

NATURE FORWARD

Naturalist Quarterly

Spring 2023

NATUREFORWARD.ORG



Helping Your Native Garden Grow

NATURE ACTIVITIES & NEWS

Nature Forward inspires residents of the greater Washington, DC region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and advocacy.

HEADQUARTERS

Woodend, a 40-acre wildlife sanctuary in Chevy Chase, MD

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 9 AM-5 PM

STORE HOURS

Monday-Saturday 11 AM-3 PM

GROUNDS HOURS

Dawn to dusk

NATURE FORWARD MEMBERSHIP

Senior/Young Professional \$15
Individual \$50
Family \$65
Nature Steward \$100
Advocate \$200
Sanctuary Guardian \$500
Naturalists Council \$1,000
Preservationist \$1,000+

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Naturalist Quarterly

NatureForward.org Spring 2023

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COVER Swamp Rosemallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) taken at the Blair Native Plant Garden by Ben Israel.

From the Director

Spring is for Springboards

Even with a mild winter, I can't help but rejoice in the longer days and increasing bird and mammal activity that signal the arrival of spring in Washington. Just this afternoon, I spied a Bald Eagle flying over Woodend and began to dream of what species might choose to breed at our nature sanctuary this year. Foxes? Definitely. Dragonflies, salamanders and wood frogs? For sure. Bluebirds? You can count on it. Dare I hope for Wood Thrushes and Towhees? Always!

And while Woodend restoration continues to dazzle visitors and increase biodiversity on our 40 acres, what I'm most excited about is how Woodend serves as a springboard for our mission work around the Capital Region. Our Restoration team recently welcomed Dr. Kandis Boyd, the EPA Administrator for the Chesapeake Bay Region, who toured Woodend green infrastructure projects. Dr. Boyd received one of the first copies of our new Guide to Woodend Restoration that promotes best practices for the region. You can view the Guide here: <https://bit.ly/3xdZepf>.

This month, we completed our final rain garden at Woodend and marked the milestone of treating 100% of rainwater that falls on the sanctuary. Everywhere you turn, you can see how we are spreading out, slowing down, and soaking in stormwater. That's quite a clean water achievement, especially because we are using our rainwater expertise to teach others. Our new rain garden and all of Woodend's stormwater management projects are the centerpiece of a Spanish-language video destined for use in the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals training course. Similarly, we are using our native plant gardening knowledge to inspire entire communities. The grant-supported, low-cost garden consultations and kits we offered to Sligo Creek watershed residents sold out in less than a day! Find out about the new ways we are expanding native plant gardening in our region on pages 4-5.

You might remember that Woodend was the original home of our first Taking Nature Black and Naturally Latinos Conferences. Since 2016, we have now hosted eight conferences total. They have become so popular that we've outgrown our headquarters space. The conferences are a great example of how Woodend served as a springboard to bigger, better conferences. Learn more about the dynamic speakers scheduled for Taking Nature Black 2023 on page 21. I encourage you to register and see for yourself how our conferences showcase the powerful voices, viewpoints, and leadership of environmental professionals of color.

The talented Nature Forward staff serve as ambassadors for our mission work all around the region. In any given month, you could find our Nature Preschool Teachers hosting a workshop at the National Association

for the Education of Young Children Conference. You might listen to our Acting Preschool Director delivering a keynote address at the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education Conference while, at the same conference, her Nature Forward colleagues presented on topics as diverse as



bioluminescent fungi and water quality testing for high school students. Or you might tune in to hear Nature Forward Conservation Advocates join our community partners to present neighborhood outreach projects at the Chesapeake Watershed Forum where we debuted our case study on *Environmental Empowerment in Historically Excluded Communities in the Washington, DC Region*. You can read the case study here: <https://natureforward.org/outreach-case-study-report>.

As you enjoy the arrival of spring migrants and the emergence of beautiful spring wildflowers, you can take pride in knowing that your membership and contributions support all the ways we leverage Woodend Nature Sanctuary, our professional staff, and our mission work to springboard the growth of a larger, more diverse community of nature stewards in our region. Thank you for your support!

Happy Spring,

nature forward **TAKING NATURE BLACK**
March 8-11 • Online & in person
natureforward.org/taking-nature-black
Nature Forward members: Save 25%
by using discount code **nfmembers**

JOIN US!

Nature Forward wants to help your native garden grow!

by Lisa Goodnight



Beautiful native gardens at Woodend attract admirers and pollinators

The day that so many gardeners live for will soon be here! That's when true VIPs (Very Important Pollinators) begin zooming in and out for an early spring flower feast.

"Spring is a great time to begin to observe your garden," advises Nature Forward Garden Programs Manager Alice Sturm. "The change in season is an opportunity to take stock of what is working and what isn't."

Nature Forward offers excellent resources to help you. In addition to at-home consultations and tours of Woodend Nature Sanctuary's native gardens, the Woodend Nature Shop is an essential stop for gardeners. There, you can find and purchase everything from seeds to gardening tools. Soon, visitors will be able buy native plants at the shop too.

Nature Forward is also expanding gardening help in other areas, including offering Spanish-language trainings to professional landscapers, and providing native plant pollinator kits to people who live in the Sligo Creek subwatershed.

If you're anxious to do something right now, cleaning and sharpening your garden tools is important, but don't rush out to use them just yet.

"On the first warm day, we are all tempted to get to work in the garden - but cutting back perennials and grasses should wait until temperatures are reliably in the 50s, to ensure any overwintering invertebrates have emerged," Alice says. "In our area, this often means waiting until late April or May to cut things back."



Garden Programs Manager Alice Sturm pots up plants for Nature Forward's native plant sale

If last season is any indication, there's much to look forward to in the 2023 gardening season. Last year, our native garden volunteers kept a diary of their tasks. Their observations, recorded in the Woodend Native Plant Garden Diary, will help guide this year's garden volunteers to success. In addition, our newly published Woodend Restoration Guide (<https://bit.ly/3xdZepf>) will help educate our entire region on how to implement best practices for creating beautiful gardens that support wildlife.

Here's an example of the 'ribbiting' sights from **March 18, 2022**:

"Bloodroot (S. canadensis) still blooming profusely, Bluebells (Mertensia virginica) have buds and just starting! Clean up in the North Garden and the Log Garden. Moved and divided two of the Royal Ferns (Osmunda regalis) near the wetspot in the "Coastal Plain." Saw a Toad!"

And of course, being outside has its own perks as noted by a volunteer in this **June 3, 2022** entry:

"The eastern prickly pear's (Opuntia humifusa) first blooms of the season opened during our volunteer session! A nice reward for a hard day's work. It was a good day to do some transplanting and re-arranging, as rain came in the afternoon."

Nature Forward is extremely grateful to our team of dedicated volunteers who are committed to sharing the joys of native plant gardening with everyone!



Scan the QR code to view
or visit <https://bit.ly/3xdZepf>

"Most of us garden to get outside and beautify our homes or neighborhoods," Alice says. "Gardening with native plants is fun because it really takes the 'beautification' to the next level. You are not just adding plants, you are adding birds, invertebrates, and so much more."

"You can grow your own bird feeder with native grasses and perennials," Alice adds. "Goldfinches love the seedheads of Wild Bergamot, for example. Or 'plant' hummingbirds in your yard by growing Coral Honeysuckle or Scarlet Beebalm. It's a great way to get connected to our local ecology—and contribute to its health."

Volunteer Opportunity

Nature Forward has an exciting opportunity for people who have not been able to volunteer in the past due to schedule conflicts. We received a grant to, among other things, provide highly subsidized pollinator native plant kits to people who live in the Sligo Creek subwatershed, which is a priority watershed in our region.

Nature Forward will need volunteer help to assemble and deliver these kits to people who sign up! The schedule will be flexible, so people who want to volunteer on weekends, evenings, or just want to participate in a time-limited project, will be able to volunteer over a two-week period in late April/early May and again in late September/early October. For those not currently volunteering in the garden, but interested in this particular opportunity, please email peihaan.orestes@natureforward.org to find out how to sign up.

Find out more about Nature Forward garden programs at natureforward.org/native-plant-gardening. Beginning May 1, we will offer a range of native plants for sale in our Woodend Nature Shop! Offerings will update seasonally from spring through fall.



Nature Forward Legacy Society

By naming Nature Forward as the beneficiary of your estate, you can make an important statement about preserving the natural world for future generations.

While you might think that legacy gifts are only for extremely wealthy people, in reality, estate gifts starting at just \$1,000 make a huge impact on our mission work.

Whatever amount is right for you, by including Nature Forward in your legacy plan, you can help us deliver positive benefits to people and nature in our region.

There are a variety of ways to give. You can name Nature Forward in your will or revocable trust or as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or life insurance. Take pride in leaving a lasting legacy for nature here in our region.

Nature Forward member Mary Massey (right) receives a volunteer appreciation award from Nature Forward Deputy Director for Programs Alison Pearce.



