

SUMMER 2024

# nature forward

Q U A R T E R L Y



**Accotink Creek, Little Falls Branch,  
Rock Creek, Seneca Creek, and Sligo Creek**

**Find out how we can take action  
today to protect these local streams**





## NATURE FORWARD QUARTERLY

Summer 2024

### 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. Advertisements or services do not carry the endorsement of Nature Forward.

ISSN 0888-6555

© 2024 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.



Photo courtesy of Friends of Sligo Creek



# nature forward

Q U A R T E R L Y

SUMMER 2024

- 4** From the Director  
Update from Lisa Alexander
- 5** Nature Forward Executive Director  
Announces Retirement
- 6** 2024 State of the Streams  
BY LYDIA LAWRENCE
- 8** Local Author Pens New Children's Book  
About Seeds  
BY LISA GOODNIGHT
- 10** Roller Coaster Ride: The Challenging  
Path to Creating Law in Virginia  
BY RENEE GREBE
- 14** Connecting Youth to Nature  
Preschool, summer camp, family walks and  
more fun!
- 18** Catching up with GreenKids  
Energy Express Presentations at Your Local Library!
- 20** Connecting Adults to Nature  
Check out our Adult Nature Programs, Natural History  
Field Studies and Nature Travel opportunities
- 25** Volunteer Corner
- 28** Nature Travel
- 30** Bilingual Bird Walk
- 32** Master Naturalist Program
- 34** Restoration Update
- 39** Tributes  
February–May 2024
- 39** Registration information  
Your questions about registering, answered!



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
L I S A   A L E X A N D E R

## Summer Love

Summer makes it easy to love nature! All around us, the natural world is literally abuzz. Baby birds are fledging. Bees, butterflies, flies, and moths busily carry pollen grains from plant to plant – ensuring fruits and seeds will follow. There is so much photosynthesis going on you can practically feel the trees sequestering carbon, turning sunshine into sugar, and releasing oxygen into our air.

And summer is a season when Nature Forward does some of our best work! I can't wait for summer campers to arrive at Woodend Sanctuary. From June through August, our headquarters comes to life with hundreds of children who spend every day outside frolicking in Woodend's restored habitats and building lifetime bonds with nature. I am proud of how many young nature stewards we inspire at Camp Woodend each summer.



The Nature Forward community can also take pride in the impact that our work has across the region. We made great strides for environmental legislation in Maryland, Virginia, and DC - promoting clean energy, native plant gardening, and tree protection bills (see page 12). Learn more about how Nature Forward is letting policy makers know that energy sucking, water polluting, data centers shouldn't be built without stringent environmental regulations at our upcoming Conservation Café (see page 12). And as with all environmental policy, there is more work to do. You can help us and nature by signing up for our Action Alert Network.

Thanks to Nature Forward, our local streams are getting the attention they deserve. Stream valley habitat is one of the most important bird and wildlife corridors and native plant havens in our region. With our newly launched State of the Streams Report, Nature Forward has called policymakers and government officials to attention. We need action now to protect and improve the water quality and stream habitat. This summer you can volunteer as a stream steward, test stream health, take action, and donate to support stream conservation (see page 6).

I was thrilled to help mark the start of our regional tree planting project for underserved communities throughout the DMV, sponsored by the US Forest Service. I joined our Restoration Team at a low-income housing community in Virginia to plant the native plant understory with Boys and Girls Club members. The kids were delighted to nestle baby plants into the soil, learn that mighty oaks grow from acorns, and make leaf rubbings to record their afternoon communing with nature. Read more about how Nature Forward is taking the lead as one of the first organizations to get trees in the ground through this US Forest Service grant program (see page 35).

You might have heard word that I'll be passing the torch at Nature Forward early next year. For the next six months, I look forward to staying in touch with you, our valued members and supporters, as we take Nature Forward into the future. And while we might sometimes mind the humidity and mosquitoes, summer is all about loving nature. Please invite a friend and join us for summer programs (see page 20). I promise you'll meet the coolest people at Nature Forward programs, even when it's hot outside!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Alexander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "L" and "A".



CONNECTING PEOPLE AND NATURE IN THE CAPITAL REGION

# Nature Forward's Executive Director Announces Retirement

Following a career dedicated to helping all people enjoy, learn about, and protect nature, Nature Forward Executive Director Lisa Alexander is retiring after 20 years with the organization, a dozen of them as Executive Director.

"I have decided to retire in January 2025," Lisa explains. "Serving as Executive Director for the past twelve years has been the most rewarding job of my career. I thank the Nature Forward community for giving me the opportunity of a lifetime."

Lisa assumed Nature Forward's top post in 2013 after serving as both Deputy Director and Director of Environmental Education. In 2005, she launched the GreenKids program, an environmental education partnership with public schools that now delivers free environmental education to more than 10,000 public school students across the region each year.

"I appreciate all the ways we've made the DC metro region a better place for nature and people," Lisa says. "We worked together to restore Woodend Nature Sanctuary to create a beacon of access and best environmental practices for the region. We broadened the scope of our restoration outreach, conservation advocacy, and environmental education. Initiatives like our signature Taking Nature Black and Naturally Latinos conferences continue to expand our audience and energize our vision of creating a larger, more diverse community of people who treasure the natural world and work to preserve it."

"Lisa Alexander sparked rebirth at Nature Forward by listening, learning, and imagining what could be and then inviting us to blaze new trails with her," said Nature Forward Board President Nancy Voit.

Under Lisa's leadership, the organization became the first, original Audubon organization in the nation to change its name. Adopting the name Nature Forward signaled that all people are welcome to join in enjoying, learning about, and protecting nature.

Nature Forward's Board of Directors has engaged Koya Partners/Diversified Search Group to help with the selection of a new Executive Director. Koya Partners is a national search firm that specializes in assisting mission-driven organizations like Nature Forward. Koya will help the Board develop a profile of the ideal candidate and then publicly launch the search this summer.

Lisa, whose love for nature dates back to her childhood in suburban Chicago, says her next chapter will include enjoying her family, travel, and, of course, spending more time in nature. While her departure leaves Nature Forward with big shoes to fill, she says she's pleased to report that the organization is on solid financial footing and well-positioned for the future.

"It has been a true privilege to serve on the Board of Nature Forward and witness Lisa's multiple talents," says Nature Forward Board member and Past President Diane Wood. "All of us living in the greater DC region can thank Lisa every day for the many treasured moments we each are able to spend enjoying our natural world."

If you would like to make recommendations for Nature Forward's next Executive Director, or want to be considered for the role, please contact our Koya Partners team directly at [NatureForward\\_ED@koyapartners.com](mailto:NatureForward_ED@koyapartners.com).





# State of the Streams 2024: Protecting Our Waterways

by Lydia Lawrence, Director of Conservation

Shortly into my tenure as Nature Forward's Conservation Director, I found myself sitting in a roomful of leaders of some of the most successful community-based organizations working to protect the Chesapeake Bay. Realizing that we would not meet our 2025 Chesapeake Bay goals, we explored ways to encourage more people to care for the Bay in new ways. One of the most formidable barriers is the fact that most people in the Bay watershed do not live directly on the Bay. As a result, they might not understand why they should care about Chesapeake Bay issues. Additionally, how can average people connect to metrics and jargon like TMDL or MS4 or non-point source pollution?

Conversations like these make me proud of Nature Forward's new State of the Streams Report. State of the Streams is a report that engages people on the Chesapeake Bay's health by focusing on streams that are in their own backyards. The report highlights the health of five streams across DC, MD and VA: Accotink Creek (VA), Rock Creek (DC), Little Falls Branch (MD), Seneca Creek (MD) and Sligo (MD). The scores for these streams are based on four main factors: Water Quality, Habitat/Biodiversity, Climate Resilience, and Access.

Streams are often our first and sometimes only connection to our rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. They are everywhere—by our homes, highways, and stores. Because streams are all around us, they are often the most impacted by the shifting landscapes of our communities and by climate change. As storms become more severe, high amounts of stormwater rush off pavement and erode the banks of our streams. That

stormwater carries litter and sediment pollution from our roads and neighborhoods into our streams, polluting the water and impairing the quality of life for the creatures who live in those streams. Finally, the loss of mature trees around streams in the watershed due to development and invasive plants causes streams to lose vital protection from increased stormwater runoff and more extreme temperatures, causing stream waters to warm to levels harmful to fish and other wildlife.

