

SUMMER 2023

# nature forward

Q U A R T E R L Y



## Our Recipe for Conservation

How Nature Forward does advocacy



#### ON THE COVER

Common buckeye at Huntley Meadows Park by Jane Gamble.

#### NATURE FORWARD QUARTERLY

Summer 2023

#### MANAGING EDITOR

Vince Robinson

#### SENIOR EDITOR

Pam Oves

#### CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Ben Israel

#### STAFF DIRECTORY

Visit [natureforward.org/staff](https://natureforward.org/staff)

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Visit [natureforward.org/board](https://natureforward.org/board)

Nature Forward Quarterly is published four times a year by Nature Forward, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Photos, art work, and articles may not be reprinted without permission from the editor. Opinions offered do not necessarily reflect official Nature Forward policy. Advertised products or services do not carry the endorsement of Nature Forward.

ISSN 0888-6555

© 2023 Nature Forward

NATURE FORWARD HEADQUARTERS/  
WOODEND SANCTUARY  
301-652-9188

[natureforward.org](https://natureforward.org)

[contact@natureforward.org](mailto:contact@natureforward.org)



[natureforward.org](https://natureforward.org)



[facebook.com/  
gonatureforward](https://facebook.com/gonatureforward)



[twitter.com/  
gonatureforward](https://twitter.com/gonatureforward)



[youtube.com/  
@gonatureforward](https://youtube.com/@gonatureforward)



[instagram.com/  
gonatureforward](https://instagram.com/gonatureforward)



[linkedin.com/company/  
gonatureforward/](https://linkedin.com/company/gonatureforward/)

Do you want to read your Nature Forward Quarterly online and reduce paper use and printing costs? If so, email [membership@natureforward.org](mailto:membership@natureforward.org) and ask to receive the Quarterly by email.





# nature forward

Q U A R T E R L Y

SUMMER 2023

14

- 4 From the Director**  
Update from Lisa Alexander

- 6 Feature: Our Recipe for Conservation**  
How Nature Forward does advocacy  
BY LISA GOODNIGHT

- 8 Feature: Celebrating "Belonging" at the Taking Nature Black Conference**  
BY LISA GOODNIGHT

- 10 Conservation**  
Regional policy and advocacy updates

- 14 Connecting Youth to Nature**  
Preschool, summer camp, family walks and more fun!

- 18 Connecting Adults to Nature**  
Check out our Adult Nature Programs, Natural History Field Studies and Nature Travel opportunities

- 32 Volunteer Corner**

- 34 Fundraising Opportunities**  
Bloomin' Birdathan and Donor-Advised Funds

- 36 Restoration**  
Spring Planting is in Full Swing

- 39 Tributes**  
February – April 2023

- 39 Registration information**  
Your questions about registering, answered!

18

36

## Bringing Conservation Home

As some of you may know, I've been in housing limbo for two years. In a moment of 'pandemic madness,' my husband and I sold our family home in December 2020. We thought we'd easily find a smaller place to dwell. No such luck! After losing multiple bidding wars, we landed in a rental. Months later, we found an 'ugly duckling' home to renovate.



As the project grinds slowly along, I've reflected on all the ways Nature Forward's conservation, education, and restoration work influenced our home renovation. Nature Forward's focus on climate mitigation strategies guided our choice of location. We searched for a property that was walkable to Metro, a library, groceries, and parkland. We plan to use only our feet and bicycles to get around on weekends. Nature Forward's emphasis on environmental justice spurred us to live in a location that abuts townhomes and multifamily apartment buildings with affordable units — because denser housing near transit equals lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Thanks to a Quarterly article on climate actions, we installed an electric car charging station with the goal of dropping our gas-powered auto for good. Inspired by a Conservation blog post, we put an induction cooktop in our kitchen and added an electric heat pump and water heater for maximum energy efficiency.

Following our advocacy team's lead on building electrification, we ultimately decided to disconnect the gas line from our house entirely. (To accomplish disconnection, we were sent to the gas company's Abandonment Unit. Talk about melodramatic!) It is my family's good fortune that we can afford these upgrades that are good for our health, reduce energy bills, and mitigate climate change. And I'm proud that Nature Forward advocates for electric-only new buildings and subsidized electrification retrofits for older, affordable housing buildings across our region.

In alignment with Nature Forward's forest conservation advocacy, we used sustainable and recycled wood products inside and out. And we installed native trees and shrubs with wildlife value including two Fringetrees, a Redbud, and a River Birch. Our small, wet yard models stormwater management practices taken directly from Woodend Nature Sanctuary itself. Our yard includes berms, swales, and a rain garden. And our plant palette is overwhelmingly comprised of native plants. I can't wait to shop at the Woodend Nature Shop to add Woodend-propagated native plants to our garden (see page 29).

While not everyone can complete a slew of greening projects all at once, each of us can make at least one change in our lives for the benefit of nature and future generations. Need inspiration? Check out Conservation updates on pages 10-11 and the Conservation Blog. Thank you, members and supporters — through your generosity, Nature Forward is ensuring that everyone in our community has the opportunity to bring conservation home.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Alexander'.



CONNECTING PEOPLE AND NATURE IN THE CAPITAL REGION

# Master Naturalists



This fall, Nature Forward will partner with the University of MD Extension to offer the Maryland Master Naturalist training course. Top-notch instructors will provide 60 hours of training in the ecology, flora, and fauna of MD with a focus on the natural history of Maryland's Piedmont region.

Master naturalist training graduates will commit 40 hours annually to naturalist-related volunteer service with Nature Forward to support education, conservation, and restoration programs. As a Nature Forward Master Naturalist volunteer you will:

- Join a community of fellow environmental stewards
- Explore Nature Forward programs
- Work and learn outside at our nature sanctuaries and other field locations

## SCHEDULE

1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month

12 noon to 3pm

October 2023 through May 2024

One virtual lecture and  
One in-person field training  
per month

Apply online by July 15, 2023



For more information and to register, visit  
[natureforward.org/program/master-naturalist](https://natureforward.org/program/master-naturalist)



# Our Recipe for Conservation:

## How Nature Forward does advocacy

by Lisa Goodnight

While too many cooks in the kitchen can spoil the broth, we need all the cooks we can find to help protect the environment. Broad engagement from area residents is key to making good environmental policy.

"We have worked hard for the last few years to set future-oriented priorities for our conservation advocacy. (See our priorities here: <https://natureforward.org/conservation>). And we've expanded the range of people and communities with whom we work," says Nature Forward Conservation Director Eliza Cava.

During April's "Speaking Up for Nature: How Nature Forward Does Advocacy" Conservation Café, Cava shared recent environmental wins, disappointing losses, and what propels Nature Forward's advocacy work.



Nature Forward advocates fight the good fight: from left, Jamoni Overby, DC Advocate; Renee Grebe, VA Advocate; Denisse Guitarra, MD Advocate; and Eliza Cava, Director of Conservation. Photo by Ben Israel.

*"We're growing advocates in the community. We train neighbors to get involved in advocating for strong environmental policies and practices in their own neighborhoods."*

— JAMONI OVERBY, NATURE FORWARD DC ADVOCATE

Successful advocacy relies on people—partners in coalitions, local residents involved in their communities, and Nature Forward's dedicated volunteers. "We love our volunteers," says Cava, explaining that volunteers play crucial roles in support of our advocacy effectiveness. "Our volunteers do detailed research, take minutes at meetings, organize rallies, and most importantly testify—in writing and in person—in favor of good environmental legislation and policy. We couldn't do our great work for people and nature without our volunteers!"

Our recent legislative wins on behalf of forests in Montgomery County and the state of Maryland (see page 10), would not have been possible without the support of thousands of individuals across the region speaking out in favor of trees. "More trees please!" was their motto! Our constituents know that trees provide countless ecological services such as flood prevention, carbon sequestration, heat protection, and air and water purification. Sadly, our region as a whole, and Maryland in particular, has lost an enormous amount of forest cover over the last few decades. Updating Forest Conservation laws doesn't automatically grow back the forest and tree canopy, but the new laws we secured set the stage to reverse tree loss trends and ensure increasing tree and forest cover for the future.

