



Natural Area News

A publication of the Ivy Creek Foundation
Volume 15, No. 3

Winter Newsletter 2009

The Future of the Barn at Ivy Creek Natural Area

The barn is a central feature at Ivy Creek Natural Area and has been used over the years in various ways. It is currently a central attraction for the school tours and is at the core of our Ivy Creek branding. The barn housed the foundation's office and was a site for public programs until 1996 when the Education Building opened. The barn is in clear need of repair and for some time the Board and staff have been considering the steps needed to make this happen. In the next couple months we hope to assemble a Barn Task Force to move this process forward in a decisive manner. Member involvement in this process would be extremely helpful. It would be valuable to have interested members join the Task Force, or simply send us your comments on your vision for the future of the Ivy Creek barn. There is a short survey on the next page you can fill out and send in – or just send us an email!

The barn was built in the early 1930s by Conly Greer, Hugh Carr's son-in-law, as a modern, up-to-date facility. It housed horses, cows, pigs, and the winter food supply necessary for successful livestock farming. Conly Greer, an agricultural extension agent in Albemarle County, also used it as a model for other farms in the area. The barn's construction was unique in part because trees growing on the farm, sawn into lumber by a portable sawmill, provided the building material. About 30 years ago the foundation raised funds to undertake considerable repairs and the County has contributed over the years to repairing and maintaining the barn. The barn is telling us it is time to do more!

There are two basic steps to take to move this process forward – and they are by no means simple! One is to determine the barn's most appropriate use; the other is to figure out what needs to be done to meet those identified needs. This will be a challenging process, complicated by an evolving organizational vision, structural and building code issues, not to mention funding! There are a plethora of questions to explore. Should the barn be climate controlled, allowing more regular use of the space? How could the barn be used more effectively as a demonstrational space? What about the lofty upper story? We will need help from people with experience with old structures like the barn, energy, and a love for Ivy Creek. Please consider how you or someone you know might be able to help with this endeavor!



Director's Note

What a great fall it has been! People have been so impressed we sold out the Nick Nichols show at the Paramount, and it really demonstrated how supportive our membership is. Thank you all so much for making the evening such a success!

As usual we have had indispensable support from all our volunteers on the trails this fall. Many thanks go out to our trail monitors and the volunteers from Teens GIVE, a group of energetic CPAs and Cub Scout Troop 114. The Scouts came and worked at Ivy Creek as a fundraiser and raised a nice bit of funding for their own local efforts!

We are truly looking forward to this winter season. We are developing new education programs and will continue to build on our arts programming. We are also looking forward to a Carr family gathering in February. Please check the website regularly to look out for more news as plans solidify!

We have some Facebook fans, but we could use more. If you are on Facebook, just search for "Ivy Creek Foundation" and become a fan!

Finally, we continue to seek out members interested in working with us a wide range of Board committees. Please consider joining the Barn Task Force!

Wishing you the best for winter,

Karen

A New Plant Survey at Ivy Creek Natural Area

Mary Lee Epps

There have been major changes to the landscape of Ivy Creek since the Natural Area was established in the late 1970s. A central part of this history has been the ebb and flow of plant communities over time. Happily, soon after the Natural Area was first created, Tom Wieboldt did an extensive survey of vascular plants within the boundaries, identifying 407 distinct species. Since then, several knowledgeable Ivy Creek members have identified groups of additional species and added them to the list. Mo Stevens contributed 42 new species in 1989. In 1995, Tim Williams surveyed ICNA and identified 50 more species. And Ken Lawless, who did a partial survey in 2001, listed 101 plants found, including 26 new ones. These several partial surveys have helped document the introduction of new



Horsemint (*Monarda punctata*)
Once common at Ivy Creek, Horsemint is now restricted to small areas due to the loss of its preferred old field habitat.



