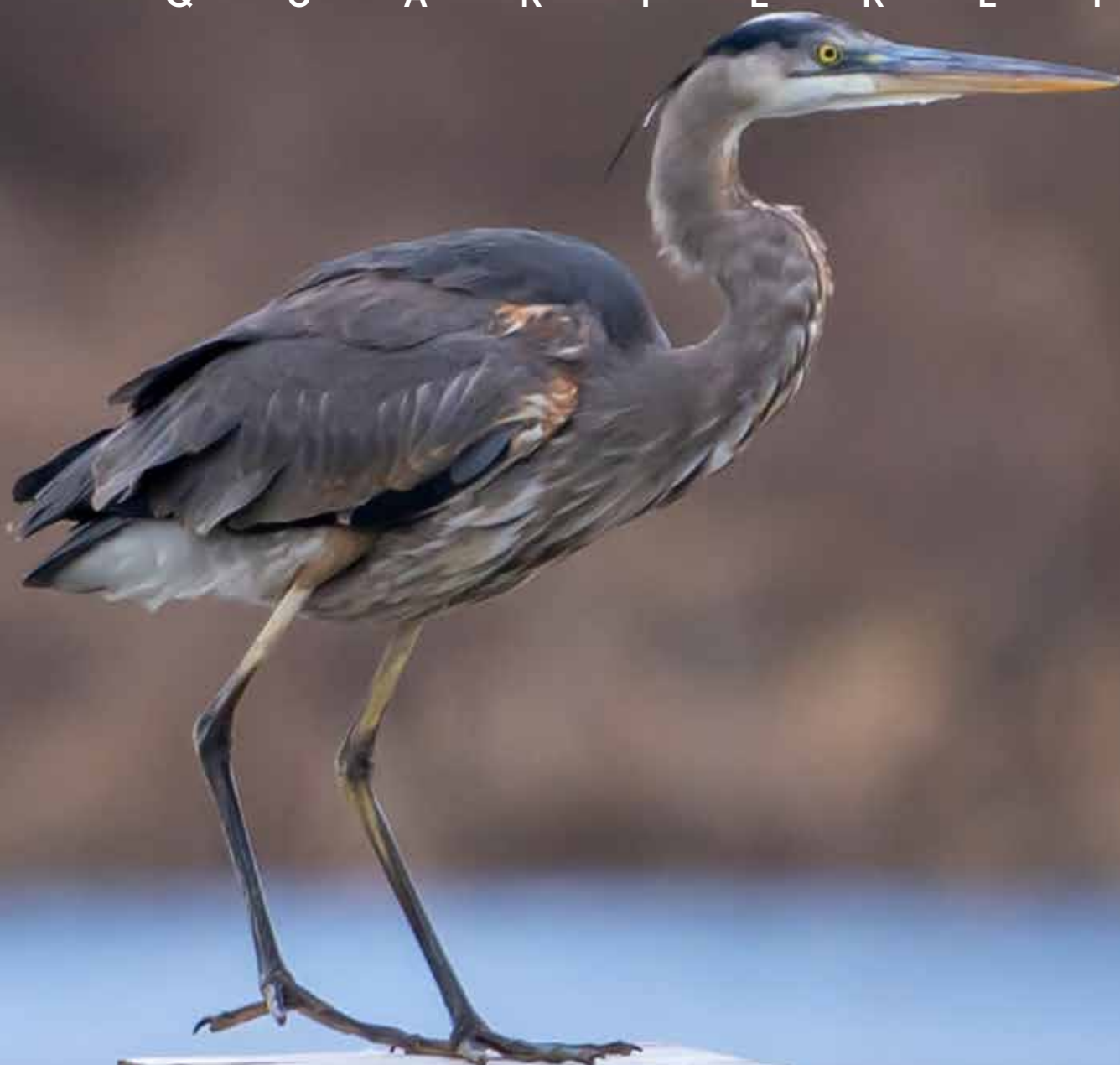


SUMMER 2025

# nature forward

Q U A R T E R L Y



**Crisis and Hope: The State  
of America's Birds**



#### ON THE COVER

Great Blue Heron by Ana Ka'ahanui/  
Capital Nature

#### NATURE FORWARD QUARTERLY

Summer 2025

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
A L I S O N P E A R C E

**Speak Up, Rest Up, Repeat**

As summer approaches, I look forward to slowing down a bit. With Earth Day events and tree planting done, I plan our family vacation and long weekends at our cabin in Shenandoah. But this year, I am having trouble tapping into “rest mode” to recharge my energy for the work of environmentalism and education. This is surely due to the increased responsibilities that come with my appointment as Nature Forward’s Executive Director. But it’s also from the news I hear on NPR during my short commute to that job. Every day brings a fresh assault on one or more of my core values. Every car ride sends me into existential fretting about the world my children will live in as adults.

Much of my fretting relates to our ecological future. So many of the environmental movement’s hard-won achievements are being dismantled as quickly as a toddler can upturn a bowl of cereal. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), passed in 1918, was the key accomplishment of our organization and its sister Audubon Societies in their earliest years. In April, the Department of the Interior hobbled the regulatory power of that Act when it issued a legal opinion that the MBTA does not apply to the preventable killing of migratory birds resulting from industry hazards such as open oil waste pits or unmarked power lines. The Endangered Species Act (ESA), enacted in 1973, has been a powerful lever for protecting threatened species. The US Fish and Wildlife Service moved to rescind the regulatory definition of “harm” in the ESA to eliminate impacts to habitat essential to species survival. The creation of the National Climate Assessment in 2000 by congressional mandate was a major landmark in our efforts to understand climate change drivers, impacts, risks, and responses. Though 2024 was the hottest year on record, the administration halted work on the next climate assessment by summarily dismissing the over 400 volunteer scholars who are its authors.



What can we do in the face of these rollbacks? Nature Forward will continue to call upon legislators, industry, and every citizen to recognize our moral duty as ecological actors. We must insist on economies, communities, and ways of living that protect human health and leave room for other species to survive and thrive. We cannot abdicate responsibility for pollution, habitat degradation, and wildlife mortality with statutory loopholes any more than my teenager can get away with blaming the mess in the kitchen on the dog. We will continue working hard to ensure that all students in the DC region are environmentally literate and prepared to help find solutions to climate change and species loss. I hope that you will enjoy reading about those efforts in the pages that follow and that you will support Nature Forward at this critical time with donations, advocacy, and volunteering. Together, we can keep the environment at the forefront of public conversation. I hope you’ll also join us out on a trail somewhere—to rest and reflect in the presence of nature’s miracles—and recharge your energy for the work ahead.

Thank you for helping us move Nature Forward,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Alison Pearce".



CONNECTING PEOPLE AND NATURE IN THE CAPITAL REGION

# Taking Nature Black 2025: A Powerful Force for Environmental Justice

In a political climate that has forced some organizations to retreat from inclusion and environmental justice initiatives, Nature Forward's 2025 Taking Nature Black Conference stood as a beacon of Resilience and Reclamation. Using that theme, the March event, brought together nearly 600 attendees from 30 states and as far away as Uganda, demonstrating the growing reach of this premier environmental forum.

"This conference is proof that together we are a powerful force," declared Wawa Gatheru, Founder of Black Girl Environmentalist and one of six distinguished keynote speakers who addressed the four-day conference. Other thought-leaders included Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr. (Hip Hop Caucus), Dr. Jylana L. Sheats (Tulane University), Dr. Carolyn Finney (author of "Black Faces, White Spaces"), Matt Scott (Project Drawdown), and Dr. Mustafa Santiago-Ali (National Wildlife Federation).

Over the course of two virtual conference days, an in-person day in downtown Silver Spring, and a day of outdoor nature experiences, Taking Nature Black featured impactful discussions on critical topics including "Building Floodwise Communities" and "Restorative Park Engagement: Addressing Intersectionality." "It was an honor and joy to hold sacred space with you," said Hope Khodaei, a panelist for the "Honoring Our Ancestors: Land and Labor Acknowledgment" discussion. "I was inspired by the experience."

Another standout element of the event was its celebration of youth. Students from DC's Anacostia High School shared moving poetry and insights from their book "Young Voices of the Anacostia River: Exploring Black Roots to the Eastern Shore and Back." The conference also featured the first-ever Student Climate Competition, showcasing the environment-themed work of students from multiple universities.

"It has been an honor to be an attendee at these conferences and sponsor to provide support for the broad audience that engages at the conference and the networking opportunities in the conservation field," said Carmera Thomas-Wilhite of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Support for the conference reached unprecedented levels with a record 44 sponsors participating, including lead sponsors Howard Hughes Medical Center, The Nature Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land. "Sponsor support of this event changed lives at a time when so many felt defeated and discouraged," said Nature Forward Conservation Director Lydia Lawrence, who served as conference co-chair along with DC Conservation Advocate Jamoni Overby. "Critical spaces like Nature Forward's Taking Nature Black and Naturally Latinos Conferences are not possible without our sponsors' consistent belief in and support of spaces that uplift everyone."

Nature Forward's commitment to these values continues with the Naturally Latinos Conference coming in 2026, followed by the return of Taking Nature Black in 2027. Learn more and stay connected at <https://natureforward.org/conferences/>.