Advocacy is also ramping up in Washington, DC, where Nature Forward has helped secure other environmental victories. For instance, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser signed into law the Migratory Local Wildlife Protection Act, a

measure that will add bird safe practices to DC's building code. That's a great tip of the hat to Nature Forward's founders, who came together on behalf of bird conservation. And we activated volunteers to testify in favor of the new Healthy Homes Act that will provide incentives to phase out CO2 spewing gas appliances and switch to electric in low to moderate income homes.

"We're growing advocates in the community," says Nature Forward's DC Advocate Jamoni Overby, who is working to recruit new environmental advocates in Ward 8. "We have a Raise Your Voice program that educates residents on how different government agencies affect environmental policy. We train neighbors to get involved in advocating for strong environmental policies and practices in their own neighborhoods."

Nature Forward hosts numerous community outreach programs, in places like Ward 8 Water Watchers in Washington, DC, Water Protectors of Little Hunting Creek in Fairfax County, VA, and ¡Sí Se Puede! based in the Long Branch section of Silver Spring, MD. For these community members, who have not traditionally accessed the inner workings of government, our outreach programs help equip and train them to have a greater sense of agency over the natural resources in their community and to advocate for their neighborhood priorities.

Other tools in our advocacy kit include Action Alerts that galvanize community members to write and call legislators when important policies or laws (both good and bad) are in play. Our Conservation Blog keeps local environmental issues front and center for members and supporters of Nature Forward. Informative blog posts go up regularly with headlines such as: "Don't Let The Mayor Delay DC's Climate Commitments," "Electrify Montgomery County's Future Buildings Today," and "Speak Up For Stronger Climate Action Leadership In Fairfax County!" Visit [natureforward.org/conservation-blog](https://natureforward.org/conservation-blog) to read our blog.

In the face of so many pressing environmental challenges, Nature Forward acts strategically when it comes to our advocacy focus.

**Conservation continued on page 26**



*"Being kind in advocacy can go a long way...even when we are doing something meant to pressure elected officials."*

— ELIZA CAVA,  
NATURE FORWARD  
CONSERVATION  
DIRECTOR



Nature Forward staff and supporters, joined by Councilmembers Evan Glass, Marilyn Balcombe, Natali Fani-González, and Andrew Friedson, gather at Woodend to celebrate the passage of the Montgomery County Forest Preservation Bill.

*"I am grateful that the conference continues to exist," says former Nature Forward Development Manager Antoinette Sooh-Jordan. "I never could've imagined that it would grow to what it is today."*

# Celebrating "Belonging" at the Taking Nature Black Conference

by Lisa Goodnight

"Nature doesn't care if we are Black or White, rich or poor, straight or gay. She invites us to sip from her raindrops, bathe in her sunlight & get lost in her moonbeams. In Nature, all things are possible."

Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali, Vice President for Environmental Justice, Climate and Community Revitalization for the National Wildlife Federation, tweeted those words during Nature Forward's 5th Taking Nature Black (TNB) Conference.

Themed "Belonging: Engaged and Empowered," the 2023 Taking Nature Black Conference included: two virtual conference days; one in person day at the Metro-accessible Civic Center in Silver Spring, MD; and one day of outdoor nature experiences. The conference continued Nature Forward's celebration of inclusion that was highlighted in our 2022 ebook, *Belonging: The Black Americans in Nature Photography Project*. The beautiful online project, funded by the US Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry

Program, enabled Nature Forward to address the absence of photographs of Black Americans in nature. You can view the gorgeous photographs here: [natureforward.org/download-belonging](https://natureforward.org/download-belonging).

This year's conference, held March 8 - 11, gave attendees the opportunity to celebrate Maryland's own Harriet Tubman on Harriet Tubman Day on Friday, March 10th. A new video showcased Tubman, the Underground



Beatra Wilson, Assistant Director of Urban and Community Forestry for the US Forest Service, poses with friends next to her photo from the *Belonging* ebook. Photo by Liz Guertin.

Railroad's most famous conductor, and highlighted her role as an unsung naturalist who used her deep knowledge of nature as a tool to lead African Americans to freedom. Tubman's name was invoked throughout the conference by various speakers including Montgomery County Councilmember Laure-Anne Sayles, Outdoor Afro founder Rue Mapp, and Nature Forward Board member, Alan Spears, Senior Director of Cultural Resources, National Parks Conservation Association.





Tykee James leading an eventful bird walk on the last day of TNB. Twenty-one species were observed including an American Kestrel, Dark-eyed Junco, and a Carolina Wren. See page 28 for more pictures from this outing.

A diverse and enthusiastic audience of more than 500 people representing more than 30 states coast-to-coast participated in online presentations and networking. Attendees traveled from as far as New Mexico, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Florida to attend in person to hear luminaries including Dr. Jalonne White-Newsome, Senior Director for Environmental Justice on the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Since its launch in 2016, Nature Forward's Taking Nature Black Conference has grown to be one of the nation's premier environmental forums showcasing diversity, inclusion, and equity. Centered on issues impacting the Capitol Region, the conference continues to shine a spotlight on environmental justice, empowerment, and belonging in nature—topics that resonate with diverse nature professionals and advocates from across the nation who face similar challenges in their own communities.

In addition to riveting panel discussion on topics ranging from *Nurturing the Next Generations of Black Environmentalists* to *Rediscovering our Connections to the Land*, the 2023 conference featured: the screening of *Wood Hood*, a powerful documentary that followed a Black New York City teen on a camping trip; a free bird walk led by DC Audubon chapter president Tykee James in Anacostia Park; and a live photo exhibit, curated by Nature Forward photographer Ben Israel, featuring images from *Belonging*.

"Amazing conference, community, and learning. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate and be a part of this inspiring community," said Patricia Greenberg of Fairfax County Park Authority, a Taking Nature Black Sponsor. This year we hit a record with 27 conference sponsor organizations.

"We appreciate each and every sponsor, speaker, and attendee who made this year's conference a resounding success," said TNB Conference Chair Vince Robinson. "People are calling the experience inspiring and insightful, fueling, nourishing, and uplifting."

Taking Nature Black is held every other year rotating with its sister conference, Naturally Latinos, which will take place in January 2024.



SCAN TO VIEW OUR eBook "BELONGING"



LaTreice V. Branson, founder of Drum Like a Lady, wowing the crowd with a little help from a few audience members.



Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome delivering a stirring keynote address.

# More Trees Please!

**R**esearch has shown that urban green spaces, including trees, are associated with reduced stress, improved mental health, and increased physical activity. Trees play a vital role in mitigating the urban heat island effect and filtering stormwater runoff, which helps to protect our streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. In May, our partner organization Casey Trees put out their 15th annual Tree Report Card on the State of DC's Trees 2022. It showed the tremendous tree canopy loss our region has suffered over the last few years. Through Nature Forward's and our partners' advocacy, we are working on turning that trend around – read below for a good-news story on our recent big wins for forest protection in Maryland and Montgomery County. But there is so much more work to do. Casey Trees recommends that the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments establish a regional tree canopy goal, and we agree. We also know that now that we've fixed one law in Montgomery County, we need to update tree protection legislation in Prince George's and Fairfax Counties, as well as Washington, DC. It's critical to plant new trees when old ones are cut down, but it's even more important to protect those existing, valuable forests and trees. It takes decades for a young tree to replace the shade, habitat, and water and air quality benefits that a mature tree provides. Join us in all our tree and forest campaigns by signing up for our Action Alert list!

Forest bathing guides Raquel Pinto and Ana Ka'ahanui lead a bilingual walk to show the mental health benefits of forests in Long Branch, MD. Photo by Denisse Guitarra.