Estate gifts that contribute to general operating support for Nature Forward are the most flexible when it comes to funding our mission work. You can also include a specific designation or program in keeping with our mission. For example, generous donors Jessie Harris and Woody Cunningham recently established a Senior Naturalist Endowment Fund for Nature Forward, and others have stepped up to contribute to that fund to support the work of our top educator in perpetuity.

Long-time Nature Forward member, Mary Massey, has joined a distinguished group of supporters who are part of the Nature Forward Legacy Society. She explains her reason for giving.

"After 39 years of work, mostly for non-profit organizations whose purpose was to protect the natural world, I retired, and in 1991 I joined Nature Forward (back when it was called Audubon Naturalist Society). The organization became my home away from home, and I am still a dedicated volunteer," Mary says. "The work of Nature Forward is so important and effective in our region, I have made it a major beneficiary of my estate."

We are grateful to count Mary as a member of our Nature Forward Legacy Society!

To discuss your options, please contact Nature Forward Director of Development Corinna Fisk at corinna.fisk@natureforward.org or call Corinna at 301-652-9188 ext. 31.

Sample language for naming Nature Forward in your estate plans

I give to Nature Forward, Inc., a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit incorporated in the District of Columbia and whose headquarters located in Chevy Chase, Maryland, the sum of \$ _____ (or _____% of my residuary estate) for general operating purposes.

Remembering Cristol Fleming

Please join Nature Forward and Cris Fleming's family on Sunday, May 14 at 11 am at Woodend to dedicate a bench in Cris's honor.

We'll share light refreshments and fond memories of one of Nature Forward's finest teachers. Please RSVP at give.natureforward.org/Remembering-Cris-Fleming.



Claim your Legacy Society pin today!



By naming Nature Forward as the beneficiary of your estate, you are making an important statement about your commitment to preserving nature for future generations.

Members who include Nature Forward in their estate plans at any level become members of our Legacy Society, receive a commemorative pin, and are invited to join special programs including nature walks and events.

Thank you for your generosity!



Scan to view our Legacy Giving Guide



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forward
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LEGACY SOCIETY

☐

I have already included a gift to Nature Forward or Audubon Naturalist Society in my will or estate plan. Please send me my Legacy Society pin!

☐

I am considering a gift to Nature Forward in my will or estate plan. Please send me more information.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

☐

I wish to keep my legacy gift anonymous.

Please mail to:

Ms. Corinna Fisk
Development Director
Nature Forward
8940 Jones Mill Road,
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Thank you!

Conservation



Policy and Advocacy News



SPRAWL IS BAD FOR FORESTS AND STREAMS: Backyard trees offer critical wildlife habitat. In addition, neighborhood trees provide excellent stormwater management, shade streets and houses, and deliver health benefits to people. And while Nature Forward favors protection for individual trees, intact forests are even more important to nature in our region. When housing and retail sprawl occurs in less-developed areas, that new development often cuts down intact forests. Intact forests support a wide variety of wildlife and keep area watersheds healthy. Even small-scale development that removes intact forests can quickly tip our watersheds toward poorer water quality and reduced biodiversity. Despite some successful reforestation and tree canopy planting around the metro area, we have lost total forest cover in urban, suburban and rural areas of the Capital region. Nature Forward advocates for aggressive shade and street tree planting in urban zones. We work to preserve tree canopy in habitat corridors, including stream valley parks, that crisscross suburban landscapes. And in the farther-out regions, we work to fight sprawl, including new highways, poorly planned subdivisions in rural areas like Ten Mile Creek, and other forms of development that reduce intact forest cover and negatively impact watersheds and water quality across our region. Sign up for our Action Alert Network and join us to speak up for the trees.

Photo above shows sprawl development in Fauquier County, VA. Credit Will Parsons/Chesapeake Bay Program. See this full story on our blog at <https://natureforward.org/sprawl-is-bad-for-forests-and-streams>.

Washington, DC

Oversight and Performance Hearings: Nature Forward will submit comments on the Department of Public Works, the Commission on Climate Change & Resiliency, and the DC Housing Authority.

Healthy Homes for All Act: This bill provides a program with financial incentives and technical assistance to increase the number of low-income households that enjoy building electrification. Nature Forward supports the reintroduction of this bill by Councilmember Charles Allen. Stay tuned for Action Alerts and send in your own comments in support of building electrification!

Bird Safe Buildings: The Migratory Wildlife Protection Act of 2022 has been signed by Mayor Muriel Bowser. Read Nature Forward's comments in support of the bill designed to reduce bird building collisions.

Maryland

Montgomery County's Forest Conservation

Law: Montgomery County is reviewing Forest Conservation Bill 25-22. We testified on February 7 in favor of stronger forest protections. The Forest Conservation Bill is headed to a Transportation & Environment workgroup hearing. We will keep you updated on the new ways you can speak up for the trees. Read about our work on strengthening the County's Forest Conservation Law at: <https://tinyurl.com/4v6jdkhj>

Get involved & learn more! Sign up for our Action Alert Network and read all our latest posts at <https://natureforward.org/conservation-blog>.

Virginia

Watching out for Fairfax County development

proposals: We are keeping an eye on 70 development proposals in the initial phase of the Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) Process. Nature Forward will be commenting on these proposals in partnership with others in the Fairfax Healthy Communities network.

Fairfax County's budget will be released in late February and we'll need residents to write comments and testify to help fund climate initiatives. Stay tuned for action alerts!

Cinder Bed Road Bikeway threatens globally rare habitats at the Newington Conservation Site. Nature Forward is fighting to save the site from further negative impacts.

Volunteer with Nature Forward Conservation on Advocacy & Policy!

Our Conservation Advocacy volunteer corps meets bimonthly for training, idea sharing, and new assignments. Join our next meeting to discuss current policy priorities, successes, challenges and ways to get involved in DC, Maryland and Virginia. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, April 13 at 3:30 pm at Woodend Nature Sanctuary in Chevy Chase, MD. RSVP at NOW! Email jamoni.overby@natureforward.org for more info.

Advocacy Workshops

Register at natureforward.org/conservation/training. Members \$20; nonmembers \$30. Complimentary registration available, contact eliza.cava@natureforward.org. Free for Advocacy & Policy volunteers. Instructor: Eliza Cava (at Woodend)

Environmental & Conservation Advocacy 101

Wednesday, April 26, 2-4:30 pm

What's your environmental issue? Our highly engaging, interactive workshop will cover the following key advocacy skills: starting with and communicating your WHY, connecting environmental solutions with human needs, and introducing campaigning skills that allow everyone to bring their strengths to the table.

Nature Forward attended the Virginia Conservation Network Lobby Day in Richmond on January 31.



It's General Assembly Time!

In spring, Nature Forward works with statewide partners to track bills in the Maryland and Virginia General Assembly. We support environmental budgets in DC and the surrounding counties and testify at agency oversight hearings. Follow our work on advocacy priorities on our Conservation Blog.

Conservation Café

Join us for inspiring conversations on nature conservation topics. Your \$10-15 registration fee supports our Conservation Program! Complimentary registrations available, contact eliza.cava@natureforward.org. See detailed descriptions and register at natureforward.org/conservation-cafe.

March

No Café. Instead, please attend the Taking Nature Black Conference March 8-11! More details on page 21.

April and May

Check our website at natureforward.org/conservation-cafe. We are planning our first in-person Café since 2020. Announcements will be made online and via email.



Connecting Youth to Nature

Nature Preschool



Nature Preschool enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year is now open! Our half-day program accepts children ages 3-5 years old for a year full of nature-based, hands-on educational experiences for young children. Building on children's inherent curiosity about the world around them, our teachers incorporate science, math, literacy, and the arts to explore seasonal occurrences and natural history throughout the 40 acres at Woodend Nature Sanctuary.

Do you have a little one under 3 years-old? Join us for the 2023-2024 Acorns program! This one-hour program is designed for our youngest learners to explore Woodend once a week with their favorite adult for an entire year. Please visit natureforward.org/nature-preschool to review available sessions and enroll. Additional inquiries can be sent to Rose Brusaferro at rose.brusaferro@natureforward.org.

Family Walks at Woodend

First Saturday of each month (9-10 am)
Members \$12 per family, nonmembers \$20

Join Nature Forward naturalists and educators on a leisurely walk through the habitats at Woodend. Explore the wonders of trees, meadows, streams, insects, birds, and everything Woodend has to offer! Limited to 10 families. Register at natureforward.org/woodend-tours.

We also have **NATURE BACKPACKS** available! Visit our Nature Shop to check out a backpack (ID required) that will have tools and activities you and your family can use to explore nature at Woodend Sanctuary. Backpacks are free for check-out in the shop but must be returned by 3 pm. Shop hours are currently M-Sa from 11 am-3 pm.



NATURE-THEMED BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Create lasting memories for your child
and also support nature conservation and education







Explore Woodend Nature Sanctuary with a naturalist and enjoy nature-themed activities and games all outdoors!



For details, visit
natureforward.org/birthday-parties



Connecting Youth to Nature

Enjoy the wonders of Spring at Woodend!

