through A Little Climate Music, forest carbon storage – “How history has shaped our forests, and why they should be allowed to grow old with dignity.”, electric vehicle show in the parking lot, and solar-powered homes tour. These folks are Activating, and they will answer your practical questions.

Instructor(s): *Doug Hendren, (MusicalScalpel.com)– Doug Hendren is an orthopedic surgeon turned climate troubadour. Doug grew up and was educated in the Boston area (Harvard BA 1973), working as an inventor’s assistant before medical school (Case Western Reserve, MD 1982), and orthopedic residency (Harvard, 1988). He replaced hips and knees in Eureka, California and Harrisonburg, Virginia until hanging up his scalpel in 2010.*

Chris Bolgiano, (chrisbolgiano.com) Chris Bolgiano, mildly amusing nature writer, has written or edited six books, several of which have won literary prizes. She has also written innumerable nature and travel articles for The New York Times, Washington Post, American Forests, Sierra, Audubon, and many other publications. As Faculty Emerita at James at Madison University, she has access to an overwhelming world of research and is, in fact, usually overwhelmed.

BTW, both Doug and Chris live in homes powered by the sun.

Collective Action Can Win the War Against Invasive Plants

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: Forming more Cooperative Weed Management Areas across the state of Virginia is one big key to making progress against the tsunami of invasive plants. Learn how the Blue Ridge PRISM was formed, what it has accomplished, what it takes to start similar organizations and the huge benefits of multiple PRISMs working together to help each other and to make a difference across the entire state. The Blue Ridge PRISM will provide support to individuals and groups interested in making a difference beyond their own back yards.

Instructor(s): *Rod and Maggie Walker are two of the founders of the Blue Ridge PRISM, the first Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) to be formed in Virginia. They are landowners in western Albemarle County who decided to move beyond their own property and help other landowners battle invasive plants.*



Wild Foods 4 Wildlife

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: Come learn about the wild plant foods that animals eat and specifically about how volunteers can become a forager “Meals on Wheels” to a wildlife rehabilitator in your home region. We will do some hands-on plant identification and small group discussion and, as time allows, we’ll head outdoors to see what is in nature’s pantry or possibly do a quick seed cleaning demo.

Instructor(s): *Kate currently is the Watershed Administrator for the Friends of the Middle River, and a former employee of 5 years for the Wildlife Center of Virginia—a hospital for native Virginia wildlife. She is a bit of a forager freak and she created a website database of the wild plant foods that wild mammals, birds and reptiles eat: wildfoods4wildlife.com.*

Saturday Morning Off-site Field Sessions (various times, check session listing)

Please note the following details regarding these off-site sessions:

- These sessions have varying starting and ending times. Pay careful attention to the times for your session.
- Start and end times for off-site sessions include the travel time from and back to Massanetta Springs.
- Some of these sessions begin with a classroom portion at Massanetta Springs, and then have a field portion. These aspects are indicated in the descriptions.
- Some sessions will have vans or buses providing the transportation, but we are not able to provide vans for all field sessions. Please assume that you will need to carpool in participants’ vehicles unless otherwise indicated. We will ask for carpool driver sign-ups before the conference.
- Travel times and distances listed in parentheses are one-way, unless otherwise indicated.

Carrier Arboretum

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 9:00 AM - 12:15 PM

Location: Edith J. Carrier Arboretum (5 miles/15 minutes)

Description: The Edith J. Carrier Arboretum, a 125-acre woodland sanctuary on the James Madison University campus, is a public urban garden and forested greenspace that preserves native plant species, provides opportunities for research, and promotes knowledge of the botanical and natural world for people of all ages. There are between three and four miles of interconnecting trails through the arboretum, and a magical children’s area. In this session, participants will learn about how riparian planting projects have been designed and used to improve ponds and wetlands at the site. They’ll also learn how Virginia Master Naturalists volunteer as Arboretum trail scouts.

Logistical notes: Wear your walking shoes, and dress for the weather. There are restrooms and water available at the Arboretum.



Instructor(s): David Forrer and Burt Blessing are Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers in the Headwaters Chapter.

Birding Basics

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Location: Massanetta Springs and Lake Shenandoah (2 miles/5 minutes)

Description: Are you just starting to get into birds, and you wish you knew how to identify them? Or, perhaps you want to volunteer for a project that requires bird identification skills, but you don't yet know how to do that? If so, this is the class for you! This workshop will introduce you to birding and will cover all of the basics of how to identify birds, tips for finding birds, the materials and equipment you need to get started, and citizen-science/volunteer project applications. The workshop will begin with classroom instruction at the conference center (1.25 hours), then we will drive (10 minutes) to Lake Shenandoah for an outdoor field session to practice your new birding skills. We will be walking on trails (1.5 – 1.75 hours), so come dressed for the outdoors and in comfortable walking shoes. A limited supply of binoculars will be available for loan during the class, but if you have your own, please bring them. This class is recommended for new birders.

