



# Cattails



7130 Marshy Point Road, Middle River, MD 21220  
[www.marshypoint.org](http://www.marshypoint.org)  
410-887-2817

## The Marshy Point Nature Center Council Newsletter June - July - August 2017

### Spring Festival

A sunny Spring day and a crowd over 1,300 added up to another successful Spring Fest. Many thanks to the MPNC staff and the many volunteers who contributed to a great day. Visitors enjoyed critter talks, demonstrations, insect safaris, frog hunts, crafts, games, face painting and live music.



### 17th Annual, Members Fish Fry - Tuesday, June 20, 2017, 6:00-8:00 p.m.



Will Play for Fish

Entertainment Featuring Traditional Music from "Will Play for Fish"  
(Tom Reedy, Lisa Roberts, Amy Hopkins & Randy Johnson)  
Free to Members, Join Now! \$25 (Family) \$15 (Individual) Membership & Dinner

Please call the office to R.S.V.P. by June 16th  
(Space is Limited, No Walk-ins), 410 887-2817, Bring an appetizer or  
dessert to Share! Sponsored by Marshy Point Nature Center Council



A walk through the woods in the spring is a joyful experience. To feel the fresh air with just a touch of warmth renews my vigor and sets the perfect mood to get out into my own garden. Here and there are tender stalks of woodland flowers pushing through the winter's duff, a testament to their survival.

Did you know that many of the most admired plants that grow in the forest can also be the answer to that shady spot in your garden that can't support the more colorful perennials and annuals? Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Mayapple, Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*) some violets, common bluebells, ferns, and even the sweet-smelling Lily-of-the-Valley are just a few.

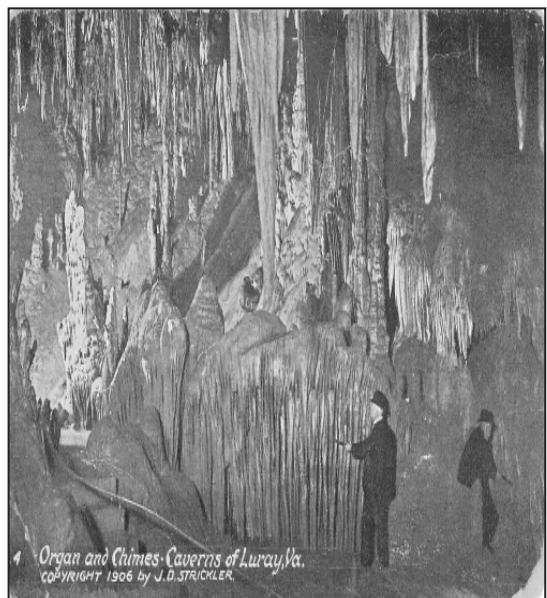
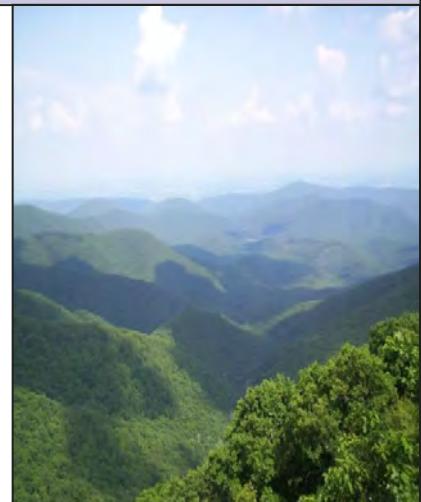
As the trees lose their leaves in the fall, I don't bother to rake them off my shade garden. After all, the forest is covered in leaves all winter long, yet in the spring the long-anticipated woodland plants once again pop up to surprise us. A light raking in the spring is all that is needed, but most of the leaf covering will have decomposed which will add nutrients to the soil.

### Luray, Virginia: Vacation Destination

Cara Urban

In summers past, I've taken many wonderful vacations to places that have helped me understand the wonders of the environment around us. I want to take a moment to reflect on Luray, Virginia, one of my favorite places to visit and home to some of the most beautiful caverns and mountains on the East Coast.

Luray is the headquarters of the Shenandoah National Park and close to the Skyline Drive, a beautiful, 105-mile road which runs the length of the Park's foray through the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. President Herbert Hoover himself asked that the road be built in order to show off the area around the summer home which he loved. Through the winter months, the mountains are a beautiful place to ski – as summer dawns, the views as you hike the trails are even more breathtaking.



As if Luray wasn't already scenic enough, it is home to the Luray Caverns, a National Natural Landmark. Discovered in 1878, the cave has drawn in countless visitors to marvel at its beautiful natural stalactite and stalagmite formations. Over the 66 million years of the cave's formation, mineral-rich water dripped down through the "karst" landscape above the limestone, in darkness and silence, to leave its deposits on the stone of the ceiling and floor. The marvelous results were witnessed only by early humans, whose remains and tools have been found inside by various explorers. As you walk into the cave for your tour, you quickly reach the Dream Lake, a perfectly reflective stretch of water under the earth.