Our streams need our help! Each of the streams we studied only managed "fair" or "ok" health scores. All suffered from too much impervious surface, not enough tree canopy, and insufficient riparian buffer. All but one stream lost wetland acreage over the last 15 years, which is detrimental to their ability to capture water from storms and carbon in the atmosphere. The quality of wildlife and stream habitat reflected these challenges with most streams scoring poor to moderately poor when it came to fish populations and benthic macroinvertebrates. All these challenges will intensify as our communities contend with population growth and with the worsening impacts of climate change.

Equally important to our scores for Water Quality, Biodiversity, and Climate Resilience is our consideration of Access as a measure of stream health. The Access score is unique to Nature Forward's report card. That's because we think it is important to highlight factors like proximity to parks and trees—assets not equitably distributed across communities despite their importance to the mental and physical health of everyone. According to the Center for American Progress, 74% of communities of color are

## Our State of the Streams Partners



deprived of access to nature compared to just 23% of white communities. The divide is similar by class with 70% of people living in low-income communities deprived of nature compared to 20% of those living in moderate or high-income communities. Our access scores evaluate each watershed on two sub-indicators: tree equity and access to parks. The tree equity indicator is different from the tree canopy indicator that contributes to the report's Climate Resilience score. Rather than measuring and scoring a watershed's tree canopy coverage, tree equity evaluates whether the distribution of the tree canopy within each stream's watershed is equitably distributed. Likewise, access to parks evaluates whether community members in each stream's watershed live within a 10-minute walk to a park.

It is more important than ever that every one of us take action to improve the health of our streams! We can volunteer with local organizations doing litter cleanups or pulling invasives. We can participate in community science with Nature Forward or one of our many watershed partners who monitor stream health through water quality monitoring. We can work with community-based organizations to advocate to local leaders to make smarter land use decisions and to make environmental decisions that improve our streams. Finally, we can contribute what we have and donate to organizations that fight every day for the health of our streams and the well-being of the environment around them. All these actions are essential if we are to make progress in stream stewardship.

Read the full State of the Streams report at [natureforward.org/SOS24](https://natureforward.org/SOS24) and consider taking action by joining one of our community science water quality monitoring teams at [natureforward.org/WQM](https://natureforward.org/WQM). You can also test stream health with our Creek Critters smartphone app. It's a free download through Google Play or Apple's App Store.

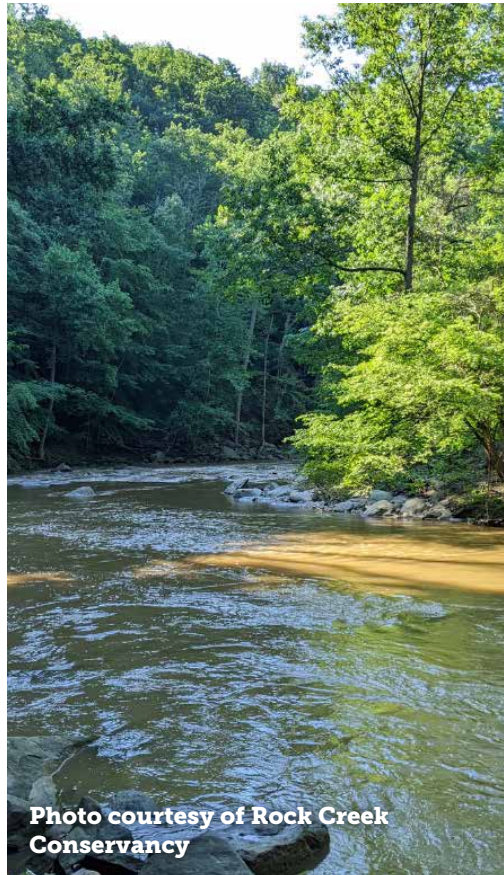


Photo courtesy of Rock Creek Conservancy



Accotink  
Creek, VA

**FAIR**

Score: 66

Little Falls  
Branch, MD

**FAIR**

Score: 74

Rock Creek,  
DC & MD

**FAIR**

Score: 67

Seneca Creek,  
MD

**FAIR**

Score: 68

Sligo Creek,  
DC & MD

**FAIR**

Score: 67

#### GRADING SCALE

0 - 20 Very Poor

20 - 40 Poor

40 - 60 Moderately Poor

60 - 80 Fair

80 - 100 Good

Read the full report



Photo courtesy of Little Falls Watershed Alliance



# So Seedy, So Glorious – Local Author Pens New Children’s Book About Seeds

by Lisa Goodnight

Seeds, glorious seeds, are the inspiration behind a new children’s book written by Nature Forward member Laura Gehl, PhD. Released in April, *Saving Delicia* is a story about a young girl determined to save the Delicia tree, which is in danger of extinction. It celebrates the connections between generations and nature, emphasizing that small steps can have a big impact on our natural world.

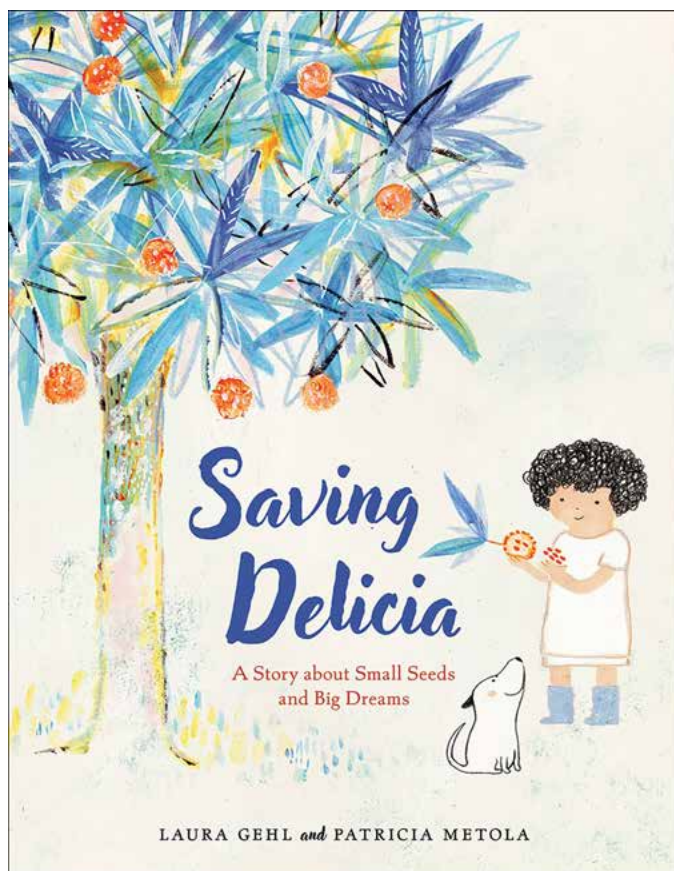
“While the initial title of the book was *Saving Seeds*, I think the title *Saving Delicia* beautifully showcases the fact that the Delicia tree is really another character in the story. Readers care about the tree, just like they care about the human characters, Kari and Old Otis,” Dr. Gehl explains.

“This book will be a fun read for our Oaks, Saplings, and Acorns classes,” says Nature Forward’s Preschool Director, Rose Brusaferro PhD. “We focus on seeds in the fall, when tree and plant seeds are abundant at Woodend. Our preschoolers have made black walnut ink, foraged for and eaten semaras (maple helicopter seeds), and roasted chestnuts.” Dr. Brusaferro is excited to add *Saving Delicia* to the preschool library and more seed saving to the children’s autumn activities.

When she’s not writing, Dr. Gehl enjoys the outdoors, saying one of her favorite places is Rock Creek Park. “I am constantly inspired by what I see on my walks. I’ve now published several books about trees and birds...and I have others in the works!” Look for *Saving Delicia* and other titles by Dr. Gehl in the Woodend Nature Shop.

