



# Cattails

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## The Marshy Point Nature Center Council Newsletter September - October - November 2017

### Fall Festival 2017



Enjoy the first official fall weekend with Marshy Point Nature Center at our 10th Annual Fall Festival! Activities include, kids mini Marsh Mucker mud run, apple cider pressing, animal shows, hikes, face painting & crafts. There will be demonstrations about early American & Native American life, Chesapeake Bay Retriever & Search Dogs demos. Guided canoe trips are offered (weather & tide permitting). Admission & parking are FREE! Join us at Marshy Point on Saturday, September 23, 10am to 4pm for a great day at the Fall Festival!

### Free Speaker Series - All are Welcome!

**“Monarchs and Milkweed”**  
by Dr. Susan Greshens  
September 19, 7 p.m.

Dr. Susan Greshens, Professor of Biology at Towson University will discuss these intriguing butterflies, and their host plants. The presentation will focus on factors that influence the chance that caterpillars will survive to adulthood and reproduce to complete their life cycle.



**“Maryland Biodiversity Project”**  
by Jim Brighton  
October 17, 7 p.m.

Jim Brighton of the Maryland Biodiversity Project will discuss the project to catalog the flora and fauna of the state. The project has cataloged over 17,000 species, including over 8,800 species with photographs, and feature the work of more than 600 naturalists and photographers.

**“Alaska’s Inside Passage”**  
by Bob Stanhope  
November 21, 7 p.m.

Retired Baltimore County Naturalist, Bob Stanhope traveled up the passage in search of bald eagles, brown bears and whales. He will share stories and photographs of his travels.



## Gardening - Nature's Way

### Fall Pass-Along Plants

Deb Hyson



I can't begin to count the many flowering plants I have received from neighbors, friends, and family throughout my gardening years. Some were short-lived, others were muggers (best not to mention those), but most are still with me, a lovely reminder of the generosity of gardeners.

The hardiest of these are the beautiful array of day lilies and irises that, once planted in partial to full sun and fairly decent soil, will quickly settle themselves in to bring much anticipated color to the garden in the spring and early summer.

It just so happens that one of my granddaughters and her husband recently purchased a house that sits on about two acres of grass! And it just so happens that it's time, once again, to divide my pass-along plants.

### Those Pesky Stink Bugs

Anna Stoll

It's late autumn and you're in the middle of a good book or your favorite TV program when bzzz— something flits past your ear. What the heck was that? Then you spot it on the lamp shade—it's a stink bug. How did it get in the house?



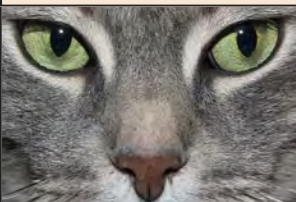
There are a variety of stink bug breeds, but the one that has been causing problems in many areas of the country is the brown marmorated stink bug, which is native to Asia. These insects were first found in the U.S. in eastern Pennsylvania in the late 1990s, and were thought to have arrived accidentally in a shipment from Asia. They have now spread to most areas of the country. Stink bugs are about 1/2" long, brown, and their hard-shelled backs are shield shaped. They're called stink bugs because they produce a noxious odor when attacked by a predator or squashed.

Stink bugs have become serious agricultural pests because they suck the juices out of a variety of fruits, vegetables, and trees. They damage the leaves of the plants and cause scarring on the fruits and vegetables.

So why and how do stink bugs get into our homes and what can we do about it? They come in to stay warm over the winter months and they'll sneak in through any tiny opening they can find—gaps around windows, doors, vents, utility pipes, air conditioners, etc. Stink bugs don't bite, but it's not pleasant to have them flying around your home. So how do you get rid of them? A fly swatter is an easy answer if you can stand the smell of the squashed insect. Vacuuming is another solution, and some people get rid of the vacuum bag afterward to avoid the odor. Gently knocking them into a container of soapy water is a popular method. An internet search will turn up a variety of chemical and natural solutions to eliminating stink bugs. You might find just a few of the insects over the course of the fall and winter, but other homes are inundated. In that case you may need to contact a professional exterminator.

