



Natural Area News

A publication of the Ivy Creek Foundation, Volume 21, No. 3

A Quarterly Newsletter

Junior Naturalists' First Meeting

Mon., Jan. 18, 4 to 5:30 pm - For ages 5-9. The 4H Junior Naturalist Club at Ivy Creek Natural Area will learn about the native plants and wildlife of our area (including snakes, spiders, and bats). To register, email **Dan Bieker** at danbieker@gmail.com or phone 434-971-9618. We offer fun and outdoor activities exploring the fields, forests, and streams of ICNA.

Field Ornithology Class

Sat., Feb. 13, 8:30 am - Come to the first of a series of classes on field ornithology (NAS 160) sponsored by PVCC and taught by **Dan Bieker**. PVCC registration required by Jan. 10.

First Saturday Bird Walks

Sat., Dec. 5, 7:30 am - Join us for an early morning bird walk with **Dave Hogg** of the Monticello Bird Club. Also Jan. 2 and Feb. 6, 7:30 am.

Rivanna Master Naturalist Training Information Meetings

The next RMN training program will meet Wednesday mornings from 9 am to noon beginning **Wed., Feb. 10**, and some Saturdays through May 18 in the Education Building.

Information meetings will be held at the Education Building, **Dec. 2, 9 am; Dec. 12, 10 am; and Jan. 4, 7 pm**. For more information visit www.vmn-rivanna.org.

Annual Day of Cleaning

Sat., Jan. 23, 9 am - noon Every year, we give the Education Building a spruce up. This year we want to clear out boxes of photos, slides, cords, and stray or odd equipment. We need to clean out the cupboards, reorganize, and toss/give away what we no longer need. Also seeking shop vacs, tall ladders, and a truck for a drive to the dump after the event. Email: ivycreekdirector@gmail.com.

Introduction To Natural History (NAS 145)

Mon., Jan. 11, 6:30 pm - A hands-on study of the plants, wildlife, and geology of Central Virginia. Ten Monday classes meet 6:30 - 9:30 pm in the Education Building; five Saturday morning field trips to various locations. Register through PVCC.



ICF Past President Dave Hogg Reflects Upon the Last Three Years

As I begin my term as Past President and reflect on the Ivy Creek Foundation (ICF) during the time I have served on the Board, I realize that the ICF has undergone several changes, mostly positive. Perhaps the most significant was the decision to **make the position of Executive Director full-time**, an initiative undertaken by my predecessor Victoria Dye. Our executive director, Tatyanna Patten, has brought new energy and vision to the Foundation.

With the **completion of the Barn Project** we are able to again use this building as a resource for our education programs. With the expert guidance of some of the Board members, we have begun to **explore more deeply the history of River View Farm**, and its connection to the

once vibrant Hydraulic Mills community. We have **completed a Strategic Plan** which is now our road map for the continued development of our programs. And we have taken the first steps to **plan the management of the newly created William W. D. Woods Natural Heritage Area**.

There have been disappointments. The one which I regret most deeply is that **the transfer of management of the Ragged Mountain Natural Area from ICF to the City** has led to the possibility that the Area will be opened to more general recreation.

There continue to be challenges. We would like to see our membership grow, because our members provide financial support and are an important source of the many

volunteers whose efforts make the programs. We would like to see our outreach to the community expand so as to better promote environmental awareness and respect for our natural resources, and to develop a more comprehensive understanding of our cultural history.

We have been successful, **with the help of BamaWorks, in fighting the spread of invasive plants**, but we need to limit their presence even further. Thanks to the energy and efforts of the members of the ICF Board, along with the contributions of the many dedicated Foundation members who volunteer as docents and trail stewards, and with the assistance provided by the kindred partner organizations, I am confident that we can meet these challenges.

Our Historic Barn is Fun to Explore

Who does not love a barn? Barns are solid, safe, and warm, and smell of hay and farm animals. Sometimes they even surprise us with snake skins and birds' nests!