## Get involved & learn more!

**Sign up for our Action Alert Network and read all our latest posts at [natureforward.org/conservation-blog](https://natureforward.org/conservation-blog).**

## Washington, DC

**Fighting the Climate Crisis on Many Fronts:** Throughout the spring, Nature Forward has been organizing, testifying, and presenting at neighborhood meetings about ways the District can ramp up our fight against the climate crisis. We are supporting the **Healthy Homes Bill** that would speed up low-income electrification retrofits; pushing the **DC Housing Authority** to make its buildings more sustainable for residents; and pushing back against the Mayor's proposal to delay the **Building Energy Performance Standards** program.

## Maryland

### Maryland and Montgomery County Forest Wins!

In March, the Montgomery County Council passed unanimously Forest Conservation Bill 25-22. In April, the MD General Assembly passed Forest Conservation Bill SB526/ HB723. Both the county and the state level forest conservation legislations have expanded protections to priority forests and increased replanting requirements. Thank you to the Montgomery County Forest Coalition, Montgomery County Council, Department of Environmental Protection, Planning Department, and MD General Assembly for passing these historic forest protection laws that will help create more climate resilient communities. Read the details for each law and see what's next for our region's forests on our blog.

## Virginia

**Advocates in Fairfax County have successfully lobbied the Board to again this year to invest more heavily in parks.**

Because of these efforts, this year's budget will include six additional staff positions for a number of our key asks, such as staffing a mobile Nature Center for Fairfax County Parks Authority.

**Cinder Bed Road Bikeway** is still threatening globally rare habitats and we are continuing to try to save the Newington Conservation Site from further impacts.

## Regionwide

**Are you following environmental decisions at the Supreme Court?** This summer, court watchers are expecting decisions on several cases with critical implications for the environment. Two stand out: Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo challenges the so-called "chevron doctrine," which represents the deference that courts give to agencies (such as the EPA) when they make technical decisions, so often critical in environmental regulation. And Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency could dramatically narrow the scope and authority of the Clean Water Act to protect wetlands.

DC Advocate Jamoni Overby testifies in opposition to the proposed Washington Gas rate increase that would go to fund fossil fuel infrastructure expansion.



## More ways to get involved.

### Environmental & Conservation Advocacy 101 (Virtual)

**Wednesday, July 19, 2-4:30 pm**

**Register at [natureforward.org/conservation/training](https://natureforward.org/conservation/training)**

**Leader: Eliza Cava**

**Members \$20; nonmembers \$30; free for Advocacy & Policy volunteers**

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. Complimentary registration available, contact [eliza.cava@natureforward.org](mailto:eliza.cava@natureforward.org).

### Volunteer with Nature Forward Conservation on Advocacy & Policy!

**Next meeting: Thursday, June 29, 4-5:30 pm**

**Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

**RSVP to [jamoni.overby@natureforward.org](mailto:jamoni.overby@natureforward.org)**

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.



# Connecting people to nature in their communities

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](https://natureforward.org/community-outreach).



## Bilingual Earth Day Festival in Edmonston, MD

We had over 100 people come out to our Earth Day Festival on April 15! In two hours, families planted native plants and flowers within eight new rain gardens on Gallatin Street. Participants enjoyed a series of activities, including planting sunflower seeds in biodegradable newspaper pots. Neighbors attended a bilingual native plant gardening workshop (taking home all 30 sets of 50 plants) and the children had fun moving and dancing at a bilingual workshop led by Dance Place founding director Carla Perlo. Mayor Tracy Gant and Town Administrator Rod Barnes joined us at the event. The event was funded by Chesapeake Bay Trust via the Town of Edmonston. See page 30 for more pictures from the festival.

A young woman holding her Nature Forward native plant kit and garden design to take home from the Edmonston Earth Day festival and native plant garden workshop. Photo by Kristin Cook.

# Stream Science

## Community Science PLUS Community Engagement at Stream Monitoring Sites

This summer, Nature Forward will begin engaging the public by hosting learning stations at a few of our Maryland Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) sites as part of a pilot funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Outreach volunteers will be trained to answer questions and convey stream health messages at learning stations that will be set up alongside the community science stations where our volunteer monitoring teams are working. We are continuing to recruit 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.

**Interested in becoming a stream outreach volunteer and helping with this new project? Please send an email to [cleanstreams@natureforward.org](mailto:cleanstreams@natureforward.org).**

*We are recruiting outreach volunteers to run family-friendly stations to convey our stream and health messages.*



Prince George's County park users visit one of our newest monitoring sites this past April to learn about the health of Northwest Branch. Photos by Gregg Trilling.



### Stream Science Classes

Our introductory and advanced WQM classes are available online.  
[natureforward.org/water-quality-monitoring](https://natureforward.org/water-quality-monitoring)

SCAN FOR CLASS LIST  
AND TO SIGN UP >





# Kids unplug and play at Woodend Sanctuary

## Unplug and Explore at Woodend Nature Sanctuary

Did you know playing in nature helps children with:

- cognitive development (creativity and problem solving)
- emotional growth (stress reduction and self-confidence)
- socialization (cooperation and self-awareness)

To find programs and events that connect your family to nature, visit [natureforward.org](https://natureforward.org).



### 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. 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](https://natureforward.org/nature-preschool) to review available sessions and enroll. Additional inquiries can be sent to Rose Brusaferro at [rose.brusaferro@natureforward.org](mailto:rose.brusaferro@natureforward.org).



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

*Learn more at [natureforward.org/birthday-parties](https://natureforward.org/birthday-parties)*



ENJOY THE WONDERS OF WOODEND

# Days Off Camps

## Grades K-5

Monday, September 25 (MCPS)

Monday, October 9 (MCPS & DCPS)

Wednesday, November 1 (MCPS)

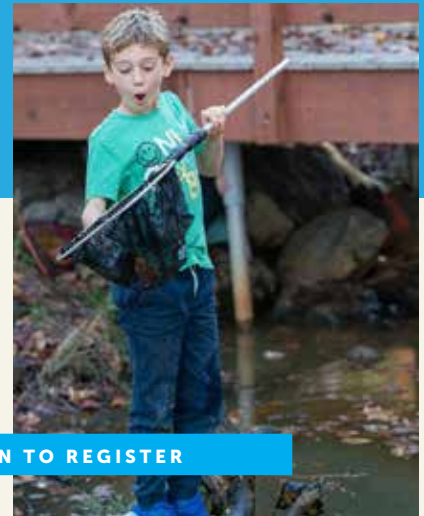
8:45 am – 5:00 pm

Members \$135, nonmembers \$155

Register at [natureforward.org/day-off-camps](https://natureforward.org/day-off-camps)



SCAN TO REGISTER



Join us for a day off full of outdoor adventures and nature exploration. Activities may include catching frogs in the pond, learning about pollinators in the meadow, games, and building forts. Come prepared to get dirty and have fun!



## 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](https://natureforward.org/woodend-tours).



SCAN TO FIND FAMILY PROGRAMS



## Summer Camp 2023

Registration for Summer Camp is open!  
[natureforward.org/summer-camps](https://natureforward.org/summer-camps)

Limited spots available in all grade levels.

Questions? Email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org)



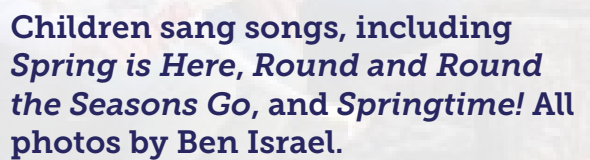
### OAKS SPRING CELEBRATION

Children in our Nature  
Preschool's Oaks program  
displayed their artwork in an  
outdoor gallery.





**Registration is open for the 2023-2024 school year. Visit [natureforward.org/nature-preschool](https://natureforward.org/nature-preschool) for more info.**





# Explore nature in the DMV with us this summer

## Wild places are closer than you think®

From field trips to Natural History Field Studies and Nature Travel, adults can find a wide variety of opportunities to learn about and experience nature led by regional naturalists.

