
Habitat Herald

A Publication of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

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Fall 2004

In This Issue:

- 2 A Word from the President**
- 5 ANS Water Quality Programs**
- 7 LWC Program Calendar**
- 8 Stream Monitoring Update**
- 11 Before You Clean Up Plant Debris,
Consider the Benefits of a Messy Yard**
- 12 ANS Environmental Education
Programs**
- 14 Butterfly Count 2004**
- 17 Campaign to Save Courtland Woods
— A Status Report**

www.loudounwildlife.org

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Fall Wildflowers

by Stan Shetler

My lifelong journey in botany began with the inspirational moment in a Virginia woods near Harrisonburg when, as a sophomore on a botanical field trip at Eastern Mennonite College (now University), I first discovered spring-beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) and other endearing spring wildflowers. But it was the asters, goldenrods, and other fall wildflowers of central New York State, introduced to me as a junior in a plant taxonomy class at Cornell University, that plunged me into the limitless subtleties and complexities of the flora and caught me up in the never-ending intrigue of trying to unravel and understand them.

If you like a puzzle, if you like a challenge, meet the fall flora! To study fall wildflowers it is necessary to study summer wildflowers as well, because the fall flora is largely the thinned and persisting late summer flora, although some species, notably the asters and certain goldenrods and other composites (members of the aster and sunflower family) are primarily fall-blooming (e.g., cultivated mums). If the weather stays mild, many summer wildflowers will continue to bloom well into fall, at least here and there.

In spring, the floral action is in the woodlands, but in summer and fall the action shifts to the open places — wetlands, meadows, fields, waysides, and edges. In spring, the number of species in flower is limited and manageable; in summer and fall the numbers explode, and keeping track can soon get out of hand. The palette of spring is restrained and discrete, that of summer and fall, bold and continuous with

Continued on page 3

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is a non-profit 501(c)(3) group of volunteers who share a common goal of protecting and perpetuating natural habitats for the benefit of both people and wildlife. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Board meets the first Tuesday of each month. Board meetings are open to all members. For more information, or to suggest topics for discussion at upcoming meetings, contact Tom Bjorkman.

You can also visit us at:

www.loudounwildlife.org

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A Word from the President

by Nicole Hamilton

Over the past few months, the members of the LWC Board have been working to develop a new logo and tag line for the organization. We will use these to update our website and outreach materials and hopefully expand our membership by reaching more of our Loudoun residents. Throughout this activity, I have had this quote by Baba Dioum, a Senegalese conservationist, buzzing through my head: *"In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand what we are taught..."* I think this quote summarizes what we do through the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. We are a group of people who love the environment and relish in the opportunity to grasp the earth with our toes. We enjoy learning and teaching each other about the fascinating aspects of nature and are excited to see the spark of new understanding in others. We are a passionate group — and we want to conserve what we love.

At our annual meeting this past May, I was elected as the new President of LWC — to carry the torch being passed from Tom Bjorkman, Phil Daley, Bruce McGranahan, Joe Coleman and others. I am honored to take on this role and excited to act in this position, especially as LWC approaches its 10th anniversary! Over this coming year, there are many things that we hope to accomplish, and they cross the dimensions of education and ultimately conservation. We will continue to offer our educational programs by bringing in resident experts to talk about specific animals and habitats and going out into the field to observe and identify butterflies, dragonflies, birds, amphibians, wildflowers and any other aspects of nature that catch our attention. We will continue to spread knowledge through

Continued on page 10

Fall Wildflowers...*continued from page 1*

endless shades of yellows to reds and blues to purples. In common parlance, many summer and fall bloomers are “weeds” rather than wildflowers, especially if they have tiny flowers.



The composite family (*Asteraceae*, formerly *Compositae*) dominates the fall and much of the summer. Some commitment to learning the seemingly complicated but basically simple structure of the flowering heads is essential to successful identification. Suffice it to say here that what appears to be a single flower and in fact often behaves as a single flower, such as when a chicory head opens and closes, is actually a whole “bouquet” (inflorescence) of tiny flowers. These tiny flowers, called florets, are of two types: ray florets and disk florets. Many composites have both in the same head. Others have one type or the other. Chicory, for example, has only ray florets.

The highlights of the autumn parade are without doubt the asters and goldenrods. To name an aster or goldenrod correctly can be an Olympian challenge, but it is a challenge well worth the try! When you succeed you will belong to the autumn wildflower elite. These flowers grow in a wide range of habitats from dry to wet and open to wooded. More than two-dozen species of goldenrods (genus *Solidago*) and over 30 species of aster (genus *Aster*) grow in the Washington-Baltimore area. (Recent molecular studies have led some botanists to split *Aster* into several smaller genera.) Starting with the early goldenrod (*S. juncea*) in mid- to late summer, the goldenrods bloom in force from late summer into fall, to be joined then by the asters.

In addition to the early goldenrod, the gray (*S. nemoralis*), tall (*S. canadensis*), wrinkled-leaved (*S. rugosa*), and grass-leaved (*Euthamia graminifolia*) goldenrods are among the most common species of open places. In woods, look for the blue-stem (*S. caesia*) and zigzag (*S. flexicaulis*) goldenrods. Always interesting to find along roadsides and woodland edges is the silverrod (*S. bicolor*), a creamy white goldenrod. It has erect spikes in contrast to the more typical inflorescence — golden-yellow arches of one-sided flowering branches flowing from the top of the plant.

