



Roanoke Valley Master Naturalists Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Sunday, July 17, 2016

Garst Mill Park, Roanoke, VA

Attendance: Lynn Akers, Brian Boggs, Maya Bohler, Larry Bradfield, Amy Dupuis, Joe Dupuis, Bill Fabian, Nancy Fabian, Gwinn Firing, Mark Gustafson, Mary Harshfield, Robin Jordan, Scott Karns, Gail MacFarland, Jaclyn Norkus, Gary Oberlender, Laurel Riddle, Ginny Savage, Frank Sellers, Kaye Sellers, Joey Story, Pat Taylor, Sharon Vest, Jean Warren, Bill Wilkinson, Janet Wilkinson, Freyja Williams, Dave Williamson, Lynn Williamson, Dennis Woodson (30)

Call to Order: The general membership meeting was called to order at 2:57 PM by Bill Fabian.

Old Business:

- **Treasurer's Report (Janet Wilkinson presented for Mike Crowder):** Janet reported on the 2nd quarter financial report as follows:
 - The beginning balance was \$4,584.48
 - Deposits in the 2nd quarter: \$781.00
 - Total amount of checks written of \$154.17, as follows:
 - \$104.17 to George Devlin for riparian project at Garst Mill Park
 - \$50.00 to Janet Wilkinson for picnic shelter for 3rd quarterly meeting at Garst Mill Park
 - Ending balance of \$5,211.31. Sharon Vest motioned to approve the treasurer's report, Gwinn Firing seconded the motion; the treasurer's report was unanimously approved.
- **Secretary's Report (Janet Wilkinson):** Janet previously emailed the minutes of the April 17, 2016 quarterly meeting to members. Sharon Vest motioned to approve the April minutes and Nancy Fabian seconded the motion; the minutes were unanimously approved.
- **Other Old Business:**
 - **VMN Logo Items:** Scott Karns asked for approval to order assorted sizes of shirts and hats. He will base the designs off of the email feedback he received earlier this year. Dave Williamson is looking into linking to an apparel vendor through the chapter website so that members can order and pay for items. Nancy Fabian told Scott to find out how much the apparel stock will cost and then the

executive committee can approve the expenditure. Scott can ask the treasurer to write a check to cover the cost of the items.

Subcommittee Reports:

- **Membership/Marketing Committee (Dave Williamson):** Bill Fabian introduced Dave Williamson as the new chair for membership/marketing. Dave said that the chapter website is constantly being improved and that he and Brian Boggs have some additional ideas to publicize our chapter that they will be implementing.
- **Curriculum Committee (Nancy Fabian):** Twenty-five trainees completed this year's training course. Some trainees have not taken the practical exam yet. Bill Fabian stated that those who missed over the maximum number of classes are invited to take those classes during the next training class, starting in February 2017.
- **Projects Committee (Robin Jordan):**
 - **Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Volunteer Opportunities:** Robin Jordan reported that in June there was a successful McAfee's Knob Task Force Ridge Runner training. There are now enough volunteers that they are considering expanding the program to put Ridge Runners at Dragon's Tooth. Robin reminded everyone that the Task Force reports to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, which provides training and keeps statistics on the trails. Scott Karns reminded everyone there is a meet up page where information/events are shared about the Task Force.
 - **Garst Mill Park:** The riparian buffer planting project continues to have needs for ongoing maintenance. George Devlin sent along Splash Valley/Green Ridge passes that were from Roanoke County as a thank you for help with projects. The passes were placed on a table for members to pick up at the end of the meeting.
 - **Harvey's Knob:** Robin Jordan has requested to be added to the Facebook page for Harvey's Knob so that she will get updates and will be able to let members know what is going on at Harvey's Knob. Bill Fabian said that Mike Crowder checks on Harvey's Knob periodically and takes care of any needs he discovers. The annual hawk migration was mentioned as a volunteer opportunity—you do not have to be an expert on hawks in order to help. There is a guide available on the chapter website that helps with hawk identification.
 - **Center in the Square:** Freyja Williams reminded members that there are opportunities available for volunteer hours at CITS. Volunteers are needed for the tank team in the atrium, the touch tank/river room, and the butterfly garden. The Science Museum can really use our help, especially on weekends. Contact Freyja or the CITS volunteer coordinator for more information. Bill Fabian asked if parking is still free for volunteers and Freyja said it is.
 - **Roanoke City/Save Our Streams Rain Barrel Workshops:** Gail MacFarland reported that Joey Story and she attended rain barrel making workshops. There are sessions available at the Salem Public Library,

