

Virginia Master Naturalist



*Headwaters Chapter Newsletter
serving Augusta & Rockingham Counties
Spring 2013*

“ The life of the mind is not the rotation of a machine through a cycle of fixed phases, but the flow of a torrent through its mountain-bed, scattering itself in spray as it plunges over a precipice and pausing in the deep transparency of a rock pool..” - R. G. Collingwood

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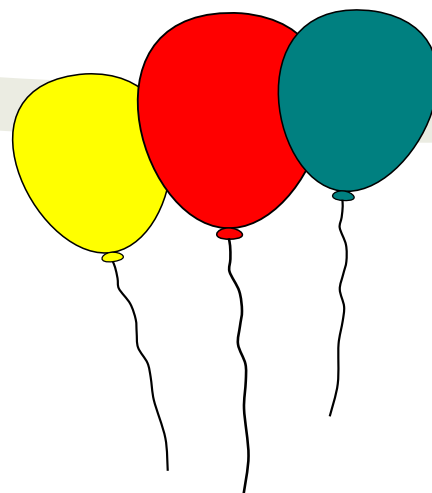
To contribute articles, photos or suggestions, or useful links, please send via email to
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Virginia Master Naturalist



Upcoming Events



Graduation Day Party plans are underway!

This exciting event will take place June 12. The Board will sent out invitations very soon. Hope to see you there. If you have special requests or suggestions for this special day, please contact Penny Warren, Programs Chairperson,

Advanced Training Opportunities

By special request, a "3 in 1 Day" advanced training may be offered again in 2013. If you are interested, please contact any Board Member to make your interest known. In 2012, Sandy Greene and RoxAnna Theiss created a "3 in 1 Day" that included a nature walk/scavenger hunt by the river with identification of native edible plants, an introduction to a Field Guide for Master Naturalists, and a computer workshop for navigating the VMN Volunteer System on line. Part of the fun included a Jeopardy game in Sandy's barn with MN Field Guide topics. Participants enjoyed a delicious meal of quiche, salads, and berries that were foraged or locally grown. Savory venison kabobs cooked on the grill were delicious. For current information about advanced training opportunities, go to the Headwaters Chapter calendar or contact RoxAnna Theiss, Training Chairperson.

2013 Virginia Master Naturalist Conference to be held October 18 -20 in Richmond.

All Virginia Master Naturalists are invited to attend. The precise location, workshops, field trips, and registration details are to be announced. This event is an annual opportunity for VMN volunteers to share ideas and learn from each other, to participate in high-quality advanced training sessions, and to learn about a region of Virginia that may be different from their home communities. It's a time and place to recognize and reward volunteers and chapters for all their efforts. I have attended the 2011 and 2012 conferences and found the networking, field trips, workshops and the entertainment to be very memorable experiences.

- submitted by Sophia Cliffe

A sampling of recent service projects

To learn more about Headwaters Chapter Projects, please contact **Sandy Greene, Membership and Projects Chairperson**

Smooth Sumac berries in autumn in Augusta County

- **Meaningful Watershed Environmental Education at Frontier Culture Museum**
- **Native nut collection for injured wildlife**
- **Stream monitoring**
- **Great Backyard Bird Count**
- **Tree sale and tree planting**
- **Removal of invasive plants at JMU Arboretum**
- **Removal of litter from streams and public lands**
- **Project BudBurst plant phenology citizen science**
- **Direct animal care at the Wildlife Center of Virginia**

A sampling of recent advance training opportunities

To Learn more about Advanced Training, you may contact **RoxAnna Theiss, Chairperson of Training**

- **Dendrochronology**
- **Orphan wildlife rehabilitation at Wildlife Center of Virginia**
- **Future Fisherman "Train the Trainer"**
- **Woodland Management for Landowners**
- **Saw-whet owl banding**
- **Project Underground Facilitator Training at Douthat State Park**
- **Vernal pools symposium**
- **"The Global Energy Transition" lecture at Washington and Lee**
- **Benthic Stream Monitoring**
- **Bioretention Projects**



