

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Volume 25, Issue 5

February 2007

Annual Appeal Contributions Still Sought

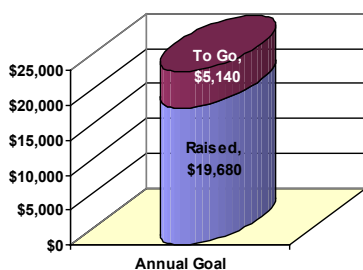
As this is being written, PVAS's annual fundraising appeal—which was launched December 15—has raised \$19,860 so far.

That's a great result: it's already significantly more than PVAS has raised in any previous year!

But we're still a little more than \$5,000 short of our \$25,000 fundraising goal.

If you haven't contributed yet, please consider doing so now. A return envelope is included with this newsletter for your convenience (be sure to add your own postage).

Annual Appeal Progress



PVAS Makes Major Staff Changes

PVAS is making major changes in its staff lineup by promoting Yankauer Nature Preserve Director Kristin Alexander to Executive Director of PVAS and by hiring a new Director of Children's Programs.

When the new *PVAS Organization and Structure* was approved by the membership last May, Kristin was viewed by all as a perfect fit for Executive Director. She joined PVAS in January, 2001, after receiving a master's degree in Experiential Learning from Minnesota State University at Mankato. She already had extensive accomplishments working in environmental education and had received her bachelor's degree in Environmental Education from Penn State University.

Kristin has been a great asset to PVAS and is vital to a new era of growth and expanded service to the community. Her promotion was approved by the PVAS Board of Directors in December and became effective January 1. Her new responsibilities include directing the day-to-day operations; advising and assisting the president and the

Executive Committee; long-range planning; and supervising PVAS staff, interns, and volunteers.

The new Director of Children's Programs is Ellen Murphy who has extensive experience in developing, directing, and delivering educational programs for children. Her appointment, which is a ¾-time position, was approved by the Board on January 3 and was effective immediately.

Ellen's responsibilities include planning and implementing our summer camp program and our education programs for area schools and youth organizations. Ellen comes to PVAS from the Girl Scouts of Shawnee Council, in Martinsburg, where she had served as program and property manager and product sales coordinator since the summer of 2004. She has a B.A. in History and Secondary Education from Appalachian State University, in Boone, NC, and a certificate in Nonprofit Management from Shenandoah University.

Members Approve Constitution and Bylaws Changes.

The PVAS membership has overwhelmingly approved the proposed constitution and bylaws changes that were submitted for a vote at the beginning of November.

In all, 108 ballots were received: 107 affirmative ballots and a blank ballot that an individual had failed to fill out. Eight of the affirmative ballots had to be disqualified because they were from people whose memberships were not current, which leaves 99 valid affirmative votes.

Constitution - continued on Page 2, Col. 1

Eastern Shore Trip is Main Event for February

PVAS invites its members and interested members of the public to two field trips in February.

First, on Saturday, February 10, we will join with members of the Baltimore Bird Club for birding on the Eastern Shore from Cape Henlopen, Delaware, to Ocean City, Maryland.

Field Trips - continued on Page 3, Col. 1

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

Constitution - continued from Page 1

The affirmative vote of 10 percent of the total membership, or 46 members as of November 1, was required for approval.

As was explained in the November issue of *Valley Views*, the proposed constitution and bylaws changes were needed for a variety of reasons, including responsiveness to evolving national standards for good practices among nonprofit organizations.

Board Adopts Conflict of Interest Statement

During its January 3 meeting, PVAS's board adopted a conflict of interest statement to be signed by PVAS officers, directors, committee chairs, staff members, and certain consultants.

PVAS's new bylaws require the organization to follow the recommendations of the Internal Revenue Service model conflict of interest policy, and those recommendations stipulate that all such persons should "be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts" relating to actual or possible conflicts of interest.

The new conflict of interest statement is intended as a standardized instrument for providing that opportunity.

The statement can be found on the PVAS website.

Board Adopts Whistleblower, Document Policies

During its January 3 meeting, PVAS's board also adopted new PVAS policies concerning whistleblower protection and document retention and destruction.

