

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society

Volume 35, Issue 7

April 2017

President's Note

by Michael Sullivan, PVAS President

PVAS is growing. We have growth in staff, growth in the property that we manage, and growth in the programs we provide to members and the community at large.

Growth and change can be both exhilarating and unsettling at the same time. The board and the Executive Director realized that, as we grow, obtaining an independent assessment of the current condition of PVAS would be beneficial in many ways. Toward this end, we hosted three representatives from the Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA) over March 2-4, 2017 for a peer consultation. We asked ANCA to review our structure and our programs and to provide us with guidance and recommendations on four key issues: program sustainability, staffing structure, board development, and fiscal and donation policy.

ANCA team: W. Brooks Paternotte, Pam Musk, and Amy Yeakel, at Cool Spring



The ANCA consultants reviewed our governance and financial documents, visited our Yankauer and Cool Spring preserves, participated in a board meeting, and held 13 stakeholder meetings with staff, volunteers, board and committee members, conservation partners, and public school teachers. It was a very busy and productive three days. Our Events Committee, as they always do, made sure that everyone was well fed.

We expect ANCA's final report with specific recommendations in April. Here's a preview. Overall, the ANCA consultants were favorably impressed with our organization, our reputation, the strength of the volunteer base, and the number and variety of programs we deliver. Amongst other things, they expressed their view that we should: cross-promote our programming at every opportunity; improve internal and external communications and our use of electronic media; develop a capital budget following acquisition of the Cool Spring Preserve; and place more emphasis on planned giving.

The final ANCA report will contain many more observations and recommendations. We'll share it with our members when it becomes available. Looking ahead, I'm sure this solid advice will enable PVAS to develop a road map to manage growth and advance our mission with confidence.

Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

A year ago we reported on a survey nearly 200 of our members, donors and program participants were good enough to complete. Looking back on the survey a year later, I thought you'd be interested to see how your feedback has shaped PVAS since we've analyzed the results!

Preserves: Over 60% of respondents rated the preserves as "essential" to our mission. We took that to heart, and have put more resources into our preserves, and have added the Cool Spring Preserve - our first property in Jefferson County - to our list of preserves. In addition, we hired Bridget Tinsley to help manage the properties to make sure they are safe and welcoming for people and wildlife. She has spearheaded several volunteer workdays at each preserve in the last six months. We are working to give Bridget even more time to spend on this important element of her position with PVAS.

Advocacy: In the survey, we also learned that you'd like to see us put more effort into local and state advocacy as an organization. That has not been an emphasis within PVAS in recent years, so that feedback was certainly important to hear! We are still in the baby steps in this realm, but you'll see in this newsletter we'll be holding our first Environmental Advocacy Forum in April. This event is designed to help the local community be the most effective voice they can for WV environmental and human health.

Communication: We learned that the majority of you get your information about PVAS programs in Valley Views, our monthly newsletter. Based on this, we extended our newsletter publication into the summer with an abbreviated version to improve our communication in that very busy season. The website, which was rated a very close second in order of importance, continues to be updated and improved. Our e-mail blasts were highlighted as needing to be changed, and we have admittedly not gotten around to that. However, we are very close to making that change as we speak! It's just taken longer than anticipated.

Programs: All of our programs for youth, adults and families were rated as highly important. We are serving more and more people each year, and are prioritizing our energy based on the survey as well as our registration numbers. Camp was rated as our most important youth program. We are expanding our Audubon Discovery Camp program significantly this year with the addition of our Cool Spring Preserve location. You shared great ideas for trips, speakers, workshop topics and other programs for the future and we are working to implement them as we can.

The survey was a critical part of the ANCA Consultation that Mike Sullivan refers to in his President's Note. We will continue to refer to the input from this survey as we prepare for our next budget year. We truly appreciate you taking the time to provide your thoughts! We are taking your feedback to heart.

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

Our Avian Neighbors

By Wil Hershberger

It is that time of year again when our visiting winter birds head north and migrants from southern latitudes will head back to nest in our area. As you can imagine, there are numerous hurdles and dangers that these migrants must overcome and endure. Finding food, avoiding predators, avoiding glass windows, towers and guidelines, persisting through the fickle nature of spring weather – and then to still be fit enough to find and defend a nesting territory and attract a mate. Wow, it is amazing that they survive at all, not to mention then raise a family.

We can help these beleaguered travelers succeed in their mission by providing safe areas to fuel up, rest, and then continue their journey. Having clean feeders, feeding areas, and water features are very important to reduce the spread of diseases that can be passed from one bird to another. Providing cover near these resources helps the birds to avoid predators by giving them an “out” to jump into in a moment of crisis. Cover should be about 20 feet from the feeders and feeding area. Feeders should be cleared of any built-up seeds or dirt that has accumulated in the bottoms and crevasses, then cleaned with warm soapy water and a soft brush. After thoroughly rinsing with clean water, disinfect the feeders with a dip in a mixture of warm water and bleach (9:1). Allow the feeders to dry and then rinse several times with clean water to remove any traces of chlorine. Once dry, the feeders are ready to be placed back into service.

Birdbaths can become very popular on frosty days when other sources of water are frozen and during dry spells. Be careful to keep the water and surfaces clean and free from accumulations of wastes and debris. Clean and disinfect the birdbaths as you do your feeders. Place birdbaths far enough from areas where predators could hide and make a surprise attack on the birds as they bathe.