Tim Williams negotiates steep terrain looking for ferns.

plant species at ICNA since its founding. However, this approach has a major drawback. It gives us no information about species that may have disappeared. A new inventory of vascular plant species was sorely needed, and this August Tom Dierauf, Tim Williams, and Chip Morgan began the task with several Master Naturalists acting as spotters and recorders.

Doing a survey is a challenging task. Many plants can only be identified during their limited blooming period. This means that the same areas must be revisited several times over the period of a year or more. And some sedges and grasses can only be keyed out with the help of a microscope. Nevertheless, the group has made a good start, already identifying more than 400 species, including 84 new ones.

Every walk has yielded surprises. One new addition to the list is a full-grown butternut tree (*Juglans cinerea*), which undoubtedly has been at Ivy Creek for many years but somehow was overlooked before. Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), a handsome late-summer flower of wetlands, was gone from its only known location, but later it was found in three new places. Another exciting discovery was a large and healthy colony of walking fern in a new area below the orange trail. Unfortunately, not all the discoveries have been happy ones. New alien invasives have arrived including Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) and wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*); we were unable to find the uncommon orchid, whorled pogonia (*Isotria verticillata*) in its only known location; and what were formerly large swaths of both shining clubmoss (*Huperzia lucidula*) and meadow spikemoss (*Selaginella apoda*) have shrunk to tiny patches.

The fall survey season has now ended, but the group will be back on the trails by February or early March, looking for spring ephemerals such as bloodroot and May apple to add to our growing list. Stay tuned!

Ivy Creek Barn Survey

Please help us explore the future of the Ivy Creek barn by filling out this survey. You can mail this to: Ivy Creek Foundation, PO Box 956, Charlottesville, VA 22902. Or send us an email addressing these questions and other comments as you see fit to: icf@ivycreekfoundation.org. Please respond by December 31st, 2009!

- Have you been in the barn? Yes No
- How do you feel it is an asset to Ivy Creek?

- Please consider these three basic options moving forward and select your preference:
 - Undertake minimal repairs to the barn to keep it standing.
 - More extensive repairs and renovation to allow more regular use of the ground floor.
 - Extensive repairs and renovation that would allow use of the second floor.

- What do you think would be the best future use for the barn?

Would you be interested in helping by serving on the Barn Task Force? If yes, please send us your details!!

Turtle Tales

Pearl Zmich

The Native American people have many stories that explain why animals act in a certain way. This story explains why turtles hibernate in the winter and why the turtle's shell looks cracked:

Turtle heard some birds talking in the trees overhead. They were talking about going south. Turtle asked the birds, "Why are you going and where are you going?" The birds answered, "Soon it will be winter here so we are going south to the land of summer." Here it will be cold and it will be hard to find food but in summer land food will be easy to find." Turtle said to the birds, "Can you take me to summer land?" The birds said, "Sure! Can you hold on to this stick with your mouth?" Turtle said, "Yes I can!" The birds lifted Turtle with the stick in his mouth. Turtle liked flying. Then Turtle wondered if they were at summer land yet. Turtle opened his mouth and started to say, "Are we..." As soon as Turtle opened his mouth to talk, he fell right on the ground and cracked his shell. Turtle crawled to a near-by pond and buried himself in the soft mud. Here Turtle slept until it was spring. Ever since this, turtles spend the winter hibernating in the mud.



Winter Birdbath

Not all birds migrate, some stay around all winter. Birds need water even in the winter. You can help them out by making a winter birdbath.

1. Get a plastic catch pan from a flowerpot and a rock or a brick.
2. Put the catch pan where you think the birds will like it.
3. Put the rock or brick in the catch pan and fill the pan with warm water.

Now that you have birds coming to the birdbath, you might like to participate in The Great Backyard Bird Count, February 12-15, 2009. (Contributed by Pearl Zmich, for more information, go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc/)

Coordinator's Corner

Thanks to our hard-working volunteers, we had a record-breaking school tours season with over 1,300 schoolchildren and adults enjoying the outdoors this fall. Additionally nearly 400 adults and families participated in weekend programs such as Monarchs on the Move, Insect Walk, and Native Trees. As always none of this is possible without our volunteer guides and program instructors.

