

# RAPPAHANNOCK RAMBLINGS

Issue 1 Volume 6

February/March 2022

## What's Happening: Early Spring Events in The City of Fredericksburg

By Kyle Close

While it might be cold outside with some lingering snow still on the ground, the City of Fredericksburg is gearing up for several environmental events in early spring, which will hopefully bring some warmer weather.

Callie Brown, the Outdoor Recreation Supervisor for Fredericksburg Parks, Recreation, & Events has reached out with several upcoming service opportunities and events that might be of interest to Master Naturalists. The first being a Volunteer Orientation for interested volunteers at **The Motts Run Nature Center** on **Saturday, March 26**, at 9:00 am.

The orientation will be at the Nature Center and will provide new volunteers with an overview of the Nature Center, Motts Run Reservoir Recreation Area, and what to expect while volunteering. Brown says, "The Motts Run Nature Center is run solely by volunteers. It is open 12-5 p.m. every Sat & Sun from April-October."

Located at 6600 River Road, Fredericksburg, the Nature Center provides learning and interpretive material for guests, helping provide information and larger context to what might be seen or experienced while visiting Motts Run Reservoir Recreation Area. Volunteers can expect consistent volunteer opportunities at the center during the year, "volunteers can sign up for 2.5 hour shifts to open the Nature Center and help guests. We ask that Nature Center volunteers commit to at least 15 hours during the season (six 2.5-hour shifts)" said Brown.

Interested volunteers should RSVP to Callie by email at [cmbrown@fredericksburgva.gov](mailto:cmbrown@fredericksburgva.gov).

Provided in this newsletter is a copy of the flier shown, with additional information if needed.

(con't p. 6)

*"The mountains are calling and I must go..."*

### In This Issue

- Spring Events p. 1
- Book Review p. 2
- Invasive Plant Removal p. 3
- Oakley Forest p. 4
- Calendar p. 5



MOTTS RUN NATURE CENTER

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Calling all nature enthusiasts! Volunteers are needed to staff the Motts Run Nature Center on weekends from April to October. A fifteen hour commitment is requested for the season. We'll teach you everything you need to know! Must be 16 years or older. Children under 16 are welcome to volunteer with their parents!

**Volunteer Orientation: Sat. March 26 @ 9-10:30 a.m.**

TO SIGN UP, CONTACT: CALLIE BROWN  
540-372-1086 X213 OR  
[CMBROWN@FREDERICKSBURGVA.GOV](mailto:CMBROWN@FREDERICKSBURGVA.GOV)



## The BUZZ.....a Book Review

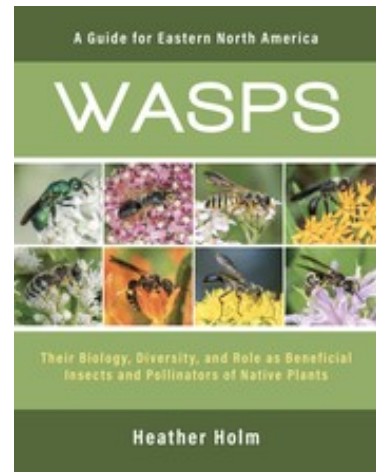
by Madelyn Chappell

Wasps: Their Biology, Diversity, and Role as Beneficial Insects and Pollinators of Native Plants by Heather Holm. Published February 15, 2021 ISBN 9780991356317

Portability: hardback, over 400 pages, 9"x12", definitely not something to carry in your field bag

Layout: Colorfully illustrated with actual photographs, range maps, preferred native plants and hints on identification

Thoughts: A well-researched, illustrated guide on wasps as pollinators and the native plants they feed on. The first five chapters cover general information, life cycles, anatomy, diet, and ecosystems they support. These chapters were an easy read, but highly informative around wasp biology.



The guide section has range maps, native plants the wasp prefers, hints to ID and information around that species. I have used the guide to ID wasps and found the guide a bit difficult to use until I became more familiar with the families.