*“Seeds are fascinating... they have an innate wiring to decide on the perfect time to germinate.”*

—DR. ROSE BRUSAFFERRO,  
NATURE PRESCHOOL  
DIRECTOR



Laura with her family.



Dr. Gehl, who received her PhD. in neuroscience, is fascinated by all branches of science. Her 2021 book *Who is a Scientist?* features STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) experts including Isha Renta Lopez, a NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric) meteorologist and past Nature Forward Board member, who appreciated being part of the project.

"Inspiring the next generation of Latina scientists is a blessing. I am thankful to Laura Gehl for the opportunity to be included in her book, but also because she is inspiring so many people from diverse backgrounds who haven't seen scientists who like them in books before. Representation matters and Laura did an amazing job of including scientists of diverse backgrounds," says Renta Lopez, a children's author herself, whose new book *Sofia and her Bomba Drum*, is available in English and Spanish.

Connecting children to nature and science at a young age remains a top priority for Dr. Gehl. She sees saving seeds as both a fun activity and engaging storyline for kids, but also as a path that connects and empowers children in preserving our natural environment for the future.

"More and more plants and trees will be negatively affected due to climate conditions," explains Dr. Gehl. "If plants die out because of climate change, seeds from seed banks may be able to restart plant species including food crops. Seed banks can and will play an important role in protecting our planet's biodiversity."

Nature Forward runs its own version of a seed bank project. Our restoration team collects acorns in the fall with the help of our nature preschoolers. The team sprouts the acorns over the winter in Woodend's greenhouse, and then plants the oak seedlings all through the nature sanctuary to increase biodiversity. Oaks are one of our region's top food and habitat sources for insects, birds, and other wildlife. Our Woodend Nature Shop also sells custom native seed mixes that you can buy and plant at home or in your community to help increase our region's biodiversity.

"Seeds are fascinating to people of all ages because their small package contains all the genetic information needed to grow entire plants, including trees like the Delicia tree and our mighty oaks," Dr. Brusaferro said. "Let's all save and plant seeds!"



Isha M. Renta and Laura Gehl when *Who Is a Scientist?* was published in 2021.

# Rollercoaster Ride: The Challenging Path to Creating Law in Virginia

by Renee Grebe, VA Conservation Advocate

**F**airfax County homeowner Melinda Soltys needed help. In the face of our climate crisis, converting lawns into more ecologically beneficial alternatives, such as native plant gardens or rain gardens, should be a no-brainer. However, not all homeowner associations (HOAs) allow the reduction of lawns for expanded gardens, and Melinda had run into this issue. In 2022, she approached Nature Forward and a couple of our partners seeking help to introduce legislation to support residents' rights to install conservation-friendly landscaping. Inspired by Maryland's 2021 HB322 which prohibits HOA governing bodies from imposing undue restrictions on homeowners for employing environmentally-friendly landscaping techniques, Melinda wanted to see similar support in Virginia.

With help from our partners at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, we brainstormed next steps. We gave Melinda some advice and encouraged her to talk to her local legislators and cycle back with us. When she returned to us in early 2023, Nature Forward agreed to partner on the issue. With that, we dove into our first experience working to introduce legislation to the Virginia General Assembly.



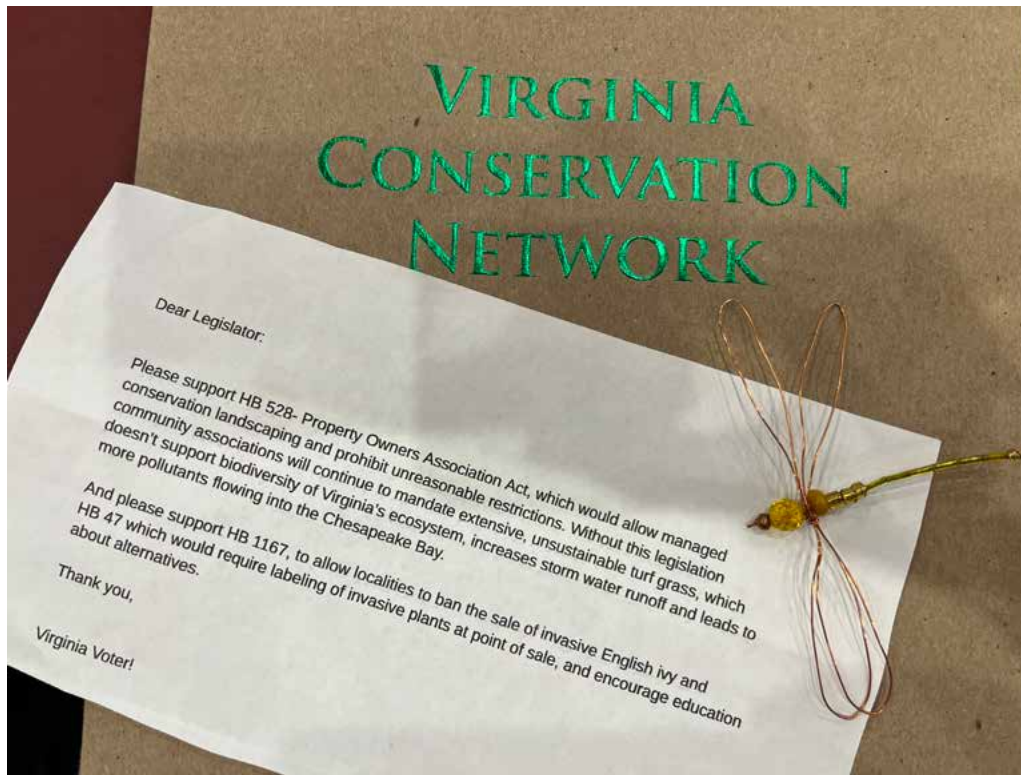
Renee Grebe and Melinda Soltys

This is a promising path to making a new law: identifying a problem, working with partners, building a movement, and collaborating with legislators! Melinda stockpiled research, drafted our initial legislation, and has been our resident (no pun intended) expert. As Nature Forward's NOVA Conservation Advocate, I played the role of connector by drawing in resources from other organizations with legislative experience. We facilitated discussions with a myriad of stakeholders, and we engaged our Action

*"There is something awe-inducing and inspiring about walking the halls of the General Assembly while it is in session. You can drop in on committee meetings and public hearings and literally watch laws being written. You can step up to the mic and speak to the matters at hand, sharing why these issues are important to you and why they should therefore be important to the General Assembly."*

—MELINDA SOLTYS





Network subscribers. By the summer of 2023, we were reaching out to legislators to promote the idea of this bill. We are grateful to Delegate Krizek who ultimately stepped forward to partner with us and patroned HB528 to allow managed conservation landscaping in HOAs.

What a rollercoaster this has been! The General Assembly process is complex and fast moving. All new bills are assigned to be discussed by one of many committees (made up of a small subset of legislators), and then often to one of their subcommittees (with even fewer legislators).

HB528 was assigned to the "Housing/Consumer Protection Subcommittee" of "General Laws." From there, we spent weeks working with Delegate Krizek and his staff, our conservation partners, and the Community Associations Institute to refine the bill's language so that it respected the best intentions of HOAs while allowing the changes needed to strengthen climate resiliency.

Unfortunately, just a day before it was to be heard, language in the bill was changed in a way that undermined its intent. Delegate Krizek wisely pulled the bill and asked that a Housing Commission workgroup improve the bill's language. Although we were disappointed to have HB528 be continued to the 2025 General Assembly session, I will be presenting this bill to Virginia's Housing Commission on June 5th in Richmond. The work continues and we are not giving up! Read the 2024 General Assembly wrap-up at <https://natureforward.org/va-2024-ga-wrap-up/>.





## DC

After three long years of advocacy, the Healthy Homes Act was unanimously passed by DC Council on Tuesday, May 7. This bill will provide the opportunity for 30,000 low-moderate-income families to transition from burning dangerous fossil fuels in their homes to using clean electricity. Thank you to our members and supporters of Nature Forward and the Beyond Gas campaign for your role in this concerted effort!



