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Our *Amazing* Volunteers



THE PEEPER

Calvert Nature Society

www.calvertparks.org

November 2016

The Volunteer Issue

Owls: What a Hoot!

by Shannon Steele

One of the things I love about working at Calvert County Nature Parks is being able to interact with the nature center's live owls. When a group requests an owl program, I know it will be a success, because all I have to do is walk around with my little winged arm candy, and people are mesmerized. While I have their attention, I like to sneak in a little education about owls, and dispel the many myths and misconceptions about them.

Eye See You

Until recently, I thought that owls couldn't move their eyes because they were so big they filled up all the space in their sockets. I heard this from several sources and thought it was true; however, when I observed an owl being prepared for taxidermy, I learned that owls' eyes are elongated. This tube shape, along with bony structures called sclerotic rings, is actually



Park staff and volunteers set up mist nets to band saw-whet owls.

what prevents them from moving their eyes. Cartoons have people believing owls can turn their head the whole way around to see, but the truth isn't too far off; they can turn it about 3/4 of the way around.

(Continued on page 11)

Calvert Stewards, Looking Forward

by Maya Huchla

For anyone actively volunteering or following the Calvert Stewards projects, we hope you noticed some changes over the past year. Fiscal Year 2016 was the start of an ongoing project to develop a stronger, more cohesive corps of community members working to improve Calvert's nature parks and our cultural and natural heritage.

Winning Numbers

One of the changes instituted this past year was more consistent tracking of volunteers and their hours working on projects. These reports help us show the county just how much volunteers are an invaluable asset to the division, which in turn helps with funding and program support. Tracking hours also identifies the time and energy needed for certain projects.

In FY2016 we tracked:

- 232 volunteers involved in 42 projects
- 3 groups were tracked, composed of 180 volunteers working 1046 hours
- 182 volunteers attended 38 trainings, workshops, and enrichment programs (476 hours)
- Total time: 3,700 individual volunteer hours.

The National Volunteer Center values volunteer work at \$24.64/hour, which translates to more than \$87,000 worth of projects, research, and outreach that our volunteers have provided the division.

Thank you, thank you, to everyone who has volunteered for Calvert County Natural Resources. Every little bit of time you're able to volunteer makes a difference, and we sincerely hope it's a rewarding and enjoyable experience for each of you.

(Continued on page 8)

Planning for the Future, Comprehensively

Knowing how to protect your land for the future is of the utmost importance. To that end, the Society was proud to host more than two dozen landowners at Kings Landing Park in mid November to discuss how best to preserve their land for the future.

The “Your Land, Your Legacy” workshop—organized by the Land Preservation Committee, Calvert County Department of Community Planning & Building (CPB) and the Calvert County Division of Natural Resources — engage landowners in a discussion about land planning options and agricultural preservation. The landowners met with estate planners, local land trusts, and governmental agency representatives to discuss the latest land preservation initiatives in Southern Maryland.

“Conservation of land for public use provides wonderful opportunities for citizens to explore and appreciate the natural, cultural, and historical features of the County,” noted Karyn Molines, Chief of Calvert County Division of Natural Resources. “Easements on private land help to preserve the rural character of the County.”

In addition to the organizers, CPB and the Division of Natural Resources, and the host, Calvert Nature Society, the Soil and Conservation District and Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust also supported this event.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Calvert Nature Society recently participated in county comprehensive planning process. Past efforts to preserve Calvert's land, direct and control growth, and to create eco-tourism and heritage tourism opportunities need to be carried forth in the upcoming Plan, so as to maintain a high standard that we currently enjoy.

Along with our fellow members of the Sustainable Calvert Network, the Society believes that Calvert County should continue to control and direct growth to town centers to

sustain our farming, forestry and fisheries operations and protect our river and bay. Working landscapes and open spaces are a key to good health and happiness of Calvert residents.