The native plant information was outstanding and have already planted natives to attract more wasps. The hints on how to tell these common wasps apart was well worth the book. The color photographs were well laid out and I was happy to have them in my collection.

It does not cover all wasps, just the most common. If you are looking for something more comprehensive, this may not be the book for you.

Rating 4-1/2 Buzzes



## Invasive Plant Removal with Friends of the Rappahannock

By Kyle Close

In an average year, Friends of the Rappahannock facilitates environmental educational programming to 6,000 children at their Fredericksburg headquarters along the Rappahannock River. To help provide an educational space that is reflective of Virginia's natural habitat with native plants, Friends of the Rappahannock has regular invasive plant removals around their educational programming areas in late winter/early spring to help facilitate the growth of native spring wildflowers.

The first removal in 2022 was this past Saturday, February 5 with the next planned removal being March 5 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at their headquarters, located at 3219 Fall Hill Ave. For both removals the main goal is to remove Japanese Honeysuckle along trails near and around the educational programming area.

Japanese Honeysuckle is an invasive species throughout Virginia and is one of what Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden calls "The Dirty Dozen", as it is one of twelve most problematic invasives in the region.

The removals are organized by Brent Hunsinger, the Tidal Programs Manager and State Policy Coordinator at Friends of the Rappahannock. Brent highlighted some of the wildflowers benefiting from the removal including, "Spring Meadow Beauty, Dutchman's Breeches, Yellow Trout Lily, Virginia Bluebells, Cut-leaf toothwort and Bloodroot."

When asked if the problem of invasives have gotten worse at the site Brent wrote, "Yes. We are now seeing Perilla Mint and Silkgrass show up in the woods by the river. The river brings in new species when it floods."



Volunteering to help remove invasive species at the Friends of the Rappahannock not only helps in giving native plants a chance of survival, but also in providing a means for children on school trips and visitors in general to see and learn about those native plants.

While there are annual removal days like the upcoming March 5 event, volunteers can also remove invasives throughout the year at their will. Below is a link to the event sign up form and more information from FOR about Brent's contact information for those interested in volunteering.

Even if three hours might not seem like a long time, it does help in providing native species a fighting chance. Three hours of removal can have a tremendous impact as demonstrated from this past Saturday's cleanup. With just around 12 volunteers, almost 15 wheelbarrows worth of Japanese Honeysuckle and Multiflora Rose were removed.

There are about 15 spots left for the March removal and can be accessed via the link below.

Link for signing up - [Invasive Plant Removal - Friends of the Rappahannock \(riverfriends.org\)](https://riverfriends.org/invasive-plant-removal)



# Destination Spotlight

## Oakley Forest Wildlife Management Area, Spotsylvania Virginia

By Kyle Close

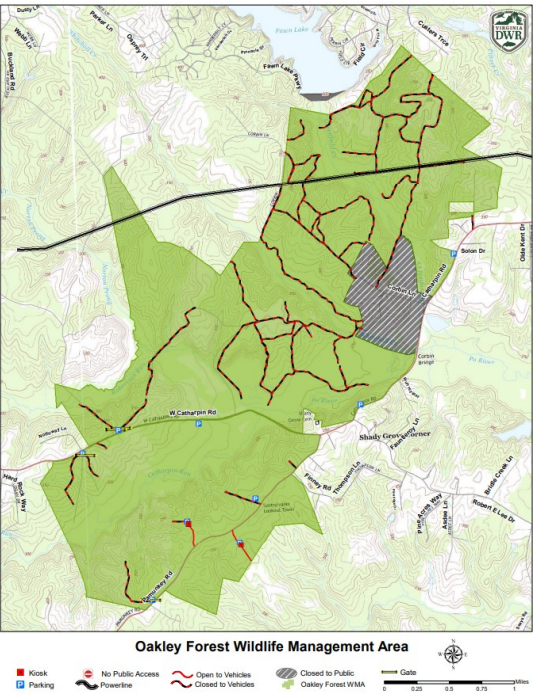
While many Virginians might be familiar with State parks, most likely many are not as familiar with another type of state-maintained land open to the public, the Virginia Department of Wildlife’s (DWR) Wildlife Management Areas (WMA).

