

2019

LOUDOUN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY **ANNUAL REPORT**

People and Wildlife Thrive Together



Our Mission:

To inspire, motivate and engage
people to protect, preserve and
restore wildlife habitat



Garter snake with leaf litter and, below, a Red Fox mid-pounce (photos: Liam McGranaghan)

Cover: Painted Lady and Fiery Skipper on liatris (photo:Michael Myers)



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT



Michael Myers

I completed my first full year as executive director in 2019. It has been a tremendous experience to shepherd multiple long-term projects to realization. I’m proud to carry on the legacy of our previous executive director, board members, volunteers, and members, and I’m excited for what the future holds for LWC, as we continue to grow and mature entering our 25th year in 2020.

One of our great accomplishments was the completion of *The Birds of Loudoun: A Guide Based on the 2009-2014 Loudoun County Bird Atlas*, published in April. This 214-page hardcover book is the most substantial publication Loudoun Wildlife has produced to date. An incredible amount of work went into collecting the data during the bird atlas, and the written species accounts and stunning photographs from local photographs bring the book to life. Thanks to a generous donation, copies of *The Birds of Loudoun* can be found in every library in Loudoun County. We’re very excited to be able to share *The Birds of Loudoun* with the community.

As 2019 came to an end, we closed in on completing the purchase of JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary, and we are on pace to complete the purchase in early 2020. We assisted Chuck and Stacy Kuhn in placing the property under a conservation easement held by the Land Trust of Virginia. In November, we completed our first habitat restoration project on the property. Nearly 100 volunteers planted 260 native trees and shrubs with support from the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District, Lucketts Ruritan Club, and many other groups. We continue to work with The Nature Conservancy for assistance in acquiring the property and on plans to



For sale: new *Birds of Loudoun* book (photos: B.J. LeCrone)



Birds of Prey attendees on the lookout

create additional wetlands. We look forward to sharing this unique, globally rare wetland with the community in 2020 and beyond.

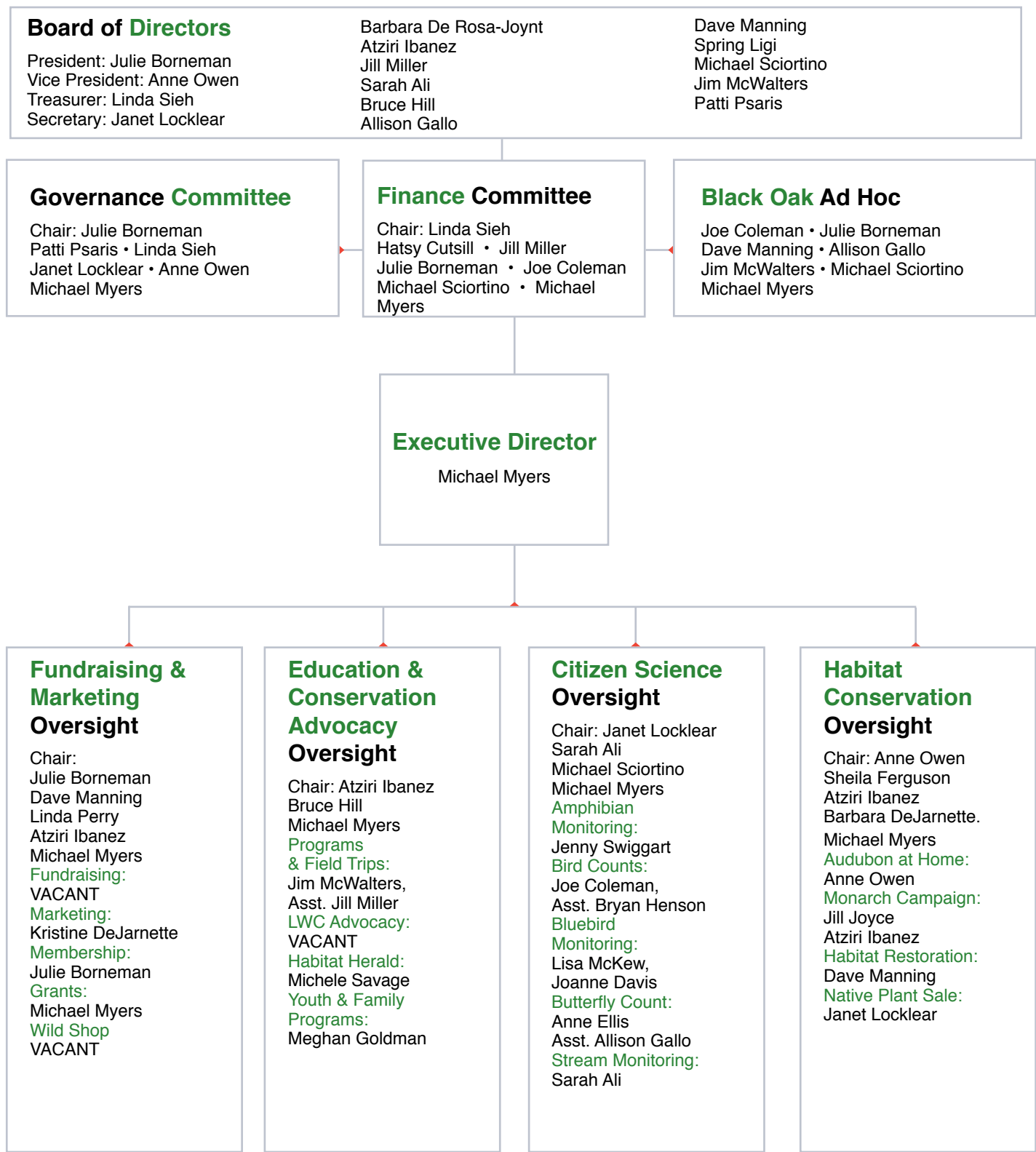
Another important step in our organization’s growth came last fall, when we were awarded a challenge grant by the Community Foundation of Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties to create an endowment. We are tasked with raising \$10,000, and the Community Foundation will match that \$10,000 and establish a \$20,000 endowment on our behalf. That endowment will create a perpetual annual source of unrestricted revenue for our programs, to be used wherever we need it most.

Becoming landowners and establishing an endowment are huge accomplishments that we look forward to achieving in 2020. But our programs will always be the driving force behind LWC’s organization. We would not be successful without all the time and effort our volunteers contribute to conduct our advocacy, citizen science, education, and habitat conservation programs. I am extremely grateful to work with such dedicated and passionate people, producing high-quality programs that help make Loudoun a place where people and wildlife thrive together.

In 2020 our organization will be celebrating a big milestone for our 25th anniversary. We look forward to celebrating with our many members and volunteers!