Lydia Lawrence, Mariah Davis, and Jamoni Overby



# Crisis and Hope: The State of America's Birds

This is one of the most exciting times of the year for bird lovers. Spring is when hundreds of millions of birds fly from their southern winter retreats to breeding grounds in the north. However, even as we celebrate the dazzling sights and sounds of spring migration, there is cause for grave concern about the state of America's birds.

In March, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), a coalition of leading conservation organizations, including Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the American Bird Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation, and many others, released "The 2025 State of the Birds Report" for the

Amanda Rodewald of the Cornell Lab's Center for Avian Population Studies.

"This report is a wake-up call for all of us in the conservation movement, and I encourage everyone to read it," says Nature Forward Executive Director Alison Pearce. "As an organization that was founded for the protection of birds, Nature Forward is especially sensitive to the fact that everything we can do to protect birds benefits all wildlife and people."

While the overall outlook for birds is concerning, there are bright spots. Certain waterfowl species have shown resilience over time. Duck species have increased 24% since 1970, and populations of certain waterbirds are up 16%. Much of the credit goes to policy gains like the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Duck Stamp program, and the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill. However, even these population gains have slowed in recent years. And there's another serious threat: bird flu.

Since late last year, American wildlife agencies have reported major die-offs of birds linked to the highly contagious bird flu or avian influenza (H5N1). Ironically, waterfowl and seabirds, the very groups that had shown conservation success, have been particularly affected.

Despite the troubling trends, there is hope. "The State of the Birds Report" emphasizes that targeted conservation works when properly supported. Programs like the American Oystercatcher Recovery Initiative have helped breeding populations increase by 43% over 16 years. Conservation ranching programs have restored nearly three million acres of grasslands. These successes demonstrate the effectiveness of science-based planning and collaborative conservation investment.

"We have clear evidence that conservation works in halting declines," says American Bird Conservancy President Michael J. Parr. "What we now need more than ever are programs and funding that match the scale of the greatest challenges birds face today."



Osprey by Ben Israel

There are several things all of us can do right now to safeguard birds:

1. Reduce window collisions—Colliding with windows kills approximately 599 million birds annually in the US, according to the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Installing window clings or screens helps prevent birds from hitting glass at your home or business.
2. Keep cats indoors—Domestic cats, the largest direct human-caused source of bird mortality, are responsible for an estimated 2.4 billion bird deaths each year, according to the US Fish & Wildlife Service.
3. Clean bird feeders regularly—Backyard birders can take some comfort knowing that songbirds remain at lower risk from H5N1. Still, avian health experts say keeping bird feeders clean helps prevent the spread of other diseases.
4. Create bird-friendly habitats with native plants—Growing native plant species and reducing or eliminating chemical pesticides in your yard helps protect migratory birds.
5. Participate in community science efforts—Through monitoring programs like eBird or the North American Breeding Bird Survey, ordinary citizens can help collect valuable data on the status of bird populations. Programs like Nature Forward's Water Quality Monitoring Program engage people in efforts to improve waterways and habitats.

Perhaps most importantly, Nature Forward members can advocate for strong nature conservation policies. Championing bird-friendly laws like the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was a catalyst for Nature Forward's founding in 1897 as the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia. From protecting ecosystems to sustainable data center development, supporting policies that promote clean air, clean water, climate change mitigation, and habitat preservation are critical to protecting birds, habitats, and people.

"The beauty of conservation is its reciprocal nature," says Lydia Lawrence, Nature Forward's Conservation Director. "Policies that protect birds ultimately create clean air, clean water, and more stable ecosystems that benefit everyone. Likewise, policies focused on human health—from reducing air pollution to preserving green spaces in urban areas— create sanctuaries where birds and other wildlife can thrive."

You can read the complete 2025 State of the Birds Report at [www.stateofthebirds.org/2025/](http://www.stateofthebirds.org/2025/).

*"As an organization that was founded for the protection of birds, Nature Forward is especially sensitive to the fact that everything we can do to protect birds benefits all wildlife and people."*

—ALISON PEARCE,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



American coot by Ben Israel

# GreenKids Celebrates 20 Years of Environmental Education

by Jeff Chandler, GreenKids Director

**L**ike pollinators in a community garden, Nature Forward's GreenKids team is always on the move. From week to week, you'll find us bouncing around the region, from classroom to cafeteria, schoolyard to stream, exploring the world with students to better understand our relationship to it. Between lessons, we stop at Woodend Nature Sanctuary to swap out materials for the next week's schedule, check in with colleagues, and pick up the mail. Earlier this spring, I found tucked inside my mailbox, a clipping from the Audubon Naturalist News (the precursor of this publication) dated June/July 2006, Vol. 32, No.4. The feature article introduced readers to a brand new educational program completing its pilot year—GreenKids.

I smiled as I read: "On one recent afternoon, Westland Middle School sixth graders replicated pollution runoff in a three-dimensional watershed model." Our Watershed Waste Solutions lesson continues to be a foundational introduction to the concept of watersheds and is taught in all four school districts we serve—Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland, Loudoun County in Virginia, and Washington, DC.

I could picture the scene perfectly—students gathered around the watershed model, eyes wide with anticipation, as the simulated rainstorm washed together rainbow sprinkles, cocoa powder, and colorful sugary juice mixes (all representing various forms of stormwater runoff pollution). I could picture it, because in October of 2023, over 17 years after the article was published, I led this exact same lesson for 6th graders at Westland Middle School as an introduction to a four-part weekly after-school club called the Stream Team. Students sampled water quality at Little Falls Branch, just down the street from the school, and created posters to hang in the hallways educating their classmates about the impacts of stormwater pollution on watershed health.



Biology students from Blake High School (MCPS) conduct water chemistry tests during a stream study to assess local watershed health.

Although this lesson has remained a staple, GreenKids as a program has grown and changed considerably since that first year. Now celebrating 20 years, GreenKids reaches more than 10,000 students each year, serving more than 50 schools across four school districts. From Pre-K through 12th grade, we offer hands-on environmental science lessons that bring learning to life for students and anchor their connection to the content in local and personal contexts.

*"Thank you for a wonderful experience during today's erosion learning and experimenting! The students were highly engaged and proud of sharing their knowledge from their science learning in class. The students were excited to participate in the collaborative hands-on portion!"*

—TEACHER FEEDBACK ON GREENKIDS PROGRAM



Fifth grade students at Woodlin Elementary (MCPS) use a watershed model to simulate the spread of pollution through stormwater runoff.



I've had the privilege of leading the program for the past three years, but the echos of impact felt by students and teachers over the past 20 years still make their way back through appreciations and partnerships that have developed throughout the program's history. "Words cannot fully express my heartfelt gratitude," began a teacher's email following a recent Wonderful Worms lesson with their Kindergarten classes. "The students were thoroughly excited and deeply engaged throughout the activities, and the feedback from teachers has been overwhelmingly positive...Experiences like this not only ignite curiosity but also create lasting impressions that they will cherish for years to come. Thank you for making such a significant impact on our school community!"

Following a stream study, a high school biology teacher wrote: "The students had a wonderful time and didn't want to leave the field study. The experience of studying biology in the field and learning about their own community will stick with them throughout high school. Experiences like this will hopefully inspire students to activism and STEM careers."

It's the emails from teachers like these, or the unprompted comments from students to their teachers like, "Can we do this again?! This was way better than writing it down on paper," that let me know we have created something special in GreenKids. The work we do with students not only benefits our environment, but benefits our communities, by encouraging students to make meaning of what we learn in ways that speak to their own identities and experiences. They're invited to explore new possibilities for career interests and to use what they learn to better their own lives and the lives of those around them. Perhaps my favorite student quote so far to sum up how I feel about this work came from an elementary student following an Earth Week event last year. As I collected gloves from a litter cleanup and trowels from a pollinator planting, they came up to me and said, "I really liked this because I like doing things that are healthy. My heart feels so kind. This was the best day ever!"



GreenKids celebrates 20 years with an Earth Day event at Rolling Terrace Elementary (MCPS) to plant native plants with 2nd grade students.



# First General Assembly Reflections

by Angie McCarthy, MD Conservation Advocate

When I was in elementary school, I wanted two careers: Britney Spears and a “speecher.” The career that I have made the most headway on is speechin’ and I like to think eight-year-old Angie would be proud of the amount of yapping I did this past legislative session. April marked the end of my first legislative session as the Maryland Conservation Advocate, and I did my very best to protect and advance our environmental goals before the Maryland General Assembly.

From the start of this session, we were all painfully aware of the state’s budget shortfall. However, we could not have predicted the speed and devastating efficiency of environmental policy changes at the federal level. Our state legislators worked hard on offense and defense—but with over 3,000 bills presented, environmental advocates had to keep reminding lawmakers of the names of bills, much less their value. For many folks, the environment is still a nice-to-have, and not a must to protect.

My first time testifying in Annapolis was a test of endurance and thinking on your feet. I was testifying in support of four of Nature Forward’s priority bills in one committee session: the Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather Act (RENEW); the Abundant, Affordable Clean Energy Act (AACE); the Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health (CHERISH); and the Data Center Impact Analysis and Report. The hearing room was incredibly crowded. Every time you got up, someone tried to take your seat.