## Maryland

Thanks to our dedicated Nature Forward members and supporters, we sent a record number of 233 letters to our Maryland state legislators this past MD General Assembly. We were able to pass two of our priority bills which were The WARMTH Act (HB397/SB570) and the EmPOWER Reform (HB864). The WARMTH Act will help low-income families with incentives to transition to clean energy sources. The EmPOWER Reform will work with gas and electric companies to reach MD climate goals. Unfortunately, this session we also had a major environmental loss which was the passage of the Critical Infrastructure Streamlining Act of 2024 (SB0474/HB0579) which will allow data centers to use diesel generators on site. You can read more in our blog posts.

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



Work with Nature Forward  
Conservation on Advocacy & Policy!

Our next Conservation Volunteers meeting will be at Woodend Nature Sanctuary on **Wednesday, July 17 at 1:30 pm**. We will be honoring our volunteers for their work with refreshments and learning about about new opportunities to help serve Nature Forward's mission. For more information contact, Jamoni Overby ([jamoni.overby@natureforward.org](mailto:jamoni.overby@natureforward.org)).

## CONSERVATION CAFÉ



TUESDAY, JUNE 4 • 7:00-8:30 PM • VIA ZOOM

### Data Centers and local National Parks:

### DO THEY COMPUTE?

Come hear from guest speaker:  
**Kyle Hart, Mid-Atlantic  
Program Manager  
National Parks Conservation  
Association**





# Stream Science

## Spring Water Quality Monitoring

This spring, Nature Forward volunteers monitored 28 stream sites in Washington DC, and Montgomery, Prince George's, and Howard Counties. As of this writing, team leaders have reported data on 27 sites where 182 volunteers spent 648 hours conducting aquatic macroinvertebrate surveys and habitat assessments.

In April, many of our volunteers monitored multiple stream sites and engaged nearly 250 community members on stream health issues.

Do you live near...

Dark Branch, Upper Rock Creek, Great Seneca Creek, Little Seneca Creek, Cabin John Creek, Little Falls Branch, Muddy Branch, Watts Branch Lower Rock Creek, Northwest Branch, Sligo Creek, Paint Branch, Hawlings River, Middle Patuxent River?

Visit our WATER QUALITY MONITORING WEBPAGE to view volunteer-generated data for these streams and to learn more: [natureforward.org/program/water-quality-monitoring](https://natureforward.org/program/water-quality-monitoring).

*Since the early 1990s, Nature Forward community scientist volunteers have been collecting data to help assess the health of our region's streams.*





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

SCAN TO FIND FAMILY PROGRAMS



nature forward  
preschool



- ✓ Nature-based, child-led experiences
- ✓ Academic excellence and engaged learning
- ✓ Focused on whole child development

Find out more, schedule a tour, or enroll at  
**[natureforward.org/preschool](http://natureforward.org/preschool)**

## Birthday Parties at Woodend



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

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



# Nature Educators Reach Thousands this Spring

Nature Forward's Youth Programs staff are wrapping up a terrific academic year of school programs and gearing up for summer camp! Over 1,500 elementary school students visited Woodend during 71 field trips this year, including 50 free programs for public schools and eight programs specifically for students with disabilities. These students explored habitats, learned about life cycles and spent time just being kids in our Nature Play Space.

Through relationships with the Montgomery Housing Partnership and Beacon House, we delivered 30 programs for children living in affordable housing communities, including bringing worms, feathers and furs to their classrooms to increase their comfort with nature and welcoming them to Woodend to explore under logs and dip nets into the pond. Our nature educators also provided 80 lessons to afterschool programs in Title 1 elementary schools through the Excel Beyond the Bell program. These programs focus on getting kids outside and away from screens after long days in the classroom.

Looking ahead to summer, we have awarded 32 Camp Woodend scholarships! These programs are made possible by the generosity of the Dorothy Espinoza Schneider Field Trip Fund, the George Preston Marshall Foundation, the Clark-Winchcole Foundation, and the Stone & Holt Weeks Foundation.

*Camp Woodend starts June 17.*

*A few spots remain! Visit [natureforward.org/summer-camps](https://natureforward.org/summer-camps) to register or email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org) to see what camps are available.*

## Family Walks at Woodend

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

We have programs for families! On the first Saturday of each month, join us for a family "Walk in the Woods" at Woodend. For Earth Month, our Naturalist Ambassador Allie Chamot collaborated with Master Naturalist Frank Sanford to offer our first bilingual family walk in Spanish and English. We'll do another bilingual walk **June 8 - FREE**. All are welcome! Regardless of what languages you speak, you're sure to learn a lot. Register at [natureforward.org/children-families](https://natureforward.org/children-families).







# Nature Preschoolers on a Walk in the Woods

Nature Forward photographer Ben Israel captured these images of youngsters in our Saplings preschool program exploring Woodend Nature Sanctuary during a spring forest walk. Preschoolers in both our Saplings (for ages 3 and 4) and Oaks (for ages 4 and 5) programs have lots of time outdoors enjoying free play, songs and stories, hands-on activities and much more. Both programs help children gain the social, emotional, and early literacy skills that prepare them for success in kindergarten. Researchers have found that outdoor experiences help boost a child's cognitive and behavioral development and physical and mental health setting the stage for a lifetime of happiness, creativity, and resilience.







## Preschool Enrollment Now Open!

Visit [natureforward.org/preschool](https://natureforward.org/preschool) to learn more and apply for the 2024–2025 school year.





# Energy Express Presentations at Your Local Library!

Started in 2017, Energy Express is a partnership between Nature Forward, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, and Montgomery County Public Libraries. These presentations, created and led by high school students enrolled in the year-long Peer Outreach with Energy Resources (POWER) program, take the annual Summer Reading Program and SUPERCHARGE IT! Get ready to embark on an exciting, energy-saving journey! Our presentations are jam-packed with interactive activities that will make you a pro at conserving energy. Building on the summer reading theme, "Adventure Begins at the Library," these presentations will take us around the world in search of renewable energy knowledge, complete with cool giveaways to help you keep the energy savings going at home. The presentation schedule is included below. Find one near you and come join the fun!

<b>Tuesday, July 9</b>	<b>11AM @ Aspen Hill Library 2PM @ Davis Library</b>
<b>Thursday, July 11</b>	<b>2PM @ Germantown Library</b>
<b>Tuesday, July 16</b>	<b>11AM @ Rockville Library 2PM @ Gaithersburg Library</b>
<b>Thursday, July 18</b>	<b>11AM @ Potomac Library 2PM @ Marilyn Praisner Library</b>
<b>Tuesday, July 23</b>	<b>11AM @ Olney Library 2PM @ Maggie Nightingale Library</b>
<b>Thursday, July 25</b>	<b>11AM @ Quince Orchard Library 2PM @ Wheaton Library</b>



Presenters prepare for a fun-filled Energy Express presentation!



Participants experience energy efficiency by powering lightbulbs with their own strength!



We are grateful to everyone who supported the 44th  
**nature forward birdathon**

*Special thanks to sponsors:*

**Dr. Linda Lear & Mr. John Nickum**



**Sandy Spring Bank**



**Scarlett**



Photo by Jane Gamble



# Wander into the Wild Side 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.

## 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 301-652-1851 or email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org)

SCAN TO REGISTER



### Meeting Trees at Carderock

Tuesday, June 4 (10 am-12:30 pm)

Leader: Marney Bruce

Location: 3rd parking lot upriver at Carderock, MD

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Ever wanted to learn more about your local trees? Take a deep dive into tree identification, habitat, and ecology all around the parking lot off the tow path at Carderock. Join our tree-hugging leader for an introduction to the many trees and habitats that surround the parking lot. Easy, level terrain suitable for those with disabilities. Don't expect an aerobic workout!



### Summer Birding Strolls

A: Saturday, June 8 (7-9:30 am) – Pine Lake at Wheaton Regional Park (Leaders: Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon)

B: Tuesday, July 2 (8:15-10:45 am) – National Arboretum (Leader: Paul Pisano)

C: Sunday, August 11 (7-9:30 am) – Hughes Hollow (Leaders: Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon)

D: Monday, August 19 (7-9:30 am) – Occoquan Bay NWR (Leader: Paul Pisano)

E: Saturday, August 31 (8-10:30 am) – Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens (Leaders: Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon)  
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 beginner 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.