"3 in 1 Day" Advanced Training held June 2012

RoxAnna Theiss and Sandy Greene held the first Headwaters "3 in 1 Day" advanced training at Sandy's place. The day began with an introduction to the MN Field Guide created by Sandy and held in the barn. It is a "who's who" in the world of government and non-profit agencies tailored to the needs of the area serviced by the Headwaters Chapter. After a lively game of jeopardy to see what we knew or missed, some of the class participants headed over to the log cabin for a computer session taught by RoxAnna Theiss. The objective was to have everyone present be able to access and navigate the MN volunteer system web page (<http://www.virginiamn.volunteersystem.org>), and also be able to log in volunteer and advanced training hours. Other participants joined a scavenger hunt adjacent to a wooded area by the river bank with Eric Jones and Sandy identifying wildflowers and seeking edible plants. The delightful day was topped over with a meal of locally grown or foraged greens, a quiche with lambs quarters, venison ka-bob provided by RoxAnna and expertly grilled by Frank Deckert. The class savoured the fresh picked berries, as well as, homemade cakes topped with whipped cream. Sandy treated us to her homemade honey mead, and elderberry tea. Anyone for a "3 in 1 Day' in 2013? Count me in!

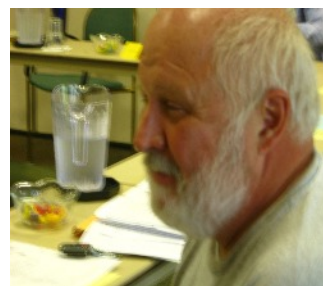


.....Article and 5 of 6 photos by Sophia Cliffe .

Day One of the Headwaters MN Class of 2013 Fall Semester



The Class of 2013 Fall semester began on August 31, 2012 with 15 resourceful students eager to begin their studies and participate in lab work and field trips. Fall classes included instruction in ecological concepts, geology, meteorology ecology, forest management, interpretive skills, dichotomous keying, and an overview of citizen science opportunities. The classes provide an overview. Students spend many hours reading, and preparing for presentations, and participating in field trips.



Spring Semester Class Snapshots - Day One

- by Sophia Cliffe



The Spring Semester began April 3, 2013. Paul Bugas, DGIF, and Dawn Kirk, USFS, gave presentations about Ichthyology and Aquatic Entomology followed by lab work.



Big Meadows Mammology Field Trip Notes

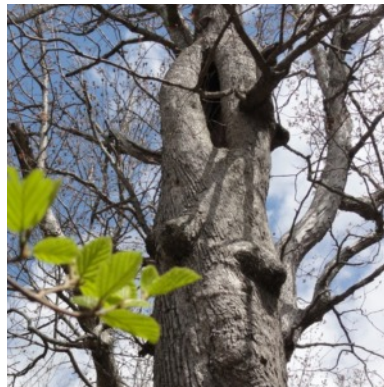
May 13, 2013 - by Tom Long



Many wildflowers can be found at Big Meadows; some provide wildlife food. It is believed Native Americans and early settlers kept the meadows cleared to attract game and perhaps for grazing livestock. For historical reasons, SNP keeps the meadow in open using a 3 year cycle of burn, brushhog, and fallow. Otherwise, it would soon be a thicket of locust trees.



Park Ranger, Rolf Gubler described the exclusion fencing used to protect rare plants like Canadian Burnet from the huge deer herd - 100-150/sq. mile in the Big Meadows area. **Blue flags warn deer of the fencing.**



This "high rise" bear den near Big Meadows housed a sow and a couple cubs a few seasons ago. The nearby trail was briefly closed.



This deer exclusion area protects grey birch at one of its southernmost locations in the United States. Also protected are marsh marigold.



Training Committee

RoxAnna Theiss, Chairperson

Sophia Cliffe, HMN

Barb Frew, HMN

Jerry Hopkins, HMN

Dr. Eric Jones, PhD, MBC

Jim Lawson, Rivanna MN

Don Plants, HMN



**Kudos, and Many Thanks
to the Headwaters Chapter Training Committee,
Instructors, Field Trip Guides, and Hosts
Who Made the 2013 Headwaters MN Basic Training Class Possible**

Instructors and Field Trip Guides for the Headwaters Class of 2013

Bill Benish, RBC
Callan Bentley, NOVA
Dara Booher, VCE
Chris Bowlen, VNPS
Paul Bugas, Jr., DGIF
Christa Cabe
Seth Coffman, TU
Tom Dierauf, VDOF (ret)
Adam Downing, VCE
Billy Flint, JMU
Barb Frew, HMN
Sandy Greene, HMN
Rolf Gubler, SNP
Kate Guenther, HMN
Sara Hollberg, VCC
Diane Holsinger, ABC
Jerry Hopkins, HMN
Charlie Huppuch
Eric Jones, MBC
Dawn Kirk, USFS