The forces that created these mountains and the caverns below are beyond our ability to recreate, or even fully understand. The wonderful scenery can help remind us that the environment around us is not only something we touch and are touched by every day, but part of the long history of our planet.

## Mistaken Point Ecological Preserve

Carol Mason



Ediacaran fossils at Mistaken Point: *Fractofusus misrai* and *Bradgatia* on the famous E surface (Guy Narbonne's index finger points to *F. misrai*). (photo © David Rudkin, Royal Ontario Museum)

For the hardy hiker who enjoys an unusual vacation experience, I suggest the Ecological Preserve on Mistaken Point, in Newfoundland, Canada. Here the adventuresome traveler will see a site found nowhere else in the world, with fossils that are 570 million years old. The significance of the Preserve is reinforced by the fact it has been declared a World Heritage site by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO).

It's hard to imagine that this island off the coast of Canada, which is the most eastern point of North America, was at one time deep below (3300 feet) the ocean floor. On that seabed developed the Ediacara biota, the earliest known multi-cellular creatures. These odd animals were immobile, linked to the bottom of the ocean by spindle-like attachments. There are

numerous spindle fossils at Mistaken Point, as well as the fronds, discs, and ribbed structures of the actual animals. The reason there is such a large, well-preserved area of these early life forms is due to the movement of gigantic earthen plates, which create great heat as they are uplifted and slide one over the other. This creates molten lava and volcanic ash. At some point a tremendous amount of ash covered the ocean floor where the Ediacara biota were located. When it cooled the animals were perfectly preserved. Millions of years later when the land has been exposed and eroded, it becomes a fascinating location for a unique vacation.

If you would like to come to Mistaken Point, bring your hiking boots because no motorized vehicles are allowed, not even bicycles. From mid-May to mid-October there is one guided tour per day. Make your reservation early. There is a fairly rugged 4 mile hike round-trip to reach the fossil beds, with plenty of time for exploration. There is no charge. For more information see the link below.

[http://www.ecc.gov.nl.ca/parks/wer/r\\_mpe/directions.html](http://www.ecc.gov.nl.ca/parks/wer/r_mpe/directions.html)

## Dogwood Trees

Anna Stoll

It's always a delight to see dogwood blossoms in the spring. The four white "petals" we see, however, are bracts, and the flowers are in the center. They are tiny and surrounded by green-yellow bracts. There are many types of dogwoods, but *Cornus florida* is the species that is native to our area. It's the state tree of Missouri, New Jersey, and Virginia.

There are several theories about how the dogwood got its name. One explanation is that the tree was originally called "dagwood" and the wood was used to make narrow weapons such as daggers and arrows. Others think that the trees are called dogwoods because when the branches knock together in the wind it sounds like a dog barking. Another theory is that people would boil the wood and use the water to treat mange in dogs.

Native Americans used wood from dogwood trees to make toothbrushes and they would also combine dogwood bark with tobacco and smoke the mixture in pipes. The wood is hard and dense and through the years has been used to make a variety of tools and decorative items.

In autumn the dogwood berries appear. They are red but very small, so you might not notice them unless you make a point of looking for them. They are eaten by a variety of birds as well as squirrels. It's a funny sight to see a squirrel hanging upside down and trying to get that last berry that is just out of reach.

In addition to our wild dogwoods there are a variety of other dogwoods that are popular for growing around our homes. Cultivars of the white dogwood produce beautiful pink or red flowers. The Kousa dogwood from Asia produces many white flowers about a month after our native trees. Red twig dogwoods are also native to our area. They are shrubs rather than trees, and they are best known for their beautiful red bark which adds color to winter landscapes. Regardless of their color, dogwoods are always a welcome sight.



# Naturalist Report

Ben Porter



Summer is an exciting time in the natural world and at Marshy Point. The warm weather has brought ospreys back to their nests on Dundee Creek, blue crabs to the water below, and an astonishing array of amphibians to our freshwater wetlands. This season also brings thousands of visitors: summer campers looking for a glimpse of the marsh man, kayakers, hikers, and many summer program participants.

With each passing season Marshy Point continues to offer more programs, exhibits, animals, and park features. We've seen visitation, program participation, and volunteer hours increase year after year. And indeed, it is the dedication of our volunteers and staff that makes this such a special place. As I think about the fast

paced and sometimes confusing world around us I believe, now more than ever, that Marshy Point and other natural places are essential parts of the human experience. The many forms of summer outdoor recreation available at Marshy Point serve to connect us back to the natural world but also to renew that all too often neglected part of the human spirit that thrives in the natural.

To that end, I ask everyone reading this to consider doing just a few simple and even enjoyable things. Take the time to slow down and visit natural places. Sit quietly and listen to the sounds around you. Sign up for a weekend nature program at Marshy Point. Consider becoming a member or renewing your membership. Contact the nature center and inquire about volunteering and share your enthusiasm for Marshy Point with others.



