



Natural Area News

A publication of the Ivy Creek Foundation
Volume 14, No. 3

Winter Newsletter 2008/09

Skull Forensics with Local 7th Graders

At the Annual Meeting in September we discussed several of the new environmental education units we have been developing at the Ivy Creek Foundation. We have four new education units we are hoping to find funding for this year on skull forensics, local greening initiatives and resource conservation, monarchs and stream health. Together these four units comprise what we are calling the Ivy Creek Authentic Environmental Education Program. One reason this name stuck is that each unit uses compelling, natural props to more thoroughly engage students. Making the material more tangible and memorable.

In early September we tested the skull forensics unit, designed to complement 7th grade biology studies, with two local 7th grade classes. The unit begins with a discussion of teeth: what they are used for, what they are called, where they are located in human mouths, and then moves on to other mammals. Images of different skulls are projected and conversation continues, focusing on type of diet and how that impacts placement and shape of teeth. And then the real fun starts.

Out come trays of four different skulls, one set for each group of up to four students. These are real skulls. While all students should have been thoroughly engaged as the conversation was interactive and the images powerful, any young mind wandering from the conversation is now glued to the subject matter. The students are asked to determine what type of eater each skull came from (herbivore, omnivore or carnivore) and to make an educated guess as to what the mammal might have been.

It was a great success and we have been encouraged to try and provide this unit to all the local 7th grade classes we can. We cannot run any of these new education units with existing resources. It will cost just under \$5,000 to deliver the skull forensics unit to 7th graders in all the Charlottesville and Albemarle public schools. We have applied for two competitive local grants and will also be looking for support from other funders and individuals. If you would like to make a donation to this effort, please be in touch or visit the giving page of our website at <http://ivycreekfoundation.org/membership.html>.



Director's Note

It has been a beautiful fall. I hope you have had the time to come out for a walk or a program!

This fall we have had many volunteer groups come out the Ivy Creek and Ragged Mountain Natural Areas to help out on the trails and to work on other projects. The weather has been very cooperative. Day of Caring in September was especially beautiful. Many thanks to all these groups and individuals!

We have held many informative and engaging programs these past few months. I especially appreciated the trail-building seminar in October and have enjoyed the work we have been doing on invasives with local middle school students.

I hope you have checked out the revamped website and have found it useful. We are continually welcoming new volunteer guides and trail stewards, and are also currently looking for a newsletter editor. So if you, or someone you know, might enjoy working with us, please give us a call - (434) 973-7772 or email icf@ivycreekfoundation.org.

All the best for winter,

Karen

Nature Camp, Vesuvius, Virginia

Shirley Napps

Do you know a young person who can't take a walk in the woods without turning over every rock in search of insects or salamanders? Who loves to wade in creeks, catch butterflies or look for birds? Who would rather be outside investigating nature than indoors watching TV or playing video games? If so, Nature Camp might just be the place for him or her. Since 1942 Nature Camp has sought to train a corps of interested, knowledgeable youth to conserve and protect the environment and to become wise stewards of the earth's natural resources.



Located in the George Washington National Forest near Lexington, Virginia, Nature Camp is a coeducational, residential summer camp specializing in natural history and environmental education for 5th through 12th graders. Once described as a place "where fingertips are taught to see," Nature Camp emphasizes hands-on, place-based, experiential learning in classrooms consisting of forest, field and stream. In each of four two-week sessions divided by age, campers attend classes in such subjects as botany, geology, and ornithology, but they also enjoy plenty of free time for hiking, swimming, and games. Many campers return summer after summer and form lasting friendships that extend into adulthood, as they develop a deep and abiding attachment to nature and lifelong love of learning.

Laura U., a camper from Midlothian, VA, wrote: "There is something so special about Nature Camp: the trees, streams, classes, hikes, campers, staff, songs and swimming holes. It gives you a feeling of attachment. Nature Camp feels like home, and just as we would do all in our power to protect our home, we learn at Nature Camp to care the same way for ... our environment." Upon arrival for Fourth Session and her first time at Camp, Phoebe S., a camper from Montebello, VA, and the third of siblings to go to Camp, exclaimed, "I've been waiting for this day for SIX YEARS!" She was not disappointed—she now arranges her summer around the Camp schedule.

For more information, visit the Nature Camp website at www.naturecamp.net or contact camp director Philip Coulling (540-460-7897 or director@naturecamp.net).