Spring Break Camp

April 3 to April 6, 2023
8:45 am - 3:00 pm

Grades K-5

Catch frogs in the pond,
hike to Rock Creek,
& get your hands dirty
in our Learning Garden!

Cost:

\$370 for Members
\$400 for Non-members

*Extended camp available
until 5:15 pm for \$100*



nature
forward

Register now at
natureforward.org/spring-break-camps

Questions? Contact denis.perez@natureforward.org

Summer Camp 2023

Registration for Summer Camp is open!

Limited spots available in K and 1st/2nd grade camps.
Second session of 5th/6th grade Outdoor Skills added.

Visit www.natureforward.org/summer-camps for more info.

We will also be offering extended camp for K camps until
3:45 pm and for Grades 1-6 until 5 pm.

Limited spots available.

Questions? Email pam.oves@natureforward.org.

Unplug and EXPLORE

at Woodend Nature
Sanctuary

DID YOU KNOW?

Playing in nature
helps children with

cognitive development

Creativity • Problem Solving

emotional growth

Stress Reduction • Self-Confidence

socialization

Cooperation • Self-Awareness

To find programs and events that
connect your family to nature,
visit natureforward.org

and click Children & Families on
our homepage!



Children & Families

Our youth programs include
nature preschool, summer
camp, and much more.

[Learn More](#)



nature
forward

Connecting people and nature
in the Capital Region



Children in Nature Photos



Preschoolers in our Nature Preschool's Saplings program enjoy a day of fun in the leaves at Woodend Nature Sanctuary.





Youngsters had a good time of hands-on exploration during a Woodend tour in partnership with Montgomery Housing Partnership.



Children and families held a Preschool Winter Celebration at Woodend Nature Sanctuary in December. All photos by Ben Israel.

Adult Nature Programs

Wild places are closer than you think. ®

ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR ADULT PROGRAMS

- Visit www.natureforward.org/nature-classes
- All changes/cancellations/transfers must be handled through the EE office.
- Questions? Call Pam at 301-652-9188 x16 or email pam.oves@natureforward.org

Urban Watershed Restoration Challenges - the Foundry Branch

Saturday, March 4 (9 am-1 pm)

Leaders: Neal Fitzpatrick and Bill Yeaman

Suggested donation: \$5-\$20

The Foundry Branch begins near the Tenley Metro Station and flows south into the Potomac River, just west of Georgetown. We will look at the natural features of the stream valley park and discuss long-term stormwater impacts and needed infrastructure and stream rehabilitation. We will walk the approximate 3 mile stream valley from north to south, to look at and discuss past problems and future plans for sewer infrastructure and stream rehabilitation. Representatives from the National Park Service, and DC Water, have been invited. We will meet at the intersection of Wisconsin Ave and Van Ness ST next to the McDonalds. The walk will end at the C & O Canal in Georgetown. Participants can return to Tenley on a Wisconsin Ave metrobus and/or make plans for lunch in Georgetown.



Woodcock Watch

Saturday, March 4 (5:15-7:30 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

In his *Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold described the mating display of the American Woodcock as a “sky dance.” Announcing its presence with nasal “peents”, the male woodcock ascends high in the sky at dusk. To the accompaniment of a constant twittering, it circles, then plummets back to earth in a series of zigzag movements, wings whistling. On this field program to a natural area in upper Montgomery County, we’ll hope to be lucky enough to catch a performance of this seasonal drama.

COVID Policy for Outdoor Adult Programs

Masking is optional for participants in Nature Forward programs. If you test positive for COVID, you may participate in Nature Forward activities after you have a negative antigen/home test no sooner than 5 days after the first positive test. Twelve will be our usual group size maximum, unless an outing’s focus and/or field conditions call for a smaller group—or allow for a bit larger group. All of the policies above are subject to change.



Winter Walk Along the Canal

Wednesday, March 8 (10 am-12:30 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Join this final session in our Winter Canal Walk series. Walking upriver from Carderock, we'll keep our eyes and ears open for over-wintering wildlife, practice botany skills, and enjoy the expansive views along the Potomac River which this season provides. We're certain to notice signs of spring's advances—both in plant life and birdsong.

Early March at Cape May

Saturday, March 11 (9 am) to Sunday, March 12 (4 pm)

Leader: Mark Garland

Members \$120; nonmember \$168

Cape May, at New Jersey's southern tip, is a magnet for bird life at all seasons. March brings a mix of winter birds and the earliest northbound migrants. Like many places, the weather in March is quite variable, and we could experience pleasant, early spring conditions—or wintry chill and gales! Whatever the weather, we'll follow trails through forest, field, and wetland habitat, along with walks on one or more beaches. Gannets, loons, and scoters are often abundant just offshore at this season. If we catch a warm spell, we may hear frogs calling at dusk, and if it's calm, we can watch for displaying woodcocks at the same time. *Overnight options include hotels, B&Bs, owner rentals, and campgrounds around Cape May which are booked by participants themselves.*

Geology Walk at the Glendening Preserve

Saturday, March 11 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Joe Marx

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

The Glendenning Nature Preserve is a patch of former farmland located near the Patuxent River, about 25 miles east of downtown DC in Anne Arundel County. Glendening's vegetation varies markedly from place to place, reflecting differences in soil and drainage. Those differences arise in turn from the geological history of the locale which began as marine deposits on the continental shelf. Later, the area was lifted above sea level and subjected to cycles of erosion and subaerial deposition. Finally, winds generated by the Pleistocene glaciers to our north spread a belt of wind-blown sand over the older layers. All will be demonstrated and explained during an easy, two-mile walk on the preserve's *natural surface trails*.

Winter Birding Series: Occoquan Bay NWR

Sunday, March 12 (8:30-11 am)

Leader: Paul Pisano

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Our Winter Birding Series concludes with a walk at Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge near Woodbridge, VA. Overwintering species of birds and early spring migrants will get our attention on this field trip aimed at beginning to mid-level birders. *Our explorations will be on mostly-level natural surface trails which may be uneven, muddy, and/or slippery.*

Want to Get Started in Birding?

Saturday, March 18 (8:30-11:30 am)

Leader: Mark England

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

If you're curious about birds and bird watching but don't know where to begin, this "how to get started" outing is for you. No experience required! The goal of our field morning, which visits Black Hill and/or Little Bennett Regional Parks in upper Montgomery County, is to begin developing the ability to find, study, and identify birds in their natural environment. Birding tools such as field guides, binoculars, and other resources will also be discussed.



Knock, Knock

Sunday, March 19 (8:30-11 am)

Leaders: Pam Oves and Stephanie Mason

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

As winter winds down, join us for a bird walk through the varied habitats of Hughes Hollow as we focus on the 7 species of woodpeckers frequenting local woodlands and wetlands this time of year. Of course, we'll also look and listen for all birds we may encounter as we explore a couple of locations here. *Our walk of up to several miles on natural surface trails (which may be uneven, muddy and/or slippery) may move at a bit faster pace than our typical bird walks. The official name of our field site, near Poolesville, MD, is McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area.*

Adult Nature Programs

Spring Saunters Along the Canal

Wednesdays (10 am-12:30 pm)

Section A: March 22—Carderock

Section B: April 5—Widewater

Section C: April 19—Violettes Lock

Section D: May 3—Riley's Lock

Section E: May 17—Pennyfield Lock

Section F: May 31—Swain's Lock

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Each walk members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Enjoy these leisurely walks on the Towpath along close-in portions of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The focus of our walks, starting from different locations, will be the general natural history of the varied habitats along the Potomac River and Canal. We'll proceed at a slow "naturalist's shuffle," as we experience the wondrous unfolding of spring. We'll stop often to observe birds, wildflowers and other plants, butterflies, snakes, turtles, and whatever else we might find.

