

AUTUMN 2026

nature forward

Q U A R T E R L Y



**Mindfulness: New Ways to
Experience Wild Places**

ON THE COVER

Photo taken at Woodend by Ben Israel.

NATURE FORWARD QUARTERLY

Autumn 2026

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Many Paths to Nature

When I arrived in California for graduate school, I was paired with a roommate who loved to hike. I bet you're thinking that made her a perfect match for this nature lover. But we weren't always in sync. My friend kept up a brisk pace and an uninterrupted stream of conversation as we climbed the slopes of the Santa Cruz mountains. I struggled to keep up, partly because she was more fit, but also because I "braked for" any plant that was unfamiliar from my east coast upbringing. She would march in place in these moments to keep her heartbeat up. I would squat down to count petals and sepals until her eye rolling weighed too heavily on me.

Fast forward a couple of decades and I think back with sympathy for my friend's impatience with the pokey little botanist that I was. On a recent walk with a birding friend, she asked how many starlings I thought we'd seen as she dutifully recorded our sightings in eBird. Because I lead an organization founded in the 19th century by birding enthusiasts I answered, "Hmm, probably a dozen." But it could have been as few as six or as many as twenty. I wasn't interested enough in the starling count to keep track. Don't get me wrong, I can get pretty jazzed by a goldfinch in my yard. But I still don't feel compelled to log my observation of the bright yellow plumage. It's just not how I "do nature."



Of course, neither my roommate, my birding friend, nor I are in the right or in the wrong. There are so many different ways to experience nature and belong within its vastness. Beyond personality, our family experiences and cultural backgrounds also shape our particular relationships with plants, animals, and habitats. There is no perspective or way of knowing nature that is more authentic than any other, whether gained through scientific investigation, rock climbing, farming, botanical sketching, hunting, or daily admiration of a single urban street tree. Our challenge is to build an inclusive environmental movement that recognizes and celebrates the innumerable paths to nature. Beyond that, our movement should provide opportunities for all of us to know nature, ourselves, and each other better.

As you read the pages that follow, I think you'll find that Nature Forward offers a remarkable range of experiences to its members and supporters. We aim to inspire, engage and activate people across the DC region. I hope that you'll find something here that connects with your way of belonging within nature or even entices you to branch out beyond what feels familiar. And I hope you'll bring your own ideas and passions to this diverse community of people working to protect the natural world that sustains us all.

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



CONNECTING PEOPLE AND NATURE IN THE CAPITAL REGION

Halloween Bat Night

Campfire & Night Hikes

Thursday, October 29 from 5 - 7:30 pm

Woodend Nature Sanctuary
8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD

Nature Forward invites you and your family to enjoy spooky (but not scary!) fun roasting s'mores, taking a night walk with a naturalist, creating bat crafts, sharing stories and songs by the campfire, and an optional costume show-and-tell.

Learn about some of the most misunderstood mammals of Maryland's night skies: Bats!

Which bat species live in Maryland? How do they navigate dark skies to find food?
How many insects do they eat? *(Spoiler: it's more than you might think!)*

There'll be two chances to join Senior Naturalist, Genevieve Wall, for an evening walk through the sanctuary trails. (From 5:15 - 6 pm or from 6:15 - 7 pm)



Per vehicle fee:

\$12 for Nature Forward members
\$16 for non-members

To register, scan QR code
or visit bit.ly/halloweenbatnight



nature forward

Mindfulness: New Ways to Experience Wild Places

by Lisa Goodnight, Communications Manager

Nature Forward invites learners to explore the natural world through many lenses, from astronomy to ornithology. But in our busy, overstimulating world, sometimes just being still in nature is what we need. Engaging in the practice of being present, whether through forest bathing, journaling, or yoga, can free the mind and open us to a deeper sense of connection with the natural world.

"Slowing down and immersing in the present moment in nature—the swaying of the tree limbs in the breeze, dappling shade and sun, the scent of rich earth underfoot—reminds us that we are all a part of something greater," said Nature Forward's Senior Naturalist Genevieve Wall, who leads journaling classes at Woodend. She says keeping a journal connects her to the rhythms of nature and brings her joy.

Natural History Field Studies Instructor Cathy Wiss brought that idea into the classroom this past spring, incorporating journaling into her Freshwater Ecosystems course which focused on the unique habitats and properties of freshwater streams, lakes, and vernal pools. The combination of traditional learning and mindfulness was a hit.

"Several in the class made wonderful drawings about what they observed. One person commented, 'I'm really enjoying this process. I may keep doing it after the class is over,'" Wiss said.

Ana Ka'ahanui, a Virginia Master Naturalist and co-founder of Capital Nature, encourages group sharing and offers her special blend of tea to close out her forest bathing walks, which are held across the region, including at Woodend.

A certified forest guide since 2020, Ana has encountered skeptics along the way. She recalled one walk when one participant said she was not an outdoors person and was unsure what to expect. By the end of the walk, the woman was quite literally singing a different tune.

In fact, the participant said, "When I was looking for a tree, I came across a group of three, and I started singing to them."

It turns out she was a member of an a cappella group—and had found an unexpected trio (or tree-o) on her own.

When Ana introduces people to the practice, she sometimes jokes, "I promise no one will be getting naked."

The immersion, of course, is in nature, not bath water.

Mindfulness, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.



Ana Ka'ahanui

Even those who don't need to be sold say forest bathing offers an awe factor, even in a green space you know well.

"Over years of volunteering, I've gotten to know a few of Woodend's secrets," explained Taunya English, Master Naturalist and author of the nature-inspired picture book *Honeybird Blue*. "I can point out a patch of citrusy spicebush. I know the best stumps to roll if you're a 1st-grader hoping to meet a pill bug. But even if you know the sanctuary's trails and trees well, forest bathing with guide Ana Ka'ahanui is an opportunity to experience Woodend in new ways—a bit slower and with all your senses."

Nature Forward's newest mindfulness offering is yoga in the forest (see page 29). While yoga has been offered at Woodend as a special stand-alone program over the years, it's now part of the regular offerings and billed as "not a traditional yoga class, but a nature-based movement experience that invites connection with the living world around you."

Nature Forward's Audience Engagement Coordinator Tori Carr, who runs the Woodend Walks and Tours, calls yoga in nature a pleasant escape. "Participants get to reflect on what's good in the world. That's what nature can do for people."

All are invited to enjoy the serenity of wildflower meadows, native plant gardens, and everything that Woodend has to offer. The sanctuary is free and open to the public every day of the year, from dawn to dusk with wheelchair-accessible trails and restrooms.



Childhood Belongs Outdoors: Nature Forward's New Preschool Director Knows This Firsthand

by Lisa Goodnight, Communications Manager

When our preschoolers come to Woodend this fall, the students and their families will be welcomed by a Miami native who himself was an outdoors kid, catching insects, lizards, and sometimes even large iguanas.

"I grew up in a neighborhood full of kids my age. I spent all day outside exploring on my own and with neighborhood kids," says Carlos, Nature Forward's new preschool director. "We would build forts and invent elaborate games that lasted all day. Looking back, I realize those experiences shaped not only my love for nature but also my creativity, confidence, and sense of curiosity. The outdoors wasn't somewhere we just visited; it was where childhood happened."



Carlos has lived in Washington, DC, since 2012. He has worked in early childhood education for more than a decade as a preschool teacher, kindergarten teacher, lower school librarian, camp counselor, and school leader. He also serves on the City Blossoms board of directors.

He recently spoke about the importance of nature-based education on the Outdoor Classrooms Podcast. It's a great listen for anyone interested in cultivating learning gardens and nature-based curricula for children, with tips and actionable strategies to start, manage, and grow outdoor classrooms.

"We build our curriculum around what children are interested in," Carlos told host Victoria Hackett. "We are inviting them into this outdoor classroom, taking the kids out and exposing them to what is out there."

At Nature Forward's Nature Preschool, a child wondering how maple syrup comes from a tree can become the beginning of a lesson. This curriculum grows from children's curiosity as our teachers build on students' interests, creating meaningful learning experiences that evolve throughout the year. Children's fascinations, whether with insects, birds, puddles, or fallen logs, become invitations for deeper exploration and learning.

Carlos looks forward to an exciting nine months of getting muddy, exploring every corner of Woodend's 40 acres, and educating the next generation of tree huggers.

A growing body of research shows that outdoor experiences help boost children's cognitive and behavioral development, as well as their physical and mental health. More time outdoors, especially in early childhood, helps set the stage for a lifetime of happiness, creativity, resilience, physical strength—and environmental responsibility.

Connection before conservation is one of Carlos's guiding philosophies.

"I think it helps capture the heart of why we do this work," he says. "Before we ask children to protect nature, we first have to help them fall in love with it. When children have joyful, meaningful experiences outdoors, caring for the natural world becomes an extension of that connection."

For families who want to bring more nature into their children's lives, Carlos encourages them to start with whatever is available. A school playground with a single tree can become an outdoor classroom.

"Just going to that tree over four seasons and revisiting that tree makes such a difference," he said. "You can see nature on your way to the grocery store, the dentist. Nature could be a small bug crossing the sidewalk."

The point, he says, is to help children—and adults—recognize that nature is already part of their everyday lives.