Logistical notes: Note the early 8:00 am start time in the Massanetta Springs classroom.

Instructor(s): Jessica Ruthenberg has been the Watchable Wildlife Biologist for Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries for over 5 years. She has a Master of Science in Natural Resources and Environment from University of Michigan where she specialized in Conservation Biology and Environmental Behavior, Education, and Communication.

Purcell Park: Stream and Habitat Restoration

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Location: Purcell Park (6 miles/15 minutes)

Description: This session will cover the restoration efforts that have taken place in Purcell Park throughout the years, centered around a stream restoration that was completed in 2009. The project restored about 3,500 linear feet of stream to a more natural state, bringing back a meander with riffles and pools for instream habitat. As part of the project, 17 acres of stream buffer was planted with trees and shrubs and placed into a conservation easement for permanent protection. Other restoration efforts that have taken place in Purcell Park include the installation of bubblers and management of invasive goldfish in Purcell Park Lake, management for Emerald Ash Borer, and a planned woodchip bioreactor project to remove excess nitrogen from the stream. The session will include a walking tour around Purcell Park to discuss these restoration efforts.

Logistical notes: Please wear comfortable shoes and weather appropriate clothing - the session will include walking in grass and graveled trails. Note that this session ends at 10:30 AM.

Instructor(s): Rebecca Stimson is the Stormwater Compliance Specialist at the City of Harrisonburg Public Works Department. Rebecca is involved with management of water quality in the city as well as other environmental and sustainability initiatives.



Growing trees for the future: Virginia Department of Forestry Seedling Nursery (Augusta Forestry Center)

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 9:00 AM - 12:15 PM

Location: Augusta Forestry Center (19 miles/30 minutes)

Description: This session will be a tour of the Hardwood/mixed conifer nursery. Every aspect of the nursery will be described on how we sow seeds, manage the seedlings and harvest the crop. Please bring boots to walk in seedling fields. The walk is short and not more than a ½ of mile.

Logistical notes: Bring boots, water, and sunblock.

Instructor(s): *Joshua McLaughlin (Assistant Forestry Center Manager) graduated from Virginia Tech with Bachelor's in Wildlife Biology and minors in Forestry and General Biology. Josh has been at the nursery for 15 years and grew up right across the river from the facility.*

Shenandoah National Park Habitats

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Shenandoah National Park (South River Picnic Grounds) (24 miles/35 minutes)

Logistical notes: Pit toilets are available at the picnic grounds. Bring day back pack with water.

Description: Views of the Shenandoah River Valley and Alleghany Mountains, with one hour easy circle walk along the Appalachian Trail, viewing wild flowers and insects in different habitats below South River Picnic Grounds of Shenandoah National Park.

Instructor(s): *Andy and Frances Sale are ten-year Master Naturalists with love of Appalachian wildflowers, with over five years of seasonal observations on this particular circular trail.*

Saturday Lunch

Lunch

Date/time: Saturday, September 21, 12:15 PM – 1:15 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Saturday Afternoon Onsite Long Sessions (1:30 PM – 4:30 PM)

Freshwater Fishes of Virginia Field Guide

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs (inside and out)

Description: Participants will be indoors for an hour-long lecture based on Freshwater Fishes of Virginia Field Guide, which will cover fisheries management, anatomy, ecology, distribution, fish watching/collecting, and a detailed review of all 25 families. The remaining session will take place outside in the area around Massanetta Springs.



Participants will learn the features of a spring creek, practice fish watching, seine for fish in the stream, identify their catch, and possibly sample Lake Campbell. Students will come away with a deeper appreciation of freshwater fish found in the Commonwealth.

Logistical notes: Participants should plan on one hour of indoor instruction and two hours outdoors. Bring river shoes, sunglasses, hat, and shorts or pants that can get wet.