Nature Travel is back! See pages 22-23 for information on upcoming trips to Arctic Canada, Mexico/Yucatan, and Costa Rica.

## Adult Nature Programs

### Online Registration for Adult Programs

**Sign up at [natureforward.org/nature-classes](https://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](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org)



### Wild in the Wetlands

**A. Friday, June 9 (8:30-11:30 am)**

**Huntley Meadows Park, VA**

**B. Sunday, July 9 (8:30-11:30 am)**

**Jug Bay Natural Area of Patuxent River Park, MD**

**Leaders: Stephanie Mason (A) & Bradley Simpson (B)**

**Each walk members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

Join Nature Forward staffers to explore the seasonal richness of two parks in the DC-Metro area. As summer arrives and brings with it long, hot, muggy days and nights, wetlands soak up the sunlight and come alive with plant and wildlife activity. We'll explore these protected area's open and mostly sunny habitats with walks of up to a couple of miles at a slow summer pace. In June, our Senior Naturalist will lead a search for summer wildlife activity and seasonal plant life along the boardwalk at Huntley Meadows Park in Alexandria, VA. Our Restoration Manager leads the July walk which will explore the botanical richness of the Coastal Plain bottomlands along the Patuxent River at Jug Bay Natural Area in PG County.



### Summer Shuffles Along the Canal

**Wednesdays (9-11:30 am)**

**A: June 14 – Carderock**

**B: June 28 – Widewater**

**C: July 12 – Violettes Lock**

**Leaders: Stephanie Mason (A & B) and Carol Hayes (C)**

**Each walk members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

Summer arrives and it's likely to be hot, so we'll keep our pace along Maryland's C&O Canal to a shuffle as we visit three spots along this Potomac River parkland. We'll stop often to observe birds, wildflowers, butterflies, dragonflies, snakes, and whatever else we may find underfoot or overhead.

## Introduction to Dragonflies and Damselflies

**Thursday, June 15 (7-9 pm)**

**Saturday, June 17 (morning field trip)**

**Leader: Lisa Shannon**

**Members \$56; nonmembers \$78**

**In-person lecture only \$28/\$38**

Grab your binoculars and prepare to set your sights not on birds—although “mosquito hawk” is a common moniker—but on those six-legged, aerial acrobats of wetland habitats: the dragonflies and damselflies. Thursday’s illustrated lecture, presented in-person and indoors at our Woodend Sanctuary, will include ID, biology, and behavior of the more common species of *Odonates* in our area plus a period for Q & A. You’ll join our leader for a morning field trip to the wetland habitats of Patuxent Research Refuge (North Tract) near Bowie, MD where all will have a chance to test their identification skills. *Expect open and sunny conditions on the field trip.*

## Solstice Stroll in the Hollow

**Wednesday, June 21 (6:45-8:45 pm)**

**Leader: Stephanie Mason**

**Members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

Enjoy a slow evening stroll through the field, forest, and wetland habitats of the Hughes Hollow Wildlife Management Area, south of Poolesville, MD. As the sun sets on the longest day of the year, we’ll look and listen for owls, frogs, foxes, beavers, bats, and insects as we welcome the arrival of astronomical summer.

## Butterfly Basics

**Sunday, June 25 (9 am-Noon)**

**Leader: Stephanie Mason**

**Members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

On this slow stroll through several habitats at Black Hill Regional Park near Boyds, MD, you’ll enjoy an introduction to some of the common butterflies of summer: their habits and habitats, how to identify them, and where to look for their caterpillars and host plants. *Be prepared for explorations in open, sunny habitats on natural surface paths.*

## Dragons of the Air

**Sunday, July 16 (9-11:30 am)**

**Leader: Lisa Shannon**

**Members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

The wetlands around Pine Lake in Wheaton Regional Park, MD are an ideal spot to begin learning how to ID the most common dragonflies in our area. Naturalist Lisa Shannon will help dragonfly enthusiasts (beginners welcome!) focus on identification characteristics, as well as the life histories, of these aerial insects. *Close-focusing binoculars are recommended for optimal dragon-watching in the open and sunny habitats we’ll explore.*



## Summer Birding Strolls (7-9:30 am)

**A. Tuesday, July 18 – Huntley Meadows, VA  
(Leader Paul Pisano)**

**B. Friday, August 4 – Black Hill Regional Park, MD  
(Leader Denisse Guitarra)**

**C. Saturday, August 19 – Occoquan Bay National  
Wildlife Refuge, VA (Leader Paul Pisano)**

**D. Sunday, September 3 – Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens,  
DC (Leaders Lisa Shannon and Rob Hilton)**

**Each walk members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

*Summertime...and the living is easy—unless you’re a bird busy with nesting chores and the many challenges of raising young. That means summertime can be a more difficult period for nature lovers to encounter birds as they quiet down and move around with greater stealth. Still, there is lots to observe, discuss, and enjoy on a summer birding walk so we’re offering this series for beginning to mid-level birders. When the series begins, breeding bird activity will still be ongoing, but as summer moves into late July and August, the movement of southbound migrants will be underway. *Expect some open and sunny field conditions at all of our locations. There will be chances, however, to duck into the shade periodically.**

## Paddle on the Potomac

**Wednesday, July 19 (10 am-1 pm)**

**Leader: Melanie Choukas-Bradley**

**Members \$36; nonmembers \$49**

Join a naturalist at the Key Bridge Boathouse for a summer paddling trip around Theodore Roosevelt Island. Discover the magic of paddling around DC's historic 88.5 acre island in the Potomac beneath the boughs of magnificent sycamores, cottonwoods, silver maples, black walnuts, basswoods, and river birches. Witness the blooms of summer wildflowers growing along the shoreline and the thrill of spotting ospreys, bald eagles, herons and egrets, and the noisy kingfisher! Our leader is the author of Finding Solace at Theodore Roosevelt Island, so she knows this area well. *Canoes or kayaks can be rented or you can bring your own. Registration fee does not include boat rental.*

## Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

**Thursday, July 20 (9-10 pm)**

**Leader: Carrie Fitzgerald**

**Members \$16; nonmembers \$22**

Join us for a guided look at the summer night sky with an astronomer from Montgomery College. Perched on the lawn at our Woodend Sanctuary, participants will view visible solar system objects, star clusters, and nebulae through a telescope provided by the leader. You'll leave with an enriched understanding of the science of astronomy, as well as the ability to locate and identify constellations and celestial objects on your own. *Keep your fingers crossed for clear skies!*

## How Do Their Gardens Grow?

**A. Saturday, July 22 (9:30-11:30 am) Boyds, MD**

**B. Wednesday, August 2 (10 am-Noon) Bethesda, MD**

**Leaders: Karoline Anders (A) & Marney Bruce (B)**

**Each walk members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

Here's your chance to visit the home gardens of two Nature Forward members who have worked to reduce lawn coverage, increase food and shelter for wildlife, and incorporate native plants whenever possible. Both will share their successes and failures while guiding you on a leisurely stroll in their yards. Karoline's half-acre yard includes more than 50 native plant species in multiple sun and moisture combinations, plus an extensive vegetable garden. Marney's yard includes sun-loving plants in the front, shade-loving species in the back, and a water feature.

## The Summer Side of Little Bennett Park

**Friday, July 28 (9-11:30 am)**

**Leader: Carole Bergmann**

**Members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

Explore the summer side of this botanical gem among Montgomery County Parks under the leadership of a botanist who knows it well—and loves it dearly. At 3,700 acres, the Park near Clarksburg, MD harbors rich plant diversity due to its many habitats which also create many niches for a wide range of wildlife. On a leisurely hike of up to a couple of miles, our leader will introduce you to this parkland's seasonal plant richness in addition to general natural history. *Expect some open and sunny conditions, as well as some uphill and downhill on natural surface trails which may be muddy and/or slippery.*

## On the Wing Along the Canal

**Sunday, July 30 (8-10:30 am)**

**Leaders: Lisa Shannon and Rob Hilton**

**Members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

The varied habitats of the C&O Canal between Carderock and Widewater include Potomac waters, bottomland forest and swamps, watery impoundments, and even rocky cliffs which attract an abundance of bird species in all seasons. These habitats can also be a productive spot for summer dragonfly and damselfly watching. Join our morning's search for both birds and dragonflies as the experienced leaders share ID tips. Don't forget your binoculars!