We believe that the current Plan goal is a good one, and we support the current visions detailed in the Plan. Specific recommendations include:

- TDRs should not be the only way to meet the 40,000 acre benchmark. Rural Legacy, MALPF and other preservation programs should help reach that goal.
- The forestry benchmark should be revised to call for increasing the percentage of forestland, without compromising prime farmland. Forests are a key to good water quality.
- The Cultural Heritage vision should reflect our diversity and the Plan should value heritage as a primary means of developing and maintaining a sense of identity, a sense of place.
- The Plan should document the economic value of agri-tourism, ecotourism and heritage tourism and identify strategies to safe-guard and strengthen these economic engines. There benefits should be recognized in the economy section of the plan.

Weigh in

Calvert communities depend on a strong plan to guide future county initiatives, be it preservation, development, schools etc. The Comprehensive Plan touches every aspect of our lives, so please be a part of the process.

Although the initial meetings are now complete, there will be many more opportunities for you to provide comments.

In the future, the county will be setting up discussions and more surveys on SpeakUp Calvert! Submit your ideas at <https://calvertcounty.granicusideas.com/ideas>.

– Anne Sundermann, Executive Director

Owls *(cont'd from page 1)*

Rare Birds

Another common misconception is that people think Barn Owls are abundant in Calvert County. Preferring large, open grasslands flourishing with meadow voles, they disappeared from the county as the number of large fields dwindled.

Calvert County Natural Resources Division, Southern Maryland Audubon Society, and a dedicated group of volunteers have been working with landowners to install and monitor nest boxes. Luckily there have been two successful nests so far, which gave me a rare opportunity to see wild baby owls.

Another memorable moment was in the winter of 2013 when Snowy Owls migrated much further south than they had in decades. Such beautiful birds!

Northern Saw Whet Owls, Maryland's smallest owls, migrate through Southern Maryland every fall. The naturalists are starting a mist net research project to learn about their local migratory patterns. We have caught several in our mist nets so far this year.

Who Lives Locally?

There are three more common species: Great-Horned, Barred, and Eastern Screech Owls. The Great-Horned Owl, named for the horn-like feathers on its head, is the second-largest owl in North America. This gray-brown owl with a white throat and yellow eyes lives in a broad range of habitats, including forests, deserts, and cities. They'll eat anything smaller than they are, including hawks and skunks. Listen for their “Who's Awake? Me too?” call, especially in winter when owls are breeding. They often use old crow nests, but even have been found nesting on apartment balconies.

Barred Owls are a little smaller than the Great-Horned Owls and lack ear tufts. Their feathers are mottled brown and white with dark brown bars on their chest to match their deep brown eyes. They are often found in mature forests near water, and their diet includes crayfish and amphibians as well as rodents and birds. Barred owls will use old crow nests but will also nest in large tree cavities. Their “Who Cooks for You?” call can be heard during winter courtship, but don't be surprised if you hear them on a summer day.

Eastern Screech Owls, the smallest of the three, can be red, gray, or brown. They also have ear tufts and yellow eyes. Screeches can be found wherever there are trees. They are small but mighty predators, eating a variety of prey including animals as large as squirrels and rabbits. Although they are called Screech owls, they mainly trill and whinny. They will nest in tree cavities but will readily use nest boxes.

If you are as captivated by owls as I am, you can build and put up a screech owl nest box at your house. In addition, you can visit www.calvertparks.org to discover other ways to help owls.

Rebuilding for the Future Kings Landing Cabins Restored

Through a generous grant from the Maryland African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP), Calvert Nature Society and the Division of Natural Resources have completed the preservation of the YMCA cabins at Kings Landing Park in Huntingtown. The cabins, once a respite from inner city Baltimore, were in use until the 1980s but had fallen into disrepair.