Many of the birds that nest in our area will happily accept human-made homes. Birdhouses can be built for many species and can provide a learning experience for young people as they can see the benefits of their labors. Cornell’s Nest Watch program has building plans for birdhouses for dozens of species: <http://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/>. The directions for cutting and assembly are available for download there. Almost any birdhouse installation should have predator guards installed to protect the nesting birds from snakes, raccoons, cats, squirrels etc. Perhaps the easiest predator guard to install is the Nole guard made from 1/2” hardware cloth: <http://nestwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/guardnoe.pdf>. Special care should be observed in the placement of nesting boxes. The orientation, height, and mounting can have a profound effect on the acceptance of the box by the birds and the success of the nesting attempt.

With the advent of wireless videos cameras, it is now possible to install a small camera in a nest box and keep an eye on how the nestlings are doing from the comfort of your home. Everything you need to know to prepare a monitored nest box is right here:

<http://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/installing-a-nest-box-camera/>

With a little effort, you can help our resident and migrant nesting birds succeed at bringing another generation into the world to continue their species and our enjoyment of our avian neighbors.



Photos of Eastern Bluebirds © Wil Hershberger

Nest Box

Eastern, Western, and Mountain Bluebirds;
Tree and Violet-green Swallows

Eastern Bluebird
© Cedar Breeder

Note: Western Bluebirds need a 1 1/2" diameter round entrance hole and Mountain Bluebirds need a 1 3/8" diameter round entrance hole. Swallows are smaller than bluebirds and will be able to enter holes 1 3/4" or larger.

front

sides (cut 2)

Two "pivot" nails allow side to swing out for cleaning.

Use a nail or screw at bottom to keep side closed.

back

roof

floor

Completed Box

Increase Your Chances of Nest Box Success!
Information on natural history, habitat, nest box placement, and management for Midwestern birds is available in *Woodworking for Wildlife*. Order at minnesotasbookstore.com

Note: these dimensions are for 3/4" thick board. Some cedar boards are 5/8" thick. If so, the floor must be 3 3/4" wide, not 4".

Lumber: 1" x 6" x 6'

back	roof	front	side	side	floor
------	------	-------	------	------	-------

PVAS Events

Advocacy Forum on April 13th

As citizens and community members, we all have relevant issues and concerns, but how do we best make our voices heard? Effective advocacy is an important tool for individuals to amplify their message. Join PVAS for the “Advocacy Forum: A Guide for the Uneasy Environmentalists” on April 13th from 6:30-8pm at the Frank Art Center Auditorium on Shepherd University’s campus in Shepherdstown, WV.

This non-partisan event aims to empower participants who are concerned about environmental and resource conservation issues. A panel of local professionals will speak about what advocacy strategies are most effective at the local, state and national level. Panelists and speakers include former Democratic State Representative Stephen Skinner; Dr. David Didden, Director of Jefferson County Public Health; Mary Anne Hitt, of the Sierra Club; Christian Thomas of SkyTruth; and Wendy Radcliff, Lawyer, Advocate, Organizer, and former WVDEP Environmental Advocate, based in Charleston, WV.

The panel will be moderated by PVAS board member Joe Hankins and will be followed by a Q & A session from the audience. A post-event gathering from 8:30 onward will be held at the Domestic Restaurant: 117 E. German St, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

This event is free and open to everyone. Registration is appreciated and can be completed on the PVAS website or by emailing bridget@potomacaudubon.org. For more information you may also contact Patty Bachner at 202-365-8002 or impattyb@gmail.com.

April 12 Program Will Focus on Bird Songs

Our monthly program for April will feature a presentation entitled “A Celebration of Birdsong.” The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 12 at the Hospice of the Panhandle facility in Kearneysville. Admission will be free and everyone is welcome to attend.

The speaker will be Wil Hershberger, of Hedgesville, one of the area’s leading naturalists. He will use his own photographs and sound recordings, as well as videography by Lang Elliot, to follow the songs and sounds of birds from winter into early summer. He will focus on a few species to demonstrate the uniqueness of birdsong, what it tells other birds about the singer, and the fine details of different species’ vocal performances.

Wil has been photographing and recording the natural world for more than two decades and his work has been published in many magazines, calendars, and books. He is coauthor of *The Songs of Insects*, a book and audio CD published by Houghton-Mifflin Company.

His recordings of birds, frogs and insects are archived at the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Wil is also one of the instructors in our always-popular “Birding 101” program. His website can be found at natureimagesandsounds.com.

The Hospice facility’s address is 330 Hospice Lane, Kearneysville. The Audubon events will be held in the main meeting room of the facility’s Main Office building. There is plenty of parking at the facility.

For more information go to the PVAS website or contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org, or 703-303-1026.

Volunteer Spotlight

Have You Met Bob Dean?

If not, we know you should because Bob is a well-loved, well-known, and founding member of PVAS! Because of Bob’s commitment to serve, he has benefited PVAS in countless ways.

One of Bob’s most prominent titles has been Birding 101 co-instructor, which he passionately taught for 30 years! In addition to that impressive commitment, Bob also actively leads field trips, bird banding trips and owl prowls for PVAS. His trips fill up so quickly that he often agrees to lead second or third events in order to accommodate our eager participants. Bob is a regular instructor for our Master Naturalist Bird Class and he enjoys volunteering at Dolly Sods Bird Banding Station.

Aside from his vast amount of bird expertise, Bob plays a mean guitar! The PVAS community is often treated to Bob’s guitar playing and voice at events like Fireflies, Fiddles and Frogs and numerous fundraising events. Bob is a carpenter extraordinaire and can often be seen on rooftops in and around the Eastern Panhandle. His carpentry skills have aided an infinite number of PVAS projects throughout the years.

PVAS is forever grateful for Bob’s generosity, commitment, wisdom and easy-going smile. We know all of our PVAS volunteers are great! If you know someone who others should meet, please contact Bridget Tinsley at bridget@potomacaudubon.org.



