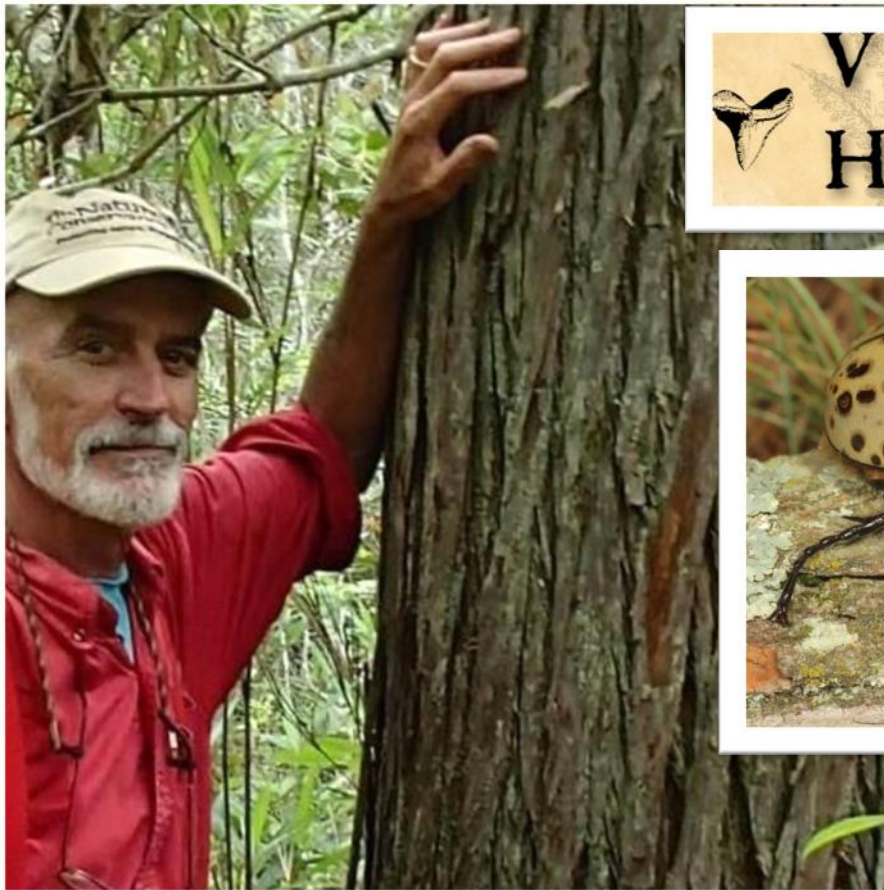


# THE SOUTHSIDER

Virginia  
Master  
Naturalist



Volunteer educators, citizen scientists and stewards helping Virginia conserve and manage natural resources



Virginia Natural  
History Society



*Male Eastern Hercules Beetle*

## Well done John, GOOD WORK!

In 2019 John Bunch was involved with an observational paper studying the Hercules Beetle and it was published this summer in the *Banisteria*, an online journal of the Virginia Natural History Society. John says, "This was a very rewarding adventure to be a part of".

**Observations on the Behavior, Biology, and Distribution of the Eastern Hercules Beetle, *Dynastes tityus* (Linnaeus) (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae; Dynastinae) in Virginia - John Bunch and Art V. Evans** can be found by visiting [virginiannaturalhistorysociety.com](http://virginiannaturalhistorysociety.com) and looking up issue 'Number 54 2020' of the *Banisteria*.

Well done to John on all his hard work and dedication. Our chapter is proud of you!



# Monarch Waystations



It's official. We are now a certified Monarch Waystation! We're seeing a lot more Monarchs this year than we've seen in a while. Maybe the swamp milkweed and butterfly weed we planted last fall are making them feel more at home

*Kathy D'Andria's, July 30th 2020*

CREATE, CONSERVE, & PROTECT  
MONARCH HABITATS





## Poison Ivy, Poison Oak – Are They the Same?

*By John Bunch*

All my life I've heard people use the names Poison Ivy and Poison Oak interchangeably. Is there really any difference? In the way that they both can cause allergic skin reactions that can itch terribly, there is no difference. But they do indeed happen to be different species and both have those tell-tale leaves-of-three. I have had run-ins with both plants and the Poison Oak seemed to have caused far greater skin reactions for me than the ivy.

Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) thrives in a variety of habitats in our area ranging from wet to dry forests, swamps, and in disturbed areas. The plant can be shrubby or seen climbing into trees, sometimes showing more leaves than the tree it's clinging to. You can really see these hairy looking vines on trees along the rivers, loving that environment. The leaves have points to them and the plants bloom with white flowers from late April into May which lead to fleshy whitish berry-like fruit which some birds will eat. And those birds seem to be quite effective at scattering the seeds in their droppings, which answers the question 'How did that Poison Ivy plant get in my yard when it wasn't there a month ago'?



Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron pubescens*), on the other hand, will only be found in a dry and usually very sandy habitat. This plant really does look like its name sake as its leaves, more rounded than the ivy leaves, cause the plant to look very much like a small oak tree. The plants I've seen are generally 1 to 2 feet tall, standing straight up in a small shrub-like form. It too blooms late April into May, bearing the same looking flowers and fruit as the ivy. Due to its low growth habit, this plant is more apt to come into contact with your ankles or legs as opposed to the ivy which would more commonly come into contact with your hands, arms, and upper body.

Getting a "Touch of the Poison" as I've heard some locals call it, is never fun. If it comes into contact with your skin, quickly washing it with soapy water goes a long way to avoid or reduce its effects.

And I'm sure you're heard of Poison Sumac (*Toxicodendron verix*), but the habitat where it grows, you'll probably never see it. You see, it's a rare plant that grows in a swampy environment and despite searching for it, I have yet to find it.





## 7 Natural Ways to Keep Bees and Ants Away From Hummingbird Feeders

*Recommended by Lynn Wehner, taken from Birds & Bloom, July 27th 2020*

### 1. Choose red saucer feeders

With their long tongues, hummingbirds can reach the nectar in saucer feeders—but insects can't.

### 2. Attach an ant moat

Ant moats are typically about 3 inches wide and 1 to 2 inches deep. Hang them above hummingbird sugar water feeders. Because ants can't swim, water is an effective deterrent. You can also buy hummingbird feeders with built-in ant moats. Keep the moats clean and filled with water.

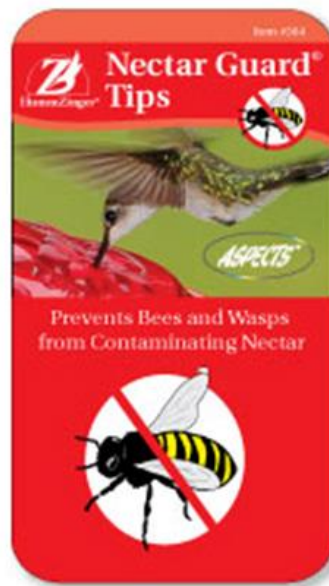


### 3. Hang feeders with fishing line

Fishing line is too thin for ants to climb, which means they won't be able to reach your hummingbird feeders for a free meal. Learn how to clean hummingbird feeders.

### 4. Slip nectar guard tips over hummingbird feeder holes

Nectar guard tips block insects like yellow jackets, but hummingbirds can still get to the nectar.



— Flexible membrane

### 5. Periodically move feeders

Just moving feeders by 3 or 4 feet will help insects lose track of them. Birds will still find them easily, but insects often won't.

### 6. Place fake wasp nests nearby

Remove all active wasp nests from the area where you want to place your feeders. Then hang the fake wasp nests in protected areas (away from rain) to deter real wasps, which are territorial and won't typically venture into a place they think is already occupied.