Spring in the Parks

8:30 am-12:30 pm

A Sunday, March 26 – Watkins Regional Park, MD

B. Wednesday, April 12 – Riverbend Park, VA

C. Saturday, April 22 – Rachel Carson Conservation Park, MD

D. Saturday, May 13 – Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, DC

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Each walk members \$35; nonmembers \$49

Join our Senior Naturalist for these broad-based nature hikes in four of our region's close-by protected areas. On each outing, we'll experience the dramatic seasonal changes in the natural world ignited by spring's longer hours of daylight and warming temperatures. We'll search for showy wildflowers, the unfolding leaves of trees and shrubs, and all manner of spring wildlife activity. Be prepared to walk up to 2.5 miles on natural surface trails which may be rocky, uneven, and/or possibly muddy/slippery. *Hikes B and C include uphill/downhill, with the steepest walking on B.*

Spring Early Birds Series

A: Saturday, March 25 (8-11 am): Piscataway Park, MD (Cathy Stragar)

B: Sunday, April 2 (8-11 am): Blue Mash Nature Trail, MD (Len Bisson)

C: Wednesday, April 5 (8:15-11 am): National Arboretum, DC (Paul Pisano)

D: Friday, April 14 (7:30-10:30 am): Huntley Meadows Park, VA (Anne Cianni and Mike Bowen)

E: Saturday, April 22 (7:30-10:30 am): Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, DC (Lisa Shannon and Rob Hilton)

F: Wednesday, April 26 (7-10 am): Wheaton Regional Park, MD (Anne Cianni and Mike Bowen)

G: Sunday, April 30 (7-10 am): Governor's Bridge Natural Area, MD (Liz Guertin)

H: Sunday, May 7 (7-10 am): Hughes Hollow/McKee Beshers WMA, MD (Len Bisson)

I: Saturday, May 13 (7-10 am): Kingman Island Park, DC (Lisa Shannon and Rob Hilton)

J: Wednesday, May 17 (7-10 am): Little Bennett Regional Park, MD (Mark England)

K: Sunday, May 21 (7-10 am): Occoquan Bay NWR, VA (Paul Pisano)

Each walk members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Immerse yourself in the phenomenon of spring migration with these field programs at nearby parks. Our walks are aimed at beginning and intermediate birders for whom the spring pulse of bird activity can often be overwhelming. We'll search for both resident and migrating birds by sight and sound. As we develop skills for finding birds in the field, we'll also discuss the arrival sequence of spring travelers—and the departure of overwintering species. *Our field trips are undertaken on natural surface trails and/or boardwalks which may be muddy, uneven, and/or slippery. Some mild uphill/downhill is possible. Participants provide their own binoculars.*



Photo by Jane Gamble

Warbler Warm-up

Thursday, March 30 (7-9:30 pm)

Leader: Mike Bowen

Members \$26; nonmembers \$34

It's time to start brushing up on the voices and field marks of the lovely and soon-to-be-arriving warblers. Even for the most seasoned birders, finding and properly IDing them as they arrive or pass through between late March and the end of May can be a real challenge. Since we all need an annual refresher, we've enlisted the help of one of our most experienced bird trip leaders. He will use both photos and recordings to present the general arrival sequence of warbler species in our region. Our tutorial will be presented indoors at our Woodend Sanctuary.

Early Spring Wildflower Hike

Friday, March 31 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Beat the winter blues on this search for the earliest spring wildflowers in the woods and bottomlands along the Potomac near Carderock Recreation Area, just outside the Beltway near the American Legion Bridge. We'll look for the greening leaves, swelling buds, and (fingers crossed) unfolding flowers of species such as Harbinger of Spring, Early Saxifrage, Spring Beauty, and Bloodroot. *NOTE: our roughly 1.5 mile hike will include some uneven, rocky, hilly, and likely muddy stretches on natural surface trails.*

Nature Photography Basics

A: Sunday, April 2 (8-11:30 am) Carderock, MD

B: Thursday, May 4 (8:30 am-Noon) Brighton Dam, MD

Leader: Liz Guertin

Each session: members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Join Maryland Master Naturalist and award-winning nature photographer Liz Guertin for a journey into nature photography basics: learning to compose and achieve the best shots possible in the outdoors. All cameras are welcome—including your phone! Liz will cover everything from exposure & composition to the craft & ethics of nature photography. Our venue for Section A will be the Carderock Recreation Area, along the C&O Canal and the banks of the Potomac, where we will focus on native spring flowers, leaves & ferns unfurling, stands of bright skunk cabbage, and more. Section B's destination at Brighton Dam in Howard County, MD features flowering azalea bushes as far as the eye can see. We'll enjoy a spectrum of pinks, whites, reds, ivories and purples with the beautiful Triadelphia Reservoir in the background. We'll also keep our eyes open for native spring flowers & birds.

Bluebells and Budbreak at Boundary Bridge

Friday, April 7 (9 am-1 pm)

Leader: Melanie Choukas-Bradley

Members \$40; nonmembers \$49

We're delighted that the author of the award-winning book, *A Year in Rock Creek Park* and the critically acclaimed, *City of Trees*, will offer her 17th year of Nature Forward walks in the country's oldest urban national park. Under her expert guidance, you will witness the annual floral miracle of Virginia bluebells, spring beauties, and trout lilies in the floodplain forest, while the leaves of tulip tree and American beech begin to spill from their buds. We'll hope to catch bloodroot, wild ginger, cut-leafed toothwort and other blooming spring ephemerals as we explore both floodplain and upland woods at a leisurely pace. Time permitting, we'll do a bit of "forest bathing." Throughout, we'll keep our eyes and ears open for belted kingfishers, wood ducks, migrant songbirds, and tiny spring peeper frogs. *Expect some uphill/downhill walking on natural surface trails which may be muddy and/or slippery.*

Beginning Wildflower ID

Saturday, April 8 (9 am-12:30 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

During April, spring wildflowers in the Washington area are abundant and dazzling! On this field class, based in the just-outside-the Beltway Carderock Recreation Area, we'll explore several short trails between the C&O Canal and the Potomac River. We'll work on developing the observational skills which are key to learning to recognize and ID wildflowers. As we're learning the names and niches of species such as Virginia bluebells, dutchman's breeches, toad trillium, and more, we'll take time to just enjoy their beauty. *Expect some rocky, uneven, and muddy terrain on the natural surface trails we'll use.*



Adult Nature Programs

The Magic of Early Spring Woods

Friday, April 14 (10 am-12:30 pm)

Leaders: Marney Bruce and Anne DeNovo

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

A stroll through an early spring woods in our region can be magical—with the colors and forms of unfolding leaves and stems of trees and shrubs catching the eye. In bottomland woods, there's the added delight of spring wildflowers underfoot. Our leaders can't wait to share one of their favorite places for this seasonal wonderment: the Monocacy Aqueduct on the C&O Canal Towpath near Dickerson, MD. Carpets of spring blooms and leafing-out trees will be celebrated as the group walks upriver—and then back—for a total of 2-3 miles. *The Towpath is wide and flat, but may be muddy and rutted.*

River Herring Return to Rock Creek

Saturday, April 15 (9 am-1 pm)

Leaders: Neal Fitzpatrick and Bill Yeaman

Suggested donation: \$5-\$20

Tom Horton describes the annual Rock Creek migration of river herring in Bay Country: "No finer parade, or one more unappreciated, ever swung through this capital than the quicksilver legions of *Alosa pseudoharengus*, the common river herring." On our 23rd(!) annual herring walk, we hope to view the spawning run and discuss opportunities for restoring fish migration to Rock Creek. We will meet at the Cleveland Park metro and walk the adjacent stream valley to visit the fish ladder at Peirce Mill. We'll continue south to Klinge Valley, just north of the National Zoo, and walk the hiker biker trail to our end point at Connecticut Ave and Devonshire Pl. which is a short walk back to the Cleveland Park metro station.



Georgetown Geology Loop

Sunday, April 16 (8:30 am-12:30 pm)

Leader: Joe Marx

Members: \$35; nonmembers \$49

The Georgetown neighborhood in Washington rests firmly on a mass of ancient granite, surrounded by several other types and ages of bedrock. Our hike will cover about 5 miles—through wooded parkland and along city streets. The terrain varies from easy to moderate, with hills being the biggest challenge. During our hike, we will visit the edge of the Coastal Plain, three gorges, the Piedmont upland, and a major fault zone. Not bad for a morning's stroll around town. *The pace set and distance covered on our geology forays will be faster and farther than our usual "naturalist's shuffle."*

The Secret Lives of Wildflowers

Sunday, April 16 (2-5 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

They're lovely to behold. But their beauty belies the scrappy, survival strategies of our region's short-lived spring wildflowers. Coping with cold temperatures, species such as Trout Lily, Spring Beauties, and Dutchman's Breeches race to complete their flowering and fruiting cycles before the brief window of spring sunlight is shut out by the unfolding forest canopy. Our Senior Naturalist spills some of their secrets in a roughly 1.5-mile round trip walk along the C&O Canal Towpath from Violettes Lock.