Both policies can be found on the PVAS website.

The whistleblower-protection policy establishes a formal process for dealing with complaints by whistleblowers and for preventing retaliation.

The document retention and destruction policy specifies the minimum lengths of time the organization's various kinds of documents must be retained, and spells out guidelines and responsibilities for managing documents.

PVAS's policies were adapted from sample policies developed by the National Council of Nonprofit Associations.

All nonprofit organizations in the U.S. are required to adopt such policies to comply with the American Competitiveness and Corporate Accountability Act of 2002, commonly known as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

Remember Backyard Bird Count

Just a reminder that the 2007 Great Backyard Bird Count will take place February 16-19.

Described in detail in the last issue of *Valley Views*, the Count is an annual four-day event that involves bird watchers of all levels in counting birds and reporting their results to create a mid-winter snapshot of the numbers, kinds, and distribution of birds across the continent.



Master Naturalist Training to Start in April

PVAS has now received formal approval from the State of West Virginia to operate a local chapter of the state's Master Naturalist program, and we will begin offering training this April for Eastern Panhandle residents who wish to become certified as Master Naturalists.



Our Master Naturalist's chapter will be known as the "Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program."

Training will begin with two full days of classes the weekend of April 14-15. After that, there will be one full day of classes each month (all on Saturdays) through September, and two full Saturdays of classes during October.

In all, 64 hours of instruction will be required to complete the training cycle—48 hours of core classes, and 16 hours of electives.

Core class topics include Amphibians and Reptiles, Aquatic Habitats, Birds, General Ecology, Insects, Mammals, Nature Interpretation and Teaching, Terrestrial Habitats, Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines, Wetland Habitats, Wildflowers and Weeds, and Wildlife Habitat Improvement.

Elective class topics range from Butterflies to Mushrooms to Nature Journaling.

The location of the classes will alternate as follows between Cacapon State Park, in Morgan County, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Jefferson County:

April 14 & 15 (15 class hours total) Cacapon State Park
 June 9 (8 class hours) NCTC
 July 7 (6 hours) Cacapon State Park
 August 11 (7 hours) NCTC
 September 8 (7 hours) Cacapon State Park
 October 6 (7 hours) Cacapon State Park
 October 27 (7 hours) NCTC

Enrollment will be limited to 20 persons this first year, and the deadline for submitting applications will be February 15.

Tuition will be \$300 per person for the full course of instruction.

To apply or get further information, call 304-676-3307 or pvas-mail@aol.com. Application forms and information are also available on PVAS's website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

One of the first in the nation, West Virginia's three-year-old Master Naturalist program is patterned after the long-established Master Gardener Program.

It is aimed at allowing individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of the natural world while helping their communities and the environment.

Work Getting Underway on Land Management Plans

PVAS's Land and Facilities Management Committee plans to meet soon to begin coordinating development of new land management plans for the Yankauer and Eidolon nature preserves but preliminary work on these plans is already underway.

The Nature Conservancy has recruited Virginia Tech's Natural Resources Program to assist with the Eidolon plan, and the program's Director, David Trauger, has assigned two graduate students, Aileen Smith and Sara Hamberg, to the project.

Dr. Trauger, Aileen, and Sara traveled to Morgan County December 9 to meet with PVAS and TNC representatives and to tour the Eidolon property. They also participated in a public meeting that PVAS and TNC held that day at the Panorama Restaurant near Berkeley Springs to brief area residents about Eidolon.

The Virginia Tech team is very enthusiastic about the project and is aiming to have a draft plan ready in six to eight months.

Meanwhile, Michael Schwartz, of the Conservation Fund's Shepherdstown-based Freshwater Institute, will be helping PVAS develop the Yankauer plan within the same general timeframe.

As was noted in the last *Valley Views*, Shepherd University soil science students last fall completed soil mapping of the Yankauer property, which is an important preliminary step for that property's plan.

The students presented their report to members of the Land and Facilities Management Committee at a meeting at Shepherd on December 7.