Instructor(s): *Paul E. Bugas, Jr. is a Fisheries Manager with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) based in Verona. He graduated from Virginia Tech in 1975 with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Forestry and Wildlife (Fisheries Option), immediately starting his career with VDGIF. He currently oversees fish stock assessments, habitat improvement, fish stocking, environmental impacts, fish health, and water quality projects in 29 counties. Bugas has received awards from the American Fisheries Society, Garden Club of Virginia, Trout Unlimited, the Izaak Walton League of America, and others for his outreach efforts in aquatic education. In 1990, Paul organized the Virginia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society and served as its first president. He also served as the chapter advisor for the Headwaters Chapter of the VMN program for many years.*

Corbin Hilling is a Virginia Se Grant Graduate Research Fellow and PhD student at Virginia Tech. Corbin completed degrees in biology (BS) and wildlife and fisheries resources (MS) at West Virginia University. He is an award-winning instructor in the Virginia Tech Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation, where he teaches students to identify Virginia fishes. Corbin has published several scientific articles on fishes and their biology during his young career. Further, he is active in public outreach and engagement to spread awareness of fishes and their conservation. Corbin enjoys fishing during his free time for both freshwater and marine fishes.

Saturday Afternoon Onsite Short Session 1 (1:30 PM – 3:00 PM)

Owl Wisdom

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: This session has two parts, with interactive questions at the end. First, Dr. John Spahr will share the results of the past 6 years of his field work with Eastern Screech Owls in Highland County. The most common and wide-spread owl in Virginia, Eastern Screech Owls live close to us, but are more often heard than seen. Slightly smaller than the American robin, this handsome owl feeds on prey as small as crickets and as large as squirrels and pigeons.

Part two of the session will feature Dr. Clair Mellinger, who, along with co-researcher Charles Ziegenfus, has banded about 2,000 Northern Saw-whet owls since 2001 with Project OwlNet, studying their migration and wintering habits. Saw-whet owls are Virginia's tiniest owls, weighing less than 3 ounces, but are ferocious hunters with a rasping metallic call that gives them their name.

Not only do these two renowned researchers join forces to bring you in-depth information on two species of owls, their lifelong observations and research demonstrate the wisdom and staying power we are all seeking as naturalists. Come be inspired!

Instructor(s): Penny Warren, VMN volunteer, will moderate this joint session.

After a 30 year medical career, John Spahr, MD, of Stanton, turned his attention completely to birds – doing a 90,000 mile 700 species birding “big year” to mark his retirement. He has served as president of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, which recently published one of his owl studies in its scientific journal, The Raven. He is a regional reviewer for eBird and serves as regional coordinator for Virginia’s second Breeding Bird Atlas program.

Dr. Clair Mellinger, of Harrisonburg, taught biology at Eastern Mennonite University for over 35 years. He earned his PhD. at UNC at Chapel Hill. Dr. Mellinger has served as President for the Virginia Society of Ornithology, and Rockingham Bird Club, and is the author of the “Birds of Rockingham County”. He ran two USFWS Breeding Bird Survey routes for over twenty years and also numerous breeding birds surveys for the George Washington Forest.

Yes We Can! Controlling Invasive Plants from Suburban Parks to Rural Landscapes

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: Whether it’s stiltgrass glades in the understory, honeysuckle or bittersweet strangling shrubs and trees on a forest edge, lesser celandine carpeting a floodplain, or kudzu shrouds along streambanks, battling invasive plants can be a daunting challenge. But there’s hope, and we CAN make a difference! Armed with some knowledge, teamwork, resources, wise strategies, and stamina, it is possible to eliminate these beasts or reduce them to a level of discretionary weeding, at a variety of scales. Come hear some stories, of projects complete, and works in progress, outright victories, and teeterings on the brink. Just remember: It’s Always a Good Day for a Bad Plant to Die!!

Instructor(s): Jim Hurley is a leader with the Blue Ridge PRISM, and formerly an organization development consultant working with national environmental nonprofits. He has been doing, organizing and leading invasive plant control projects since 2002, beginning in northern Virginia, continuing on his 156-acre property at the base of the Blue Ridge in Greene County, and regionally in central Virginia.

Chronic Wasting Disease in Virginia’s White-tailed Deer

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs (inside and out)

Description: Chronic Wasting Disease is an on-going concern for Virginia’s deer population. CWD has the potential to cause long-term, possibly irreversible, population impacts and DGIF is working hard to monitor and manage it. In Part 1 of this session, we will provide an introduction to CWD: what is CWD, history of the disease, Virginia’s situation, potential deer population impacts, latest CWD research, what actions DGIF is taking, and volunteer opportunities. In Part 2, we will do a CWD sample collection demonstration using decapitated deer heads. We will go outside for this part of the session. There will be a hands-on option for anyone who wants to try collecting tissue samples. Those who are considering volunteering with DGIF in the future with CWD efforts are encouraged to have a try. Wear clothes that you won’t mind if they get a bit bloodstained. Aprons, gloves, and all tools and disinfectants will be provided. There will be blood, and



given the time of year some foul smells, but guts and gore will be minimal these are the heads only.