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

(AS OF DECEMBER 2019)



Staff Support

Office Admin: Doreen Varblow, **Membership & Outreach:** B.J. LeCrone, **Volunteer Coordinator:** Kim Strader



Michael Myers celebrates Pollinator Week Proclamation with Loudoun's Board of Supervisors

After 3+ years of meetings, public input and policy debates, Loudoun County's Board of Supervisors adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in June 2019. Throughout the process, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy engaged decision makers to include strong conservation policies in the new plan, inspired residents to voice their demand for policies that preserve open spaces and protect wildlife habitat, and worked with partner organizations to raise awareness and push for policies that will guide Loudoun to a sustainable, resilient future for generations to come.

Although many groups and individuals hoped that a stronger set of environmental policies had been adopted, several significant victories were won for the environment:

- Zoning regulations and development standards will first identify and preserve natural and heritage resources prior to development.
- Best practices/guidelines will be followed to reduce impervious surfaces, which harm water quality and aquatic wildlife.
- Native vegetation has been prescribed for re-naturalization along streams.
- International Dark Sky Association's Dark Sky standards will be promoted, which will benefit animals and insects that suffer from the effects of light pollution.

The inclusion of many of the environmental policies in the new comprehensive plan was influenced by Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition's New Comprehensive Plan Committee, of which Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy was a team member. The committee was honored for its work by the Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which presented the group with its annual Friend of The Mountain Award for 2019

After adoption of the new Comprehensive Plan in June, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy continued its fight for preservation and conservation by partnering with other groups to ensure that effective environmental zoning regulations will be implemented, as Loudoun County staff use the Comprehensive Plan's policies to craft new zoning ordinance that will directly affect how people and wildlife will live in Loudoun. We are particularly focused on regulations that will govern

riparian buffers, tree canopy and native plant use. This important work illustrates how essential our advocacy program is to the county's future.

In addition to work on the Comprehensive Plan, other Advocacy Program highlights include:

- As a member of LCPCC's Emerald Ribbons committee, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy advocated for a county-wide system of connected parks and trails. In January 2019, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors passed a board member initiative that allows for the development of a detailed implementation plan for such a system, which could provide valuable habitat connections for resident and migratory wildlife and native plants. As plans develop, Loudoun Wildlife continues to engage decision makers and the public in this important initiative.
- Loudoun Wildlife hosted an Advocacy Workshop in conjunction with Audubon Naturalist Society to teach residents how to communicate with decision makers in order to make a difference for the environment.
- Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy members met with Parks, Recreation & Community Services staff to discuss our concerns and offer solutions regarding the impact that the county's planned improvements would have on Bles park's wetlands and other habitat. Thanks to public input, including testimony from Loudoun Wildlife, the size of a planned lawn area that would replace a pollinator meadow has already been significantly reduced. The plans for development continue into 2020, which will bring more opportunities to raise our voices for conservation.

As more people are attracted to live in Loudoun, and land-consuming industries such as data centers continue to bulldoze forests, meadows, and wetlands, it is more important than ever to stay engaged, making voices heard for preserving open spaces and connecting habitat.

BUTTERFLY COUNT



The 23rd annual butterfly count, held on August 3, 2019, was a classic in terms of weather: warm, sunny morning gave way to hot, sunny afternoon – perfect for butterflies and they did not disappoint. Fifty volunteers, including 10 leaders, formed 8 teams and scouted the 12 sectors of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy butterfly count circle (centered near Waterford).

Butterfly highlights include: 1,140 Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, the most counted of this species to date; 393 Meadow Fritillaries (a record); and 459 Common Buckeyes (also a record). We added a new sighting to the list: Ocala Skipper. The total number seen was 6,368, the largest we have recorded and the team included nearly double last year's total.

Butterfly highlights include: 1,140 Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, the most counted of this species to date; 393 Meadow Fritillaries (a record); and 459 Common Buckeyes (also a record). We added a new sighting to the list: Ocala Skipper. The total number seen was 6,368, the largest we have recorded and nearly double last year's total.

The action plan for this year called for developing new leaders in the field and we have added four: Michael Myers, Myrna Pacheco, Carol Beckman field and Jim Torrens.

For the first time, one of our volunteers was injured while scouting. Leader Allison Gallo accompanied her, ensured she received help and reported by phone and email to LWC.

Other highlights: Allison Gallo was added as a co-coordinator. We are feeling our way forward as we figure out how this will work. It is a question of defining tasks, sharing information, and staying organized as we interact with a fairly large and ever-changing group of volunteers. Laura and Liam McGranaghan stepped up to lead the Hillsboro Team when Jon Little could not.

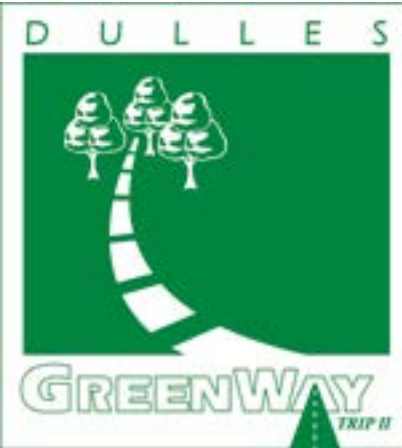
The first Tally Rally was held at Dragon Hops Brewery in Purcellville at 4:30, with about a dozen participants, including Julie Borneman, LWC President.



Ocala Skipper (photo: Larry Meade)
Below left: Sleepy Orange on Echinacea.
Below right: Sachem with Mountain Mint.
Bottom: Silvery Checkerspot (last three photos: Michael Myers)



PARTNERING FOR OUR FUTURE



Dulles Greenway

The Dulles Greenway and its parent company, Toll Road Investors Partnership II (TRIP II), have had a significant impact on the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy through the annual Drive for Charity. Their donations over the last 16 years have been instrumental in enabling Loudoun Wildlife’s growth and maturity. Funding from the Drive for Charity has contributed to the success of all parts of Loudoun Wildlife’s mission, from citizen science, to education, to habitat conservation. As a result of our long relationship, Loudoun Wildlife has continued to steward and study the 149-acre Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project, finding 158 bird species there during its five-year Bird Atlas, the second-highest number for Loudoun’s Great Places. The property is referenced throughout Loudoun Wildlife’s 2019 publication *The Birds of Loudoun*. Loudoun Wildlife periodically leads nature walks onto the property, educating people about the rare and unique species that reside there.



JK Moving Services

In 2019 Loudoun Wildlife continued to work with Chuck & Stacy Kuhn to protect the 87-acre globally rare wetlands outside of Lucketts known as JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary. Chuck & Stacy placed the property under a conservation easement held by the Land Trust of Virginia, permanently protecting the property from future development. Loudoun Wildlife continued to lease the property in 2019 while raising funds to purchase it from the Kuhns at a conserved value. In November, Loudoun Wildlife completed the first habitat restoration project there, designed to buffer an exposed vernal pool and enhance the habitat for amphibians and other wildlife.