Complementing the yellows of the goldenrods, which usher in fall, are the blues, purples, and whites of the asters, which usher out fall. Among the abundant white-flowered asters of fields, waysides, and edges are the calico (*A. lateriflorus*), panicked (*A. lanceolatus*), and white heath (*A. pilosus*) asters. The calico aster is also called the goblet aster because its disk florets have exquisite tiny purplish corollas that are goblet-shaped. In the woods, the white wood aster, with heart-shaped leaves, is common.

The common blue heart-leaved aster (*A. cordifolius*) ranges widely from open areas and woodlands to backyards and probably is the blue aster most often encountered. There are many other notable blue or purple asters, but none quite so spectacular as the tall, often cultivated New England aster (*A. novae-angliae*) with its massive bouquets of reddish- purple or rosy heads borne on small flower-stalks that are covered with tiny glands. It likes moisture and grows in ditches, wet meadows, and open bottomlands.

The list of late summer-to-fall composites doesn't stop with asters and goldenrods. Swales and wet meadows large and small light up with towering



Continued on page 4

Fall Wildflowers...*continued from page 3*

thickets of dusty pink joe-pye-weeds (several species of *Eupatorium* or, by some, *Eupatoriadelphus*), velvety purple New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*), and the cheery yellows of wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*), green-headed coneflowers (*Rudbeckia laciniata*), and true sunflowers (*Helianthus species*).

Much shorter but yellow, too, is fall's bewildering array of blooming *Bidens* species — beggar-ticks, tickseed-sunflowers, bur-marigolds — in the marshes, flood plains, and even upland habitats. The showiest is the midwestern tickseed-sunflower, *Bidens aristosa*, which often blankets meadows and roadsides in buttery yellow in fall. Providing vibrant splashes of blue to violet in the exposed moist places is the ageratum-like mistflower (*Eupatorium* or *Conoclinium coelestinum*).



Autumn's seemingly endless palette of color and diversity certainly does not belong entirely to the composite family, but to many plant families. Notable among the fall legumes are the baffling bush-clovers (*Lespedeza* species) and tick-trefoils (*Desmodium* species), the latter with distinctive segmented seed pods. The segments, each with a seed, break apart and hitch a ride on fur or clothing. The large and complicated, aromatic mint family contributes many species, including the white-flowered mountain-mints (*Pycnanthemum* species) of old fields and bottoms and beefsteak-plant (*Perilla frutescens*), a horticultural import from India with ornamental purplish stems and leaves and white flowers, which has become an autumn invasive of edges and waysides throughout our area. From the touch-me-not family comes the orange or spotted jewelweed, with delicate spurred flowers and turgid pods that explosively shoot out their seeds in all directions if ripe when touched. It blooms continuously over several months, is an abundant annual of wooded as well as open places, and may form dense stands by fall, sometimes head high. The great blue lobelia, with its sentinel spikes of numerous large blue flowers, gives an exotic touch to wet meadows and openings in late summer and early fall.

I have barely touched on the great parade that awaits the fall hiker with a serious enthusiasm for wildflowers. Fall is also a time for many interesting and colorful seed pods and fruits, but that is a subject all its own. Make this your fall to study the wildflowers. Head for the open country — the old fields; unkempt bottomlands, roadsides, and other waysides; woodland openings and edges; and especially open, undisturbed wetlands. Check out the unmowed places such as under power lines or along railroads. Various stretches of the C&O Canal Towpath and the W&OD Trail can be very productive, as at Clark's Crossing just west of Vienna, where the flora has a touch of prairie. Scout successional fields and bottomland meadows of abandoned farms, as at Loudoun's own Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve.

See the stream valleys of Loudoun County through the lens of the fall wildflowers before it is too late!



AUDUBON NATURALIST SOCIETY WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS

The water quality of Loudoun County's streams is integral to the well-being of local wildlife and is an indicator of overall ecosystem health. Most of Loudoun County's streams support diverse communities of aquatic life, but in the nation's third-fastest growing county, these irreplaceable resources are under daily threat of destruction and need constant vigilance. Streams and shoreline habitats provide food, shelter, and travel corridors for animals and many of the migratory bird species that make their seasonal journeys across our landscape.

Stream Monitoring classes are taught by Cliff Fairweather of Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS). As our volunteer base grows, the LWC, in partnership with ANS, Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District and the North Fork Goose Creek and Catoctin Watershed Committees, plans to establish stream monitoring teams for every watershed in Loudoun County. These program are made possible, in part, by grants from the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Please join us for one of our sessions.

They are educational, good for the environment, and fun for the entire family.

Classes are held at the Rust Sanctuary in Leesburg, VA — *Sign up is required.*

To register for any of the classes, contact Cliff Fairweather at (703) 803-8400 or cliff@audubonnaturalist.org.

PROTOCOL PRACTICUM

Saturday, November 13 (10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.) — Note: *This class is for Loudoun Stream Monitoring Program participants only. Others should attend the Clifton/Manassas area session (November 7).*

Using the data collection protocol developed for the ANS Water Quality Monitoring Project, participants will learn how to gather abiotic data (temperature, pH, and several habitat assessments) and use a D-frame net to collect stream organisms. This section will include additional habitat assessment instruction and will be held in both the classroom and the field. New monitors should attend this class prior to their first monitoring session, and current monitors are encouraged to attend this class periodically as a refresher. *Please bring boots or sneakers for wading.*

PROTECTING LOUDOUN'S STREAMS AND WATERWAYS

If you are interested in becoming a stream monitor, please fill in the following form and mail it to:

Stream Monitoring Project
c/o Audubon Naturalist Society
ATTN: Cliff Fairweather
Rust Sanctuary
802 Children's Center Rd, SW
Leesburg, VA 20176