ICF Membership

The Ivy Creek Foundation is a volunteer-based non-profit organization that depends on community donations to maintain the natural areas and to continue and expand its educational programming. At Ivy Creek Natural Area we hope to increase the number of school tours we offer as well as develop education programs to take place elsewhere, such as at local schools and at the sites of local environmental projects or areas where activity is underway that will impact the local environment. We also hope to continue to develop the environmental education units, like the skull forensics unit described in this newsletter, as well as education programs related to the family history of Ivy Creek.

We will not be able to do any of this without the support of our membership! 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 _____

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustaining | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Benefactor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Regular | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Subscribing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Patron |

Local Tree Stewards Restore Quiet Area Edge

Phil Stokes

This fall an ambitious crew of Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards (CATS) fully equipped with saws, clippers, mattocks, and even a weed wrench, attacked a terrible and highly visible invasive plant infestation at Ivy Creek. After four morning work sessions they had freed the Quiet Area edge between the Education Building and the Barn of non-native oriental bittersweet, Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, and autumn olive; excessive grape vines, although native, were reduced in number. Other than a couple of spice bushes and some blackberries on the outer edge, no woody natives were salvageable except a few older trees that had become established before the onslaught of invasives.



With approval of the Ivy Creek Foundation's board, a plan was prepared by the tree stewards to restore the area with native plantings that are most highly valued by birds and other wildlife. Generous assistance was provided by the Jefferson Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS) which sourced and purchased the widely varied selection of native trees and shrubs. The Jefferson Chapter obtained four trees and 53 shrubs from numerous resources including a large wholesale purchase from a conservation nursery, contributed and discounted plants from local nurseries, mail ordered trees, and shrubs donated by chapter members.

Compared to the effort required to clear the area, planting was a cinch. By the end of planting day, October 26th, the tree stewards had transformed the area spectacularly by planting all the trees and shrubs. Follow-up maintenance by the tree stewards or other groups will be required to control re-emerging invasives and establish a wildlife-friendly ground cover. Connected with the plantings, CATS intends to prepare educational materials and provide programs related to wildlife dependence on native flora. A flyer describing the project, including the detailed landscape plan with a plant list, is now available from a box on the site.

Tree stewards whose volunteer hours made this project possible are Rosemary Connelly, Joan Currier, Laura Dollard, Mara Evans, Jay Gillenwater, Marjie Giuliano, Jane Ann Griffis, Jack Hardgrove, Maud Henne, Terri Keffert, Harriet Mederios, Jenny Mikulski, Jack O'Leary, Pat & Steve Schnatterly, Phil Stokes, Elena Speidel, Dorothy Tompkins, Jacki Vawter, and Leslie Weinhardt. A training program for new Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards will begin on February 24, 2009; registration forms are available at many locations or by phoning Virginia Cooperative Extension at (434) 872-4580.

Pagoda Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)

CATS planted one Pagoda Dogwood in the recovered Quiet Area edge. This Dogwood is a small understory tree native to Albemarle



County but has not been found before at the Ivy Creek Natural Area. The Pagoda Dogwood is used by over 60 species of wildlife, including over 40 bird species. Its fruit alone attracts over 30 species of bird, including the downy woodpecker, brown thrasher, wood thrush, eastern bluebird, and cedar waxwing.

The Pagoda Dogwood was formerly called the Pigeonberry as its fruit was the favorite of the now-extinct Passenger Pigeon. The scientific species name of *alternifolia* refers to the alternate leaf pattern, uncommon for Dogwoods.

Coordinator's Corner

A Busy Season Comes to a Close! A big thank you to all the volunteer guides who led over 1000 students and 300 adults on the trails from September through November. That is over one hundred tours. This is the heart and soul of what Ivy Creek is all about. Thank you one and all.

Thank you also to the public presenters for birds, monarchs, insects, invasives, wildflowers, etc. Some 400 people enjoyed 23 different presentations. This doesn't even count the people who just come to enjoy nature without any interpretation. I thank the people who maintain the trails and make all the programs possible.

During the winter months there are many organized programs available to help you learn more about nature, including Dan Bieker's Natural History courses offered by Piedmont Virginia Community College. Volunteer programs such as Master Naturalists, Tree Stewards, and even the local beekeepers offer special programs that begin the winter. All are detailed in this newsletter's calendar.