Winter landscape at JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary (photo: Sierra Plummer)

PARTNERS

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy collaborates with many nonprofit, corporate, and government partners to complete our work across the county. Additionally, Loudoun Wildlife representatives participate in a number of coalitions, alliances, and working groups to achieve our mission. We want to recognize and thank our partners for helping create a world where people and wildlife thrive together. We apologize if we have inadvertently overlooked anyone.

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| 50 West Winery | Loudoun County Chapter | Magee Design | Transition |
| 868 Estate Vineyards | JK Moving Services | Monarch Joint Venture | Triathlon |
| Abernathy & Spencer | Leesburg Daybreak | Monarch Watch | TRIP II, the Dulles Greenway |
| Greenhouse | Rotary Club | Morven Park | U.S. Geological Survey at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center |
| Atlantic Union Bank | Leesburg Garden Club | National Audubon Society | Virginia Bluebird Society |
| Audubon | Loudoun Beekeepers Association | Nature by Design | Virginia Department of Transportation |
| Naturalist Society | Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce | North American Butterfly Association | Virginia Master Naturalists - Banshee Reeks Chapter |
| Audubon Society of Northern Virginia | Loudoun County Government | Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society | Virginia Native Plant Society, Piedmont Chapter |
| Banshee Reeks | Loudoun County Parks, Recreation, and Community Services | Northern Virginia Bird Club | Virginia Save our Streams, Department of Environmental Quality |
| Nature Preserve | Loudoun County Master Gardeners | Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority | Virginia Society of Ornithology |
| Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship | Loudoun County Environmental Stewardship Alliance | Northwest Federal Credit Union | Virginia Vernal Pools Program |
| Blue Ridge Conservation Alliance | Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition | Oatlands Plantation | Waterford Citizens Association |
| Blue Ridge Wildlife Center | Loudoun County Public Library | Piedmont Environmental Council | Waterford Foundation |
| Broadlands Nature Center | Loudoun County Public Schools | Plant NOVA Natives | Watermark Woods Native Nursery |
| Carmax Cares | Loudoun County Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance | Plow & Hearth | Wild Birds Unlimited Ashburn |
| Claude Moore Park | Loudoun Pediatric Obesity Coalition | Potomac Appalachian Trail Club | Wild Ones, Blue Ridge Chapter |
| Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund | Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District | Potomac Valley Audubon Society | Wildlife Veterinary Care |
| Community Foundation of Loudoun & Northern Fauquier Counties | Loudoun Watershed Watch | Purcellville Business Association | Wildwood Landscape |
| Dominion Virginia Power | Loudoun's Emerald Ribbons | Purcellville Parks and Recreation | Willowsford Conservancy |
| Friends of Banshee Reeks | Lucketts Elementary School | Sunset Hills Winery | |
| Friends of Sleeter Lake | Rudy Youth Service Club | The Bird Feeder | |
| Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains | Lucketts Ruritan Club | The Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club | |
| FrogWatch USA | | The Nature Conservancy | |
| Goose Creek Association | | The Nature Generation | |
| Great County Farms | | Town of Leesburg | |
| Hill House Farm and Nursery | | Town of Round Hill | |
| Izaak Walton League, | | | |



PATRONS

Thank You!

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is grateful to everyone who helped us work toward our mission in 2019. We rely on the generosity and skills of our volunteers, donors and partners to accomplish all the efforts described in this report. These individuals and organizations are listed on this and preceding pages. We apologize if we have inadvertently overlooked anyone when compiling these lists.

Great Blue Heron \$5,000 plus

Marlene Burkgren
Nana and Kevin Chroninger
Joe and Karen Coleman
Jeanne Morency
TRIP II, the Dulles Greenway
Alfred P. Van Huyck

River Otter \$1,000 plus

Sarah Ali and Karel Svoboda
Anonymous
Anonymous
Julie and Chris Borneman
Hill House Farm and Nursery
Ann and Tony Garvey
Lucketts Ruritan Club
Brian Magurn
Jan Massey and Emelin, Tyler, and Nathan Beach
Ben and Suzette McIlwaine
McMunn Family Foundation:
Susan and David McMunn
Jocelyn Sladen
Carol Sottili
Pat Valas
Suzanne M. Volpe
Ralph Wall
Randee Wilson

Spotted Salamander \$250 plus

AmazonSmile Foundation
Chandra Bittner
Browning Equipment Inc.
The CarMax Foundation
Sally Crosen
Hatsy Cutshall
Helen and Johan de Groot
Barbara and Thomas DeRosa-Joynt
Mitchell Diamond and
Lucy Bernstein
Reuben Firmin
Friends of Brambleton Library

Allison Gallo
Edward Gomez
Stephanie Henson
Bruce and Janice Hill
Alice Janes
Sharon and Larry Kearns
Nevin Kelly
Robert and Dee Leggett
Dave and Lisa Manning
Michael Mercincavage
Jill and Bobby Miller
Northern Virginia Regional
Park Authority
Tyler and Antoinette Montgomery
Creations By Diane: Diane Nastase
Tracey Newton
Anne Owen and David Wheeler
Eric Pohlner
Donna Quinn
Charles Tiffany Richardson
Family Fund
Matrix Consulting
Lenali Smith and Thomas Mulrine
Kathleen Turner and John LoGalbo
Marcia and Richard Weidner
Anne Zaleski

Monarch \$100 plus

Mary Agnich
Tony and Jan Aiken
Albab Akanda
Steven Allen
Anonymous
Carol and Matt Anticevich
Jennifer Ashton
Erin Austin
Dale and James Ball
Judy Bardsley and Dave Redmond
Virginia Baxter
Valerie Beaudoin
Jill Becker
Carol Beckman

Samhita Bellary
Colette Berrebi
Gem Bingol
Alison Blackstone
Christine Boeckel
Vera Brechbiel
Sally & Michael Brenton
Bill and Della Brown
Christa Brusen
Audrey Burton
Claudia Butz Lindstrom
Phil Bzdyk
Ernie and Patti Jo Carnevale
Gloria Chepko and David Culver
Jim and Jamie
Karen Coleman
Linda and Glenn Colucci
Katie Conaway
Tara Connell
Peter Coppolino
Edward and Mary Corack
Kathy Corrigan
Janine Czarnecki
Phil and Ellie Daley
Richard and Sally Darr
Joanne Davis
Suzanne and John DeSaix
Mary Desmond
Clarice and Charles Dieter
John DiGiorgio
Helen DiRenzo
Victoria Duarte
Hannah Duffy
David and Carol Dunham
Samantha Dunmire
Dana Eddy
Elizabeth Ellers and
Eugene Gulland
Rick and Sarah Entsminger
Karla Etten
Cheryl and Carl Ewald
Margaret Fera