Blooms in the Bottomland

Friday, April 21 (10 am-12:30 pm)

Leaders: Marney Bruce and Anne DeNovo

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Nothing could be finer during the last half of April than a morning stroll through the bottomlands along the Potomac River. By this time in the season's unfolding, spring beauties, golden ragwort Virginia bluebells and more add bright color to the forest floor. Overhead, trees such as maples, elms, and cottonwood unspool their flowers and leaves. Our route—*mostly level, but possibly muddy and/or slippery*—will follow the River Trail from Great Falls, MD. We will move upriver along the floodplain, then return along the C&O Canal Towpath for *a total hike of a little over 2 miles.*

Introduction to Field Sketching

Friday, April 28 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Jen Brown

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

We're happy to offer this introductory workshop where you'll learn how to create colored sketches using a limited number of watercolor pencils. This approach is especially useful if you want to do field sketching as you only need to carry three or four pencils, a water brush, and paper in your backpack. Nature Forward member and artist Jen Brown will guide you through the following techniques—color mixing, washes, and shading. This tutorial will be based at our Woodend Sanctuary where our native plant gardens will offer many eye-catching spring blooms. Depending on the weather, we'll spend some (or most) of our time under an outdoor tented space. *A list of suggested materials for this program will be sent two weeks in advance.*

May Day Along the River

Monday, May 1 (9 am-2:30 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$35; nonmembers \$49

We'll embrace all things spring on this celebrational hike along the Potomac River's protected uplands and bottomlands—a 4-mile stretch of diverse habitats that we return to frequently. We'll keep our eyes and ears open for birds, butterflies, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and more as we hike upriver along the C&O Canal from the Widewater access to Great Falls Park, MD—and back. *Note: This hike will move faster and farther than our usual naturalists' shuffle field trips.*

Geology at Woodend

Thursday, May 4 (1-5 pm)

Leader: Joe Marx

Members \$35; nonmembers \$49

Our Woodend Sanctuary sits firmly on the hard rock of Maryland's Piedmont Upland. The woods and lawns of today, however, hide evidence of a tumultuous history extending back half a billion years. We'll hike about 2 miles on woodland paths within the Sanctuary as well as neighboring Rock Creek Park, examining the topography and underlying bedrock to see what they can tell us about Woodend's geologic story. *The walk, sometimes uphill or downhill over rocky or muddy terrain, will move faster at a faster pace than our usual naturalist's shuffle.*

Spring Warbler Walk

Wednesday, May 10 (7-11 am)

Leaders: Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon

Members \$35; nonmembers \$49

It's high season for warblers!!!! With more than 30 species of these winged travelers moving into and through the Mid-Atlantic during spring migration, it can be challenging to find and properly identify them. Our leaders, both long-time birders in the DMV, will aim this teaching field trip at beginning to mid-level birders. The leisurely walk along the C&O Canal will begin at Pennyfield Lock and then move upriver by car caravan to Riley's Lock.



Spring on Wheels Along the Potomac

Thursday, May 11 (8:30 am-2 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$35; nonmembers \$49

Spring has sprung and the C&O Canal's Towpath along the Potomac River is one of the finest places in the DC-metro area to experience this season's richness. In order to cover more territory and visit more habitats, we'll use bikes to explore the stretch from Swain's Lock to Blockhouse Point, a nearly 9 mile round-trip ride. We'll dismount often to look for spring wildflowers, butterflies and other insects, and reptiles and amphibians—all the while keeping an eye and ear open for spring bird activity. *Bring your own bike.*

The Trees of Spring at Berma Road

Friday, May 12 (10 am-12:30 pm)

Leader: Marney Bruce

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

By early May, most of the trees in our region are sporting the new growing season's leaves. Some early-blooming species are already bearing developing seed containers while a few late bloomers are biding their time. Join our tree-hugging leader for an introduction to and appreciation of the large trees lining the flat Berma Road trail, which parallels the Towpath above the Widewater stretch of the Canal.

Adult Nature Programs

Appalachian Spring

Sunday, May 14 (9 am-2:30 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$35; nonmembers \$49

Spring rains, warming temperatures, and longer hours of daylight ignite a great burst of life in the valleys and ridges of the Appalachian Mountains. One of the best ways to explore this seasonal richness is along the Appalachian Trail. Our Senior Naturalist leads this search for spring blooms, butterflies, and breeding bird activity amongst the rocky terrain of Maryland's South Mountain. Starting at Gathland State Park near Frederick, we'll hike along the AT for around 1.5 to 2 miles before turning around and retracing our steps. *The AT here is rocky and uneven—and there will be some moderately strenuous uphill/downhill. We'll stop often to observe natural phenomena, but will then pick up the pace to try and cover the distance stated.*



Fern Basics

Thursday, May 18 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Kit Sheffield

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

What makes a plant a fern? And what are the most common ferns in our area? Walk the moderate trails of Riverbend Park--home to at least fifteen species of these ancient plants--with a naturalist who will share the answers. Along the way, he'll also help you learn some of the common characteristics that you'll be able to use to identify ferns on your own. *This park is located along the Potomac River near Great Falls, VA. Be prepared for some uphill/downhill on this hike of several miles on trails which might be muddy, uneven, and/or slippery.*

On the Wing in Late Spring

Saturday, May 20 (8:30 am-2 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Members \$35; nonmembers \$49

As the pace of spring's dramatic changes in nature slows down, join our exploration of the field, forest, and freshwater tidal habitats along the western shore of the Patuxent River where it is protected as the Jug Bay Natural Area. We'll keep eyes open and ears attuned to things on the wing: birds, butterflies, dragonflies, bees, and other insects. Of course, we'll pay attention to the plant company these winged things keep, as well. *Be prepared to walk between 3-4 miles on uneven but mostly flat natural surface trails which may be muddy/slippery.*

Mountain Laurel Meander

Friday, May 26 (10 am-12:30 pm)

Leaders: Marney Bruce and Anne DeNovo

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

As spring gives way to summer, enjoy blooming Mountain Laurel and other plants of the oak/hickory woodlands along the Rachel Greenway Trail adjacent to Northwest Branch Creek in upper Silver Spring, MD. *Be prepared for uneven and rocky natural surface trails with some gentle uphill/downhill stretches. Depending on recent rains, there may also be several small stream crossings.*

Birding-by-Ear Walk

Saturday, May 27 (7-11 am)

Leader: Mark England

Members \$35; nonmembers \$49

Do you hear what I hear? The various songs and calls of birds can help enthusiasts find and ID species, especially when the landscape is fully leafed out. But for beginning and mid-level birders, interpreting this wide variety of voices can be confusing and frustrating. Our leader will help you learn to listen for and begin to recognize some of the species breeding in our region. He'll also discuss the upsides/downsides of using Voice ID apps. *The walk will split field time between the Blue Mash Nature Trail and nearby Rachel Carson Conservation Park.* This walk is intentionally scheduled after the migratory pulse of through species in order to focus on local breeders—both resident and migratory.

Nature Forward Conferences



BELONGING: ENGAGED & EMPOWERED

Online March 8 - 9 • In Person March 10

Silver Spring Civic Center, Silver Spring, MD



Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome
White House
Council on
Environmental
Quality (CEQ)

Rue Mapp
Outdoor
Afro

Alan Spears
National Parks
Conservation
Association

Dr. Mamie Parker
Trailblazing
Conservationist

**Tamara Toles
O'Laughlin**
Climate
Critical
Earth

Caroline Brewer
Author &
Literacy
Activist

LaTreice V. Branson, MFA
Artist &
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Scan QR code for details and registration

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Natural History Field Studies



This unique continuing education program for adults offers a comprehensive and stimulating view of our region's natural history and conservation issues. Taught at the college freshman level, these evening courses are open to anyone 18 years of age or older—nature professionals and beginning enthusiasts alike. A Certificate of Accomplishment in Natural History is awarded to those choosing to complete a required curriculum of 39 Continuing Education Units (CEUs), but anyone can enroll in any class for the sheer pleasure of learning.

Classes are currently being offered via online Zoom sessions with in-person field trips. For a complete list of the classes in the NHFS program, plus instructor bios, visit natureforward.org/nhfs.

Spring Wildflowers: Identification and Ecology

NATH7135E, 3 CEUs

Class night and time: Mondays, 6-8pm

Class meetings: March 20-May 22 (no class April 3)

Class Location: Lectures online via Zoom

Field trip dates: Saturday, April 1, 10 am-12 pm:

Woodend Sanctuary; Saturday, April 15, 9 am-12 pm: Carderock;

Sunday, May 7, 9 am-1 pm: Thompson Wildlife Management Area

Members \$350, nonmembers \$400

Instructor: Clare Walker



Follow the changing of the season this spring as we look closely at wildflowers blooming in the Mid-Atlantic each week. The class will include field identification during different life stages, plant family relationships and habitat preferences so you can get outside and hunt for flowers (record flower observations in an optional iNaturalist class project where we will look at the strengths and weaknesses of the app at identification). Classes will include the chance to work in groups to identify flowers. Explore the relationships between the plants and their pollinators and seed dispersers to gain an understanding of each flower's role in the ecosystem. Spring wildflowers deserve our admiration for their incredible adaptations to overcome seasonal vagaries from low temperatures to short growing seasons. The field trips feature two of the area's best wildflower locations as well as a session to learn the use of guides and apps for identification. Registration closes March 15.

Registration Info for Natural History Field Studies Classes

Registration is handled completely online by Nature Forward, formerly the Audubon Naturalist Society, through our adult program registration system. Register for Natural History Field Studies classes at natureforward.org/nhfs.

Questions? Contact pam.oves@natureforward.org.

Refund Policy for NHFS classes: Nature Forward will provide you with a refund (minus a \$25 administration fee) if you cancel your enrollment no later than the day following the first class lecture. After this date, no refunds will be provided. In the event of a course cancellation due to insufficient enrollment or other events beyond our control, we will notify you as soon as possible and provide you with a full refund.

Important Registration Dates: If minimum student enrollment is not reached by one week before the scheduled start date, the course may be cancelled. Please see class descriptions for registration cut-off date.