And parents don't have to be experts. Hackett noted during her conversation with Carlos that parents and educators can "learn alongside the children," asking questions, looking for answers, and making discoveries together.

There's another reason to make room for nature in our lives: its sheer beauty.

"The natural world is insanely beautiful," Carlos says. "It inspires art, fashion, and architecture."

For Carlos, it all comes back to giving children the time, freedom, and opportunity to experience that beauty for themselves.

To take a tour with Carlos and learn more about our program, please visit the Nature Forward Preschool webpage.

Hear Carlos Duque on the Outdoor Classrooms podcast. Visit the Nature Forward preschool page, click "Meet Our Preschool Director," then scroll down to the podcast link for episode 210.



Building Bridges for Better Policy: The Harder Side of Advocacy

by Renee Grebe, VA Conservation Advocate

In 2022, when Nature Forward opposed the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway proposal through a globally rare wetland habitat in Fairfax County, VA, we did not do so lightly. Creating safe biking and pedestrian infrastructure is a critical first step to getting people out of cars as we aim to reduce carbon emissions and address the climate crisis. But these facilities should not be built at the cost of our most sensitive, rare, and/or valuable ecosystems and habitats.

Out of conflict rises learning

Our opposition created challenges: we found ourselves on opposite sides of organizations with whom we regularly partner. It was essential for Nature Forward to find a path forward for our environmental, active transportation, and smart growth organizations to work together again in advocating for bike-ped connections.

Nature Forward established a Trails Workgroup with representatives from seven partner organizations in our Fairfax Healthy Communities network. We met multiple times in 2022, including two site visits to talk about trail benefits and challenges, better understand our different perspectives and needs, and seek ways to “get to yes” in advocating together for safe, comfortable, active transportation networks. We tackled issues from the safety of families and commuters to the irreplaceable wetland ecological communities and services.

Policy blind spots created environmental challenges and increased costs

The development guardrails that protect our streams and their buffers from normal development do not apply to trail development. And yet, our stream areas are frequently seen as the best place for flat, accessible paths. In Cinder Bed’s case, no prior environmental assessment was done before the line was drawn on the map. A late-stage environmental review process revealed what was there, but county supervisors considered this project too far along to change course. The globally rare habitat would now be impacted, and costs skyrocketed from \$4M to \$18M as two bridges and wetland mitigation was now required.

Shared understanding allowed continued partnership

Although our organizations could not come to consensus on a path forward for the Cinder Bed proposal, our Trails Workgroup effort helped to rebuild trust and understanding. Without clear next steps, we paused the workgroup but continued advocating together on other issues.

Dominion clearcuts hundreds of trees on the W&OD

Fast forward to the fall of 2024: Dominion Power cleared four miles of mature trees near Vienna, VA along their right-of-way on the NOVA Parks Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) bike trail. Our Trails Workgroup jumped into action and readily reassembled a chorus of opposition to the devastating loss of trees, shade, and beauty along this heavily used path.

Our shared experience from our 2022 workgroup discussions provided a strong platform for collaboration, resulting in a jointly hosted rally by our organizations in the fall of 2025 after months of stalled discussions between Dominion and NOVA Parks. Dominion and NOVA Parks ultimately signed a new agreement under which Dominion committed to stop wholesale clearing of trees along the W&OD trail.



The wetlands in the area of the proposed Cinder Bed Road Bikeway. Photo credit: Friends of Accotink Creek.

Fixing the process, changing policy, but doing it together

At the same time as the W&OD crisis, Fairfax County was proposing updates to their Bicycle Master Plan via the Active Fairfax Transportation Plan Study amendment, the underlying policy that guides how and when trail development takes place in the county. This process allowed feedback from the public and gave our organizations the opportunity to work in unison to “get to yes” on policy.

Our recent W&OD partnership and the 2022 work of building trust, respecting limitations, and appreciating differences allowed us to begin the review process with open minds and knowledge that our partner organizations were working in good faith towards a more positive outcome for future trail development.

We reviewed the details of the plan and identified potential guardrails to prevent another Cinder Bed Road Bikeway. With ideas in hand, we collaborated with Fairfax County staff and the Planning Commission to communicate our concerns and the need to balance support for trail development with earlier environmental review in natural areas.

“Advocacy isn’t always a rally, protest, or flooding inboxes,” says WABA’s Virginia Organizer Kevin O’Brien, a key workgroup collaborator. “Sometimes effective advocacy shows up as quiet work, behind the scenes, with thoughtful partners working together.”

In a show of solidarity, Nature Forward and Washington Area Bicyclists Association (WABA) met one-on-one with multiple supervisors in the county to ask for support of our workgroup’s proposed changes to allow for earlier environmental review. Our organizations testified in support of the overall new trails plan but asked for specific and targeted improvements to avoid environmental conflicts and unnecessary cost increases for future projects.

In May 2026, the Board of Supervisors approved the new Active Transportation & Trails Plan, complete with improved environmental guardrails.

“Although our organizations could not come to consensus on a path forward for the Cinder Bed proposal, our Trails Workgroup effort helped to rebuild trust and understanding.”

—RENEE GREBE,
VA CONSERVATION
ADVOCATE



Trails Workgroup site visit on the W&OD trail, observing the eroded banks of the stream where the paved connector trails were built.

Nature Forward thanks the partners of our Trails Workgroup: Coalition for Smarter Growth, Washington Area Bicyclists Association, Sierra Club Great Falls Group, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling, Northern Virginia Bird Alliance, and Friends of Holmes Run.

September is National Preparedness Month

by Jamoni Overby, DC Conservation Advocate

September is **National Preparedness Month**, a time to encourage individuals, families, and communities to prepare for emergencies before they happen. In the DMV, and especially in Washington, DC, preparedness is increasingly important as climate change brings more frequent and intense rainfall, increasing the risk of flooding in many neighborhoods.

Communities across Wards 5–8 have experienced firsthand how flooding can disrupt daily life, damage homes and vehicles, and threaten public health. Understanding local flood risks and knowing how to respond before, during, and after severe weather are essential steps toward building a more resilient city. Throughout September, Nature Forward is helping residents take action through its **Building Flood Wise Communities** initiative.

The program empowers residents in **Wards 5–8** with practical knowledge about flood preparedness, stormwater infrastructure, climate resilience, and community resources. By connecting education with local experiences, Building Flood Wise Communities equips neighbors to better protect themselves and advocate for safer, healthier communities.

To recognize National Preparedness Month, Nature Forward will host a **free five-part virtual workshop series** throughout September. Each session will provide practical tools and information from special guests and community leaders to help residents.

Remember, “Failure to plan is planned failure.” Join us this September to learn how small actions today can help protect your family, your neighbors, and your community from tomorrow’s storms.



Jamoni Overby giving a presentation in Ward 5 Ivy City.

Happy Birthday, Marylanders for Data Center Reform

by Angie McCarthy, Clean Energy Campaign Manager

This summer, the Marylanders for Data Center Reform Coalition turned one! To celebrate, we assembled in Calvert County to reconnect, set priorities for the next General Assembly session, and share valuable information. I am often impatient to get to the meat of a meeting, but moments where we can collaborate and be in community with each other are always worth the time. In fact, building stronger partnerships is what time is for! Our work is rooted in the community, and our community is what moves our work forward. Much of the work that the Coalition pushes for would be moot without our members pushing alongside us.

As I look back on this year, I am astounded by how far we have come in just twelve months. When Governor Wes Moore vetoed the Data Center Study Bill, Nature Forward members sent over 1,300 letters to their representatives, urging them to see the value in having the information we need for good governance. Because of the Coalition and our members voicing their concerns, the Utility RELIEF Bill included Maryland’s first data center regulations, with the clean capacity and large load registry. In just a year, the Coalition has grown to nearly 70 member organizations and has changed the data center landscape in Maryland.



The Marylanders for Data Center Reform Coalition annual meeting in Calvert County, where we broke bread, shared insight, and learned from each other.

Conservation: Stream Science

A Benthic Macro-VERTEBRATE?

This summer, Nature Forward volunteers ventured into streams across Maryland and DC to monitor the health of freshwater ecosystems, as they have meticulously done each season for over 30 years. While teams focus on finding “stream bugs” or benthic macroinvertebrates, volunteers are excited to find other stream critters as well. One critter our stream teams are particularly joyful to find is a fish called the sculpin!

Maryland’s freshwater sculpins are small, typically less than four inches long. They have big heads, large fan-like side fins, and eyes on top of their heads; they look quite distinct from other fish. Their coloration is brown, usually with mottling or blotching, resembling the cool, rocky stream beds where they live. Sculpins lack swim bladders, an organ that allows fish to control their buoyancy, so they are not very good at swimming in open water. They are specialized to sit on stream beds and ambush macroinvertebrates, though they will eat other fish if the opportunity arises.



Water quality monitors collecting a benthic macroinvertebrate sample this summer at Meadowside Nature Center. Photo by Ben Israel.