Logistical notes: Participants who wish to stay for Part 2, and would like to try collecting samples, rather than just observing, will need to wear clothes they don't mind getting some blood on, just in case.

Instructor(s): *Chelsey Faller is the Wildlife Disease Biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.*

A Soft Spot for Spotted Skunks: What We've Learning about Virginia's Little Stinkers

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: In this session I will introduce you to the eastern spotted skunk, a small and elusive (and stinky) small carnivore. We will explore spotted skunk ecology and the differences between this species and its larger, striped cousins. I will also discuss current conservation issues involving the spotted skunk and the research I have been conducting over the last years at Virginia Tech. I will also provide updates about the ongoing VMN Eastern Spotted Skunk Survey, how past volunteers have contributed to our research, and how interested folks can get involved. There will also be several examples of game cameras and tracking and trapping equipment to view and handle.

Instructor(s): *Emily Thorne is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Virginia Tech. She has been conducting research on the rare and elusive eastern spotted skunk since December 2014 and has organized a Virginia-wide citizen science based spotted skunk camera survey with the help of many dedicated VMN volunteers.*

Saturday Afternoon Onsite Short Session 2 (3:15 PM – 4:45 PM)

A Soft Spot for Spotted Skunks: What We've Learning about Virginia's Little Stinkers (REPEAT)

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 3:15 PM – 4:45 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Logistical notes: none

Description: In this session I will introduce you to the eastern spotted skunk, a small and elusive (and stinky) small carnivore. We will explore spotted skunk ecology and the differences between this species and its larger, striped cousins. I will also discuss current conservation issues involving the spotted skunk and the research I have been conducting over the last years at Virginia Tech. I will also provide updates about the ongoing VMN Eastern Spotted Skunk Survey, how past volunteers have contributed to our research, and how interested folks can get involved. There will also be several examples of game cameras and tracking and trapping equipment to view and handle.

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eastern spotted skunk since December 2014 and has organized a Virginia-wide citizen science based spotted skunk camera survey with the help of many dedicated VMN volunteers.

Wild Foods 4 Wildlife (REPEAT)

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 3:15 PM – 4:45 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: Come learn about the wild plant foods that animals eat and specifically about how volunteers can become a forager “Meals on Wheels” to a wildlife rehabilitator in your home region. We will do some hands-on plant identification and small group discussion and as time allows we’ll head outdoors to see what is in nature’s pantry or possibly do a quick seed cleaning demo.

Instructor(s): *Kate currently is the Watershed Administrator for the Friends of the Middle River, and a former employee of 5 years for the Wildlife Center of Virginia—a hospital for native Virginia wildlife. She is a bit of a forager freak and she created a website database of the wild plant foods that wild mammals, birds and reptiles eat: wildfoods4wildlife.com.*

Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 3:15 PM - 4:45 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: Learn what’s special about the proposed 90,000-acre Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area and the diverse flora and fauna found there. This large tract of mostly unfragmented forest supports 250 species of birds, healthy population of native brook trout, black bear, and two species of salamanders found nowhere else. The Shenandoah Mountain proposal, located in the George Washington National Forest, encompasses five roadless areas, one of which is the largest east of the Mississippi River. The proposal includes headwaters of both the Potomac and James Rivers and provides drinking water for Harrisonburg, Staunton, and many towns and communities downstream. It has long been a recreational destination with 150 miles of trails, popular trout streams, lakes, campgrounds, picnic areas, and some of the most outstanding scenery in Virginia. The proposal, which was developed through collaboration with diverse forest interest groups, including wilderness advocates, mountain bikers, hunters, fishermen, game managers, and timber producers, has been endorsed by over 400 businesses and organizations. Friends of Shenandoah Mountain has been educating the public and building support for the proposal for 15 years and is now reaching out to local governments to gain their support, bringing the proposal a step closer to federal legislation.