Name: _____
Street: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____

List the Classes and Dates you are interested in:

Class	1st Choice	2nd Choice

List the Stream you are interested in monitoring:

1st Choice	2nd Choice

If neither of those streams is available, are you willing to help monitor a site designated by the Project?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you interested in being one of our Team Leaders?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you be interested in helping us with some of our administrative functions (typing, maintaining our database, or record-keeping)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

For more information on any of the programs please contact:

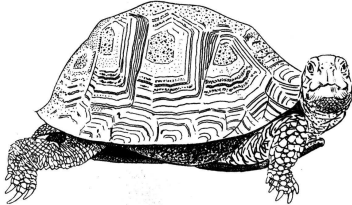
Audubon Naturalist Society — Cliff Fairweather (703) 803-8400

LWC PROGRAM CALENDAR

Space is limited for many of these programs.

Please call the designated program contact for further information and to reserve your spot.

BIRDS, EELS, AND TURTLES: MIGRATION AND MAGNETISM — Monday, November 8, 7:00 p.m. at the Rust Library in Leesburg.



Dr. Eugenie Mielczarek, an Emeritus Professor of Physics at George Mason University and world birding traveler, has done extensive lecturing and writing on the influence of magnetism in the migration of various animals. She will share research findings by biologists and physicists on how animals use their built-in abilities to successfully navigate extraordinary distances during migration. This free program is sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. *Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com.*

BIRDING BANSHEE — Saturday, November 13, 8:00 a.m. Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and the Friends of Banshee Reeks at the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve for the monthly bird walk. Because of its rich and varied habitat, this part of the county is a birding hot spot. Please bring binoculars. *Questions - contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com.*

BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER — Saturday, November 27, 8:00 a.m. On the fourth Saturday of each month (except December), the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy leads a bird walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES). This beautiful 900-acre preserve is located on Harpers Ferry Road, Rt. 671, in northwestern Loudoun County. Only a few miles south of Harpers Ferry and the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, the property includes meadows in the valley and heavily forested slopes on the Blue Ridge. Meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station on Rt. 671 at 8:00 a.m. *Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com.*



BIRDING BANSHEE — Saturday, December 11, 8:00 a.m. See the November 13 listing for details.

EIGHTH ANNUAL CENTRAL LOUDOUN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT — Sunday, December 26. Join us as we participate in the National Audubon Society's Annual Christmas Bird Count. Started in 1899, these surveys are held all over the country, and the results are used to better understand bird populations and dynamics. Our count-circle has a 15-mile diameter and covers 177 square miles of Loudoun's countryside: north to Waterford, south to Aldie, east to Ashburn, and west to Purcellville. Everyone is welcome, beginners and expert birders (amateurs are teamed with experienced birders). *If you are interested in participating for the whole day or just part of the day, contact Joe Coleman (540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com) to register and receive additional information.*

Questions about the above programs —

contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com.

For up-to-date information on our programs check our web site at www.loudounwildlife.org.

Stream Monitoring Update

by Darrell Schwalm

Stream Monitoring Spring 2004

The LWC Spring 2004 stream monitoring was successful thanks to the dedicated work of the volunteer monitors. The wet weather and high flows hampered things, but rescheduling and the diligence of monitors won out in most instances. This year LWC is collecting only two samples — spring and fall. The plan is for LWC to start monitoring in some additional streams, and this is already beginning to happen.

As of spring 2004, volunteer monitors and sites included the following:



Phil Daley monitoring Crooked Run

Site 2	Tuscarora Creek	Gem Bingol and Jennette Baughan
Site 3	Catoctin Creek	Kristi and Peter Larson
Site 4	SF Catoctin Creek	Suzanne Wade, Bob Lyon, and Camille Neville
Site 6	Crooked Run	Phil and Ellie Daley, and Helen deGroot
Site 7	NF Goose Creek	Margaret Jones, and Emily and Phil Bzdyk
Site 9	NF Beaverdam Run	Kate Marincic, Suzanne Wade, Bill Gordon, and Darrell Schwalm
Site 12	Panther Skin Creek	Fred Fox and Darrell Schwalm
Site 13	Beaverdam Run	Sterling Unitarian Universalist Church
Site 14	Sugarland Run	Darrell Schwalm
Site 15	Sweet Run	Toni Pipen, Craig Turner, Amanda Burdt, and Carrie Williams
Site 15A	Piney Run	Darrell Schwalm
Site 16	Limestone Branch	Gem Bingol, Stephen Budiansky, Barbara Lupfer, and Robert Perantoni

The new monitors and sites include:

Catoctin Creek, Unnamed Tributary	Suzanne Wade, Kate Marincic, Bob Lyon, and Darrell Schwalm
Milltown Creek	Suzanne Wade, Kate Marincic, Bob Lyon, and Darrell Schwalm
Sycolin Creek	Steve, Jr. and Steve Moulton, Jennette Baughan, and Darrell Schwalm
Broad Run	Darrell Schwalm
Dutchman's Creek	Darrell Schwalm

Stream Monitoring — Fall 2004

The Fall 2004 stream monitoring period will extend from September through October. LWC will work to resample each old and new monitoring station, plus begin monitoring some new stations. Additional volunteers are being enlisted to help monitor the new sites that have been started; for information contact Darrell Schwalm at 703-430-4180.