*“Sometimes the bare minimum—just showing up—is really all it takes. It is a good reminder to us all who want to do something but are worried about doing it “wrong.” Don’t let perfection be the enemy of progress.”*

—ANGIE MCCARTHY,  
NATURE FORWARD  
MARYLAND CONSERVATION  
ADVOCATE



Angie McCarthy (middle) in the hallway of the packed hearing room, with advocates Dave Arndt and Anna Mudd, as part of the coalition to get responsible data center development.

If you have ever watched public hearings or maybe even testified yourself, you know most of the day is repetitive. A good testimony panel includes many different perspectives. While I meticulously prepped my two-minute testimonies at home, some of the planning was wasted. I had to edit myself on the fly, so I didn't repeat what other speakers had said. The last thing I wanted to do was make members of the Education, Energy, and Environment committee feel I was wasting their time. Speakers were reminded multiple times that there were more than 100 people signed up to testify, and that brevity was encouraged.

Speaking on behalf of Nature Forward, my testimonies were fact-based. I didn't have the anecdotes that private citizens might include. I could often scratch out whole paragraphs of my testimony. While this might seem like a waste of my time, it felt good to hear from other folks who are thinking similarly to Nature Forward. For my last testimony on the Abundant and Affordable Clean Energy Act, I had already testified twice and committee members were familiar with me. When I said, "my name is still Angie McCarthy, and me too," I was met with thunderous applause for simply agreeing with the previous speakers. Sometimes the bare minimum—just showing up—is really all it takes. It is a good reminder to us all who want to do something but are worried about doing it "wrong." Don't let perfection be the enemy of progress.

This General Assembly was a tough session marked by few victories—we had four priority bills. Only one of them, the Data Center Study Bill, passed to the Governor's desk in something resembling its original form. CHERISH, our purely environmental justice bill, was struck down before Crossover Day. AACE, a bill that would have made getting clean energy onto our grid easier and more affordable, was stripped down for parts and distributed amongst the Governor's suite of bills. RENEW, a mechanism to make fossil fuel polluters pay for their role in advancing climate change, had its teeth removed and passed through as a study, rather than a means of getting more money towards resiliency in the State. If you have an idea of why the State would want to say no to nine billion dollars, my inbox is open.

In the coalition debriefs since session, I have heard a refrain that I am choosing **not** to believe. "Environmentalists get one cookie a session." Apparently, our one cookie was the Data Center Study Bill. Disappointingly, Governor Wes Moore signaled from the beginning that he was going to be an "adult" about the budget, thereby cutting crucial environmental funding and working to kill bills carrying high fiscal notes. I, like many of you, choose to believe otherwise—being an adult is caring about energy independence, climate resilience infrastructure, and clean air. I will be back next session with more friends in the Statehouse, deeper knowledge of the policy issues that will hit Marylanders the hardest, and a hunger for more than just one cookie.



Angie McCarthy (third from left), testifying to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee on February 13 in support of the Data Center Study Bill. Amongst four priority bills, this is the bill that passed the "easiest." She testified in support of two more bills that day.



# Legislative Updates in the DMV

## DC (by Jamoni Overby, DC Conservation Advocate)

In April, Nature Forward celebrated all the work that the Choose Clean Water Coalition's DC workgroup has accomplished in just six months of its formation. Together with 30 other DC intersectional environmental and public health professionals, we held a workgroup luncheon at The Arc in Southeast Washington, DC. Hosted by Nature Forward's DC Conservation Advocate and CCWC's first DC Lead, Jamoni Overby led the group in tackling clean water issues that impact DC residents. From rivers and streams to lead in drinking water, we tackled what the words "clean water" mean to the District. We had a presentation from DC's Department of Energy and Environment on the city's commitment to environmental equity and a "State of the Rivers" presentation from the Anacostia and Potomac Riverkeepers, Trey Sherard and Dean Naujoks.

Conversations were sparked by a dynamic panel led by Tene Lewis and Dr. Janet Phoenix from the Campaign to Reduce Lead Exposure and Asthma about the public health implications of water pollution, and their efforts and needs in advocating for the passage of the Lead-Free DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2025.

The luncheon closed with a presentation on the Bay Beyond 2025 and call to action, underscoring the Coalition's commitment to inclusive advocacy and a healthier Bay.

In the next month the workgroup will collaborate on comments on the Poplar Point Redevelopment Plan and the DC FY26 Budget.



Jamoni introducing panelists for The Campaign to Reduce Lead Exposure and Asthma.

## Virginia (by Renee Grebe, VA Conservation Advocate)

Some years, environmental policies are strengthened, and in others it's a win to prevent rollbacks of the prior years' gains. The latter is what we saw this past General Assembly in Virginia. Unfortunately, on our key issue of acknowledging and addressing the impacts of data centers, no meaningful legislation was passed.

Our partners at the Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) help us track environment bills being considered. Of the 110 bills that VCN supported, only 33 were signed by the governor (with many more passed but then vetoed or simply not signed by the governor). Of the 35 bills that VCN opposed, 32 were defeated, while the others were neutralized through changes made along the way.

Three topics worth mentioning are:

- **Data centers can continue on, unregulated.** The 2024 General Assembly declared it needed more data to regulate data centers. Later that year, the JLARC report was released, stating that our energy needs cannot keep up with data center demand. This has implications across the spectrum, including on ratepayer impacts through increases in monthly bills. And yet, 2025 passes with no meaningful progress on regulating impacts.
- **In 2027, garden centers and nurseries will have to display signage about invasive plants.** This is a big win in the education of residents about the impacts of their purchase decisions. The law will go into effect in 2027.
- **Locales across the state can now create and use a tree replacement fund.** While Fairfax County has the authority to do this, no other locales did. This change allows all other locales to be able to implement a tree replacement fund (without having to implement the broader tree conservation code that Fairfax County references). We appreciate this as a big step forward in expanding our tree canopy statewide.

This coming November, Virginia will elect a new governor, and the environment will certainly be on the agenda.

# Stream Science

## Spring Stream Macroinvertebrate Surveys Offer “Excellent” News

While we are still awaiting data for a handful of our 27 Water Quality Monitoring (“WQM”) sites and many of our streams remain in fair or poor health, there is some good news. This spring, SIX of our WQM sites had Index of Biological Integrity scores of 5.00, indicating excellent stream health.

Nature Forward volunteers sample all monitoring sites for benthic (bottom-dwelling) macroinvertebrates three to four times each year. The macroinvertebrates are identified and counted before being returned to streams. Because macroinvertebrates exhibit varying levels of sensitivity to pollutants and other stressors, they serve as indicators of stream health. Several metrics are calculated from the data to come up with an Index of Biological Integrity (“IBI”) score between 1.00 and 5.00, with 5.00 as the highest possible score. Based on the score, streams health is rated as EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR or POOR.

So how do we compare with the past couple years?

- In 2023, two sites had an IBI Score of 5.00.
- In 2024, the same two sites had an IBI Score of 5.00.
- In 2025 (spring season only), six sites had an IBI Score of 5.00!

*\* Several monitoring sites reached the EXCELLENT range in 2023 and 2024, but only two sites had the highest possible IBI score.*

Monitoring sites that had IBI Scores of 5.00 this spring included: Dark Branch, Middle Patuxent River, Rock Creek in the Agricultural History Farm Park, Ten Mile Creek, Tributary (unnamed) of Ten Mile Creek, and Wildcat Branch. Wildcat Branch also had an IBI Score of 5.00 during Winter 2025 monitoring.

We don’t have an explanation for this and don’t know if we’ll see additional IBI Scores of 5.00 during the summer and fall monitoring seasons. We will be checking with Montgomery Parks and others to see if they had similar findings.



Dragonfly larva



WQM volunteers search through collections of macroinvertebrates at the Good Hope Tributary of Paint Branch.

Please visit the WQM webpage (<https://natureforward.org/water-quality/>) for more information about the program and to view a map highlighting current monitoring data and historical trends.





# 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)

SCAN TO FIND FAMILY PROGRAMS



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

## Give the Gift of Wonder

Nature Preschool offers families a wonderfully unique and memorable early education experience! Is there a child in your life who would enjoy spending their days exploring and enjoying the natural world? Our early childhood programs operate from September through May and include a once-a-week class made for children four-years-old and younger with their caregiver, as well as two drop-off classes for children ages three to five-years-old that run Monday through Friday. Our caring and specialized educators guide children through the seasons as they study flora and fauna, play in mud and snow, roll down hills, climb up trees, dig in the soil, wade in creeks, and so much more. At all ages, these rich sensory experiences lay the foundation for nurturing healthy, happy, and curious people. Inquire with our Preschool Director to learn more about the ways nature-based education helps develop children's executive functioning skills, gross and fine motor mastery, vocabulary, vestibular and immune systems, and other important aspects of growing up.

Please contact our Nature Preschool Director, Rose Brusaferro, to schedule a 30-minute tour of our program at Woodend Nature Sanctuary! Email [rose.brusaferro@natureforward.org](mailto:rose.brusaferro@natureforward.org) or call 301-652-8108.