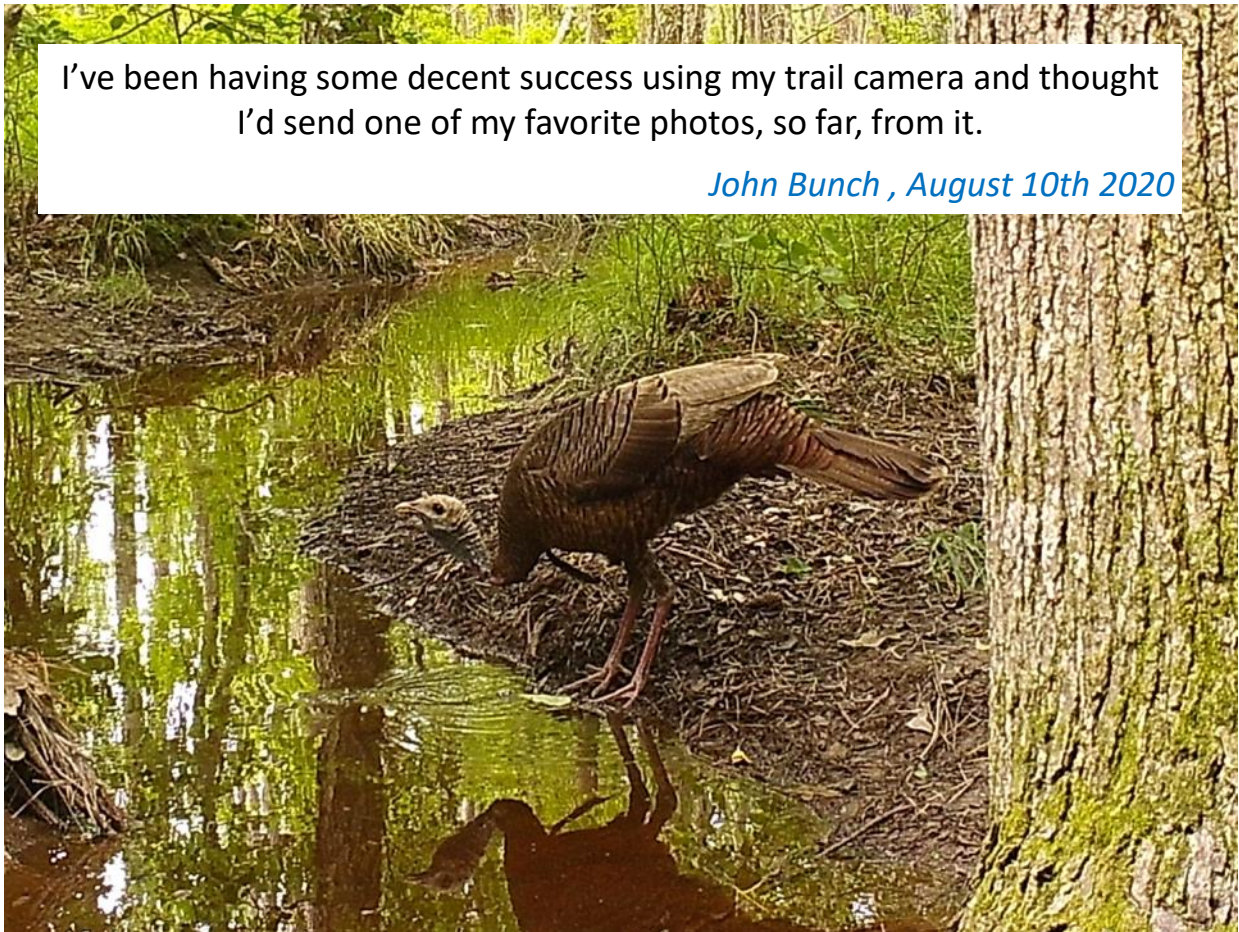
### 7. Plant bee- and hummingbird-friendly flowers

Give the bees an attractive alternative. Pollinators will flock to nectar-rich flowers in containers and the garden. Try colorful annuals like fuchsia and impatiens, and perennials like trumpet vine, bee balm and cardinal flower.

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I've been having some decent success using my trail camera and thought I'd send one of my favorite photos, so far, from it.

*John Bunch , August 10th 2020*



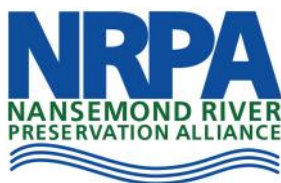
## PIONEERING NANSEMOND RIVER EFFORT TO USE OYSTER RESTORATION TO PROTECT SHORELINES

On Suffolk's Nansemond River, oyster restoration practices will be used to protect shorelines in a pioneering partnership between the Nansemond River Preservation Alliance (NRPA) and Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). These restoration projects will deploy a variety of innovative techniques and the results will be evaluated for their ability to provide benefits such as increasing oyster populations and preventing erosion. The organizations plan to select sites this year and install the projects in 2021. This groundbreaking work is made possible by a grant from Suffolk-based Bleakhorn Foundation.

"Along the Nansemond River you'll soon see how oysters can naturally reduce erosion and pollution. This will give a better understanding of restoration techniques that not only bring back the native oyster population, but also protect shorelines," said CBF Hampton Roads Director Christy Everett. "NRPA's local expertise, in-depth knowledge of the river, and network of volunteers will complement CBF's decades of oyster restoration experience to help make the Nansemond a model for using natural methods to protect shorelines."

Nature can help mitigate the impacts of erosion and flooding that threaten many waterfront properties. If waves first hit oyster structures lining the shore, some of the force of the waves is absorbed before it can cause erosion. This assists in the resurgence of marsh grasses, which also buffer waves and lessen flooding. The historic losses of oysters and wetlands in our region have reduced these natural protections.

Building shorelines using natural processes brings back those benefits and can be less costly and more effective than hard shoreline protections such as riprap and bulkheads. Oyster reefs also provide homes and food for fish, crabs, and other wildlife, and filter pollution that enters waterways. In the Nansemond River, different materials will be used to construct oyster reefs along shorelines. The results will be monitored and evaluated to determine the most effective practices in the region. These steps will lay the foundation for future shoreline oyster restoration work throughout Hampton Roads.



**CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION**  
*Saving a National Treasure*



NRPA is dedicated to raising public awareness and increasing environmental stewardship of the Nansemond River and its tributaries. For nearly a decade, over 5,000 adults and 10,000 students have participated in NRPA's community-wide projects and environmental education programs. Projects include oyster gardening and reef restoration on the river and creeks, as well as projects that reduce stormwater runoff into the waters.

"Bringing back native oysters in the Nansemond will not only help local oyster populations, but also increase underwater habitat, provide increased economic opportunities for our local watermen, and help provide cleaner water for our citizens – wins for both nature and our citizens," said Elizabeth Taraski, PhD, President/CEO, NRPA.

Oyster populations in the Nansemond River region have faced many challenges. Today, a significant amount of Suffolk's waterways remains closed to shellfish harvesting due to high bacteria levels, robbing the region of economic opportunities and limiting the areas watermen can work.

As work proceeds on the projects, local volunteers will be able to help at events to build concrete oyster reef balls. If you are interested in volunteering for the project submit your information online at the [www.NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org](http://www.NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org) or [cleanmyrivers.com](http://cleanmyrivers.com) and click on "Take Action."

Both NRPA and CBF are members of the Chesapeake Oyster Alliance, and their work on the Nansemond River in Suffolk will support the Alliance goal of adding 10 billion new oysters to the Bay by 2025. For more information, visit [chesapeakeoysteralliance.org](http://chesapeakeoysteralliance.org).

*From media release, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, July 20th 2020*





## 10 Things You Didn't Know About Oysters

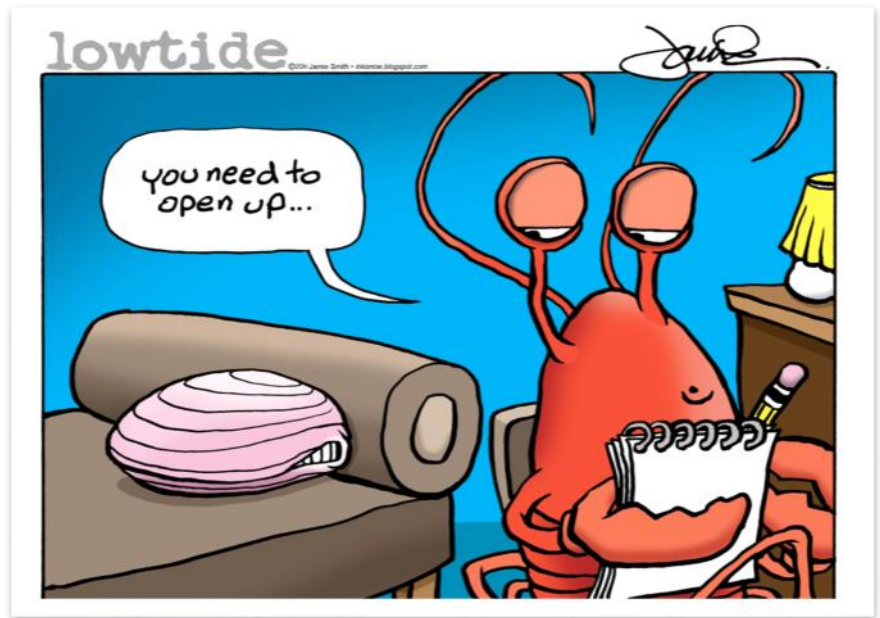
1. Oysters have been around for approximately 15 million years.

2. An oyster becomes an adult when it turns one year old and can live as long as 20 years.

3. Oysters can change their gender. In fact, they will often do it more than once.

4. Juvenile oysters are called spat.

5. Oysters breathe like fish—yes, they have gills.



6. Oysters are vegetarians. They eat algae by filtering it out of the water.

7. A single adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water a day. That's about as much water as you use in a 10-minute shower.