Ben and Arlene FitzGerald
Virginia Friend
Silvia Gagliano
Linda Gallo
John Gibson
Mary Ann Good
James & Dolores Goodson
Bud Green
Alecia Greene
Norman Gresley
Terri Guenther
Keith and Joan Guenther
Darrell and Kim Haines
Stefanie and James Hannah
James Hastings
Gerry Hawkins
Jim Henon
Eric D Hess
Priscilla Hill
Douglas and Linda Hill
Earl and Ardath Hill
Edwin and Brenda Hilliard
Gerco Hoogeweg
Atziri Ibanez
Carol Ivory
Bruce and Jill Johnson
Sarah Johnson
Steve Johnson and Lynn Rafferty
Alta and Steve Jones
Sarah Kabealo
William Kanapaux
Sandra Kao
Barbara Kauffman
Noel Keane
Carol Kearney
John Keith
Hall Kern
Jamie Kiechlin
Marie Kilcarr and Dottie
Renee Kitt
Robert Kott
Kim Kuzmowski
Sheila LaFalce
Erin Langager
Paul Lawrence
BettyJean Lecrone
Marion Lee
Jen Leeper
Dick LeRoy
Dr and Mrs Andrew M Lewis Jr

Kathleen Liermann
Spring and Steven Ligi
Doug and Louise Lipp
Cathy and Charles Little
Colonel and Janet Locklear
Loudoun County Master
Gardener Assoc.
Tamara Luzeckyj
Susan and Chris MacWhorter
Tom Marshall
Doris Mattraw
Tess McAllister
Nan and Caleb McCarry
Linda McConnell
Frank and Patty McLaughlin
Jim McWalters
Larry and Patty Meade
Patty and Clyde Meade
Alva and Francis Megan
Laureen Megan
Sue Megan
Steve Mickelwait
Paul Miller and Laurraine Landolt
J.Randall Minchew
Maryann Mueller
Michael Myers
Norman Myers
Carole Napolitano
Rick and Kim Norgaard
Michael Oak
Richard Oakley
Sarah Oliver
Philip Paschall
Gina Pasioka and Robert Justin
Andrew passafaro
Ladan Paul
Christina Penton
Rebecca Pepper
Christine Perdue and Turner Smith
Chuck and Judy Perso
Ed and Pat Peters
Pamela and Anthony Poisson
Patti Psaris and Michael Cowell
Garrett Quinn
Rosalinda Quintanilla and
Mayra Zermeno
Andy Rabin and Laura Cameron
Gordon Rathbun
Keith and Gail Reinke
John J. Reynolds

Dori and Pat Rhodes
Beverly & Christopher Ricci
Alyce Rideout
Leesburg Garden Club
Ron Carl Rogos
Janet and Daniel Romanchyk
The Edwin and Melody Rood Trust
Ellen Ruina
Carolyn and Eugene Russell
Bob and Leslie Saveland
Brian and Sue Schletz
Aaron Schneider
Jean Self-Trail
Robert Sindermann
Robert Smith
Timothy Smith
Marilyn E. Smith
Julie Snaman
Flo and James Snaman
Don andw Sally Snidow
John and Bronwen Souders
Ray Sousa
Emily Southgate
Katrina and Bernie Stafford
Greg Steinbach
Cynthia and Jim Stowers
Liz Stutz
Lisa Taylor
Frannie Taylor
Michelle Tegerdine
David and Anne Thomas
Stephanie and Robert Thompson
Bob and Linda Thompson
Heather Timer
Kristi Titus
Todd and Lisa Treichel
Diana Turecek
David Van Tassel
Conrad Varblow
Thomas Vojir
John Walsh
Tim and Rita Walston
Winston Warriner
Lynn Webster and Kurt Schroeder
Andrea Weeks
Stephen White
Ben Winn
Kathleen Winters
Jane Yocom
Patrons Continued Next Page

PATRONS CONTINUED

JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary Donations

Danielle Beres
Marlene Burkgren
Claudia Butz Lindstrom
Nana and Kevin Chroninger
Joe and Karen Coleman
Charlene DeRoche
Mitchell Diamond and Lucy Bernstein
Allison Gallo
Terri Guenther
Sharon & Larry Kearns

Jen Leeper
Lucketts Ruritan Club
Brian Magurn
Nan & Caleb McCarry
Diana Menefee
Michael Mercincavage
Jeanne Morency
Frank Piliere
Martha Polkey
George Rambo

Kelly and Thuy Senser
Gina Shahan
Robert
Katrina and Bernie Stafford
Jean Stiegler
Laurie Sweet
Pat Valas
Conrad Varblow
A Special Thanks to
Chuck & Stacy Kuhn

2019 Gifts Made in Honor of:

Amanda and Tony Brooks
Kathy Cain
Joe and Karen Coleman

Allison Gallo and Bryan Henson
Terri Guenther
Jules Johnson

Cindy Kopciak
Jon Little
Carol Myers-Rakes

2019 Gifts Made in Memory of:

Patricia Barr Crowe, Ph.D.

Paul Terrance O'Grady

George Redinger

2019 In-Kind Services and Special Contributions

Susan Abraham
Nolan and Debbie Barzee
Linda Bowman
Bill and Della Brown
Buffalo Wing Factory
Catoctin Creek
Chrysalis Vineyards
Clay and Metal Loft
Cocina and Market Table Burger Bistro
Karen Coleman
Cooper's Hawk
Copperwood Tavern
Dominion Tea
Matt Earhart
Empower Adventure

Fabbioli Cellars
Finn Thai
Ann and Tony Garvey
GeoStructures, Inc.
Terri Guenther
Ketterman's Jewelers
King St. Oyster Bar
Loudoun County Economic Development
Magee Design: John Magee
Maid Brigade
Makersmiths
Morgan Orthodontics
Nature By Design
Steve Price

Paul Reimers
Rivers Edge Landscapes
Salamander Resort and Spa
Sunset Hills Vineyard, LLC: Diane and Mike Canney
Sweetz Bakery
Tarara Winery
The Bird Feeder
Topgolf
Tuskies Restaurant Group
Twigs
Veritas Chocolate
Watermark Woods
Wild for Wildflowers
Zazu Gifts

HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS

HARRISON STREET POLLINATOR MEADOW

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy continued work on the Pollinator Meadow at Harrison Street, on the south side of the WO&D trail at approximately Milepost 34, near the Crescent Place development. In April more than 20 Loudoun Wildlife volunteers planted a variety of native plants in the 6,600-square-foot east meadow. Combined with the initial planting in the west meadow in 2018, over 1,500 plugs of native plants have been planted.

Loudoun Wildlife also continues working with NOVA Parks and the Friends of the W&OD to maintain the meadow on Harrison. We are planning to install interpretive panels at the Pollinator Meadow to educate the public about the importance of conservation design, increasing awareness of the importance of native plant meadows and their benefits to wildlife.

JK COMMUNITY FARM RIPARIAN BUFFER

In May, Loudoun Wildlife partnered with the nonprofit JK Community Farm to complete a riparian buffer at the farm. Thirteen volunteers planted nearly 100 native trees and shrubs along an unprotected stream on the property. That buffer will enhance water quality as well as providing valuable habitat for wildlife.

