

Valley Views

**Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society**

Volume 23, Issue 4

December 2004

Field Trips

Keep your eyes peeled for a “behind the scenes” tour of the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. The date has not yet been set, but we are hoping to finalize the arrangements soon. The date and other details will be posted on the PVAS website and will be announced on the heads up list.

December – Christmas Bird Counts

There are no field trips scheduled for December because of the Christmas Bird Count in Charles Town/Jefferson County on *December 18* and Inwood/Berkely County on *January 2*.

Sunday, January 22 at 8:00 a.m.

We will explore The Nature Conservancy’s Altoona Marsh in Jefferson County and neighboring ponds for over-wintering passerines, raptors, and waterfowl. At the marsh we walk on the railroad tracks and the footing is uneven, so wear appropriate shoes. We will meet at the parking lot for the small shopping center at Tusawilla Shops on Tusawilla Hill Drive, off Rt. 51 between Middletown and Charles Town. Please let us know if you are planning to come; we would like to let you know if we have to postpone due to weather. Call Ken or Patsy Hunter at 304-725-3936 or phunter@npca.org.

Saturday, January 29

Come out with PVAS as we join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy in their monthly nature walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship on Harpers Ferry Road, Rt. 671, in Virginia. We meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station at 8:00 a.m. Directions: From Jefferson County, take Route 340 east crossing the Shenandoah River bridge. Route 671 is at the intersection with a traffic light between the Shenandoah and the Potomac River bridges (gas station at the intersection). Turn right (south) onto Route 671 and travel for about five miles to the fire station on your left.

DECEMBER – Special Meeting

December 8 at 7 p.m.

The Annual December Pot Luck Dinner will be at St. John’s Lutheran Church in downtown Martinsburg at 101 Martin Street. The church is red brick, has a very tall tower and is located at the corner of Queen and Martin.

Please bring a dish to share (A-H, bring protein; I-L, a starch; M-R, veggies or fruit; and S-Z, dessert) and items for our silent auction. *Be creative!* How about plants or holiday arrangements, baked goods? A service can be put up for auction like babysitting, a car wash, drawing lessons or leading a bird walk to a favorite spot. What else? How about a gourmet dinner for four at your house? Mark items/service with the minimum acceptable bid. Please bring your own dishes, flatware, etc. for the dinner so we can be environmentally conscientious.

This meeting is also the time we get to hear from the young people we send to various environmental camps each year. So come and enjoy an evening of camaraderie, good food, and painless fundraising. We take cash and checks so don’t forget those, too!

Susan Brookreson

Meeting Programs

January 12 - Overview of Molecular Genetics as a Tool for Conservation Biology - by Dr. Timothy King

Dr. Timothy King, Research Biologist at the USGS Leetown Science Center (LSC), will give us an “Overview of Molecular Genetics as a Tool for Conservation Biology.” As a result of Dr. King’s research, the Atlantic Salmon of Maine was listed as an endangered species. Dr. King has labeled what he does as “Conservation Genetics” and is currently applying this expertise to sturgeon, nutria, black bear, salamanders, diamond back terrapins, and rare orchids (to name a few). The LSC is building a new “Conservation Genetics” laboratory space which will house Dr. King and his staff, along with state-of-the-art equipment to further this line of research.



*Potomac Valley Audubon Society is people dedicated to preserving, restoring,
and enjoying the natural world through education and activism.*

News from Yankauer Nature Preserve . . . Program News...

Morgan Academy came to the Preserve for the first time for a custom program about insects and leaves. With Fiona Harrison's help, we had a wonderful time exploring the preserve in the fall! We're looking forward to working with this new school again this spring with the Watershed Education Initiative! The fourth grade watershed program is being offered to all local schools this spring. So far four schools have signed up, and we are expecting several more. Planning for summer camp has also begun. We will be looking for several interns this summer as well as a *summer camp director*. Please spread the word and put any candidates in touch with Kristin at PVAEmail@aol.com. We are looking forward to continuing to build this program.