Instructor(s): *Lynn Cameron, Co-Chair of Friends of Shenandoah Mountain, lives in Rockingham County with her husband Malcolm who is a Headwaters Master Naturalist. Lynn is a past president and current board member of the Virginia Wilderness Committee and currently serves as Conservation Chair for Potomac Appalachian Trail Club – Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter. Lynn and Malcolm lead hikes, trail maintenance worktrips, and nature walks on Shenandoah Mountain.*

Pocket Tricks for Naturalists

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 3:15 PM - 4:45 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: I remember being led on a twilight hike with a naturalist at Yellowstone Park when I was a teenager. At one point, she gathered her flock in a circle, and told us we needed to tune our night time eyes with a special device. She then passed out little squares of colored construction paper, and asked us to tell her what color we each had. We tried so hard to please her, but we really could only see shades of gray. With good humor, she praised us for being so honest, and made her point about night vision in animals. As we began to hike again, she stopped short and asked us to employ our tuned vision to make sense of a shape on the trail ahead. It was a rattlesnake, and we could home in on the patterns and shadows. She said we all passed our naturalist test, and should all lead hikes in Yellowstone one day. Now that's a good pocket trick. A "pocket trick" is a planned short activity used by a hike leader to engage the hikers, often with a sensory component, and often employing a metaphor that will enhance the theme of a hike. It should be pleasant, memorable, and personally engaging for each hiker. Even though we are concentrating on children's hikes, most of these are appropriate for guided hikes for all ages.

Logistical notes: Bring your smile, and, if you want, your own favorite pocket tricks to share during the last half hour.

Instructor(s): *Sandy really is just a Massanetta Camp Counselor who never outgrew the magic of a hike with kids, and who acknowledges that she will continue to be happily surprised at Nature's deep pockets. With a checkered past that includes degrees in Biology and Education, teaching, working for big pharma, and The Wildlife Center of Virginia, raising a family on a farm in Augusta County, a fresh-cut herb business, and working in her husband's children's dentistry practice, she spent 13 years as the Education Specialist at the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District. Sandy has taught summer courses at Blue Ridge Community College and teacher workshops at James Madison University, including the Carrier Arboretum, and still helps to coordinate outdoors experiences for students, teachers and the general public as a volunteer Master Naturalist. She was honored to be named National Outstanding Environmental Educator of the year in 2006 by Project Learning Tree, receive the National Education Award in 2007 from the Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as receive a National Wildlife Federation National Conservation Achievement Award in 2013. Along the way, she has picked up a few fool-proof pocket tricks to stimulate, inspire, or just charm your hikers.*

Saturday Afternoon Off-site Field Sessions (1:30 PM – Various end times)

Please note the following details regarding these off-site sessions:

- These sessions have varying starting and ending times. Pay careful attention to the times for your session.
- Start and end times for off-site sessions include the travel time from and back to Massanetta Springs.
- Some of these sessions begin with a classroom portion at Massanetta Springs, and then have a field portion. These aspects are indicated in the descriptions.

- Some sessions will have vans or buses providing the transportation, but we are not able to provide vans for all field sessions. Please assume that you will need to carpool in participants' vehicles unless otherwise indicated. We will ask for carpool driver sign-ups before the conference.
- Travel times and distances listed in parentheses are one-way, unless otherwise indicated.

Wildlife Center of Virginia

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Location: Wildlife Center of Virginia (36 miles/40 minutes)

Description: Learn about the inner workings of one of the nation's premier wildlife hospitals with a presentation by an educator, a video introduction to our hospital, and a close-up experience with a resident education animal. Finish with a tour of our medical clinic, exam room, and operating suite, as well as our outdoor raptor enclosures where you'll see and learn about non-releasable owls, hawks, and eagles.

Logistical notes: Weather-appropriate clothing and shoes should be worn, as a portion of the tour (30-45 minutes) will be spent outdoors on non-paved, uneven terrain. There is one restroom available for use, but no water fountains. Long-sleeves or bug spray may be preferable, as biting insects can sometimes be an issue.

Instructor(s): *As a member of the outreach department Alex Wehrung works to create meaningful and lasting relationships with the public in a variety of ways, such as presenting educational programs, creating website and social media content, training volunteer docents, and providing care for the Center's non-releasable education ambassadors. He joined the Wildlife Center staff in 2016, graduating from Slippery Rock University with a M.Ed. in environmental education later that year.*

Shenandoah National Park Habitats (REPEAT)

Date/Time: Saturday, September 21 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Location: Shenandoah National Park (South River Picnic Grounds) (24 miles/35 minutes)

Description: Views of the Shenandoah River Valley and Alleghany Mountains, with one-hour easy circle walk along the Appalachian Trail, viewing wild flowers and insects in different habitats below South River Picnic Grounds of Shenandoah National Park.

Logistical notes: Pit toilets are available at the picnic grounds. Bring day back pack with water.