Sterling Unitarian Universalist Church monitoring Beaverdam Run

Continued on page 8

Stream Monitoring...*continued from page 8***Friends of Beaverdam Run and Friends of Piney Run**

The Sterling Universalist Church and the Blue Ridge Environmental Education Center are interested in starting a "Friends of" group in both the Beaverdam Run and Piney Run watersheds. Each "Friends of" group will conduct stream monitoring, as well as organize a variety of other stream-related activities depending upon the desires of the members. Possible activities include: stream clean-ups, soil-erosion watcher teams, storm-drain marking, and stream-day educational events.

Any LWC member located within these watersheds who is interested in joining such a group should contact Darrell Schwalm at 703-430-4180.

Water Pollution Studies in Piney Run and Limestone Branch

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued a final report of their nonpoint-pollution assessment of Piney Run and Limestone Branch. The report found each stream unsafe for full-body recreational use due to fecal contamination of the waters. The pollution study (called a Total Maximum Daily Load, TMDL, study) found that fecal waste from farm animals was the primary source of contamination. Failing septic systems and wildlife also contributed fecal pollution.

Hundreds of children use Piney Run for swimming at its confluence with the Potomac River downstream of Harpers Ferry. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has not announced when it will work with local authorities to develop a plan to reduce pollution loads into the streams and make them safe for recreational uses. The reports are available on DEQ's web site at www.deq.state.va.us under TMDL reports.

Catoctin Creek TMDL Implementation Plan

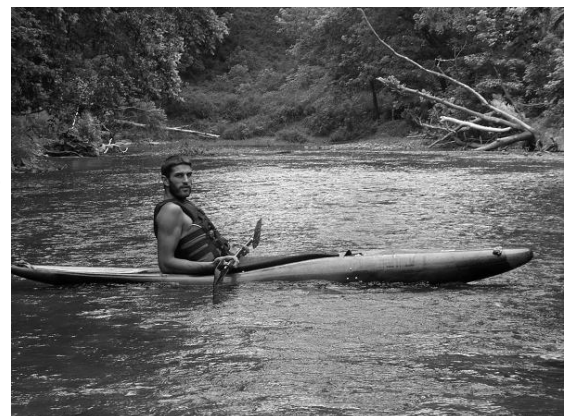
DCR has conducted their final public meeting and issued their draft report on how to reduce nonpoint pollution affecting Catoctin Creek. The plan calls for spending \$1.7 million to provide cost-share funds and technical assistance to install 126 livestock fencing and alternative water source systems to exclude livestock from the streams and 20 septic tank upgrades to remove human pollution. These funds will go to the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District and the Health Department for cost-sharing and hiring people to provide technical assistance. Loudoun Watershed Watch (LWW) requested additional funds to support citizen stream monitoring to track the effectiveness of the implementation plan and to support a community educational program. However, these funds were denied. LWW is concerned that the initiative will not be effective, as planned, in excluding over 90% of the cattle



Scouts cleaning up Catoctin Creek



Cattle in Limestone Branch



Recreational use of Catoctin Creek

Continued on page 10

Stream Monitoring....continued from page 9

and horses from streams. This high level of exclusion is needed to restore water quality. The plan is now dependent upon volunteer participation by landowners along the streams and their willingness to change farming practices.

Loudoun County's Administrator for Environmental and Historical Resources Resigns

Mr. Mark Moszak, the County Administrator for Environmental and Historical Resources, has accepted a position with the Potomac Conservancy and will be moving to Maryland. Gathering information about the management and protection of environmental resources, Mark has played an important role in county government. He obtained grant funds for the county to begin watershed management planning and organized riparian buffer restoration projects. Mark participated in the Loudoun Watershed Watch as the county liaison, and he will be missed.



Loudoun County Stream Restoration project on Beaverdam Run in Ashburn Farm

**A Word...continued from page 2**

publications like the *Habitat Herald*. And, we will continue to monitor the condition of habitat through our stream monitoring program and annual butterfly and bird counts.

At a time when habitat loss is moving at an astounding rate across our county and prized locations like the W&OD trail and areas around Banshee Reeks are threatened, we need to pull together, now more than ever, to teach, to understand, to love, to conserve. To this end, LWC will continue to act as a voice for the environment, informing you of the issues and calling you to action to act as that voice for critical conservation initiatives.

While these activities are continuations of what we already do as core functions, we want to do more of these to reach more people and pull additional people in to spread the understanding. And so, in addition to maintaining the current course, we will add outreach as a key focus of our activity. Our website will be updated to include more information and be more interactive. We will develop information packets for new and prospective members. And, we will work to reach more audiences across the county, from east to west, by reaching out to new residents through homeowners associations, fairs and other community venues. As we move through the year, we will work to establish more family-oriented programs that will enable us to help educate a new generation of conservationists.

Throughout all of this, we need your help because through your involvement we can spread knowledge and understanding at an exponential rate. One person may be able to teach 10 people, but 10 people could teach 100 people, who could in turn teach 1,000. Many of you told us in your member survey last January that you were interested in helping us either behind the scenes or out in front leading activities. We have already reached out to a few of you, and we will continue to do so over the coming months. I thank you now for your support and encourage all of you to spread the word about LWC to your friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The more we teach, the more we will understand, and the more we will conserve for the benefit of all.

Before You Clean Up Plant Debris, Consider the Benefits of a Messy Yard

The following article was written by Wisconsin journalist Melanie Radzicki McManus for the National Wildlife Federation's National Wildlife magazine.

Fall finds most homeowners with clippers in hand, busy cutting down plant remains and clearing debris from their yards in preparation for winter. Conventional garden wisdom says this helps control pests and disease, and, more importantly, keeps yards looking nice.