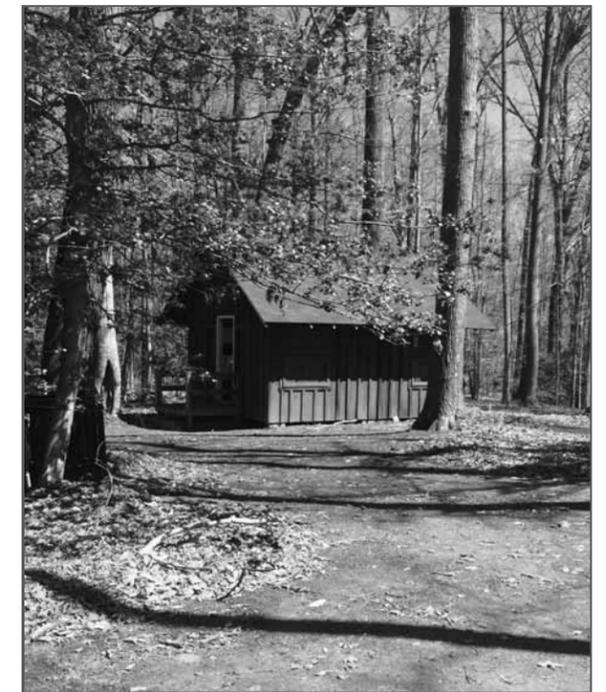
Camp Mohawk, as it was called, is the only known African American camp in Calvert County during the period of segregation. The project rebuilds a place that focuses on the experiences urban African American youth had in a rural outdoor environment.

Next Steps

Although the YMCA's ownership is known, the story of the activities has not been told. The Society and park staff hope to record the oral histories of the campers, many of whom still reside in the Baltimore area.

The one-room cabins are rustic wood frame, three-season buildings. The refurbished cabins will be opened for group camping in the near future.

–Anne Sundermann



Calvert Nature Society is dedicated to the protection and preservation of Calvert County's natural heritage and the creation of an environmentally literate and aware community. We provide opportunities for appreciation and understanding of our natural world through our outreach initiatives and in support of the mission of the Calvert County Natural Resources Division. Calvert Nature Society is a 501(c)3 organization.

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Michael Rawlings, *Office Assistant II*
Jerry King, *Building & Grounds Maintenance Worker*

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Nature Society News

Welcome to new board member **Michael O'Shea**. Michael was raised in Calvert County. He graduated from DeMatha Catholic High School and went on to earn his Bachelor of Arts at Loyola College in Maryland, where he graduated cum laude and was a member of the Pi Sigma Alpha honor society. Michael earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland School of Law. While in law school, Michael was an Associate Editor on the University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender and Class. He worked for the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County as a Case Management Intern and the Circuit Court for Howard County as a Judicial Intern.

Upon graduation, Michael was selected to serve as Judicial Law Clerk for the Honorable Marjorie L. Clagett, County Administrative Judge for the Circuit Court for Calvert County, where he gained experience performing complex legal research in a number of areas of law. Upon completing his clerkship, Michael entered private practice. He currently maintains a general legal practice with concentrations in Real Estate, Corporation and Business Association, Land Use & Zoning, and General Civil Litigation. Michael is a member of the Maryland State Bar Association, the Calvert County Bar Association, and the American Inn of Court of Southern Maryland. He is also a dedicated member of the Calvert County community; Michael is a member of the Calvert County Historical Society, the Calvert County Chamber of Commerce and the Maryland Farm Bureau. In his free time, Michael enjoys cycling, farming, hiking, politics, sailing, reading, and cooking.

Calvert Nature Society held its annual meeting and Volunteer Appreciation on Sunday, August 28 at the Cypress Swamp Nature Center. CCNRD Chief **Karyn Molines** and Volunteer Coordinator **Maya Huchla** emceed the Volunteer Dinner, acknowledging the many accomplishments of our volunteers, but particularly the decades long contributions of **Lloyd Hepburn**. Friends signed a large "card" for Lloyd, thanking him for his inspiration.

After dinner, **Dr. Paul Bushmann**, a biology professor at Anne Arundel Community College, spoke about his recent survey of horseshoe crab breeding patterns at Cove Point and Flag Ponds Nature park. We thank Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust for support of our lecture series.

In early October, board member **Bill Chambers** and his wife **Cindy** hosted a house party for the Society at their waterfront home on Broomes Island. House parties are a great way to spread the word about the Society. If you are interested in hosting a casual get together at your home, please contact **Anne Sundermann** at anne@calvertparks.org. Many thanks to Bill and Cindy for opening their home to us!