Lorrie Knies, SNP
Edie Kretsch, Natl Chim
Lib Kyger, VNPS
Allen Larner, ABC
Jan Mahon
Dwayne Martin, HMN
Josh McLaughlin
Clair Mellinger, EMU
Whit Morris, FOMR
Jo-El Nelson
Patti Nylander, VDOF
Mike Pelton, UT
Don Plants, HMN
Michelle Prysby, UVA
Eric Pyle, JMU
Nancy Sorrels
Jerry Stenger, UVA
RoxAnna Theiss, HMN
Penny Warren, HMN & ABC
Charles Ziegenfus, JMU

Headwaters Geology Field Trip with Professor Callan Bentley

March 30, 2013

Fort Valley, Shenandoah County, VA

By Tom Long

The early spring morning was crisp and clear as a group of Headwaters Master Naturalists gathered at the Fort Valley Community Center and Library. Northern Virginia Community College Assistant Professor of Geology and Fort Valley resident Callan Bentley joined Roxanna Theiss, Dwayne and Pat Martin, Art Vasy, and Tom Long. Our goal for the day's adventure was to learn more about the geology of the Blue Ridge and Massanutten mountains as well as the Shenandoah Valley and Fort Valley.

Our first stop, the Woodstock Tower, is one of the relatively few old towers in the George Washington

lies the Shenandoah Valley, the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, and the Allegheny

Valley through Woodstock Gap to the Shenandoah National Park. In the chilly breeze atop the tower that offers rare 360° views, Callan gave an interesting overview of the geologic forces that created the mountains, valleys, and the famous seven bends of the river.



National Forest that the public can still climb. To the west

Mountains beyond. To the east your gaze is across Fort



The Hike up Veach Gap is a gradual ascent with some stream crossings. Callan lead us just off the trail climbing over rock debris to a couple stunning examples of an anticline – a fold in the rocks that is convex up with the oldest beds at its core. Sitting on the rocky hillside, we learned more about how anticlines form and other geological features of the gap. Callan set up his Giga Pan controlled camera to take panoramic pictures of the formations which will eventually become part of a worldwide data base.

2012 Headwaters Annual Meeting Highlights

Programs Chairperson, Penny Warren did a fantastic job organizing HW's 1st Annual Meeting. It was held on a blustery autumn day, November 3, at Natural Chimneys Park. The Members of the Board of Directors were introduced. Sandy Greene, Chairperson of Membership and Projects, presented Certified Master Natural Certificates to those who had earned them in 2012. The meeting began at 1pm with a hike of the North River Gorge led by Charlie Hupcock and Lynn Cameron. Sophia Cliffe and Kate Guenther stayed behind to set up the hospitality area, and stir the savory stews simmering in the crockpots. Nancy Owen gathered kindling for Kate to start the fire in the hearth. We owe much to Nancy for kindling the Headwaters Chapter. She is the person who spearheaded the Headwaters Chapter Steering Committee. While 20 participants enjoyed their hearty meal by the hearth, Kate G and Dwayne Martin entertained us with drumming while Sandy G played her dulcimer. What a memorable day!

.....Article and photos by Sophia Cliffe

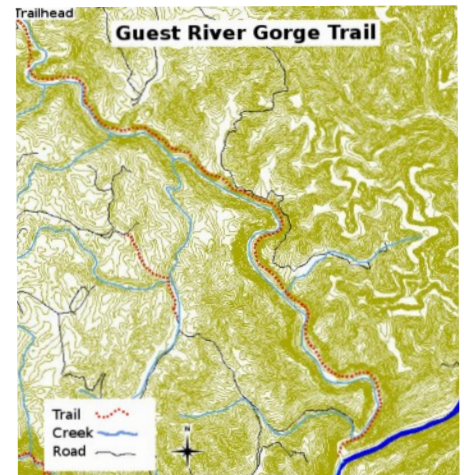
See North Gorge hike details and notes by Kate Guenther on Page 11



Headwaters Annual Meeting Hike notes

- Notes are from the 2012 Annual Meeting Minutes by HW Secretary, Kate Guenther
Autumn leaves by the river photo is courtesy of Jim Waite.

Members met at North River parking lot for a facilitated hike. Charlie Huppuch, retired US Forest Service supervisor, and Lynn Cameron, representing Friends of Shenandoah Mountain led the hike to the North River Gorge near Mt. Solon. They discussed various management options and proposals for the George Washington/ Jefferson National Forests, and found much common ground. Charlie gave a great history of the national forests and their management. He showed the hikers many areas where the trees are approaching the end of their life span. He is an advocate of cutting for wildlife habitat and forest renewal. Lynn showed the group a map of biodiversity in the US, and we are certainly in the top few areas for diversity. She discussed coalition building and the need to block hydrofracking or other mineral extraction in the many areas of national forest where mineral rights are still privately held. Charlie has also had some experience with this. Along the way, Headwaters hikers met bikers, a hunter, girl scouts, and other hikers on the trail. It was a busy day in the gorge!