Funding from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund made this project possible. Revenue generated from Friend of the Chesapeake license plate sales provide funding to the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, which awards grants to nonprofits for volunteer habitat restoration and education projects that benefit the Chesapeake Bay. We are grateful that Loudoun County wildlife shares in the benefits from this program.

SLEETER LAKE PARK TREE PLANTING

Loudoun Wildlife is partnering with Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Town of Round Hill, and others who have come together as Friends of Sleeter Lake to steward the park's natural resources. In March, Friends of Sleeter Lake organized a volunteer project to perform ongoing maintenance on the previously planted pollinator garden, plant over 20 native trees, and remove brush from the park grounds. More than 30 volunteers pitched in to increase the amount of wildlife-friendly habitat.

In the fall, Loudoun County purchased a parcel of property that will connect Franklin Park to Sleeter Lake Park. This means even more opportunities to protect wildlife habitat, as well as offering additional space for people to enjoy nature. We look forward to participating in both parks' continuing evolution.



A hardy group of volunteers gets ready to plant Harrison Street's new Pollinator Meadow (photos: B.J. LeCrone)



THE YEAR IN BIRDING

BY JOE COLEMAN

The highlight of Loudoun Wildlife's birding year was the publication of *The Birds of Loudoun: A Guide Based on the 2009-2014 Loudoun County Bird Atlas*. Coordinated by Spring Ligi, this book was an incredible achievement for a small nonprofit. More than 85 volunteer atlas participants reported over 262 species after spending 5,900 hours in the field observing birds. [For much more information see the following page].

Our bird walks, counts, and programs remained among Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's most popular activities, attracting both beginners and experienced birders. The regular monthly bird walks at Banshee Reeks and the Blue Ridge Center are so popular that when the weather cooperates, it is often necessary to split into two groups. In 2019 we added a third regular monthly walk at Bles Park, located along the Potomac River in eastern Loudoun, which has also proven to be popular.

Loudoun Wildlife also offers a number of special walks. The most popular of these was the annual Birds of Prey driving trip in high January. This event began



Northern Harrier (photo: Michael Myers)

with an introductory class on raptors by Liam McGranaghan and was followed by a road trip where three different groups explored Loudoun's backroads, searching for birds of prey. In March it was followed by a class and field trip on waterfowl by Bill Brown and then the annual American Woodcock walk led by Emily Southgate.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy celebrated bird migration in 2019 with several walks, our first Big Sit, and its annual Birdathon. Between the six Birdathon teams, the eight walks and the Big Sit, we found an astounding 150 species of birds. To put that in perspective, the teams and groups found almost 3/4 of the 206 birds seen in Loudoun County in an ENTIRE YEAR! And the Birdathon raised \$12,480, more than any previous year.

On December 28 LWC concluded its birding activities for the year with the annual Christmas Bird Count. The 124 participants,

the second highest number of people participating in this count, had a beautiful day for the 23rd Central Loudoun Christmas Bird Count. While the 88 species seen were a little below the average of 92, the number of individuals observed, 42, 239, was among our highest. A Peregrine Falcon, a Merlin, lots of Ravens and Bald Eagles, a record numbers of woodpeckers, and Rusty Blackbirds in a large flock of blackbirds were the highlights of the day.

Without LWC's dedicated walk leaders, Birdathon team leaders and Christmas Bird Count sector leaders, all this would not be possible. Special thanks go to the numerous people who make it happen:

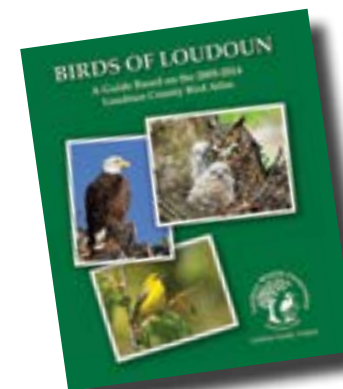
Bob Abrams
Sally Brenton
Bill Brown
Kent Clizbe
Joe Coleman
Phil Daley
Liz Dennison
Allison Gallo
Mary Ann Good
Bryan Henson
Bruce Hill
Gerco Hoogeweg
Sharon Kearns
Spring Ligi
Steve Makranczy
Tess McAlister

Laura McGranaghan
Liam McGranaghan
Larry Meade
Linda Millington
Michael Myers
Christine Perdue
Donna Quinn
Andy Rabin
Nancy Reaves
Dori Rhodes
Michael Sciortino
Carol Sottili
Emily Southgate
Warren Wagner
Marcia Weidner
Jane Yocom



Baby Bluebird (photo: Lisa McKew)

BIRDS OF LOUDOUN: A GUIDE BASED ON THE 2009-2014 LOUDOUN COUNTY BIRD ATLAS



In late April 2019, atlasers and Loudoun Wildlife members gathered at Morven Park's Stone Barn to celebrate the completion of Loudoun Wildlife's first book, *The Birds of Loudoun*. Using data from the 2009-2014 Loudoun County Bird Atlas, the book addresses questions such as: Where is a particular species found in Loudoun and when am I likely to find it? Which of Loudoun's birds are thriving and which need our help the most? Written by local birders, the book includes 261 in-depth species accounts with stunning photographs taken by local photographers. Great places to bird throughout the county and suggestions for putting the data into action are also provided. Thanks to the generosity of 20 sponsors, the books were affordably priced at \$34.95. We

have sold over 500 books as of December 2019. *Birds of Loudoun* was well received by the Board of Supervisors each of whom was given a complimentary copy. Thanks to Supervisor Volpe's generous donation, two copies of the book are now available in every library throughout the county. Books can be purchased online through the Loudoun Wildlife website or in person at Morven Park's

Gatehouse (open 10am - 2pm every Thursday and second Saturday of each month). To promote the book and educate local residents about Loudoun's birds, past Loudoun Wildlife President and current Bird Activities Coordinator Joe Coleman gave a series of talks at libraries throughout the county.

Some of the contributors to *Birds of Loudoun*



Hermit Thrush (photo: Michael Myers)

FINANCIAL
REPORT

Statement of Activities
January 1 through December 31, 2019

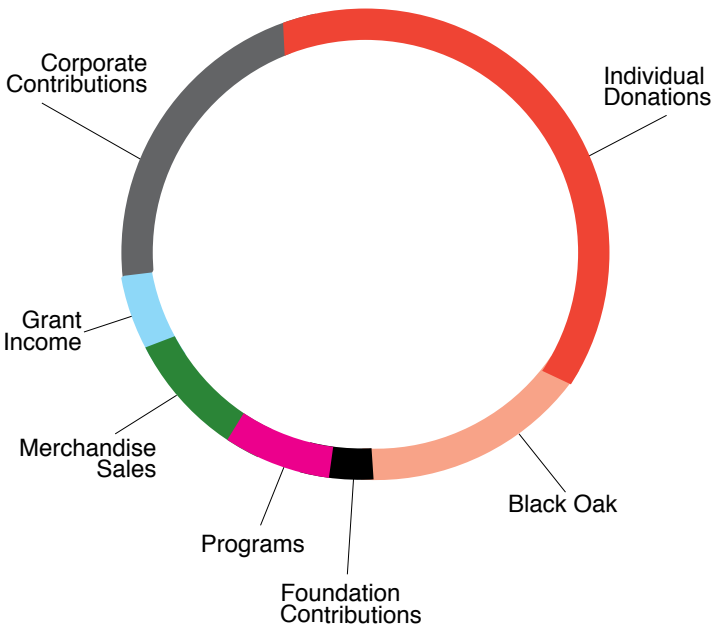
REVENUE

Individual donations	\$72,942
Corporate contributions	44,157
Foundation contributions	6,160
Grants	8,000
Merchandise sales & other	23,558
Programs & events	38,270
JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary (Black Oak)	68,337
Total Revenue	\$261,424