PVAS Events

Wildflower Walk Set for April 15

PVAS is sponsoring a spring wildflower walk along the C&O Canal near Shepherdstown, on Saturday, April 15. Local wildflower experts, Mary Duke and Kathryn Henry, will lead the walk. It will be free, and everyone with an interest is welcome to attend, including families with children. Pre-registration is requested, and available on the PVAS website.

Participants should plan to meet at 9:00 a.m. in the large C&O Canal parking lot on Canal Road, three-tenths of a mile south of the Shepherdstown/Sharpsburg bridge. From there, the walk group will proceed north on the Canal to the bridge, and then take a trail known as the Ferry Hill Trail up to the top of the ridge that overlooks the Potomac at that point.

A wide variety of wildflowers should be on display along the way, including trillium, trout lilies, shooting star, bluebells, columbine, hepatica, sedums and ferns. The Ferry Hill Trail is rather steep, so that portion of the walk should be considered moderately difficult. The rest of the walk will be on level ground and easy.

The total time for the walk will be about 2 1/2 hours. Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for prevailing weather conditions, and bring water.

For more info, contact Krista Hawley at 703-303-1026 or adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org.



Photo of *Hepatica americana* courtesy of virginiawildflowers.org

Family and Youth Programs

Spring Break Library Programs for Families

This month PVAS will host a week of spring break library programs at locations in Jefferson and Berkeley Counties. Kids will travel around the world through story time and crafts, while learning about our planet's amazing nature and wildlife.

Kids will receive a 'nature passport' when they attend their first program, and different stickers will be offered at each stop around the globe! All programs are free and open to the public, for ages 4 and up. Below is the tentative program schedule.

Check the PVAS website for updates.

Monday, April 17: South Jefferson Public Library, 11am-12pm, Australian animals and dot painting

Tuesday, April 18: North Berkeley Public Library, 11am-12pm, Asia's mountains and origami; Martinsburg Public Library, 2-3pm, Africa and handprint peace trees

Wednesday, April 19: Shepherdstown Public Library, 11am-12pm, South American rainforests and rain sticks

Thursday, April 20: Charles Town Library, 11am-12pm, The Arctic and edible igloo building

Friday, April 21: Bolivar-Harpers Ferry Public Library, 11am-12pm, North American butterflies and pasta rings



Homeschool Adventures

We have begun providing monthly homeschool programs designed for kids ages 5-10. Programs are offered at Cool Spring Preserve and Yankauer Preserve and include science-based activities that reflect on specific nature-based themes.

Upcoming program: **Spring Wildflowers:** Friday, May 5, at Yankauer Nature Preserve.

Family and Youth Programs

Upcoming Wee Naturalists Programs

PVAS's Wee Naturalists programs are designed to introduce preschoolers (ages 3-5) to the natural world through walks, circle time, games, crafts, and activities! Our upcoming Wee Naturalist programs include:

Chickens Aren't the Only Ones: Tuesday, April 11, at Cool Spring Nature Preserve, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

This program includes a story followed by an egg hunt for eggs that are painted to look like wild bird's eggs. Everyone is encouraged to bring his or her own basket for the egg hunt.

Flowers Are Calling: Tuesday, May 16, 2017, at Yankauer Nature Preserve, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

The wildflowers are in, so we're going on a wildflower hike! Our book for the month is *Flowers Are Calling*.

The cost is \$5 (single fee) per child/adult partner (**there is no extra charge for an additional child under age 2**). Pre-registration is required. Please register on the PVAS website: www.potomacaudubon.org/Family-Events-Calendar.

Wee Naturalists Are Coming To Martinsburg!

Our monthly Wee Naturalist program for preschoolers and a caring adult is coming to Martinsburg this summer! PVAS is partnering with Berkeley County Parks and Recreation to offer the program twice a month at the Gateway Children's Garden Park, on Ambrose Avenue, near the Martinsburg Mall.

Details on dates and themes will be coming soon. The Gateway Garden Club was behind the effort to create a park that would be an exploration experience for children and encourage physical play. It features a dinosaur "dig" and bones, a mini-Zip Line, butterfly garden, "hiking" trail up to the top of the "mountain," and other discovery areas.

It was a true community effort built with grant and donated funds and is open April-October. PVAS is excited that we will be able to offer programs there this year. If you'd like more information on the Wee Naturalist program, contact Ellen Murphy (Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org).

PVAS Helps Burke Street Kids

One of the focus areas for the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle is the Burke Street Promise Initiative in downtown Martinsburg. This 40-block area around Burke Street Elementary School has a high number of families living in poverty and in need of community support.

Since February, a collaborative program of the United Way and Shepherd University students has provided a program designed to support families with very young children with preschool preparation activities. Their older siblings have the opportunity to interact with college students and other adults as they work on homework and play games in an effort to broaden their horizons.

In March, the weekly afterschool program has allowed PVAS to bring a bit of nature to the participants. PVAS AmeriCorps volunteer, Alison Zak, has met with the small group of elementary-and-middle-school aged children and shared our animal skins, led story times, and played high-energy animal games with these fun loving students.



Spring School Programs Continue

Even though March produced a late winter snow, our spring school programs are concentrating on spring themes! Insects is the most popular theme requested by kindergarten classes each spring, and PVAS will be teaching that very subject at Ranson, Opequon, and Valley View Elementary Schools in April and May.

The Pre-Kindergarten classes at Wee Disciples will focus on Earth Day activities in late April. Classes at Back Creek Valley, St. Joseph's, and Wee Disciples, where PVAS has been visiting classrooms every month all year, will cap their program with a visit to one of our nature preserves. Most have chosen Stauffer's Marsh, although the St. Joseph's third grade is looking for a "walk in the woods" at Yankauer Preserve. There's still time to arrange a program!

