

HABITAT HERALD

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOUDOUN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

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THE LOUDOUN
WILDLIFE
CONSERVANCY
IS A NON-
PROFIT GROUP
OF
VOLUNTEERS
WHO SHARE A
COMMON
GOAL OF
PROTECTING
AND
PERPETUATING
NATURAL
HABITATS FOR
THE BENEFIT
OF BOTH
PEOPLE AND
WILDLIFE.

PRESIDENT:
DIANE GILLIAM

VICE-
PRESIDENT:
JOE COLEMAN

NEWSLETTER
STAFF:
BARBARA
HOLLAND
&
KARIN SCOTT

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy has had a very successful first year. As we celebrate our anniversary, we have almost 100 members, with more joining us all the time. Our free educational Tuesday evening programs have been well attended by members and visitors of all ages, and many stalwart souls have braved the weather for our field trips. We're beginning to have an impact in the county with our message of welcoming wildlife in our communities. We believe that it is possible, even in manicured new developments, to landscape in a way that is attractive to birds, butterflies and other native creatures, as well as the neighbors! The companionship of nature is one of the most pleasant reasons to live here, but nature is fragile and its native places are often more easily destroyed than preserved. With the completion of the Dulles Greenway and the prospect of even heavier development, keeping our companions around will take planning and work.

The Conservancy is dedicated to educating home-

owners and developers and affecting public policy on the support of wildlife habitats.

Looking ahead, we plan to expand our services and educational programs, develop more projects like our schoolyard program, work proactively with developers, and establish a stream-monitoring and restoration committee. We will become more active in the community and solidify our public policy efforts with the Land Use Tax Credit initiative, hoping to provide financial incentives for owners of smaller properties.

Your sponsorship and support are needed more than ever as we move into our crucial second year. Give us your ideas. Talk to your neighbors. Bring friends to our programs. If you are not already a member of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, please join us

and help
spread the
word. The
h u m a n
race needs

company. A world with only people in it would be a lonely place to live.

Diane Gilliam, President



COUNT THE RABBITS, HEAR THE QUAIL



Wildlife biologists of the Virginia Department of Fish and Game need volunteers for a quail and rabbit count. The project will cover only one morning in June, but will be an ongoing commitment to monitor the area over a number of years. Volunteers will drive a twenty mile route, stopping to listen to quail calls and tally the number of rabbits seen along the way. For more information or to sign up, please call Mike Fies at (540) 248-9390.

"What is a country without rabbits and partridges? They are among the most simple and indigenous animal products; ancient and venerable families known to antiquity as to modern times; of the very hue and substance of Nature, nearest allied to leaves and to the ground."

Henry David Thoreau

PILOT PROGRAM LAUNCHED ON EARTH DAY

Our Habitat Subcommittee has been working with the enthusiastic support of the parents, staff and students of Lincoln Elementary School to develop and sustain a schoolyard habitat program.

The Lincoln School, which occupies a swath of largely untouched old-growth forest, complete with woodland flowers and a variety of native trees and wildlife, was chosen as a likely site to develop a habitat program as a pilot for other Loudoun schools. Over the course of the year, the subcommittee has helped the school create a butterfly garden with the kindergarten class and plant a hedgerow of native trees with the second graders. With contributions of financial and in-kind support from local business and a \$500.00 grant from the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District, the Lincoln School community pitched in to build an outdoor classroom and nature trail on the school grounds.

The outdoor classroom was launched on Earth Day, April 22, to an enthusiastic crowd of students, staff, community volunteers, and county officials. Our committee is currently developing a presentation of the Lincoln School pilot activities for the benefit of other schools interested in the program.

Jenny Bergen, Schoolyard Habitat Subcommittee Chair

POEMS FROM LINCOLN SCHOOL

NATURE

Nature is a kind of peace in the wind.
Nature is a kind of love.
I see nature and nature sees me.
Nature is good for sitting alone in the sun.
Nature is good to me.

Chris Savage,
Miss Brackin's Second Grade Class

WHAT NATURE MEANS TO ME

Nature means to me a lot because it has a lot of special things that I could just cry.
Sometimes I feel like I can get mad.
I like to hear those pretty birds sing.
Sometimes Nature makes me feel like I want to sing.

Calen Vesper,
Miss Brackin's Second Grade Class

EDUCATION UPDATE

The committee has completed its first brochure. Please give us a call if you know of an opportunity to help us with distribution.

We continue to write articles on Loudoun's flora and fauna, to be published in area papers. We plan to secure a spot at the popular Bluemont Fair in September to present our message. We will need volunteers to man the display, so call if you can spend a few hours that weekend.