Find required reading lists and instructor bios at
www.natureforward.org/nhfs.

Introduction to Botany

NATH7120, 3 CEUs

Class night and time: Tuesdays, 6-8 pm

Class meetings: March 21-May 23

Class Location: Lectures online via Zoom

Field trip dates: Saturday, April 1, 10 am-1 pm:

Patuxent River Park Jug Bay Natural Area; Saturday,

April 15, 10 am-1 pm: Woodend Nature Sanctuary;

Saturday, April 29, 9 am-12 pm: Thompson Wildlife

Management; Saturday, May 13, 10 am-1 pm: Buck Lodge Community Park

Members \$380, nonmembers \$430

Instructor: Bradley Simpson

Learn the basics of botany by exploring the evolution of plants through taxonomy. From club mosses to ferns to conifers and flowering plants, students will explore the various characteristics that define each group as unique. Our hands-on field trips will give you the opportunity to experience all these plants live and investigate their features further by seeing trailing lycopods, the unfurling of polypodiopsida, the cones of gymnosperms, the flowers of monocots, and the leaf veins of eudicots. Registration closes March 15.



Introduction to Ornithology

NATH7118E, 3 CEUs

Class night and time: Wednesdays 6-8 pm

Class meetings: March 22-May 24

Class Location: Lectures online via Zoom

Field trip dates: Saturday, April 1; Saturday, April 29;

Saturday, May 20

Members \$300, nonmembers \$330

Instructor: Gemma Radko

Learn about birds and their unique characteristics. Study bird anatomy, plumage, evolution, classification, distribution, and much more. Field trips emphasize field identification, bird song, and other behavior. If minimum student enrollment is not reached by one week before the scheduled start date, the course may be canceled. Registration closes March 15.



Photo by Jane Gamble

Find details on Summer NHFS classes, which start in June, at natureforward.org/nhfs in April:

Chesapeake Bay Ecosystems

3 CEUs

Thursdays, 6-8 pm

Instructor: Terry McTigue

Late Summer Wildflowers: The Aster Family

1.5 CEUs

Wednesdays, 6-8 pm

Instructor: Clare Walker



@gonatureforward



Geology at Great Falls, MD

A brisk but sunny winter hike at Great Falls (MD) showcased some breathtaking sights. In January, Geologist Joe Marx led participating adventurers from the Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center to the falls overlook and adjacent areas along the towpath. During the nearly two-mile excursion, Joe explained how the bedrock of the Great Falls area formed hundreds of millions of years ago in massive tectonic collisions. As participants viewed the amazing landscapes and wildlife, Joe also described how the waxing and waning of the continental glacier led to the much more recent creation of the falls. Photos by Ben Israel.

Find your next outdoor learning adventure at natureforward.org/nature-classes.





Conservation Outreach Programs

Nature Forward works to reach families in their communities—near where they live, work, and go to school—and connect them to nearby nature through engaging, hands-on activities and trainings. Check out photos of the experiences and projects we are working on with community leaders, partner organizations, and of course, empowered residents. Learn more about these programs at natureforward.org/community-outreach.

Earth Day Opportunity: Planting Rain Gardens in Edmonston, Maryland

Do you have plans for Saturday, April 15?

Join others as they participate in a town-sponsored family-friendly Earth Day festival by planting new rain gardens in Edmonston, Maryland.

SAVE THE DATE! We'll post more information in March.

Oportunidad del Día de la Tierra: plantar jardines de lluvia en Edmonston, Maryland

¿Tienes planes para el sábado 15 de abril?

Únete a otros mientras participan en un festival familiar por el Día de la Tierra plantando nuevos jardines de lluvia en Edmonston, Maryland.

¡Guarda la fecha! Publicaremos más información en marzo.

Our **Water Protectors of Little Hunting Creek** 2022 programming wrapped up in Fairfax County, VA with a fun event on December 3 where families learned about pollution and what happens to our streams when it rains. Programming is hibernating for the winter and events will start up again this spring.



Families used the interactive Enviroscapes model to learn about how rain carries pollution to our local streams.

Don't Pollute Youth Empowerment and Litter Project:

Since December 2022, in partnership with CHEER, Defensores de la Cuenca, and Friends of Sligo Creek, Nature Forward has been leading bi-weekly watershed education trainings for 18 Latinx/e high school students at the Long Branch, MD Community Center. The students will continue to learn about the importance of trees to watersheds and human health and wellbeing. Later in the spring, students will plan their own action project to reduce litter in and around their neighborhood.



In January students conducted *E. coli*/bacterial and pH testing with our partners from the Anacostia Riverkeeper at Long Branch Stream.

Stream Science

Coming Soon: Learning Alongside Stream Monitoring

Nature Forward received a Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) grant to engage the public by hosting learning stations at some of our Maryland water quality monitoring (WQM) sites.

Often, when monitoring their streams, WQM volunteers are approached by park visitors who are curious about what they are doing. The volunteers cannot dedicate as much time as they would like to meeting and greeting passers-by. Recognizing that face-to-face interactions are very effective for conveying our stream health messages, Nature Forward will pilot a series of community engagement learning stations alongside monitoring teams at five Maryland stream sites.

We are recruiting outreach volunteers to run these family-friendly stations. Outreach volunteers will provide a brief overview of water quality monitoring, introduce visitors to WQM teams, explain how and why we catch and count aquatic macroinvertebrates, help people observe and identify these fascinating critters using microscopes, and provide opportunities for getting involved in protecting their local streams.

We will kick off this project over the summer and have already applied for additional grants to expand the pilot to more MD sites and two of our highly visible Washington, DC sites.

Interested in becoming a stream outreach volunteer and helping with this new project?

Please send an email to cleanstreams@natureforward.org.



A neighborhood family dropped by our Northwest Branch monitoring site last October and helped the team for over two hours. The family had learned about our stream monitoring program through the Langley Park Civic Association.



Our WQM volunteers with our visitors.



Stream Science Classes

Our introductory and advanced WQM classes are available online.

For a list of classes and to register, please visit Nature Forward's Water Quality Monitoring page at <https://natureforward.org/water-quality-monitoring>.



facebook.com/GoNatureForward

Youth in Nature Photos

Nature Lessons and Fun in Long Branch

A group of high schoolers in the Long Branch community enjoyed a day of outdoor fun and learning in February. The students are part of a Long Branch outreach initiative called "Don't Pollute." During this outing, led by Nature Forward Board Member Abel Olivo and Svetlana Lopez of the non-profit Defensores de la Cuenca, the teens learned about the connection of "Health and Behaviors." Students participated in a nature hike exploration in the woods next to Long Branch stream.

Christie, Hyojung, Kayla and Valeria from Montgomery Parks talked about the various park renovations. They also shared how students can get involved and make their voices heard on what they want to see in their local parks.

The "Don't Pollute" project is in its fourth year as part of a long-term partnership between Nature Forward, CHEER, and Defensores de la Cuenca. The goal is to develop the next generation of Latinx/e nature stewards around Long Branch stream. Photos by Ben Israel.



Long Branch students explore their neighborhood environment as part of Nature Forward's partnership project called "Don't Pollute."



Abel Olivo, co-founder and executive director of Defensores de la Cuenca and a Nature Forward Board Member, leads students during a February nature education outing in the Long Branch community.



Read more about our Long Branch Community outreach at natureforward.org/long-branch-community-outreach.

Volunteer Corner



For Liz Guertin, volunteering her time and talent to Nature Forward is paying huge dividends



Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Brookside Gardens



Liz Guertin

Liz Guertin, the Columbia, Maryland-based photographer and artist, started her connection to Nature Forward through the Master Naturalist program, which trains adult learners to become nature stewards through science-based education and volunteer service.

"I was getting my start as an artist and wanted a good place to build a relationship with naturalists and scientists to enhance my practice," Liz explains. "My main interest as an artist is to work in the intersection of art and science. My volunteer work as a Master Naturalist at Nature Forward has given me many opportunities to straddle the line, which is absolutely my happiest place."

Master Naturalist graduates donate at least 40 hours of volunteer service annually to support Nature Forward education programs, stewardship of Woodend habitats, and conservation outreach. The contributions of volunteers like Liz are essential for Nature Forward to accomplish its mission to inspire residents of the greater Washington, DC, region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment. However, Liz says she also benefits.

"Unquestionably! Becoming a Master Naturalist is, for me, is an identity," she says. "It means I spend my time learning about ecosystems and species."

Liz, who travels about half the year capturing amazing nature photos, finds that her continued growth as a naturalist fuels her continued growth as an artist.

"My most recent example was the time I spent in Parque Nacional Palo Verde in Costa Rica. Because I'm a naturalist, the staff naturalist on site took me places and showed me things that the average visitor does not get access to," Liz explains. "We spent hours talking about invasive species, the tropical dry forest, walking the trails and roads, identifying birds, and watching fireflies on the wetland. This was a connection I wouldn't have grown without my volunteer work. It's the best connection I've ever had to nature and people."