The barn at the Ivy Creek Natural Area was built in the early 1930's by Conly Greer on River View Farm as a modern, up-to-date facility, and it reopened in 2012 after major renovation and repair. Our barn not only housed horses, cows, pigs, and the winter food supply for livestock, it also symbolizes the success of a family descended from Hugh Carr, a freed slave who



owned his own property and passed it on to his children. The barn is the only remaining barn on the African American Heritage Trail built by a free African American in Virginia, and possibly the East Coast. Greer was an agricultural extension agent in Albemarle County who used the

barn as a model for other farmers. Schoolchildren particularly enjoy exploring the barn – it is where the rich African American history celebrated by the Foundation comes to life. Stalls for horses named “Queen of Sheba” and “Haile Selassie” illustrate the pride Greer took in his African heritage. Stanchions for dairy cows, old farming equipment, and a model of the barn offer visitors a way to imagine farm life in the early 20th century. Natural history displays include a “tracking” sandbox for identifying bird and animal tracks and a working beehive exhibit.



Barn docent Mark Rough explains a “Frogs and Toads” poster in the barn

explore the barn each Saturday afternoon, with most coming in April and May. This year, July 4 was especially busy, with 64 visitors. Thanks especially to our docents: **Ann Vonnegut, David Smith, Edwina St. Rose, Jane Erwine, John Edelen, Mark Rough, Mitch Sams, Tom Brett, Nancy Gercke, Dave Hogg, Debbie and Tim Weber, Carol Cutler, Victoria Dye, Ronda Ingersoll, and Julie Farrell.**

Hour-long barn docent training is offered on the first Saturday of each month from May to October at 10 am. We would love to extend our hours from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturdays and Sundays, so if you are interested in becoming a docent, contact **Education Coordinator Bruce Gatling-Austin,** programs@ivycreekfoundation.org

Barn Docents Guide Visitors Saturdays 2-4 pm

Volunteer barn docents staff the barn on Saturday afternoons and encourage visitors, “Please TOUCH!” the displays of skulls, nests, pelts, and feathers. The barn and the history of Hydraulic Mills and the Carr family help visitors to better understand local ecology by showing human imprints on the land. On average, 20 visitors



Our exhibit of pelts, skulls and bones offer “hands on” learning

A Tribute to Lost Friends



As 2015 winds down, we pause to reflect on the loss of several of our patrons, founders and friends, including **Bob Hammond, John Austin, Skip Purnell** and, most recently, **Francis Fife.** Each in his own way contributed greatly to Ivy Creek's sense of community and conservation. We will miss them all.

Finance Committee Seeks Volunteers

Do you have accounting acumen or financial skills? The Finance Committee provides oversight of Ivy Creek's budget and fiscal management for the ICF Board. The Committee meets quarterly and works closely with the treasurer and the executive director. If you would like to join or know more about it, please e-mail Treasurer Phil Stokes at philipfs@embarqmail.com.

Do You Have a Knack for Organizing?

Our library materials need to be sorted and cataloged! **Carol Hogg** has graciously volunteered to lead the library effort, but we seek two to three people who can help her with our dusty archives of books, magazines, and posters. If you are interested, please contact **Executive Director Tatyanna Patten** at ivycreek.director@gmail.com.

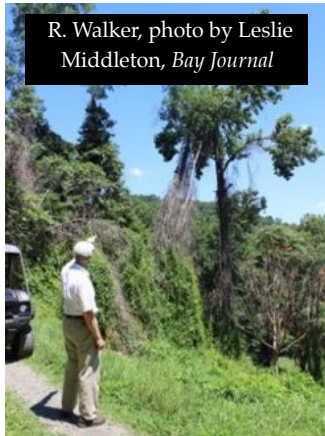
Introducing Blue Ridge PRISM

Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management
 Featured Ivy Creek Partner Organization



This is the fourth in a series highlighting our partner organizations. We chose to feature this new group because it is the first of its kind in Virginia, promising to reduce the impact of invasive plant species in a 10-county area.

Blue Ridge PRISM is our newest partner organization and the first of its kind entirely in Virginia. **Rod and Maggie Walker**, who retired to their Middle Mountain Farm in western Albemarle County, along the Blue Ridge, founded this non-profit agency whose mission is "to reduce the impact of invasive species in our targeted 10-county region." (See the map above.) The organization is a **Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)**, one of a few in the East, where land is extremely fragmented, and contiguous areas hard to find. There are roughly 150 CWMA's in the U.S., with the largest concentration in the West where the idea began.