## President's Thoughts



Female Osprey Protecting Her Eggs

I want to thank everyone for attending the Spring Fest held in April. Everyone seemed to be having a good time. I want to thank the staff and volunteers for putting on a great festival.

Have you had a chance to check out the Osprey Cam? The Ospreys returned in late March and are busy preparing for the nesting season. As of this writing three eggs have been laid. By the time you read this we may have young birds.

Play PokéMon Go? We held our first PokéMon night of 2017 on a cold April evening and are planning on holding additional nights in June, and July. I hope you can join us.

Members are reminded to join us at the Nature Center in June for our free annual Members Only Fish Fry. This is a council member benefit to thank you for your support throughout the year. Reservations required by June 16th.

The staff has a calendar full of activities for the summer. As normal, there are programs scheduled for each weekend. The camps filled up fast this spring and are wait-listed.

The Park is open weekdays daily from 9AM to sunset and open weekends from 7AM to sunset. The Center is open 9AM to 5PM daily.

I sincerely hope everyone gets to visit the Center during the summer season. Have an enjoyable, active Summer. See you at the Point. Brent Byers - president@marshypoint.org

## Marshy Point College Scholarships



2016 Scholarship Recipient Sarah

The Marshy Point Nature Center Council is pleased to announce a scholarship for Baltimore County High School college-bound seniors and undergraduate college students who are pursuing an education in environmental science nature education, or a related field. Applicants should show evidence of their commitment to the health of the environment and plan to pursue a relevant major to fulfill this commitment. Two scholarships will be awarded in 2017. Applications can be obtained online, [www.marshypoint.org](http://www.marshypoint.org) or by calling the center at 410-887-2817. All materials should be postmarked by June 16, 2017.



2016 Scholarship Recipient Maura

## Support Marshy Point Nature Center

Your donations allow us to continue programs and activities at Marshy Point Nature Center that are fun and educational for the whole family! You can make your tax-deductible gift in several ways. Donate for scholarships, choose an item from our wish list, make a general donation, or help us maintain animal collections. \*Donate online by visiting: [www.marshypoint.org](http://www.marshypoint.org) and click on "Get Involved" at the top of our home page, then click the "Donate" or "Adopt an Animal" tab. \*You can donate by mail by sending your gift payable to: MPNCC to the center: 7130 Marshy Point Road, Middle River, MD 21220.

## Trail Guide Training



We are looking for volunteers to help teach about nature! Trail guides work with group programs, special events, and animal care. Training will familiarize you with our most popular programs, the ecology of Marshy Point & Cromwell Valley Parks and techniques to share more and teach less. Each day features new subjects for enjoying the great outdoors. All training sessions are 10am to 1pm, September 13, 14, 15. Breakfast, snacks and coffee provided. New guides pay a tuition fee of \$5 that covers all material handouts. Call 410-887-2817 to register.

## Wish List for the Center

- Kids nature related books.
- New hip waders for kids.
- New unused bug spray and sunscreen.
- Child & adult, new hats.
- Zebco Rods, small size for kids.
- Ponchos

### Marshy Point Newsletter Staff

Editor: Cara Urban  
Layout and Design: Ginny Elliott

**Save the Date - 2017**  
**Fall Festival! September 23**



Maryland Point Nature Center  
7130 Maryland Point Road  
Baltimore, MD 21220



## Wildlife Corner - Helping Baby Wildlife: Unraveling Myths and Providing Tips

Valerie Greenhalgh

For decades, many myths surrounding the proper handling of baby wildlife have prevailed. Let me debunk those myths and explain what to do if you happen to find some wild, furry little friends in need of your help.

Many of us grew up being told that once you touch a baby animal, whether it be a bird (or bird eggs) or a bunny, the mother will reject that baby. Incorrect. Case in point: Earlier this week, a concerned friend called to say that her father was mowing the lawn when suddenly, little baby bunnies burst from the ground like popcorn. She was afraid to touch the bunnies for fear that the mother would not return. Not to worry. If they are uninjured, simply gather the bunnies and return them to their nest. Momma bunny will come back and nurse them at dawn and dusk. If you have a dog or cat that might disturb the bunnies, simply place a milk crate over the nest except during the dusk/dawn feeding times.

If you find baby squirrels, put them in a container at the base of the tree from which they came, wait an hour or so, and see if the mother returns. She will carry them back to the nest.

Baby birds also frequently find themselves in trouble. Their nests can be disturbed for many reasons, ranging from windy thunderstorms to threats from other wildlife. If you find displaced nestlings, try to replace them in the nest and tree from which they came. The mother bird will continue to care for them.

If, however, the wildlife you have discovered is either orphaned or injured, please contact a wildlife rehabilitator in your area for assistance, including the wildlife center for which I volunteer – Phoenix Wildlife Center. [www.phoenixwildlife.org](http://www.phoenixwildlife.org). The animals and I thank you.