# camp woodend

BY NATURE FORWARD



**A few spots remain! Questions?**  
Email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org).  
Register at  
[natureforward.org/camp-woodend](https://natureforward.org/camp-woodend)

## **K Camps**

Backyard Birds (Session 3) 1 space

Animal Babies & Meta Morphs (Session 4) 1 space

## **1st/2nd**

Cold Blooded Creatures (Session 1) 1 space

Science Slueths (Session 1) 2 spaces

Nature Detectives & Carnivore Camp (Session 6)

Fairytale Forest 2 & Nature Detectives 2 (Session 6)

## **3rd/4th**

Steam Team 2 & Radical Reptiles 2 (Session 4)

## **5th/6th**

All camps have space except Outdoor Skills & Farm to Table (Session 2), and Woodend Field Scientists & Animal Keepers (Session 4)

## **7th/8th/9th**

Outdoor Explorers (Session 4) 2 spaces



## **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](https://natureforward.org/birthday-parties)



# Celebrating Earth Day with GreenKids at Rolling Terrace Elementary School

Nature Forward celebrated Earth Day by joining Rolling Terrace Elementary for a school-wide celebration and planting event. The day included poetry written and read by students, native planting of shrubs and trees provided through Nature Forward's restoration work, storm-drain painting, and the start of a new composting program! Nature Forward's GreenKids Educators led lessons for second grade classes on the importance of "Tree-cosystems"—a space where trees and understory plants are planted together to benefit both people and wildlife! Students learned about the parts of plants and how each part helps the tree and provides important habitat for wildlife. During the event, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of GreenKids in MCPS and the school system recognized this long-standing partnership with a plaque, presented to Nature Forward during the opening remarks. GreenKids first helped Rolling Terrace achieve the Maryland Green School Award in 2011 and has continued to provide lessons, Green Team activities, and teacher professional development ever since. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Rolling Terrace Elementary and MCPS for many more years to come!










# If you and your family love nature, you'll ♥ Woodend Nature Sanctuary!



Join us for expert-guided family walks to experience the wonders of trees, meadows, streams, birds, insects, and everything else Woodend has to offer!

First Saturday of every month • 9-10AM

Third Saturday of every month  
(Bilingual - English/Spanish) • 9:30-10:30AM

Nature Forward Members  
\$12 per family;

Nonmembers  
\$20 per family



Planning a visit to our  
accessible Nature Play Space?

Stop by during our  
Play Space Naturalist Hour!

Enjoy engaging nature activities  
offered **FREE** on the  
4th Saturday of every month!



10AM to Noon

nature  
forward

[natureforward.org/family-walks-in-the-woods](http://natureforward.org/family-walks-in-the-woods)



# Volunteers Bridge Generations in Nature

This spring, we'd like to shine the spotlight on one of our quieter volunteers. Gail Melson has been sharing her calm enthusiasm with our youth education programs for nearly 10 years! This what she has to say about her experiences with Nature Forward:

*"At the end of an in-school, several weeks long project that involved students planting seeds for a salad, I saw kids getting second and third helpings of a delicious salad they had helped grow."*

—GAIL MELSON

"The best thing about retiring from Montgomery County Public Schools in 2016 was taking the Master Naturalist class at Woodend. That credential for me is aspirational since the natural world is something I'll keep learning about for the rest of my life. Master Naturalists need to contribute volunteer hours every year. Here are a few of my favorite memories. A four-year-old naturalist said to me, 'I heard a barred owl. That bird says 'who cooks for you.' Several times, I've led Montgomery Parks' 55 and better walking club to and through Woodend where they got to see and hear what Nature Forward has to offer. How lucky I've been to have had these opportunities! I look forward to making more memories here in the future."

Thank you for all your help, Gail!



## 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.

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/h64RvRxWau>.

# Savor the Summer Sun this Season!

## 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 Environmental Education office. Questions? Call Pam at 301-652-1851 or email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org)

SCAN TO REGISTER



### Summer Birding Strolls

**A: Saturday, June 7 (7-9:30 am) – Pine Lake**

**(Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon)**

**B: Sunday, August 10 (7-9:30 am) – Hughes Hollow**

**(Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon)**

**C: Monday, August 18 (7:30-10 am) – Occoquan Bay NWR**

**(Paul Pisano)**

**D: Saturday, August 30 (8-10:30 am) – Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens (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 challenging period for nature lovers to encounter birds as they quiet down and move around with greater stealth. Still, the challenge is worth the reward: there is lots to observe, discuss, and enjoy on a summer birding walk, as the nesting, feeding, and fledging stages of life are full of drama, risk, and fascination! 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. This series is geared towards beginning and mid-level birders. Expect some open and sunny field conditions at all of our locations. There will be chances, however, to duck into the shade periodically.

### Botany on Berma Road

**Wednesday, June 11 (10 am-12:30 pm)**

**Leaders: Marney Bruce and Allen Browne**

**Location: Widewater, C&O Canal**

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

Welcome to June! Berma Road is a trail that runs parallel to the Canal Towpath between Widewater and the Stop Gate below Great Falls. On this walk, we'll stick to the shade of the early summer canopy covering Berma Rd, and learn about the trees, wildflowers, ferns, and other plant species we observe on the shady slopes high above the Potomac River. On this afternoon of the full moon day in June, just ten days from the Summer Solstice, take in the wonder, nature, and history of the construction of the Washington Aqueduct.

### Fern Basics and Reproduction

**Friday, June 13 (9:30 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Kit Sheffield**

**Location: National Arboretum**

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

We will learn about the identification, evolutionary history, and myriad reproductive strategies of ferns on a walk along Fern Valley in the National Arboretum. Our walk will cover less than two miles on mostly natural surface trails that have some gentle slope to them.



## Living the Elements Series: Feel Your Fire

**Saturday, June 14 (9 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Lorena Saavedra Smith**

**Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

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

Join us for the second of four Living the Elements sessions at the Woodend Nature Sanctuary, where we will regain awareness of the ancient natural element, fire, whose transformative energy fills us with vitality and health while drawing us closer to our physical nature. Discover within your inner fire the spark of inspiration to overcome adversity. We will be working with the firepit, so please dress accordingly. This is the second of four Living the Elements workshops: we hope you join us for Earth (September 20) and Wind (November 15).

## Butterfly Boot Camp: Hairstreaks

**Lecture: Wednesday, June 18, 7-9 pm**

**(Woodend Nature Sanctuary)**

**Field Trip: Saturday, June 21, 9 am-3 pm, location TBD**

**Rain date June 22**

**Leader: Rick Borchelt**

**Lecture only: members \$24; nonmembers \$32**

**Lecture & Field Trip: members \$48; nonmembers \$68**

The hairstreak genus *Satyrrium* comes into its own in early summer, when many of the univoltine species are on the wing and nectaring at milkweed and dogbane. These hairstreaks can be surprisingly difficult to identify, especially the Striped/Banded duo. Join us for an evening lecture exploring the ID challenges for *Satyrrium* and other hairstreaks, and then for a field trip to see some of the common and not-so-common hairstreaks. Field trip location will depend on what is on the wing after the leader's scouting the week before; it could be Green Swamp on the MD/DE border on the Eastern Shore (about 2 hours from the Bay Bridge) where we could see Coral, King's, Striped, and Banded Hairstreaks, and a good possibility of seeing Great Purple Hairstreak and maybe even Bronze Copper as we work our way back to DC. Or we might opt for Eastern Neck NWR on the upper Eastern Shore. Red-banded and Gray Hairstreaks are likely at both locations. This is the second of three Butterfly Boot Camps: we hope you join us for Confusing Fall Skippers (September 11 and 13)!

## Summer Shuffles Along the Canal

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

**A: June 18 (Carderock Recreation Area)**

**B: July 16 (Riley's Lock)**

**C: August 13 (Pennyfield 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

**Saturday, June 22 (9 am-12 pm)**

**Leaders: Lisa Shannon and Rob Hilton**

**Location: Patuxent North Tract**

**Members \$35; nonmembers \$49**

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.

## Midsummer Microbiota

**Thursday, June 26 (6-8 pm)**

**Leader: Rita Peralta**

**Location: Huntley Meadows**

**Members \$40; nonmembers \$59**

There's a whole world of organisms that we can't easily see. In this leisurely exploration we'll use Foldscopes to look for the microbiota around us. Foldscopes 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 Huntley Meadows, where she will introduce you to Foldscopes and explore the microbes in the soil and water that populate the world as we know it. Expect a mixture of paved, boardwalk, and natural surface trails; depending on rainfall, some muddy and puddly terrain may be possible. NOTE: Registration fee includes your own foldscope, which you can take home with you to continue your explorations of this microscopic world!

## Summer Tree Series

**Saturdays, 9 am-12 pm**

**A: June 28 (Patuxent River Park)**

**B: July 19 (Woodend Nature Sanctuary)**

**C: August 2 (Little Bennett Regional Park)**

**D: August 16 (Sugarloaf Mountain)**

**Leader: Bradley Simpson**

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



Join Nature Forward Habitat Manager, Bradley Simpson, for a Summer Tree ID series! This series will include 4 walks and will explore tree species found in each of the three physiographic regions of Maryland. In June, we will meander the wetlands of Jug Bay at Patuxent River Park to learn about the tree species found in the coastal plain. In July,

we will explore piedmont species at Woodend Nature Sanctuary. Here we will also be able to see some non-native species that speak to the past use of Woodend as an estate property. Then, in August, we will focus on oaks and hickories as we walk the trails at Little Bennett Regional Park. Finally, we will explore the trees of the mountains at Sugarloaf Mountain.