Natural Resources News

We would like to welcome **Kim Curren** from Chesapeake Beach as our fall intern. Kim has a BS in Education from Salisbury and brings with her experience at the Jenkins Aquarium in Pleasant Beach, New Jersey. Kim has two children and enjoys hiking and the outdoors. Welcome, Kim!



Michael O'Shea



Kim Curren



WINTER 2016 /2017 PROGRAMS



Calvert County Natural Resources Division Calvert Nature Society

We have so many wonderful programs, we can't fit them all here. See the web site for a full listing of all the upcoming programs: www.calvertparks.org

Online registration is preferred. Many programs fill quickly; by registering online you will know immediately if you are registered for a program.

For mail in or walk in registration, a registration form must be completed.

You can find the forms on the web site or at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp.

Call 410-535-5327 or email CypressSwamp@co.cal.md.us for additional information.

NATURE PARK INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT WWW.CALVERTPARKS.ORG

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

Families can experience the fascinating natural world found in our area. These programs incorporate activities to entertain learners of all ages. Most programs spend time outdoors: dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear.

Reservations required. Adult participation required unless noted. Children must be the age indicated for each program.

Fee per program: Free for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family.

Life of a Dead Tree

Ages 3-5 years

Tuesday, November 15

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

A dead tree is full of life! Discover the many different animals that call dead trees home. A puppet show and hike will help us learn.

The Christmas Possum

18 months-5 years old

Tuesday, December 6

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

The Christmas Possum has hidden candy canes in the park. After some

possum-themed indoor activities, the naturalist will lead your children on a hike to find them.

Wintertime Hike

3-5 years old

Thursday, January 12

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Now that winter is upon us the outside world is looking very different. We will go hiking around the park and see what's different this time of year.

Winter Storytime

18 months-5 years old

Wednesday, January 18

Session A: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Session B: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Join us for wonderful winter stories.

The Eagle's Nest

6-9 years old

Saturday, January 21, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

It's nesting season for eagles. Spend some time indoors learning about these majestic creatures, and then join the naturalist on a hike to observe the nest site. Bring binoculars if you have them.

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES (cont'd from page 3)

Reservations required. Adult participation required unless noted. Children must be the age indicated for each program.

Fee per program: Free for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family.

Who Lives in a Tree?

3-5 years old

Monday, January 30

Session A: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Session B: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Birds aren't the only one who make their home in a tree. We'll discover what other animals call a tree their home and go explore for signs of animals.

Frozen Fun

18 months-5 years old

Friday, February 3

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Children will have fun doing indoor activities and crafts with ice then will bundle up and take a short hike in the frozen outdoors.

Winter Nature Mobile

3-5 years old

Thursday, February 9

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Enjoy a short hike to explore nature in winter. We will collect found materials and use them to create a nature mobile to hang at home.

Family Birding Hike

All ages

Saturday February 18, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

The Great Backyard Bird Count is this weekend. Whether it's your first time birding or you are expert everyone is welcome on this hike. Bring your binoculars!

Backbone Bash

18 months-5 years old

Wednesday, February 22

Session A: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Session B: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Explore the wonderful world of animals with a backbone! We will even meet some of those special animals.

Little Birdie

3-5 years old

Wednesday, March 8

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

There are birds of all shapes and sizes here at Battle Creek. We will go on a hike to see who we can find flying about the park.

Coming Home-Animals that Migrate

3-5 years old

Thursday, March 16

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Animals have lots of adaptations to survive the winter, including migration. Bring your preschoolers to learn what Calvert County animals will be returning from the warm south in the spring and then head outside to search for these travelers.

For the full listing of programs, go to WWW.CALVERTPARKS.ORG

SCHOOL'S OUT ADVENTURE

Don't let your child sit home on this day off from school-send them out to play! The day will include indoor and outdoor activities. Adult participation is not required. Fee is per child.

Nature Nuts Winter Overnight

8-11 years old

Saturday, January 14, 9:00 a.m.-Sunday, January 15, 9:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Don't hide inside all winter! During the day, we will play detective-searching the beach and the woods for animal clues. After sunset, we will head out into the quiet winter woods for a night walk, followed by a campfire and s'mores. Don't worry about getting too cold. This camp will include indoor and outdoor activities and plenty of hot chocolate. Dinner, breakfast, and snacks included.