R. Walker, photo by Leslie Middleton, Bay Journal

PRISM, an acronym for Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, takes a regional approach to fighting invasive plant species on nearly 3 million acres, including parts of the Shenandoah National Park and within the counties of Albemarle, Augusta, Clarke, Greene, Madison, Nelson, Page, Rappahannock, Rockingham, and Warren.

This program involves:

- Treating the targeted species
- Restoring native plants in the vacuums created
- Preventing new arrivals

- Creating an early warning system and task force approach to deal with new threats
- Obtaining funding to maximize programs
- Educating landowners and interested parties.

According to Walker, a retired IT executive, "One of the problems in the Commonwealth of Virginia is that our noxious weed laws adopted in 1970 are ineffective because a plant cannot be

called 'noxious' if it is widely disseminated." Walker claims that you can buy most of the "11 bad actors" - invasive plants and seeds such as Oriental Bittersweet and Autumn Olive on the Internet.

Ivy Creek Executive Director **Tatyanna Patten** believes that this nascent effort has "an outreach component unlike that of other partner

organizations. . . . Blue Ridge PRISM takes a measurable, results-oriented approach and therefore has a different scope."

Representatives from state and federal agencies, local land preservation nongovernmental agencies, private landowners, and service groups like Virginia Master Naturalists have become partners with PRISM. Shenandoah National Park Trust's administrator **Susan Sherman** agrees that one of the biggest problems they face is invasives, so the Trust has become PRISM's fiscal agent.

This fall Blue Ridge PRISM received notice that its pre-proposal for a \$375,000 grant from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture for a National Resource

Conservation Service (NRCS) has been accepted. If a full proposal is accepted, it will help them implement two major programs: 1) **the Area Stewards Program** in which a landowner not only gets his property registered for invasive controls, but also recruits his or her neighbors, and 2) **the General Landowners' Program** involving outreach to landowners to work independently.

Rod Walker will speak on Jan. 13 at 7:30 pm at the Virginia Native Plant Society meeting in the Education Building.

The Walkers write, "If we can find enough matching contributions (mostly people's time), we can increase our bid up to as much as \$890,000. All the money we would be granted would be administered through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and distributed to landowners enrolled in Blue Ridge PRISM programs as cost sharing for working on invasive plants." They have submitted a second \$180,000 grant proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Conservation. **Unfortunately, funds distributed through the EQIP program cannot be used for treatment activities on public lands like ICNA.**

Nevertheless, from its inception, Blue Ridge PRISM has had an intimate connection with ICF. As the Walkers reached out to the community, they soon began relying on ICF members **Ruth Douglas, Mary Lee Epps, Frank Biasioli, and Phil Stokes** as experts on invasive plants, and they have met in our Education Building since last fall.

Walker says, "We hope to inspire others to form CWMA's." For more information, go to www.blueridgeprism.org

Why Combat Invasive Plants?



Volunteers and Bama Works Grant Help Control Invasive Plants at Ivy Creek

Phil Stokes, Treasurer and Buildings and Grounds Chair

Many property owners and others among us do not fully understand the menace posed by invasive plants. Here's the scientific argument as advanced by the Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR) "Invasive plants are species intentionally or accidentally introduced by human activity into a region in which they did not evolve and cause harm to natural resources, economic activity or humans." (<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspinfo>).

In simple terms, these invasive non-native plants, often beautiful, destroy the delicate balance of plants and animals in our local landscapes and harm our soil and water. Some dismiss these changes as inevitable as people transport seeds and animals across regions and continents, arguing that species have always had to adapt to such invaders — "survival of the fittest." *However, today we are seeing a massive onslaught on a scale never seen before.*

According to the Virginia DCR, "An invasive plant infestation is like a slow-motion explosion, which left unchecked may severely alter a site's natural beauty and economic contributions." It is important to recognize, however, that although invasive species are always, by definition, non-natives, by no means are

non-natives always invasive. Most introduced species do not cause ecological problems and many are beneficial.