Contact Ellen Murphy (Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org) if your class would like to arrange one.

Family and Youth Programs

Outdoor Watershed Education

Watershed Education field trips began in March and will go until the end of May. Collectively 53 fourth grade classrooms from Jefferson, Berkeley and Morgan Counties have participated in the PVAS Watershed Education program this spring. The outdoor field day events take place at a local water tributary.

Students apply their new skill sets in a real-world setting by hunting for macroinvertebrates, performing water quality tests, making water filtration devices, learning about the water cycle and observing clues to assess watershed health. These field days are rewarding for everyone involved, and they wouldn't be possible without the help of tireless PVAS volunteers.



Thank you to the spring PVAS watershed team and our volunteers, Sandy Brown, Lou Scavnicky, Mary Lynn Robinson, and Mary Beth Ross, for helping to make this program a tremendous success!

Camp Programs

There's Still Time To Sponsor a Camper!

Each year, PVAS provides financial assistance to families that value the camp experience, but circumstances make it hard for them to participate.

Financial assistance applications are due by early April and the scholarship committee works hard to place campers in sleep-over camps like the Junior Nature Camp in Wheeling or the Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies in Capon Bridge. We always have additional requests for day camp assistance after the due date, however, usually from parents who have just heard about the opportunity to apply. We want every child to spend a week at Audubon Discovery Camp regardless of their family's circumstances!

Your donation of \$50 will help send a kid to camp! A donation of \$100 will help more and a donation of \$150 will sponsor a child for an entire week of Audubon Discovery Camp! Donations can be sent to Scholarship Donations, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

Our camp scholarship committee will make sure your funds are well used to send a kid to camp. And a huge thank you to the individuals and local garden clubs who have already made a donation to the financial assistance fund this year!

Summer Camps

Our Audubon Discovery Camp registration opened in February, and sessions are filling quickly! Sessions run from **June 5 to July 28** and are offered at both Yankauer Nature Preserve in Berkeley County and at Cool Spring Preserve in Jefferson County, WV. This year, for an additional fee, we will be offering both before and after care for all sessions held at Cool Spring Preserve.

Our camps offer hands-on, experiential learning, as campers engage in active investigations in a variety of natural habitats. Our goal is for campers to gain a better understanding of their role in the natural world using all five senses and exploring with mind and body.

Campers learn survival skills such as shelter building, orienteering and fire building at **Camp Survivor**, explore the marsh and meadow habitats at **Mud Pies and Dragonflies**, and learn about the lives of native people and early pioneers of the region at **Blast from the Past. Birds, Bugs and Bats** includes a family overnight campout at Cool Spring Preserve. Camps for preschool aged kids include **Nature Buddies** and **Out of the Nest**.

For middle schoolers, **Outdoor Adventurer** camp includes activities such as caving, biking, geocaching and hiking. For high schoolers, we offer a **Teen Photo Camp** at Shepherd University.

Details about camp sessions, session dates and online registration can be found at: www.PotomacAudubon.org/discovercamp.

Birding News and Events

Join April 22 Earth Day Bird Walk at Antietam Battlefield

Get an early start on this year's Earth Day by joining PVAS for a bird walk along the Final Attack Trail on the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, MD on Saturday, April 22.

The walk is free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of their birding skills. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available on the PVAS website. Participants should plan to meet walk leader Sandy Sagalkin at the Burnside Bridge at 8:00 a.m. The walk will last about 2 1/2 to 3 hours, and cover mostly level terrain.

Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water. PVAS will provide binoculars for those who do not have their own. Various trip details could change depending on weather or recent bird sightings.

The trail the walk will follow is in the area where the Union Army made its final advance to drive the Confederate Army from Maryland on September 17, 1862, only to be turned back by A.P. Hill's final Confederate counterattack. It is also the site of an extensive effort by the Antietam National Battlefield to restore and preserve native grasslands on the Otto Farm fields in the Battlefield's southwest corner.

For more information, contact Sandy at sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com or 240-291-6465.

April 26 Bird Walk at Hagerstown Kiwanis Park

PVAS, the City of Hagerstown, and the Washington County Bird Club will sponsor a bird walk at Hagerstown's new Kiwanis Park on Wednesday, April 26. The walk, led by local birding expert Sandy Sagalkin, will start at 8:00 a.m. and last one and a half hours.

The trip will focus on a variety of birds and will cover easy terrain. It will be a perfect trip for beginner birders and will include working on birding skills. However, all levels of birders will be welcome.

It will be free and open to everyone, but pre-registration will be required. Register and get full information on the City of Hagerstown's website at www.hagerstownmd.org/birdwalks. The Kiwanis park is located at 371 Dynasty Drive in Hagerstown, behind the medical professional buildings on Opal Court, off Eastern Boulevard.

For more information, contact Sandy at sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com or 240-291-6465.

Harpers Ferry Bird Walk Set for April 26

Join Deb Hale for a bird walk at Murphy's Farm in the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on Wednesday, April 26.

Participants will meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Harper's Ferry National Historical Park Visitor Center parking lot off U.S. 340, just west of Harpers Ferry. The parking lot will be open even though it is not staffed until 9:00 a.m.

Please note that after the walk is over and the lot is staffed, the Park Service will charge a fee of \$10 per vehicle to leave the lot, unless you have an annual Park pass or a NPS Golden Eagle pass.

The walk will be free and anyone with an interest is welcome. The hike will last about 3 hours and involve about 2½ miles of easy to moderate walking, without any steep terrain.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged, but not required. Easy registration is available on the Society's website. Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring insect repellent and water. For more information, contact Deb at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-1528.