Keep an eye out for Liz's nature photography classes in Nature Forward's Adult Program offerings. She also teaches everything from wildlife photography to wilderness survival skills to hiking as part of her WildLiz workshops. Learn more at wildliz.com. And if all that's not enough, she's working on a new book.



"I'm writing an invasive species cookbook!," Liz reveals. "Being a Master Naturalist has enhanced my connection to nature, and made my photography and my work on invasive species richer and better. Everything I'm working toward is improved because of the work I do for Nature Forward as a Master Naturalist volunteer."

For questions about the Master Naturalist program or volunteering with Nature Forward, please contact pei.han.orestes@natureforward.org.



Daybreak on the Patapsco River by Liz Guertin

Nature Travel



Nature Forward's Travel program offers our members and friends opportunities to search for wildlife and explore the wonders of nature outside the mid-Atlantic region. Group size is typically limited to 12-15 people, and many trips fill early. Email pam.oves@natureforward.org for complete itineraries and registration information or visit natureforward.org/nature-travel.

Arctic Canada Expedition: Icebergs, Polar Bears, Whales and More

August 3-15, 2024

Leader: Mark Garland

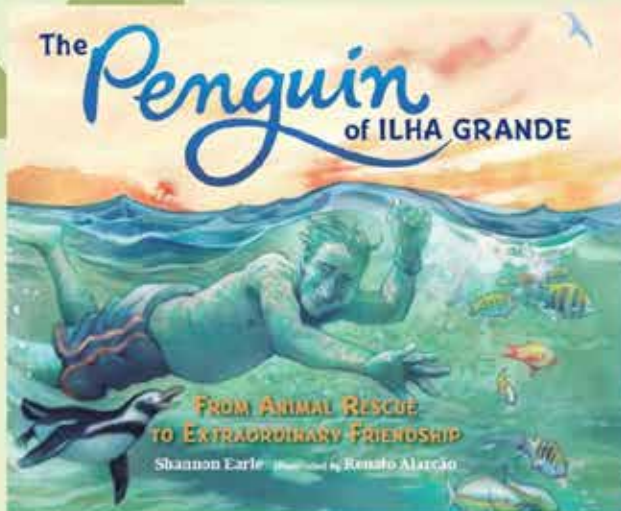
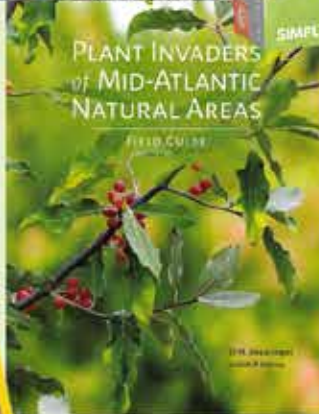
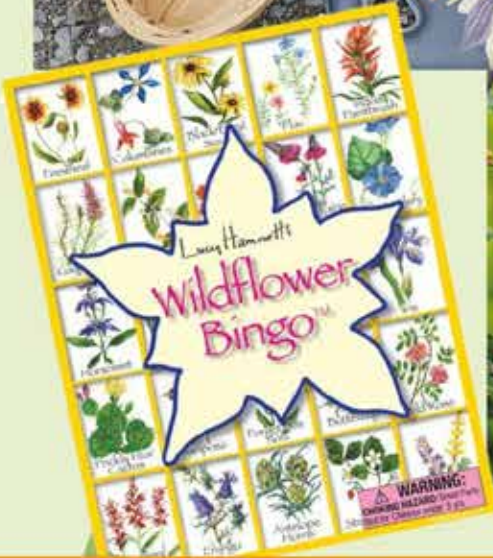
Take a once-in-a-lifetime Arctic cruise in Canada. Cross the Arctic Circle and witness stunning glaciers, islands, and fjords. Take a Zodiac Cruise around towering icebergs, look for polar bears, birds and whales, hike the tundra, and experience Inuit culture. Take in all that the Arctic has to offer in this 12 day expedition. If you are interested in receiving more information when available, email pam.oves@natureforward.org. **PRICES AND ITINERARY COMING SOON!**



Get Your Garden Ready!

With help from the
Woodend Nature Shop

Open Daily 11am-3pm ❌ Closed Sunday



AVAILABLE in
the SHOP!

The Penguin
of Ilha Grande

Written by local
author & educator
Shannon Earle!

Staff Updates



Congratulations, Serenella!



Congratulations to **Serenella Linares** (aka Mushie), who will be the Principal Park Naturalist at Mount Rainier Nature Center in Prince George's County. In her six years with us, Serenella educated and inspired thousands of children and adults.

As School Programs Manager, she developed programs that met Next Generation Science Standards while sparking curiosity and modeling authentic inquiry. As Adult Education Director, Serenella attracted a diverse range of expert speakers to the Naturalist Hour program and rebuilt the Natural History Field Studies and Master Naturalist programs with hybrid models.

Serenella served as the co-chair of the Naturally Latinos conference since its inception and will remain a thought leader for that program by serving on the advisory committee. Serenella is a shining example of accomplishing mission work through collaborative relationships. All of us at Nature Forward wish her well at Mt. Rainier and look forward to working together as partners.

Happy Retirement, Debra!



Debra Prybyla, a 12-year Grant Specialist at Nature Forward, is retiring after a career spanning the environmental spectrum and a long-term, ongoing commitment to Water Quality Monitoring. She has brought to her work a unique blend of project management, government relations, communications and fundraising experience, combined with wide-ranging conservation issue knowledge and a lifelong passion for the environment.

With an MS in Natural Resources from the University of Michigan and a BA in Biology and Environmental Studies from Williams College, Debra has used her knowledge and skills to advocate for and successfully write grants to support environmental justice, protection, restoration and education.

Debra and her husband David Blockstein, who were married at Woodend, are avid birders, cross-country skiers and appreciators of nature in all its forms. They have been among the top fundraisers in Nature Forward's annual Birdathon. We bid a fond farewell to Debra, with deep gratitude for her many years of dedicated service!



Restoration

New Invasive Alert! *Photinia villosa*/Christmas berry

by Bradley Simpson, Restoration Manager

In the summer of 2019, I was quite excited to find what I believed were many surviving red chokeberry, *Aronia arbutifolia*, stems on the part of our property bordering the Rock Creek trail. My excitement was due to finding a native shrub, that was not spicebush, in an area dominated by over-abundant deer and invasive plant species. The leaves, flowers, and fruit, at the time, all led me to believe it was the native red chokeberry...until I looked again the following winter. While preparing a slide about the red chokeberry, I intended to collect pictures of the individuals I found at Woodend until I discovered something was not right. The buds for the red chokeberry are described as long, almost ½ inch in length and red. The buds of this plant looked small and brownish. Also, the bark of the red chokeberry is described as gray, with many darker diamond-shaped fissures as it matures. While the bark of this plant is gray with no dark, diamond-shaped fissures. Instead, the bark of this mystery plant consists of many orange lenticels (gas exchange pores) that may look diamond-shaped with age. This when I knew I was not looking at a red chokeberry.

Luckily, I knew there was a red chokeberry in our Blair Native Plant Garden, so I quickly checked it for comparison. I was right. The plant prevalent in our floodplain forest, as well as under a patch of lopped off ash trees by the pond, is not red chokeberry. Using Muenscher's Keys to Woody Plants I discovered the mystery plant belongs to the genus *Photinia* (old genus name for *Pourthiaea*). Landing at this genus was not a surprise since the older scientific name for the red chokeberry was

Photinia pyrifolia. I flipped to the genus page and continued keying and got to a species...oriental photinia, *Photinia villosa* (now called *Pourthiaea villosa*). A quick google search showed the inevitable, it is a newer invasive plant in the eastern US. My excitement from the summer quickly turned to disappointment that day. I have now started to remove this aggressive shrub from our forest, and I look forward to replacing it with our native red chokeberry.

A summary of differences between red chokeberry and *photinia villosa*:

Leaves: Red Chokeberry leaves show short, purple hairs that lie flat along the mid-vein of the upper leaf surface.

Buds: Chokeberry buds are long, almost ½ inch and bright red. Photinia buds are small, under ¼ inch long and more of a brown.

Bark: Chokeberry bark is a smooth red with white lenticels when young, maturing to a gray with conspicuous diamond shaped patterns. Photinia bark is orange-brown when young with orange lenticels, maturing to a light gray with the orange lenticels becoming much larger and cracked.

Flowers: Chokeberry flowers after photinia (mid to late May) and bears bright pink to red stamens. Photinia flowers earlier (late April to early May) and bears green to light red stamens.

Fruits: Chokeberry fruits are much rounder and a darker red than photinia. Photinia fruits are more oblong than spherical and are red-orange.



The flowers of red chokeberry showing its colorful pink to red stamens.



The flowers of *Photinia villosa* lack colorful stamens.



The brownish fruits of *Photinia villosa* (left) next to scarlet fruits of red chokeberry.