Instructor(s): *Andy and Frances Sale are ten-year Master Naturalists with love of Appalachian wildflowers, with over five years of seasonal observations on this particular circular trail.*

Walk and Talk through a Working Woods and Through Time

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Location: McCormick Farm/Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research and Extension Center (43 miles/50 minutes)

Logistical notes: Note the later return time. Wear sturdy, close-toe shoes as we may venture off trail.

Description: McCormick Farm is the homeplace of the McCormick Family who invented and perfect the world's first mechanical reaper to transform American Agriculture. A behind-the-scenes look at this historic property will unveil the historic role of farm woodlots and how today's science driven management continues to meet society's needs. From wolf-trees and deer exclosures to crop-trees and oak regeneration, this Virginia Tech Research Station has much to share. This is also a great potential site for more VMN volunteer activities, and you'll learn about stewardship and education project opportunities there!

Instructor(s): *Since 2001 Adam has served Extension's Northern District, a 28-county area, as the Forestry & Natural Resources Agent. In addition to working with a number of different VMN chapters, he provides educational opportunities to landowners, loggers and youth.*

Saturday Evening Reception and Dinner

Saturday Pre-Dinner Reception

Date/time: Saturday, September 21, 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Saturday Dinner

Date/time: Saturday, September 21, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Saturday Evening Sessions

Historical Karst of the Shenandoah (optional, additional fee required)

Date/time: Saturday, September 21 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Location: Grand Caverns (12 miles/20 minutes)

Logistical notes: No eating or drinking in cave, photography is fine. Attendance is limited.

Price: To be determined, but approximately \$15

Description: This is an extended evening tour of Grand Caverns. It will encompass the public tour, some additional side-rooms and will include historical and geological footnotes. This is a roughly 1mile transit including some 125 feet of elevation changes. As a National Natural Landmark, it is not stroller, nor wheelchair accessible. There is periodic low (under 5 foot 5 inch) head clearance and sometime damp and uneven pathways. This said, the bulk of the walking is on improved gravel paths and the cave sees visitors of all ages, shapes and sizes on a regular basis.

Instructor(s): *Brian Lux is the founding director of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. He has served as a professional cave guide, training director for the Headwaters Chapter and is a*

licensed educator who currently works with exceptional young men as the owner of Camp Sequoia.

Organized Evening Activity (optional, no fee required)

Date/time: Saturday, September 20, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Description: We will be organizing an optional evening activity for those participants who want to continue the fun! Details to come.

Sunday, September 22, 2019

Breakfast (optional)

Breakfast

Date/Time: Sunday, September 22, 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Price: \$10. Pre-registration required; you cannot purchase breakfast on-site.

Sunday On-site Long Sessions (9:00 AM – 12:00 PM)

Nature Journaling Techniques, Tips, & Tricks

Date/time: Sunday, September 22 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs (inside and out)

Description: Today's nature journaling has its roots in the descriptive writing and data collection of the early explorers and naturalists. For example, lacking the detailed notes and sketches made during the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804-6, their maps, data, and plant and animal specimens which they documented would have been mere curios. In the early 19th century, Henry David Thoreau, combined scientific and natural history observations with his more personal musings on the relationship between man and nature, thus giving us the underpinnings of the modern nature journal.

Even though you may think you can't draw or write, you can record! You will learn how to document your observations and experiences in the natural world by using easy and enjoyable nature journaling and recording techniques. Some tips, tricks, and techniques will be demonstrated and applied to your journal during this workshop. A nature journal can be satisfying, powerful, rewarding, plus it will create and a record for the future. What to bring? A journal of your choice (or simply some paper!) and something to sit on outside.

Logistical notes: Participants should bring a journal or blank book of their own in which to record, suitable outdoor clothing/shoes, and a portable chair/mat on which to sit if we go outside.

Instructor(s): *Betty Gatewood retired from teaching middle school science in Augusta County in 2006, when she became the Teacher-in-Residence at Mary Baldwin College in the Environment-based Learning program. After 6 years there, she served as an Education/Interpretive Ranger for the National Park Service in Shenandoah National Park for three years. Now she is "fully retired", and nature journaling, illustrating children's' books and botanical illustration, provide creative art pleasures for her. Her passion is to provide*

opportunities for encouraging anyone to get outside to experience, observe, analyze and document the natural world through art and journaling.

Sunday On-site Short Session 1 (9:00 AM – 10:30 AM)

Designing Projects to Support Bat Conservation

Date/time: Sunday, September 22 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: This session has 2 purposes. First, we'll be providing information about bat populations in Virginia and the many challenges which face these animals. Second, we'll be discussing ideas and specific examples for Master Naturalist chapter projects which can support education about and conservation of bats in our communities.