The Weekend of the Floor

The most amazing volunteer week has just concluded. Monday and/or Thursday, Satch Alwin, Jeff Feldman, Pete and Joey Kinyon, Bill and Bonnie Stubblefield, and Rodney Woods



prepped the pavilion floor by removing the original gravel and mulch and replacing it with several truckloads of new, clean gravel. With Bill and Bonnie operating their farm equipment, and everyone raking the gravel into place, it was a slow but rewarding process. Over the weekend, 15 more incredible volunteers completed 85% of the pavilion floor with the earthen floor. With two cement mixers and essential ingredients, volunteers cheerfully followed the instructions of Sigi Koko to produce a beautiful, "eco-floor." It still needs to be sealed, but please stop by to see the results! We'd like to thank the many contributions to this project: Patrick Shunney for the loan of his mixer, Vic McFillan for an emergency delivery of more clay (for free, no less!), Essroc for sand, Air Guard for delivering sand, Mike Abbruzzese of Potomac Construction Industries for delivering and donating gravel, and Jean Neely for coordinating most of these donations. An enormous thanks also goes out to architect Sigi Koko for donating her time and expertise to this project, along with Satch Alwin, Mark Benedict, Nick and Jonathon Blanton, Wayne Braunstein, Joe and Susan Brookreson, Dan and Michael Cogswell, Bob Dean, Chris Eurice, Jeff Feldman, Georgia Jeppesen, Joey and Pete Kinyon, Billy Madert, Jean Neely, Matt Poole, Andy Vecchio, Rodney Woods, Jim McFarland, and Brent Rowley. It was a pleasure to work with every one of you! Thank you!!!

Report: "This Race is for the Birds!"

Despite the misty October morning, 55 runners braved the muddy trails at the NCTC and a hearty batch of walkers followed. The "Kids' Fun Run" was an energetic and entertaining conclusion to

the morning. The results of the race are posted at www.potomacaudubon.org.

We'd like to thank Ann Craig and the volunteers who made this event possible. Diana Gaviria (race director), and the race committee members Jean Neely, Susan Brookreson, Jane Lewis and Tom Raymond, organized a wonderful event. Thank you! Our race day volunteers were also invaluable: Joe Brookreson, Bob and Ruth Ann Dean, Don and Kathryn Henry, Martin Jenkins, Diana Mullis, Sean Pike, Becky Skidmore, Peter Smith, Scott T., Carolyn Thomas, Rod Torrez, Paula Tremba, Lynn Truslow, Cindy and Rodney Woods. Thank you all for a successful day!

Over \$5700 was raised thanks to the runners and our many sponsors including: Butterfly.net; Jefferson Security Bank; Norm Thompson; Shepherdstown Chronicle; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Yellow Brick Bank; Law Offices of Hammer, Ferretti, and Schiavoni; Associated Oral Maxillofacial Surgeons; The Bavarian Inn; Butlers Farm Market; Dr. Paul Davis, D.D.S.; Dickinson and Wait Craft Gallery; Edward Jones Investments of Shepherdstown; Greentree Realty of Shepherdstown; Healthway Natural Foods of Martinsburg; Law Office of D. Frank Hill, III; Hoxton Financial; The Journal; King's New York Pizza; linda@gregdidden.com; Martin and Seibert, L.C.; J. Davitt McAteer, Attorney; Potomac Portables; Progressive Printing; Quick Silver Designs; Riverbend Designs; Shenandoah Valley Runners; Shepherdstown Outback Basics; and Specialty Business Supply.

Annual Appeal Coming Soon!

In about two weeks, you'll be receiving a summary of the year's activities at the Preserve along with an appeal for your support. We've had another great year, thanks to contributions of our members and friends like you. We hope you continue to support our education efforts! Thank you in advance!

