



Fall 2018

BUG BYTES

Newsletter for the Banshee Reeks Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program

Website: www.vmnbancheereeks.org Email: vmnbansheereeks@gmail.com

President's Message

By Barbara Erlandson

As we close out another fiscal year, it is good to look back to see how things have stayed the same and how they have changed. Our location and partnership with Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve remains steady after 11 years, the guidance from the state and our Chapter Advisor has been solid and consistent, and some of the members of the first class are still strong members today.

Our membership size has increased over those years as have training class attendees. As of this writing, we have over 100 active members with approximately ½ of them certified. In 2017, members volunteered an average of 55 hours on a very wide variety of projects. We continue to add new projects with the addition of eMammal, Chestnut Tree Planting, and Bat Monitoring.

Here's to another great year for VMN Banshee Reeks under the new Board of Directors.

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SEASONAL HOURS

APRIL-SEPT 8AM-8PM

OCT 8AM-6PM

NOV-FEB 8AM-5PM

MARCH 8AM-6PM

CLOSED

MON, FRI,
AND ALL COUNTY HOLIDAYS

SAVE THE DATES!

Reading the Land @ Banshee
Thursday, November 10th from 10am to noon

Banshee Reeks workdays
November 17th and December 15th

VMN Holiday Party
December 23rd

New Banshee Reeks Hours

Banshee Reeks recently added more days to the schedule. They are now open on the weekend and Tuesday through Thursday during the week and the visitors center will be staffed on all 5 days from one hour after the preserve opens until one hour before it closes. Preserve hours will be seasonal (see the graphic above).

Save the Date and Recap: VMN Statewide Training and Conference

The 2018 VMN Statewide Training and Conference took place on September 7 - 9, in Fredericksburg, VA, hosted by the Central Rappahannock Chapter. The event featured two and a half days packed full of trainings, workshops and field trips covering various topics including native plants, recycling in Virginia, geology, watersheds, bat house building, and the historical connections between humans and the local flora and fauna.

The VMN Statewide conference is a fantastic opportunity to earn the eight hours of required continuing education credits towards maintaining a certification, while building and expanding on knowledge of Virginia's natural areas, VMN volunteer opportunities and current environmental trends. Maintaining a certification not only impresses the state, but it also recognizes the dedicated and thoughtful work that VMN volunteers contribute to schools, organizations, the community, the region and the state. Attendees also get lots of really cool swag!

Check out these fun photos from the event featuring some Banshee Reeks Chapter members and field trips, and save the date for the 2019 conference - September 20 - 22, 2019 at Massanetta Spring Camp and Conference Center. See you there!



Some of our members at the conference



A very cool overhang on the geology hike

VMN Invades The Natural History Museum

Paul Kreingold has been a busy man. After taking the VMN class in 2015-2016, he took over the stewardship of the pond at the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) in Leesburg. Shortly after that, he became the director of conservation for the IWLA chapter and in this capacity, he has been organizing all kinds of field trips and organization programs for IWLA and has helped our VMN chapter engage some of these same experts.

In July, Paul brought out an expert, Dr. David Adamski, for a program on moths. Dr. Adamski is a Smithsonian Research Associate Emeritus who works with Lepidoptera. As a result of this relationship Dr. Adamski invited several VMNers to the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History for a behind the scenes tour of the collection and the work he performs.

So, on October 21st, 12 curious folks embarked on this exciting field trip. Over the course of the next several hours, Dr. Adamski showed us around the amazing collection of Arthropods, Lepidoptera, and bugs.

First, he explained that one of his roles before he retired was a part of the [Systematic Entomology Laboratory](#) (SEL) which is part of the USDA. When ships and shipments arrive containing perishable

goods to the US, authorities look for potential pests and collect them. These samples are then sent to the SEL via FedEx for identification. The results of the identification determine what happens to the cargo, whether it gets sent back, fumigated, destroyed, etc. The cargo is put on hold until a determination is made, so the work is done as quickly as possible. Dr. Adamski said that the SEL typically processes several thousand of these identifications annually and the consequences of the identification can cost many millions of dollars. He also showed us his personal collection of *Lycorma delicatula*, Spotted Lanternfly, that he acquired in China.



Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*)



A large tarantula and its storage container

Next, we took a tour of the Arthropod collection. They are stored in alcohol for preservation, so they are stored separately in a controlled room that provides facilities and detection of dangerous conditions (alcohol is both flammable and toxic) to protect both the workers and the collection itself. The specimens encapsulated within alcohol are stored in test tube style glass, or if large, mason jars. One of the reasons for storing the Arthropods in alcohol is to preserve their genitalia which is highly important for spider and many other insect's identification.