In the future we'll be seeking volunteers to participate in new projects such as the arts and nature, classroom outreach, displays and exhibits, and publications.

You will see many of your favorite winter programs this year at Ivy Creek. You may also wish to consider related in-depth programs such as the Tree Steward Training, Beekeeping, and PVCC's Ornithology and Natural History of Virginia courses.

Winter is an exquisite time to view the natural world. With the leaves gone, the tree bark shows off its natural beauty. The remaining greenery, such as christmas ferns, cranefly orchids, and lichens, stand out like a rainbow amidst the browns and grays of winter. Please join us at Ivy Creek this season.



Tree Steward Training Opportunity

February 23, 2010 marks the beginning of the 14-week Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards (CATS) Training Course. Instruction will be by many top notch professionals with expertise in the subjects presented. While most classes will be at Department of Forestry (DOF) Fontaine Research Park facility, field trips will explore Ivy Creek, Ragged Mountain, and Montpelier.

Subjects to be covered are tree ID, biology, disorders and diagnosis, planting, roots, soils, ecology, and much more. Following class completion, trainees are expected to complete 25 hours of volunteer service on CATS-approved projects and activities. At Ivy Creek tree stewards have earned volunteer hours by restoring the Quiet Area between the Education Center and the Barn, and guiding school groups.

Registration forms are available at DOF, VA Cooperative Extension office at the County Office Building on 5th St. Ext., or by e-mail request to: cville.area.tree.stewards@gmail.com.

All programs are free of charge and open to the public unless otherwise indicated.

December 2009

- 3 Central Virginia Beekeepers Meeting**
Thursday, December 3, 7:00 pm
Hear "Impressions of an Italian raising Italians in Virginia" by Diego DeCorte, one of our club members. Diego will talk about his first year experiences as a transplanted beekeeper. Beginners welcome. Meet in the Education Center. Beginners welcome.
- 5 First Saturday Bird Walk**
Saturday, December 5, 7:30 am
Come join Teresa Shaner for an early morning bird walk. Cosponsored by the Monticello Bird Club. Beginners always welcome.
- 9 Virginia Native Plant Society Meeting**
Wednesday, December 9, 7:30 pm
Visit with friends old and new in a relaxed festive setting. Enjoy a native plant/seed exchange and informal holiday gathering. Meetings are free and open to all plant enthusiasts. Meet at the Education Center.

Drawing from Nature

Artist Adam Peacock will take nature lovers out for a monthly walk with paper, pencil and drawing board in hand to draw. This program is free to the public but space is limited. Please inquire about dates by calling (434) 973-7772 or emailing icf@ivycreekfoundation.org.

- 10 Monticello Bird Club Meeting**
Thursday, December 10, 7:30 pm
John Spahr will present a program on the Birds of Paradise from his two trips to New Guinea. Free and open to the public. Meet in the Education Center.
- 13 Winter Craft Day**
Sunday, December 13, 2:00 pm
Enjoy winter craft day at Ivy Creek. Make seasonal nature crafts out of natural materials. Open to all kids ages 5 and up. Please register in advance by contacting LoriAnne Barnett, (434) 872-4580 or email labarnett@vt.edu.

This program is co-sponsored with Virginia Cooperative Extension 4-H.

- 19 Tracking and the Earth**
Saturday, December 19, 9:00 am
Join Hub Knott outdoors to search for signs of wildlife activity. Learn how to read the stories of animal life in the landscape of Ivy Creek. Meet at the barn. Co-sponsored with the Living Earth School.
- 31 Ivy Creek Toddler Time**
Thursday, December 31, 10:00 am
Introduce your toddler to nature with this short talk and trail walk for three to five year olds. Volunteer guide Rachel Bush will host, starting in the Education Center at the Ivy Creek Natural Area.

