

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

Inside This Issue

INSIDE THIS ISSUE.....	1
VOLUNTEERS BRINGING THE HEAT.....	1
PARTY LIKE IT'S SUMMER 2019	1
NEW BANSHEE REEKS HOURS	2
DONATE TO VMN BANSHEE REEKS.....	2
MOTH/SPIDER NIGHT AT BANSHEE REEKS.....	2
BLES PARK "IMPROVEMENTS".....	3
LEADING NATURE WALKS	3
COMMITTEE CORNER.....	4
VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROJECTS COMMITTEE.....	4
HISTORIAN	4
COMMUNICATIONS/NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE	4
OUTREACH COMMITTEE – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!	4
HOST COMMITTEE	4
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE.....	4
CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE.....	4
TRAINING COMMITTEE	4
ABOUT BANSHEE REEKS VMN	5

Volunteers Bringing the Heat

By Susan Sims

As I look back on 2019 so far, I'm impressed by the quality of projects that our volunteers have completed, not to mention the number of hours entered into the VMS! Our chapter volunteers have reported over 2,500 hours of volunteer work across

various projects in only seven months. We've contributed to bluebird monitoring, Banshee Reeks volunteer work days, class management and instruction, the spotted skunk survey, butterfly counts, iNaturalist wildlife mapping, interpretive nature walks, habitat management, and so much more.

We've made significant impacts through our partnerships with community organizations assisting with stewardship, education and multiple citizen science projects. Partner organizations that have benefited from our chapter's expertise and commitment include Izaak Walton League, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, VDGIF, Plant Nova Natives, and Willowsford Conservancy to name a few.

It may be summertime but our chapter is bringing the heat year round! Members have also participated in 453 hours of continuing education gaining a verdant swath of knowledge from insect identification to sustainability. I look forward to what we'll be able to accomplish in the coming months as we embrace summer and move into the changing of seasons. Thank you for your continued dedication to helping Virginia and our region conserve and manage natural resources.

I hope all of you will join us at the VMN Summer Picnic and Silent Auction on Sunday, August 18 to celebrate these accomplishments and take a bit of a break to enjoy each other's company and some summer sunshine!

Party Like It's Summer 2019

Summer is in full swing, which means vacations, BBQs and the VMN summer picnic! Come join us on Sunday, August 18 from 12 to 3 pm at Banshee Reeks to celebrate the accomplishments of our VMN chapter, recognize recertifications, congratulate the newest class of graduates, and welcome the incoming class.

SAVE THE DATES!
VMN Picnic and Raffle/Auction
 Sunday, August 18th from 12 to 3pm

Banshee Reeks workdays
 August 17th, Sept 21st

The event will be a potluck and we are encouraging everyone to share a dish or favorite treat. In addition to lunch, we'll be doing a raffle and silent auction. If you have something you would like to donate please contact Thaisa Klimavicz. Previous years' prizes included stays at cabins, movies, fresh harvested vegetables, nature books, knick knacks, gardening supplies and more! Prizes and auction items do not have to be nature-related.

Please RSVP online at bitly.com/2019VMNpicnic
If you have any questions, please email Susan Sims at vmnbansheereeks@gmail.com.

Banshee Reeks Hours

Banshee Reeks added more open 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.

SEASONAL HOURS

APRIL-SEPT 8AM-8PM
OCT 8AM-6PM
NOV-FEB 8AM-5PM
MARCH 8AM-6PM

CLOSED
MON, FRI,
AND ALL COUNTY HOLIDAYS

Donate to VMN Banshee Reeks

Barbara Erlandson

Is Amazon one of your go-to-sources for all things under the sun?? It certainly is mine! There is a way to continue to shop on Amazon and they will donate .05% to VMN Banshee Reeks. Simply go to their site by using the following URL: smile.amazon.com – it looks and works the same as the Amazon that you are familiar with. Simply designate VMN Banshee Reeks as the recipient of the donation and we will collect the donation.

Moth/Spider Night at Banshee Reeks

Paul Kreingold



Dr. Adamski in action

On Saturday evening, June 22nd, 2019 the Banshee Reeks VMN chapter sponsored a fascinating talk by Smithsonian etymologist Dr. David Adamski, one of the world's leading experts on moths, and Dana De Roche who runs the spider collection at the museum. The joint presentation entitled "Why Insects are Successful" examined the adaptations insects have made to ensure their continued existence in a world filled with predators. Following the lectures attendees could examine moths and other insects caught in two moth traps setup nearby.