White Witch (*Thysania agrippina*) moths

Third, we took a tour of the Lepidoptera collection. It is massive – with nearly 3 million specimens. Rows of collection cabinets create dozens of aisles. Each row contained roughly two dozen cabinets and then inside of each cabinet are display cases. Depending upon the size of the specimens, a display case might hold 3 or 4 (like the White Witch moth), or it might hold hundreds of specimens. The cabinets and display cases are organized by genus and species with the specimens also organized by state of collection alphabetically. We looked at several different species to talk about different aspects of the collection and the order. Orangetips provided our first destination. We noticed that while we were looking at *Anthocharis sara* – a western butterfly commonly called the Sara orangetip – that the display case just above contained an uncommon local butterfly – *Anthocharis midea*, commonly called Falcate orangetip. Dr. Adamski graciously showed us the midea collection also and sadly we found that there were no specimens collected from Virginia. We looked at the collection of the White Witch while talking about how large moths can get. We looked at the collection of Morpho butterflies to talk about the structural color of blue in birds and butterflies. We looked at a collection of moths that imitate wasps. We looked at some moths that looked like grass when folded up, but then splashed bright colors as a possible defense mechanism.



Dr. Adamski showing us the Falcate Orangetip collection (*Anthocharis midea*)

It was quite an educational and impressive tour. When visiting the Museum of Natural History, visitors generally only get to see a tiny fraction, 5 or 10 percent, of the much larger and richer collection. Dr. Adamski was happy to see our naturalists' enthusiasm for the collection and his work. He also seemed happy to schedule other tours if there is interest among other members of VMN or we'd like to see other parts of the collection. Paul, of course, is busy pursuing more education opportunities, including an upcoming spider program.



Morpho butterflies (males on left, females on right)

American Rubyspot damselfly

Bryan Henson

The American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina Americana*) is small and attractive damselfly. At 3.5 to 5 centimeters long, they are easy to overlook despite the vibrant eponymous red spot on their wings. The size of these red spots on males have been found to predict their mating success*. Their preferred habitat is streams and rivers. The last one I saw in Loudoun county was at the edge of the Potomac River at Algonkian Nature Preserve's Sanctuary Trail. The Rubyspot's range include almost the entire continental US. Walter Sanford has a great picture of the nymph stage on his [website](#). In our area, their flight period is from May to October. One suggestion for finding them is to look for patches of [Water Willow](#).



American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina Americana*)

*<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0003347207000802>

COMMITTEE CORNER

Volunteer Service Projects Committee

Chair: Jane Yocom

Welcome to our newest training class members! I've been so impressed with the level of volunteerism from some of them! They have really hit the ground running. Just a few tips for you newbies and our more seasoned members. First, make sure you are volunteering in Virginia. Hours spent volunteering in Maryland, DC and other areas do not count toward your certification. And, be careful when you are working with other agencies such as LWC, PEC, etc. You may not count any hours spent advocating, fund-raising, recruiting new

members and other administrative tasks. All hours must be project oriented. I'm looking forward to meeting the new class in January at my Volunteering for the VMN CE Class. Please email me with any questions!

Historian

If you have good photos, please send them to the chapter at vmnbansheereeks@gmail.com or post them on our [Facebook](#) page.

Communications/Newsletter Committee

Chair: Bryan Henson

We're always looking for article contributions to the website, so remember that writing and research time count as VMN Volunteer Hours!

Outreach Committee

Chair: Brian Meyerriecks

The outreach committee is always looking for volunteers to join; please contact Brian Meyerriecks at brian@meyerriecks.com.

Host Committee

The Host Committee is being reinvigorated by several new folks helping in planning upcoming events. The holiday party is planned for December 23rd, 2018 at a home in Leesburg. Details and invite will be forthcoming.

Membership Committee

Chair: Barbara Erlandson

Now that the 2018/19 class is filled and seems to be humming along, membership work has turned towards urging last year's graduating class to complete their requirements for certification, asking older members to update their information to remain certified, and providing lots of volunteer and CE opportunities for the current class so that they can certify early. As of this writing, 48% of those students that graduated in 2018 have become certified.

Continuing Education Committee

Chair: Open

If you have a class that you would like to offer for the chapter, or you see an event that you think would be a CE opportunity, or there is a topic on which you would like the chapter to present a class, email the chapter (vmnbansheereeks@gmail.com).

Training Committee

Chair: Sue Robinson

The VMN training class has started with 23 students, on Sept 15, 2018. The class has completed the kickoff with Orientation, Ecology, Invertebrate Zoology, Ichthyology and Geology. Another new instructor will be added to teach Dendrology and Forest Ecology this year, Kyle Dingus. We keep trying to add new people and energy and have backups if needed. The class is very diverse and bring many interests and backgrounds to the program.



Electrofishing with John Odenkirk

About Banshee Reeks VMN

The Banshee Reeks chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist program is a volunteer corps focused on education, outreach, conservation, and management of the natural resources in Virginia. The chapter was founded in 2006 and focuses on Loudoun County and hosts many events at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. We are always looking for new members and like-minded organizations.

Visit our website at

<http://www.vmnbansheereeks.org/> or email us at vmnbansheereeks@gmail.com.

And join our Facebook group:

[Virginia Master Naturalist-Banshee Reeks Chapter](#)