According to the Virginia Department of Wildlife, the goal of the Wildlife Management Area system is to, “maintain and enhance habitats that support game and nongame wildlife while providing opportunities to hunt, fish, trap, boat, and view wildlife.” At the moment, there are 44 designated WMA in the state of Virginia, making up over 200,000 acres of protected land which are open and accessible to the public.

The Central Rappahannock Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists has several WMAs in the area, with one of the newer ones being in Spotsylvania.

Oakley Forest WMA is in the northwestern part of Spotsylvania near Fawn Lake and opened to the public in 2017. With over 4,000 open acres and nine designated parking areas, Oakley Forest offers a wide range of options for Master Naturalists, with nature viewing and hiking being some of the big draws.

Unlike state or national parks which will typically have well defined and mapped trail systems, Oakley Forest has an open hike policy which gives visitors much more leeway to hike around to where they would like within the boundaries of the WMA. There are social trails throughout Oakley Forest, but one positive about it being a WMA, is that you are not confined to those trails. For adventurous bird watchers who might be led around by calls of some of their “must see” birds, the 4,000 plus acres of open hiking might be a great opportunity to view birds in a more natural manner.



For arborists enthusiasts Oakley Forest has an amazing array of trees on its property. Including sizable Northern Red Oaks, Ironwoods, Yellow Poplars, and Black Locust. There are stands of pine throughout Oakley Forest as well.

As a Virginia Wildlife Management Area, an access permit is required to enter and utilize the hiking and nature viewing opportunities. While most hunting or fishing licenses serve as access permits to Oakley Forest, the Restore the Wild Membership access permit offered by DWR might be of particular interest to Master Naturalists. According to DWR’s website, the Restore the Wild Membership, “will help support projects across the state designed to restore and create wildlife habitat vital for their survival.” With a \$25 annual membership serving as an access permit, individuals will have access to Oakley Forest and other WMAs for a full year.

Hunting does take place at Oakley Forest during designated seasons, so be sure to be mindful of posted dates on bulletin boards in the parking areas or on the DWF website.

Link to website - <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wma/oakley-forest/>

Photo by Kyle Close; map from DWR website

## Calendar of Events

**February 18-21 – Great Backyard Bird Count**, various locations, <https://gbbc.birdcount.org/get-started/> for more information

**February 15 - Chapter Meeting**, Fredericksburg Church of Christ, 226 Riverside Drive at 7 pm; Speaker: TBD

**February 27 – Belmont Nature Walk**, Gari Melchers Home and Studio, 224 Washington Street, Falmouth at 2:00 pm

**March 3—Chapter Board Meeting**, Wegmans, 6 pm

**March 15—Chapter Meeting**, Fredericksburg Church of Christ, 226 Riverside Drive at 7 pm; Speaker: TBD

**March 26—Motts Run Nature Center Volunteer Orientation**, at 9am; Interested volunteers should RSVP to Callie Brown by email at [cmbrown@fredericksburgva.gov](mailto:cmbrown@fredericksburgva.gov).

**March 29 - Reservoir Clean Up Day**, at Motts Run Reservoir Recreation Area; two shifts, 9 am-1 pm or 12 pm –4 pm; Registration is required and can be done at - [Catalog - Fredericksburg Parks, Recreation & Events \(rec1.com\)](http://Catalog-FredericksburgParks.Recreation&Events(rec1.com)).

**April 23—Earth Day On the Rappahannock**, contact Bethany Brown ([bethany.brown510@gmail.com](mailto:bethany.brown510@gmail.com)) to volunteer for our Naturalist booth.

Please contact Kyle Close ([kylclose@gmail.com](mailto:kylclose@gmail.com)) if you have any events for our calendar. Next issue will include dates between April 15 and June 30.