January 2010

- 2 First Saturday Bird Walk**
Saturday, January 2, 7:30 am
Join us for an early morning bird walk with Leigh Surdukowski of the Monticello Bird Club. Beginners always welcome. Meet in the parking lot.
- 5 Winter Natural History Walk**
Tuesday, January 5, 2:00 pm
Join Mary Jane Epps as we search out the plants, fungi, insects, and animals that are still visible in the winter. We'll learn about their life histories, traditional uses, and how they are adapted to survival under winter conditions. Meet at the kiosk next to the parking lot at the Ivy Creek Natural Area.
- 5 Become a Virginia Master Naturalist**
Tuesday, January 5, 7:00 pm
If you enjoy the outdoors and are interested in conserving our local natural heritage, consider becoming a Virginia Master Naturalist. The Rivanna Master Naturalists' next training session will be held Tuesday evenings and some Saturdays from February 16 through May 25. Those interested in the program are

welcome to attend this free, informational meeting in the Education Center at Ivy Creek Natural Area. For more information visit www.vmn-rivanna.org.

**Young People Only:
Junior Naturalist Clubs
Gear Up for Spring.
Register now!**

The 4H Junior Naturalist clubs at Ivy Creek offer fun, outdoor activities exploring the fields, forests, and streams of Ivy Creek and Ragged Mountain Natural Areas. We will learn about the native plants and wildlife of our area (including snakes, spiders and bats!).

The clubs meet every other Monday from 4:00 – 5:30 pm at the Ivy Creek Natural Area, beginning January 18th. Two sections, for ages 6-9 and ages 10-13, provide age-appropriate activities. Pre-registration is required. To register, email Dan Bieker at danbieker@gmail.com or phone at (434) 971-9618.

This program is co-sponsored with Virginia Cooperative Extension 4-H

9 Tracking and the Earth

Saturday, January 9, 9:00 am

Join Hub Knott outdoors to search for signs of wildlife activity. Learn how to read the stories of animal life in the landscape of Ivy Creek. Meet at the barn. Co-sponsored with the Living Earth School.

13 Virginia Native Plant Society Meeting

Wednesday, January 13, 7:30 pm

Hear Tony Russell talk about the Human Impacts on Our Forests. Meet in the Education Center.

14 Monticello Bird Club Meeting

Thursday, January 14, 7:30 pm

Hear Wil Hershberger's talk on "An Appreciation of Bird Song." A seasonal journal through the cycle of bird song in our area with an in depth look at the complexity of the songs of certain species detailing all of the rich information that these birds are conveying

to one another. Free and open to the public. Meet in the Education Center.

**Natural History of Virginia
at PVCC
Register now!**

Love learning about natural history? Sign up for PVCC "Introduction to the Natural History of Virginia" (NAS 145). Instructors Dan Bieker and Tom Dierauf offer hands on lectures and field trips about the native plants and wildlife of Central Virginia and the Blue Ridge Mountains. This 3-credit course meets ten Monday evenings in the Education Center at Ivy Creek with five Saturday morning field trips. Starts January 25th. *To register, log onto the Piedmont Virginia Community College website at www.pvcc.edu by January 18th.*

16 Streamwatch Training Workshop

Saturday, January 16, 10 am to 4 pm

In this StreamWatch introductory training, learn the fundamentals of benthic invertebrate sampling to gauge water quality and stream health. Reservations are required due to limited class size. Contact Rose Brown at rose@streamwatch.org or 962-3527 Meet in the Education Building at Ivy Creek. No charge.