While Maryland’s streams are home to four different sculpin species, only two sculpin species are found at Nature Forward’s monitoring sites: the Blue Ridge sculpin and the Potomac sculpin. The Blue Ridge sculpin lives throughout the Piedmont region in the Potomac, Patuxent, and Susquehanna drainages. The Potomac sculpin, as its name suggests, is almost entirely restricted to the Potomac drainage. During the breeding season, Blue Ridge sculpin males sport a blue-green chin. Regardless of the season, the easiest way to distinguish between the Blue Ridge sculpin and the Potomac sculpin is to observe their caudal bar, the line that separates their tail fin from their body. A notch in the caudal bar on either side of the body suggests a Potomac sculpin, and a straight caudal bar points to a Blue Ridge sculpin.

Finding any of the four species of sculpins in a stream is a good sign. Similar to benthic macroinvertebrates, fish like sculpins are also indicators of stream health. Habitat fragmentation, stormwater runoff, and rising water temperatures are particularly harmful to sculpins. Fortunately, there are things that all of us can do to protect these tiny creatures. Limiting impermeable surfaces, planting natives, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, and monitoring your local waters are powerful ways to help protect amazing critters like sculpins. If you come across one of these charming fish in your local stream, practice your new fish identification skills, appreciate the sign of a healthy ecosystem, and help keep it that way!



(Left) Blue Ridge sculpin. Note the straight caudal bar. Photo by Sam Brown. (Right) Unidentified sculpin found in Ten Mile Creek watershed. Note spoon for scale. Photo by Cathy Wiss.

Summer Gardening for Fall Wildlife

by Alice Sturm, Director of Restoration

What's blooming at Woodend this fall? You might think the answer is all about plant species selection, but spring and summer weather—and maintenance techniques—play a major role in answering this question.

Our region experienced a very dry spring this year. Usually, the native plant species in our gardens at Woodend are very resilient and adapted to local weather conditions, but even the most tolerant plants can still be impacted by severe changes. We'll use White Wood Aster (*Eurybia divaricata*) as an example. This beautiful, prolific aster is typically one of the later bloomers in our gardens, brightening shady spots at Woodend from August through November, reaching peak bloom in September. This year though, by mid-July the White Wood Asters on the north side of the Mansion were in full bloom eight weeks ahead of schedule!

What's going on here? Many plants respond to physiological stress by flowering or fruiting earlier than usual. This adaptation allows them to accelerate growth and create seeds to pass on their genetic material, just in case they don't make it! This can also lead to scarcity for pollinators and seed-eating birds later in the season. So, we asked, if our October blooms are already spent by August, will our garden have resources for the many species of bees and butterflies in fall?

We decided to try a time-honored gardening technique called the "chelsea chop"—a practice that is typically used to control height and encourage later blooms. The White Wood Aster was uncharted territory though, since the chelsea chop is used mostly on summer-blooming perennials rather than fall-bloomers. We did not know what result to expect, but it worked. Our asters bloomed closer to their typical bloom time—when our pollinators really needed them!

Have you tried the chelsea chop to help plants get back on track in your own garden? Think about it next time you have something flower earlier than usual. The wildlife in your garden will thank you!



White wood asters in August (top photo) and re-bloomed white wood asters in late fall (bottom photo).

Restoration Hinges on Monitoring – Tracking Box Turtles at Woodend

by Bradley Simpson, Habitat Manager

At Woodend, the restoration team has been tracking different wildlife species, such as birds and amphibians, for multiple years. But this past year, we have started to monitor our resident box turtles! Our eastern box turtle, *Terrapene carolina carolina*, are terrestrial turtles with a hinge present on their bottom shell (plastron), that allows them to fully enclose themselves in their shell when threatened. The eastern box turtle occurs from Maine to Florida and west all the way to Texas. Individuals can be identified by the markings on their upper shell (carapace). We have used these unique markings to identify individuals living at Woodend. Through pictures collected by staff and volunteers, we have been able to identify 21 turtles currently calling Woodend home! Now, I'd like to introduce you to some of Woodend's residents. Turtles have been named through various means such as by our preschool students, staff, and camp interns.

"Worm" was first spotted during camp intern training in June of 2026 crossing the driveway by Teale. She was next photographed by Property Manager, Bjorn, preparing to lay eggs in the Nature Play Space in July!



Worm laying eggs near the nature play space.

Ella in the garden (top photo) and Fern amongst English ivy (bottom photo).



Ella met Director of Youth Programs Brenna near the Learning Garden in 2018 and ran into Director of Restoration Alice near the shop during a garden volunteer session in 2025.

Habitat Manager Bradley ran into Fern near the Atlas Cedar in our gravel parking lot in 2024. In 2025, Garden Program Manager Allie bumped into her while removing English ivy from a tree by the Brierly Driveway.



We are still finding new individuals! Keep an eye out while you visit Woodend and feel free to upload any box turtle pictures to iNaturalist so we can continue tracking these wonderful critters!

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.

SCAN TO FIND FAMILY PROGRAMS





nature forward
preschool



Acorns

September 9, 2026 - May 27, 2027

Once-weekly nature discovery and learning program for children up to age 4 with a caregiver

Wednesdays or Thursdays
9:00 am to 10:15 am
or
10:45 am to Noon

Tuition: \$150 per month
(plus one-time \$75 application fee)
Sibling discounts available



Learn more and enroll at natureforward.org/preschool-acorns

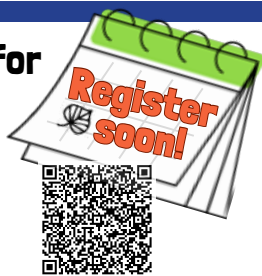
2027 Camp Season

Tell your friends! Registration for the 2027 camp season will open on Thursday, January 21 at 10 am.



Camp Woodend thanks all campers, parents, teachers, interns, TNTs, and JRCs who helped make this summer great.

mark your calendars for days off camps (Grades K-5)



When school is out, let your child join us for days filled with outdoor adventures and nature exploration at Woodend Nature Sanctuary in Chevy Chase, MD.



DAYS OFF CAMPS 8:45am - 5:00pm

September 21	March 9	April 22
January 25	April 12	May 17

Price per each one-day camp:

\$150 for Nature Forward members - \$200 non-members

FALL MINI CAMP 8:45am - 5:00pm

November 4 and November 5

Price for two-day camp:

\$295 for members - \$345 non-members

SPRING BREAK CAMP 8:45am - 3:00pm

Monday, March 29 - Friday, April 2, 2027

Price for week-long camp:

\$545 for members - \$610 non-members

Extended camp available Mon-Thurs until 5PM for \$145

natureforward.org/daysoff

Family Walk at Woodend

First Saturday of every month: 9/5, 10/3, 11/7 (9-10 am)

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

Explore Woodend with your family this fall! Expert naturalists will lead participants on a leisurely walk through the habitats of our 40-acre nature sanctuary. Witness the trees change color, meadows turn to seed, birds migrate south, and animals prepare for winter. Only register one adult when signing up. Returning families will get 50% off their second walk.

Nature Storytime at Woodend

Third Saturday of every month: 9/19, 10/17, 11/21 (11-11:30 am)

FREE, no registration required.

Join naturalists for an interactive, outdoor storytime at Woodend Nature Sanctuary. We will read aloud nature-based stories that encourage children to use their imagination, connect with the outdoors, explore, and play. For children ages 6 and under alongside an accompanying adult.

Play Space Naturalist Hour

Fourth Saturday of every month: 9/26, 10/24, 11/28 (10 am-12 pm)

FREE, no registration required.

Where do frogs come from? Why do birds migrate? Whose fur is *that*? Ask all these questions and more at Woodend's Nature Play Space on the fourth Saturday of the month, where a naturalist educator will set up a display of fascinating nature items for family audiences to explore! This interactive, hands-on, free program encourages curiosity in our youngest naturalists. Drop by anytime between 10 am and noon to meet our naturalist!



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



Learn more and see our party themes at natureforward.org/birthday-parties

Native Plantapalooza at Woodend

Nature Forward's headquarters, Woodend Sanctuary, is bursting with summer blooms! From whites to yellows to blues and purples, our native plants are putting on a colorful show. Not only do they look good, but their flowers and fruits feed pollinators and birds that call Woodend home.



From front: Black-eyed susans (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), native petunia (*Ruellia humilis*), and sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) in the North Entry Garden



Carpenter bee on Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)



Eastern tiger swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*) on Joe Pye weed (*Eutrochium* spp.)



Bumblebee (*Bombus* spp.) on Threadleaf mountainmint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*)



Blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)



Northern river oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*)



American goldfinch on anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)



Lanceleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium dubium*) and others



Purple passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*)



Brown thrasher on Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*)

Peer Outreach With Energy Resources (P.O.W.E.R.)

by Lulu Li, senior at Winston Churchill High School (MCPS), and POWER Energy Ambassador

POWER is a program led by Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection and Nature Forward to teach Montgomery County high schoolers about energy conservation and sustainability. The program helps young people apply the energy conservation knowledge they learn toward public outreach and future sustainable careers.

I applied to POWER because I wanted to learn more about energy efficiency and challenge myself to be more comfortable with sharing conservation ideas to the public. I was excited for the chance to work with other high schoolers to teach people in our community about energy conservation. I learned the importance of teaching young students and parents about energy use in an engaging and informative way. Often for me and many others, climate change can be a big overwhelming topic, causing people to feel powerless, but with POWER and the tabling outreach events we hosted, people are exposed to easy solutions and habits that they can implement in their own life to make a positive difference for our climate.