## A Little Bird Told Me: Bird Language Workshop

**Tuesday, July 1 (9 am-1 pm)**

**Leader: Genevieve Wall**

**Location: Fire Circle at Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

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

Two Cardinals chip back and forth as they forage. A Robin whistles a high-pitched “seet” and stares stiffly into the trees. A Dark-Eyed Junco’s white tail bars flash and the birds fall silent. Each of these signs reveals the complex web of interactions, relationships, and rhythms in nature—simply learn to interpret their language, and a whole world of meaning begins to unfold. Whether you are an advanced birder, or a first-timer who is curious to learn more, you are welcome. This workshop will include about 45 minutes of sitting still in quiet listening. Some walking on natural surface trails will be required at Woodend Nature Sanctuary.

## Boating the Byway

**Saturday, July 12 (2-6 pm)**

**Leaders: Alex Green, Lisa Green, Jim Rapp**

**Location: Cambridge, MD**

**Members \$110; nonmembers \$145**

Boating the Harriet Tubman Byway with Alex and Lisa Green of Harriet Tubman Tours and Jim Rapp of Delmarva Birding Weekends offers a unique blend of history and nature. As you glide on a pontoon boat through the serene waterways that were once part of the Underground Railroad, Alex and Lisa share captivating stories of Harriet Tubman’s bravery and journey to freedom. Jim Rapp enriches the experience with insights into the local birdlife and natural surroundings, making this tour a peaceful yet educational adventure. It’s a perfect way to connect with both the historic significance and natural beauty of the Eastern Shore.

## How Does her Garden Grow?

**Sunday, July 13 (10 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Karoline Anders**

**Location: 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 101 native plant species in multiple sun and moisture combinations, plus an extensive vegetable garden.

## Dragons of the Air

**Sunday, July 20 (9:30 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Lisa Shannon**

**Location: Lake Artemesia**

**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.



## On the Wing Along the Canal

**Saturday, July 26 (8-10:30 am)**

**Leaders: Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon**

**Location: Carderock Recreation Area**

**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

**Lecture: Thursday, July 31, 7-9 pm (Woodend Nature Sanctuary)**

**Field Trip: Sunday, August 3, 9:30 am-12 pm (Pine Lake at Wheaton Regional Park)**

**Leader: Lisa Shannon**

**Lecture only: members \$24, nonmembers \$32**

**Lecture & Field Trip: members \$48, nonmembers \$68**

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, 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.

## Star Party!

**Thursday, August 7 (8:30-10 pm)**

**Rain date Friday, August 8**

**Leader: Carrie Fitzgerald**

**Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

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

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. 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, identify, and navigate by constellations and other celestial objects using your very own star map! Keep your fingers crossed for clear skies.



## Shorebirds on the Move

**Tuesday, August 12 (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.

## Wildflowers, Seeds, and Late Summer Survival Strategies

**Thursday, August 21 (9-11 am)**

**Leader: Gina Ghertner**

**Location: Turkey Run Park, VA**

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

As late summer builds into early autumn, come explore Jug Bay with Nature Forward staff member and Lead GreenKids Educator Gina Ghertner. We'll learn how plants have been preparing to enter fall by gathering as much energy as possible in summer. Plants have evolved complex energy storage and seed dispersal strategies. Along the way, we'll observe the wetlands of Turkey Run Park, the wildlife that call it home, and the seasonal shifts of late summer.

## Midweek Meanders Along the Canal

Wednesdays (10-12:30 pm)

A: September 10 (Riley's Lock)

B: September 24 (Pennyfield Lock)

C: October 8 (Carderock)

D: October 22 (Violette's Lock)

E: November 5 (Swain's Lock)

F: November 19 (Widewater)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Each walk members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Enjoy one or more of these leisurely late-summer through late-fall strolls on relatively close-in portions of the C&O Canal's historic towpath which see less foot and bicycle traffic on weekdays than weekends. The focus of these naturalist-led walks will be the rich natural history of the varied habitats long the Potomac River and the Canal. We'll proceed at a "naturalist's shuffle" pace, stopping often to observe and enjoy seasonal plant and animal life, including birds, fall wildflowers, fruits, and foliage, butterflies, snakes, turtles – and whatever else we might find. The towpath is flat, but could be muddy and/or uneven. Access to the towpath at Riley's Lock includes stairs or a steeply-inclined foot trail.



American Toad by Dave Huth

### Registration for September programs

Note: Registration for adult programs for September and beyond will have a different link from summer programs. If you are registering for June-August programs and want to sign up for a September program, please visit <https://natureforward.org/program/nature-classes> and click on the registration link from the calendar listing. Email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org) if you have any questions.



Silver-spotted Skipper by Judy Gallagher

## Butterfly Boot Camp: Confusing Fall Skippers

Lecture: Thursday, September 11, 7-9 pm  
(Woodend Nature Sanctuary)

Field Trip: Saturday September 13, 10 am-3 pm, location TBD  
(rain date September 14)

Leader: Rick Borchelt

Lecture only: members \$24, nonmembers \$32

Lecture & Field Trip: members \$48, nonmembers \$68

As if the multitudes of Sachems weren't confusing enough, early autumn in the mid-Atlantic brings second broods of small, brown, often poorly-marked skippers—Crossline, Swarthy, and the infamous "three witches"—Northern Broken-dash, Dun, and Little Glassywing. Join us as we tick off the ID skills required for these "little brown jobs" of the butterfly world, and then come with us into the field to test our knowledge, but where we will learn that there is no shame in leaving an ID at "sp." for these small, dull-colored species. We'll begin on the Choate Mine Trail at Soldiers Delight NEA northwest of Baltimore and end at the community gardens at the Howard County Conservancy. We should have an abundance of look-alikes to pore through, and might see the seldom-encountered Leonard's Skipper. As an added bonus we could end the field trip with a stop at the nearby Woodstock Snoball Stand! This is the last of three Butterfly Boot Camps.

## Natural History of Galls

Thursday, September 18 (7-9 pm)

Leader: Cliff Fairweather

Members \$20; nonmembers \$28

Naturalist Edwin Way Teale called galls "edible homes" and that's not a bad two-word definition for these hijacked bits of plant tissue. Discover the fascinating, often complex, and occasionally bizarre world of galls, gall-makers, and their associates. Through an online lecture via Zoom, we'll learn about their natural history and develop our gall search-image for further exploration out in the field!



## Living the Elements: Rest on Earth

**Saturday, September 20 (9 am-12 pm)**

**Leader: Lorena Saavedra Smith**

**Location: TBD**

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

Join us for the third of four Living the Elements sessions where we will enter into an intimate relationship with the Earth element, which has the capacity to stabilize and ground us, offering a deep connection to this living realm and all its diverse forms. Reconciling with the Earth element is about honoring life through all its cycles, including rest, and the principle of taking only what is necessary for our sustenance. We will do activities on the ground, so please dress comfortably. This is the third of four Living the Elements workshops: we hope you join us for Wind (November 15).

## Fall in the Parks

**(8:30 am-12:30 pm)**

**A. Sunday, September 21—Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, VA**

**B. Sunday, October 12—Patuxent Research Refuge/North Tract, MD**

**C. Saturday, November 8—Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, DC**

**Leader: Stephanie Mason**

**Each walk: members \$35; nonmembers \$49**

Join a naturalist for these seasonal, broad-based nature explorations of nearby parks rich in natural history. We'll walk between 2-4 miles as we enjoy the development of fall color and fruits amongst lingering blooms and all manner of wildlife, including insects, resident and migrating birds, mammals, and reptiles and amphibians. Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge near Woodbridge, VA protects open grasslands as well as bottomlands along Belmont and Occoquan Bays. At the Patuxent Research Refuge/North Tract near Laurel, MD we'll explore Coastal Plain woodlands and wetlands. Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, on the banks of the Anacostia River inside the Beltway, features protected swamp, marsh, and woodland habitats within sight of DC's urban sprawl. Our explorations will occur on mostly-level natural surface trails which may be muddy, slippery, and/or rutted.

## The Magnificent Migration of Monarchs

**Thursday, September 25 (7-9 pm)**

**Leader: Ma. Estela Romero Vázquez**

**Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary**

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



Ma. Estela Romero Vázquez is a fifth generation of Angangueo, Michoacán, México, a town adjacent to the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere

Reserve World Heritage site known for its overwintering concentration of the Eastern population of Monarch butterflies. For one night only, Estela will be visiting the Washington, DC area and sharing her knowledge and passion with Nature Forward's audience. In this talk, Estela will convey how ancestral indígena connected with the annual cycles of Monarch's arrival and overwintering in local forests, and how the scientific research of the last four decades makes clear the wonderful and vital way in which Monarchs impacted their lives. She will share about education and conservation actions happening in Angangueo to support Monarchs' habitat and to raise the next generation as intuitive guardians of the Monarchs' Oyamel forests. As a writer, storyteller, and passionate educator, Estela hopes each person comes away with wonder, gratitude, and increased awareness about how to protect these amazing butterflies.