Currently, we are consolidating our many informative handouts into a single strong flyer that will be both enticing and intriguing. We like to think many individuals will be charmed by the idea of a natural, healthier and more welcoming property.

Give us your input. Sign up for a committee. Join us in our mission to keep our native creatures among us.

Leslie Metzger, Education Chair

NATURALLY LOUDOUN

FLYING SQUIRRELS

If you have a stand of mixed hardwoods on your property or have access to a similar habitat nearby, there is a chance that at twilight on a summer evening you may fleetingly observe one of the more secretive small mammals that occur in Loudoun County, the flying squirrel.

Aside from bats, the flying squirrel is North America's only other mammal species capable of flight. However, unlike bats which have wings and are true fliers, the flying squirrel is a glider. It has a loose fold of skin between the front and hind limbs. With its limbs outstretched, this fold of skin is stretched and supports the body as the squirrel glides from tree to tree. Generally the ratio of height loss to horizontal distance traveled is 1:3, or for every foot of height lost, a flying squirrel travels about three feet forward.

Unlike the gray squirrel, flying squirrels are active only at night. They spend the daylight hours in tree holes, such as abandoned woodpecker nests. Some flying squirrels build nests much like the nests of gray squirrels but smaller.

Flying squirrels feed on seeds, fruit, buds, young plant sprouts, and leaves, but they also have been reported to eat insects, bird eggs, and meat.

The breeding season of these animals occurs in late winter and again during the mid-summer. Up to six young may be born at a time.

PLEASE RENEW !!

*It's time to renew your membership if you joined us last year.
Please use the adjoining form.*

REPORT FROM THE PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy has offered public lectures on such varied topics as migrating hawks, butterfly gardening, growing wildflower meadows, and minimizing conflict between humans and wildlife. These programs, most of which have been held at the Rust Library in Leesburg, have averaged an audience of more than 50 each.

On our field trips, we have visited Clifton Farm, part of the Airlie Environmental Center, and the MacDowell homestead. Both are dedicated to maintaining a wildlife habitat harmonious to both man and nature. We have seen a baby great horned owl with its downy feathers blowing in the wind and a short-eared owl crisscrossing an open field in search of its evening meal.

Joe Coleman, Program Chair

JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS IN THIS GRASS-ROOTS EFFORT TO KEEP LOUDOUN COUNTY A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE MAY LIVE IN HARMONY
(540) 554-2403

NAME

STREET

TOWN

TELEPHONE / HOME

WORK

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

\$20 single	\$200 single lifetime	
\$30 family	\$300 family lifetime	\$75 corporate

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Saturday, May 18, 8 a.m. - A bird walk along the W&OD Trail near Leesburg, with John Chambless. During this most beautiful month of the year, we expect to see late migrants as well as local nesters like Yellow-Breasted Chats and Indigo Buntings. Call (540) 554-2542 to sign up.

Tuesday, May 21, 7:30 p.m. at the Rust Library in Leesburg - "A Natural Celebration", with Jim Clark of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, nature photographer and writer. This program takes us on a slide journey celebrating the natural world, from the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia down to South Carolina's Low Country and across to the Rockies.

Sunday, May 26, 10 a.m. - A field trip on the state of the Catocin, one of Loudoun's healthy streams, with Cliff Fairweather of the Audubon Naturalist Society. Late last fall we inspected the Catocin at the Taylorstown Bridge and found many beneficial invertebrates; we'll be checking the habitat again to see how it has changed and what sort of creatures live there. Call (540) 554-2542 to sign up.

Tuesday, June 18, 7:30 p.m. at the Purcellville Library - "Hedgerows & Habitats", with Jocelyn Sladen of Virginia's Native Plant Society and the Environmental Studies at Airlie. This slide show and discussion will cover the rich variety in wildlife, form and color of hedgerows and lightly managed properties, compared to the sterile uniformity of manicured lawns.

Saturday, July 27, 5 p.m. at the MacDowell property - A walk through a wetlands meadow in high summer, with Jocelyn Sladen and Jean Worthley. We hope to see a profusion of summer blooming wildflowers, probably including some of our native wild orchids. Call (540) 554-2542 to sign up.

In the near future, we will be offering programs on the area's snakes and amphibians as well as its bugs and birds. We will study the requirements of quail and find out what the county's parks have planned to help preserve natural habitats.

It has been an exciting year, please join us for another one!

Joe Coleman, Program Chair



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