## Trees through the Season at Turkey Run Park

**Wednesday, June 12 (10 am-1 pm)**

**Leader: Bradley Simpson**

**Location: Turkey Run Park, VA**

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

Join our final walk of a March-June series enjoying the progression of spring. Habitat Manager Bradley Simpson will lead you through tracking the seasonal flow as spring transitions into summer. After visiting the same location multiple times throughout the season, Bradley—and those who have joined him! – are primed to observe the changes over time, and to cultivate a keener understanding of the dynamic forest ecosystem—and the trees within. First-timers welcome! The natural surface trails, which will include some fairly steep uphill/downhill, may be muddy and/or slippery. Depending on the route and water levels, there may be a stream crossing.

## Outdoor Wellness for Mind and Heart: Eco-Mindfulness Field Trip

**Saturday, June 15 (9 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Lorena Saavedra Smith**

**Members \$40; nonmembers \$49**



This life-changing outdoor program is intended to assist participants in navigating life's challenges that can lead to feelings of being unprepared, alone, and overwhelmed, often causing neglect of

personal well-being while focusing on caring for others. This program will teach the "how to" and encourage the participants to take a break from the chaos and focus on themselves, with nature as their ally. Participants will find solace among trees and water, a mindful pause from their worries, and recover the strength to embrace tranquility and harmony and focus on their well-being despite being worried about external turmoil. They will also learn how to find refuge in a supportive community where they will feel seen, heard, and understood. Together, the participants will cultivate mature compassion, learn how to care for each other, and radiate that compassion out of their inner circle and the environment. They will leave this program encouraged, knowing that nature stands as a loyal friend among life's challenges. This program is geared towards environmental activists and advocates, and is intended as a continuation of the month-long Eco-Mindfulness Series.

## Introduction to Inks and Watercolors in the Field

**Sunday, June 16 (10 am-12:30 pm)**

**Leader: Jen Brown**

**Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary, MD**

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

We're happy to offer this introductory workshop where you'll learn how to create sketches using ink and a limited number of watercolor pencils. This approach is especially useful if you want to do field sketching as you only need to carry your journal and a few supplies in your backpack. Nature Forward member and artist Jen Brown will guide you through the following—ink techniques, color mixing, and shading. This tutorial will be based at our Woodend Sanctuary where our native plant gardens will offer many eye-catching late spring blooms. A list of suggested materials for this program will be sent two weeks in advance.

## Summer Shuffles Along the Canal

**Wednesdays, 9-11:30 am**

**A: June 19 (Carderock Recreation Area)**

**B: July 17 (Swains Lock)**

**C: August 28 (Violette's Lock)**

**Leader: Genevieve Wall**

**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 spots along the Potomac River Parkland. We'll stop often to observe birds, wildflowers, butterflies, dragonflies, snakes, and whatever else we may find underfoot or overhead.

## Summer Pond Life

**Sunday, June 23 (9-11:30 am)**

**Leader: Lisa Shannon**

**Location: Patuxent North Tract, MD**

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

Come join Lisa Shannon and Rob Hilton at Rieves Pond at Patuxent North Tract. We'll be looking for dragonflies and damselflies, of course, but also warblers, frogs, butterflies, plants, and anything else that catches our eye at this quiet green refuge within a refuge.



# Tours at Woodend Nature Sanctuary

## Family Walks in the Woods

**Saturdays: 6/1, 7/6, 8/3, 9/7 (9-10 am)**

**Members \$12 a family; nonmembers \$20 a family**

Join expert naturalists 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. Only register one adult when signing up.

## Saturday Morning Bird Walk

**Saturdays: 6/8, 7/13, 8/10, 9/14 (9-10 am)**

**Members \$12; nonmembers \$16**

Join enthusiastic birders at Woodend to learn birding basics. You will learn binocular basics and how to identify common birds as well as explore the wonders of migration. Second person FREE.

## Natural Habitats of Woodend

**Fridays: 7/19 (10-11:30 am)**

**Members \$12; nonmembers \$16**

Join Nature Forward naturalists to explore the meadows, forests and stream at Woodend. Learn about the work we do to improve our native habitats for our local wildlife.

## Notable Trees of Woodend

**Fridays: 8/16 (10-11:30 am)**

**Members \$12; nonmembers \$16**

Learn about the notable trees Woodend has to offer with Habitat Manager, Bradley Simpson. We will learn how to identify these trees and where you might find them in the wild.

## Native Plant Gardens of Woodend

**Fridays: 6/21, 9/20 (10-11:30 am)**

**Members \$12; nonmembers \$16**

Join Garden Manager Alice Sturm in the exploration of the many native plant gardens Woodend has to offer.

## Botanical Gems in Blockhouse Point

**Thursday, June 27 (9:30 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Carole Bergmann**

**Location: Blockhouse Point Conservation Park**

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

Blockhouse Point Conservation Park has been designated one of the "Best Natural Areas" in M-NCPPC Parks and offers plant enthusiasts a number of special habitats to explore. Our leader—a retired botanist/forest ecologist/naturalist—will lead us on a hike through higher quality forests aimed at beginning to mid-level plant enthusiasts. We'll ID plants along the way, focusing on their seasonal aspects and ecological niches. Expect a couple mile hike on natural surface trails, with some rocky and uneven terrain with uphill and downhill stretches.

## Dragons of the Air

**Thursday, July 11 (9:30 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Lisa Shannon**

**Location: Lake Artemesia, MD**

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

The wetlands around Lake Artemesia 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. Depending on the forecast predicted closer to the date, the start time may shift to 9 am to keep us in cooler, more comfortable temperatures.





## Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

**Friday, July 12 (9-10:30 pm)**

**Leader: Carrie Fitzgerald**

**Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

**Members \$20; nonmembers \$28**

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!

## Midsummer Microbiota

**Thursday, July 18 (6-8 pm)**

**Leader: Rita Peralta**

**Location: Theodore Roosevelt Island**

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

There's a whole world of organisms that we can't easily see. In this leisurely exploration we'll use Foldsopes to look for the microbiota around us. Foldsopes are a foldable optical microscope that allows you to observe those living beings so small they normally escape our awareness. Join naturalist Rita Peralta for an adventure at Theodore Roosevelt Island, where she will introduce you to Foldsopes and explore the microbes in the soil and water that populate the world as we know it. Expect a mixture of paved and natural surface trails; depending on rainfall, some muddy and puddly terrain may be possible.

## How Does Her Garden Grow?

**Saturday, July 20 (9:30-11:30 am)**

**Leader: Karoline Anders**

**Location: Home Garden in Boyds, MD**

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

Here's your chance to visit the home garden of a Nature Forward member who has worked to reduce lawn coverage, increase food and shelter for wildlife, and incorporate native plants whenever possible. Karoline will share her successes and failures while guiding you on a leisurely stroll through her yard. Karoline's half-acre yard includes more than 50 native plant species in multiple sun and moisture combinations, plus an extensive vegetable garden.

## Navigate with the Summer Stars!

**Friday, July 26 (8:30-10 pm)**

**Leader: Carrie Fitzgerald**

**Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

**Members \$20; nonmembers \$28**

Summer is the perfect time to learn about the night sky. In this program, an astronomer from Montgomery College will demonstrate how to find and identify summer constellations as well as how to use the stars for basic navigation. From the lawn of our Woodend Sanctuary, we'll take in the night sky with both a telescope and the naked eye. You'll leave with a star map and an ability to navigate the heavens. Keep your fingers crossed for clear skies!

## On the Wing Along the Canal

**Saturday, July 27 (8-10:30 am)**

**Leaders: Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon**

**Location: Carderock Recreation Area, MD**

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

The varied habitats of the C&O Canal between Carderock and Widewater include Potomac waters, bottomland forests 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!

## Introduction to Dragonflies and Damselflies

**Thursday, August 1 (7-9 pm at Woodend)**

**Sunday, August 4 (9:30 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Lisa Shannon**

**Members \$46; nonmembers \$64**

**Lecture only \$20/\$28**

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. During the evening lecture at Woodend, our leader will discuss ID, biology, and behavior of the more common species of Odonates in our area. You'll join our leader for a morning field trip to the wetland habitats of Pine Lake in Wheaton Regional Park, where all will have a chance to test their identification skills.