**Sign up at PVCC for
Field Ornithology
Register by January 25th!**

Birdwatching enthusiasts from novice to expert will learn how to identify the birds of Central Virginia by sight and song through Saturday morning field trips. Starts on February 20th. For more information about this course, call Dan Bieker at 971-9618. *Register by logging onto the Piedmont Virginia Community College website at www.pvcc.edu by January 18th.*

17 Trim a Tree: Animals in Winter

Sunday, January 17, 2:00 pm

Bring your toddlers to hear Nicol Butters tell a children's story and then make tree decorations for the birds. After we make popcorn strings and peanut butter cones we'll place them on

trees around the Education Center. Free. Meet in the Education Center.

18 **Junior Naturalists First Meeting**

Monday, January 18, 4:00 to 5:30 pm

First meeting of Junior Naturalists, a Cooperative Extension 4-H club. See box above for more information.

19 **Youth-in-Nature-Day**

Tuesday, January 19, 7:45 am

Youth-in-Nature-Days are a series of day camps being held at the Ivy Creek Natural Area during the 2009-2010 School Year. They are held on non-school weekdays. This month we will focus on navigating or Safely Exploring the Woods of Ivy Creek. To sign up, call LoriAnne Barnett at 434-872-4580 or email at labarnett@vt.edu.

19 **Become a Virginia Master Naturalist**

Tuesday, January 19, 7:00 pm

Introductory meeting, see description for January 5th.

Beginning Beekeeping Class This Winter.

Learn about the basics of beekeeping from the Central Virginia Beekeeping Association. This indoor course covers bee biology, choice of bee species, and honey production.

The class runs every Thursday evening from 7:00 to 9:00 pm during the month of February 2010. Classes are not held at Ivy Creek but in the new County Office Building Annex at 1600 Fifth Street Extended. More details will be available in the Albemarle County Parks & Recreation Department's "Open Doors" flyer in January.

25 **Natural History of Virginia**

Monday, January 25, 6:30 to 9:30 pm

Join us for the first class of PVCC's Natural History of Virginia. Meet in the Education Center. See description above.

28 **Ivy Creek Toddler Time**

Thursday, January 28, 10:00 am

Introduce your toddler to nature with this short talk and trail walk for three to five year olds.

Volunteer guide Rachel Bush will host, starting in the Education Center at the Ivy Creek Natural Area.

February 2010

6 **First Saturday Bird Walk**

Saturday, February 6, 7:30 am

Join us for an early morning bird walk with the Monticello Bird Club. Beginners always welcome. Meet in the parking lot.

10 **Virginia Native Plant Society Meeting**

Wednesday, February 10, 7:30 pm

Hear Jake Hughes, Lead Biological Science Technician, Shenandoah National Park speak about the park's upcoming plant propagation program, which includes the public. Free and open to the public. Meet in the Education Center.

11 **Monticello Bird Club Meeting**

Thursday, February 11, 7:30 pm

Come learn from Ann Harman how to help the flowering plant pollinators. Free and open to the public. Meet in the Education Center.

13 **Tracking and the Earth**

Saturday, February 13, 9:00 am

Join Hub Knott outdoors to search for signs of wildlife activity. Learn how to read the stories of animal life in the landscape of Ivy Creek. Meet at the barn. Co-sponsored with the Living Earth School.

16 **Youth-in-Nature-Day**

Tuesday, February 16, 7:45 am

Youth-in-Nature-Days are a series of day camps being held at the Ivy Creek Natural Area during the 2009-2010 School Year. They are held on non-school weekdays. This month we will focus on remembering and The History of Ivy Creek Natural Area, To sign up, call LoriAnne Barnett at 434-872-4580 or email at labarnett@vt.edu.

20 **Field Ornithology Class**

Saturday, February 20, 8:30 to 11:30 am

Come to the first of a series of classes on field ornithology sponsored by Piedmont Virginia

Community College and taught by Dan Bieker. Registration required by January 25th. Meet in the Education Center. (See description above.)

21 Learning the Native Trees of Virginia

Sunday, February 21, 2:00 pm

Learn to identify trees in the dead of winter using bark, branching, seed, and other distinguishing characteristics. Join Ellen Powell of the Virginia Department of Forestry on a Winter Walk in the **Ragged Mountain Natural Area**. Meet in the RMNA parking lot.