The Waking Woods

6-9 years old

Friday, March 31, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Warm Farm Recreation and Nature Park

Spring is springing all around us! In this day off from school, we will get out and explore the woods, meadows, and waterways of this great new park. Depending on the weather we may-dip net in the pond for frogs and tadpoles, build forts in the woods, search the meadows for spring wild flowers just coming up.

Program fee per child: Members: \$20; Nonmembers \$30

Volunteer Spotlight: Barbara Stewart Mogel

The Board of County Commissioners recognized Barbara Mogel as one of Calvert County's outstanding volunteers at their annual "Calvert You Are Beautiful" ceremony in September. Barbara exemplifies the adage that one person can make a difference. In 2012, Barbara approached Calvert County's Natural Resources Division about resurrecting the Barn Owl Nest Box project, which had stopped in the 1990s. Barbara's efforts were quickly rewarded...In its first season, the box project had its first Barn Owl nest in over 15 years. The re-occurrence of Barn Owls in the County highlights the value of integrating natural habitats and agricultural practices.

The Barn Owl symbolizes the value of maintaining the rural character of Calvert County and represents those quiet, secluded places that are rarely visited. Because of their secretive nature and specific food preferences, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources deemed them as "highly likely to become endangered in the near future." The Patuxent River remains one of three main breeding areas for this owl in the State. However, their population has declined in Calvert County at a rate of more than 50% over the last 10 years.

Now in its third year, the project has grown from 17 to more than 50 nest boxes. Barbara has recruited more than 80 volunteers to assist with the installation and monitoring of the boxes. Since 2012, Barbara has devoted nearly 1000 hours to this project and manages other volunteer for the project, including scheduling and documenting their hours and organizing appreciation events. Barbara's efforts promote understanding of Calvert County's natural resources. Her leadership resulted in the success of Calvert Nature Society's "Adopt-an-Owl" fund raising campaign, raising more than \$1000 in support of the project.

Barbara dedicates her heart and soul to ensure that Barn Owls remain a part of Calvert's natural heritage. By donating to Calvert Nature Society, purchasing supplies from her own pocket, and accumulating mileage as she drives the back roads in search of ideal Barn Owl habitat, Barbara's can-do spirit and commitment to philanthropy and volunteerism make a difference wherever she goes. Learn more about Calvert You are Beautiful at www.co.cal.md.us/index.aspx?NID=1489.



Barbara Mogel

Join our Volunteers!

If you are interested in these, or other volunteer opportunities, please contact **Maya Huchla** at volunteer@calvertparks.org or at the Nature Center on weekends at 410-535-5327.

Amphibian Monitors. Volunteers are needed each day to help monitor amphibian populations at Flag Ponds Nature Park. Trained volunteers will check drift fence traps in the morning to identify count, and measure salamanders, frogs and toads captured in bucket traps. Animals are then released. Volunteers should be willing to commit to 2-4 days per month. We need volunteers for weekdays and weekends. Families can volunteer, but at least one adult must be responsible for data collection and animal safety.

Bird Nest Monitors. We continue to expand our bird nest box monitoring and we need more boxes built! If you are handy with a hammer and screwdriver, you can help build

bird boxes and put them up in the parks. We also need volunteers to visit the nests throughout winter to get them ready for the spring nesting. Families are welcome to participate.

CHESPAX Educators. We need volunteers who are available on weekdays. Are you available for a few hours during the week to help teach children about animal diversity, terrapins or oyster populations? We use volunteers to help teach CHESPAX environmental education programs for Calvert County schools. New volunteers will be trained by staff and experienced volunteers. For adults; all volunteers must undergo a background check to work with school children.

Events. Help out at our display table at the County Fair, Patuxent River Appreciation Day, and other outreach events. Volunteers generally work in 2-3 hour shifts.

Volunteers *(cont'd from page 1)*

Projects

We started some new projects, improved existing ones, and found ways to better thank and enrich our volunteers.