But now some experts say leaving your planting beds intact over the winter—not being so tidy—is beneficial for your garden, because an amazing array of insects and arachnids use dead plant stems, leaf piles and other summer debris as winter homes. Some of these creatures will later keep destructive insects under control; other may help pollinate plants.

So what critters are actually trying to bed down in your yard? Ladybugs and lacewings like to nest in the dry, sheltered crowns of native grasses, says Cheryl Long, a senior editor at *Organic Gardening*, while pollinating bees prefer hollow plant stems. Butterflies and moths often spend the winter in chrysalides on the ground, adds Craig Tufts, chief naturalist at the National Wildlife Federation. And baby spiders hide at the base of old stems, using them as supports for their webs come spring, when new plant growth is not sturdy enough. There are also creatures that nestle under leaves and other dead vegetation to insulate themselves from winter's chill. "It gets kind of cold without that 'down comforter,'" says Tufts, "which also provides the insects with protection from predators."

Lending some urgency to the situation is the recent discovery by Andrew Williams, an honorary fellow in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's entomology department. Williams discovered an average of 15 diverse animal species overwintering in the stems of various prairie plants, with one particular plant harboring an amazing 31 different species of insects. Most people garden with nonnative plants, Williams says, which cuts down on the diversity of insects likely to be present in plant stems during the winter months. Nevertheless, he says gardeners should definitely consider postponing their annual cleanups until spring.

Before you sit back and relax all fall, check with municipal authorities to make sure you won't be violating a local ordinance by leaving plant debris around. And be sensitive to your neighbors' preferences; even if they don't comment on your yard's new look, take the time to explain why you're leaving things au naturel this year. "Maybe they won't get it," says Tufts, "but at least they'll know what you're doing is done with foresight and not neglect."

If you would like to help out your yard's insect and spider populations, yet can't bear the thought of looking at brown stems, just leave a section or two untrimmed. "Everyone's tolerance varies a little," says Tufts.

Many plants can look quite stunning when they bare it all for winter, and experts suggest cultivating some



Dead plant stems and other debris provide shelter to insects and arachnids in winter.

Baby spiders hide at the base of old stalks, using them as supports for their webs come spring.

Continued on page 13

ANS Environmental Education Programs

*The following classes are given by the Audubon Naturalist Society at the Rust Sanctuary in Leesburg, VA.
Please contact Tammy Schwab at tschwab@audubonnaturalist.org or (703) 669-0000
for more information or to register.*

Family Programs (For beginners of all ages)

Fees: ANS members: \$5 per child (\$3 for each additional child); nonmembers: \$8 per child (\$5 for each additional child). Please note that additional child discount is for siblings only. Adult participation required; adults do not pay fee unless otherwise noted. All programs require registration, but drop-ins are welcome!

Lovely Leaves

Saturday, November 6 (10:30 - 11:30 a.m.)

Why do leaves change color? What makes them fall off the trees? Join us as we take an autumn hike around Rust Sanctuary learning about leaves, looking at their beautiful colors and searching for wildlife living in the leaf litter.



Are You Ready for Winter?

Saturday, November 13 (11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)

Learn about the ways that plants and animals are getting ready for winter. Whether they are going to migrate, hibernate, or resist all nature has to prepare for the harsh conditions coming in winter. We will hike the trail, visit the pond, and spend time in the nature center.

Nature for Toddlers (Ages 1-3, with Adult)

Wednesday, December 1 (9:30 - 10:30 a.m.)

Thursday, January 6 (9:30 - 10:30 a.m.)

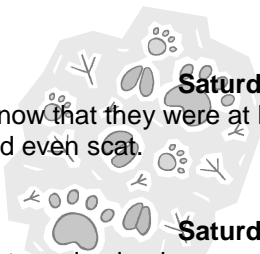
Tuesday, February 1 (9:30 - 10:30 a.m.)

Come and explore nature with your toddler! Join us for a single day or several days and learn about how to teach your child about nature. Each day we will read a story and investigate an animal that lives at Rust. A craft and a short hike will be included during our time together. If your toddler needs a ride during our hike, bring a backpack (strollers are not appropriate for the trails).

Tracks and Traces

Saturday, December 4 (1:30 - 2:30 p.m.)

What signs do animals leave behind to let us know that they were at Rust? Become a wildlife detective and search for various animal signs such as tracks, homes and even scat.



Nature's Survival Guide

Saturday, January 8 (2:00 - 3:00 p.m.)

From thorns to tendrils to teeth and talons, plants and animals are equipped with an amazing array of structures and behaviors to help them stay alive. We'll learn about some survival adaptations during the introduction and then search for more in Rust's various habitats.

Winter Birds

Saturday, February 26 (9:30 - 10:30 a.m.)

Birds are incredible creatures who perform amazing feats on a regular basis and are good examples of how adaptations, behavioral and physical are important to the study of any animal. We will look for birds in their natural habitats and learn some amazing facts about migration, bird nests, and bird songs.

Continued on page 13

ANS Programs...*continued from page 12*



**Amateur Naturalist Series
(For adults and interested teens)**

Fee \$10.00 for ANS members and \$14.00 for non-members.

Owl Prowl

Friday, November 12 (7:30 - 9:30 p.m.)

Come to Rust to search for owls in their natural habitat. Without leaves on the trees we will be able to more easily spot these nocturnal predators. We will learn about the history of owls, their adaptations and field identification techniques to spot them in the wild.

