

Valley Views

**Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society**

Volume 22, Issue 9

June 2004

PVAS Inaugurates First Kingfisher Awards

The annual meeting and election of officers on May 8 marked a number of firsts for PVAS. It was the first official PVAS business meeting held at Yankauer; it was the first PVAS meeting under the new pavilion shelter; and, it was the first presentation of the Kingfisher Awards. Approved earlier this year by the board of directors, the Kingfisher Awards recognize extraordinary and, in some cases, many years of service to PVAS, the membership, and the programs that we support.



For those unable to attend, here is a rundown on the first recipients:

KATHY BILTON – for being our faithful web master and field trip leader

DIANA CUMMINS – for establishing and updating our Heads Up list, organizing and running the Birds and Nature Fest at NCTC, and for her artistic contributions

BOB DEAN –for MAPPS, more quality field trips than we can ever count, Birding 101, The Christmas Bird Count, and many others

-Kingfisher Award continues on page 4

Summer Field Trips

Please mark your calendars and join us for these two special opportunities to enjoy an environmental treasure very close to us.

August 7 at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship: Annual Butterfly count. Please join the Loudon Wildlife Conservancy at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship located on Harpers Ferry Road, Rt. 671, a few miles south of Harpers Ferry and the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers. We will meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station on Rt. 671 at 8:30 a.m. For more information call Patsy or Ken Hunter at 304-725-3936 or phunter@npca.org.

Saturday, September 4, 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship: Birds, Butterflies, and Wildflowers. Join the Loudon Wildlife Conservancy and the Potomac Valley Audubon Society on a general, natural history walk (about three miles long) at this beautiful preserve in northwestern Loudon County. We should see butterflies using the late summer wildflowers as well as early migrating birds. The Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship is located on Harpers Ferry Road, Rt. 671, a few miles south of Harpers Ferry and the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers. We will meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station on Rt. 671 at 8:30 a.m. For more information call Patsy or Ken Hunter at 304-725-3936 or phunter@npca.org

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

News from Yankauer Nature Preserve . . .

Thank You Volunteers!

I can't thank our volunteers, including our new Preserve Partners, enough for their help in pulling off another amazing year. The fiscal year's official program tally hasn't been completed yet, but in one week of May alone, we worked with over 550 children. (Granted, that was a crazy week.) Every time I think I've pushed my luck too far, volunteers have risen to the occasion, allowing us to do infinitely more programs than we "ought" to be able to pull off. Thanks to all who have put in many hours of baking, entertaining, teaching, constructing, clearing, and uncountable other tasks to support our mission with your talents, time, effort, patience, and dedication. We couldn't do what we do without you.

We'd like to also recognize a few Partners for their above and beyond contributions:

- Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship loaned us tables and chairs for several events at the Preserve free of charge.
- Bruce Avey, CPA, has provided accounting services related to accounting for our employees.
- Eo's, a new deli on German Street donated a portion of April's ice cream sales to Yankauer.
- Jim Gassler, CPA, consulted with us regarding bookkeeping as our budget grows.
- Hoxton Financial, for donating the balance of a client's payment to the charity of the clients' choice: PVAS and the programs at Yankauer.
- Jen Rolston of Eden Design donated the majority of her services when she designed a logo for Yankauer.
- Cam Tabb donated the delivery of several truckloads of mulch for our temporary pavilion floor and trails. -*Kristn Alexander, Director*

Audubon Discovery Camp

Don't forget that camp starts June 14! Sign up now for up to eight weeks of summer camp with a new theme each week! Campers ages 6-12 are invited to play in the woods this summer as they participate in this unique camp experience. Junior Counselors ages 14 and up are

invited to apply for several volunteer positions. See the PVAS website (www.potomacaudubon.org) for camper and junior counselor applications. Please help us spread the word! Spaces are still available!

Watershed Wrap-up

In May, interns were back at the schools after the April field trips to the Potomac River. Students had the opportunity to connect their river experience with the bigger ecological picture such as how those little insects they found in the river fit in with the larger food web. They also explored their school grounds, looking for signs of human impact on the school grounds such as trash, oil in the parking lot, and erosion, and discussed ways to fix those issues and prevent them in the future. The Conservation Fund's Freshwater Institute joined our efforts and helped students plant a rain garden at their

school to filter runoff and prevent (or fix) erosion areas. The service project serves as the "grand finale" of the watershed experience. We look forward to offering this program to fourth grade classrooms next year now that the pilot phase is complete. We thank the EPA, NOAA, and Canaan Valley Institute for their help in getting this program off the ground over the past two years financially. We also owe our thanks to our program partners: The Conservation Fund's Freshwater Institute, Isaac Walton League, the Jefferson County Watershed Coalition, The National Conservation Training Center, and Shepherd College's Institute for Env. Studies.