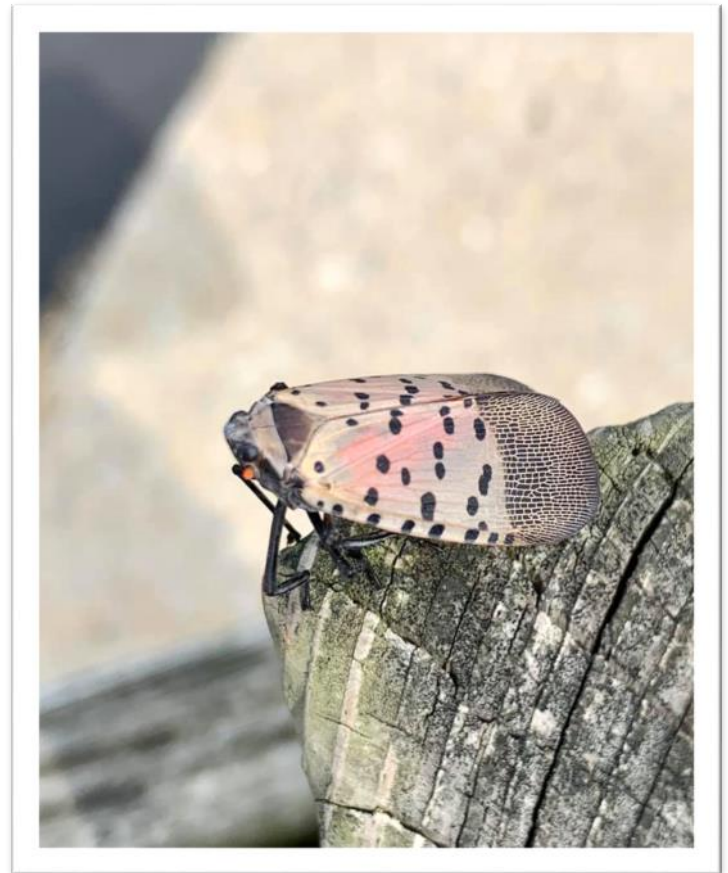
8. As oyster generations settle on one another and grow, they form reefs that provide shelter for other animals, like fish and crabs

9. A raw oyster may still be alive as you eat it. No really—if you're at a raw bar and someone shucks you a fresh oyster, it's likely still alive. Give it a poke with a fork next time to see if it moves.

10. Oyster shells are recyclable. You can return your shells at several drop off locations around the Bay, and they'll be reused to help grow juvenile oysters.

**What we've all feared,  
the Spotted Lanternfly  
has shown up locally, in  
Virginia Beach.  
Keep your  
eyes open out there.**

*Shared by John Bunch, Facebook*



The spotted lanternfly *Lycorma delicatula* (White) is an invasive insect spreading throughout southeast Asia and eastern North America. The rapid spread of this species is facilitated by the prevalence of its preferred host, tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima* (Mill.) Swingle), as well as its use of many other host plants. While the spotted lanternfly has been previously reported to use over 65 plant species, most of these reports are from Asia and may not be applicable in North America. Additionally, many of the known hosts have not been specified as feeding hosts or as egg laying substrates. To better understand the potential impacts of this invasive insect on natural and cultivated systems in North America, we reviewed records from published and unpublished results and observations of host plant use by spotted lanternfly. We aggregated 172 host plant records worldwide and found feeding behaviors associated with 103 plant taxa across 33 families and 17 orders, 20 of which were not previously known to be associated with SLF and 15 of which were not confirmed as feeding hosts. North American records account for 56 of these taxa which include native, cultivated, and nonnative species. As a result, the spotted lanternfly has the potential to impact a wide assortment of ecosystems throughout its potential range and its North American distribution may not be limited by the presence of tree of heaven.

*Abstract taken from 'Worldwide Feeding Host Plants of Spotted Lanternfly, With Significant Additions From North America'. Lawrence Barringer and Claire M. Ciafré. Shared by Claudia Lee*





Will you go into your profile on the homepage, and in the upper left side of the page, click on "edit your profile?"

Check to see if all your information is correct and up to date, then scroll down to the bottom of your interests, and in the blank box labeled "other interests," type in the word "Updated" and the date.

Thank you so much for your attention to this detail. If you have any questions, email me at [poulter22@msn.com](mailto:poulter22@msn.com), or reach out to Penny Owings at [donandpenny93@gmail.com](mailto:donandpenny93@gmail.com).

Karen Poulter

Membership Committee

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## Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Conference and Volunteer Training 2021 in Virginia Beach

The Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront will be our home base for the 2021 VMN Conference.





## Purple Martin Project

Submitted by:

Penny Owings, Jane Bauer-Constant, Della Carrico, Randy Dove, Henry McBurney, Beverley Ruegger, Kieren Smith, Andy Wilson

### Project Purpose and Value

Project will provide many benefits to bird population by providing safe and secure nesting sites for these migrating birds. Will add to the knowledge base of this species by reporting data on nesting success and great value in educational outreach efforts.