## Natural Heritage Series: Blue Ridge Beginnings

**Tuesday, September 30 (9:30 am-2:30 pm)**

**Leader: Stephanie Mason**

**Members \$35; nonmembers \$49**

A little more than an hour northwest of Washington, DC lies Catoctin Mountain, the front edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Here, on a day of the week when visitors are few, we'll enjoy early autumn in Catoctin Mountain National Park. We'll hike around 3 miles, at a leisurely pace, as we look for the plants and animals that inhabit the Park's woods and waterways. In addition to natural history, we'll consider the Mountain's cultural history and past land uses. Our explorations will include uphill/downhill hiking over rocky and uneven ground, which may be muddy and/or slippery.

# Nature Notes from Genevieve's Journal: Summer 2025

by Genevieve Wall, Senior Naturalist

Welcome to Nature Notes! Those who have met me on Adult Forays know I keep a nature journal. I find the habit sharpens my observations, connects me to the rhythms of nature, and brings me joy. In this column, I'll share some notes from the pages of my nature journal, in hopes that it may inspire you to connect with nature this season.

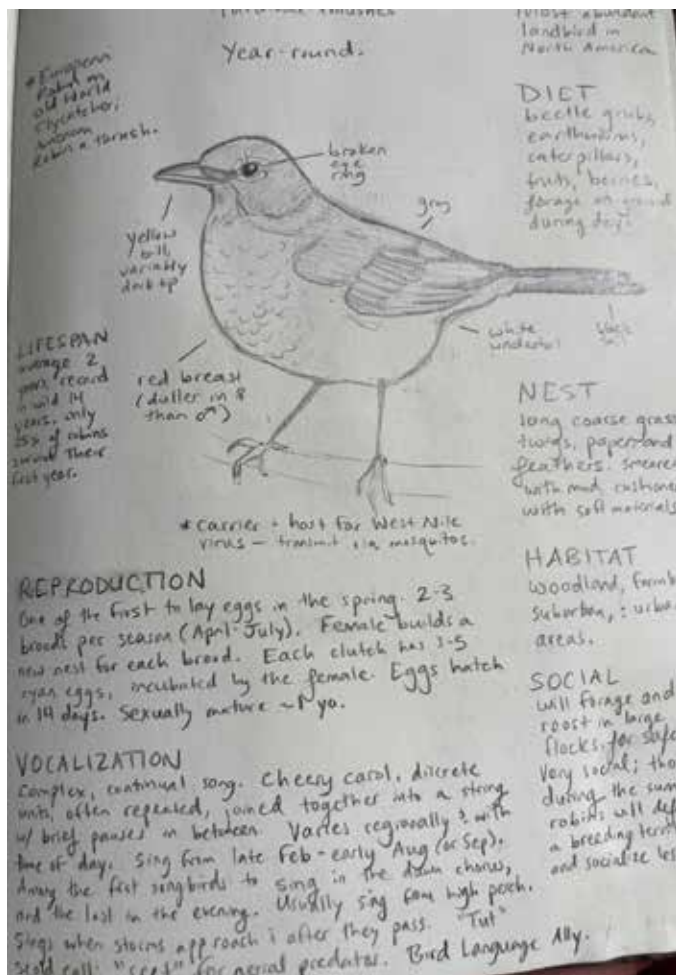
Often the first observations of a season spark the greatest excitement: from the first baritone call of a bullfrog, to the first purple serviceberry fruits, to the first blossoming milkweed. Yet at the same time, quietly (and more easily overlooked), there are also the unobtrusive lasts: the last frost, the last chickadee courtship song, the last cool night of spring.

In the first week of June last year, iridescent dogbane beetles crawled along the greenish-white flower clusters of its host plant. Grey squirrels skittered among the trees. In the sky above, fluffy towers of cumulus clouds lifted upward. Some of these clouds, now taller than they were wide, began to wisp over at their tops— the ice crystals in the cirrus clouds creating friction that would soon build to the bombastic release of lightning. In this breezy

afternoon, the golden sun shone through lush, translucent tuliptree leaves as the robins *tut-tut-tutted* in the branches. All the while, the clouds gathered, and a sudden cool gust from the southwest smelled like rain.

*"Nature reminds us to rest and experience stillness, even with the busy summer season bustling all around us."*

—GENEVIEVE WALL



As we draw nearer to the summer solstice, the days are still getting longer—but not at the two-and-a-half-minutes a day sprint we experienced in mid-March. Now, the days lengthen at a creep. On the solstice, that pace slows to a pause. This moment of pause happens many ways in nature: solstices, slack tide in the marsh, a loved one's lungs at full expansion before they exhale. Nature reminds us to rest and experience stillness, even with the busy summer season bustling all around us. This pause marks a transition—from flow to ebb, wax to wane. The solstice is another last.

As spring gives way into summer, what lasts do you notice? As the daylight begins to recede again—slowly, then faster and faster—may you drink in as much presence and pause as possible. And may you notice the easily overlooked.



# Woodend Walks and Tours

## Family Walk at Woodend

**Saturdays: 6/7, 7/5, 8/2, 9/6, 10/4, 11/1, 12/6 (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.

**Bilingual Walks on Saturdays: 6/21, 7/19, 8/16, 9/20, 10/18, 11/15 (9:30-10:30 am)**

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

Explora la maravilla de la naturaleza—los árboles, pájaros, insectos y todo lo que Woodend nos ofrece, con uno de nuestros naturalistas. Solo registre un adulto al inscribirse.

## Saturday Morning Bird Walk

**Saturdays: 6/14, 7/12, 8/9, (9-10 am) 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, 12/13 (8-9 am)**

**Members \$12; nonmembers \$16. Second person FREE.**

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

*Bird Walks will start at 8 am  
starting in September*

## Forest Bathing

**A: Saturday, July 19 (10 am-12 pm) Leader: Adria Zeldin**

**B: Saturday, October 18 (10 am-12 pm) Leader: Ana Ka'ahunui**

**Members \$30; nonmembers \$40**

Join Forest Bathing guides in a soothing exploration and mindfulness walk through the forests at Woodend. Awaken your senses, connect to the present moment, and support your mental health and well-being.

## Natural Habitats Tour of Woodend

**Fridays: 8/8, 11/14 (10-11:30 am)**

**Saturdays: 7/19, 9/20 (9-10:30 am)**

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

Boasting 27-acres of forest, five acres of wildflower meadows, and a restored small stream, Woodend is an oasis of natural habitats in our rapidly urbanizing region. Learn about the bees and butterflies that visit our meadows, the frogs and salamanders that breed in our stream, and the many bird species that thrive at our sanctuary.

## Native Plants Garden Tour of Woodend

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

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

Woodend was once a lavish estate with impressive formal gardens. Nature Forward has maintained the beauty of that cultural landscape, while transitioning to native plant gardens that support wildlife and reduce stormwater pollution. Learn tips for tending your own conservation landscape!

## Notable Trees Tour of Woodend

**Fridays: 6/13, 9/12 (10-11:30 am)**

**Saturdays: 6/21, 8/16 (9-10:30 am)**

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

The forest and lawns of Woodend are perfect places to learn more about both native and introduced trees. Master key identification strategies for 20 species, visit three county "champion" trees, plus learn about the wildlife habitat and ecosystem services that trees provide in our urban region.

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

## Online Registration for Natural History Field Studies

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

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

## Summer Wildflowers: Identification and Ecology



**NATH7149E, 1.5 CEUs**

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

**Class meetings: July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29**

**Lectures via zoom EXCEPT for July 8 – IN PERSON at Woodend**

**Field trip dates: Saturday, July 12 (8:30-11:30 am) at Patuxent Wildlife Refuge North Tract; Saturday, July 26 (8:30-11:30 am) at McKee Beshers WMA**

**Instructor: Dr. Clare Walker**

**Members \$210, nonmembers \$260**

Gain an appreciation of the varied summer wildflowers of our region from dazzling orchids to roadside 'weeds'. Many are important pollinator plants from the distinctive milkweeds to lobelias and mountain mints. (The aster family is the focus of the Asters class in August and not included in this course). Explore methods of field identification, from traditional field guides to the advantages/disadvantages of different apps, giving you the tools to go outside and hunt for flowers (recording flower observations in an optional iNaturalist class project). The class will also consider the ecological roles between the plants and their pollinators and how they support wildlife in different habitats of the Mid-Atlantic. Field trips, featuring some of the area's best wildflower locations, will

allow practice in recognizing identification characteristics and using guides/apps. A magnifier/hand lens is recommended. This class is aimed at beginner to intermediate levels. Check website for required reading materials. Photo of beebalm by Clare Walker.



## The Aster Family: Identification and Ecology

**NATH7137E, 1.5 CEUs**

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

**Class meetings:** August 5, 12, 19, 26, September 2

**Lectures via zoom**

**Field trip dates:** Saturday, August 9 (9-11:30 am) at Woodend Nature Sanctuary; Tuesday, August 19 (8:30-11:30 am) at TBD; Saturday, September 6 (8:30-11:30 am) at Patuxent Research Refuge North Tract

**Instructor:** Dr. Clare Walker

**Members \$240, nonmembers \$290**

Discover the beauty and diversity of the largest flowering family in North America—named after the familiar asters. You might be surprised to know that this family contains plants as diverse as lettuce, artichokes and even a common local shrub. The Asters include many familiar favorites 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. Check website for required reading materials.