Instructor(s): *Peggy S. Plass is a Virginia Master Naturalist and the Project Committee Chair of the Headwaters Master Naturalist chapter. She has volunteered, developed, and coordinated projects related to bat education and conservation for Headwaters for 2 years. Leslie has been a wildlife enthusiast all her life. One of her earliest memories is feeding grass stems to a nestful of almost-weaned meadow mice she discovered in her backyard. She housed and bred snakes, turtles, lizards, frogs, and insects before finally becoming a zookeeper with the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park. She left the zoo to join Montgomery County Parks as a park naturalist. In 2001, Leslie founded Bat World NOVA, a satellite rescue center of Bat World Sanctuary, so that she could pursue a lifelong love of bats. Since then she has cared for over 800 bats at her facility and has maintained a colony of bats that visit schools and other venues to educate the public about bats and wildlife conservation.*

Sunday On-site Short Session 2 (10:45 AM – 12:15 PM)

Designing Projects to Support Bat Conservation

Date/time: Sunday, September 22 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: This session has 2 purposes. First, we'll be providing information about bat populations in Virginia and the many challenges which face these animals. Second, we'll be discussing ideas and specific examples for Master Naturalist chapter projects which can support education about and conservation of bats in our communities.

Instructor(s): *Peggy S. Plass is a Virginia Master Naturalist and the Project Committee Chair of the Headwaters Master Naturalist chapter. She has volunteered, developed, and coordinated projects related to bat education and conservation for Headwaters for 2 years.*

Leslie Sturgis has been a wildlife enthusiast all her life. One of her earliest memories is feeding grass stems to a nestful of almost-weaned meadow mice she discovered in her backyard. She housed and bred snakes, turtles, lizards, frogs, and insects before finally becoming a zookeeper with the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park. She left the zoo to join Montgomery County Parks as a park naturalist. In 2001, Leslie founded Bat World NOVA, a satellite rescue center of Bat World Sanctuary, so that she could pursue a lifelong love of bats. Since then she has cared for over 800 bats at her facility and has maintained a colony of

bats that visit schools and other venues to educate the public about bats and wildlife conservation.

Woody Plant Identification

Date/time: Sunday, September 22 10:45 am - 12:15 pm

Location: Massanetta Springs (all outdoors)

Description: When it comes to woody plant identification, practice doesn't make perfect, but it does make better! Sharpen your skills at identifying native trees, shrubs, and woody vines of the local area. Learn diagnostic features for quick ID, and practice using dichotomous keys and hand lenses. This session will be taught outdoors.

Logistical notes: Wear shoes and clothes for being outdoors.

Instructor(s): *Ellen Powell is the Conservation Education Coordinator for Virginia Department of Forestry. She wrote Common Native Trees of Virginia and Common Native Shrubs and Woody Vines of Virginia.*

Sunday Off-site Field Sessions

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Birding Basics

Date/time: Sunday, September 22 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Location: Edith J. Carrier Arboretum (5 miles/15 minutes)

Description: Are you just starting to get into birds and you wish you knew how to identify them? Or, perhaps you want to volunteer for a project that requires bird identification skills, but you don't yet know how to do that? If so, this is the class for you! This workshop will introduce you to birding and will cover all of the basics of how to identify birds, tips for finding birds, the materials and equipment you need to get started, and citizen-science/volunteer project applications. The workshop will begin with classroom instruction at the conference center (1.25 hours), then we will drive (12 minutes) to Edith J. Carrier Arboretum for an outdoor field session to practice your new birding skills. We will be walking on trails (1.5 – 1.75 hours), so come dressed for the outdoors and in comfortable

walking shoes. A limited supply of binoculars will be available for loan during the class, but if you have your own, please bring them. This class is recommended for new birders.

Logistical notes: Note the 8:00 am start time. Meet at the conference center in the assigned classroom

Instructor(s): *Jessica Ruthenberg has been the Watchable Wildlife Biologist for Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries for over 5 years. She has a Master of Science in Natural Resources and Environment from University of Michigan where she specialized in Conservation Biology and Environmental Behavior, Education, and Communication.*

Reddish Knob Sunday Outing

Date/time: Sunday, September 22 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: Reddish Knob on Shenandoah Mountain, with multiple stops on route (30 miles/60 minutes)

Description: Participants will travel into the heart of the proposed 90,000-acre Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area in the George Washington National Forest and ascend to Reddish Knob (4,397 ft. el.), which offers some of the best panoramic views in our region. Regional Ecology, Botany, Geology, and History will be the main focus. When Shenandoah Mountain was acquired by the Forest Service 100 years ago, it had been clearcut, burned, and mined, and was badly eroded. The area has recovered to the point where it is now considered to be a “Biodiversity Hotspot”. There will be several stops along the way so that participants can appreciate how the vegetation changes as the elevation increases. We will have opportunities to take short walks.