Photo by Liz Jones



## Summer's Spineless Wonders

**Sunday, August 6 (8-10:30 am)**

**Leader: Cliff Fairweather**

**Members \$33; nonmembers \$46**

All true bugs are insects, but not all insects are truly bugs. Confused? And where do those strange names like 'butterfly' and 'dragonfly' come from when these insects are not flies at all? Join a bug-hugging naturalist for a hands-on look at the most diverse group of animals on the planet. Our field "classroom" will be the McKee-Beshers WMA near Poolesville, MD. Exploring the woods and wetlands there, we'll learn to distinguish insects from other creatures lacking a backbone as we look for the ID characteristics of major insect groups. *Our field conditions will include sunny, open areas with tall vegetation.*

## Shorebirds on the Move

**Wednesday, August 9 (10 am-4 pm)**

**Leaders: Cyndie Loeper and Paul Pisano**

**Members \$44; nonmembers \$60**

Shorebirds—sandpipers, plovers and related birds—are among the most spectacular migrants of the avian world. Most of them nest in the Arctic—where the breeding season is quite short—and many of them travel there from points far to the south. Southward migration of shorebirds—starting as early as July—presents a challenge as both adults and juveniles are on the wing. Our August field trip will give us good chances to see and study a mix of young birds in fresh plumage, as well as adults in the remains of breeding plumage. The field trip will begin at Delaware's Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge and include other stops nearby based on the leaders' scouting efforts the previous day. Our shorebird tutorial is aimed at mid-level birders, but beginners are welcome. *Expect hot, open and sunny field conditions with little or no shade. Don't forget summer insect activity. Transportation to the field trip will be by personal car. Carpooling information will be shared.*



Ocola skipper by Rick Borchelt

## Butterfly Boot Camp: Confusing Fall Skippers

**Thursday, August 24 (7-9 pm)**

**Saturday, August 26 (10 am-2 pm)**

**Rain date: Sunday, August 27**

**Leader: Rick Borchelt**

**Members \$56; nonmembers \$78**

**In-person lecture only members \$28; nonmembers: \$38**

Late summer and early autumn see a spike in migratory southern skipper species making their way northward to the mid-Atlantic to take advantage of fall blooms such as goldenrods, asters, bonesets and more. These southern migrants overlap with and supplement the largest broods of the season for many of our region's resident multi-brooded skippers. On Thursday night's in-person session at Woodend Sanctuary, get a jump on identifying this fall's confusing assemblage of "little brown jobs." The leader will use slides and handouts to sort through the confusing array of the butterfly world's equivalent of confusing fall warblers. On Saturday's half-day field outing, you'll get to test your ID skills in the field looking especially for uncommon species such as Long-tailed, Ocola, Brazilian, and Whirlabout Skippers. The location for the field trip (under an hour's drive from the Beltway) will be determined by the leader after scouting expeditions earlier in the week. *Expect open and sunny field conditions on the field trip. Please note the rain date for the weather-dependent field session.*

# Natural 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 12-14 people, and many trips fill early. Email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org) for complete itineraries and registration information or visit [natureforward.org/nature-travel](https://natureforward.org/nature-travel).

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

**August 3-15, 2024**

**Leader: Mark Garland**

**Cost: \$12,295-\$16,295 per person depending on cabin.**

**Charter and international flights extra.**

Take a once-in-a-lifetime Arctic cruise in Canada with Adventure 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. Visit [natureforward.org/arctic-adventure](https://natureforward.org/arctic-adventure) for more information or email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org).



*Dear friends:*

*The polar regions are among the least accessible places on the surface of our planet. In recent years there has been a big increase in travel to the Antarctic regions, but the true Arctic of the north remains visited by relatively few.*

*It's an area that's always intrigued me—the three main ecological divisions of earth are the tropic, temperate, and arctic regions. For a full sense of the earth's ecology, it's helpful to visit all three.*

*I've had a few chances to see arctic environments in northern Alaska, but those visits have left me craving to see more. When I met the leaders of Adventure Canada at a travel conference a few years ago and learned of their expedition cruises into the far north, I knew I wanted to travel with them some day. That opportunity is now coming, as Nature Forward plans a trip with them in the summer of 2024. The trip begins in northern Greenland and travels west into Arctic Canada, an itinerary that I can't wait to experience.*

*While our travelers will not be the only ones on the ship, Adventure Canada has planned some special meetings and activities solely for our group, and our meals will all be taken together. And for those of us with an aversion to classical cruising, it's comforting to know that our ship carries a maximum of 198 passengers plus crew. There are no casinos, no stage shows, no hoopla, just a concerted focus on natural history.*

*I hope you'll decide to join me on one of the first big trips of the renewed travel program for Nature Forward.*

*With my best wishes,  
Mark S. Garland*



## Mexico: Birding the Ruins of the Yucatán

**November 28-December 8, 2023**

**Leader: Mark Garland**

**Cost: \$3,895 for Nature Forward members; nonmembers should join Nature Forward before registering**

Offered in partnership with Holbrook Travel, we will pack our binoculars and embark on an intense birding adventure to the environmentally diverse Yucatán Peninsula. Witness native birds soar above the stunning ruins of Oxtankah, Chicanná, Calakmul, Hochob, Uxmal, and other archaeological sites on this journey through the Maya world. Heads will turn at every point of this expedition as we look for a rainbow array of birds including hummingbirds, parrots, tanagers, toucans, raptors, and many more. From trail hikes to boat rides, birders will have an opportunity to participate in a variety of outdoor activities while exploring the history of the Maya and the birds that inhabit the ruins of this ancient civilization. Visit [natureforward.org/yucatan-adventure](https://natureforward.org/yucatan-adventure) for more info.

From trail hikes to boat rides, birders will have an opportunity to participate in a variety of outdoor activities while exploring the history of the Maya and the birds that inhabit the ruins of this ancient civilization.

- Enjoy exceptional birding while visiting the walled city of Becán, once a Maya political, economic, and religious center.
- Watch for target species like the Hook-billed and Gray-headed Kites, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, and the magnificent King Vulture.
- Embark on a boat ride on Bacalar Lagoon, nicknamed the "Lake of Seven Colors."
- Search for avifauna in the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, home to approximately 350 bird species.
- Go birding by boat through the Celestun marshes and mangroves, home to herons, cormorants, frigatebirds, and flocks of flamingos.



## Costa Rica: A Trove of Tropical Birds—and More

**February 3-14, 2024**

**Optional Extension to February 17**

**Leaders: Stephanie Mason and Carlos "Charlie" Gomez**

Our Senior Naturalist is looking forward to her 22nd year of co-leading our popular Nature Forward trip with Costa Rican birder and naturalist extraordinaire Charlie Gomez. The small, tropical wonderland of Costa Rica is notable for harboring an amazing diversity of plants and animals. This country's colorful birds—from the tiny Magenta-throated Woodstar Hummingbird to the rainbow-hued Keel-billed Toucan—will turn any nature enthusiast into a bird lover. Our basic trip explores Caribbean lowland rain forest, southern Pacific foothills and coastline, and other protected wildlands. An optional extension to the cooler mountain highlands features a different view of the tropics with towering oak trees and wild avocados providing habitat for birds such as Resplendent Quetzal and Fiery-throated Hummingbird. Contact [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org) or 301-652-9188 x16 to be put on the list to receive our registration packet when it is available.