### Project Description

Procure and/or build Purple Martin (PM) houses and install in appropriate location and habitat. Chapter PM houses will be installed on public lands such as parks and courthouse property or other suitable locations. Chapter may agree to fabricate and help with installation of PM houses on private properties. Monitor as necessary during the nesting season, clean & refurbish houses as necessary and store in dry area during off season.

### Project Location

Initial recommendation by project team is for two PM houses to be installed in Windsor Castle Park and one at the Isle of Wight court house in the vicinity of the pollinator garden.

### Time Frame

This is an ongoing seasonal project. Once a colony of Purple Martins has been established, monitoring will begin May 1st and continue through the end of August. Volunteers will check the houses once a week. Amount of time to monitor will depend upon housing type. At the end of the season houses will be taken down, cleaned, and stored.

**Project approved at August meeting.**





## A Visit to the Gasburg Granite Flatrocks Preserve

By John Bunch



In the pursuit of acquiring Bryophyte county records, it was suggested that I try and visit a set of Granite Flatrocks. These rocky habitats are more southerly located, but there does happen to be some spots in Virginia that contain them. Historically, Brunswick County has had little Bryophyte collection performed in it, and it just so happens that The Nature Conservancy owns such a place and located in close proximity to Gaston Lake called the Gasburg Granite Flatrocks Preserve. This small parcel of land was set aside to preserve a couple rare-to-Virginia plants, one being Small's Stonecrop (*Diamorpha smallii*), this location being the only place in Virginia known to contain these plants. This area is not open to the public, and in order to collect there, I had to first obtain permission. That is, if I could. As collecting Bryophytes (mosses, liverworts, and hornworts) results in very little disturbance of plants or habitat, in time, that permission was granted to me. There were requirements that went along with it though, and that was to provide TNC with the specimen

names that were obtained and to make sure that the specimens were deposited into an herbarium for use in public knowledge.

So with permission granted, I enlisted Geoff Payne to help out. With Coronavirus cautions in mind, we set off in 2 vehicles, leaving on the early side to try and get sampling completed before it became too hot. We easily found where we needed to park and once out of the cars, took care the entire time to ensure safe distancing. It was only a short walk through the woods to get to the large main set of stones and quite an interesting sight to see. Vegetation mats could be seen covering parts of the flatrocks, these mats primarily being the areas we were interested in. In collecting the specimens over the



*Flatrocks Diamorpha Smallii*

course of the morning, we tried to select one

of every different species of moss and liverwort that could be found. I would collect the plant while Geoff jotted down the necessary data for each. The data that was needed for each plant was date/time, lat/long measurements, county designation, and a short description of the substrate it was found growing in.

Over the course of 4 hours of checking all the rock outcrops (of which there were roughly 5) and also in the woods along a dry stream bed, which by the way yielded quite a number of samples, we were able to come away with 35 specimens.





*Bryophytes Laid out to Dry*

Back at home, the specimens were all laid out to dry, taking care to keep the correct label with each one. After 2 days' time, the plants now being dry, excess soil was cleaned off and they were placed into individual paper packets with the appropriate information written on each. The packets were then boxed up together and put in the mail to Helen Hamilton for identification. Helen has become quite the expert in keying out Bryophytes and has agreed to handle the specimens that I collect. You see, identification is not easy. A number of specific identification books are necessary to own along with good microscopic equipment. I have the main book on liverworts and a microscope, but I'm not sure I have the patience to deal with all the details that need to be teased out before correct determination can be made. So I greatly appreciate what she's agreed to do and this partnership has worked out very well for the both of us.

After about 2 weeks, I received a response from Helen that out of those 35 samples sent to her, 14 of them were new county occurrence records for Brunswick. At least one of the mosses is a species that is rarely found in Virginia. As you can expect, these findings made us all very happy.



## Could it be?

Picture of Stanley Barlow (cohort 9) examining an American(?) chestnut tree in Isle of Wight. From all appearances it is an American chestnut tree but have sent off sample branch to the American Chestnut Foundation to have it analyzed. The tree is 37" in circumference at shoulder height. Although a little out of its historical range the tree seems to be thriving and shows no sign of being diseased.

Henry McBurney



More than a century ago, nearly four billion American chestnut trees were growing in the eastern U.S. They were among the largest, tallest, and fastest-growing trees. The wood was rot-resistant, straight-grained, and suitable for furniture, fencing, and building. The nuts fed billions of wildlife, people and their livestock. It was almost a perfect tree, that is, until a blight fungus killed it more than a century ago. The chestnut blight has been called the greatest ecological disaster to strike the world's forests in all of history.

The American chestnut tree survived all adversaries for 40 million years, then disappeared within 40.