April 30 C&O Canal Bird Walk

PVAS is teaming up again this year with the National Park Service to offer bird walks along the C&O Canal towpath in the Williamsport, MD area. The first walk, led by local birding expert Sandy Sagalkin, will be held on Sunday, April 30. It will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the Canal Visitor Center at Cushwa Basin, and it will last about two hours.

The walk will be free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of their birding skills. It will involve easy walking over level ground, and children and families are welcome. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required; registration is available on the PVAS website.

The Canal towpath offers good birding opportunities, as it is a major stop for migrating birds and neotropical birds that breed in our area.

Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along insect repellent and drinking water. Binoculars will be provided if needed.

Directions to the Williamsport Canal Visitor Center can be found on the Canal website at www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit/williamsportvisitorcenter.htm. The walk may be canceled or postponed if weather conditions are poor. For more information, contact Sandy at sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com or 240-291-6465.

Birding News and Events

April 8 is Race for the Birds!

PVAS's 16th annual "This Race is for the Birds!" is almost here! It will be held on Saturday, April 8, at Wild Goose Farm, 2935 Shepherd Grade Road in Shepherdstown. The farm is just across the road from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center.

The 2016 event will include two professionally timed races: one 5 kilometers long and another 10 kilometers long. There will also be a one-mile "Fun Run" for children under 10 years of age. In addition, adults and families who wish to walk or jog the 5K course at their own pace may do so.

The 5K and 10K races will follow non-technical cross-country trails through the farm's scenic fields, rolling hills and woods. The course will be suitable for all runners. The 5K and 10K races will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the children's Fun Run will be held at 10:45 a.m.

The children's Fun Run will be free. Fees for the other portion of the event will range from \$25 to \$35. You can save money by registering online.

To register, and for more information, go to the race website at www.raceforthebirds.org. Email Race4birds@potomacaudubon.org with any questions you may have. Race day registration is offered, but please note that registration fees increase by \$5 on race day. All proceeds will be used to support PVAS educational programs, and all fees are tax deductible.



April 8 Race Sponsors Announced

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society has announced that 40 local businesses and organizations are sponsoring its 2017 "Race for the Birds." The lead sponsors of this year's race are the owners of Wild Goose Farm, Jay Clemens and Caroline Seen, who have been named "Diamond Level" sponsors for donating the use of the facility.

United Capital Financial Advisers LLC is the race's "Platinum Level" sponsor, contributing \$1,000. The accompanying photo shows the following members of the United Capital firm: from left to right, Amanda Runkles, Leota Trainor, Ashlyn Paul, Stacy Lindberg, and Rob Hoxton, Managing Director.



The race's other sponsors are as follows:

Gold Level (\$500 or more): Friends of Mark Benedict, Spirit of Jefferson, The Journal, The Observer, The Shepherdstown Chronicle, Sustainable Solutions, Two Rivers Treads, and Trees 101.

Silver Level (\$250 or more): Associated Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons, Briarwood Dental Center, Caribbean Islands Travel Service, Chick-fil-A of Martinsburg, Jefferson Security Bank, Patthoff General Dentistry, Progressive Printing, Roach Energy / ROCS Convenience, and Shepherd University Wellness Center.

Bronze Level (\$100 or more): AC&T; Anne R. Basham, DDS; The Bavarian Inn; Bros and Bras; d'Accord Boutique; Depot Florist; Dickinson and Wait Craft Gallery; domestic restaurant; German Street Coffee & Candlery; The Press Room; Grapes and Grains Gourmet; John A. Draper, Jr., MD; La Trattoria Italian Eatery, Martinsburg; Morgan Academy; Mountain View Solar; Potomac-Mecklenburg Garden Club; Reid's Distributors; Ted Leslie, DDS; William F. Queen, DDS & Whitney Queen Spry, DDS; Shepherdstown Sweet Shop; and The Skinner Law Firm.

A sincere thank you to all of our sponsors.

Birding News and Events

Wild Goose Farm Hosting April 8 Audubon Race

The new owners of Shepherdstown's Wild Goose Farm are providing the use of the historic property and its barn for this year's "This Race is for the Birds." on Saturday, April 8. Proceeds from the race will be used to support the activities of PVAS, which include environmental education and outreach for children and adults in the region.

Wild Goose Farm is located just north of Shepherdstown at 2935 Shepherd Grade Road. It was originally owned and developed by sons of Shepherdstown's founder, Thomas Shepherd, in the early 19th Century. It currently comprises 173 acres and includes a mansion dating to 1810, a bank barn dating to the 1840s, and numerous additional outbuildings and ponds.

It was purchased in 2016 by Jay Clemens and Caroline Seen, who are operating it as an event venue.

The accompanying photo shows, from left to right, Alec and Anthony Mawing, caretakers at the farm; farm owner Jay Clemens; and PVAS executive director Kristin Alexander.



Race for the Birds Volunteers Needed!

Are you interested in volunteering on April 8th at Wild Goose Farm?

We would love your help! Volunteers will help with a variety of tasks including; handing out t-shirts, taking 'day-of' registrations, finish line help, directing runners on the course, etc.

Please visit raceforthebirds.org and click on the Volunteers tab or email Carolyn Thomas at crthomas25443@gmail.com.

Register Now for the Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon

May will mark the 8th annual Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon. Similar to a walkathon, a Birdathon helps raise money as participants accept donations or pledges per species counted in a 24-hour period. This fun event is an important fundraiser for PVAS, and everyone can be involved! Registration is open on the Potomac Valley Audubon website until April 28, 2017 and donations are always accepted.