### Domestic Cats and Their Impact on Wildlife

Valerie Greenhalgh



My cat has always begged to go outside. Recently, against my better judgment, he got his wish. Before long, he began killing birds, mice, bunnies and who knows what else. I was heartbroken. I thought that my sweet boy wouldn't harm a flea. But, I quickly learned that cats have a devastating effect on the wildlife population. In the U.S., cats kill billions of birds and mammals every year, including native songbirds whose populations are already challenged by loss of habitat and pesticides.

Well-fed cats still hunt wildlife, and most often they are killing many more animals than they bring home. Cats that do eat their catch are taking away potential meals from other animals, such as hawks, foxes, falcons and owls. And cats can carry and transmit deadly diseases to other wildlife.

*Continued.*

*Cats, Continued.*

To help control the situation, the easy solution is to keep your cat indoors, but if you decide to allow your cat outside, it's best to avoid doing so at nighttime, as well as at dusk and dawn.

Some products have been proven to be effective at decreasing your cat's hunting success rate, including colorful cat collars and a "cat bib" (to slow down his quick-action paws). You can buy these items or make them yourself. To help control the number of feral cats in our neighborhoods, most Maryland counties have programs available to assist you with trapping and spaying/neutering.

Let's not forget, too, that an outdoor cat's life expectancy is much shorter than an indoor cat's. Cars and poisons are just two of the risks they face. Please consider taking a few steps to help your cat live a long, happy life, and maybe you can help save some wildlife, too.

## Maryland State Parks: Don't Forget to Visit!

Cara Urban

Last month I was driving down Paper Mill Road towards Hunt Valley as I had a million times before, to go to work. This time, though, I had a friend with me who is new to the area. When she asked me why there was a bike shop on the side of the road, I remembered there was something like a park there... a place I had never visited. As a result, we got out of the car and spent a pleasant hour on the Gunpowder Falls State Park's Northern Central Railroad (NCRR) hike and bike trail!

It is easy to forget that our state has the Maryland Park Service to maintain many beautiful parks for us to enjoy. While Marshy Point Nature Center seeks to educate as well as inspire local Marylanders, if you just want to hike, there is plenty of nature to be found! The Gunpowder Falls State Park has over 120 miles of trails for hikers to enjoy, and the Hammerman Area (with a beautiful beach) and Dundee Creek Marina (for all you boat enthusiasts) are located near Marshy Point, right here in Middle River. Many other trails exist around the state and can be found at <http://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/central/gunpowder.aspx>.

As you plan your fall field trips, don't get so caught up in the bustle that you drive right past a beautiful trail like I did for so long. Remember to think about all of our state parks, and pay us a few visits here at Marshy Point!

## Fort Garrison

Ben Porter



In the late 1600s Maryland was a very different place than it is today. Wolves, mountain lions, black bears, elk, and even bison inhabited our state. Native Americans burned large sections of the landscape to improve hunting and species diversity but much of the state was covered by mature old growth forests. The colony of Maryland was founded at St. Mary's City in 1634 and by the 1690s the Maryland frontier lay near present day Pikesville. Members of the Maryland Ranger Corps were stationed there at Fort Garrison, then the westward extent of white settlement in Maryland. Mounted Rangers rode patrols from the fort along the frontier to establish a colonial presence, guard against "hostile Indians" and intercept runaway indentured servants. The fort itself might be a modest structure by today's standards but in the 1690s the stone blockhouse with walls several feet thick and a stone roof represent an imposing declaration of colonial presence.

Over time the fort became part of different private estates and was used as slave quarter, barn, and eventually fell into disrepair as a neighborhood sprung up around it in the 1960s. Community interest led to several restoration projects and the fort stands today and is managed by the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the department has offered interpretive programming at Fort Garrison since 1987 with the addition of school field trips in 2014. On November 19, of this year Cromwell Valley and Marshy Point will jointly sponsor the Fort Garrison Feast. The meal features wild game and foods that would have been available in the late 1600s. At 1 p.m., the fort will be open for public visitation.

Annual donations to benefit the fort come from a number of community organizations including the Society of Colonial Wars, the Rotary Club of Pikesville, the Colonial Dames of the 17th Century, the Cromwell Valley Park Council, and the Marshy Point Nature Center Council.