Taken from American Chestnut Foundation





On July 4, this Barred Owl was hunting in our yard just about dusk. Stanley and I followed him from tree to tree until there wasn't enough light for me to continue taking photos without using a flash. We didn't see him catch anything but it was fun to watch him hunt and he kept an eye on us, too.

Karen Barlow





Stanley Barlow and Henry McBurney have been weeding the long leaf pines that were planted last fall at Windsor Castle Park. Stanley built and installed cages around the trees to protect them from deer. He has installed 86 cages and has about 14 more he hopes to get done.



**ONE pic of your favorite spot/tree/plant/habitat/animal/bird  
in your own back yard.**



Wildflowers and Compost Bin. Claudia Lee





Here's my favorite.....my bananas are growing so early! Usually they bloom out in August and frost kills them fast. But this year I might get lucky! Randi Dandrea



Lynn Wehner Pond in backyard



Prothonotary Warbler returns to my backyard for second year. Wayne Jones





This little arrangement at the corner of the house is a favorite. Why, because it is changeable. I like to create nursery log areas that provide habitat for the decomposers. A frog house can be placed and other pieces from around the garden to create interest. When the neighborhood kids visit my garden it is a simple teachable moment section covering many topics and it is something they can create at their own house.

Stella Payne

**What: Early Bird Walk****Where: Hoffer Creek****When: October 10 at 7:45 am**

Take a stroll around Lake Ballard and beyond with local birding experts (or by yourself) to identify birds in the area by sight and sound before the Preserve opens to the public. Bring binoculars or spotting scope for best viewing. Gates will open at 7:45 am and close promptly at 8:00 am. This event is free to the public, but donations are greatly appreciated! For more information go to: <https://www.hoffer creek.org/events>

**CONTINUING EDUCATION****What: Butterfly Trek: The Amazing Monarch Migration****Where: Williamsburg Botanical Garden****When: October 10th, 10:am to 11:30am**

Learn about Monarch butterflies and the life cycle of the 4 generations it takes to complete their 6,000-mile migration from Mexico to Canada and back to Mexico every year. VCE Master Gardener and WBG Volunteer Judith Alberts shares the Monarchs' story through her photographs and videos. You'll also learn how to attract Monarchs and other butterflies to your garden, and get tips for raising them. This program is suitable for children.

This presentation will be on the Zoom platform and recorded for posting on our YouTube channel.

Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/butterfly-trek-the-amazing-monarch-migration-registration-120740117943>

**What: Creek Critter Weekend****Where: Hoffer Creek****When: October 17 & 18, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm**

On Saturday, October 17 and Sunday, October 18 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Mike Reiss will be stationed at the Oyster Pier to help you learn about the critters that inhabit Hoffer Creek. Examine blue crabs, snails, fish, shrimp, worms, and other aquatic creatures usually out of sight and explore how these animals impact water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. We will also be depositing live oysters onto the oyster reef along the edge of the Preserve. While this event will take place outside, we ask that you please abide by social distancing guidelines and wear a face mask to get an upclose look at the critters. Admission is FREE! For more information go to: <https://www.hoffer creek.org/events>



**What: Design Your Own Blue Bird Box (WITH INSTRUCTOR KOLLYN ZEDER)****Where: Norfolk Botanical Garden:****Tuesday, October 13, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

Join us for a fun and functional art event that will also help a charity and our feathered friends! Bluebird Beach Bungalows are made by people with disabilities and support people with disabilities. Have fun being creative and take home your very own one-of-a-kind bluebird house!

Cost: \$25 (\$35 for not-yet-members)

Register at: <https://60710.blackbaudhosting.com/60710/Adult-Edu-Design-Your-Own-Bluebird-Box-13Oct2020>

**What: Worm Composting with Master Gardener Kandy Keith****Where: Norfolk Botanical Garden****When: Thursday October 15, 2020**

Turn your kitchen waste into a dark rich soil conditioner. Each participant will make a working compost bin, complete with starter worms! COST: \$40 (\$55 for not-yet-members) Register Online at: <https://60710.blackbaudhosting.com/60710/Adult-Edu-Worm-Composting-15Oct2020>