Multi-year Donors a Treasured Few!!!

As everyone knows, raising money for a non-profit takes work—and there's a lot of "I wonders" involved. (Like: "I wonder whether we'll make our budget this year!!?") There's one small group of donors who help take the guesswork out of the fundraiser's job: The Multi-Year Donors. These folks pledge to give a level of support each year for five years— and even longer. We know we can count on that money to support our general operating budget and that is a huge plus! For the recognition they deserve, here's our group, in alphabetical order:



-Yankauer continued from page 2

John and Jenny Allen (Supporter)
Gat and Susan Caperton (Patron)
Richard E. McCleary (Supporter)

Our sincere thanks go to them and we urge you to consider joining them as Multi-Year Donors. We'd love to talk with you about it! Call Jean Neely at (304) 876-2410, or email: jeaneely@ix.netcom.com

Car Donations Paying Off!

Since our original announcement regarding our ability to donate your car to PVAS/Yankauer, we have had two additional donations. Between the three vehicles donated so far, Yankauer and PVAS have raised \$3465! Thanks go out to Jay Norelli and Diana Cummins for their recent donations. Each donor can tell you that this is a fast and painless process and benefits everyone involved. Contact Kristin for details at 304-676-3397 or PVASmail@aol.com.

Recent Grants

We are pleased to announce three recent grants supporting our efforts at the Preserve. The Eastern West Virginia's Community Foundation's Jane Snyder Fund has agreed to support our summer programs with a grant of \$1000. We have received \$600 in funding from the Arts and Humanities Alliance of Jefferson County (AHA!), the West Virginia Commission on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts to support the art component of our summer camp. Additionally, the Potomac Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Region, Inc. recently accepted our application to contribute \$500 to a study on the efficacy of a variety of control measures on Ailanthus, or Tree of Heaven, at Yankauer.

President's Perch

Hi Everyone



It's hard to believe how quickly winter turns into summer around here. It seems like yesterday I was waiting to get my seeds planted, and today I can't get them in the ground fast enough. Summer is here...and this will be the last issue of Valley Views that you will receive until August, so please hang on to it so that you can find us over the summer. We have tried to pack all of our summer activities (summer camp, field trips, etc.) into this issue, but you can also find our calendar online at <http://potomacaudubon.org>, and you can also subscribe to our "Heads-up" email list by sending Diana Cummins a note at montex@frontiernet.net.

Congratulations to our 10 Camp Scholarship winners (see page 4). When you buy birdseed you help send kids to camp, so thank you everyone for making this possible! Also, there are still openings for our Yankauer summer day camp, Audubon Discovery Camp (see article on page 2).

The annual meeting and election of officers was held at our Yankauer Nature Preserve on May 8, and we had a great time and a beautiful day. This was the first time we did a potluck for the annual meeting, but it was great fun and lots of folks turned out, so I'm thinking we will do it again next year.

Have a great summer, and I hope to see you on a field trip or at Yankauer somewhere along the way...or at the very latest, "I'll see you in September, when the summer's through!" Oh my, I don't want to think about that yet...enjoy it while it's here!

-Diana Mutus, President, PVAS

National Policy Chapter Survey Results

PVAS was one of two chapters from West Virginia that participated in a national survey of conservation priorities for the coming year. In total there were 266 Audubon chapters that participated.

The top five priorities as tallied from the survey were:

1. PUBLIC LANDS PROTECTION

2. BIRD CONSERVATION
3. ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
4. WETLANDS & ESTUARY PROTECTION
5. CLEAN WATER ACT

You can find the full text on Web at: <http://www.audubon.org/local/cso/docs/2004surveyresults.doc>.

-Survey continued on page 5

Blue Ridge Center BioBlitz!

WANT TO KNOW WHAT SPECIES LURK ON THE HILLS, IN THE PONDS, AND AROUND THE BARNES OF THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER?

Come to BioBlitz June 4-5, 2004!

The Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES) is hosting a BioBlitz on June 4 and 5, 2004. Beginning at 3 p.m. on Friday, June 4, scientists, naturalists and volunteers will comb Loudoun County's largest piece of private protected property as part of the first ever Blue Ridge Center BioBlitz.

Blue Ridge Center BioBlitz is a 24-hour biological survey of all living things found on our 900 acres. Everyone will be racing against the clock to see how many species can be collected, identified and recorded before the clock runs out.

It's botanists competing against mycologists, entomologists against mammalogists, ichthyologists against herpetologists!

Visitors and guests are invited to attend on Saturday, June 5, to interact with scientists, help count critters, and join in the discovery.