The National Wildlife Foundation Honors Sandy Greene with a Special Achievement Award

For decades, Sandy Greene has taught adults and children the importance of environmental stewardship with imagination and joy. For the twelve years she has served as Education Specialist at the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District in Verona, VA , Sandy has partnered with local, state and federal agencies, and the school systems themselves, to provide over 200 field trips for 22,000 students, in addition to over 300 classroom presentations, 50 teacher workshops and tours and 78 civic programs. For many years she worked at The Wildlife Center of Virginia, coordinating field trips. Recognizing the watershed connections between their farm and the Shenandoah River, Sandy and her husband walk the talk, with riparian buffers, wildlife plantings and solar power. Sandy has served on a variety of Boards, including the Shenandoah Valley Pure Water Forum and the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Education Committee, taught summer courses and teacher workshops, and often coordinated outdoors experiences for students, teachers and the general public. Sandy was appointed by two governors to The Foundation for Virginia's Natural Resources, and is a certified Virginia Master Naturalist. She was named National Outstanding Environmental Educator of the year in 2006 by Project Learning Tree, and received the National Education Award in 2007 from the Daughters of the American Revolution. Now retired, Sandy is busier than ever, volunteering with partners and agencies on behalf of the natural and wild areas around us.



[Editor's Note: Sandy Greene is currently the Membership and Projects Chairperson for the Headwaters Chapter]

Capture and Release - by Kate Guenther

Driving home on a May evening from work in 2012, I saw a roadkill opossum. As usual, I stopped to check if it was a mom with babies. Luckily, there was an exit lane between me and the interstate traffic as I walked, but I still pressed myself up against the guardrail, eyes on my subject, and walked quickly toward the opossum. About thirty feet from my goal, I heard a low growl at my feet. I froze and looked down. There, in the shadows of the guardrail, a baby woodchuck eyed my shoe with suspicion and growled menacingly. I retreated a few steps and then saw there were actually three young woodchuck noses poking out from the grassy edge. I took a wide circle around them and vigorously warned them of the dangers of hanging out by the highway.

A few steps further and I now could see the four baby opossums standing on their (dead) mom. I whisked up mom and babies, looked around the area for other babies who had wandered off, and proceeded to deliver the whole pile of opossums back to the center. The baby opossums were guests of the Wildlife Center for about a month until they were ready to go out and take on the big world.



On Release Day, I found a safe place in the general area where they had been initially rescued, but away from the highway. It was wide-open countryside with farm fields, hedgerows, streams, and woods-- good edge habitat for four-up-and-coming opossums. I hiked them down the dirt road, set down the carrier and opened the door. Three waddled out, each doing their own thing and going their own ways, in no big hurry. I bent over to see what #4 was up to and it was plastered up against the back of the carrier as if terrified. It hissed at me--expressing that had no intent to come out. I gently pulled the towel out the door, carrying the last opossum slowly forward toward the door. As it came out the door, I could see it and it lay rigidly on its side, mouth open, eyes glazed over--dead!

"Oh come on now, this is no time to play dead! You gotta get out there with your brothers and sisters!" (who, by the way, were all nearby munching grass and leaves, watching the show). I decided to go read a book in my car for 10 minutes to give the procrastinator time to overcome its fear. When I returned, it had awakened and had ventured a few steps off the towel. I lifted my carrier away, and the last opossum turned and gave me one last parting hiss, then waddled off down the dirt lane to its future.

Editor's Note: Kate is the HW Secretary, webmaster, and Acting Outreach Chairperson. She has also taught sessions of the MN Basic Training course, and is actively involved in volunteer stream monitoring. She is the Front Desk Coordinator at the Virginia Wildlife Center and involved in too many projects to list in this small space.

WINTER SILHOUETTES – by Tom Long

Buffalo Gap, Augusta County, VA - March 18, 2013

Several inches of snow fell overnight making roads slick and closing area schools. The forecast called for additional snow turning to cold rain later in the afternoon. Most of us signed up for the Winter Silhouettes field trip probably thought it would be postponed for a second time, but Roxanna was working the phones early in the morning to determine who and how many would show up in spite of the weather.