◦Bird Banders tested sites at Flag Ponds for saw-whet owl banding during migration. The site was successful and there was good volunteer interest, so the project will kick-off this fall (and will hopefully be an annual project)!

◦Barn Owl Nest Box Monitors had another successful year. The season wrapped up with an owl-banding demonstration, volunteer social, and night hike.

◦Teaching Volunteers got a behind-the-scenes look at preserving terrapin habitat on Poplar Island as well as oyster rearing at the Horn Point Lab and Oyster Hatchery.

◦Five Kayaking Volunteers completed a 2-day intensive kayak-guide training and are now able to assist naturalists on public kayak trips.

◦Volunteers checked salamander traps, bluebird boxes, or prothonotary warbler boxes. Thank you to everyone who helped with those projects, collected data, and committed to the checking schedule!

◦Animal Care Volunteers began assisting weekend staff at the Cypress Swamp Nature Center. Especially during the busy summer months, it's great to have extra hands to help take care of the critters and greet park visitors.

◦Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts worked on boardwalk and trail repair, building nest boxes, removing invasive plants, installing bat boxes/predator guards/interpretive signs, and more. Several of these were Eagle Scout and Gold Award projects.

Looking Ahead

Our goal for FY 2017 is to have at least 50 volunteer activities. This includes research, stewardship, and community projects; volunteer trainings and special programs; and as I mentioned above, more recognition opportunities.

Getting Involved

If you would like to become a Calvert Stewards Volunteer, we'd love to have you. Visit www.calvertparks.org/volunteer to read project descriptions, keep an eye on the CNS calendar for upcoming Calvert Stewards events and programs, and email volunteer@calvertparks.org to join in on the fun.

We're always open to new ideas—if there's a way we can better serve our volunteers or a new project you'd like to try, please let us know!

Thank you!

As in years past, our active volunteers were recognized during the Calvert Nature Society Annual Meeting at the end of August.

This year's recognition dinner was dedicated to Lloyd Hepburn, a volunteer for over 30 years and avid herpetologist, educator, and lover of all nature.

We also recognized the following volunteers for all the time they volunteered over the past 20 years, and presented them with a walking stick as a token of our appreciation.

- Carolyn Anderson—
Bluebird Nest Box
Project

- Mary Ellen Boynton—
Teaching Volunteer,
Salamander Population,
Outreach, Kayak volunteer

- Jack Brown—Barn owls, Saw-whet owls, Community
and Construction projects, Outreach

- Fred Bumgarner—Teaching Volunteer, Outreach,
Nature Center aid, former CNS Board

- Martha Grahame—Teaching Volunteer, CNS Board,
Outreach

- John H. Jones —CNS Board

- Dudley Lindsley—Teaching Volunteer, former CNS
Board

In the future, we will create seasonal events to bring staff and volunteers together so that we can celebrate and recognize projects and volunteers more than just once a year.



Longtime volunteer Fred Bumgarner receives his walking stick to commemorate his 20 years of dedication and support to the county nature parks.

PROGRAMS FOR 10–16 YEAR OLDS

(Including Junior Rangers Series)

These programs encourage developing minds to appreciate and protect the nature around them. Programs identified by the Junior Rangers Series logo are designed to create a group of young men and women with a strong, long-term commitment to preserving and protecting the landscapes, waterways, and natural resources of Calvert County. Adult participation is not required for these programs. Fee per program, unless noted: Free for members, \$8 per person for nonmembers.

Owl Pellet Dissection

12-17 years old

Saturday, December 10, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

You can learn a lot about an animal by what they eat. Teens will each get an owl pellet to pick through and reassemble a mouse skeleton.



Great Falls Hiking Trip

12-16 years old

Saturday, Dec 17, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park and travel to Great Falls, MD

A fun winter hike at Great Falls, MD, along the Potomac River. Members: \$10; Nonmembers \$20.