## Summer Report from the Senior Naturalist

Ben Porter

After a great summer season at Marshy Point, fall promises to be another busy and exciting time on Dundee Creek. New animals, new exhibits, new programs, and new staff all make up the mix at Marshy Point. After almost five years as the Full Time Naturalist at Marshy Point I'm honored to have been promoted to the position of Director/Senior Naturalist. During my time at Marshy Point I've been consistently impressed with the natural beauty and biodiversity of the place. The cooperative efforts of the Marshy Point Nature Center Council and the Recreation and Parks Staff in developing the facility and park grounds are undertaken to enhance and compliment the natural features of Marshy Point.

To that end I'm glad to share some exciting upcoming and recently completed projects. In the circle around the front flag pole we are in the process of developing a Children's Chesapeake Play Area. The central feature is a 3/4 scale replica skipjack for kids and adults alike to board and play. A second feature is a life sized bald eagle nest replica built atop a platform for visitors to climb and look out. Additional development of the play area site is ongoing. Our trail system development has been finished for the time being, with a total of 8 miles throughout the forests and meadows around the park. This summer has also seen the development and installation of new exhibit panels, rebuilding the adobe oven, and significant work on managing invasive plants throughout the park. Inside the nature center a new duck habitat and new exhibit artwork aim to improve animal care and visitor enjoyment.

The goal in all of these projects is to make Marshy Point a dynamic place that our visitors will enjoy over and over. If you haven't visited lately, please do because I can assure you that there will be something new and different. Most importantly, none of it could happen without the dedication of the many volunteers and staff that make it all possible. In concluding, I wish to thank staff and volunteers who work out of a desire to share their enthusiasm with our visitors and see the remarkable natural world around us as the gift that it is.



### Congratulations Marshy Point Scholarship Recipients!

This year, the Marshy Point Nature Center Council is excited to announce they have awarded two, six hundred dollar scholarships! Recipients are Sarah Kulis, sophomore at West Virginia University and James Duffy, freshman at Christopher Newport University in Virginia. Good luck to both!

The Council is currently building the scholarship fund and welcomes contributions to help with this endeavor.

### Trail Guide Training 2017



**Marshy Point Nature Center is looking for volunteers** interested in learning about nature to teach children about nature! The staff of the Center will program you for success by teaching you about the environment around Marshy Point. Each day features new subjects and new techniques for enjoying the great outdoors.

- **All training sessions are 10am - 1pm, September 13th, 14th, 15th.**
- Breakfast, snacks and coffee provided.
- New guides pay a tuition fee of \$5 covers all material handouts.
- Call 410-887-2817 to register.

## Presidents Report

Brent Byers

August marks the end of our membership year at Marshy Point. All Membership renewals are due in September. Thus, this is a good time to reflect back on the accomplishments and changes of the Council and Center over the past year, and what a year it has been!

For starters we have several personnel changes at the center this year. Nina Jay replaced Brina Doyle as the Recreation Coordinator and is doing a great job. Brina didn't move far as she took a position with more hours at Cromwell Valley Park. Our director, Leo Rebetsky, retired this spring. Ranger Ben did a great job filling in as the acting director over the summer and was recently appointed as the new director. Congratulations Ben! As always, we have had a full year of programs and events at Marshy this year. Our two festivals both had good attendance. School programs filled most of the available slots, weekend programs were well attended, Pre K Mondays continued to be a hit, and summer camps were waitlisted. The Pokémon evenings we held this year were a good fundraiser for the center and seemed to be a fun event for all that attended. I enjoyed watching people of all ages walking the parking lot getting some exercise as they captured the crazy characters. Thanks to our vice president, Dave Oshman, a Pokémon aficionado for coming up with the idea.

Rangers Leo and Ben worked with Eagle Scouts to design and complete projects for our center. The Eagle projects done this year included building a replica Skipjack in the Natural Play area, refinishing the deck's picnic tables, adding the skunk Cabbage trail, building a larger duck enclosure and constructing a life size replica eagle nest. Ranger Ben also coordinated volunteers from Middle River Aircraft to rebuild the clay oven and build a split rail fence around the natural play area.