Bruce

December 2008

- 3 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection**
Wednesday, December 3, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
Explore the natural world with your children through story, song, games, and craft. Every Wednesday, storyteller and nature-educator Kate White shares the joy and fun of nature. Topics include tree and plant identification, animal tracks and signs, stargazing, bird language, and much more. Meet in the Education Building.

**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 19th. Two sections, for ages 6-9 and ages 10-13, provide age-appropriate activities. Pre-registration is required. To register, email LoriAnne Barnett at barnettl@vt.edu or phone at 434-872-4580.

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

- 6 First Saturday Bird Walk**
Saturday, December 6, 7:30 am
Join Teresa Shaner for an early morning bird walk. Cosponsored by the *Monticello Bird Club*. Beginners always welcome. Meet in the parking lot.
- 6 Winter Craft Day**
Saturday, December 6, 2:00 pm
Winter craft day at Ivy Creek, sponsored by 4-H. Make seasonal nature crafts out of natural materials. Open to all kids. (Note: children younger than five need a parent

with them to help them with craftwork.) Meet in the Education Building. To register or for more information, contact LoriAnne Barnett at 434-872-4580 or email at barnettl@VT.EDU.

- 10 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection**
Wednesday, December 10, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).
- 10 Virginia Native Plant Society Meeting**
Wednesday, December 10, 7:30 pm
Native plant and seed exchange. Also bring pictures or collected items for a show-and-tell at this informal festive gathering. Free of charge. Meet in the Education Building.
- 11 Monticello Bird Club Meeting**
Thursday, December 11, 7:30 pm
Charles Ziegenfus will present on the nesting success of juncos as related to acorns and chipmunks. Free of charge. Meet in the Education Building.
- 17 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection**
Wednesday, December 17, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).

January 2009

- 3 First Saturday Bird Walk**
Saturday, January 3, 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.
- 7 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection**
Wednesday, January 7, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).
- 8 Winter Natural History Walk**
Thursday, January 8, 2:00 pm
Join us 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.

8 Monticello Bird Club Meeting

Thursday, January 8, 7:30 pm

Learn about the "quail action plan" in this talk titled "The Bobwhites and the Bees," which will explain why early-succession habitat is so important to a variety of species. No charge. Meet in the Education Building.

Natural History of Virginia

at PVCC

Register now!

Love learning about natural history? Sign up for 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 Building at Ivy Creek with five Saturday morning field trips. Starts January 26th. *To register, log onto the Piedmont Virginia Community College website at www.pvcc.edu by January 10th.*

14 Become a Virginia Master Naturalist

Wednesday, January 14, 10:00 am

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 Wednesday mornings from February 18 through May 20. Those interested in the program are welcome to attend this free, informational meeting in the Education Building at Ivy Creek Natural Area. For more information, contact Dede Smith at 434-296-0074 or visit www.vmn-rivanna.org.

14 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection

Wednesday, January 14, 3:30 to 5:30 pm

Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).

**14 Virginia Native Plant Society Meeting
Invasive Plants: Action and Challenges!**

Wednesday, January 14, 7:30 pm

Hear Ruth Douglas talk about the threat of non-native invasive plants, and actions being taken at the local and state levels to control them. She is the Invasive Plant Education Director for the VNPS. Meet in the Education Building.

18 The Three Stories of Ivy Creek

Sunday, January 18, 2:00 pm

Dede Smith will share 200 years of local history through the intertwining stories of Hydraulic Mills, Hugh Carr and Riverview Farm, and the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir. This presentation of the unique cultural and social history of the area around and within the Ivy Creek Natural Area will be in the Education Building followed by a walk to the Hydraulic Mills overlook.

Sign up at PVCC for

Field Ornithology

Register by January 26th!

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 14th. 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 26th.*

19 Junior Naturalists First Meeting

Monday, January 19, 4:00 to 5:30 pm

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

- 21 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection**
Wednesday, January 21, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).

**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 2009. 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.

- 24 Streamwatch Training Workshop**
Saturday, January 24, 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.
- 26 Natural History of Virginia**
Monday, January 26, 6:30 to 9:30 pm
Join us for the first class of PVCC's Natural History of Virginia. Meet in the Education Building. See description above.
- 28 Become a Virginia Master Naturalist**
Wednesday, January 28, 10:00 am
Introductory meeting, see listing on January 14th.
- 28 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection**
Wednesday, January 28, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).