To participate you can create your own team, or join an existing team and register online. Participants will search for and count as many birds as possible during a consecutive 24-hour period. If you prefer to stay in one place, you can also participate in a "Big Sit." In this case you count as many bird species as possible within a fifty-foot diameter circle of your choosing within the 24-hour period.

Donations can be made to a specific team or by pledging to donate a dollar amount (\$1, \$2, \$5, or more) for each bird species counted by a participant or team. Pledge form applications and donations are accepted online at <http://potomacaudubon.org/birdathon.html>. Donations can also be made by mailing a check to: PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. Please note the Birdathon or Big Sit Team you are donating to in the memo line.

There is no entrance fee, registration is easy, and prizes are awarded at the end. Teams must consist of 2-5 participants (unless a person registers for the Big Sit). All you have to do is get together with friends or family and form a team. Identify your team members, choose a leader, select a team name and decide whether your team will be competing in one of the special categories, such as youth or new birder teams. For questions, or to find an existing team to join please contact Bridget Tinsley at bridget@potomacaudubon.org.

Notes from the Preserves

Upcoming Events at the Nature Preserves

Spring is a special season at the PVAS nature preserves. Migrating birds are returning, summer camp kids have yet to arrive, spring wildflowers are blooming and the trees are budding. Several events are scheduled at our nature preserves, and correspondingly there are volunteer service days for those who would like to help with some spring cleaning. Whether you're out for a hike, birdwatching or helping clear trails, we hope you visit the PVAS nature preserves this spring.

Yankauer: Volunteer service event for preserve maintenance on April 21 from 9am-12pm. Wildflower walk on April 23 from 1-3pm.

Eidolon: Celebrate Earth Day by lending a helping hand at Eidolon on April 22. Volunteers will be working to clear trails from 10am-2pm. Food and drinks will be provided, and carpooling from Jefferson and Berkeley counties can be arranged.

Cool Spring: Lend a hand to help native spring wildflowers on May 6. Volunteers will learn to identify common spring invasive plants and learn about how to best control and eradicate them.

Stauffer's Marsh: Habitat restoration work is underway in the Stauffer's field. A prescribed fire will be performed by Sustainable Solutions, LLC and we expect to begin a wood turtle survey soon.

For information regarding the preserves or any events at each site, please contact Bridget Tinsley at bridget@potomaudubon.org.

The Yankauer Bathrooms are Done!

A HUGE thank you goes out to Lou Scavnicky for his leadership and skills in getting the composting toilet facility up and running and officially approved by Berkeley County! A lovely porch is now complete which allows the building to be ADA compliant. The building was not quite as easy to put together as anticipated, so there was quite a bit of problem solving involved. The county building inspector came out last week and it passed beautifully.

A huge thank you to ALL who were involved with this project: Bob Dean, Stan and Josiah Corwin-Roach, Gary and Diane Sylvester, Jeff Feldman, Tony Erwin, and others... We so appreciate the time and effort of this amazing crew. This huge accomplishment wouldn't have happened without you.



Purple Martin House Installed at Cool Spring

A new Purple Martin house was recently installed at PVAS's Cool Spring Preserve.

The martin house was selected and delivered by Chip Hussion and the Purple Martin Society of Frederick (PMSFM). PMSFM presented a lecture on Purple Martins last year at a PVAS monthly program. Amy Moore, Cool Spring Preserve's Site Manager and Chip installed the new martin house in mid March, ahead of the arrival of martins to our area. We have high hopes martins will move in this year and establish a colony for years of enjoyment for visitors to Cool Spring Preserve.

Learn more about Purple Martins at PMSFM's website: PMSFM.org.



Conservation

Chimney Swift Project Update

The Chimney Swifts have begun their northern migration, and have already been seen in Alabama and Florida, according to www.ebird.org. Their return is a reminder of the importance and timeline of our “Raise the Roost” conservation project.

The effort continues to gain momentum as engineer Richard Klein of Alpha Associates, Inc recently agreed to help with the design of the Chimney Swift tower on Shepherd University campus. The site selection will be finalized after further engineering assessments are complete. We are still in the early stages of the project development, but look forward to seeing a structural design of the tower and finalizing dates for construction. Donations toward the Chimney Swift tower construction will help us with these initial expenses. Your support can be given in many ways: through a tax-deductible donation www.potomacaudubon.org/support, by attending “This Race is for the Birds”, or by participating in the Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon during May.

The “Raise the Roost” project continues to receive tremendous support by the community. We have had some generous financial donations toward the project, and we continue to get a lot of publicity. The Observer will publish an article about the Shepherdstown Chimney Swift project in an upcoming edition. Updates of the project can also be found online at <http://potomacaudubon.org/ChimneySwifts>.

The Monarch Alliance Joins the PVAS Family

By Sandy Sagalkin

The Monarch Alliance is thrilled to become part of the PVAS family, a partnership that will give us access to the assets and membership of an amazing organization. I started The Monarch Alliance in 2015 after visiting the Monarch sanctuaries in Mexico in 2014. Even though 2014 was the year of the lowest census taken at the reserves, the experience was like walking into a Walt Disney dream world. I was blown away by what I saw, and determined to bring my experiences back home to others.

We are now two years old, and so far most of our programs have been in my home state of Maryland -- but it's now time to expand into West Virginia.

In Washington County, we have worked closely with the City of Hagerstown, establishing a beautiful Monarch Waystation at Kiwanis Park. We have also initiated a number of other waystations in the city and the surrounding county, and the newest one will be with Washington County at Camp Harding in Big Pool, MD.