HOMESCHOOL FIRST FRIDAYS

Ages 4-12

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Homeschool First Fridays is a series of environmental education programs developed especially for homeschoolers ages 4 to 12. These classes are a great way to get hands-on science and nature lessons, receive help on projects and research and network with other homeschooling families. Each two-hour program will consist of indoor and outdoor hands-on learning. Depending on the topic, students may observe live animals, collect aquatic creatures, take measurements of water quality, or play games.

- Parents with younger children (ages 4-6) will stay with the group; parents of older children have the option of staying or not.
- Parents who stay with the program are expected to participate as mentors and teachers. Staff will provide guidance.
- Siblings younger than 3 are welcome, but must be under the care of a parent/guardian at all times and should not distract the program participants.

TEEN HOMESCHOOLERS

12-16 years old, no adults required. Free for Society members.

Nonmembers pay \$8 per family per program

Animal Care Day

Monday, January 9, 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Does your homeschool have an interest in animals and how to best take care of them? Maybe they are considering veterinary school or might like to work at a nature center someday? This special class for teen homeschoolers will let teens meet some of the captive animals here at Battle Creek Nature Center and perform, with guidance from nature center staff, the tasks necessary to maintain our animal collection.

Hike to the Big Cypress

Tuesday, February 7, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Send your teen on this special opportunity to explore the northern section of the Cypress Swamp where few visitors get to go. We will talk about the adaptations of cypress trees as well as learn what makes a Champion or Big Tree. We will then trek through the swamp to locate our county champion bald cypress and measure it.

Spring Herp Search

Monday, March 6, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Warm Farm Recreation and Nature Park

Teen homeschoolers will learn about Calvert County's "herps" (reptiles and amphibians) and then head into the wetlands and woods of this new county property to search for and count these amazing creatures.

- Older and younger students will be grouped by age to allow for age-appropriate topic exploration (parents will stay with the younger group).

Please select only one session per day. Free for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family per program

Friday Homeschool — Habitats

4-12 years old

January 6, The Friendly Forest

February 10, The Beautiful Beach

March 3, The Super Swamp

A Session: 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

B Session: 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

In this winter's homeschool series each month will focus on a different habitat found at Flag Ponds Nature Park.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Take time to learn about and appreciate the natural resources found throughout the County. These programs combine hiking through the parks, while learning more about the plants, animals, and other natural wonders.

These programs are geared towards adults and older teens. Fees, unless noted: Free for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per person.

Winter Waterbirds

13 years old and over

Saturday, January 28, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Sunday, February 26, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Enjoy a leisurely two mile hike to visit the swamp, ponds and beach to see what birds are out and about. You may register for either program, or both if you wish.

Winter Greens

Ages 13 years through adult

Friday, February 17, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm

We'll explore the forests in search of the ferns, herbaceous plants, and trees that are green in the winter. Co-sponsored by the Maryland Native Plant Society.

Nature Preschool Workshop for Adults

Adults only

Saturday, February 25, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Learn to connect your preschool child to nature and inspire their creativity through numerous hands-on activities and make-and-take crafts. Share ideas with other parents and teachers of preschool-aged children.

Nature Trivia

21 years old and over

Saturday, February 11, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Mully's Brewery, 141 Schooner Ln., Suite 15,

Prince Frederick

Think you are a nature expert well grab your friends and come test out your skills at Nature Trivia! We'll have beverages from some local breweries as well and fun prizes. Check our website for more updates on this event! \$60 per team.

Wildflower ID for Beginners

For adults, although teens 16 years and older may attend.

Friday, April 28, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Interested in knowing the names of the wonderful wildflowers you encounter in forest and field? Then take this class where you'll learn to "key-out" local plants using the popular Newcomb's Wildflower Guide. Other field guides can be used, but the instruction will focus on the terminology and methodology of Newcomb's. Check our website for more updates on this event!