## Shorebirds on the Move

**Friday, August 2 (9 am-3 pm)**

**Leaders: Paul Pisano and Cyndie Loeper**

**Location: Bombay Hook NWR, Delaware**

**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.

## Campfire Songs and Stories

**Friday, August 16 (7:30-9:30 pm)**

**Leader: Genevieve Wall**

**Location: Firepit at Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

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

Ah, to spend an evening surrounded by the sounds of summer insects and a crackling campfire at Woodend Sanctuary! This August, we invite you to come together to share nature songs and stories in a circle under the stars. We'll light and tend a fire together, and share some fireside tea and s'mores while listening to tales that relate to experiences in nature—and how they made us come alive. Storytellers and story-listeners alike are warmly welcome. This event is geared towards adults.

## Summer Botany at Little Bennett

**Saturday, August 17 (9-11:30 am)**

**Leader: Carole Bergmann**

**Location: Little Bennett Regional Park, MD**

**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 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, some forested stretches, as well as some uphill and downhill on natural surface trails which may be muddy and/or slippery.

## Sunrise Bird Sit

**Sunday, August 25 (6-9 am)**

**Leader: Genevieve Wall**

**Location: Firepit at Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

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

By late August, often the first whispers of autumn have arrived: a cool breeze, and the beginnings of fall migration. The end of summer can feel like a beginning, too, especially for those whose lives feel the rhythm of the academic year. Enjoy a meditative morning in the forests, meadows, ponds, and edges of the Woodend Nature Sanctuary where we'll tune in to the activity of birds. We'll gather at the Firepit and disperse across the sanctuary for quiet solo observation; then return all together and map out what we heard and when. With a whole group's observations, it's illuminating what patterns and connections can emerge.





# Master Naturalists Tackle a Blair Native Garden Update

In this installment of the Volunteer Corner, we're taking another look at our current Master Naturalist class. Every student is asked to complete a project as part of the class—Diana Colangelo and Lisbeth Hencke worked with Alice Sturm on the Blair Native Plant Garden. They wrote this about their experience:

As part of the Maryland Master Naturalist program, participants must take on a volunteer project that benefits their host site. We chose to undertake a redesign of the Coastal Plain section of the Blair Native Plant Garden at Woodend, which Alice Sturm, Nature Forward's Garden Program Manager, had identified as a priority project. This section of the garden is meant to showcase native plants that grow in Maryland's Coastal Plain ecoregion and inspire home gardeners to incorporate some of these plants into their own gardens. However, many of the plants have become too tall and unmanageable to appeal to the average home gardener, and one of the major goals of this project was to create a plant palette with shorter plants, resulting in a garden aesthetic that would appeal to a broader range of gardeners.

The project has been fun and challenging so far, and we still have a lot of work to do! We started with an assessment of the site, completing a soil texture test (the soil is well-drained silt loam), a test of the water percolation rate (water drainage into the soil is within a normal range suitable for most plants), and a soil compaction test (there were no compaction issues, which means roots have plenty of room to grow!). We also measured the site and created a map of the current garden plantings. We then created a list of native plants we would like to add to the garden. Since we want to create a space that is beautiful, diverse, and provides the greatest benefit to local pollinators and other wildlife, we considered the following criteria:

- Plant species – to incorporate diverse native species from a range of plant families found in the Coastal Plain ecoregion.
- Plant size – to ensure a variety of plant sizes, from ground covers, to grasses, to shorter perennials, to taller perennials (but nothing too tall!).
- Host plants – to support wildlife (including insects!) by selecting plants that are host plants for our local butterflies and moths, such as Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and Gray Goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*).
- Bloom time – to choose plants that will provide blooms and visual interest from early spring to late fall.
- Bloom color – to create a plant palette that will have a wide range of colors, providing a feast for the eyes of both humans and pollinators!
- Growth habit – to balance the need for these plants to “hold their own” against weeds, while not choosing anything that's likely to take over the garden.



Bloodroot blooming early in the spring

We met with Alice to discuss and refine our plant list and then created a layout plan for the garden (in the rain...that's dedication!). Our remaining steps include finalizing the plan, meeting with the Blair family to present the plan and get feedback, recommending installation methods and places to source the plants, prepping the site (weeding, removing plants that are not in the new plan, etc.), and then planting in the fall. We both plan to be involved with this project all the way through planting, and very likely beyond! We hope you enjoy the new garden design of the Coastal Plain section of the Blair Native Plant Garden when you see it in bloom next year!



# 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).**

## Summer Tree ID

**NATH7148E, 3 CEUs**

**Class night and time: Mondays, 6-8 pm**

**Class meetings: June 17-August 19**

**Lectures online via zoom**

**Field trip dates: Saturdays from 10 am–1 pm: June 22 (Patuxent River Park – Jug Bay Natural Area); June 29 (Woodend Nature Sanctuary); July 20 (Little Bennett Regional Park); August 3 (Sugarloaf Mountain)**

**Instructor: Bradley Simpson**

**Members \$380, nonmembers \$430**



Learn about trees, shrubs, and vines in this 10-week intensive course! Taxonomy, plant morphology, and forest ecology will all be explored. The course will focus on the identification of our region's woody plants with the use of local dichotomous keys. Field trips will emphasize plant associations and reinforce the use of keys by highlighting identifying characteristics of various woody plants. Registration closes June 13. Required books:

- Tree Finder: A Manual for Identification of Trees by their Leaves (Eastern US) (Nature Guides) Paperback by May Theilgaard Watts
- Common Native Trees of Virginia by Ellen Powell

- Trees in my Forest by Bernd Heinrich

Recommended:

- Plant Identification Terminology: An Illustrated Glossary
- Muenscher's Keys to Woody Plants: An Expanded Guide to Native and Cultivated Species by Edward A. Cope

*It was such a pleasure to take a class led by Bradley. He impressed me from the first class! I would definitely like to take more classes from him ....because even though I have studied nature all my life, there is so much more to learn!*

—NHFS STUDENT FROM  
WINTER TREE ID CLASS



## Introduction to Fern ID

NATH7142E, 1.5 CEUs

Class night and time: Wednesdays, 6-8 pm

Class meetings: July 10-August 7

Lectures online via zoom

Field trip dates: Saturday, July 20 (9 am-12 pm) National Arboretum, DC; Saturday,

August 3 (8:30-11:30 am) Riverbend Park, VA

Instructor: Kit Sheffield

Members \$210; nonmembers \$260

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 July 8.

Required Textbook:

- A Natural History of Ferns, by Robbin C. Moran

## Summer Bird Life

NATH7116E, 1.5 CEUs

Class night and time: Tuesdays, 6-8 pm

Class meetings: July 9-August 6

Lectures online via zoom

Field trip date: Saturday, July 20 (Little Bennet Regional Park)

Instructor: Gemma Radko

Members \$180; nonmembers \$230



Bird activity is especially busy in the summer, with courting, nesting, and fledging happening in the space of a few short months. Learn about local breeding bird species and their nesting strategies, nests and nestlings, habitat requirements, birding tips, and much more. A field trip to a local park will help participants learn to identify local nesters, their nests, and young birds. Registration closes July 3.

Required Textbook:

- Any good field guide, such as The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America (Second Edition) or the Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America by Roger Tory Peterson

*Kit's obvious joy of ferns and his enthusiasm for teaching about them is certainly a strong point. His depth and breadth of knowledge relative to ferns (their evolution, cultural aspects, medicinal history, origins of their nomenclature, species distributions, etc.) is amazing!!*

—NHFS STUDENT FROM  
PREVIOUS FERN ID CLASS

### COMING IN SEPTEMBER

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

**Wildlife Ecology**  
Sally Valdes

**US Conservation History**  
Eliza Cava



# 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 12-14 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](http://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.**

Last call - *one space left!*

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

**January 31-February 12, 2025**

**Leaders: Stephanie Mason & In-country guide Eddi Recio**

**Cost: \$5,795**

This will be Stephanie's 27th year as a Nature Forward leader to this small, tropical wonderland with amazing plant and animal diversity. Costa Rica's colorful birds—from the elegant Snowcap Hummingbird to rainbow-hued Tanagers to the large, comical Toucans—will turn any nature enthusiast into a bird lover. Our trip will visit moist Caribbean lowlands, Caribbean slope, lush cloud forest habitat at 5,000 feet, and the Cano Negro wetlands in the north. Email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org) to receive a detailed itinerary and registration information packet as soon as it becomes available. Registration and trip deposits will not be accepted in advance of the packet's release.