We have held butterfly ID workshops, Junior Monarch Alliance programs (including ones at North Jefferson Elementary School and at Hagerstown's Discovery Station), educational programs, butterfly counts, tagging demonstrations (including one with PVAS at NCTC), milkweed and nectar plant sales, and have also participated in festivals. We have a special interest in participating in the monarch citizen science programs of Journey North, Monarch Watch and the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project.

I want to welcome you to attend our first Annual Meeting on April 29 at NCTC and hear about our programs. We will start the day with a bird walk at 8:30 a.m. See the schedule on the PVAS website.

I hope you will join us, and participate in our programs. We will soon have a link to the PVAS website. The Monarch Alliance website is www.themonarchalliance.org; we also have an active Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/theMonarchAlliance/?ref=br_rs. You can get on our mailing list or offer to help our programs by sending me an email at sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com.

My sincere thanks to PVAS, and welcome to PVAS members.

May 20 is the Second Annual PVAS Native Plant Sale

While the weather may attempt to fool us, Spring is certainly around the corner! A season dedicated to vibrancy and new beginnings, when our ambitions overcome reason as we plan our gardens, summer adventures, and trips to unload our past lives at the thrift store. We hope that your love for the season gets the best of you, and inspires you to learn about native plants.

PVAS will be hosting a 2nd annual Native Plant Sale on May 20th from 9am to 4pm behind the Shepherdstown Public Library. This event aims to promote Potomac pollinators, by providing the public with a large native plant selection as well as horticultural, ecological and apiculture specialists. The PVAS Native Plant Sale promises to bring the coveted natives to you!

Many of our vendors accept order requests in advance. If you are looking for some butterfly attractants you can also pre-order swamp milkweed and butterfly weed on the PVAS website. For more information, or to fill out a vendor application please visit: www.potomacaudubon.org/Native-Plant-Sale.



Conservation

Horses, and Warblers, and Trees - Oh, My!

By Linda DeGraf

Wonder what those three have in common? So did the intrepid group that found its way down the long gravel road past Shannondale to the Rolling Ridge Foundation lands Sunday afternoon, March 19. We spent about an hour discussing a Forest Stewardship Plan that had been written for these 1400 acres of forestland that are protected by a conservation easement with the Appalachian Trail Commission. In light of the triple stresses of deer, invasive species, and overcrowded trees, work is underway to improve forest health and resiliency for the sake of the land and its wildlife.

Kyle Aldinger talked about a program with the Natural Resources Conservation Service that is funding projects in various parts of West Virginia that dovetail with guidelines for habitat improvement for the cerulean warbler. Opening up canopy spaces by selective thinning of tree stands and working toward restoring native understory benefits the trees and the warblers, as well as other wildlife.



“But what about the horses?,” you ask! And so did everyone standing out in the clearing, until Lars Prillaman and his draft horse, May, trotted up behind them. Lars and May demonstrated a low-impact method of horse-logging to bring logs out of the woods once they have been felled. May calmly listened to Lars’ voice commands and deftly threaded her way between trees, putting 1700 pounds into the job of bringing timber resources out. Then she charmed the crowd while Lars explained how they work together. They are part of a larger collaboration currently underway between Rolling Ridge, TimberLandConsulting, NRCS, Horse in the Forest, and Sustainable Solutions to explore how restorative forestry can be done sustainably and effectively.

Linda DeGraf is chairperson of the board for the Rolling Ridge Foundation, and a Potomac Valley Master Naturalist.

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

Master Naturalists to Hold Third Annual Spring Gathering at Cacapon State Park

The third annual Master Naturalist Spring Gathering, themed “A Leopold Spring,” will be held on Sunday, April 30th at Cacapon State Park.

We will gather at the picnic area in front of the Nature Center, and kick off the day with a bird walk led by Lynne Wiseman at 8:30 a.m. Clark Dixon will demonstrate Dutch Oven cooking, and you are invited to bring your own Dutch oven, ingredients, and favorite recipe to share. Tanner Haid will give a presentation on Urban Forestry, for which MNs can receive education credit, and you can build your own Leopold bench with Paul Breitenbach. There will also be an afternoon hike featuring special aspects of Cacapon State Park. More presentations and details on the bench-building project will follow.

Please bring a covered dish to share at our noontime lunch, and also bring your own plate, cup, and utensils. Water and tea will be provided. Stay tuned for updates on the PVAS website, and via email blasts.

Master Naturalists Nature Photo/Art Exhibit Fundraiser

During the month of May, the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists will be featured in a Nature Photo/Art Exhibit at the Fire Hall Gallery in the Charles Town Visitor Center. The exhibition will kick off with a reception Friday evening, May 6, and hang until Sunday May 28.

A portion of the proceeds from any pieces sold will go to support the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist program. The Exhibition will be built around 4 themes: Birds, Animals, (Mammals/Reptiles/Insects), Plants and Landscape, and People in Nature.

2017 Master Naturalist Conference

The 2017 Master Naturalist Conference will be held at Chief Logan State Park and Lodge June 9-11. This annual conference presents a great opportunity for Certified Master Naturalists to earn education hours for recertification. Registration will open very soon.

Go to www.mnofwv.org for more information and to register. Individuals who are not Master Naturalists but who are interested in natural history may also register and attend.

Did You Know...?

Did you know that it's easy to complete your PVMN certification or recertification this year?

You can find the certification forms and answers to your questions about the program on our website: <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/masternat>. If you still need to certify, take a look at the schedule of classes for the upcoming year and contact Amy Evrard (amyyoung4@gmail.com) to see if there is room for you to attend the classes you need. To complete recertification this year, be on the lookout for education and volunteer opportunities in e-mails from Krista Hawley. If you have any questions about how many courses and volunteer hours you still need, contact Larry Smith at msmith19@frontiernet.net.

We want to help you become, and remain, a Master Naturalist!