NCTC Special Program

December 2 at 7:00 p.m.: "Native Frogs and Toads in the Sierra Nevada of California: Saving Threatened Species"

Biologist Curtis Milliron will give this presentation at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC). Global amphibian declines have been heralded as an environmental early warning sign of endangered species and habitats. To add to the complexity, the restoration of one species may adversely impact the health of another species. Milliron will examine the difficult scientific decisions that go into amphibian conservation work. Milliron will describe the status of endangered high elevation frogs and toads of the Sierra Nevada of California which have been threatened by disease and pesticides. He will explore the environmental tradeoffs so that introduced trout do not threaten native amphibian and invertebrate species.

Milliron has been a biologist for the California Department of Fish and Game since 1984. He has researched high mountain lakes, amphibians, and fisheries since 1995.

Presidents Perch

Hi Everyone

Where did all the leaves go? Seems like I turned around and they were gone Hope you were able to get out and enjoy the changing seasons!



Please note that our December meeting is our **Holiday Pot-Luck at St. John's Lutheran Church in Martinsburg at 7:00 p.m.** (see page 1). The food is always superb ... and it's fun to hear from our camp scholarship winners. Do join us!

Be sure to mark your calendar for our 2004 Christmas Bird Counts (see page 1) date December 18 and January 2. This is citizen science at its best, and lots of fun, too.

In light of all the holiday happenings in December, I'm already looking forward to those quiet, cold, January evenings with a wood fire and hot chocolate We won't be sending a January newsletter, so hold on to this one so that you will know how, when and where to find us.

Diana Mullis, President, PVAS

Some Seasonal Reflections

Is it my imagination, or are the holidays
Coming faster and faster every year?
Didn't I just finish packing away
All the lights and papers and bows?

Fall is in full bloom
The landscape changes daily
As the trees continue their disrobing
Allowing us glimpses of things hidden
Among the fallen leaves and naked twigs.

The flaming colors we see
Tease us for a few weeks, then
All we see are the grays and browns
Of a beautiful season past.

Now we anticipate.
Will the winter be gentle with us?
Will the harsh winds blow on our tender faces?
Will it snow? A white Christmas perhaps?
A single snowflake on my tongue?

Family and fun, food and fast
Charity and cheer
How quickly the weeks fly by.
Will I soon be packing away
The lights, the papers and the bows?

We wish you the best for the holiday season, and may the good Lord bless us all.

Diana Cummins, Vice-President

Audubon Take Action Alert

As of this writing, the Congress has not passed the Omnibus Appropriations bill aimed at resolving outstanding budget issues for Fiscal Year 2005. Attached to that bill are a number of riders, "controversial measures that proponents try to sneak into a bill, a must-pass bill, like this in order to avoid any debate or vote on the specific issue by either chamber!" National Audubon has put out a legislative alert calling for members to take action and let their congressmen know their feelings and concern with the proposed riders.

By the time you read this article it may be too late to have a say in the Omnibus Appropriations bill. If the bill hasn't passed or been favorably amended, get a message to your representatives in congress. If it is too late for this bill make sure you visit Audubon's Public Policy Web site and check on the follow-up plan and register yourself for timely notification of future alerts.

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E-mail: audubonaction@audubon.org

Web Site: <http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/default.asp>

MAKE A DIFFERENCE, JOIN PVAS TODAY!

When you join PVAS, you automatically become a member of the *National Audubon Society*.

Your membership includes:

- ◆ One year (six issues) of award-winning *Audubon Magazine*
- ◆ Eight issues of *Valley Views*, PVAS's newsletter of field trips, programs, and local issues
- ◆ Advance notice of all PVAS events

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DATED MATERIALS

MAIL TO:

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The *Potomac Valley Audubon Society* meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, in the auditorium at the USGS Leetown Science Center, Letown/Kearneysville, WV. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about *PVAS* or its programs and activities, please call any of the board members listed her or see <http://potomacaudubon.org>. *PVAS* serves the Easter Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVASBOARD
 The *PVAS*Board meets the first Wednesday of the month (Sept.-June) at Shepherd College, Snyder Hall, Room 317, 7PM. These meetings are open to all *PVAS* members.

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