At 11:00 AM a hearty band gathered at the U.S. Forest Service Work Center at Buffalo Gap – Roxanna, Gretchen, Dwayne, Pat, Judi, Kathy, Carl, and Tom – to meet up with state forester Patti Nylander for a primer on tree identification during the leafless winter months. Patti pointed out various



characteristics such as size/shape of the tree, bark form and coloration, branch alignment, and even smell to help identify trees commonly found in Shenandoah Valley woodlands. Some like the shagbark hickory (pictured), white oak, and evergreens such as hemlock are easy to identify. It can be more difficult to distinguish between others, for example the scarlet and black oaks.

Most of us will probably identify trees during warmer months when leaves, flowers, nuts and other distinguishing characteristics make using the field guide much easier. Patti's tips on identifying trees during the winter months strengthened this group of Master Naturalists's year-around tree identification skills.

Training Tidbits from RoxAnna Theiss

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Quite often the terms and conditions of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program become confusing to new members and trainees, and need clarification. The following format has been adapted from the Volunteer Policy Handbook and updated to target the Headwaters Chapter experience.

In a nutshell:

You are a "Virginia Master Naturalist in Training" from the time you enter training class until those scheduled classes for that training session are finished and you have successfully completed your training. During this time you may be accumulating both Volunteer hours and Advanced Training hours which you are recording on the VMN-VMS website. This may allow some to jump straight from "VMN in Training" to "Certified Virginia Master Naturalist". If you need more time to accumulate your volunteer and CE hours (the Continuing Education hours are the same thing as ADV EDU - Advanced Education/Training hours) you have twelve months from the month of your commencement (last class) to accumulate and record those required hours.

During this time you are a "Virginia Master Naturalist Member of the Headwaters Chapter". You will always be a VMN member of the Headwaters Chapter. You may be inactive for a while (meaning, not so much that you are not volunteering, but that you are not recording your hours on the VMN-VMS website) but you are always one of us and very valuable to the Chapter and the Program. Once the recorded hours for volunteer service and CE or ADV EDU training meet the annual requirements you become:

A "Certified Virginia Master Naturalist". That certification is maintained on an annual calendar year basis by accumulating and recording your volunteer and advanced training hours.

(continued on next page)

Training Tidbits from RoxAnna Theiss - Certification Requirements (cont'd)

What follows is a simplified question and answer way to look at the certification requirements and how they fit into your life as a Virginia Master Naturalist:

Question: I've just successfully completed my basic training (this is the first step toward certification and must be completed to continue toward a certified status). How long do I have to finish my requirements for my *initial* certification?

If your training class ended on this date:	You have (or had) until this date to complete any make-up classes, complete and record 8 hours of advanced training, and 40 hours of volunteer service for certification:
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October 2011	October 2012 (see question 3 below for expanded explanation)
June 2013	June 2014
June 2014	June 2015

Question: I've just completed and *recorded* all of my *initial* requirements within the allowed time frame (see above) or sooner to become a Certified Virginia Master Naturalist. How long does my *initial* certification last?

In general, the expiration date of the *initial* certification and each subsequent certification depends upon the time frame in which the requirements for annual certification were met, not upon the year of the basic training course. Your basic training year does allow you some extra months to accumulate and record your certification requirements for your initial certification year, however.

If you complete and record all the requirements for certification between these dates:	Your certification is valid through this date:
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October 2011 through December 2012 (for class of 2011 only)	31 December 2013
August 2012 through June 2013 (for the class of 2012-13)	31 December 2014
January 2013 through December 2013	31 December 2014
August 2013 through June 2014 (for the class of 2013-14)	31 December 2015
January 2014 through December 2014	31 December 2015
January 2015 through December 2015	31 December 2016

Headwaters Chapter Board Members November 2011 - November 2013

Position	Name	Preferred Phone	Email address
Chapter Advisor	Paul Bugas	W (540) 448-2199	Paul.Bugas@dgif.virginia.gov
President and Historian	Sophia Cliffe	H (540) 416-0974	sophiarose209@gmail.com
Vice President	Don Plants	H (540) 740-4469	treeherders39@yahoo.com
Secretary and Acting Outreach	Kate Guenther	H (540) 350-2824	goatherderkate@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Barb Frew	H (540) 740-4469	Foresthome@ymail.com
Membership Chair and Projects Chair	Sandy Greene	H (540) 234-9336	greenes104@aol.com
Programs Chair	Penny Warren	C (540) 849-9245	Penny@staunton.com
Training Chair and Hospitality Chair	RoxAnna Theiss	H (540) 828-2288	Roxanna_theiss@yahoo.com

Virginia Master Naturalist Sponsors

“Virginia Master Naturalist programs are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital, family, or veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.”