Mark S. Garland

## The ABCs of Central Italy (Adventure, Birding, and Cuisine!)

**April 29-May 8, 2025**

**Leaders: Paul Pisano & Valerio G. Russo**

**Cost: \$6,595**

Venture into the breathtaking landscape of Central Italy. Your voyage will start in Rome, and tour a variety of Italian national parks that will offer you a first-hand look at the wonders of spring migration in the Mediterranean. Italy's mountains, foothills, wetlands, and coastlines will offer diverse habitat in which we will observe migratory birds, mammals, and other wildlife. While we're enjoying the outdoors, we won't neglect culture and cuisine: this itinerary features archaeology, history, and mouthwatering meals. Destinations include Abruzzo, Lazio, and Molise National Park, Majella National Park, Ventotene, Circeo coastal wetlands, and the Mignone River Valley. Email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org) to receive a detailed itinerary and registration information packet as soon as it becomes available. Registration and trip deposits will not be accepted in advance of the packet's release.

## Upcoming Destinations We're Considering

**Oregon**  
Summer 2025

**Arizona**  
Fall 2025

**Iceland**  
Summer 2026

Got somewhere you'd like us to travel? Let us know! Share feedback and destination ideas with us at [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org).





*Dear friends:*

*There's no wildlife experience on Earth that can match the wondrous experiences of an African safari. The scenery of East Africa is worth the trip on its own, with tree-dotted savannas stretching on for miles and rugged mountains punctuating the horizon in many locations. When you come over a rise and suddenly realize that you're close to a herd of elephants, zebras, giraffes, impalas, or other big mammals, you can't help but feel wonder and awe. Toss in the thrill of spotting predators – lion, leopard, cheetah, jackal, hyena, and others – and each day afield can bring countless highlights.*

*While the big mammals get all the headlines, East Africa supports a dazzling variety of bird life. Lilac-breasted Rollers and Superb Starlings and showy and widespread songbirds. Wet spots harbor many different herons, egrets, waterfowl, flamingos, and shorebirds often side by side with hippos. Glance skyward and you're likely to see soaring eagles, vultures, storks, or swallows. Curious and observant naturalists will also enjoy seeing African butterflies, beetles, frogs, and lizards, and some enormous crocodiles. Cultural experiences are also included, from meetings with pastoral Maasai natives to a wildlife rehabilitation project.*

*You are cordially invited to join Nature Forward for an unforgettable trip in March of 2025 to Kenya, a country long considered the premier safari destination. Our trip is organized by Classic Escapes, a US-based company known for organizing top quality trips to Africa and other locations around the world. Nature Forward has worked with Classic Escapes on all of our previous trips to Africa. Nature Forward Senior Naturalist Genevieve Wall and I will accompany the group and work with an outstanding team of native African naturalist guides. We'll travel in rugged and comfortable safari vehicles, with window seats for all, and stay in wonderfully comfortable lodges, enjoying outstanding meals and service.*

*This will be my 15th trip to Africa's safari region, and I'm just as excited for this trip as I was for my first, nearly 20 years ago. I look forward to sharing magical experiences with Nature Forward members.*

*Asante sana (thank you),  
Mark S. Garland*

## **Kenya: The African Adventure of a Lifetime**

**March 3-15, 2025, with optional extension until March 20**

**Leaders: Mark Garland & Albert Mitcho Karisa**

**Cost: \$12,595, or \$17,590 with the optional extension**

Beloved Nature Travel leader Mark Garland returns for a sweeping, 13-day expedition in Kenya. After you arrive in Nairobi, your adventure will take you to the stunning scenery of Nairobi National Park; to the Yasabara Waterhole, the largest salt-lick in the Aberdare mountains; to the Great Rift Valley, where an ancient geologic fault line divides the landscape; to the biodiverse riparian habitats at Lake Nakuru, Lake Elmenteita, and Soysambu; and to wildlife sanctuaries that will allow you to encounter rare species like Black Rhino, Rothschild Giraffe, and Chimpanzee. You will also visit the Maasai Mara, the "Jewel of Africa," home to 500 species of birds. Along the way, you'll relax in superior accommodations and enjoy traditional Kenyan and Maasai cuisine. This is the African adventure of a lifetime. If you stay for the optional extension, you'll also experience the volcanic hills and rivers of Tsavo West National Park, where ancient baobab trees grow. You'll also visit an underwater observatory to safely observe hippos and crocodiles up-close. You'll end your adventure at Amboseli National Park, where the snow-capped peak of Mount Kilimanjaro towers into the heavens. Register with Classic Escapes by mailing in a registration form found at [natureforward.org/kenya-trip-2025](https://natureforward.org/kenya-trip-2025).





# Join us for a Bilingual Bird Walk June 8

Led by expert naturalist and educator Frank Sanford and Nature Forward Naturalist Ambassador Allie Chamot on a beautiful spring morning, individuals and families enjoyed a bilingual birding experience at Woodend Nature Sanctuary in April. Participants explored trees, birds and other wildlife while using our accessible trail. Our next Bilingual Family Walk is scheduled for **June 8 from 9-10 am at Woodend**. Visit [natureforward.org/bilingual-family-walk/](https://natureforward.org/bilingual-family-walk/) for details. The walk is free of charge. Photos by Ben Israel.











## Woodend Sanctuary & Mansion

[woodendsanctuary.org](http://woodendsanctuary.org)

Social and  
Corporate Events



Photos by Shelly Pate Photography



@woodendsanctuary

# 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 3 pm

October 2024 through May 2025

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

Apply online by July 15, 2024

[https://www.volgistics.com/  
appform/1076886845](https://www.volgistics.com/appform/1076886845)



# SUMMER FINDS AT WOODEND NATURE SHOP

Open daily 11am-3pm | Closed Sunday



Entertain young minds all summer long with our fun, creative and educational gifts.

**Members receive 10% off!**

Visit us at [natureforward.org/shop](https://natureforward.org/shop) or call (301) 652-3606.

**woodend**   
**nature shop**  
BY NATURE FORWARD



# Trees, Trees, and More Trees!

The restoration team has been very busy this past spring removing invasive Japanese maple trees, planting over 400 new trees in the forest, and growing another 500 oaks for future forest restoration efforts! In March and April, staff and volunteers removed about 100 Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) along Woodend's stream. Trees were cut and treated with a localized herbicide so that the roots will continue to stabilize soil along the stream banks. Following the removal of these trees, Nature Forward joined forces with a local high school chapter of the Planting Shade organization to plant 125 pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*) and 125 red chokeberries (*Aronia arbutifolia*). Restoration staff and volunteers also worked along the south fenceline to replace wisteria, bush honeysuckle, and multiflora rose with 100 assorted native trees and shrubs. Another 65 trees were acquired through the MD Forest Service Backyard Buffer Program and a donation by the NOVA Soil and Water Conservation District and planted along Woodend's restored stream. Nature Forward Habitat Manager, Bradley Simpson and Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member, Grace Dho have also started a tree nursery to grow our own plants for forest restoration efforts. Thanks to many donations of acorns in the fall, we have about 500 oak seedlings of various species growing in our greenhouse. They will be added to the forest in the fall and new acorns will be collected to start the process again!

*It's been great to see the forest rebound with the Restoration team's assistance. These projects really highlight the difference between the invasive-heavy sites and the value of the restored sites."*

—GRACE DHO,  
CCCC MEMBER



Oak seedlings growing in the greenhouse at Woodend.



A highschooler from Montgomery Blair high school planting a pin oak at Woodend.