During our weekly meetings, we talk about ways people can save energy at home and at school. Some easy everyday actions people can use to be smarter about their energy use is switching from incandescent lights to LED lights, using a smart power strip to cut power for devices not in use, and simply turning off the lights when they are not in use. Although these actions might be small, when added together and applied by everyone they can make a huge difference in the energy consumption in a community. LED lights have an energy efficiency of around 80%, compared to 20% efficiency of traditional incandescent light bulbs. This adds up to cost savings on your utility bill. Montgomery County households can save about \$225 in energy costs per year by switching to LEDs (Montgomery Energy Connection). If everyone makes the change to LED lights, we will save electricity and save money while we're at it!

Before POWER I had a general idea that I wanted to pursue a sustainable career in scientific research, but I never knew what kind of jobs were available.



After participating in POWER and having the chance to hear talks from experts in the field, I have a stronger understanding of what it is like to pursue a sustainable career and what specific kind of job is best for me. This year, I am looking forward to rejoining the program to teach and empower more students about the importance of sustainable outreach!

This program is funded in part by Constellation Energy's E2 Energy to Educate grant program, and Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

Photos: Author, Lulu Li; and elementary students using a shortwave infrared camera to analyze lightbulb efficiency during an afterschool program led by POWER.

Volunteer Spotlight: Woodend Field Trips Foster Lifelong Connections with Nature

by Peihan Orestes, Volunteer Coordinator

Virginia Davis hasn't been a volunteer with Nature Forward for long, but she has been a huge help leading our school field trips!

I recently asked Virginia a few questions about her experience as a volunteer. She says: "I had been eyeing Nature Forward's adult education programs for years and finally had the flexibility to sign up a few years ago. I completed the Master Naturalist training program in 2024-25 and started volunteering. My favorite part of volunteering is the opportunity to continue learning from the incredibly knowledgeable staff and other volunteers. I also love seeing what the field trip kids notice on our walks and hearing their ideas about what's happening in the natural environment at Woodend."

When not at Woodend, you can find Virginia traveling and hiking with her husband and two teenagers. They just finished a road trip around New Brunswick and Nova Scotia with some gorgeous hikes and great folk music!



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SCAN TO REGISTER



For the Birder

Summer Birding Strolls

D: Saturday, September 5 (8:30-11 am) – Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, DC (Rob Hilton and Lisa Shannon)

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! 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.

Fall Birding Series

A: Tuesday, September 22 (8:15-10:45 am) National Arboretum (Paul Pisano) (DC)

B: Saturday, October 17 (8-10:30 am) – Dyke Marsh (Rob Hilton/Lisa Shannon) (VA)

C: Sunday, November 1 (8-10:30 am) – Lake Artemesia (Rob Hilton/Lisa Shannon) (MD)

D: Sunday, November 8 (8-10:30 am) – Hughes Hollow (Len Bisson) (MD)

E: Saturday, December 5 (8:30-11 am) – Patuxent Research Refuge, South Tract (Rob Hilton/Lisa Shannon) (MD)

Each walk members \$33, nonmembers \$46

Our fall birding series visit natural areas under an hour's drive from DC where a variety of habitats—including field, forest, and wetland—provide good opportunities for the observation and ID of birds in autumn. On the earliest walks, we'll hope to catch some southbound migrants—including those "confusing fall warblers." As the season progresses, we'll watch for sparrows, raptors, waterfowl, and other birds, both resident and overwintering in the region. These teaching walks are aimed at beginning to mid-level birders, but all are welcome. Our explorations will be on mostly level, natural surface trails that may be uneven, muddy, and/or somewhat slippery.

Hawk Watching at Waggoner's Gap, PA

Thursday, September 24 (10:30 am-4 pm)

Rain date: Thursday, October 1

Leader: Genevieve Wall

Members \$35, nonmembers \$49

Fall brings thousands of migrating raptors—hawks, falcons, eagles, and their allies—to the Appalachian Ridges and Atlantic coast. Our field trip goes to one of the premier hawk-watching sites in the area: Pennsylvania's Waggoner's Gap, about a 2.5-hour drive from DC. Waggoner's Gap sits atop Kittatinny Ridge, and is part of Pennsylvania's 1.5 million acres (larger than the state of Delaware!) of public game lands. Over the course of the day, we'll learn how to ID raptors as they fly far overhead, and dive into the life history of these fascinating animals. Getting to the hawk-watch lookout—you'll want to bundle up for this rocky and open-air viewing site!—requires walking up a short, but rocky, trail to an outcropping of perched boulders. We will be joined by an educator from the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Depending on group interest, Genevieve may lead an optional general natural history walk along the Tuscarora trail for those who'd like to stretch their legs, though of course, those who want to keep on hawk-watching are welcome to stay.

Prowling for Owls

Saturday, September 26 (7:15-9:30 pm)

Leader: Mark England

Location: Little Bennett Park

Members \$33, nonmembers \$46

Have you ever ventured out after dark and wondered: hoooo's out there? Join experienced "owler" Mark England at sundown to try to hear or see our three most common local owl species: Eastern Screech Owl, Barred Owl, and Great Horned Owl, all of which are present at the park. Mark will demonstrate the basics of owling and talk at length about each owl species. Though the park is usually closed after dark, the leader will have a required

night-use permit for our trip. Participants will be expected to keep quiet to maximize our chances of observing owls.



Eastern Screech Owl, Zygy from Wikimedia Commons

Sparrows and Finches: An Introduction to the Season's LBJs

Lecture: Thursday, November 19, 7-9:30 pm

(Woodend Nature Sanctuary) (Paul Pisano)

Field Trip A: Saturday, November 21, 8:30-11 am

(Occoquan Bay NWR) (Paul Pisano)

Field Trip B: Sunday, November 22, 8:30-11 am

(Blue Mash) (Rob Hilton & Lisa Shannon)

Lecture: members \$20, nonmembers \$28

Each walk: members \$33, nonmembers \$46

It's that time of year when sparrows and finches can present beginning to mid-level birders with some of their most difficult ID challenges. Feeling that way about yourself? You're invited to join one (or both) of our field tutorials for an introduction to the most common sparrows and finches in our region during this season. Tips for recognizing plumage, voice, habitat preferences and more will be shared by our teacher-leader teams. To help you prepare for the walks, leader Paul Pisano will present an optional illustrated photo & vocalization lecture at our Woodend Sanctuary. Registration for the lecture is separate from the walk.

On the Prowl for Winter Waterfowl

Lecture: Thursday, December 10 (7-9:30 pm)

(Woodend Nature Sanctuary)

Field Trip: Sunday, December 13 (8:30-11:30 am)

(Gunner's Lake, Germantown, MD)

Leaders: Mike Bowen & Anne Cianni

Lecture only: members \$20, nonmembers \$28

Lecture and Field Trip: members \$49; nonmembers \$69

Early winter is the best time to search for and learn to ID overwintering waterfowl in our area. If you're ready to refresh your skills and learn for the first time, our leader Mike Bowen will offer a lecture at Woodend prior to the in-person field trip at Gunner's Lake in Germantown, MD, where a paved trail around the water allows for easy waterfowl watching with binoculars. While our focus will be waterfowl, we'll keep an eye open for all birdlife. All levels of birders welcome.



For the Botanist

Botanical Gems: Rachel Carson

Tuesday, September 29 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Carole Bergmann

Location: Rachel Carson Conservation Park

Members \$33, nonmembers \$46

Rachel Carson Conservation Park (RCCP) near Brookeville, Maryland is a 650-acre protected area named as one of the Best Natural Areas in Montgomery County. Comprised of both forested tracks and open meadows in varying stages of succession, RCCP harbors rich species diversity due to its many habitats, which also create numerous niches for a wide range of wildlife. With leader Carole Bergmann—former Countywide Botanist and Forest Ecologist for Montgomery County—we will explore the characteristics of woody and herbaceous plants nearing the end of the growing season, early-succession piedmont grasses, and the dried remnants of seeds, fruit, flowers, and leaves. Though botany is our focus, we will be attuned to whatever wildlife we encounter. Expect to hike up to 3 miles through a variety of plant communities, including dry and wet meadows, shrub thickets, early successional woods, higher quality maturing upland forests, and riparian bottomlands along the Hawlings River. *Expect some uphill and downhill on natural surface trails, which may be slightly rocky, muddy, and/or slippery. No restrooms at the trailhead.*



Witch hazel by Judy Gallagher, Wikimedia Commons

Fall Forest Foray at Sugarloaf Mountain

Wednesday, October 21 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Bradley Simpson

Members \$33, nonmembers \$46

As the leaves change color and our trees begin their period of dormancy, the fall forest is full of life. From plants like witch-hazel that flower in late October to wildlife collecting acorns and hickory nuts to prepare for winter to birds stopping by as they head south. Join Habitat Manager Bradley Simpson to explore the colorful and lively fall forest of Sugarloaf Mountain.

Introduction to Tree Identification

Friday, October 16 (10 am-2:30 pm)

Leader: Stephanie Mason

Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary, MD

Members \$35; nonmembers \$49

October is a great month to begin learning to ID our local trees and shrubs. With colorful leaves and this season's seedpods hanging on, there are visible and fairly easy-to-find distinguishing characteristics to help sort out various species. Based at our Woodend Sanctuary, this learning session will begin under an outdoor awning where we'll talk about techniques for tree ID, coupled with the introduction to and practice with a basic, easy-to-use ID key. For the rest of our time, we'll stay outside and practice our new ID skills on the many trees growing on-site. Both beginners and those who want to brush up on their tree ID skills are welcome.