The December 9 Eidolon public meeting was well attended. Some 30 area residents showed up, and many of them offered to help get the Eidolon preserve up and running. Thanks to the Morgan County Ecology Coalition for its help in setting up and publicizing this event.

PVAS hopes to undertake some work at Eidolon before the land management plan for that property is completed.

We would like to complete mapping of Eidolon's trails this winter so a trail map can be ready for visitors next spring.

And we would like to begin attacking some of the invasive plants that are present on the property.

Field Trips - continued from Page 1

This trip will offer an opportunity to see loons, gannets, sea ducks, Great Cormorants, and Purple Sandpipers. Razorbill sightings are also possible.

The group will meet between 9:00 and 9:30 a.m. at the Lewes-Cape May Ferry passenger parking lot in Lewes, Delaware, and leave from there.

Some participants may choose to go to Delaware on Friday and stay overnight. Some may choose to stay in or around Ocean City on Saturday night and continue on to Assateague on Sunday.

Field Trips - continued on Page 5, Col. 1

Leading Nature Photographer to Conduct Seminar

Internationally known nature and wildlife photographer Art Wolfe will conduct a two-day nature photography seminar in Shepherdstown the weekend of February 24-25.

The seminar, which is being sponsored by PVAS's Potomac Valley Nature Photographers, will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day in the National Conservation Training Center's Robert C. Byrd Auditorium. It will be open to photographers of all skill levels.



During the seminar, Wolfe will cover topics that range from the philosophical to the practical—from finding one's inspiration as a photographer to techniques for pre-visualizing images.

Also presenting will be Rick Holt, a nationally acclaimed teacher and photographer who will give an in-depth look at the latest state-of-the-art programs for processing and handling digital images, especially Adobe's Lightroom.

The cost of enrollment in the seminar will be \$199 in advance for both days and \$139 in advance for one day. The cost at the door—if space is still available—will be \$249 for both days or \$189 for one day.

All proceeds from the seminar will be used to further PVNP's activities in outreach, education and conservation.

Enrollment will be limited to 250, so those who wish to enroll are encouraged to do so now. Mr. Wolfe has generously donated a few early-enrollment incentives to be given away by drawing from the first 50 people who sign-up. These incentives include a signed limited edition print of one of Mr. Wolfe's images, a seat at a week-long workshop at his studio in Seattle, WA (transportation to and from the workshop and lodging and meals not included), and others to be announced at the seminar.

To enroll, log onto www.potomacvalleynaturephotographers.org and purchase your tickets online. If you prefer, you can send a check with the appropriate dollar amount to PVNP, PO Box 863, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. Checks should be made payable to PVNP. For further information see the web site listed above or email Wil Hershberger at Wil_Hershberger@potomacvalleynature-photographers.org.

Wolfe has been capturing images of the natural world and remote cultures for more than 30 years. His work has appeared in all of the major publications in the U.S. and many others across the globe. His internationally acclaimed and award winning books have garnered praise from his peers for many years.

William Conway, President of the Wildlife Conservation Society, has called him "the most prolific and sensitive recorder of a rapidly vanishing natural world."

His website can be found at www.artwolfe.com.



Hello everyone:

This month, I'd like to highlight three things.

First, I want to emphasize that the staff changes we've announced—Kristin Alexander's promotion to Executive Director and the hiring of Ellen Murphy as our new Director of Children's Programs—represent a major step forward for PVAS.

By making these changes, we're not just promoting and adding staff: we're expanding our capabilities in much-needed ways.

Our main problem in recent years has been that the demand for our programs—particularly our children's programs—has grown to the point that we haven't been able to keep up with it.

This has been a good kind of problem to have, to be sure. But that hasn't made the situation any less frustrating—especially for Kristin, who's had to do most everything pretty much on her own.

That will change now that Ellen's come on board. She brings a wealth of experience and she'll be able to help us in many ways. In particular, we look forward to being able to deliver more children's programming in the future.

Second, I want to thank all of you who have helped make our annual fundraising appeal such a success so far.