# 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](http://natureforward.org/nhfs).

## Online Registration for Natural History Field Studies

**Sign up at [natureforward.org/nhfs](http://natureforward.org/nhfs)**

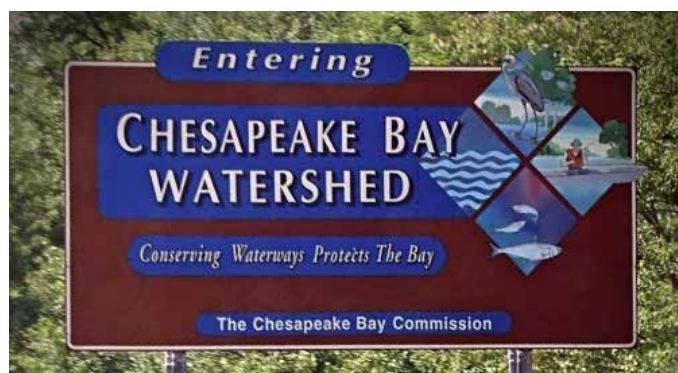
Registration is handled completely online. Register at [natureforward.org/nhfs](http://natureforward.org/nhfs).

Questions? Contact [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org).



**SCAN FOR REGISTRATION,  
REQUIRED READING LISTS  
AND INSTRUCTOR BIOS**

**Required reading lists and instructor bios at  
[natureforward.org/nhfs](http://natureforward.org/nhfs).**



## Chesapeake Bay Ecosystems

**NATH8216, 3 CEUs**

**Thursdays, 6-8 pm**

**June 15-August 17**

**Lectures online via Zoom**

**Field trip dates: Friday, July 14, U of MD's Horn Point oyster hatchery; Saturday, July 29: Anacostia River boat tour; Saturday, August 5: Survey native mussel species in lower Anacostia; one additional field trip TBD.**

**Instructor: Terry McTigue**

**Members \$420, nonmembers \$470**

Discover how physical, chemical, geological, and biological processes come together to shape the diverse ecosystems within the Chesapeake Bay. Learn the history of the Bay, its current condition, and what people are doing to conserve and restore habitats and ecosystem function to the well-loved and well used watershed and estuary. Registration closes June 12.

## Introduction to Fern ID

**NATH7142, 1.5 CEUs**

**Wednesdays 6-8 pm**

**June 28-July 26**

**Lectures online via Zoom**

**Field trip dates: National Arboretum, DC, Saturday, July 8 (9 am-12 pm); Riverbend Park, VA, Saturday, July 22 (8:30-11:30 am)**

**Instructor: Kit Sheffield**

**Members \$260, nonmembers \$310**

This course covers the identification, evolutionary history, and ecology of ferns and lycophytes. Lectures will focus on understanding the life and reproductive methods of these ancient plants, the local fern families and their characteristics, and their uses by humans and animals. Field trips will focus on identification of ferns using a variety of resources. Registration closes June 25.



## Late Summer Wildflowers: The Aster Family

NATH7137, 1.5 CEUs

Wednesdays, 6-8 pm

August 2-30

Lectures online via Zoom

Field trip dates: Learning to Use Guides at Woodend, Saturday, August 5 (9:30-11:30 am); Patuxent Research Refuge North Tract, Saturday, August 19 (9 am-12 pm); Jug Bay Natural Area, Saturday, August 26 (9 am-12 pm)

Instructor: Clare Walker

Members \$290, nonmembers \$340

Maryland Native Plant Society is celebrating 2023 as the year of the asters. Discover the beauty and diversity of this the largest flowering family in North America. It includes many familiar favorites flowers from coneflowers and sunflowers to black-eyed Susan and blazing stars but also many notorious weeds and invasives. Suitable for beginners and immediate students, this class will guide you in the identification of these tricky flowers. We will also look at the ecological roles of these important flowers that support specialist bees, many butterfly and moth species, galls and more. Registration closes July 27.

### COMING IN SEPTEMBER

*Details on Fall NHFS classes, which start in September, available soon at [natureforward.org/nhfs](https://natureforward.org/nhfs)*

## Mammals of the Mid-Atlantic

3 CEUs

Mondays, 6-8 pm

Instructor: Kerry Wixted

## Introduction to Ecology

3 CEUs

Wednesdays, 6-8 pm

Instructor: Sally Valdes

## Night Sky for Naturalists

1.5 CEUs

Thursdays, 6-8 pm

Instructor: Carrie Fitzgerald





## Conservation continued from page 7

"We have over 1,000 bills that get introduced each session. We are eager to work on as many as we can, but of course we must be selective. We review all the environmental bills introduced and how they align our priorities," says Maryland Advocate Denisse Guitarra. "We take a lot of factors into consideration when deciding where to activate our team. Is this an issue we've been working on already? Do we have the technical experts we need? Do we have a coalition that can support our work?"

Advocacy dates back to Nature Forward's very beginning, when we were founded in 1897 as the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia. Early members of the organization, many of them women, worked in concert with other Audubon societies to secure passage of important bird conservation legislation. The 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects birds to this day! That's an important example of the power and legacy of strong environmental advocacy.

Nature Forward's Conservation department expanded in 2019 thanks to a transformational gift from an individual that allowed the organization to triple the size of our advocacy team to take on the immediate environmental threat of the climate crisis. The regional impact of our three, full-time advocates has been outstanding, including the Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors adoption of the county's first-ever Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) in 2021. Renee Grebe, Northern Virginia Advocate, says that she loves the policy wins, but that the losses still sting. Renee, who has been certified as a Virginia Master Naturalist since 2014, is still troubled by a recent Fairfax City decision to bury a stream and cut five acres of forest to make way for development.

"One reason we weren't so successful—we got involved too late. It was really far along," Grebe says of the plan. "But the really good thing that came out of it was that we actually ended up building an amazing cohort of environmental advocates in Fairfax City. That cohort helped support the election of a new, environmentally-focused city council member. This new network of environmentalists working together in Fairfax City will help us prevent future stream and forest loss."

Conservation Director Cava rounds out her description of Nature Forward advocacy by saying that she thinks our work would make Mister Rogers proud. "Being kind in advocacy can go a long way...even when we are doing something meant to pressure elected officials. We advocate based on science, and in a way that doesn't include personal attacks. Bringing kindness to advocacy is part of our recipe for success—and we welcome as many cooks into the kitchen to help make our environmental advocacy success possible!" she explains.



Nature Forward conservation staff discuss how to speak up for nature at an April Conservation Cafe at Woodend.



# TAKING NATURE BLACK

## 2023 SPONSORS and PRESENTERS



**Rue Mapp**  
Outdoor Afro  
Presented by



**Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome**  
White House Council  
on Environmental  
Quality



**Alan Spears**  
National Parks  
Conservation  
Association



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



**Caroline Brewer**  
Author  
carolinebrewerbooks.com



**Dr. Mamie Parker**  
M.A. Parker &  
Associates



**LaTreice V. Branson, MFA**  
Radical  
Adventures in  
Wellness



**Belonging:**  
Engaged & Empowered



**THANK YOU: Nature Needs All of Us**





# Spring into Birding with TNB

As part of the March Taking Nature Black Conference, the public was invited to a free bird walk led by avid birder Tykee James. The trip started in DC's Anacostia Park and continued on the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail providing a unique opportunity to observe Washington, DC's resident birds from multiple perspectives: from the ground and from the top of the canopy. James, who also appeared as a panelist during the conference, is a powerful advocate for equitable access to nature. He is co-founder of Amplify the Future, which provides scholarships and networking opportunities to students from diverse backgrounds (<https://amplifythefuture.org>). He is also Senior Government Relations Representative at The Wilderness Society, and president of the soon-to-be-renamed DC Audubon Society. Photos by Ben Israel.