Since Europeans began colonizing the New World more than 400 years ago, many thousands of plant species have been introduced to North America. In Virginia, the DCR recognizes 606 non-native species that have become "naturalized"- that is, are capable of reproducing outside of deliberate human cultivation. About 15% of Virginia's naturalized plant species, a total of 90 species in all, are deemed invasive by DCR for their potential to threaten, overtake, or radically alter native ecosystems and plant communities.

- 11 "Bad Actors"**
- Ailanthus (Tree-of-heaven)
 - Oriental Bittersweet
 - Autumn Olive
 - Japanese Stiltgrass
 - Wavyleaf Basketgrass
 - Mile-a-minute Vine
 - Kudzu
 - Japanese Honeysuckle
 - Garlic Mustard
 - Multiflora Rose
 - Chinese Privet

Invasive plants typically exhibit the following characteristics:

- Rapid growth and maturity
- Prolific seed production
- Highly successful seed dispersal, germination and colonization
- Rampant vegetative spread
- Ability to out-compete native species
- High cost to remove or control

Recently, a "new" invasive threatens to spread across Virginia — the Wavyleaf Basketgrass, so named because of the ripple in its leaves. It has been found in Albemarle County, just south of Charlottesville, including our own William W. D. Woods NHA (R. Douglas).

Botanists and agricultural researchers have found bio-controls successful and are working on other "natural" treatments in arresting some invasive plants. Some argue against all herbicides, but others say that judicious use of herbicides may be necessary. (See "Garlon" in sidebar.)

The diversity of the forests and fields of Ivy Creek are under attack by an unprecedented infestation of non-native plants. Some areas are becoming an impenetrable tangle dominated by Oriental Bittersweet and Autumn Olive completely shading all the underlying plant community. Other non-native invasive plants are also a concern.

Three years ago, ICF met with county officials and then applied for a grant from **Bama Works Fund of Dave Matthews Band in the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation** to fund the hiring of a qualified commercial contractor to herbicide heavily infested field and edge areas. In December 2012 ICF was generously awarded \$5,000 to cover herbicide treatments over a two-year period. Early in 2013 the invasives were mowed and cut, making them more vulnerable to the herbicide application the grant funded. Garlon 3A (foliar) and Garlon 4 (basal bark) were applied to field and edge areas near the parking lot and also to the native tall grass field north of the Education Building. Since Garlon is a selective herbicide for broadleaf plants, grasses will survive the treatment. Good results were achieved. Similar herbicide application followed in late summer 2014.

"About half of Ivy Creek's bimonthly public workdays have focused on controlling the spread of these invasives." — Phil Stokes

Attendance by members at invasives removal workdays has been disappointing, but we've also held removal events for volunteers from Teens Give, Scouts, UVA's APO service fraternity, Miller School, and United Way's Day of Caring. All this effort totaled about 350 volunteer hours in 2015. While a promising beginning, considerably more work remains in order to reduce the invasive threat. **Please donate or volunteer to help.**



Wavyleaf Basketgrass has recently invaded Virginia

Welcome to Our New Board Volunteers



John Edelen

**Wildlife Manager,
Barn Docent,
StreamWatch**

As far back as he can remember, John has always been fascinated by the natural world. At a very young age he

became “addicted” to hunting and fishing, which led to a strong interest in wildlife management. In the early ‘60s, he began working at Remington Farms Wildlife Management Demonstration Area as assistant game manager involved in their waterfowl programs.

In the late ‘80s, John implemented a plan drawn up by Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage for his property on the Eastern Shore to open up a small marsh and convert a field into native grasses, leading to a noticeable increase in quail, rabbits and songbirds.

Today John is retired and volunteers at Ivy Creek as a barn docent and member of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, “viciously attacking non-native invasive plants on workday Thursdays.” He is vice president of the Thomas Jefferson Chapter of Trout Unlimited and is also active in StreamWatch.



Tana Herndon

**Field Tour Guide,
Master Naturalist,
StreamWatch**

Upon retiring from UVA, Tana became a member of the

second class of Rivanna Master Naturalists and soon became a school tour guide at Ivy Creek. Growing up in Charlottesville, she has often spent time on our trails, particularly enjoying native plants and working on the ICNA vascular plants survey and herbarium.

