



## June 2026

June is national pollinator month, and the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU has several [pollinator-themed talks](#) this month, including "Native Landscaping for Backyard Birds" with Rich Woods (June 10), "Brood Pollination of Plants by Specialized Insects" by David Hembrey (June 17), and a talk about the Flora of Virginia app by Anna Marie Johnson (June 24). These free talks are a part of their brown bag lunch lectures and are free. Register [here](#).

## chapter updates



*Pictured: Bree Hersch, member of cohort 10 and teacher at Bessie Weller, organized the workday with various members of the community.*

**Weller Woods Workday**

On Sunday, May 3, 2026, Staunton High School National Honor Society members, master naturalists, Bessie Weller teachers, parents, and community members joined Bree Hersch (Cohort #10) in Weller Woods for a workday. Weller Woods is located adjacent to Bessie Weller Elementary School in Staunton. With the support of a grant from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the forested learning trail includes five investigation stations for students to engage in hands-on learning and explore the natural features around the space.

Much work has been done to layout the trails, develop accessibility to the stream and stabilize the banks, create a vernal pool, and involve students with planting native plants. At the workday, the group cleared brush; removed or cut back invasive species (garlic mustard, privet, round-leaved bittersweet, and wineberry); used wood chips to designate the investigation station; and smoothed out the pathways. The signage for the trails was recently installed by Augusta Sign Company. The signs feature watercolor illustrations by Betty Gatewood and include learning standard aligned text by Tamra Willis, the grant writer for the project. Bree is the Outdoor Learning Coordinator for Staunton City Schools. It is a wonderful example of a community collaborative project.

- Cindy Westley



**Volunteers Needed! Pollinator Trail Management at Lake Shenandoah, June 11, 9 a.m.-noon.** Meet in the parking area at Lake Shenandoah, bring gloves, water, sun protection, rakes, hand clippers.

**Can you help?** [Email Scott Jost](#), and if possible, sign up on Better Impact.

Our chapter is into its second season keeping the pollinator meadow trail at Lake Shenandoah looking sharp.

We've taken this on as a regular monthly activity between May and October to support the pollinator meadow and to help reduce the workload for Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources staff who manage Lake Shenandoah.

While the plants and pollinators are beautiful, summer's abundant growth narrows the trail causing discomfort for some people who use the trail for regular walking and jogging. Keeping the trail clear and keeping its users happy—and happy with the pollinator meadow—is an important, though not obvious, aspect of habitat restoration and stewardship.

*(Photo caption: A yellow bumble bee (*Bombus fervidus*) browses beardtongue (*Penstemon*) along the Lake Shenandoah pollinator trail. Photo by Scott Jost)*

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## volunteer opportunities

[Staunton Adopt-a-Spot](#) trash clean up, June 14, 9-11 a.m. Our chapter has adopted a 1/3-mile stretch of Churchville Ave. that runs alongside Gypsy Hill Park. Trash bags, safety vests, grabbers, etc. will be provided by the city; bring water or anything else you may want. Sign up in BetterImpact or [email Lora Steiner](#).

**Campus Tree Inventory at JMU:** The tree inventory continues this year with a focus the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum. They will be held on June 9, 11, 15, 18, 22, 26, 30; July 2, 7, 9, 13, 15, 20, 22, 24, 27, 29; and Aug 5, 7, 19, 24, 26. Tree inventory starts at 8:30 a.m. and goes until 11-11:30 or whenever phone batteries get low. Meet at the Frances Plecker Education Center at the Arboretum (780 University Blvd., Harrisonburg) at 8:30 a.m. Training is provided; a smartphone is encouraged but not required. All other equipment is provided. Previous tree ID skills are not required, just a willingness to learn. **If you have any questions and/or if you plan to participate in any of the tree inventory work dates, please [email Ali Sloop](#)** (or text her at 540-421-1105) so she knows who to expect. If you are new to the JMU Tree Inventory volunteer team, please contact Ali at least a week before you plan to volunteer to get log-in information for the mapping application they use in the field.

**Blue Ridge PRISM ID walks + workdays**, various dates at Carrier Arboretum and Ridgeview Park in Waynesboro. See their [calendar](#) for full details.

[Evening with Bats](#), **first and third Fridays through September 18** at the Carrier Arboretum in Harrisonburg. This event is hosted by chapter volunteers and the Bat Conservation & Rescue of Virginia, and includes a bat call monitoring station as part of the evening. Visitors can watch and learn more about acoustic monitoring, and what it's telling us about the bats who live in the Arboretum. Parking is available in lot R5 (Costco side); meet at the arboretum pond 15 minutes before dusk.

**Caterpillar Count!** This citizen science [project](#) is run by the University of North Carolina researchers, and you can join an existing project or start your own.

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## continuing education

***National Cave Week at Grand Caverns***, various free talks May 31-June 6.

Topics include conservation, skin microbes, and more. The full [schedule](#) is on their website; RSVP required.

Register

***Geology of Shenandoah National Park***, June 11, 6-7 p.m.

Massanutten Regional Library will host this talk at the Harrisonburg branch with an expert from the park.

More info

***Pollinator Smart Tour***, June 16, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.

DCR will be [leading a tour](#) of JMU's solar site certified through the Virginia Pollinator-Smart Program, which incorporates native plantings.

Register

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*We want to hear from you! Have a project update, field trip pics, nature observation or something else you'd like to share?*

*[Please email us!](#)*



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