BRCES is located about two miles from the Potomac River in northwestern Loudoun County, between Short Hill Mountain and the Blue Ridge: 11661 Harpers Ferry Road in Neersville, Virginia.

BioBlitz is being hosted by the Blue Ridge Center and partnering organizations to raise awareness of the astonishing number and variety of living things found on planet earth and how they all play an important role in the healthy functioning of an ecosystem.

Volunteers are still needed for set up, assisting the scientists, serving food, pouring LOTS of coffee and cleanup. Volunteers will be fed and free camping is available. For more information, contact: Fiona Harrison at fharrison@brces.org or call 540-668-7640.



-Kingfisher Award continues from page 1

JEFF FELDMAN – all-round, get-it-done kind of guy, who put up the pavilion, organized the Yankauer Barn Party and helps in many ways

DIANA GAVIRIA – organized (with Jane) our 5K race, was chair of race committee last year (huge success)

WIL HERSHBERGER – long time member, past president, Birding 101, MAPPS, quality field trips, feature articles for Valley Views, and more

LISA LACIVITA – past officer, the signage at Yankauer, found donors for a free survey of Yankauer saving us thousands, and more

JANE LEWIS – *This Race Is for the Birds* coordinator, thanks to Jane who organized our first race and put in place all we need to keep having this very successful event

DAVID MILLER – long time member, works behind the scenes at the time consuming and sometimes thankless job of publishing Valley Views

LYNNE WISEMAN – long time member, frequent board member, past president, field trip leader, and anything that needs to be done

RODNEY WOODS – tireless Yankauer worker, maintains the trails, helped put up pavilion, newly elected board member as Yankauer Liaison person

The Kingfisher Awards are an acknowledgement of the contributions of the recipients and a small way of saying thanks for all they've done.

Students Head to Camp

Thanks to a successful birdseed sale and the generosity of members, PVAS is sending ten students to camp this summer! Attending the Discovery Camp at Yankauer are Max Fransen of Boonsboro, Skylar Rose Sade of Shepherdstown, Zoe Jenkins of Shepherdstown, Brittany Kegarise of Kearneysville, Caleb Kell of Martinsburg and Erin Welsh of Kearneysville. Heading for a week of activity at the Mountain Institute at Spruce Knob are Sarah Gilroy of Harpers Ferry and Sierra Grabowska of Shepherdstown. Finally, off for a two-week stay at the Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies are Cody Segraves of Ranson and Kyle Myles of Harpers Ferry. Our congratulations to all the scholarship winners! As always, the campers have been invited to share their stories of adventure and learning at the December meeting.



The Hummers Are Back!

By now you should know that the hummingbirds are back in West Virginia. The Web site that follows is the source of this information and you can get plenty more for yourself: <http://www.hummingbirds.net/map.html>.

So clean out those feeders, mix-up the sugar water and get ready for the little guys!

Here's the recipe for artificial nectar (syrup):

- Use one part ordinary white cane sugar to four parts water.
- Boil the water if you wish, but it's not necessary. The microorganisms that cause fermentation don't come from the water; they are transported to the feeder on hummingbird bills.
- Store unused syrup in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

This mixture approximates the average sucrose content (about 21%) of the flowers favored by North American



hummingbirds, without being so sweet it attracts too many insects.

Hummingbirds get the energy they need to maintain their astonishing metabolism primarily from flower

nectar and the sugar water they find at feeders. For protein and other nutrients, they also eat soft-bodied insects and spiders. According to Bob Sargent's perspective: "Hummers need nectar to power the bug eating machine that they are." Think of them as miniature flycatchers, and sugar is just the fuel for getting their real nourishment. You might try setting out some overripe fruit—banana peels are good—to attract flies for your hummers.

Filling the Feeder

The sugar water used to fill hummingbird feeders is only a supplement to the birds' natural diet. It's not necessary to buy a commercial "nectar" mix that includes additional vitamins, protein, or other substances, because the birds get all they need from the flower nectar and insects they consume. All they want from us is the quick energy they get from ordinary white cane sugar. It's just fuel for chasing bugs.

-Survey continued from page 3

Also there is an accompanying survey spreadsheet, compiled by state, available at: http://www.audubon.org/local/cso/docs/2004survey_bystate.xls

Even though many of our members have mixed feelings over the changes in direction for grass roots support by the National Audubon, this survey serves to remind us of the need for a national voice and the ability to bring to bear substantial resources to further our common interests.



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

ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR:

\$20 Individual SPECIAL OFFER, 1st time members only!

\$35 Individual (renewal)

\$15 Seniors and full-time students.

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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.-April) at Shepherd College, Snyder Hall, Room 317, 7PM. These meetings are open to all *PVAS* members.

PVAS Officers and Board Members

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