Nature Forward and Partners Distribute Pollinator Garden Kits

Nature Forward recently kicked off a two-year collaboration with Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC) and Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals (CBLP), funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund. We are working together to increase conservation landscaping across the Sligo Creek subwatershed. We will distribute low-cost, pollinator garden kits to residents and provide Spanish-language trainings for landscapers. FOSC is well-known and respected throughout the watershed where they conduct a wide variety of education, outreach and stewardship programs. Through their communication connections with neighborhood listservs, FOSC will help recruit landowners to participate in the pollinator garden project and recruit Spanish-speaking landscapers to join the training. Nature Forward and FOSC will work together to deliver plants and host tours of green infrastructure in the Sligo Creek watershed. CBLP will help us deliver and advertise the trainings. Our own Nature Forward volunteers will also have an important role to play in helping to assemble and deliver the garden kits we have designed! We're excited to see this collaboration "blossom" across Sligo Creek over the next two years.



Woodend Tours

We hope to see you on a Woodend Tour this year! These walks are led by Nature Forward staff and volunteers. For more information and to register, please visit natureforward.org/woodend-tours.

Family Walks at Woodend

Saturdays, 9-10 am

March 4, April 1, May 6, June 3

Saturday Morning Bird Walks

9-10 am

March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10

Forest Bathing

10 am-12 pm

April 28, May 21, June 9

Natural Habitats of Woodend

10-11:30 am

April 29, May 26, June 23

Native Plant Gardens of Woodend

10-11:30 am

April 7, May 20, June 2

Notable Trees of Woodend

10-11:30 am

April 14, May 12, June 17



**nature
forward**

Garden Consultations

On-site Garden Coaching
& Garden Design



Learn more at natureforward.org/native-plant-gardening

Bloomin' Birdathon 2023

Our Most Fun Fundraiser is Back for its 43rd Year!

Our much-anticipated spring tradition invites nature lovers to count for a great cause.

Northern Cardinal



American Goldfinch



Eastern Bluebird



Bird photos by Jane Gamble

"Bloomin' Birdathon is a long-running annual tradition for the Nature Forward community," says Nature Forward Director of Development Corinna Fisk. "This is an important and engaging fundraiser that supports our conservation, education, and restoration programs across the Capital Region."

The event is similar to a bike-a-thon or a walk-a-thon fundraiser. The difference is that instead of collecting donations based on miles walked or cycled, you ask your friends and family to give based on the number of bird species or spring wildflowers you can spot in a 24-hour period.

If you're not into birding or wildflowers, you can count any species you'd like – from amphibians to insects to mushrooms. You decide! Whatever you choose to count, the Bloomin' Birdathon provides a way for nature lovers of all stripes to enjoy the outdoors and support our important mission work in the Capital Region.

"Whether you're just getting started or counting is your annual tradition, the Bloomin' Birdathon is a great opportunity to appreciate nature in your own way, at your own pace, at every skill level, while supporting a great cause," Corinna adds.

Large Flowered Trillium



Barn Swallow



Donate or sign up today to support this year's 43rd Annual Bloomin' Birdathon!
Visit natureforward.org/birdathon.



Asking family, friends, or co-workers to support you with a small donation for every bird, wildflower or other species you find is a great way to engage them in something that we all cherish: nature. Everyone can feel good about taking action to protect the natural world.

Thanks to the dedicated support of our Bloomin' Birdathon counters and donors, last year's event was an amazing success. Bolstered by a generous matching challenge by Dr. Linda Lear and Mr. John Nickum, and corporate sponsorships from MOM's Organic Market, Scarlett Pet Food, and Zeiss, our 2022 Bloomin' Birdathon raised more than \$80,000 to support Nature Forward environmental education and conservation programs. With your help, we can do it again this year!

"Anyone can sign-up to participate and count species anywhere from right outside your window, around your neighborhood, to a nearby park, shoreline or forest," Corinna says. "No prior experience is necessary to have fun and be successful!"



Going once. Going twice. Call for Auction Items!

Please support our unique After Dark silent auction by donating items or experiences.

Your donations of auction items are tax-deductible and will help Nature Forward realize its vision of creating a larger, more diverse community of people who treasure the natural world and work to preserve it.

Vacation home rentals are our top earning auction items, as are nature experiences and travel. Also popular are fine dining, nature-themed artwork and crafts, garden consults and tours, new outdoor equipment and gear!

Contact Erin Mosley at erin.mosley@natureforward.org about your auction donations. Thank you for contributing auction items by May 1, 2023.



Erin Kelleher Photography

Weddings
Milestones
Corporate Events

Woodend Sanctuary & Mansion
 Climate-controlled tent included
woodendsanctuary.org

nature forward

MEMORIAL AND TRIBUTE CONTRIBUTIONS November 2022-JANUARY 2023

IN HONOR OF:

William Adams

Bruce & Anna Goldin

Lisa Alexander

Christine Allen

Elaine Anderson

Emily van Loon & Thom Wolf

Kathy Benjamin

Kate Anderson

Eliza Cava

Clyde Shorey

Edwin Clark

Anne Litchfield

Gail David & Steven Heydeman

Patty Friedman & Blair Levin

Jeanine Derr

Susannah Derr

Hugo Hammond

Ross Hammond

Jan Holderness

Louise Beale

Joe McManus

Marsha Pinson

The Melter Family

The B-Ks

**FK Millar on the occasion of her 100th birthday
from her Family and Friends**

Barbara Brace; Joanna Zawadski; Clint & Meg Harris

Carolyn Peirce

Michele Sullivan

Joe Sander

Cindy, Allan, Courtney & Morgan

Lois Taylor

Tim McTaggart

Adria Zeldin & Peter Gray

Gidon van Emden

Beth Ziebarth

Jan Majewski & Rich Delmar

Join the Biggest Hour for Earth

8.30pm 25th March
 Switch off. Give an hour for Earth.
earthhour.org

60
EARTH HOUR

Turn your lights off for one hour on March 25 to save energy and help the planet. Learn more at earthhour.org.

IN MEMORY OF:**Frank Alexander**

MJ Alexander

Sally Backus

Pamela Brown; Margaret Magner; Michael Smith

Joyce Black

Barri Sue Black

David Brody

Betty Brody; Jay Brody; Arthur Brody

Caroline Simmonds Cook

Jonathan Cook

Cris Fleming

Mark Schilling

James Grodsky

Susan Grodsky

Sydney Jacobs

Jan Majewski & Rich Delmar

Stephen Jones

Joan & Ed McCallister

Jane Pisano

Debbie & Geoff Berkowitz

Dennis R. Shaw

Dana Shaw

Michael Trister

Nancy Duff Campbell

Arthur Zimmer

Kristin Zimmer

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Education programs are held at Woodend, Nature Forward's 40-acre Headquarters, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815, unless otherwise noted. All education programs except Nature Travel have online registration. You will be notified immediately if the program is full; otherwise, confirmation letters will be emailed 1-2 weeks before the scheduled program.

Lectures are held at our Woodend Sanctuary, and field trip transportation is by private vehicle or carpool unless otherwise noted. Most programs are limited to 16 participants and also have a minimum enrollment, so early registration is important to ensure that programs run. Unless otherwise noted, weekend adult foray program fees do not include meals or lodging.

Because our programs rely on registration fees for funding, we have adopted this policy:

- Cancellations must be made at least six working days before the beginning of the program to be eligible for a credit to your account, less a \$5 administrative fee.
- If an adult foray is cancelled by Nature Forward due to low enrollment, you will receive a full refund. If a weather-related concern or another issue outside of our control forces a cancellation, you will receive a full credit to your account.
- Nature travel programs have different cancellation policies, explained on the information sheet sent on request.

Nature Forward is committed to addressing problems when they occur. Program participants are encouraged to bring problems or concerns of any kind directly to the staff member in charge of the program. Staff members will try to resolve the problem immediately or as soon as reasonably possible. If staff is unable to do so, they are expected to bring the problem to the attention of their immediate supervisor or member of the Senior Management Team, who will take responsibility for seeking a resolution. Program participants are welcome to bring unresolved problems or concerns to the attention of the Executive Director. The Executive Director's decision on resolution of the problem is final.

Do you participate in the National Capital Area CFC?

The easiest way to support Nature Forward is to designate **Nature Forward 75493** in the 2022 Combined Federal Campaign under EarthShare Mid-Atlantic.



Do you want to read your Naturalist Quarterly online and reduce paper use and printing costs? If so, email membership@natureforward.org and ask to receive the Naturalist Quarterly by email.

Help us continue to protect Nature for All with a special spring gift to Nature Forward!

At Nature Forward we never lose hope. We see children and adults taking action every day to protect nature. It all starts with people like you.

With your support, Nature Forward will continue to defend wildlife and local ecosystems, protect our streams, and teach people about the natural world right here at home.

Please send a special spring gift today. Whether you can give \$25, \$50, \$100, or even \$500, every dollar counts.

Continue to support nature for yourself, your loved ones and our future generations by making your tax-deductible, spring-appeal gift by June 15.

You can donate online at natureforward.org/springappeal.



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Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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nature forward
Connecting people and nature in the Capital Region