Welcome to the World of Winter Trees

Wednesday, December 16 (1-4 pm)

Leader: Bradley Simpson

Location: Rock Creek Park - Picnic Grove 10

Members \$33, nonmembers \$46

Ever wanted to know what type of tree you were looking at and despaired because there were no leaves? Never fear, help is here! Join Habitat Manager Bradley Simpson for a winter stroll at Rock Creek Park. On this walk, we'll enjoy December along the trail and learn how to approach identifying trees when their branches are mostly bare.

For the Nature-Lover Generalist

Autumn Marvels by Metro

A: Tuesday, September 15 (10 am-1 pm) – Rosslyn Metro Station, near Theodore Roosevelt Island

B: Wednesday, November 18 (10 am-1 pm) – Cleveland Park Metro Station, near Klinge Valley Trail in Rock Creek Park

C: Tuesday, December 8 (10 am-1 pm) – College Park Metro Station, near Lake Artemesia

Leader: Genevieve Wall

Each walk members \$33, nonmembers \$46

You don't need to go far by car to enjoy the great outdoors! In this series, we'll explore the progression of autumn one metro stop at a time. As we venture through serene river views, lush stream valleys, and lakeside trails of these metro-accessible parks, we'll learn about the wildlife and natural history that we encounter along the way. We'll encounter migrating birds, autumnal bounties of flowers, fruit, and nuts, and the seasonal progression as animals and plants prepare for winter. *The leader will meet you at the metro outside the exit turnstile. Expect a ~10 minute walk from metro station to the trail entrance. We will wander the trails, traveling at the pace of curiosity and stopping often to learn about whatever we encounter along the way.*

Midweek Meanders Along the Canal

Wednesdays (10-12:30 pm)

A: September 16 (Riley's Lock)

B: September 30 (Pennyfield Lock)

C: October 14 (Carderock)

D: October 28 (Violette's Lock)

E: November 11 (Swain's Lock)

F: December 2 (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.*

Fall in the Parks

(9 am-1 pm)

A. Saturday, September 19— Riverbend Park, VA

B. Sunday, October 18—Patuxent Research Refuge/North Tract, MD

C. Sunday, November 15—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. 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. At the Patuxent Research Refuge/ North Tract near Laurel, MD, we'll explore Coastal Plain woodlands and wetlands. At Riverbend Park, which sits along the Potomac River near Great Falls, VA, we'll use both bottomland and upland trails to enjoy fall colors and fruits. *Our explorations on trips A&B will occur on mostly-level natural surface trails which may be muddy, slippery, and/or rutted. The natural surface trails at Riverbend will include uphill and downhill walking.*

A Rocky Hike at Cascade Falls

Tuesday, November 3 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Genevieve Wall

Location: Patapsco State Park, MD

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Visit Maryland's oldest state park! From the banks of the Patapsco River, we'll set off uphill along the Cascade Trail, hugging close to the stream at first and then returning on the uplands side. Along the way, we'll pay close attention to the progression of autumn, as well as the trees, mammal tracks and signs, birds, or other plant and animal life we encounter. We will cover nearly three miles on natural surface trails, which include a couple of steep uphill/downhill sections and some rocky terrain. There is a per-car fee to enter the park (\$2 MD tags, \$4 non-MD tags).

Solstice Celebration Hike

Friday, December 18 (12-4:30 pm)

Leaders: Genevieve Wall and Stephanie Mason

Location: Widewater, C&O Canal (Montgomery County, MD)

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

The first day of winter is arriving. Whether you call this astronomical event the shortest day—or the longest night—of the year, it's a good occasion to pause the hustle-bustle of daily life and join fellow nature lovers on a hike in a beautiful place! Our outing starts at the Widewater area along the C&O Canal Towpath and will move upriver to Great Falls. Here we'll traverse the bridges out to the Great Falls Overlook—and after enjoying the drama and din of the Falls—we'll retrace our steps back to Widewater. As daylight fades on our return walk downriver, we'll look and listen for wildlife activity—primarily birds—as they settle in for the longest night of the year. *Be ready for a round-trip of nearly 4 miles on the natural surface Towpath at a pace faster than our usual naturalist's shuffle.*

Nature Art

Botanical Watercolors: Coneflowers

Tuesday, September 1 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Jen Brown

Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary, MD

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

In this class, we will learn basic watercolor techniques. We'll put our new skills into practice by painting all the different parts of a coneflower (ray flowers, disc flowers, leaves and stem). And, if there is time, we will put them altogether and paint a complete coneflower. Along the way, we'll hone our observations and bring vivid summer wildflowers to life on the page.



Autumn Oak Leaves in Watercolor

Wednesday, November 4 (10 am-1 pm)

Leader: Jen Brown

Location: Woodend Nature Sanctuary

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Fall in our area can be a dazzling array of color, but oak leaves are often overlooked. With their glowing golds, rich browns, and subtle reds they make a challenging but fun subject for watercolor. In this class we will focus on a single oak leaf, first doing a tonal study in one color to map out the lights and darks, then moving on to color. We will also cover color mixing, how to transfer a drawing to watercolor paper, and tips on how to handle leaf veins.

Take Nothing But Pictures: Nature Phone-tography

Saturday, November 14 (8:30-11 am)

Leader: Liz Guertin

Location: Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay Natural Area (PG County, MD)

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

Join Maryland Master Naturalist & Nature Photographer, Liz Guertin, for a journey into phone photography! Liz will teach composing great shots, using the many creative features & apps on your phone, and how to capture fall color in all its glory. All phones welcome! Our venue for the morning is the spectacular Jug Bay Natural Area and Black Walnut Creek boardwalk, where we'll find bald cypress and other plants in fall color. Please bring a freshly charged device.

For the Insect Lover

Late Summer Insect Quest

Thursday, September 10 (10 am-12:30 pm)

Leader: Lisa Shannon

Location: Brookside Gardens and Pine Lake, Wheaton Regional Park, MD

Members \$33; nonmembers \$46

September may be autumn, calendrically, but here in DC early September still has summer weather and, most importantly, summer insects! We'll start at the Brookside Gardens pollinator garden to see what butterflies are around and then walk through the beautiful gardens to Pine Lake to look at dragonflies. *It's about a 1.5-mile walk total, on mostly flat paved or gravel trails.*

Natural Heritage Series

Natural Heritage Series: Fall in Love with the James River

Saturday, October 10 (10 am) to Sunday, October 11 (5 pm)

Leader: Genevieve Wall

Location: Southeast of Richmond, VA

Members: \$280; nonmembers \$330

Experience the beauty of autumn on the James, America's founding river, as Senior Naturalist Genevieve Wall leads us on an immersive two-day adventure. The tidal wetlands on the James River come alive in fall, as migrating flocks of red-winged blackbirds descend on native wild rice, deciduous trees don their autumn apparel, and fresh pecans crunch underfoot. We'll explore one of Virginia's most remarkable ecosystems and its rich natural and cultural history by canoe, pontoon boat, and guided hikes through riverside habitat.

Paddle through blackwater creeks and tidal marshland, then ferry over to Presquile National Wildlife Refuge. Because you can only reach this island by boat, this hidden gem and Important Bird Area is an ecological treasure that few members of the public ever get to visit. We'll spend the night at the refuge's rustic bunkhouse, with optional night and sunrise hikes to enjoy the rich plant and animal life on the island. On day two, we'll embark on a leisurely hike on the trails out to the interior creeks, where the forest floods twice a day at high tide. We'll close our exploration by conducting a scientific collection fish trawl from the pontoon boat to learn about the fauna of tidal freshwater ecosystems. Bald Eagles (and perhaps any lingering first-year Osprey) will fish alongside us as we identify Hogchokers, White Perch, Bluegill, and other aquatic species. There will be an option to share a meal together at a nearby riverside restaurant. Families with youth ages 10+ welcome! (All minors must have a parent/guardian accompany them on the trip.) Program cost covers all guided activities, overnight accommodation at a rustic shared bunkhouse, and three group meals during our stay. Participants should be able to walk up to two miles at a relaxed pace, to sit and stand for extended periods, to climb a short step, to enter and exit a canoe (with assistance), and to gently paddle a canoe on flat water. Genevieve may adjust the order of activities if needed to best serve the needs of the trip. Important note: the shared bunkhouse is the only lodging option for this outing. Alternate accommodation is not available. Should severe weather force us to postpone the trip, we will reschedule to November 7-8.