which are free, for up to 20 people. The materials for the rain barrel project are provided. There are also opportunities with Roanoke City Stormwater to become a rain barrel trainer. There is also Save Our Streams training upcoming and there is currently a special focus on Roanoke City streams.

- **Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway:** Dave and Lynn Williamson reported that they have been volunteering with Friends to clean trails and campgrounds and performing other activities. There is a website for Friends on which volunteer opportunities can be found.
- **Bluebird Monitoring at Hanging Rock Trail:** Joe Dupuis reported that he has been monitoring bluebirds along the Hanging Rock Trail. Bill Fabian said he will update the VMN system to reflect bluebird monitoring as a broad category (it is currently location-specific).
- **Botetourt County May Day:** Dennis Woodson reported that he worked a May Day event in Botetourt County a couple of years ago with Denny McCarthy, the previous chapter advisor. Dennis thought it was a great event, especially since every 4th grader in the county attends. There are different educational stations through which the students rotate. Since Denny has moved, Robin Jordan will contact the Salem Department of Forestry office to find out about this event.
- **Happy Hollow/Birding and Wildlife Trail Adoption:** Sharon Vest talked about opportunities at Happy Hollow, which in the past have included pruning overgrown azaleas, usually in early spring. There is also the opportunity for trail maintenance throughout the year. Sharon participated in a VMN webinar put on by Department of Game and Inland Fisheries about adopting birding/wildlife trails. There are a large number of trails in the Roanoke Valley, and maybe the chapter could adopt one or more. The commitment is to check on the trails several times per year using a checklist that discusses birds, amphibians, wildlife, trail condition, etc. Sharon will check with DGIF for further details about this program.
- **Winter Feeder Watch:** According to Sharon Vest, for \$18/year, one can join feeder watch through Cornell University and report on what birds visit one's backyard feeder from November – April. This is a great way to get volunteer citizen science hours. Data collection includes general information about the weather conditions and what birds were spotted during what time period. Cornell will take as much or as little data as one is willing to submit. Bill Fabian said that the kit one receives from Cornell upon signing up is worthwhile and includes some good resources.
- **eBird:** Gwinn Firing stated that eBird has a new feature whereby one can be assigned a 9 square mile block of land through the Virginia bird breeding atlas to regularly monitor. There are 4,200 blocks in Virginia. The count is mainly concerned with June and July and focuses on nesting, feeding behaviors, etc. The data from this citizen science effort helps the state obtain grants for further work. Gwinn recommended linking to the

Virginia bird breeding atlas for everyone who is using eBird. The contact is Ashley Peele, ashpeele@vt.edu, vabba2.org. Bill Fabian said there was an article in the Roanoke Times recently about the birding atlas.

- **Advanced Training Committee Report (Bill Fabian):** Bill said that Gail MacFarland is stepping down as chair of the advanced training committee. Gail confirmed this and said that she does not have any continuing education planned for the October meeting. Bill asked if anyone will step up to chair advanced training, and Scott Karns volunteered. Scott will coordinate advanced training and continuing education in conjunction with quarterly general membership meetings or as field trips. Ideas for continuing education included tree identification (especially winter tree ID, as presented previously by Toni Pepin) and wetlands ecology, also presented by Toni Pepin.