Visit the  
**Woodend Nature Shop!**

Open daily 11am–3pm

Closed Sunday

**Members receive 10% off!**



**Now selling... NATIVE PLANTS!**







# Bilingual Earth Day Festival in Edmonston

*"It was very rewarding to see Edmonston families planting flowers in the eight newly installed gardens as a way to create, beautify, and build storm-resistant neighborhoods."*

—DENISSE  
GUITARRA,  
MD CONSERVATION  
ADVOCATE

People of all ages took part in a day of learning, enjoying, and protecting nature in the Town of Edmonston this spring. During a Bilingual Earth Day celebration held Saturday, April 15, adults and children helped plant flowers and trees, learned about the importance of native plant species, and enjoyed crafts and other activities. Edmonston's sustainability efforts have earned several awards in recent years, including Tree City USA's "Golden Trowel Award" and the "Best Community Garden Program" award from America in Bloom. The Bilingual Earth Day event was sponsored by the Town of Edmonston and Nature Forward, and funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Photos by Eliza Cava, Denisse Guitarra, and Gregg Trilling.











# MJ Alexander has found her place at Nature Forward

**MJ Alexander, who also goes by Alex, is a relatively recent addition to our Nature Forward family, but she's been busy!**

She first connected with Nature Forward during a forest bathing program at Woodend several years ago. MJ began attending other adult programs offered by Nature Forward, including the Master Naturalist class of 2021. She says, "The program was so rich with information about all things nature! I have definitely found my place with Nature Forward—the people who work and volunteer at Nature Forward are dedicated and knowledgeable and the programs offered are so diverse and robust—I knew I wanted to be a part of this wonderful organization." MJ now volunteers with the Water Quality Monitors and co-hosts several of our virtual programs, such as Natural History Field Studies courses.

MJ has lived in the DC Metro region for about 20 years. She is a certified forest bathing guide and enjoys helping people manage stress through breath work, body movement and nature connection. She currently practices federal ethics law and was a former Air Force Judge Advocate. At some point, she hope to be able to use her legal skills to help out in the area of conservation, too. Thank you for all you do for us, MJ!

For questions about volunteering with Nature Forward, please contact [peihan.orestes@natureforward.org](mailto:peihan.orestes@natureforward.org).

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Serve on the Nature Forward Board of Directors and Board-led Committees



Nature Forward is in search of a few good volunteer Board members and Committee members. This is a great opportunity for young professionals to advance their careers and for seasoned members to bring their expertise to Nature Forward leadership. In particular, Nature Forward would like to enlist a diverse cohort of Board and Committee members who have a passion for the natural world and a deep commitment to principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility. This year, of particular interest are volunteers with experience in:

- Business Law
- Fundraising

- Non-profit Financial Accounting
- Local Business Leadership
- Science/Engineering
- Inclusion, Equity, Diversity, and Accessibility

We are eager to include members from throughout the DC metro region, especially those from Virginia and the District of Columbia where we are seeking broader representation. If you would like to be considered for Board or Committee service, please contact [corinna.fisk@natureforward.org](mailto:corinna.fisk@natureforward.org) or apply at <https://forms.office.com/r/R68UhHfnPb>.



## Eagle Scouts Get Their Wings at Woodend Sanctuary

Congratulations to three Eagle Scouts who completed projects at Woodend this spring. Jason Flax led a group of scouts to construct an impressive wooden platform as the base of a new greenhouse in our Learning Garden. William Hallward-Driemeier designed a hexagonal tree bench and table for our preschool play yard and led his scout group to construct them. Finally, Finn Morrison took on a habitat restoration project, inspiring his scout group to remove a substantial patch of invasive bush honeysuckle and replace it with twenty native trees. Thank you!



## Master Naturalist Program

See page 5 for information on this popular program starting in October, or visit [natureforward.org/master-naturalist](https://natureforward.org/master-naturalist).

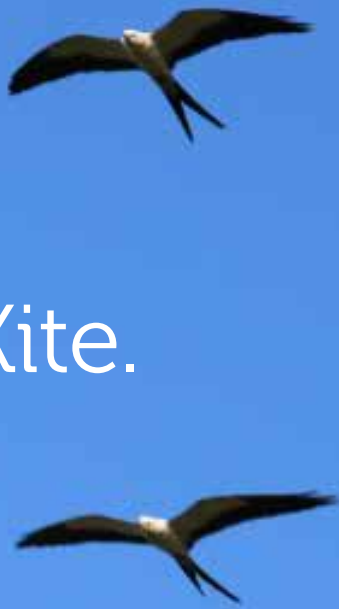
**Registration is open now!**





# Look! Up in the Sky! It's a Swallow-tailed Kite.

by Lisa Goodnight



This year's Bloomin' Birdathon fundraiser was like no other for David Blockstein, PhD and Debra Prybyla. Not only did this husband-and-wife team travel farafield to spot birds rarely seen here in the Mid-Atlantic, but the couple (pictured with the famous manatee statue located in southwest Volusia County, FL) also used a new tool to generate even more support for Nature Forward's conservation and educational programs.

"Having our own Birdathon web page where sponsors list their name can inspire other people to donate and increase their contribution," said David, talking about the benefits of RallyUp, the new fundraising tool designed to make the 43rd annual Bloomin' Birdathon experience even easier for participants.

One of the couple's supporters told them he was increasing his giving after seeing some of the other amounts posted on David and Debra's RallyUp page. However, those who wish to remain anonymous can. The couple used RallyUp to share updates with their donors.

"This is our fourth year doing the Birdathon," said David, who in past years created spreadsheets to keep track of pledges. "We started in the pandemic in 2020. It was our 25th wedding anniversary and we used that as our hook to encourage donations. We began our Birdathon at Woodend where we married. Last year, we did the

Birdathon in Calvert County, MD, where our daughter is living, and this year, we visited Debra's mother in Florida for Mother's Day."

Debra worked for nearly 12 years as a Grant Specialist at Nature Forward. David is an ornithologist and the co-Director of Solve Climate by 2030, a project of Bard College. Thanks to friends and family, they have been among the top fundraisers in Nature Forward's annual Birdathon.

This year, their Birdathon started May 17 before sunrise at 5:20 am at Blue Spring State Park, where manatees are the main attraction. Blue Spring, located in Orange City, FL, is one of the largest winter gathering sites for manatees in the US. It's also, according to Florida State Parks, a Great Florida Birding Trail site with 142 species observed inside the park, including highlights such as Anhingas, Limpkins, and Northern Parulas.

In the park, Debra and David heard Chuck-will's-widow, a very loud night bird, a Sandhill Crane, and saw a Florida Scrub Jay. They visited more than six sites, ending at 8:30 pm at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, with Chuck-wills-widows again calling. In all, they counted over 80 species. The Swallow-tailed Kites, pictured above, were among the highlights. "Suddenly and silently, first one and then six Kites sailed above us, circling and chasing. One settled atop a large pine while others vanished as quickly as they came," David enthused.

As for what they'll do for the 2024 Birdathon—the year they'll celebrate 30 years of marriage—it's a little too soon to say. But one thing's certain, nature and Nature Forward will be part of the festivities. And for that, we are so grateful.



# Support Nature Through a Donor-Advised Fund

This spring, family members representing the Board of a Donor-Advised Fund came to tour Woodend with their fund advisors to learn more about Nature Forward programs. The tour experience enhanced the family foundation's connection to and enthusiasm for Nature Forward's restoration, education and conservation mission work.

If you manage your charitable giving through a Donor-Advised (DAF), please let us know if you and your fund advisors would like to tour Woodend or visit Nature Forward programs. In person experiences can bring to life the positive impact for people and nature that your philanthropy makes possible.

If DAFs are new to you, they are a simple, flexible, and tax-efficient charitable giving program that allows you to support your favorite causes. DAFs are the fastest-growing charitable giving vehicle in the United States because they are one of the easiest and most tax-advantageous ways to give to charity. DAFs can be set up through a community foundation or your financial institution.



**Nature Forward earns top ratings from Charity Navigator, Candid (GuideStar), and other non-profit evaluators for accountability, transparency, and financial best practices.**

Donations to Nature Forward are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.