Careers in Wildlife and Nature

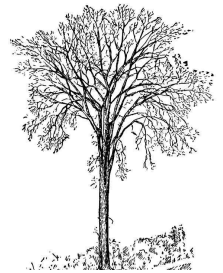
Saturday, December 4 (10:00 - 11:30 a.m.)

Looking toward the future? What career would you like to have when you grow up or what would you like to do next? Come and learn about the exciting careers available in the environmental field. We will discuss the different types of jobs and how to prepare yourself to get one.

Winter Tree Identification

**Saturday, January 8
(10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)**

During winter when trees do not have their leaves, they can be very difficult to identify. We will learn how to identify the common trees in this area based upon the characteristics of twigs and bark. You will never look at a stick the same way again!



Wildlife Gardening

Saturday, February 26 (1:00 - 3:00 p.m.)

It's that time of year again to start thinking about your spring garden. Have you ever been interested in attracting certain birds or butterflies to your yard? We will learn which plants these animals prefer and how to place them in your garden to best meet their habitat needs.



Plant Debris...*continued from page 11)*

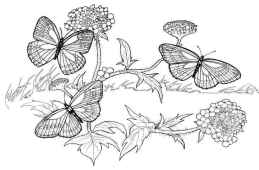
of them to enhance your yard's off-season appearance. Long says sedums such as autumn joy are attractive, as are orange coneflowers and yarrow. Tufts recommends switch grass and Indian grass.

In addition to leaving plants standing, you can also help creatures by creating small brush or rock piles, or by cutting down some dead plants, then forming a loose pile of their stems on the ground. "Clipping is not necessary bad," says Williams, "as long as you keep the stems in a place where the animals can extricate themselves the following spring."

When spring finally does roll around, you may be tempted to run out and tidy everything up. After all, you've been waiting all winter. But try leaving a portion uncut all year, says Tufts. "Even if you hold off until April 1 and then trim everything, maybe 30 percent of the insects still haven't emerged," he says. "If you leave a little bit standing, then trim it next year and leave a different section standing, you're always assured of doing your best in terms of perpetuating those species that may emerge later than most."

Because many of the bugs that benefit from this approach are less than a quarter inch long, it may be difficult to observe the transformations taking place in your garden. Still, you will be making a difference. Changes will happen.





Butterfly Count 2004

by Nicole Hamilton

The 2004 Butterfly Count on August 7 was another wonderful success! Weather-wise, it was a splendid day, in the mid-70s and mostly sunny, which was a nice compromise for human and butterfly participants. We had four teams visiting 13 areas within our count circle. The count teams assembled at 9 a.m. at their various meeting locations, and many participants continued on through the afternoon until 6 p.m. While some of the data has yet to roll into the count compiler, so far our numbers show that we counted 2,242 individual butterflies and approximately 54 different species. Some unusual sightings at a few of our locations included the Sleepy Orange, Cloudless Sulphur, and Appalachian brown.

Once the data compilation is complete, we will be forwarding our data on to the North American Butterfly Association so that Loudoun's data can be tracked at the national level. Also, we will be looking at this data against that of past years' to see if there are any trends to watch. Many thanks to all of our count participants who helped make this such a success:

Bob Lyon
Caryl Buck
Thomas Staley
Mary Ann Good
Cristina Montejo
Desiree DeMauro
Bonnie Arnold
Brunie Haydl

Mona Miller
Dave and Mitchell Hanson
Bill and Regina Cour
Susanne Shackelford
Bruce and Genie Hopkins
Ted Moline
John Drummond
Patsy Hunter

Lisa Barker
Janet Stone
Bill Seebeck
Larry Lynch
Nicholas Shallcross
Sue Beffel
Gem Bingol
Dee Leggett

Mimi Westervelt
Ron Staley
Nicole Hamilton
Lauren Scott
Elizabeth Evans
Joe Coleman
Fiona Harrison
Tom Raque

And, a very special thank you to Tom Raque who stepped in on short notice to fill a team leader spot for us! We hope to see you out counting with us next year. Mark your calendars now for the first Saturday in August 2005 — August 6.



	Total by Species	Butterfly Hill	MacDowell's	Water Ways	Rust	Ida Lee	Rockland	Hamilton's	North Round Hill	AT Road	BRCES	Franklin Park	Lincoln South	Alder School Rd
Pipevine Swallowtail	2							2						
Zebra Swallowtail	24		2	12			6			1	3			
Tiger Swallowtail	243	2	8	8	8	3	5	18	17	21	138	3	7	5
Black Swallowtail	11	1		2		1			2		1	1	1	2
Spicebush Swallowtail	139	1	15	2	5		6	7	5	13	69	1	13	2
Orange Sulphur (Alfalfa)	31		3	2			1			3	9	6	4	3
Clouded Sulphur	101	4	12	16	1	6	6		2	1	10	19	18	6
Sleepy Orange	3			1						2				
Cloudless Sulphur	4										2	2		


Continued on page 15

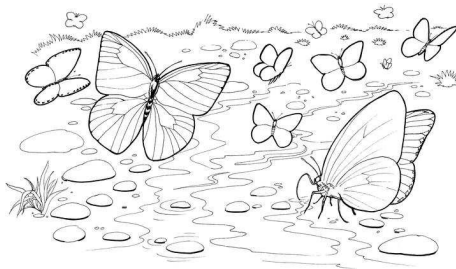
Butterfly Count...continued from page 14