Through our membership dues, income from events, and generous donations, we continued to provide much of the funding for summer camp, programs, project/exhibit development, exhibit support, and animal care cost. This year, the county transferred ownership of the C-Hawk workboat to the council. The council now takes care of maintenance and insurance cost so that we could use the boat for programs, research, and camp. We also paid for certification training for our two boat captains, Ranger Ben and Captain Jim. In addition to maintaining and supporting our ongoing programs and exhibits, we have been able to add many enhancements. This year, a cage was built for our newest bird, a Kestrel, trails were added, new trail signs were purchased, the fish exhibit mural was added in the classroom, and the scat exhibit was placed in the restrooms. Where else do you find exhibits in the restrooms! Ranger Ben is always thinking of something different. I wonder what he will come up with next year? The Council also funded the Chesapeake Bay water mural painted in the lobby and the duck hunting display added in the auditorium. Additionally, the Council purchased new security cameras to improve the security at the center. None of the above would have been possible without your continued support and generous donations. The Council's yearly budget is approximately \$60,000. This money is used for funding programs and camps, animal care, new exhibits, exhibit maintenance and education for the staff.

I am very excited about the Center's direction. We continue to have great attendance at our festivals, camps, and programs. Membership is now over 400 members and visits to the Center continue to increase. Feedback from visitors is very positive.

To continue the positive direction of Marshy Point we need your membership support. Having a strong membership base is vital to our success here at Marshy point. PLEASE RENEW YOUR MARSHY POINT MEMBERSHIP NOW. See you at the Point! Brent Byers



### **Support Marshy Point Nature Center!**

Donations from (the local community), or (individuals, families, businesses, and organizations) enable Marshy Point Nature Center Council to provide educational and fun activities at Baltimore County's only waterfront Nature Center.

Please give and help continue the Council's mission to furnish the kind of family-friendly activities that allow everyone to share in learning about nature while having fun, too!

#### **Ways you can make your tax-deductible gift:**

\* Donate **online** by visiting: [www.marshypoint.org](http://www.marshypoint.org).

Click on the donate tab in the upper right of the screen.

\* Donate by **mail** by sending your gift payable to: Marshy Point Nature Center Council  
7130 Marshy Point Road, Baltimore, MD 21220.

Every gift makes a difference!

### **Marshy Point Newsletter Staff**

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## Wildlife Corner - Canada Geese—Awesome Pest, Chatterbox, Hunters' Prey

Carol Mason



Waterfront property is a favorite haunt for Canada Geese. Maryland has a resident goose population, which grows considerably when augmented by the migrant group that winters over in the Mid Atlantic area. Our frequent fliers are known as the Atlantic Population Canada Geese. They arrive in Maryland from the tundra zone of northern Quebec, Labrador, Newfoundland, and Greenland. From late September to March, they make their home in the wetlands, including waterfront property in the suburbs.

These avian visitors eat for up to twelve hours a day. What goes in must come out: up to a pound of droppings a day! Joanne Hock, a Bowley's Quarters resident, calls the mess disgusting, citing the slimy green piles everywhere. Another nuisance factor of Canada Geese is their noise. They are considered the chatterboxes of the waterfowl world, making over twenty different sounds. Joanne doesn't mind the cacophony in the daytime, but finds it a bit much at night.

Goose-caused problems for property owners include over-grazed lawns, droppings and feathers on walkways and play areas, nutrient loading in ponds, polluted swimming areas and drinking water sources, aggressive nesting birds, damage to gardens, and hazards to cars and planes.

Methods of controlling the geese population include habitat modification, which means removing nesting containers, planting different grasses, not mowing the lawn, or making steeper banks at the water's edge. Physically excluding the geese is a limited solution which involves netting or other coverings. Harassment opens up many possibilities, such as alarms, balloons, and dogs. Any of these methods should be implemented as soon as geese begin to appear. Try to keep a flock from getting established on your property never feed the birds. Geese management programs require a long-term commitment and an organized plan. In limited instances, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will give property owners the authorization to kill geese, usually when they are leading to extensive crop damage.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects geese, goose nests and eggs, allowing hunting only during specific times and limiting how many birds each hunter may take. Hunting is an important industry on the Eastern Shore and it is a necessary population control method. Kent, St. Anne's and Talbot counties are big waterfowl hunting areas. Large flocks are drawn to the fields near wetlands. Some farmers provide suitable nesting ponds. The extensive open fields after harvest time provide an important source of food in the winter time.

Canada Geese are making a comeback from the late 19th century when they were endangered. An international program to preserve important waterfowl habitats in Quebec to make sure they have adequate breeding areas is supported by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, eight other states and Ducks Unlimited.