Tree Steward Training

Gain knowledge of tree identification, care, and how trees benefit our urban and rural landscape. Classes begin Tuesday, February 23rd, 2009 at the Department of Forestry, not at Ivy Creek. After completing the 14-week training (Tuesdays 9 am until noon) you become a Charlottesville Area Tree Steward. Tree Stewards volunteer in a variety of tree related activities, not all physically demanding. At Ivy Creek, the tree stewards have restored a section of the Quiet Area edge between the Education Center and the Barn. Register at many library locations, garden centers, Dept. of Forestry, and Virginia Cooperative Extension (phone 434-872-4580) or website <http://www.treesvirginia.org>. Cost of \$75 includes training manual and other publications.

25 Ivy Creek Toddler Time

Thursday, February 25, 10:00 am

Introduce your toddler to nature with this short talk and trail walk for three to five year olds. Volunteer guide Rachel Bush will host, starting in the Education Center at the Ivy Creek Natural Area.

27 Mars Rising at Ivy Creek

Saturday, February 27, 7:30 pm

Get close to the planet Mars at Ivy Creek. Charlottesville Astronomical Society will help you visit the red planet without leaving Earth. Following a short presentation in the Education Center on the recent discovery of Martian caves, we will view the sky from the open mowed area next to the barn. Bring your own telescope or look through the scopes set up by the Charlottesville Astronomical Society. Use low beam or red flashlights only. Free and open to the public. Cloudy skies will cancel this event.

March 2010

4 Central Virginia Beekeepers Meeting

Thursday, March 4, 7:00 pm

Beginners welcome to our first meeting of the year. No charge. Meet in the Education Center.

6 First Saturday Bird Walk

Saturday, March 6, 7:30 am

Join us for an early morning bird walk with the Monticello Bird Club. Beginners always welcome. Meet in the parking lot.

ICF Membership

The Ivy Creek Foundation is a volunteer-based non-profit organization that depends on community donations to maintain the natural areas for your enjoyment and to provide free educational programming. This year we are developing a series of environmental education units, several of which we have described in past newsletters. We are also working with local teachers, school administrators and other community partners to develop education programs related to the rich family history of Ivy Creek.

We cannot do any of this without the support of our membership! This year we have launched our first concerted membership drive, and we need your help! Please become a member if you are not already, or pass this form on to a friend who enjoys the natural areas but is not yet a member. To join, please send your tax-deductible contribution to: Ivy Creek Foundation, P.O. Box 956, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Name(s) _____ Email _____

Address _____

- \$10 Student
- \$35 Contributing
- \$100 Sustaining
- \$500 Benefactor
- \$25 Regular
- \$50 Subscribing
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Ivy Creek Foundation
P.O. Box 956
Charlottesville, VA 22902

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Change Service Requested

Membership Renewals: Membership renewal letters went out in November. Please send in your membership donation as you are able. As ever, we are working hard to expand our membership. If you know someone who enjoys our natural areas, or does not know about these wonderful community assets yet, please share this newsletter with them and encourage them to become a member!

Ivy Creek Foundation

Our Mission: To preserve and manage the Ivy Creek and Ragged Mountain Natural Areas for community education and appreciation.

The Ivy Creek Foundation is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization created in 1979 that works to manage, improve, and preserve the ecosystems of the Ivy Creek and Ragged Mountain Natural Areas for the purposes of environmental education, land conservation, and the appreciation of Virginia's natural heritage.

Ivy Creek Foundation Board of Directors 2009-2010

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For membership information, write to P.O.Box 956, Charlottesville, VA 22902, call (434) 973-7772
email: icf@ivycreekfoundation.org or visit our website at <http://ivycreekfoundation.org>



*Check the website for additional programming
and other possible changes to the schedule.
We depend on your generous support, so
please send in your renewals!*