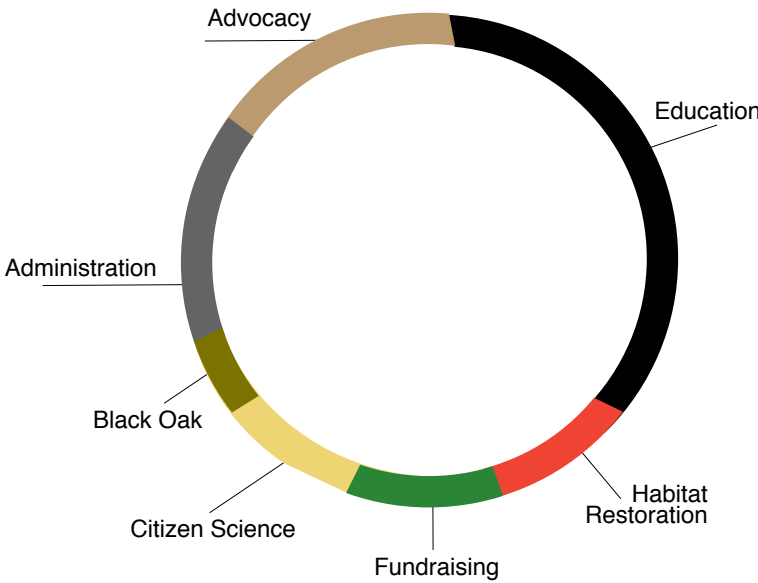
EXPENSES

Advocacy	\$25,164
Citizen science	21,635
Education	137,589
Habitat conservation	21,740
Administration	18,320
Fundraising	24,127
JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary (Black Oak)	11,385
Total Expenses	\$259,960

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Change in Fund Balance

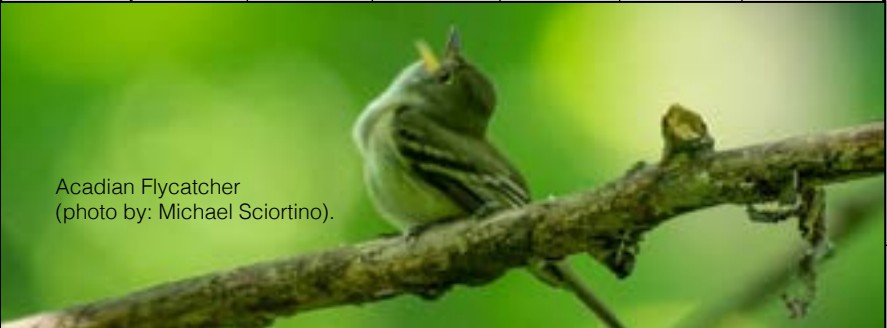
January 1, 2019: \$219,218
December 31, 2019: \$220,682

AUDUBON AT
HOME

Executive Summary

In 2019, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy’s all-volunteer Audubon at Home Ambassadors contributed over 660 hours, visiting 51 properties and providing a written report to each client detailing suggestions for providing and enriching wildlife habitat. Thirty six properties, totaling 411 acres were certified as Wildlife Sanctuary bringing the total in Loudoun County to 256 properties and just over 3,860 acres.

Goal 1: Protect and restore wildlife habitats in Loudoun County

Year	Loudoun AAH Certified Properties		Cumulative total of requests for certification	Certifications pending @ YE	Total Sign-ups in current year	Visited	Carry over to 2020	On Hold awaiting client response	Other (Withdrew, can't contact, etc.)	Percent of requests certified @ YE
	Land Area (Acres)	Number of Properties								
Prior to 2013										
2013	994.88	48	90	9	90	57			24	63%
2014	621.31	28	182	5	92	33			59	30%
2015	464.49	32	272		90	32				36%
2016	1093.9	38	344	9	74	47			27	51%
2017	193.83	38	435	26	91	64			27	42%
2018	84.73	36	545	21	108	49			31	33%
2019	411.36	36	672	19	127	51	14	10	52	28%
Total in acres	3864	256	38%	 <p>Acadian Flycatcher (photo by: Michael Sciortino).</p>						
Total in sq. miles	6.04									
Average ac/prop (2018)	11.43									
Average ac/prop (2013-2018)	15.09									

In 2019 Audubon at Home Ambassadors in Loudoun County conducted 51 visits to client properties, 2 more than the number visited in 2018. In total, 36 Properties, totaling 411 acres, were certified as Wildlife Sanctuary, 4 from prior years and 32 from the current year’s sign-ups. Total new sign-ups in 2018 were 127, up from 108 in 2018. The total number of LC properties in Loudoun is now 256, 3,864 acres. Volunteers provided 340 hours on client-facing site visits and report preparation, with a further 320 hours contributed on Ambassador orientation, outreach and program development and administration.

Goal 2: Serve as knowledge leader and partner for wildlife stewardship

Each client who we visited was provided with an electronic document “Getting Started with Wildlife Habitat in Loudoun County.” This contains links to several resources, including native plant lists for bees, butterflies, and birds in Loudoun, information on identifying and managing invasive species, and the basics of wildlife habitat. Each client also receives a written report of specific suggestions to assist with the development of wildlife habitat on their property. The AAH team maintains a database of links that can be included in our written reports dealing with topics of particular interest and relevance to each client, for example, establishing and maintaining a meadow. AAH Ambassadors took part in several Continuing Education opportunities, including the ASNV Ambassador Brunch, LWC’s Seasonal Meadows Tours and a garden visit, for which we thank Tess McAllister. Additionally, those who are Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners undertook CE programs to maintain their certifications.

Continued next page

AUDUBON AT HOME

Goal 3: Inspire and engage people to become involved in the natural world

AAH was represented at 7 events, including the Annual Master Gardeners Symposium, the Spring and Fall LWC Native Plant sales and others. We got 73 sign-ups for the AAH program from these events.

An increasing number of other sign-ups are coming in directly in response to our wider communications via *Habitat Herald*, social media, and personal recommendations.

Outreach volunteer hours are estimated at 32.