	Total by Species	Butterfly Hill	MacDowell's	Water Ways	Rust	Ida Lee	Rockland	Hamilton's	North Round Hill	AT Road	BRCES	Franklin Park	Lincoln South	Alder School Rd
Cabbage White	448	10	21	88	23	18	34	15	57	21	67	21	53	20
Harvester	0													
American Copper	0													
Banded Hairstreak	1						1							
Striped Hairstreak	0													
Coral Hairstreak	0													
Gray Hairstreak	0													
Red-banded Hairstreak	5				3		1				1			
Spring/Summer Azure	23		7		3			1	1			2	6	3
Eastern-tailed Blue	29		1	2	6	2		2	1	5	9			1
Olive Hairstreak	0													
American Snout	3							2	1					
Variegated Fritillary	7				2	1					3		1	
Great Spangled Fritillary	7		2	1							4			
Meadow Fritillary	17		1			2	1	7			4		1	1
Silvery Checkerspot	47		19	2	1		1	4			13	1	1	5
Pearl Crescent	315	3	18	39	1	5	2	3	27	11	109	22	63	12
Northern Crescent	2											2		
Question Mark	8	1	1	1					1	1	1		1	1
Eastern Comma	10		2			2					3	1	1	1
Mourning Cloak	0													
American Lady	2				1	1								
Painted Lady	4	1		1	1	1								
Red Admiral	4	2									1	1		
Common Buckeye	9	1			1	1			1		3		2	
Red-spotted Purple	79	2	6	3	5	2		6	9	4	21	5	12	4
Viceroy	1													1
Hackberry Emperor	43	1	10	7	4	1	1	2	1	2	8	1	3	2
Tawny Emperor	10		3		2		1				2			2
Appalachian Brown	12				2						10			
Northern Pearly-eye	68		42		12				3				6	5

Continued on page 16

Butterfly Count...*continued from page 15*

	Total by Species	Butterfly Hill	MacDowell's	Water Ways	Rust	Ida Lee	Rockland	Hamilton's	North Round Hill	AT Road	BRCES	Franklin Park	Lincoln South	Alder School Rd
Little Wood-Satyr	0													
Common Wood-nymph	13				13									
Monarch	20	5	1		2	4					2	4	2	
Silver-spotted Skipper	157	7	10	8	2	5	1	10	7	15	50	5	36	1
Southern Cloudywing	2				2									
Northern Cloudywing	3				2	1								
Hayhurst's Scallopwing	1												1	
Horaces's Duskywing	13			10				2				1		
Wild Indigo Duskywing	4											4		
Common Checkered Skipper	23					1			2		17	2	1	
Common Sootywing	15					3			4		8			
Least Skipper	40		11	6	3			1		2	7	1	4	5
Fiery Skipper	7				1	3		1					2	
Peck's Skipper	81	1		7	32	2	1	1	1	4	8	14	10	
Tawny-edged Skipper	4											2	2	
Crossline Skipper	2											1	1	
Northern Broken-dash	4		1					3						
Little Glassywing	13				10		1	2						
Sachem	4			1		1			1			1		
Zabulon Skipper	108				24				6	3	17	20	34	4
Hobomok Skipper	1								1					
Dun Skipper	15		1		1	2				2	8		1	
Juvenal's Duskywing	0													
Total by Site	2242	42	197	219	173	68	69	89	150	111	608	143	287	86
Number of Species	54	15	23	21	29	23	16	19	21	17	31	26	28	21



Campaign to Save Courtland Woods — A Status Report

GOALS OF THE CAMPAIGN:

- Purchase Courtland Woods for donation to Loudoun County, thereby adding 200 acres of critical wildlife habitat to the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve and avoiding construction of a 277-unit housing development in an environmentally sensitive area
- Create opportunities for bird watching, wildlife watching and hiking — advancing Virginia's new eco-tourism industry
- Preserve historic sites, vistas, and landscapes — supporting Virginia's growing heritage-tourism industry
- Provide opportunities for environmental research and education
- Protect water quality in Goose Creek, a State Scenic River and the drinking water supply for downstream communities
- Build momentum for protecting other natural and cultural assets in the Route 15/Old Carolina Road Corridor and the surrounding area

STATUS:

The *Campaign to Save Courtland Woods* was formed in the winter/early spring of 2003. The Campaign pursued initial negotiations with the owners and developers of Courtland Woods in order to obtain the option to purchase the land. Negotiations were suspended in the summer of 2003 due to the wide gap between the parties on the purchase price. Since that time, a three-pronged strategy has been pursued to encourage the developers to return to the negotiating table:

Strategy 1: County Application Oversight

Mark Herring, a local land-use attorney, was hired to monitor the developer's construction and development applications at the county level. The Campaign also supported the Loudoun County Health Department's and County Sanitation Authority's decision to allow construction of only 190 houses based on the inadequacy of the development's spray irrigation system. It was found that the soils in the spray areas could not absorb sewage effluent for the full build-out of 277 homes. In addition, the Campaign supported the county upholding the requirement for a 200-foot buffer along historic Route 15, which likely would result in another 25% – 40% reduction in houses. As the developers' profit margin decreases due to the problems of building in such an environmentally sensitive area, the hope is that they will choose the alternative option of selling the land to the Campaign.

Access to the Courtland Woods development would be on narrow, gravel country roads, which could not handle the 2,700 daily trips that the development would generate. With this in mind, the Campaign is working with the county to clarify and enforce the complex transportation proffers.

Strategy 2: Media and Public Relations

Courtland Rural Village is the wrong development in the wrong place. The Campaign's media and public relations strategy has communicated this message by highlighting the historical and environmental resources that are in jeopardy, our fight to preserve the land, and our ultimate goal to purchase Courtland Woods and give it to the public.