Dana De Roche sharing her spider expertise

Bles Park “Improvements”

Bryan Henson

Bles Park is an amazing natural area and park in eastern Loudoun county. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy typically holds a dragonfly walk during the summer because of the fantastic variety of Odonata to be found in the fields, marsh, pond, mature forest and river habitat. Individual and group bird walks have identified more than 175 species of birds. In the last year, several rare birds have been found at the park, including Sora, Common Gallinule, American Bitterns, Marsh Wren, and Mourning Warbler.

Loudoun County has developed a plan to change the park. Some details of the plan can be found online at

<https://www.loudoun.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/Bles-Park-22> . The plan impacts many of the natural areas of the park. One change would be to put a road along the edge of the marshy wetlands. Another would fragment the wetlands and encourage visitors and visibility into the most hidden/protective areas of the marsh. Yet another change would replace shrubs/trees near the pond with a pavilion and lawn. Also in the plan, is additional parking that will mostly be situated on a small marshy area.

There currently is no place to provide feedback on this plan besides by emailing your county supervisor or contacting prcs@loudoun.gov .



A Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) at Bles Park

Leading Nature Walks

Bryan Henson

Have you ever thought about leading a nature walk? Are you afraid that you aren't qualified enough? Not sure how it would go?

To be qualified to lead a walk, you just need to have some information/knowledge/enthusiasm to share. This can be identification of plants, birds, insects, landscape features, or any other natural element. There is really nothing to fear about not being knowledgeable enough. A wise leader once explained to me that you typically end up with two different groups that come on walks that interest them: those that know nothing about a topic and are excited to learn anything and those that already know a good bit about a subject and can help you educate the others and will contribute to the walk.

Further, it is perfectly okay on a walk to say “I don't know” as long as you walk the participants through the challenge using field guides or help them understand what resources are available to answer their questions. You'll find that most novice participants are very happy if you can just teach them one or two things about the subject. Finding one or two beautiful subjects (trees, dragonflies, butterflies, etc) can provide a lasting positive memory.



Eastern Ratsnake (*Pantherophis alleghaniensis*) at IWLA during a nature walk

If you still uncomfortable, there are interpretation classes and even educational walks on how to give nature walks.

The need for nature walk leaders is quite high; organizations such as Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, Willowsford Conservancy and many of the local communities are all looking for leaders on topics of all kinds. If you'd like to get your feet wet trying your hand at leading a walk, then your best bet is to be a co-leader. On most walks, you want to have two or more leaders in case of emergency and to help keep the leader to participant role lower. So, you can be teamed up with an experienced leader and just assist; this can be a great way to learn even more information to share on future walks.

If you are interested in leading walks or co-leading walks, please reach out and I'll help you get started.

COMMITTEE CORNER

Volunteer Service Projects Committee

Chair: Jane Yocom

Here we are in the midst of the Dog Days of Summer. While it's so hot during the mid-day, try to find some volunteer opportunities in the early morning or late afternoon/evening. I noticed some of you haven't entered any hours yet this year!

This is a good time to check over (or add) your entries in the VMS. The longer you put off entering hours, the more you forget to add! Make sure you've listed a "project" for each activity. And, if you are leading a walk, teaching a class, manning a booth, make sure you add the "Populations Served" information! The state loves to see how many people in the general public we reach with our message of conservation!

If you need help finding a project to work on...let me know and we can talk about your interests and what project fits those areas!

Historian

If you have good photos, please send them to the chapter at ymnbansheereeks@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 – Volunteers Needed!!!

Chair: Brian Meyerriecks

The outreach committee is always looking for volunteers to help staff upcoming outreach events.

Host Committee

The Host Committee is being reinvigorated by several new folks helping in planning upcoming events. If you would like to help, please contact ymnbansheereeks@gmail.com.

Membership Committee

Chair: Barbara Erlandson

As members, please reach out to your friends, family and neighbors and talk about the important work we do. One of the reasons new members give for joining the organization is to find like-minded friends. Let's find those new friends.

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 (ymnbansheereeks@gmail.com).

Training Committee

Chair: Sue Robinson

The 2019-2020 VMN training schedule has been published online.

DATE	CLASS
9/14/2019	Journaling, History of VA Naturalists
9/28/2019	Ecology/Taxonomy
10/12/2019	Ichthyology
10/26/2019	Invertebrate Zoology

11/9/2019	Geology and Soils
11/23/2019	Dendrology & Forest Ecology
12/7/2019	Interpretation and Mammalogy
1/4/2020	Weather, Climatology & Biogeography, Risk Management Volunteering CE
1/25/2020	Urban Ecology and Natural Resource Management Ticks CE
2/22/2020	Wetlands Ecology
3/14/2020	Ornithology (8am start) Optics CE
3/28/2020	Herpetology
4/11/2020	Botany
4/25/2020	Practicum & Graduation

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.vmnbancheereeks.org/> or email us at vmnbansheereeks@gmail.com.

And join our Facebook group:

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