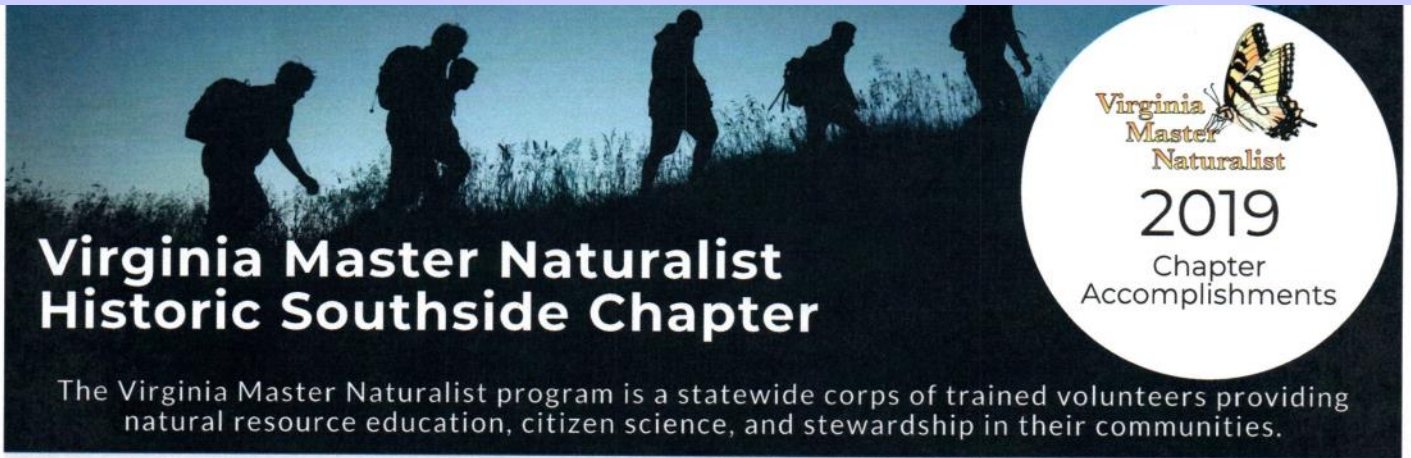
**What: Labyrinth of Ice: The Triumphant and Tragic Greely Polar Expedition (Virtual Event)****Where: The Mariner's Museum****When: Thursday, October 22, 2020, 7:00 pm****Presented by Author and Journalist Buddy Levy**

Critically acclaimed author, speaker, entertainer, and bon vivant, Buddy Levy is an expeditionary travel writer and journalist. Many will recognize him as the co-star of HISTORY Channel's hit docuseries Brad Meltzer's "Decoded." He has published seven books, including his latest bestseller, *Labyrinth of Ice: The Triumphant and Tragic Greely Polar Expedition*. Based on Levy's exhaustive research, this is the incredible true story of one of the most harrowing adventures in the annals of polar exploration.

About the lecture: In July 1881, Lieutenant A.W. Greely and his crew of 24 scientists and explorers were bound for the last region unmarked on global maps. Their goal: Farthest North. What would follow was one of the most extraordinary and terrible voyages ever made. *Labyrinth of Ice* is the story of the heroic lives and deaths of these voyagers hell-bent on fame and fortune — at any cost — and how their journey changed the world.

Please Register Online for this Zoom Lecture at: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_e9IMbl\\_pSKONZJFpcv\\_jLQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_e9IMbl_pSKONZJFpcv_jLQ)





# Virginia Master Naturalist Historic Southside Chapter

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of trained volunteers providing natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship in their communities.



**36**  
**Members**  
achieved Certified  
Virginia Master  
Naturalist status

**1,770**  
**Contacts**  
made through  
926 hours of  
education &  
outreach



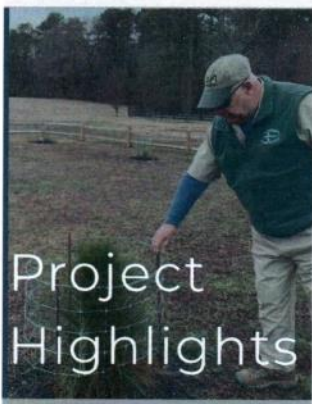
**12**  
**Outdoor Sites**



**10**  
**Scientific Studies**  
supported through citizen  
science projects

**16**  
**Trainees**  
graduated from the  
basic training course

improved through  
stewardship  
activities at parks  
and natural areas



### Restoring Longleaf Pine

Volunteers worked with the Town of Smithfield to introduce longleaf pine back into its native habitat in the town park. The project included planting trees, installing interpretive signs, and other outreach efforts to increase environmental awareness of park visitors.



### Nansemond River Education and Monitoring

Volunteers assisted the Nansemond River Preservation Alliance in providing hands-on education about the watershed for every 7th grader in Suffolk Public Schools. They also helped conduct water sampling and testing in order to help identify and address non-point source pollution in the watershed.



**Thanks for reading!!!**

**Please send content for the next newsletter to:**

**Wayne Jones      [wjones@suffolkva.us](mailto:wjones@suffolkva.us)**

**Leora Porter      [club1060@gmail.com](mailto:club1060@gmail.com)**