## Early Spring Events (con't.)

Next up is **Reservoir Clean Up Day**, a one-day service event on **March 29** at Motts Run Reservoir Recreation Area. The event is broken up into two shifts. The first shift, the morning shift, runs from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and the second shift, the afternoon shift, runs from 12:00 pm through 4:00 pm. Areas of focus during the cleanup will be along the shoreline, the Nature Center, and the nature play space.

Registration is required and can be done through this link - [Catalog - Fredericksburg Parks, Recreation & Events \(rec1.com\)](http://www.rec1.com). An account is required to sign up for the event, but takes less than a few minutes to set up. Lunch will be provided the day of to all registered volunteers.

The last event from the City of Fredericksburg is none other than one of Fredericksburg's largest annual events, **Earth Day On the Rappahannock**. Slated for **Saturday April 23**, with a rain date of April 30, the event will take place at Old Mill Park and will have dozens of environmental exhibitors and all kinds of activities.

Entering its 18th year, Fredericksburg's Earth Day has brought in over 5,000 attendees in previous years prior to COVID. The Central Rappahannock Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist will have a booth, as will many other service-related environmental organizations.

Activities, music, and demonstrations will be ongoing throughout the day including a Virtual BioBlitz and Chalk & Talk Art Contest. More information can be found at the event's website, [earthdayfred.com](http://earthdayfred.com) with more info being posted to the site as the event closes in.

In addition to providing a lot to visitors, the event can also use some volunteers. Volunteers can help with setting up, breaking down, or helping to run services like the water table. Interested volunteers should reach out to Callie for more information.

The website for Earth Day is live and can be found at [earthdayfred.com](http://earthdayfred.com).

## Contact Us

### Central Rappahannock Chapter Virginia Master Naturalists

P.O. Box 5996  
Fredericksburg, VA 22403  
[masternaturalistcrc@gmail.com](mailto:masternaturalistcrc@gmail.com)

Visit us on the web at:

 [http://  
masternaturalistcrc.blogspot.com](http://masternaturalistcrc.blogspot.com)

[www.virginiamasternaturalist.org](http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org)

 [Central Rappahannock Chapter -  
Virginia Master Naturalists](https://www.facebook.com/CentralRappahannockChapterVirginiaMasterNaturalists)

## Chapter Officers and Committee Chairs

### Chapter Officers

**President:** Harry Puffenberger  
[hpuffen@yahoo.com](mailto:hpuffen@yahoo.com)

**Past President:** Jim Scibek  
[j-m-scibek@msn.com](mailto:j-m-scibek@msn.com)

**Vice-President:** Amy Settle  
[arsettle@msn.com](mailto:arsettle@msn.com)

**Treasurer:** David Way  
[bikeman101797@gmail.com](mailto:bikeman101797@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Day Goldsmith  
[day.mcclanahan@gmail.com](mailto:day.mcclanahan@gmail.com)

**Chapter Advisor:** Andrew Peal  
[andrew.peal@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:andrew.peal@dcr.virginia.gov)

### Committees

**Membership/Special Events**  
Chair: Imogene Treble [trebleie@gmail.com](mailto:trebleie@gmail.com)

**Project Committee**  
Chair: Rikki Lucas [lucasr2@mymail.vcu.edu](mailto:lucasr2@mymail.vcu.edu)

**Continuing Education/Advanced Training**  
Chair: Amy Settle [arsettle@msn.com](mailto:arsettle@msn.com)

**Basic Training**  
Chair: Jim Scibek [j-m-scibek@msn.com](mailto:j-m-scibek@msn.com)

**Outreach/Publicity**  
Chair: Bethany Brown [bethany.brown510@gmail.com](mailto:bethany.brown510@gmail.com)

**Communications Committee**  
Chair: Amy Settle [arsettle@msn.com](mailto:arsettle@msn.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** Kyle Close [kylclose@gmail.com](mailto:kylclose@gmail.com)



*Virginia Master Naturalist Programs are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital, family, or veteran status, or any other basis protected by law.  
An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.*