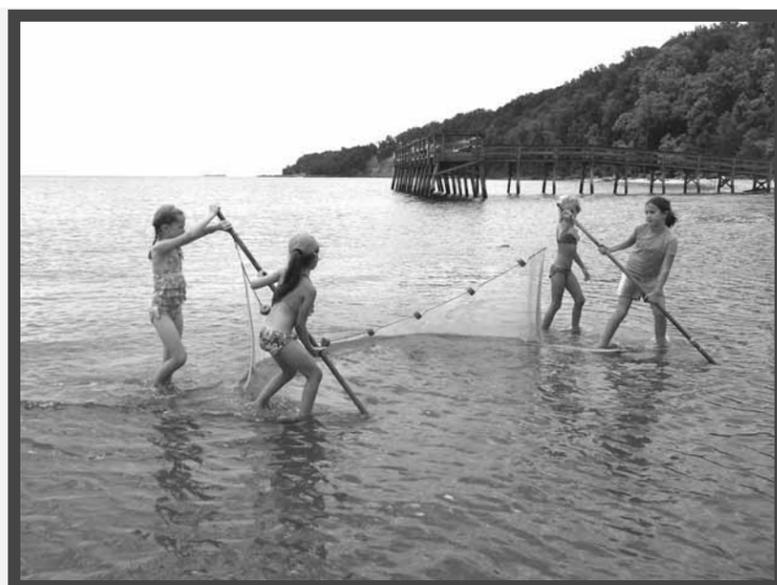
A Gift of Nature Creates Memories That Last Forever

Your donation directly supports our programs and activities

- Foster knowledge of our local environment through our educational programs.
- Build appreciation of our natural places.
- Join in recreational activities at our parks.
- Support preservation of our county lands.

Your gift will help us move into the future ... to protect our lands and waters and to educate and inspire through nature.

DONATE TODAY AT
www.calvertparks.org/donate.html



CALVERT STEWARDS

Volunteer Opportunities

Assisting at the parks is a rewarding way to raise awareness of the importance of our natural lands. Use your experience to help preserve our future in Calvert County by becoming one of our Calvert Stewards. Some projects are appropriate for families, and most qualify for the Junior Rangers programs. Programs are free, unless noted.

Creating the Money Crop Trail

All ages, under 18 with adult

Saturday, January 14, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm

The Money Crop Trail, located along the Rolling Road at Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm, invites visitors to walk in the same footpaths that farmers drove oxen, mules, and horse-drawn carts over 250 years ago. Join other volunteers in helping staff clear this nature trail. We'll provide tools and gloves, but you're welcome to bring your own.

Hike to the Big Cypress

12 years old and over

Monday, January 23, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

This is a special opportunity for volunteers to get together and explore a little visited part of the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp property. We will hike through the winter swamp to the county champion bald cypress tree-the biggest of its kind in the county. After the walk, stay for a pot luck lunch to get warmed up or head home.

Volunteer Campfire

For volunteers ages 16 and older

Friday, January 27, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Beat the winter blahs and join the Naturalists and fellow volunteers around the campfire! Please bring a side dish to share, and we'll show you how to cook dinner-on-a-stick over the fire. We'll provide the 'smores as well. Stories, music, and general good cheer welcome! If possible, bring your own reusable mug/dish/flatware.

Blackwater Wildlife Refuge

Adults

Monday, February 13, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park, then travel to Blackwater Wildlife Refuge

From eagles to owls and ducks to geese who knows what we could see as we go birding at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. This area is a major stayover and migration stop for many birds along the east coast. This trip is open to all current Calvert Stewards. Thanks for everything you do!

Great Backyard Bird Count

All Ages

Friday, February 17, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

The 20th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count begins today. Whether you are a novice or an expert birder, volunteers of all ages are welcome to help identify and count birds. Data will be used by researchers at Cornell and the National Audubon Society.

Salamander Study Training

9 years old and over, under 18 with adult

Thursday, February 23, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Come find out more about our local salamanders and this volunteer program which helps to keep tabs on their population at Flag Ponds Park. Join the naturalist in getting the traps ready for the fall season. Bring work gloves and wear clothes that can get dirty.

Prothonotary Warbler Information Session

10 years old and over, under 18 with adult

Tuesday, March 21, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

After a short presentation about our Prothonotary Warbler Study, volunteers will trek around the park to learn the nest box locations and prepare them for the season.

Save the Date Heritage Farm Day

Sunday, May 7, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm

Join our naturalists in history walks, nature talks, kids activities and more. Details will be available in early 2017.