Natural Heritage Series: Harriet Tubman's History, Heroism, and Nature Knowledge

Saturday, October 24 (10 am) to Sunday, October 25 (3 pm)

Leaders: Alex Green, Lisa Green, Genevieve Wall

Location: Cambridge, MD

Members: \$230; nonmembers \$280

After a popular one-day trip in March, Alex and Lisa Green from Harriet Tubman Tours and Senior Naturalist Genevieve Wall are back with an expanded version: a two-day nature and history adventure on Maryland's eastern shore! Visit the landscapes where Harriet Tubman's keenly developed skills as a naturalist helped keep her and her passengers on the Underground Railroad safe. In this tour, you'll learn a blend of Harriet Tubman's life history, and explore some questions—how do you keep warm on a cold night when smoke from a fire could reveal your location? What plants are useful, edibly or medicinally, and where can they be found? How do you stay aware of human and animal movements? The two-day version of this trip will allow for hands-on learning activities about shelter, evasion, and navigation. On this trip, we'll caravan together to a series of sites that will enrich your understanding of Harriet Tubman's life and legacy—as a hero of the underground railroad, a force for freedom, and a naturalist with deep knowledge of the land around her. Program cost covers field activities only; we'll share information about lodging and food options to all registrants. This trip requires a level of physical fitness to be able to be able to walk up to one mile at a time at

a relaxed pace on mostly flat natural surface trails. The leaders may adjust the order of activities if needed to best serve the needs of the trip. Should inclement weather force us to postpone, we will reschedule to November 14-15.



Photo by Cristina Niciporciukas

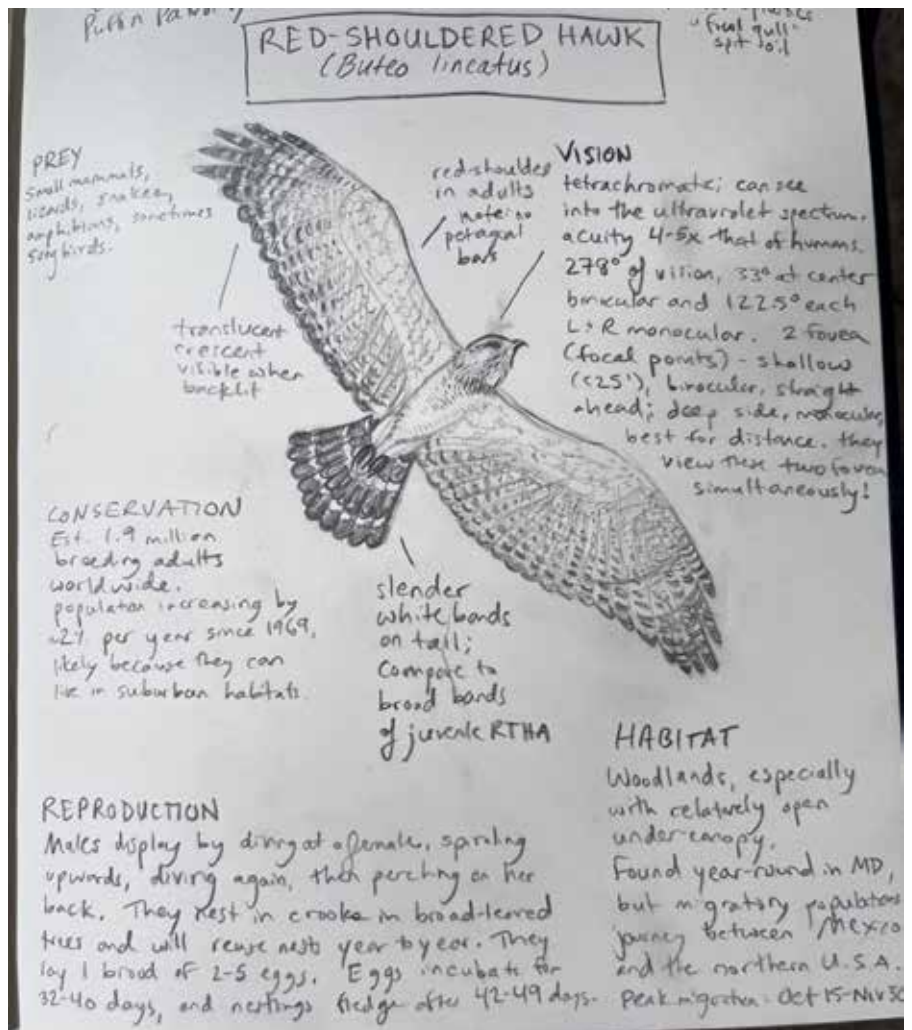
Nature Notes from Genevieve's Journal: Fall

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.

Two red-shouldered hawks soar high in the sky, uplifted by rising thermals. Sunlight shines through the translucent crescents near their wingtips. As they scan the woodlands below, I wonder what they see: twitching twigs that bely the presence of a chipmunk, mouse, or vole foraging in the brush? Streaks of fresh rodent urine scattering ultraviolet light? And me, with my binoculars and conspicuous broad-brimmed hat, staring up at them?

It's September, and fall migration is already well underway. Migration is demanding and dangerous work. Individuals may starve to death, exhaust themselves over open water and drown, or be blown off course by powerful storms. So, migratory birds catch a lift where they can. When the wind meets the Appalachian Mountains, it is forced upwards by the rock. These updrafts help keep large birds aloft with minimal effort. The fewer calories the birds expend in flight, the more likely they are to survive the journey. Because of this, raptor migration tends to follow ridgelines.



Prior to the 1930s, many people viewed birds of prey as pests. But a gradual shift in attitude began, and biologists, birders, and curious members of the public began to gather along the Blue Ridge to observe hawks, eagles, and falcons in flight. And thus the "Hawk Watches" were born! One excellent site relatively close to us in the greater DC area is Waggoner's Gap: an exposed rocky hilltop on the Kittatinny Ridge with panoramic views. Counters have logged daily records dating back to 1952. These long-range data help us better understand birds of prey: their life history, their numbers, and how we can help protect them.

Above, the pair of red-shouldered hawks circle higher. With my binoculars down, I lose them in the unrelenting blue of the September sky.

Woodend Walks and Tours

Family Walk at Woodend

First Saturday of every month: 9/5, 10/3, 11/7 (9-10 am)

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

Explore Woodend with your family this fall! Expert naturalists will lead participants on a leisurely walk through the habitats of our 40-acre nature sanctuary. Witness the trees change color, meadows turn to seed, birds migrate south, and animals prepare for winter. Only register one adult when signing up. Returning families will get 50% off their second walk.

Beginner Bird Walk

Second Saturday of every month: 9/12, 10/10, 11/14 (8-9 am)

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

Join enthusiastic birders for beginner birdwatching at Woodend Nature Sanctuary. No experience is needed, just curiosity! Binoculars are provided. Learn how to identify common birds around the DC area this fall. This walk will be just over half a mile long and entirely on durable trails.

Nature Journaling

Sunday, September 13 (10-11:30 am)

Members \$12; nonmembers \$16

Observe and creatively record the wonder of nature this fall with words, pictures, and numbers at Woodend Nature Sanctuary. No artistic skill or experience is needed, just a desire to slow down, notice more, be curious, and develop a deeper connection with the natural world. Bring a journal with blank pages and a pen or pencil.

Native Plant Gardens Tour of Woodend

Friday, October 9 (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 to your own native plant gardens this fall!

Restoring Woodend's Ecosystems

Friday, October 16 (10-11:30 am)

Members \$12; nonmembers \$16

Restored habitats provide food and shelter for bees and butterflies in our meadow, frogs and salamanders in our pond, and many bird species in our forest. Explore what stewardship means for Woodend's natural habitats on this walk through our 27 acres of forest, 5 acres of wildflower meadow, native plant gardens, ephemeral stream, and pond.

Nature Yoga & Nature Immersion: Forest Movement at Woodend

Sunday, November 1 (9:30-11 am)

Members \$12; nonmembers \$16

As the seasons shift, join us for a grounding, peaceful morning of gentle movement and sensory connection with nature at Woodend, with a focus on stillness, deep breath, and slow, accessible movement. This is not a traditional yoga class, but a nature-based movement experience that invites connection with the living world around you. All levels welcome; no prior yoga experience needed. Bring a mat/towel, water, and dress for the weather and uneven outdoor terrain.

Forest Bathing with Ana Ka'ahanui

Saturday, November 7 (10 am-12 pm)

Members \$30; nonmembers \$40

Forest Bathing, or shinrin-yoku, is a mindfulness practice that invites participants to slow down and use all of their senses to take in and connect with the natural world. This practice was developed in Japan in the 1980s as a response to burnout and stress in urban areas. Join certified Forest Bathing guide this fall, Ana Ka'ahanui, for a soothing exploration through the forests of Woodend. Dress for the weather and uneven outdoor terrain.

Fall Tree ID and History

Saturday, November 14 (9-10:30 am)

Members \$12; nonmembers \$16

Enjoy the oranges, reds, and yellows of our forest while mastering your tree identification skills with an expert naturalist this fall at Woodend Nature Sanctuary. On this walk, you will visit county "champion" trees and discover the ecological and cultural significance of native and introduced tree species in the Capital 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.

Online Registration for Natural History Field Studies

Sign up at natureforward.org/nhfs

Registration is handled completely online. Register at natureforward.org/nhfs.

Questions? Contact pam.oves@natureforward.org.