Tana’s interest in plants also led her to working on plant surveys in Albemarle County at Preddy Creek, Old Mills Trail, and Ragged Mountain. Last year she explored the William W. D. Woods Natural Heritage Area with other Ivy Creek “scouts” and was excited to find that it has different types of vegetation and “a gorgeous view.”

Formerly secretary of the local Master Naturalist chapter, she is membership chair of the Jefferson Virginia Natural Plant Society and also spends time volunteering with StreamWatch doing benthic macro-invertebrate sampling.



Mary Spear

**Marketing and
Development,
Master Naturalist**

With a background in fashion design and the arts, one

would not at first glance expect Mary Spear to be an avid naturalist. Born in upstate New York in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains, Mary has always enjoyed walking in nature. She graduated from New York City’s Fashion Institute of Technology and became a loungewear lingerie designer for Christian Dior. She has also worked as an artist specializing in oil paintings, sculpture, and commercial illustration while living in Westchester, NY.

In 2001 Mary moved to Charlottesville and was introduced to Ivy Creek as a member of the first class of Master Naturalists. After reading one of our newsletters, she offered to work for ICF, noting, “I was looking for a way to give back. I have worked for non-profits like Focus Women’s Resource Center in marketing and development, and have been active in StreamWatch.” Now she organizes fundraising events for the development office of Westminster Canterbury of the Blue Ridge.



How Many Visitors Come to Ivy Creek?

This is not a trivial question for ICF. Now, thanks to a new traffic counter installed by Albemarle County Parks and Recreation at the end of April, we are learning just how popular our beloved park really is. Over the past six months, 22,063 cars have entered the parking lot at Ivy Creek. **That’s an average of nearly 850 cars each week or 121 cars each day!** Not surprisingly, visitation varies according to the season and prevailing weather. Thus far, we have seen peaks in visitation in May and again from late August through late October, with a drop during rainy spells. Foundation Board members and volunteers have also started a weekend tabling effort at the kiosk to meet visitors, get a better sense of who visits ICNA (and why), and encourage new membership. Surprising to everyone is the steady stream of out-of-town and international visitors coming to Ivy Creek. — *Steve Thompson, ICF Board*



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Tat's Chat

A tribute to Dave Hogg, an Outstanding Volunteer

Tatyanna Patten, Executive Director

Our December 2015 issue marks the end of my third year with Ivy Creek Foundation. It has been an incredible three years! When I first became executive director, I was astounded by the natural beauty of my office — no one gets to have a work place like Ivy Creek. I had not yet experienced fully how much Ivy Creek Foundation depends upon its volunteers. Now I know that we could not function without them. For me, the person who embodies that spirit of service and volunteerism most is our past president, Dave Hogg.

Dave's presidency of the ICF board coordinated with my coming. Working closely together as an executive team, we led an organizational transition that was both productive and steady. I know he has his own perspective on what that change and stability in leadership has meant to Ivy Creek, but I want to honor it in my own way.

Sometimes Dave has said that I've brought a sense of vision to Ivy Creek, but I believe that I have merely provided the framework and the language for the Board to express its own. And if I have done that successfully, it could not have happened without Dave's vision. He sensed the balance between fresh and conservative values and found ways to encourage both. His willingness to lead by respecting and incorporating many points of view engendered a spirit of cooperation among board, staff, and volunteers. He was consistently generous with both his

time and his attention. It has been a distinct pleasure to serve my first three years under his leadership.

Today, ICF is more fiscally stable than it was in December 2012. ICF has more definition in terms of what it is, what it dreams of being, and how it wants to get there. And ICF has a board that thinks broadly, looks for opportunities for expansion, communicates more clearly, and has an enthusiasm for moving forward. This is his legacy as a president and an Ivy Creek volunteer. At a time of thankfulness and reflection, we are all so grateful to Dave.

Ivy Creek Workdays

Sat., Dec. 19, 9 am to noon - Help us keep ICNA the special place it is. Join the Ivy Creek Foundation (ICF) trail volunteers as we maintain the trails, remove invasive plants, and control erosion. Wear outdoor work clothes. We meet the second Thursday and the fourth Saturday year round.