## Why a DAF could be right for you:

- DAFs allow you to donate cash, stock, and other assets as charitable gifts over several years.
- DAFs provide a flexible and easy method of giving if you support multiple charities.
- DAFs can be used to complement or replace a private foundation.

If you have a DAF managed by Fidelity Charitable, Schwab Charitable, T. Rowe Price Charitable, Vanguard Charitable, or Intentional Philanthropy, Nature Forward is already set up in their systems and you can easily recommend a grant to us.

If you'd like to add Nature Forward to your DAF distributions, we can help! For more information on how to make a DAF charitable gift to Nature Forward, please contact Corinna Fisk at [corinna.fisk@natureforward.org](mailto:corinna.fisk@natureforward.org) or 301-652-9188 x31. And thank you for supporting Nature Forward's mission work for people and nature!

## Nature Forward is located at:

8940 Jones Mill Road  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Federal Tax ID Number: 53-0233715

# Spring planting in full swing

## Native Plant Species Abound after Deer Exclosure

We are making more progress with each passing month in adding native plant species and wildlife habitat at Woodend. Five years after deer exclusion, it is gratifying to see native plant species recovering on their own and such a joy to be able to plant diverse species with high wildlife value knowing they can now thrive.



## 4-H Planting

As part of a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, 50 high school students from around the country who participate in 4-H programs visited Woodend this April. The young conservationists received a tour of Woodend restoration projects and had the opportunity to ask questions of our in-house experts. Then, they gave back by planting 425 tree saplings to help with forest regeneration at the sanctuary. Species planted include white oak, northern red oak, chestnut oak, willow oak, American hazelnut, and American plum.

## Update on New Raingardens

The two-celled rain garden and a small conservation landscape along the driveway across from the Teale Center that was installed in November has been brought "online" and is now operational. We gave the plants several months to get established, then removed the sandbags blocking the inlet in late April. We have achieved our goal of treating all of the stormwater that falls on impervious surfaces in the sanctuary.

Alongside the construction of this rain garden, we have produced an instructional video, in partnership with the communications department, in English and Spanish, on rain garden design and installation. We will use this video in future trainings for landscape professionals, and make it available to the public. Thank you to the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection for funding this improvement at Woodend!



## Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member Capstone Project

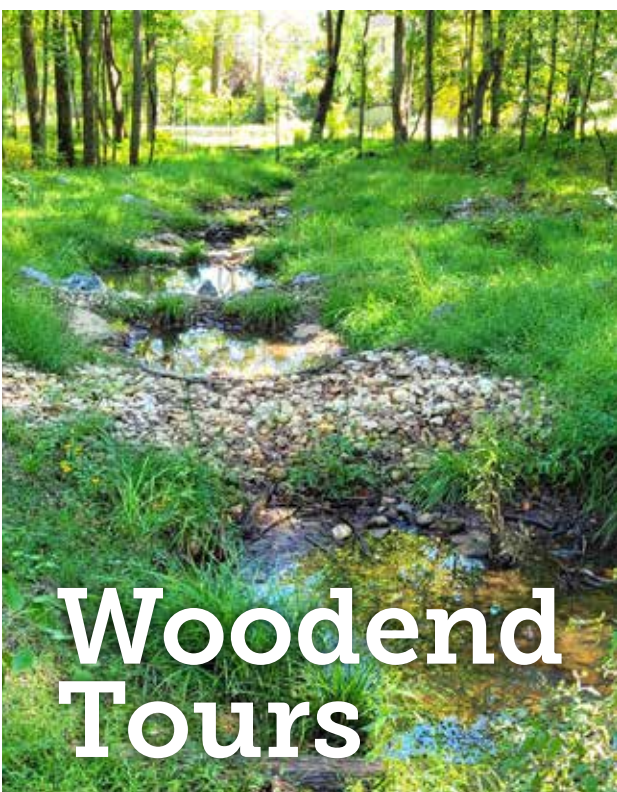
This year's Chesapeake Conservation Corps member, Laura Dennison (third from left), led five of her fellow corps members in the planting of 34 trees and shrubs as well as 64 wildflowers and ferns! As a part of her capstone, Laura removed a plethora of Japanese honeysuckle and multiflora rose in order to make room for natives such as arrowwood viburnum, smooth sumac, hackberry, witchhazel, wild geranium, maidenhair ferns, and more!





## Stone & Holt Weeks Foundation

Nature Forward is grateful to the Stone & Holt Weeks Foundation who provide generous funding every year for summer camp scholarships and field trips. This spring board members of the foundation gave even more by organizing a volunteer work day at Woodend. The group planted Virginia bluebells to replace invasive lesser celandine growing around the historic spring house along the new accessible trail.



**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](https://natureforward.org/woodend-tours).

### **Family Walks at Woodend**

Saturdays, 9-10 am  
July 1, August 5, September 2

### **Saturday Morning Bird Walks**

9-10 am  
July 8, August 12, September 9

### **Forest Bathing with Ana**

10 am-12 pm  
Sunday, July 16

### **Notable Trees of Woodend**

10-11:30 am  
Friday, July 21

### **Natural Habitats of Woodend**

10-11:30 am  
Friday, August 18

### **Native Plant Gardens of Woodend**

10-11:30 am  
Friday, September 15





## Garden Consultations

On-site Garden Coaching and garden design

*Learn more at [natureforward.org/native-plant-gardening](https://natureforward.org/native-plant-gardening)*

**Nature needs you.**  
**Nature needs me.**  
**Nature needs all of us.**

BECOME A MEMBER OF  
NATURE FORWARD TODAY!

<https://natureforward.org/membership/>



Senior/Young Professional \$15

Individual \$50

Family \$65

Nature Steward \$100

Advocate \$200

Sanctuary Guardian \$500

Naturalists Council \$1,000

Preservationist \$1,000+

## Experience Nature with Nature Forward

From Adult Field Trips to Classes to Nature Travel,  
find a wide variety of opportunities to learn about and  
experience nature led by regional naturalists.

**visit [natureforward.org/adult-programs](https://natureforward.org/adult-programs)**



**nature forward**

Connecting people and nature in the Capital Region



# Memorial and Tribute Contributions

FEBRUARY-APRIL 2023

## IN HONOR OF:

**David Cohen**  
Paul Piazza

## IN MEMORY OF:

**Michael Martin**  
Laura Holms

**Tony Mead**  
Kay Martin; Paul Pisano; Peter Salinger; Anna Urciolo

**Connie Nissley**  
Anne Fretz

**Roberta 'Robyn' Owens**  
Lynell Abbott; Dale Richards; Patricia Sutton;  
Joan Wilentz; David & Hatsumi Wilentz

**Nechama Prizel**  
Emma Basch

**Harvey Schreiber**  
David & Naomi Balto; Lizzy & Joel Davis; Jeannie Engel; Jan Feldman; Barbara & Joe Fampus;  
Connie & Michael Gercin; Barry Trebach; Mildred Trebach; Susan Trebach; Jay Zukerman



On Sunday, May 14, Nature Forward staff, volunteers and members, and Cris Fleming's family assembled to celebrate Cris's amazing legacy. A signature element was the dedication of a memorial bench at Woodend Nature Sanctuary in her honor. The ceremony included lovely tributes and cherished memories of our treasured teacher and leader.

With her extensive knowledge of the plant world and all of nature, her devotion to helping others learn, and her wonderful sense of humor, Cris inspired curiosity and passion for the natural world during her many years as an environmental educator, author, and mentor.

## 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 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 canceled 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.

### COVID Policy for 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.



8940 Jones Mill Road  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
[natureforward.org](http://natureforward.org)

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
AUTO  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SUBURBAN, MD  
PERMIT NO. 3385

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PROUDLY PRINTED ON 30% POST-CONSUMER WASTE PAPER. PLEASE RECYCLE THIS PAPER.

# Thank you



**LINK** STRATEGIC PARTNERS

*for your support as a Leading Sponsor of the*

**43<sup>rd</sup>** **Bloomin' Birdathon**