New Business:

- **Go Outside Festival:** Janet Wilkinson informed that group that this year's Go Outside Festival is being held October 14-16, 2016. Janet is willing to organize the logistics for the booth if someone else is willing to coordinate the activity(ies). The activity(ies) is/are necessary in order for the chapter to get the discounted booth rate of \$50. Since the application is due August 1, time is of the essence. Robin Jordan agreed to handle the activity(ies) and is thinking about an activity that Department of Environmental Quality has available, "Bug Rocks", rocks that have bugs painted on them, like what would be found in the rivers and streams in our area. Robin and Janet will work together to plan the activity(ies) and to apply for a booth space for Go Fest.
- **Date Change for 4th Quarterly Meeting:** Bill Fabian stated that since Go Fest is still ongoing on October 16, there has been an email proposal to change the meeting date to either October 9 or 23. Janet Wilkinson requested October 9 in case there are any last minute details for Go Fest, this gives a chance for us to meet prior to the event. The date change to October 9 was unanimously approved.
- **Statewide VMN Conference:** The Blue Ridge Foothills and Lakes Chapter are hosting the state VMN meeting at Smith Mountain Lake from August 26-28. We have a number of members who are volunteering to help at the conference and a number of members attending the conference.
- **VMN Conference Photo Contest:** Bill Fabian said our chapter has two members interested in entering photos into the photo contest at the conference, but our chapter can only have one submission per category. There were three entries for the flora/fauna category, two by Joe Dupuis and one by Robin Jordan. Upon vote, Robin's photo of a hooded warbler will be entered. In the landscape category, Joe Dupuis' "September Morning" will be entered.
- **Save Our Streams:** Bill Fabian reports that the chapter has two SOS sampling kits available, although they are incomplete. There need to be dowels added and 36 inch square white sheets, along with ice cube trays and thermometers. Nancy confirmed the possibility of reimbursement by the Isaac Walton League for supplies. Joey Story and Robin Jordan claimed the two kits, as they will be regularly performing SOS monitoring.

- **Election of New Officers and Committee Chairs:** Bill Fabian is stepping down from the Presidency and Janet Wilkinson has been nominated. With no nominations from the floor, Gwinn Firing motioned to close nominations for Presidency. The motion was carried and Janet Wilkinson was elected President. Frank Sellers was elected Treasurer. Scott Karns was elected Secretary. Nancy Fabian will continue as Vice President and Curriculum Committee Chair.
- **Hours in VMS for Midyear Certification:** Bill Fabian said the state VMN is making midyear certification available for new trainees/members who have completed their volunteer hours to obtain their certification in 2016, instead of waiting until the end of the year and receiving it in 2017. The midyear point is only for new certifications, not recertification. Bill needs hours to be updated in the VMS by July 31 in order to report to state VMN.
- **Meet Up:** Scott Karns proposed that the chapter start a Meet Up site in order to better communicate with members, establish community, enhance accountability, and recruit. Scott says that Meet Up will email you when items are posted, or you can opt out and just check the site at your convenience. Meet Up costs \$99/year, or \$15/month. Frejya Williams suggested that the chapter agree to use Meet Up for one year to see how we like it. Dave Williamson agreed to run the Meet Up site, as he has done this for other organizations. The proposal to join Meet Up for one year at \$99 passed.
- **Business Cards:** Dave Williamson urged everyone to take some VMN membership cards home to hand out to people to inform them about the chapter. Janet Wilkinson also brought pamphlets for anyone who needs them for advertising.

2016 Meeting Dates: The next quarterly general membership meeting will be on October 9, 2016 at 2:00 PM at the Salem Public Library. Secretary Scott Karns will arrange for the meeting space.

Adjournment of Meeting: With no further new business, Scott Karns thanked the outgoing officers and motioned to adjourn the meeting. Frejya Williams seconded the motion, and all members were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 4:11 PM.

Minutes recorded and submitted by

Janet Wilkinson, Secretary

Roanoke Valley Master Naturalists