Milkweed by Clare Walker

## Interpretation for Naturalists

**NATH8284E, 1.5 CEUs**

**Class night and time:** Wednesdays, 7-9 pm

**Class meetings:** July 9, 16, 23, 30, August 6

**Lectures in person at Woodend**

**Field trip dates:** Saturday, July 19 (9 am-12 pm) at Woodend Nature Sanctuary and Saturday, August 2 (9-11 am) at Kenilwoth Aquatic Gardens

**Instructor:** Genevieve Wall

**Members \$210, nonmembers \$260**

Part science and part art, interpretation can forge deeper connections between people and the natural world. In the hands of a skilled interpreter, an ordinary leaf, rock, or twig becomes a window into an extraordinary world of meaning, understanding, and appreciation. In this class, you'll learn the theory behind different teaching approaches and explore powerful techniques to bring learning to life. From identifying birds at a family outing, to teaching in formal settings, to advocating for environmental causes you care about, you'll build the essential skills to more effectively and more confidently share your knowledge in deep and meaningful ways. Whether you're an experienced naturalist or newly nature curious, if you want to share your nature insights in ways that truly resonate with other people, this class is for you! There are no required books for this course; all readings will be shared via a class Google Drive.



Photo by Peihan Orestes

### COMING IN SEPTEMBER

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

**Introduction to Fungi**  
**Serenella Linares**

**Mammals of the Mid-Atlantic**  
**Kerry Wixted**

**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](https://natureforward.org/nature-travel).

## Iceland: Landscapes, Puffins, and Legends Beneath the Solar Eclipse

August 3-13, 2026

Leader: Genevieve Wall

Cost: \$13,995 (single supplement \$2,395)

Iceland is famous for its unique scenery: it is the "land of fire and ice," where volcanoes and glaciers have carved paths across the landscape, where breathtaking waterfalls plunge off of cliffs, where scrappy wildflowers and berry bushes take advantage of the short summers, where pelagic birds gather in large numbers, and where—even in August—there is a chance to faintly glimpse northern lights shimmering overhead. Experience the raw, roaring power of the falls; the lush landscapes at Þingvellir, where placid surface waters hide a separating fault line 200 meters deep; the deep blue silence in the heart of an ice cave; the cacophony of gregarious puffin colonies; and the rhythmic ejections of water and steam from powerful geysirs. Our adventure is timed so that we will be in the path of totality for the solar eclipse on August 12. Join Senior Naturalist Genevieve Wall on this trip of a lifetime! Registration open!

*Dear friends:*

*As alien as Iceland's unearthly landscapes may appear, they are a result of geologic forces that are profoundly earthly. Built, razed, and built again by volcanic eruption, splitting and spreading as the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates diverge, its surface carved and scraped by massive glaciers...it's no wonder Iceland ranks highly on so many people's bucket lists!*

*I traveled to Iceland in August of 2022 as a newlywed with my husband, and from the first day fell in love with the country. August is a beautiful time to visit Iceland; the days are still long, the temperatures mild, but the nights are growing longer and darker. On that trip, we were able to witness the shimmering beauty of aurora borealis twice—green and translucent, like thin hazy clouds dancing unmistakably in the dark.*

*Our trip is organized by Classic Escapes, a US-based company with a top-tier reputation for quality trips that Nature Forward has partnered with several times before. On our trip, we'll marvel at the stunning natural history of Iceland's scenery, encounter wildlife (did you know the Arctic Fox is the only indigenous land mammal to Iceland?), enjoy the tart tang of abundant late summer bilberries and crowberries, and observe birds such as Arctic Terns, Kittiwakes, Fulmars, Razorbills, and—of course!—Atlantic Puffins. Our travels will take us to the basalt columns and black sand beaches of Reynisfjara, to the chunks of glacier that wash up onto Diamond Beach, and to Þingvellir National Park—a UNESCO world heritage site with a placid lake that belies a geological drama unfolding underneath as the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates split apart. While we'll focus on natural history, we've designed a balanced trip that includes cultural heritage experiences (such as the Skógar Turfhouse museum, where we can glimpse what life was like for Icelanders in the 19th century), culinary experiences, and a replenishing trip to an Icelandic sauna heated by geothermal vents under Lake Laugarvatn.*

*Even in ordinary times, Iceland is an extraordinary destination. I am thrilled to share this extra extraordinary experience with Nature Forward members, as we witness the earthly beauties of "the land of fire and ice" as well as the celestial phenomenon of a total eclipse!*

*Takk fyrir (thank you),  
Genevieve Wall*





## Desert Wings: Birding through Arizona's Unique Habitats

### Only a few spots left!

**September 22-30, 2025**

**Leaders: Liz Guertin and Jake Thompson**

**Cost: \$4,995 (single supplement \$1,295)**

This autumn, come enjoy the winged wonders of fall migration in the stunning scenery of Arizona! As our group explores desert lowlands, mountain conifer forests, riparian wetlands, and the awe-inspiring cliffs of the Grand Canyon, we'll have the chance to encounter hundreds of species of migratory birds as they travel through flyways on their way south. It's an amazing annual journey, and on this trip, you'll be front and center through it under the guidance of local birder Jake Thompson, and Nature Forward representative, skilled photographer, and birding trip leader Liz Guertin.



Photo by Eugene Becks

## The Mystical Migration of the Monarch

**February 17-23, 2026**

**Leaders: Mark Garland & in-country guide – with visits from Estela Romero!**

**Cost: \$4,025 (single supplement \$475)**

The sight of overwintering Monarchs clustered together among the trees in Northern Mexico is one not easily forgotten. On this trip, you'll explore multiple Monarch Sanctuaries, and marvel at the incredible lives of these butterflies, while also enjoying the mountains, birds, flora, cuisine, and more! Mark Garland returns to lead this trip, and the group will be visited by fifth-generation Angangueo resident, Monarch educator, and storyteller Estela Romero. Curious to meet her? Come join us on September 25th for a one-night-only event at Woodend, as Estela journeys to share about the marvels of monarch migration! Registration opening soon! Email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org) to receive a detailed itinerary and registration packet with trip fee as soon as it becomes available.



Photo by Mark S. Garland

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

**March 5-17, 2026**

**Leaders: Stephanie Mason & in-country guide Eddie Recio**

**Cost: TBA**

For well over 20 years, Stephanie Mason has led popular Nature Forward travel trips to this small tropical wonderland with amazing plant and animal diversity. Costa Rica's colorful birds—from the glimmering hummingbirds to the rainbow-hued tanagers to the large, comical Toucans—will turn any nature enthusiast into a bird lover. Our trip explores Caribbean lowland rain forest, southern Pacific foothills, and other protected wildlands. Email [pam.oves@natureforward.org](mailto:pam.oves@natureforward.org) to receive a detailed itinerary and registration packet with trip fee as soon as it becomes available.







# Woodend Sanctuary & Mansion

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

Social and  
Corporate Events

[@woodendsanctuary](https://www.instagram.com/woodendsanctuary)



*Photos by Shelly Pate Photography*



# DISCOVER NATURE AT WOODEND NATURE SHOP

Open daily 11am-3pm | Closed Sunday



Engage. Entertain. Explore.  
Nature themed fun for kids all summer!

**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



# Tree-rific Outreach Continues!

When our federal grants were first frozen, and then unfrozen, we sprang into action to do some good community greening while the funding is available! Working at multiple types of sites, from multifamily housing, faith communities, to the Montgomery County Public School system, we found partners willing to commit to providing care for these plantings going forward. We were able to provide support ranging from paying for watering truck visits, to tree diaper tree-watering devices, maintenance crew trainings, and beyond. These trees and flowers are blooming now in Justice 40 communities across the region.



At one site, Washington Grove Elementary School (see picture to the left), the playground shares a long fence with a junkyard. We used a combination of native evergreens, flowering trees, and some shade trees, 83 in total, to screen this view and provide a verdant wildlife corridor. Tori Carr, our Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member, partnered with GreenKids to create a curriculum teaching kids about how trees interact with other plants in their ecosystem and delivered it to over 200 students, including over 50 at Washington Grove. Students were even able to participate in the habitat creation by planting and seeding a variety of native species in and among the trees!

While the future of this funding remains uncertain, we trust that the future of the over 1,000 trees and 12,000 native shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers we've planted is bright, and that they will provide habitat, shade, and joy for wildlife and people alike for years to come.



# New Plant Alert at Woodend: Trilliums!

This spring, you may have noticed many short-lived wildflowers blooming on the forest floor beneath deciduous trees before they regain their leaves. These plants are called spring ephemerals, quickly flowering and producing seeds before they die back, leaving only their underground roots and rhizomes.

A beautiful, easy-to-recognize spring ephemeral is white trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), closely related to lilies and is a part of the Melanthiaceae family. It's native to Eastern North America and commonly found in upland forests! You can find this species at Woodend underneath our formerly triple-trunked tulip tree by the pond. Trilliums are rhizomatous plants, with their primary stems occurring below the soil. These stems spread horizontally underground and produce shoots and roots at their nodes. This characteristic helps trilliums stay warm and store nutrients during the winter.

Trillium flowers are pollinated by bees and wasps and will fruit in the summer. Each fruit contains around 16 seeds that are dispersed by ants through a process called myrmecochory. Ants are attracted to the seeds' elaioplasts, an outer casing that is packed with lipids and proteins. Ants spread these seeds as they bring them back to their nesting sites. Keep an eye out for these showy flowers each spring! Pictured below are two trillium species: the white-flowered *Trillium grandiflorum* and the red-flowered *Trillium sessile*.