We've managed to raise nearly \$20,000 in a relatively short amount of time, and many of you have been very generous: nearly 60 percent of the contributions we've received have been for \$100 or more and five have been for \$1,000 or more.

We've also received seven new multi-year pledges: four new 5-year pledges that will give us \$4,100 annually through 2012, and three new 3-year pledges that will give us another \$1,350 annually through 2010.

We appreciate all this support. And we hope those of you who haven't given yet will pitch in and help us raise the additional \$5,000 we need to reach our \$25,000 goal.

Please remember that the support of our members and friends really is essential to our efforts. As we pointed out in our annual appeal letter, many of our programs are free. For those that do involve fees, we could never charge participants—especially the many children we serve—enough to cover all our expenses. Your contributions make up the difference—make it possible for us to hire Ellen Murphy, in fact.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of you who voted to approve the constitution and bylaws changes we submitted to the membership in November. In the end, more than 20 percent of you returned ballots, which I'm told is a very impressive response for this sort of thing.

Now that this is done, our organizational structure and governing policies and practices are now as up-to-date and shipshape as we know how to make them. That should hold us for a while, at least.

—Peter Smith

February Meeting Will Focus on “Green” Home Construction

Our February meeting will focus on “green” home construction.

The speaker will be Jeff Feldman, a former environmental educator who is currently building an innovative green home for himself and his wife—our own Kristin Alexander—in Berkeley County near our Yankauer Nature Preserve.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 14, at the U.S. Geological Survey's Leetown Science Center, 11649 Leetown Road (County Route 1), Kearneysville.

Feldman will discuss green building and the importance of environmental considerations in decision-making about new construction, remodeling, and even simple upgrades of existing homes.

He will use his own home project as an example of cutting-edge possibilities and then explore more modest possibilities for average homeowners.

He will stress practical approaches, and point out not only the environmental benefits of green construction but the potential cost savings for families and individuals.

Feldman has a background in environmental education. He has a BS in Environmental Interpretation from Penn State and an MS in Experiential Learning from Minnesota State University at Mankato.

He served five years as a faculty member at Penn State University, and was Program Director and Community Environmental Advocate for the University's Shaver's Creek Environmental Center.

For the past thirteen years, he has run a leadership development and team building training firm called Eagle's View Enterprises.

In between serving his corporate and federal clients, much of Feldman's focus and energy during the past three years has gone into researching, planning, and executing his current home project.

The home he and Kristin are building features a passive solar design, straw-bale superinsulation, a composting toilet, a constructed wetland gray-water treatment system, and many other environmentally-considerate design and material elements.

Feldman says his future plans include consulting with others on green design and construction.

Upcoming Events

March 14: Monthly meeting. Speaker: Elizabeth Barron on “Morel Mushrooms along the C & O Canal”

April 11: Monthly meeting. Speaker: Wil Hershberger on “Songs of the Season” (songs of local birds)

April 21: Wildflower Festival at Yankauer.

April 28: “This Race is for the Birds” 5K run/walk at NCTC

May 9: Potluck at Yankauer Nature Preserve

June 24: Morgan Co. members' picnic, Cacapon State Park

Field Trips - continued from Page 3

Those who plan to spend one or two nights on the Eastern Shore will be responsible for making their own room reservations.

This trip can be brutally cold and windy. Participants should be prepared to bundle up, and should bring binoculars and scopes if they have them.

Those who wish to participate are asked to contact Nancy Kirschbaum beforehand at 304-876-6881 or nancyk500@adelphia.net so PVAS knows how many people to expect and can contact them if inclement weather forces cancellation--this trip was cancelled last year due to weather.

On Saturday, February 24, we will join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a winter bird walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship in nearby Loudoun County, Virginia.

This beautiful 900-acre preserve is located on Harpers Ferry Road (Route 671), a few miles south of Harpers Ferry and the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers.

The property includes meadows in the valley and heavily forested slopes on the Blue Ridge.

The walking group will meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station on Route 671 at 8:00 a.m. Ample space for parking is available there.

For more information about this event contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.