Logistical notes: Prepare for windy conditions and lower temperatures and possibly rain as we make our way to the top of the mountain. Minimal hiking but good walking shoes are recommended. Bring your own water and snacks, and don’t forget your boxed lunch. Bad weather will alter this outing. Depending on conditions, it could be a just walk in Hone Quarry.

Instructor(s): *Chris Bowlen is a Virginia Master Naturalist, currently president of the Headwaters Chapter and long time member of the Va Native Plant Society.*

Lynn Cameron is Co-Chair of Friends of Shenandoah Mountain and Conservation Chair of PATC – Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter. In addition to leading hikes and worktrips on Shenandoah Mountain, she organizes field trips and outings, often in collaboration with Headwaters Master Naturalists.

Malcolm Cameron is a geologist by training and has been a Headwaters Master Naturalist for 5 years. He is president of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club – Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter and spends a great deal of time hiking, doing trail work, and leading hikes and field trips on Shenandoah Mountain. He and his wife Lynn live in Rockingham County.

North River Gorge Hike

Date/time: Sunday, September 22 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: North River Gorge in the George Washington National Forest (24 miles/40 minutes)

Description: This one of the most beautiful and pristine areas in the George Washington National Forest. The rich river valley soils, often at the base of cliffs, support an abundance of tall trees, large ferns, and wildflowers in all 3 seasons. We will also look at some unique vernal pools and be on the lookout for migrating Warblers. It is an easy hike of about 3 miles round trip. We will descend gently into the gorge and cross the usually crystal clear North River on a hiker's suspension bridge. We will discuss the interesting history of the area. Expect about 2 to 2 1/2 hours of walking slowly and observing....it is a 40 minute drive from the conference center.

Logistical notes: Wear appropriate outdoor clothing for a 3 mile hike on forest trails. Bring water, sunscreen, insect protection.

Instructor(s): *Originally growing up surrounded by the woods of Wisconsin, John Holden has led 100s of hikes for the general public. He has been a Master Naturalist for 9+ years. He combines his love of hiking and canoeing in wild places with a deep love of nature.*

Exploring Shenandoah Valley Sinkhole Ponds

Date/time: Sunday, September 22 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve (12 miles/25 minutes)

Description: Explore the fascinating ecosystem known as a Shenandoah Valley Sinkhole Pond -- a globally rare, forested wetland community, sometimes called "vernal ponds". Participants will hike an easy mile round trip on a forest road and then explore the environs of 2 sinkhole ponds on private forest land. Topics of discussion and field investigations related to these habitats will include amphibian and forest ecology, pond flora, hydrology and soils, and conservation dynamics of these special places. Led by Mr. Michael Hayslett, Principal of Virginia Vernal Pools.

Logistical notes: Travel from the conference location to field site (~30 mins), then hike 1/2 mile on forest road to explore nearby forest ponds. Wear long pants and tick repellent, and bring ample drinking water.

Instructor(s): *Michael S. Hayslett, M.S. is a former biology/environmental science college instructor in Virginia and a pioneer of the Master Naturalist Program. His expertise as a field researcher and conservation educator is in vernal pool wetlands, and he has been called, "Virginia's leading vernal pool expert". A general naturalist since childhood, Mike has a special passion for amphibians. He resides (again) in his native Allegheny Highlands of the state and still consults widely as the Principal of Virginia Vernal Pools, LLC.*

Sunday Lunch

Sunday Boxed Lunch

Date/Time: Sunday, September 22, pickup from 7:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: Massanetta Springs

Description: Sunday lunch will be boxed lunches. Participants may pick up their lunch beginning at 7:30 am. Lunches will be kept at the appropriate temperature until 1:30 pm. If you are attending a Sunday morning Field Trip, you will need to pick up your lunch before you depart and take it with you. For anyone staying on site at Massanetta Springs on Sunday morning, you may pick up your lunch any time after 8:00 am. You can grab it and leave early, grab it and hit the road after your last session, or wait and eat it at the Expo Center before departing the conference.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Tiffany Brown at 540-231-0790* during business hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations at least 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120.

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