# Nature Forward Hosts New Events on World Migratory Bird Day



On May 10, World Migratory Bird Day, Nature Forward hosted its first ever Birds & Brews event at the Atlas Brew Works location in Ivy City, Washington, DC. Participants enjoyed bird-themed activities, prizes, and Nature Forward giveaways. Bird trivia contestants identified bird calls and tested their knowledge of what birds like to eat. After learning about a flamboyance of flamingos, some got creative using new collective nouns to describe bird groups! In addition to hosting the event, Atlas Brew Works also generously donated trivia prizes and \$1 to Nature Forward for every pint of beer served.

Before arriving at Birds & Brews, attendees had the opportunity to join a free birdwalk nearby, hosted by Nature Forward Executive Director Alison Pearce. Expert birder María-Elena Montero, President of the DC Bird Alliance, led participants through the beautiful US National Arboretum. The Arboretum is a favorite location for Birdathon counters who enjoy exploring the location's collections, like fern valley and the azaleas.

These fun new events are part of Nature Forward's efforts to welcome new participants and supporters to the Birdathon, our biggest, longest-running, and most fun annual fundraiser! In its 45th year, the Nature Forward Birdathon takes place annually from April 15-May 31. Visit [natureforward.org/birdathon](https://natureforward.org/birdathon) to donate to this important cause that supports vital conservation and education mission work here in the Capital region. Thanks to a generous gift from dedicated Nature Forward supporters Dr. Linda Lear and Mr. John Nickum, every donation to this year's Birdathon will be matched up to \$25,000!





# Legacy Giving

**By making a legacy gift, you're not just giving—you're planting the seeds of change that will flourish for generations to come. Your contribution means the world!**

Since 1897, we have been dedicated to conserving and connecting people to nature in the capital region. Imagine the profound impact you can make by naming **Nature Forward** as the beneficiary of your estate to continue this vital mission work. This thoughtful decision reflects your dedication to preserving the environment, ensuring a brighter, healthier world for future generations. Here are a few compelling ways to include Nature Forward in your legacy:

## **Make a Bequest Through Your Will or Revocable Trust**

Including Nature Forward in your will is a simple yet powerful way to make a lasting difference. Here is sample language you can use: "I give to Nature Forward, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit incorporated under the District of Columbia and whose headquarters are located in Chevy Chase, Maryland, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_(or\_\_\_\_% of my residuary estate) for general operating purposes (or a specific designation, program, or sanctuary in keeping with our mission). Their tax identification 501c3 number is: 53-0233715."

## **Give a Gift of Life Insurance or designate your Retirement Account**

Designating Nature Forward as the beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or other qualified plan is a strategic way to support our mission while potentially reducing the tax burden on your estate.

**Legacy Society Members receive special recognition and benefits, including invitations to special walks and events, opportunities to meet with the Executive Director, and a new commemorative pin.**

Contact Director of Development Corinna Fisk at [corinna.fisk@natureforward.org](mailto:corinna.fisk@natureforward.org) or 301-652-1089.



## THANK YOU, nature forward birdathon SPONSORS!

A circular logo for the 45th Annual Nature Forward Birdathon 2025. It features a brown and white bird perched on a branch, with the text "45th ANNUAL", "nature forward birdathon", and "2025" around it.

Premier Sponsors

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

Supporting Sponsors

A logo for Atlas Brew Works, featuring the word "ATLAS" in a stylized, outlined font with "• BREW WORKS •" below it.A logo for Izel Native Plants, featuring a stylized plant icon and the text "Izel Native Plants" with the tagline "Every Plant Counts. Grow Natives."

Contributing Sponsors

A logo for Empire Landscape, LLC, featuring a green leaf icon and the text "EMPIRE LANDSCAPE, LLC" with the tagline "An Environmental Restoration Company".A logo for The Backyard Naturalist, featuring a stylized plant icon and the text "The Backyard Naturalist" with the tagline "WILD FOOD • WILD MEDICINE • WILD BEVERAGES • WILD HOME & GARDEN".A logo for Kowa Crystal Clear Optics, featuring the word "Kowa" in a stylized font and "Crystal Clear Optics" below it.

In-kind Sponsors

A logo for Vortex Optics, featuring a stylized "V" icon and the text "VORTEX OPTICS".The Zeiss logo, featuring the word "ZEISS" in a blue box.A logo for Opticron, featuring the word "opticron" in a green, lowercase font.

To learn about sponsorship opportunities for 2026's Nature Forward Birdathon, please visit [natureforward.org/birdathon-sponsor](https://natureforward.org/birdathon-sponsor)



## Welcome Maggie

We welcome **Maggie Crawford** as the new Director of Education. She has deep experience in informal education, with both direct teaching experience and strategic program management. She comes to us from Chesapeake Montessori School, where she led nature-based education. At the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, she managed digital marketing for Smithsonian Jazz and Food History. Previously, she was Director of Education at the Newseum, overseeing in-person programming and NewseumED.org. Growing up in the small Creole community of Mon Luis Island, Alabama, she was instilled with a deep love of nature, especially estuaries. Maggie looks forward to shepherding Nature Forward's educational experiences that encourage more people marvel at the wonders of nature.



## Farewell Denisse

**Denisse Guitarra**, Nature Forward's Conservation Project Specialist and former MD Conservation Advocate, has transitioned to working with Montgomery County Parks. Denisse was a dedicated and passionate member of the Nature Forward team for six years. In her role as MD Conservation Advocate, she helped to pass Maryland and Montgomery County's respective Forest Bills. Additionally, she was the co-chair for Naturally Latinos 2024 and helped to launch the e-book named after that conference's theme, *Perteneciendo*. We are so excited to see all the wonderful things Denisse will accomplish in her new role.

# VISIT our Woodend Nature Sanctuary

8940 Jones Mill Rd • Chevy Chase, MD



A peaceful 40-acre oasis for all ages, abilities, and experience levels.



Wheelchair-accessible nature trail



Accessible Nature Play Space



Open daily from dawn to dusk  
Admission is free

Thanks for leaving dogs & other pets at home



# Memorial and Tribute Contributions

FEBRUARY-APRIL 2025

## IN MEMORY OF:

### Sara Hawkins

Chuck Hawkins

### Pearl Marks

Robert Mecklenburg

### Mary Anne Nester

Julia and Anthony Bayless; Heidi Gibson; Barbara Gordon; Mary-Alice Gray; Elizabeth Hayes; Stephanie Marton; Stephanie Mason; Paul Mercurio; Jacqueline Mundy; Betty and Ted Repa; Jeannette Sersen; Elinor D. Talmadge; Lisa Votraw

### Carolyn Osborne

Helene Grove Kenny

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Herndon-Reston Fish Inc

### Stone and Holt Weeks

The Stone and Holt Weeks Foundation

## IN HONOR OF:

### Lisa Alexander

Stone and Holt Weeks Foundation; Frederic Alan Press

### Peter Chapin

Debbie Zients

### Mike Gerecht

Ellen Gerecht

### Cecily Nabors

Pamela Graham

## IN MEMORIUM:

Nature Forward shares the sad news that **Dr. Gary R. Evans** passed away in late April after a long illness. Gary served on the Board of Directors from 2002-2008 and was a beloved instructor in the Natural History Field Studies program. During his remarkable career, he led the Global Climate Change Office of the Department of Agriculture in the 1990s—long before the world fully understood the stakes—and later created one of the first online Natural Resources programs at Virginia Tech.

## 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.

### Health Guidelines for Programs

Please stay home if you are sick. Nature Forward follows CDC guidelines for communicable diseases. Policies are subject to change.

# CITIZEN SCIENCE

Get to know beautiful Rock Creek in a new way!



**Is Rock Creek healthy? How safe is the water?**

Please join us to learn about DC Citizen Science Water Quality Monitoring, a program of the Department of Energy and Environment, implemented by Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

**FREE**

- **DISCOVER** what lives in the water
- **FIND OUT** how you can help protect Rock Creek
- **FUN ACTIVITIES** for your entire family and **free snacks!**

*(Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times)*

**WHERE: Rock Creek Picnic Grove #1**  
Driving directions: Parking off of Shoemaker St NW in DC off the intersection of Tilden St NW and Shoemaker St NW near Peirce Mill.

**WHEN: Saturday, June 7**  
**10:30am-12:30pm**

**Rain Date: Saturday, June 21**  
**10:30am-12:30pm**




**nature forward**

8940 Jones Mill Road  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
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# THE MAGICAL MIGRATION OF monarchs


**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25**  
**7-9PM • WOODEND SANCTUARY**

**ONE NIGHT ONLY!**

Monarch educator Ma. Estela Romero Vázquez will travel all the way to Woodend from her home in Angangueo, México, near the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, to share her deep knowledge and enthusiasm for the Monarch Butterfly.

This event will leave you with a profound sense of **wonder, gratitude & awareness** about how to protect these amazing butterflies.

**See page 25 for full description and registration details!**



**Want to experience overwintering monarchs in person?**  
Travel with us to Mexico in February 2026! More details on page 31.