

We celebrated our 22-year anniversary in 2016 with an opening of our newly renovated Mountain House headquarters and releasing our *Retrospective*. It seemed fitting that we send out a Press Release to remind our community what we were founded to accomplish and how we continue to work towards that mission. I hope you enjoy the summary below, and please also read our “Trail Talk” section. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming program. —Michael



For Immediate Release:

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy’s Mission: Program Participants Become Better Stewards of the Land

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy, Inc. (BRMC) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1994 to protect the Bull Run Mountains through education, research, and stewardship. BRMC (then trading under the name Friends of Bull Run, Inc.) was organized by local landowners who wanted to promote the preservation and improvement of natural resources on the Bull Run Mountains through educational, charitable, and scientific means for the benefit of the general public.

BRMC offers educational programs to adults and children, with a strong link to local history. At BRMC preservation does not mean a hands-off policy, but rather a focus on drawing people to appreciate the resources at hand and the completion of research to better understand and protect those resources. We served nearly 3,000 children and adults with over 10,000 impact hours through our public education programs in 2016. BRMC has a high leader-to-participant ratio that ensures a focused and quality education experience. **All of our programs endeavor to teach how important it is to care for and protect the Bull Run Mountains.**

BRMC’s popular yearlong series of nature camps (including Herpetology Camp, Nature Days, Budding Naturalist Camp, Summer Nature Camp, Chesapeake Watershed Workshop, and Winter Nature Camp) is a cornerstone of our program. Our Youth Outdoors Scholarship Program provides equal opportunities for children to attend camps. The mother of one scholarship beneficiary wrote...



“I can honestly say that it was probably one of the best adventures and learning experiences my 8 year old son ... has ever had. He came home everyday happy in his wet shoes and clothing and constantly talked non-stop about everything he saw, learned, touched and experienced with an enthusiasm and sparkle I had not seen before in his eyes Each morning he got up and

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Woodcock Watching

by Anna Ritter

*SHOOTING THE
BREEZE*
is a publication of
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On the chilly first weekend of March, I pulled on some long underwear and headed over to Clifton Farm off Blantyre Road for an evening of woodcock watching with Environmental Studies on the Piedmont and BRMC. After an introduction inside the pink farmhouse with Tom Wood (where I became very comfortable among the cushions on the warm sofa), the first of two groups headed out through the mown trails of the field behind the farmhouse just as dusk descended.

We chose a spot on the western slope of a gentle hill and tucked ourselves into the brush on the side of a trail (I got into a tussle with the spines of a black locust that tried to remove my hat when I sat down), safely out of sight of any soon-to-appear woodcocks.

The American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) is a small, plump, brown sandpiper with an almost comical-looking long beak that it uses to probe soft earth for worms, its main food source. Known affectionately as "timberdoodles" among the old-timers, the birds are nearly impossible to spot on the forest floor unless one flies out from under your foot as you hike or you are lucky enough to catch their elaborate mating dance. During early mornings and dusky evenings of spring, at times between the threats of nightly predators and daytime hawks, the male woodcocks begin their "peent" calls. These calls are quite unique, to hear them yourself, you can visit the

Cornell Lab of Ornithology's website to see a short video and audio clips.



Setting up for an evening of woodcock watching—it's best to look west so the birds are framed against the light as the sun sets.

the bend of the trail, the *peent* calls die away. Then abruptly, as if encouraged by the interested presence of the female, the male takes off again for another round of the sky.

Our group takes the opportunity to creep closer to the action site, crawling on our hands and knees through the roughly mown trail so we're the least intrusive as possible. The odd whirring bubbling noise signals the male's descent, and we freeze in place. We can just see the male and female slip away into the longer grass—and then they're gone. It seems to have been a successful night for future woodcocks.

Later, as we trudge back through the darkened field, a barred owl hoots down in the western lowlands. The woodcocks hadn't ended their last flights but five minutes ago.



American Woodcock, *Scolopax minor*, is an upland sandpiper that uses its long beak to probe for food

With a flutter of wings, the male in front of us takes off into the air, climbing higher and higher until he's just a tiny dot against the grey sky. Our group cranes our heads back, following the circles of the bird's flight. After three or four rotations overhead, he tumbles from the sky with whirring gurgles and wings askew, and lands just beyond us down the trail. The low muffled *peent* calls begin again, and the cycle repeats.

After four or five flights, a dark blur - a female, attracted by the male's dance - suddenly flies in, just skimming the tall grass. As the pair disappears around

Public Programs Spring 2017

HIKE WITH A NATURALIST

1st Thursday of Every Month at 9 a.m.

Join a professional naturalist and discover some of the flora and fauna of the local region. This program is free; all are welcome. Meet at the Mountain House.

MONTHLY SPEAKER SERIES

These programs are free and open to the community!

Please RSVP to info@brmconservancy.org

May TBA—Dr. Oliver Flint, Curater Emeritus, Neuropteroids; Department of Entomology; National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution; and David Smith, Entomologist. They will present the results of their insect work on the mountains over the last 5 years.