# Grant-funded Community Greening

Our Garden Program had a busy spring delivering green infrastructure projects throughout the region. In Montgomery County, we had a successful season of our Sligo Creek Garden Program, delivering 75 pollinator kits and 10 conservation landscape designs across the subwatershed. Now in its second year, we have planted over 7,000 square feet of pollinator habitat to date, thanks to community members who signed up, to Nature Forward volunteers who assemble and deliver kits, and to our funders—the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. We will deliver our final 75 pollinator garden kits in Sligo Creek this fall.

Meanwhile, our Tree-cosystems project got off to a great start with 175 trees planted at three sites—two multi-family housing communities in Fairfax County and Mount Rainier Nature Center in Prince George’s County. Over the next five years, we will plant 1,000 trees in Justice40 communities across the DMV with funding from the US Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry program. Justice40 is a federal environmental justice initiative which has mapped census tracts that are overburdened and underserved.

Rather than planting trees alone, our project will plant trees in ecological- and social- communities. So we spent April planting thousands of Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*), Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), Foxglove Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*) and more in the understory of newly planted trees to provide “soft landings” for insects to complete their lifecycles. Now we are training community “tree stewards” who will be compensated to care for the Tree-cosystems by weeding, watering, and tracking tree health for the life of the grant.



Grace Dho with members of the Murraygate Village Boys and Girls Club (our tree steward partner) planting on Earth Day;

Looking ahead, this summer we’ll continue to support our tree stewards, and pivot to forming new partnerships for next year’s plantings. Please let us know of places in the District of Columbia, Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties in Maryland, and Fairfax County in Virginia that would benefit from community greening. To see if an area is eligible, or simply to learn more about the Justice40 program, check out the Climate Justice Screening Tool (<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>). Or, just email us and we can check!

Email [alice.sturm@natureforward.org](mailto:alice.sturm@natureforward.org) with your ideas!

# 44th Nature Forward Birdathon Flies High!



The 44th Nature Forward Birdathon was in its last few days when this issue of the Nature Forward Quarterly went to press, so final fundraising totals aren't yet available. However, Development Director Corinna Fisk says participation in this year's event soared to new heights.

"During this Birdathon, we counted more than birds: we also counted more new participants than ever before," Corinna says. "We are so grateful for our long-time Birdathon counters and supporters and our new ones!"

Current and former members of Nature Forward's Board of Directors led by example with one of their biggest and most successful Birdathon counts ever when they gathered at Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens in DC in mid-April.

"With the wonderful and collaborative help of Nature Forward Senior Naturalist Genevieve Wall, we counted 47 individual bird species (and one muskrat), a 35% increase over last year's count," Board President Nancy Voit reports.

"It was a fun time to be out with former board member friends and to make new ones as we supported the Birdathon," adds Gregg Petersen, former Nature Forward Board member and current President of the Howard County Bird Club.

"Staying connected to people and a place we love is a very good feeling," says former Board member Carolyn Peirce.

"The Board Birdathon truly was our mission in action — bringing people and nature together in the capital region," Board member Noel Carson adds.



Nature Forward Board Birdathon Team Members (from left to right) Former Board member Paul D'Andrea, Senior Naturalist Genevieve Wall, Howard County Bird Club President and former Nature Forward Board member Gregg Petersen, Board members Noel Carson, Diane Wood, and Sarah Davidson, former Board member Carolyn Peirce, and Board President Nancy Voit. The team also included Board member Charles Costen-Sumpter.

The enthusiasm behind this year's Birdathon was evident on social media as individuals and teams shared their sightings and drummed up pledges to support Nature Forward's mission work. We appreciate our devoted, seasoned counters and their networks and so happy to welcome all of the first-time participants. Thanks to a generous matching gift challenge by Nature Forward members Dr. Linda Lear and Mr. John Nickum, those Birdathon pledges had twice the impact. Thanks also to corporate sponsors Sandy Spring Bank, The Backyard Bird Feeder, Zeiss, The Backyard Naturalist, and Scarlett Pet Foods.

Nature Forward is so grateful for everyone who contributed to our 44th Birdathon. We look forward to sharing the results from all of our wonderful Birdathon Teams in the fall edition of Nature Forward Quarterly!



## 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 [amy.warren@natureforward.org](mailto:amy.warren@natureforward.org) or apply at <https://forms.office.com/r/uCEmquXkcG>.

## Remembering Edie Daharsh

The Nature Forward community fondly remembers Edith (Edie) Daharsh, a hospice nurse and former CIA employee, who passed away in April of this year. Edie met her husband Mike on an Audubon Naturalist Society/Nature Forward natural history walk called "Geology on the Mall" led by the Geologist of the District of Columbia, Jim O'Conner. Without consulting each other, they subsequently signed up for a series of walks along the Rock Creek Park watershed with Nature Forward. Edie had to miss one, so Mike agreed to retrace the walk with her. They considered that walk their first date which led to a happy marriage that began on April 7, 1990.

Edie and Mike were active participants in Nature Forward programs including saunters, long weekends, and nature travel. Among many adventurous trips they took together, they enjoyed Costa Rica with Mark Garland, Carlos Gomez, and wonderful hummingbirds, Nebraska with Hal Wierenga and Lynn Davidson and a half million Sandhill cranes, and Colorado with Stephanie Mason, Mark England, and rugged peaks and spectacular vistas. Edie participated in the Conservation Philosophy/Nature Writing Book Club led by Kent and Marcia Minichiello for many years. She also helped with data entry for the Water Monitoring Project. For those who knew Edie, Mike welcomes you to add your fond memories at [legacy.com](https://legacy.com). Mike has generously directed memorial gifts in Edie's honor to Nature Forward.

## Nature Forward Legacy Society

Join the Legacy Society\* by including Nature Forward in your estate plans. As Nature Forward celebrates 128 years of connecting DC area residents to nature, we invite you to consider sustaining your support long into the future. Your bequest will help serve this region's growing, diverse community, combat climate change, protect clean water, preserve our green spaces, and inspire the next generation of environmental leaders.



For more information, please visit



Or contact Corinna Fisk at [corinna.fisk@natureforward.org](mailto:corinna.fisk@natureforward.org) or call 301-652-1089.

**\*Nature Forward Legacy Society Members receive a commemorative pin and are invited to major donor programs, walks and special events.**



## 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 2024-APRIL 2024

## IN HONOR OF:

### Jaime Berez & Tali Cohen

Rita Klein

### Lara Campbell

Ruth Poulin

### Carol and Smith Martin

Charles Savoye

### Stephanie Mason

Mary Massey

### Joe Sander

Luise and Stephen Rosoff

### Bradley Simpson

David Cohen

### Katrina Weinig

Ralph Cunningham

## IN MEMORY OF:

### William 'Bill' Adams

Joyce Ben-Ezra; Daphne Byron; Judy Cohen; Caren & Marc Demel; Mark England; Susan & Chris Geller; Don & Marcia Goelman; Alice Gitchell; Rene Hales; Judy Kane; Stephen & Marilyn Kaplan; Chris Kelly & Peter Sacks; Linda & Doug Kinney; Kathleen Lake; Susan Masback; Martha Morris; Peninah & Hal Neimark; Paul Pisano; Shan Quinn; Jonathan Riegel; Martha & Steve Robertson; Leon Sachs; Renata & Steve Shore; Liz Rothberg-Smith; Hannah Smith; Marcie Sponholtz; Cynthia Steele; Robert Steele; Kimberly Strong; Wendy Strong; Sarah Tamor; Patricia Thomas; Friends from the College of Fine Arts

### Don Messersmith/ Crowder-Messersmith Fund

Janet Ady; Joy Chapper; Hartmut Doebel; Susan Hunt; George Jett; Dalia Marciano-Austin; Debbie Payton; Ralph & Norma Wellens

## 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, with directions, 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 12 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

Please stay home if you are sick. Nature Forward follows CDC guidelines for isolation and masking after a positive COVID test. Policies are subject to change.



**nature forward**

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

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



CHEVY CHASE  
LAKE

# SUMMER SOUNDS

*Live Music • Specialty Wine & Beer • Gourmet Food & Snacks*

EVERY THURSDAY  
THROUGH JULY 25TH  
6:30 - 8:30 PM

CHEVY CHASE LAKE TOWN SQUARE  
8525 CHEVY CHASE LAKE TERRACE

FREE  
Admission



Reserve  
your spot

 BOZZUTO