Two successful media events were held at Oatlands Plantation, resulting in excellent media coverage in the local press. A press conference was held to announce the federal lawsuit in March,

Continued on page 18

Courtland Campaign...continued from page 17

resulting in radio and television coverage and multiple front-page stories in local newspapers. The press was shown the site of the development from Oatlands' vantage point, highlighting the detrimental impact on the entire Oatlands historic district, Route 15, and the surrounding environment, including the Dulles Greenway Wetlands. As the event ended, two beautiful bald eagles flew over the Oatlands historic district – presenting a perfect, closing note.

In spite of the federal lawsuit, the developer began clearing the initial 35 acres of land in early spring. In April, representatives from the press were taken up in a helicopter to take photographs of this clearing. The resulting press coverage included an article and a stunning photograph of the damage which appeared in the *Loudoun Times Mirror*, a widely-distributed Loudoun County newspaper.

Recent press coverage has shown the loss of wildlife habitat, problems with the sewage system, and the overall threat of such a large development to the surrounding environment, the Goose Creek, and Loudoun County's drinking water. The developer has had to resort to quotes about swimming in the sewage effluent to defend his case.

Also, the story of the *Campaign to Save Courtland Woods* is being presented at public events around the county. Bruce Dale, an acclaimed national photographer, donated his talent to produce several beautiful posters of the surrounding countryside. The posters, with the tag line "Help us save this fragile land," are being used to draw the public to booths at events, such as Oatlands 200th birthday party. The Campaign's brochure, which captures the beauty of the area, our goals, and what is at stake, is being widely distributed (please find a copy enclosed). The Friends of Banshee Reeks, the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, the Audubon Naturalist Society, and the Sierra Club continue to highlight the Campaign during their many hikes and educational events.

Strategy 3: Federal Lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers

Three of the Campaign's member organizations – the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Audubon Naturalist Society, and the Piedmont Environmental Council – filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia in March 2004 to overturn a wetlands permit issued by the Army Corps of Engineers.

This permit allowed the developer to disturb wetlands in order to build an access road into the development and to build storm water management ponds, thereby enabling the construction of 277 houses on Courtland Woods, directly in the view shed of Oatlands Plantation. The permit was granted despite the objections of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, and many other national, regional and local organizations and individuals.

The Campaign's legal team, lead by Andrea Ferster, an experienced preservation attorney, the prominent Washington, DC law firm of Shea & Gardner, and Betsy Merritt, Chief Litigation Counsel of the National Trust, reached a settlement with the Corps of Engineers in early October which ended all development of the property for now and re-opened the Section 106 process.

ONGOING STAFF SUPPORT:

Andrea McGimsey, a former AOL manager and dedicated community activist, was hired in February 2004 to manage the overall Campaign. In addition to Andrea's efforts, volunteers are needed to help in multiple ways:

- help present the campaign to the public and distribute literature at local events;
- write letters to the editor;

(Continued on page 19)

Courtland Campaign...*continued from page 18*

- spread the word to neighbors and friends;
- offer other ideas and services to help save Courtland Woods.

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR THE NEXT PHASE:

The Campaign needs to raise \$35,000 to cover the next phase of legal, management and operational fees through the end of the year. Close monitoring will continue of the county's approval process for the development and the determination of how many houses can be built on the site.

Despite the current clearing of 73 acres of woods on the site, the Campaign continues to believe that there will be an opportunity to buy the land because the development is so problematic on multiple fronts. If this option occurs, a major capital campaign to raise the purchase funds will be necessary.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the *Campaign to Save Courtland Woods*. Please consider volunteering for some of the tasks identified above. With your participation, we hope to hold a celebration party someday on the meadow, as Courtland Woods begins to grow back and the wildlife returns to this beautiful piece of land.

If you have any questions about this progress report, or if you would like to assist in the campaign, please contact Project Manager Andrea McGimsey at andrea@savecourtland.org or 703-726-0646.

YES, I want to become an LWC Member!

Membership Benefits Include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Subscription to <i>Habitat Herald</i> | * Volunteer Opportunities |
| * Classes and Workshops | * Regular Membership Meetings and Programs |

Mail this form along with your payment to:

*Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
PO Box 2088
Purcellville, VA 20134-2088*

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, ST, Zip: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____ **E-mail** _____

Please indicate your membership level:

(*membership runs from January 1- December 31)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Individual Lifetime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Corporate* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 Family Lifetime |

☐ Additional Donation \$ _____

☐ Renewing Member

☐ New Member

Programs at a Glance

(see pages 5-7 and 12-13 for complete descriptions)

November

- 6 Lovely Leaves (A)
- 8 Birds, Eels, and Turtles (L)
- 12 Owl Prowl (A)
- 13 Birding Banshee (L)
- 13 Protocol Practicum (W)
- 13 Are You Ready for Winter (A)
- 27 Birding the Blue Ridge Center (L)

December

- 1 Nature for Toddlers (A)
- 4 Tracks and Traces (A)
- 4 Careers in Wildlife and Nature (A)
- 11 Birding Banshee (L)
- 26 Annual Christmas Bird Count (L)

January

- 6 Nature for Toddlers (A)
- 8 Nature's Survival Guide (A)
- 8 Winter Tree Identification (A)

February

- 26 Winter Birds (A)
- 26 Wildlife Gardening (A)

A = ANS L = LWC W = Water Quality

Editor's Correction

The Cicada article by Cliff Fairweather that appeared in the last issue of the *Habitat Herald* was originally published by the Audubon Naturalist Society and was reprinted with their kind permission. Appropriate credit was not given, and I apologize for the oversight.
LM

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

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