- 29 Ivy Creek Toddler Time**
Thursday, January 29, 10:00 am
Enjoy a read-aloud and trail walk for three to five year olds and their parents. Volunteer guide Rachel Bush will host, starting in the Education Building at Ivy Creek Natural Area. The event is free.

February 2009

- 4 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection**
Wednesday, February 4, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).
- 7 First Saturday Bird Walk**
Saturday, February 7, 7:30 am
Join us for an early morning bird walk with the Monticello Bird Club. Beginners always welcome. Meet in the parking lot.
- 11 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection**
Wednesday, February 11, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).
- 11 Virginia Native Plant Society Meeting**
Wednesday, February 11, 7:30 pm
Hear Pat Brodie speak about her visit to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, which is noted for its natural landscapes and advocacy for native plants through research. Meet in the Education Building.
- 12 Monticello Bird Club Meeting**
Thursday, February 12, 7:30 pm
Bob Schamerhorn shares his experience of nature photography of Virginia's native species from the coast to the mountains and deep wilderness to your backyard. No charge. Meet in the Education Building.
- 14 Field Ornithology Class**
Saturday, February 14, 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 26th. Meet in the Education Building. (See description above.)

Tree Steward Training

Gain knowledge of tree identification, care, and how trees benefit our urban and rural landscape. Classes begin Tuesday, February 24th, 2009 at the Department of Forestry, not at Ivy Creek. After completing the 14 week training (Tuesday mornings 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 Building and the Barn. Register at many library locations, garden centers, Dept. of Forestry, and Virginia Cooperative Extension (phone 434-872-4580). Course cost of \$50 includes training manual and other publications.

22 Learning the Native Trees of Virginia

Sunday, February 22, 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.

25 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection

Wednesday, February 25, 3:30 to 5:30 pm

Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).

26 Ivy Creek Toddler Time

Thursday, February 26, 2:00 pm

Enjoy a read-aloud and trail walk for three to five year olds and their parents. Volunteer guide Rachel Bush will host, starting in the Education Building at Ivy Creek Natural Area. The event is free.

28 Stars and Nebulas at Ivy Creek

Saturday, February 28, 7:30 pm

Get close to the stars at Ivy Creek. Charlottesville Astronomical Society will

help you visit the Orion Nebula and other deep sky objects without leaving Earth. Following a short presentation in the Education Building, 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 2009

4 Makin' Tracks: Nature Connection

Wednesday, March 4, 3:30 to 5:30 pm

Explore the natural world with your children (see description on Dec. 3rd).

5 Central Virginia Beekeepers Meeting

Thursday, March 5, 7:00 pm

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

7 First Saturday Bird Walk

Saturday, March 7, 7:30 am

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

7 Wilderness First Aid Certification

Saturday & Sunday, March 7-8, 8:30 am

This weekend course, through basic instruction and role-playing scenarios, provides a well rounded introduction to Wilderness First Aid for hikers, climbers, paddlers and those who find themselves out and about. Led by SOLO instructor and director of the Outdoor Adventure Social Club - Matt Rosefsky. The certification is valid for two years. Registration required. Fee includes books, handouts, and certification. For more information go to www.outdoorsocial.com/wfa.htm or call (434) 760-HIKE. 10% of proceeds will go to the Ivy Creek Foundation. Meet in the Education Building.

Ivy Creek Foundation
P.O. Box 956
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Charlottesville, VA
Permit No. 299

Change Service Requested

Membership Drive: As part of our Annual Fund Drive, 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 Mission

“To preserve and manage the Ivy Creek and Ragged Mountain Natural Areas for 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 2007-2008

President: Peter Clark	Samuel Austin	Scot French	Terry Nauss
Vice President: Victoria Dye	LoriAnne Barnett	Linda Goodling	Liz Palmer
Secretary: Ruth Douglas	Meghan Cloud	Jim Hutcherson	Susan Pleiss
Treasurer: Gerri Carr	Brad Conner	Samuel Lindblom	Ellen Powell

Executive Director: Karen Joyner Education Coordinator: Bruce Gatling-Austin
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://www.ivycreekfoundation.org>



*Please send in your membership renewal
if you have not already!
Check our website for news and possible program
schedule changes due to weather.*