Participants in this trip should dress appropriately for the weather conditions at the time and bring binoculars if they have them.

PVAS Joins Parade

On December 2, at the request of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle, PVAS fielded a contingent to accompany the United Way float in Shepherdstown's Christmas parade.

The main feature of PVAS's contingent was the animals it included—seven dogs of various breeds, ages, and sizes and a parrot named Liberty.



The human companions marching with the animals included Alice Barkus, Jean Neely, Johnna Armstrong, Susan Munn, Carolyn Thomas's family, Sierra Grabowska, John King, Bill Marshall, Peter and Vicki Smith and their niece, Ashley Short.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

We now offer two kinds of memberships:

1. PVAS Local Membership

Here's what you get:

- Access to a wide variety of PVAS programs and events for adults and children.
- Discounts for selected chapter activities, like children's summer camps.
- A subscription to PVAS's newsletter and e-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest.
- ALL your dues stay here to support local PVAS efforts!

To become a local member: Enclose a check for \$20 (\$15 for seniors and students). Please make check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year.

2. Dual Membership with National Audubon

You get all the benefits of PVAS membership plus membership in the National Audubon Society, which includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. If you select this option, almost all of your dues will go to National Audubon. To obtain a dual membership, enclose a check for \$20 if you are joining NAS for the first time (\$15 for seniors and students) or \$35 to renew an existing NAS membership. Make check out to "National Audubon Society."

Membership Form

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____
 Phone (optional): _____
 E-mail: (optional): _____

Membership Type (check one):

PVAS Local Membership _____
 (For PVAS local membership, check the box following if you do NOT want PVAS to share your contact information with National Audubon: _____)

Dual Membership with National Audubon _____

I'd like to get *Valley Views* by e-mail _____ US mail _____ (check one)

.....(Audubon chapter code Y54; source code 79N7)

Clip and mail this form to:

Membership Chair, PVAS
 PO Box 578
 Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Thank you for your support!



● RED DOT ALERT

If a red dot appears on your mailing label, your membership may have expired and this could be your last issue of Valley Views.



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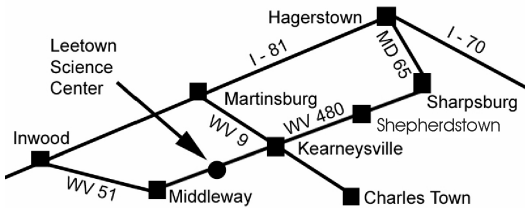


MAIL TO:

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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://www.potomacaudubon.org>. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD
 The PVAS Board meets every other month on the first Wednesday of the month (Sept.-June). Meeting location will be announced prior to meetings. These meetings are open to all PVAS members.

PVAS Officers and Board Members

- President: Peter Smith 304 876-1139pvsmith@frontiernet.net
- Vice President: Nancy Kirschbaum nancyk500@adelphia.net
- Secretary: Mina Goodrich larrymina@peoplepc.com
- Treasurer: Jane Vanderhook 304 876-6993 janehook@frontiernet.net
- Board Development: Wayne Braunstein 304 728-7181wbraun@frontiernet.net
- Board Members-at-Large: Alice Barkus abarkus@hughes.net
- Susan Brookreson brookre@earthlink.net
- Clark Dixon dixonconsultants@aol.com
- David Eldridge 304 876-2337 deldridg@citlink.net
- Rob Hoxton rhoxton@hoxtonfinancial.com
- Georgia Jeppesen georgia_jeppesen@adelphia.net
- Carolyn Thomas webethomas@aol.com
- Christine Wolf chriswolfathome@yahoo.com

Ex Officio Board Members

- Diana Mullis 304 267-3482 dianamullis@aol.com

Emeritus Board Members

- Bill Belton wbelton@hughes.net
- Jean Neely jeaneely@adelphia.net

Special Contacts

- Director of Yankauer: Kristin Alexander 304 229-9771 kaemail730@aol.com
- Web Master: Kathy Bilton kathy@fred.net
- PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis 304-267-3482 & 304 724-4520(day)