Volunteer Service at Cacapon State Park

Cacapon State Park will hold its Annual Volunteer Clean Trails Day on April 29. Volunteers are needed to help re-blaze the trail, trim back limbs and briars, and move other obstructions, such as down trees and branches along the trail. Meet at the Nature Center at 8:00 a.m. Wear appropriate clothes for outdoor work.

Renee Finchan, Park Naturalist, needs help at the nature center throughout the year, especially spring, summer, and fall busy seasons. Contact Renee for more information about either of these worthwhile volunteer opportunities: 304-258-1022 ext. 5209

All volunteer work counts toward recertification for Certified Master Naturalists as well as initial 30-hour certification.

Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds Radio Show

Each Sunday at 9:30 AM, host Ray Brown presents, *Talkin' Birds*, a live and interactive radio show all about wild birds and the beauty of nature: attracting birds to your backyard, feeding them, and learning more about them. *Talkin' Birds* features expert guests and contests for prizes like bird feeders and other bird-related items each week. On the air since 2006, over 600 shows have been produced, encouraging appreciation of our natural world and promoting preservation and protection of our environment. Find out more about *Talkin' Birds* at: <http://www.talkinbirds.com/>, and on Facebook. Listen to the live stream from WATD, every Sunday morning at 9:30, and call in to the Mystery Bird Contest. Past shows are archived as podcasts on Ray's site. Listen to a sample podcast here: <https://goo.gl/Q7Vlwo> where Ray broadcasts from the Canopy Tower in Soberania National Park, Panama.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

ALL of your dues will stay here to support local PVAS efforts and help us grow! And here's what you'll get:

- Member discount to many PVAS programs and events.
- A subscription to *Valley Views*, the PVAS newsletter.
- Free or reduced admission to participating nature centers and/or their programs across the country.
- E-mail alerts about events and programs (upon request).
- An invitation to a PVAS Members annual gathering.
- Discounts to participating **local businesses**.

Details available at potomacaudubon.org/member

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check for \$20 (\$15 for seniors and students). Make the check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year. For details, go to: <http://potomacaudubon.org/member>.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____

Phone (optional): _____

E-mail: _____

To save postage costs, PVAS regularly sends its newsletter by e-mail. You can be assured that we do not share email addresses with anyone. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail check here: ____.

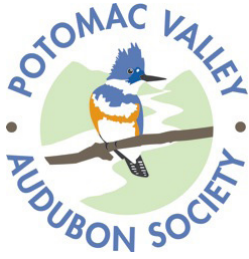
Clip and mail this form to:

Membership Chair, PVAS
PO Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443



If you'd rather join the National Audubon Society:

Some people prefer National Audubon Society membership, which includes a subscription to the Society's Audubon magazine. To become a National member, go to the Society's website at www.audubon.org and click on "join." If you join National Audubon and reside in Berkeley, Jefferson or Morgan counties in West Virginia, or in Washington County Maryland, you will automatically become a member of PVAS and have access to our events, an e-mail copy of newsletter and e-mail alerts. However almost all of your dues payments will go to the National Audubon Society; only a small percentage will go to PVAS.



Potomac Valley Audubon Society
 P O Box 578
 Shepherdstown, WV 25443
 Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 US Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 30
 Shepherdstown, WV

<http://www.potomacaudubon.org>

DATED MATERIALS

A proud partner of the United Way of
 the Eastern Panhandle and the Com-
 bined Federal Campaign.
 CFC#29061



CFC#29061

MAIL TO:

April 2017

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper

Volume 35, Issue 7

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please contact any of the board members listed here or see <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD

PVAS Board meet-
 ings take place the
 first Thursday of
 the month (Sep-
 tember through
 June). Meetings
 are open to all
 PVAS members.
 Please contact
 the President or
 Vice President if
 you would like to
 attend.

PVAS Officers and Board Members (Year of term expiration in parentheses)

- President: Michael Sullivan (2018) msullivanwv@gmail.com
- Vice President (*acting*): Jane Vanderhook (2017)..... janehook@frontiernet.net
- Secretary: Diana Gaviria (2018) jpikester@comcast.net
- Treasurer: Dan Cogswell (2017) daniel.cogswell@gmail.com
- Board Members-at-Large:
 - Clark Dixon (2017) dixonconsultants@aol.com
 - Tanner Haid (2018) Tanner.Haid@gmail.com
 - Joe Hankins (2018) joseph.hankins@gmail.com
 - Susan Jones (2018) wvbagend@frontier.com
 - Don Campbell (2017) treehouseview@comcast.net
 - Mina Goodrich (2017) larrymina@peoplepc.com
 - Patty Bain Bachner (2018)..... impattyb@gmail.com
 - Laura Davis (2018) lauradavis999@hotmail.com
 - Stephen Paradis (2018) stephen.j.paradis@gmail.com
 - Amy Evrard(2017) amyyoung4@gmail.com
- Emerita Board Member:** Jean Neely jeaneely@comcast.net

Special Contacts

- Executive Director: Kristin Alexander (304-676-3397)..... Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org
- Program Director: Ellen Murphy (304-676-8739)..... Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org
- Land and Watershed Program Manager: Bridget Tinsley Bridget@PotomacAudubon.org
- Adult Prog. Coord: Krista Hawley (703-303-1026)..... AdultPrograms@PotomacAudubon.org
- VISTA Volunteer: Erin Shaw (304-703-2510)..... admin@PotomacAudubon.org
- Web Master: Kathy Bilton kathy@fred.net
- PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis (304-754-3753)..... dianamullis@aol.com
- Valley Views editor/publisher:
 Charlotte Fremaux (301-404-8639)..... newsletter@potomacaudubon.org