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

**Required reading lists and instructor bios at
natureforward.org/nhfs.**

Introduction to Fungi

NATH7203, 3.0 CEUs

Class night and time: Mondays, 7-9 pm

Class meetings: September 14-November 16

Lectures via Zoom

Field trip dates: Sunday, September 20, 10 am-2 pm (Woodend Nature Sanctuary); Saturday, October 3, 10 am-2 pm (Patuxent River Park); Saturday, October 24, 10:30 am-2 pm (Adkins Arboretum); and Sunday, November 15, 10 am-3 pm (Mount Rainier Nature Center)

Instructor: Serenella Linares

Members \$420, nonmembers \$470

Did you know that the split gill fungus (*Schizophyllum commune*) has more than 23,000 sexes? The world of fungi includes an astounding variety of compelling organisms that have shaped the terrestrial biota in ways we are only beginning to understand. For example, fungi evolved unique strategies of exploitation and cooperation with other organisms. We will explore basic fungi biology, including anatomy and physiology, life cycles, ecology, and evolution. As we pay special attention to our local species, you'll gain a new perspective and appreciation of their place in the ecosystems around us and our daily lives.



Non-Native and Invasive Plants of the Mid-Atlantic

NATH8319E, 1.5 CEUs

Class night and time: Tuesdays, 6-8 pm

Class meetings: September 15-October 20

(no class on September 22)

Lectures via Zoom

Field trip dates: Saturday, September 26, 9 am-12 pm (Theodore Roosevelt Island); Saturday, October 3, 9 am-12 pm (Patapsco Valley State Park); Saturday, October 10, 9 am-12 pm, site TBD. Times may shift forward or back a half an hour to accommodate weather and park traffic.

Instructor: Paula Becker

Members \$240, nonmembers \$290

You've probably heard the term "invasive" before, but have you thought about what it really means? And why is it so important that you care? Consequences of invasive plants in mid-Atlantic natural areas may be medical, ecological, environmental, or economic. This course will explore the historical and ongoing arrival of invasives, look at their cultural, legal, and ecological significance, and focus time on identification of major species of concern in the mid-Atlantic and possible control measures. And we'll look at how our choices have far-reaching effects. Three field trips to local parks will reinforce identification skills and emphasize current management issues.



Porcelain berry by Wuerzela

COMING IN NOVEMBER

Details on winter classes, open for registration in late fall, at natureforward.org/nhfs.

Human Ecology

Dr. Alison Pearce

Night Sky for Naturalists

Carrie Fitzgerald

The Ecology of Plant-Animal Interactions

NATH8295, 3.0 CEUs

Class night and time: Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm

Class meetings: September 23-December 2

(no class November 25)

Lectures in person at Woodend

Field trip dates: Saturday, 9/26 (9 am-12 pm) Plant-Pollinator Interactions at Patuxent Research Refuge, National Wildlife Visitors Center (South Tract); Saturday, 10/10 (10 am-1 pm) Plant-Herbivore Interactions at Little Bennett Regional Park; Saturday, 10/24 (9 am-12 pm) Seed dispersal and frugivory – examining foliar fruit flags at Rock Creek Park.

Instructor: John Lill

Members \$390; nonmembers \$440

This 10-week course will explore the myriad ways that plants and animals interact in natural communities. Major sub-topics will include pollination, herbivory, plant defenses, frugivory, seed dispersal, ant-plant interactions, and carnivorous plants. You'll explore these fascinating and often intimate interactions through the lens of evolution, probing the fitness benefits and costs to each partner engaging in these interactions. You'll come to appreciate how plants use (and often manipulate!) animals to overcome the limitations of being rooted in place but still needing to mate with one another, disperse their offspring, and fend off their natural enemies. There will be three field trips, two written assessments, and each student will take turns presenting a paper of their choice on a relevant topic. We will read and discuss excerpts of book chapters and/or accessible scientific papers each week.



NEW!!!

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 travel@natureforward.org for complete itineraries and registration information or visit natureforward.org/nature-travel.

Churchill's Belugas, Polar Bears, & Arctic Wildlife

July 30-August 5, 2027

Leaders: Bradley Simpson & in-country guide

Cost: \$9,295 per person based on double/shared occupancy

Optional Single Supplement: \$945

Internal Air: \$1,689 per person



Hi! I'm Bradley Simpson, Nature Forward's Habitat Manager. As an all-around botany enthusiast, I'm excited to be leading this adventure in the Summer of 2027. Join us to immerse yourself in the unforgettable energy of an Arctic summer! From the town of Churchill, inaccessible by road, we'll undertake boat and kayak trips to interact with belugas, hike to search for wildlife such as Arctic fox, ptarmigan, caribou, and polar bears, and revel in the rich wildflower diversity – and these are just some of the exciting activities this expedition offers! Highlights include:

Beluga Whales: Visit belugas in the mouth of the Churchill River—with no more than seven passengers per Zodiac. This ensures clear viewing, easy photography access, and a flexible timetable. We'll also have the opportunity to kayak among the belugas—an up-close encounter in silence broken only by the splash of your paddle and the whales' inquisitive interactions as they approach your boat. And while it is thrilling to see them up close, our experience is enhanced by the chance to hear them as well. We'll listen to these delightfully vocal whales by hydrophone.

Sled Dogs: We'll meet a local Metis musher to learn all about this historic form of northern transportation and recreation, then take a ride behind his enthusiastic team as they pull us in a wheeled cart.

Local Culture: We'll meet revered elders of the First Nations, Inuit and Metis cultures in Churchill. These Indigenous storytellers are some of the last of their generation in their communities, sharing their knowledge of past and present with our travelers.



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

February 2-14, 2027

Leaders: Stephanie Mason & in-country guide Eddie Recio

Cost: \$6,175, single supplement \$900 (limited availability)

This will be Stephanie's 29th trip 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. Of course our group will keep its eyes open as well for other wildlife including mammals, butterflies, reptiles, and amphibians. 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. Detailed itinerary and registration available at natureforward.org/nature-travel. **This trip has one single room left.**

ONE
SPOT
LEFT!



Ancora! Adventure, Birding, and Cuisine: Northeastern Italy

April 28-May 8, 2027

Leaders: Paul Pisano & in-country guides Valerio Russo and Andrea Senese

Cost: \$7,795, single supplement \$575

Paul Pisano returns to Italy for a second tour in partnership with K'Nature, a company of zoologists with years of experience in both scientific research and ecotourism. We will move from coastal wetlands and lagoons to dry grasslands (magredi), agricultural mosaics, karst landscapes, and alpine meadows. This variety not only creates a visually stunning journey, but also allows us to experience an exceptional range of birdlife and ecological communities, reflecting the unique biogeographic position of northeastern Italy. And, of course, we'll refuel ourselves with flavorful regional delicacies along the way! Detailed itinerary and registration available at natureforward.org/nature-travel. **This trip is full, email travel@natureforward.org to be put on the waitlist.**

FULL!!!



COMING SOON:

Patagonia with Liz Guertin (November 29-December 12, 2027)

Colombia with Mark Garland (March 4-11, 2028)

Future destinations we're considering:

- Alaska
- Ecuador/Galapagos
- New Zealand/New Caledonia

Got somewhere you'd like us to travel? Let us know!

Be the first to know when we launch a new trip – email travel@natureforward.org to get on our announcement list.



Nature Forward Completes 46th Birdathon

The results are in: the 46th Annual Birdathon raised more than \$79,000 to support Nature Forward's education, conservation, and restoration programs! This year's top fundraisers include:

- Team Mason, Oves, Wall - \$13,068
- Team Cottingham - \$8,621
- David Blockstein and Debra Prybyla - \$6,334
- Carolyn Peirce - \$2,743
- Alison Pearce - \$2,500
- Nature Forward Board - \$2,302
- Nancy Voit - \$1,752
- Liz Jones - \$1,055



Thank you to everyone who participated in this springtime tradition, either by counting birds or making a donation.

We are also grateful to a generous longtime member who provided a matching gift this year. Thanks to their generous gift, every donation to this year's Birdathon was matched up to \$30,000.

You can find more highlights in our 46th Annual Nature Forward Birdathon Report at <https://natureforward.org/birdathon/>.

Thank you **birdathon** Sponsors!



Thank you to our In-kind Sponsors:



Woodend After Dark Highlights

June 4 was an elegant and exciting evening filled with delicious food, friends, and fun at the beautiful Woodend Sanctuary and Mansion. The support of Woodend After Dark 2026 from attendees and sponsors raised more than \$46,000 for Nature Forward's vital nature education, restoration, and conservation work.

Amazing hors d'oeuvres, a delicious plated dinner, and tempting desserts and drinks—generously prepared and served by Corcoran Caterers—all added up to an elegant and memorable evening! Event partners, Owl Moon Raptor Center, Calluna Flower Truck, and the Junior Jazz Lab, wowed attendees with a meet-and-greet with an owl, a pick-your-own bouquet experience, and lively jazz music.

The event highlights include 113 tickets sold, 4 sponsors, 27 auction sponsors, \$12,825 raised in auction proceeds, and \$1,330 raised in the interactive wine pull game! While celebrating a beautiful summer evening and supporting Nature Forward, attendees told us they also enjoyed finding new friends. "Meeting new people who share my interests" is what one guest shared about why they support Woodend After Dark. Images from the evening below.



Flexible Solutions for Diverse Occasions

Discover a multifaceted venue where versatility meets inspiration. Whether you are hosting a strategic team retreat, a baby-shower, or a grand wedding celebration, our spaces serve as a bespoke backdrop for every significant occasion.



