



## May 2026

This May is a slower month for organized activities, but there are new opportunities for citizen science as you're out in the woods this summer: [Operation Hognose](#) is a project of the Virginia Herpetological Society and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources seeking to assess the population of hognose snakes. University of Virginia researchers are also seeking reports of butternut trees throughout the commonwealth, so that they can be monitored and propagated. You can share butternut locations by [emailing the research team](#).

### chapter happenings



### **Pollinator Gardening in Harrisonburg**

On a beautiful Saturday morning, April 11, HMNs and community members installed around 30 native plants and weeded in the City of Harrisonburg pollinator garden on North Liberty Street across from the L&S Diner.

Pictured (from left) are Zack Perdue, Chip Brown, Joyce Maxwell, Scott Jost, and Andrea Dono.

Through this event, and more like it in the future, we hope to demonstrate public support for Harrisonburg's Pollinator Friendly City Program and raise awareness about the importance of pollinators and pollinator habitat on public and private property.

The next event is being planned for June, which is Pollinator Month in Harrisonburg. (Watch your email and BetterImpact for details.)

- Scott Jost, HMN Vice President



*Pictured: Observing the Goldenclub, *Orontium aquaticum*; searching for salamander egg masses; mistletoe; Pinxter azalea, *Rhododendron periclymenoides*; a type of native violet; Pink lady slippers, *Cypripedium acaule*. Photos by Lora Steiner.*

## Field trip to Maple Flats

Members of the current cohort traveled to Maple Flats in southeastern Augusta County on April 26. Maple Flats is home to 93 plants disjunct from their range, 30 of which are rare or endangered. We were led by John Holden, a member of the Rivanna chapter, who monitors salamanders at the site including spotted, tiger, and marbled salamanders.

While this outing was organized as a field trip opportunity, we're hoping to do more general wildflower walks. Have a site you'd like to explore? Let us know!

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## outreach

Waynesboro Riverfest: Constitution Park, Waynesboro, TOMORROW, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Theme: Year of the Brook Trout. Shifts are posted on Better Impact, and it would still be helpful to have some afternoon volunteers.

Cave & Karst Expo: Grand Caverns, June 6, 12-4 p.m. Watch your email and BetterImpact for more information.

## volunteer opportunities & upcoming events

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*Volunteer opportunities can be found in [BetterImpact](#) under the opportunities tab.*

**Weller Woods Learning Trail at Bessie Weller Elementary School, Sunday, May 3, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.:** Help remove and cut back invasive species and brush to clear areas that will become "student investigation stations" focused on birding and decomposition. Questions? Contact [Briana Hersch](#).

**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.

**An Evening with Bats**, *Friday, May 15, 7:30-8:45 p.m.* at Montgomery Hall Park, Staunton. Learn about local bat species and where they live, led by Leslie Sturges of the Bat Conservation & Rescue of Virginia. Rain date is May 22.

**Headwaters Master Naturalist board meeting**, *Sunday, May 24, 3-4 p.m.* Board meetings are open to all chapter members. This meeting will be held via Zoom; please [email us](#) if you'd like to attend.

**Artist Talk with Scott Jost: Celebrating Virginia's Native Bees**, *Saturday, May 30, 10 a.m.* at the Carrier Arboretum's Frances Plecker Education Center. Join our own Scott Jost to learn more about native bees and view his photography. Scott's work is currently on display at the arboretum until May 30.

**Spring native plant tour**, *May 30-31* at various homes in the area, hosted by the Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. See how local homeowners are incorporating native plants into their landscaping and helping to create habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. More info can be found on their [website](#).

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## continuing education

**Webinar: Butternut Hunt Project**,  
May 19, 9-10 a.m.

Learn about butternut trees and the [new volunteer activity](#) to document and collect samples from them around the state. Presented by researchers at the University of Virginia's Blandy Experimental Farm and State Arboretum.

**Webinar: Virginia Native Seed Collection Project**, May 21,  
12:00-1 p.m.

Join The Clifton Institute to learn about this ongoing project to launch a native plant seed industry in Virginia and how volunteers may assist. Presented by Rachel Martin at the Clifton Institute.

Register

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## Save the date!

The [2026 VMN Statewide Conference](#) will be September 18-20, 2026 at the Westin Washington Dulles Airport hotel in Herndon. The annual conference includes workshops and field trips. This year's conference will be hosted by the Fairfax and Banshee Reeks chapters.

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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!](#)*



### Headwaters Master Naturalists

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