30 clients elected to buy a “Wildlife Sanctuary” front-yard sign to celebrate Certification.

Goal 4: Advocate for wildlife/habitat conservation

AAH contributed an article to 4 issues of *Habitat Herald* in 2019, covering “Supporting Biodiversity in the Soil Food Web,” “Transforming Grassland and Lawn into Meadow,” “Plant the ‘Super 9’ for Pollinators and They Will Come,” and “Leave Winter Quarters for Wildlife in Your Landscape.”

We continued to celebrate Wildlife Sanctuary certifications on Facebook, with 16 posts, many of which feature photographs of proud and excited property owners with their new “Wildlife Sanctuary” signs.

Goal 5: Increase our capacity to fulfill the demands of our mission

A total of 24 AH Ambassadors took part in client visits in 2019, with 7 individuals making 5 or more visits. We thank all our Ambassadors for their enthusiasm and commitment to the program and to wildlife in Loudoun!

Five prospective new AAH Ambassadors attended the 2019 Orientation in March kindly hosted by Watermark Woods, Hamilton. Four have taken part in 1 or more site visits during the year, along with 7 of our 2018 cohort.

A Kick-off meeting for all Ambassadors held in January, with a primary focus on changing from our hard-copy Client information folder to support visits to our electronic “Getting Started with Wildlife Habitat in Loudoun County” document. Our goals in making the transition are to:

- maintain our resources up to date without having to manage inventories of printed brochures
- reduce wasted printing and paper consumption
- reduce the cost of our program, releasing resources for use elsewhere

A monthly email is sent to all Ambassadors to keep them engaged with the program and up to date on new topics, as well as recognizing their contributions.

AAH AMBASSADORS ACTIVE IN 2019... *THANK YOU!*

5 or more visits in the year

Ann Garvey
Ling Lay
B.J. LeCrone
Anne Owen
Dori Rhodes
Sue Russell
Irene Zolnaski

3 or more visits in the year

Colette Berrebi
Elizabeth Deretchin
Susan Ferster
Atziri Ibanez
Carol Ivory
Sandy Lockhart
Jen Lumley
Tess McAllister

Jen Smirnoff
Jennifer Venable
Jane Yocom
Janine Czarnecki
Thaissa Klimavicz
Janet Hensley
Ann Schmitt
Dave Edmundson
Ellen Ruina

PROGRAMS & FIELD TRIPS

One of the most important services the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy (LWC) provides to our community is its ongoing series of educational programs and field trips. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy programs offer valuable services and provide a rich source of information to the residents on everything from environmental issues, to education on local wildlife and habitat sustainability, most of which are offered free of charge. The quality of our programs and field trips are made possible through the support of many of our strategic partnerships and generous membership contributions. In 2019, LWC continued to attract a range of people young and old and far and near to attend our events, further illustrating our growing reach both within and outside the County.

Throughout 2019, the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy offered a variety of walks and field trips ranging from discussions on local fauna, birds, insects to outside yoga and forest bathing at Salamander Resort. One of the year’s big highlights was at our Annual Meeting where local Naturalist Alonso Abugattas spoke about the importance of insects to our everyday lives. LWC also celebrated the publication of *Birds of Loudoun* at the meeting, as well as honoring the generous donations of Chuck Khun and others to LWC.

2019 also saw Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy offer several new events, including a Writing in Nature program by Nancy Morgan, and a Big Sit event organized by Allison Gallo and Bryan Henson and created by Bird Watcher’s Digest, where birders count all the birds they see from a fixed spot. In 2019 we also saw the return of several popular programs including a fall colors walk with Emily Southgate, and a Hawk Watch at Snickers Gap. In 2019, LWC also participated in the annual Leesburg Flower and Garden show, Bluemont fair and Fox news’ Summer Zip Trip.

In addition, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy continued its monthly bird and nature walks at Morven Park, the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Studies and Banshee Reeks. We’ve also begun to add monthly bird walks in Eastern Loudoun at Bles Park. Annual events such as amphibian and bluebird monitoring, nature in winter, spring wildflowers walk, dragonfly field trip, and the butterfly count continue to be as popular as ever.

The numbers back up the increasing popularity of these events. During 2019 we offered close to 40 field trips and over 30 different programs, with an estimated attendance at our events at nearly 2,000 people throughout the year!

With the addition of new board members and an ever-growing contributing member base, we anticipate that our 25th anniversary celebrations in 2020 will prove to be a very exciting year for Loudoun Wildlife’s programs and field trips.

**ESTIMATED 2019 NUMBERS:
PROGRAMS: 1,400
FIELD TRIPS: 450**



Bluebird Monitoring participants celebrate a successful year (photo: Doreen Varblow)



Applauding a Peterson Young Naturalist Program awardee (photo: Jim McWalters)



B.J. LeCrone and Sue Russell present a Wildlife Sanctuary certification to Michele Savage

NATIVE PLANT SALES

Loudoun Wildlife held spring and fall native plant sales for the ninth year at Morven Park, in partnership with Hill House Farm & Nursery, Nature by Design, and Watermark Woods nurseries. The weather cooperated on both sale days this year, with sales bringing in the most revenue ever.

These events provide an opportunity for the community to browse and purchase a large selection of native plants — and also provide opportunities to get expert advice on creating habitat to attract birds, pollinators, and other wildlife.

Sadly (for us), the spring sale was the last with Ann Garvey at the helm. Ann started the plant sales in 2009 and moved them under Loudoun Wildlife’s wing in 2011.

Thank you, Ann, for your vision and all your tireless work over the years, educating the public about the importance of native plantings for habitat restoration.

Thanks as well to all our dedicated volunteers — 59 folks who put in more than 500 hours of work to make all this happen.



Native Plant Sale organizer Ann Garvey (photo: Sheila Ferguson)

HABITAT HERALD NEWSLETTER



Habitat Herald has continued steadily on the production schedule adopted last year by the LWC board, with the Winter issue arriving in members' mailboxes and other venues on or about Feb. 1, Spring on May 1, Summer on Aug. 1, and Fall on Nov. 1. We could not do this without the contributions of our tiny all-volunteer staff of talented editors and copy editors — or without support and input from all our dedicated readers. We're grateful to have a corps of steadfast contributors who regularly write articles for the newsletter and share their photography for publication. We've also been fortunate in finding a few new contributing writers and photographers in the last year, but we are always looking for new ideas, new writers, and new photographers who can help us convey Loudoun Wildlife's important mission to our readers. Please contact Michele Savage.