See more photos at <https://woodendsanctuary.org>

For availability and details, call (301) 450-1407 or email beatriz.engel@natureforward.org

*Photos by Nessa K Photography (bride),
Mason Photography (ceremony),
and Paperbird Photography (tent)*

woodendsanctuary.org

National Preparedness Month

RISE ABOVE: BUILDING FLOOD WISE COMMUNITIES

Join Us for a 5-Part Virtual Series

Weekly on Wednesdays this September • 6:30- 8:00 PM

Wednesday, September 2

Flooding 101

Wednesday, September 9

Emergency Preparedness

Wednesday, September 16

Building Community Resilience

Wednesday, September 23

Flood Insurance

Wednesday, September 30

I'm Prepared, Now What?



Receive a stipend for your participation in this interactive virtual series.

FREE, Accessible, Virtual Community workshops where you can learn more about:

- The District's Waterways & Stormwater
- Emergency Preparedness resources
- RiverSmart Homes, Communities & Schools Program
- Flood Insurance
- Actions to Take

For more information, contact Marquelle Ogletree at marquelle.ogletree@natureforward.org



Register here!



Climate Crisis and Eco-Grief: A Virtual Tour of the UMD CEDAR Gallery

Thursday, September 10th @ 7 PM

Virtual via Zoom

A conversation with

Dr. Jayson Maurice Porter
University of Maryland College Park



Scan to learn more!



CONSERVATION CAFE

 **Autumn Lights**
 Nov 20 • 5 - 8 pm at Woodend Mansion

CALL FOR SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS!
 Do you have a great item for our auction?

The Silent Auction is a beloved Autumn Lights tradition. If you have an item or experience that would generate excitement, please consider donating it for this year's event!

Top items include vacation getaways; nature experiences, like tours and walks; dining certificates; and themed gift baskets. Please note that we can't use artwork or clothing, and can only accept new items.

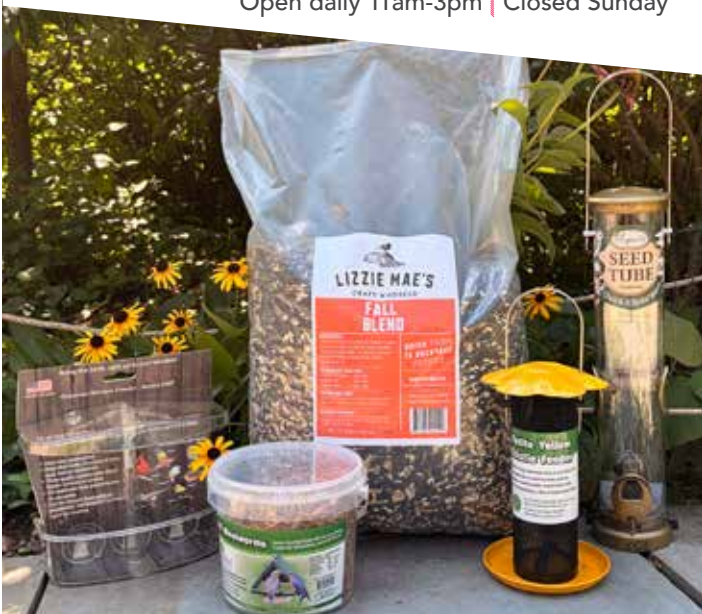
To donate your items, please email talissa.bavaresco@natureforward.org by Oct 15.

Donations benefit Nature Forward's mission work and are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

SEED & FEEDERS

AT WOODEND NATURE SHOP

Open daily 11am-3pm | Closed Sunday



Members receive 10% off!  **woodend nature shop**
 BY NATURE FORWARD

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

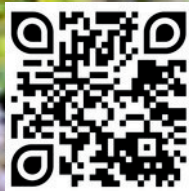
Transform your landscape!

Love Woodend's gardens?
 Take the first step towards growing a garden that improves habitat and supports our local ecosystem with native plants!

Book an on-site garden consultation at your home or residence with Nature Forward.

\$250
 (includes consultation followed by a comprehensive report)

Learn more and book your consult today!

Questions? Contact alice.sturm@natureforward.org



Welcome Marquelle

Marquelle Ogletree (she/her) is the new DC Conservation Advocate, bringing advocacy experience across local, state, and federal levels for social and environmental justice. Originally from Tallahassee, Florida, Marquelle began advocating for clean energy and climate resilience in high school. She graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, focusing on environmental justice. From diverse experiences in advocacy, community engagement, and facilitating intergroup dialogue, Marquelle takes an intersectional approach by considering the ways environment affects quality of life including food access, water quality, and health. Across the District, she is driven to empower community members while continuing critical work for clean water, disaster preparedness, and more. In her free time, Marquelle enjoys hiking, collaging, exploring museums, and puzzling.



Goodbye Jamoni

Jamoni Overby, Nature Forward's DC Conservation Advocate, will be transitioning out of her role to complete her Masters of Social Innovation at the University of San Diego. Over the last five years, Jamoni has grown Nature Forward's work in new and exciting ways. She started and led a DC Clean Water Workgroup on behalf of Nature Forward and the Choose Clean Water Coalition. Additionally, she led Nature Forward's flood resilience workshops that enabled over 1,000 DC residents to be prepared for the worst impacts of extreme weather events caused by climate change. In addition to her leadership as the DC Conservation Advocate, Jamoni co-chaired Nature Forward's staff IDEA committee and co-chaired Taking Nature Black 2025. Nature Forward will miss her immensely, but we know that everything she does for our world will only grow as she gains new skills with this advanced degree.



Welcome Maggie

Maggie Reed has joined Nature Forward as our new Development Database Manager. In this role, Maggie will manage membership and donor data, ensuring accurate entry, maintenance, and reporting. Her work will focus on gift processing and data integrity, as well as connecting and reconciling our systems, streamlining workflows, and identifying opportunities for automation. Maggie most recently worked for a healthcare IT company, where she did data analytics and reporting. She holds a Master's degree in Data Science. On the weekends, Maggie likes to visit farmers markets and attend local events with her family. She also enjoys cooking, swimming, and horseback riding. Maggie says that nature has always been a source of peace, and has enjoyed watching that same calm settle into her toddler when they are outside together.



Welcome Dani

Carol Daniela "Dani" Wilches (she/her) is the new Maryland Conservation Advocate. Originally from Colombia, Dani spent years embedded in participatory approaches with diverse communities. Dani is a sociologist by passion and public policy professional by conviction, because understanding people and changing systems go hand in hand. Before joining Nature Forward, Dani published research from different regions of Colombia on education equity and social inclusion, and supported climate advocacy at the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, including the development of the Latino outreach strategy. Dani is drawn to the spaces where meaningful conversations happen, convinced that community wisdom is where the best policy begins. Currently she is learning pottery, planting a native pollinator garden and attempting inline skating (survival not guaranteed).

Memorial and Tribute Contributions

MAY-JULY 2026

IN MEMORY OF:

Cris Fleming
Morton Kavalier

Jere French
Daniel Kaufman

Glenda Shasho Jones
Peter Mohr

Dr. Florence Kate Millar
Joanna R. Shelton

IN HONOR OF:

Teshome Ayele
Gizachew Ayele

Chuck Hawkins
Kathleen Leary

Lucas Intrater
Therese Intrater

Mayda Nathan
Nancy Hair

Stella Thompson
Bruce T. Adams

Nature Forward remembers **Belinda Saffell**, who passed away in June, with warmth and gratitude. Belinda was a beloved assistant teacher in our Nature Preschool from 2019-2020. She is survived by her husband Robb and children Ciel and Camille, who we hope will visit us often at Woodend.



Photo by Amelia McLaughlin

Dedicated Nature Forward supporter, **Florence K Millar**, passed away in June at 103 years old. FK was a retired research biologist who contributed greatly to our understanding of cancer and its treatment in a trailblazing career with NIH. After retirement, she traveled extensively on birding trips with her dear friend Emma Shelton, including with Nature Forward. We will think of FK's enduring youthful spirit at the nature play space that she helped to fund.



Photo: FK Millar was a platoon leader for the Navy's WAVE program during WWII.

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.

Nature Forward Annual Meeting at Woodend Sanctuary

Thursday, October 22, 6-8:30 pm

Speaker: Alice Sturm, Nature Forward's Director of Restoration

"Habitat Restoration: From Woodend to the Watershed"

Calling all Nature Forward members! Be sure to join us for the 2026 Annual Membership Meeting. The evening event will include a fiscal year wrap-up presented by Executive Director, Alison Pearce, recognition of our Volunteer of the Year, and election of members to the Nature Forward Board of Directors. Coffee and dessert will be served.

Please RSVP to this free event at <https://give.natureforward.org/annualmeeting2026> by Friday, 10/16.

BOARD ELECTIONS:

Nature Forward members will vote on candidates for the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting. An official notice including profiles of the slate of Board candidates presented by the Nominating Committee will be posted at [natureforward.org/board](https://give.natureforward.org/board) after October 1.



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Autumn Lights

YOU'RE INVITED!

FRIDAY NOV 20TH 2026

5:00 - 8:00 PM

WOODEND MANSION
8940 JONES MILL ROAD
CHEVY CHASE, MD

GET TICKETS!

give.natureforward.org/AutumnLights2026