Left: Fothergilla (photo: B.J. LeCrone).
Above: Squirrel Corn (photo: Donna Quinn)
Below: Banshee Reeks Memorial
Meadow wildflowers (photo: Jim Clark)

*There is poetry
among the wildflowers.*

—Rachel Irene Stevenson



STREAM MONITORING



More than 20 volunteers helped survey Tuscarora Creek (photo: Sarah Ali). Below: One great find: a hellgrammite

Certified stream monitors with the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy evaluated local stream health at eight sites in the county. The data were collected using the Virginia Save our Streams (VASOS) protocol, which involves sampling benthic macroinvertebrates, aquatic organisms living on stream bottoms that are a bioindicator of pollution level and the ecological condition of a stream. Stream monitors count the type and frequency of benthic macroinvertebrates present in the water, and use this information to compute an index score of stream health ranging from one, signifying a stream in unacceptable ecological condition, to twelve, which indicates a healthy stream.

Initially the data are submitted to VASOS, a program administered by the Izaak Walton League of America. VASOS aggregates the data for the state and then submits it to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality which uses the information to identify impaired streams to target for further monitoring, habitat restoration, and pollution control efforts. In 2018 half the streams surveyed by LWC monitors were found to be in acceptable ecological condition.

VASOS continues to be a strong partner in LWC's efforts to expand stream monitoring activity and data collection in Loudoun County. The VASOS stream monitor training resulted in six certified stream monitors and two new stream sites to be monitored.

During the summer, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy stream monitors teamed up with the Town of Purcellville to facilitate "Catch and Count Creek Creatures" event to educate families on local stream ecology. LWC stream monitors also collaborated with the Children Science Center on three interactive, educational events designed to engage families on local water quality issues.



2018 Stream Committee Information

- **Stream Monitoring Kickoff:** The annual stream monitoring kickoff this year was held in April at Ashburn Library.

- **Stream Monitoring Surveys:** Certified stream monitors surveyed Tuscarora Creek in Leesburg, Goose Creek in Lansdowne, and South Fork Catoctin Creek in Waterford in both the spring and fall. Over 20 volunteers assisted. The stream health scores were submitted to Virginia Save Our Streams (VASOS) which sends the data on to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

- **Training:** Two Certified Stream Monitors attended the "Train the Trainer" workshop on the VASOS Stream Monitoring Protocol. They are now qualified to train and certify future stream monitors which can expand the stream monitoring program. In addition one new stream monitor was certified in the fall.

- **DEQ Stream Nomination:** In December members of the stream committee met with an LCPS teacher and a representative from Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation to nominate a stream site for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to conduct in-depth water quality surveys using macrobenthic invertebrates as an indicator of stream health. This was LWC's first stream nomination meeting and an important step, as it represented a collaborative effort between community stakeholders and experts to use stream monitoring strategically in conservation and advocacy efforts. The group selected two stream locations in Leesburg to nominate to DEQ: 1) Dry Mill Branch/Tuscarora Creek, near the intersection of RT 7 and 15. And 2) "Big Spring Creek" (Leesburg) above and below RT15.

- **Water Quality Data Submission:** The function of macrobenthic stream survey data collection and submission to Virginia Save Our Streams (VASOS) for subsequent submittal to VA DEQ has now been



Certified Stream Monitor Dave Manning and his team counting macroinvertebrates (photo: Sarah Ali).

transferred from Loudoun Watershed Watch (managed by David Ward) to the LWC stream committee. The data forms for all the stream surveys conducted in 2018 have been submitted to the DEQ via VASOS.

- **Stream Monitoring App:** A mobile app is being developed to increase the speed, convenience, and accuracy of stream data collection and submission. The app will be an alternative to the paper data collection forms currently used and will be used to engage the community and hopefully increase the number of stream monitoring participants.

LWC Stream Health Assessments

Stream	Average Score	Ecological Condition
Tuscarora Creek, Leesburg	5	Unacceptable
Goose Creek, Lansdowne/Leesburg	5	Unacceptable
Horsepen Run, Sterling	5	Unacceptable
Town Branch, Leesburg	7	Unacceptable
South Fork Catoctin Creek, Waterford	11	Acceptable
Big Spring Creek, Leesburg	11	Acceptable
Crooked Run, Lincoln	9	Acceptable
North Fork Catoctin, Purcellville	9	Acceptable

JK BLACK OAK WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

BY MICHAEL MYERS



Fairy Shrimp are among the vernal pools' inhabitants (photos: Nicole Sudduth)

Early in 2017, when the Lucketts community let the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy know an 87-acre property immediately west of the village was going to be sold to developers, we decided to purchase the property because of its numerous vernal pools and unusual species. After a visit to the property in January 2018 from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage confirmed that the 87-acre parcel was home to a globally-rare wetlands, we reached out to Chuck Kuhn of JK Moving to purchase the property with the idea that after he placed a conservation easement on the property, Loudoun Wildlife would purchase it from him for half its original value.

In 2019 Chuck and Stacy Kuhn placed the JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary under a conservation easement held by the Land Trust of Virginia, ensuring that its globally rare wetlands are protected from development in perpetuity. In March of 2020 Chuck and Stacy sold the property to us at a conserved value, making it possible for us to be stewards of this property. Contributions from individual donors, support from The Nature Conservancy, and the Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund made it possible for us to acquire the property.

Our vision is to preserve and enhance JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary by protecting its sensitive vernal pools, unique geological setting, and rich amphibian and wildlife populations. Additionally, it will serve as a model and catalyst to conserve adjacent lands, and we will create an ecologically significant sanctuary for the conservation and study of native wildlife.

The wetlands restoration project will further enhance the habitat for wildlife and overall ecological diversity

We are partnering with The Nature Conservancy to create additional wetlands on the property and work together to ensure the long-term protection of the property and the tremendous conservation values it holds. The wetlands restoration project will further enhance the habitat

for wildlife and overall ecological diversity.

We completed the first of many stewardship projects on November 2, 2019, when 92 Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy volunteers planted 260 native trees and shrubs there. The purpose of this project was to enhance the ecological value and habitat for

amphibians and other wildlife by linking a vernal pool in an open field to the mature forest on the property. This project was sponsored by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy with assistance from Loudoun County, Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District, Lucketts Ruritan Club, and made possible by the help of volunteers from CarMax Cares, Leesburg Daybreak Rotary Club, Lucketts Elementary School Rudy



Serene sanctuary: JK Black Oak in winter (photo: Sierra Plummer)

Youth Service Club, Lucketts Ruritan Club, Northwest Federal Credit Union, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, and the general public.

We look forward to completing more stewardship projects like this volunteer tree planting to enhance the natural features of the property while engaging and educating the public on habitat restoration. Future plans include working with local students and adults to conduct citizen science projects studying amphibians, birds, butterflies, and other species on the property as we do elsewhere throughout the country. We are very excited to be able to complete our plethora of programs at JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary.

While we have acquired the property, we still need assistance to ensure we have the necessary funding to complete future stewardship projects on the property. Please help us steward this beautiful and valuable property by making donations at <https://loudounwildlife.org/black-oak/>.



Peter Gustafson, Gary Fleming and Karen Patterson conduct an ecological and botanical survey. Vernal pool and sedge (photos: Nicole Sudduth)





Our Mission:
To inspire, motivate and engage
people to protect, preserve and
restore wildlife habitat