HOPEWELL OBSERVATORY

April 29th, 2017—Saturday, 7:00p.m.—9p.m.

Join us for an evening of stargazing at Hopewell Observatory. Jupiter and some spectacular deep sky objects (Orion nebula and the Pleiades) will be in the night sky. Bring flashlights (red light preferred but not necessary). Rain date is May 6th.

Space is limited. Pre-Registration required.

Members: \$15/non: \$20

MIGRATORY BIRDWALK AT NORTH FORK WETLANDS

May 6th, 2017—Saturday, 7a.m.—10a.m.

Join us as George Wallace leads us on a bird walk at North Fork Wetlands. George has been active in bird research and conservation for over 30 years. Prior to joining American Bird Conservancy, he worked for Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Bird Studies Canada, The Nature Conservancy, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$20/non: \$25

PLANT ECOLOGY & FOREST SUCCESSION EXCURSION

May 21th, 2017—Sunday, 1 p.m.—3p.m.

The Bull Run Mountains and surrounding Piedmont have a long history of agriculture, logging, and old growth forests. During this excursion we'll learn about the relationships between plant species and land use over time. We'll begin inside with a history of the mountains' forests and current make-up, then head out for a field experience.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$15/non: \$20

HERPETOLOGY CAMP

Session I: June 19th—20th, 9a.m.—4p.m.

Session II: June 22nd—23rd, 9 a.m.—4 p.m.

Herpetology is the study of reptiles and amphibians. BRMC invites your child to spend two days hiking and handling, searching, and observing salamanders, frogs, lizards, snakes, and turtles on the Preserve. Marty Martin, a premier mid-Atlantic herpetologist, will be joining both camps. Ages 7-12.

15 participants per session; pre-registration required.

Members: \$100/Non-members: \$150

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED TEACHER WORKSHOP

July 7th, 2017—Friday, 9—3:30p.m.

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy invites elementary, middle,

high school and homeschool teachers to a day-long Chesapeake Watershed workshop. This unique enrichment experience develops a greater understanding of stream systems, their role within the larger Chesapeake Bay Watershed, threats to Virginia's streams, and actions that maintain their health.

Pre-registration required.

Cost: \$20 per participant

SUMMER NATURE CAMP

Session I: July 17th—21st, 9a.m.—4p.m.

Session II: July 24th—28th, 9a.m.—4p.m.

BRMC invites your child to spend an adventurous week interacting with the natural world. Each day we will focus on different groups of plants and animals on the Bull Run Mountains. Campers will add to their understanding of natural systems through hikes, stream walks, snake handling (only if desired!), frog and salamander catching, bird watching, butterfly and insect collecting, crafts, and games. Ages 7-12.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$250/Non-members: \$300.

BUDDING NATURALIST CAMP

July 24th—28th, 9 a.m.—12 p.m.

At this week-long camp, young children will be exposed to the outdoors and wildlife, as they explore life on the Bull Run Mountains through a series of discovery hikes, frog and salamander searches, snake viewing, stream exploration, nature crafts. Ages 4-6.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$125/Non-members: \$175.

CHESAPEAKE WATERSHED WORKSHOP

July 31st—August 3rd, 9 a.m.—4 p.m.

This workshop will focus on the conservation of the rivers and streams that flow into the Chesapeake Bay. We will explore headwater streams on the Bull Run Mountains, go downstream on Little Bull Run, and visit Turkey Run National Park. At each location students will perform stream monitoring, vegetation analyses, and stream habitat and riparian buffer evaluations. Ages 13-18.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$200/Non-members: \$250

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Cost: \$5 per participant including adults.

Bird Migration & Wildflowers

April 20th, 2017—Thursday, 10a.m.-12p.m. Join us as we learn about bird migration as we observe the first spring arrivals. We will also focus on spring wildflowers.

Forest Succession

May 18th, 2017—Thursday, 10a.m.-12p.m. The mountains have a history of agriculture, logging, and old growth forests. Join us and learn to tell which phase you are standing in by the species around you.

Stream Ecology

June 15th, 2017—Thursday, 10a.m.-12p.m. We'll investigate the perennial streams on the mountains, sampling aquatic life and learning about the life cycles and interactions of these creatures and their environment.

could not wait to get back to the conservancy to see the snakes, be on the mountain and catch whatever critters he could assist with in the 'river' as he called it. As a parent all of these things make me happy and grateful my son had this opportunity."

Research underpins our education program. **For 22 years, BRMC has sponsored and assisted numerous baseline studies that add important data to our understanding of the landscape.**

These studies have focused on stream/water quality, forest ecology/health, insect surveys including important pollinator populations of butterflies, moths, and beetles, American Chestnut restoration, and the impact of white nose syndrome on bat fauna populations. BRMC partners with organizations to conduct these studies, including Virginia's Division of Natural Heritage, the Smithsonian Conservation and Biology Institute, and The American Chestnut Foundation.

As the most easterly chain in the Piedmont, the Bull Run Mountains include the headwaters of Occoquan and Goose Creek watersheds. The Bull Run Mountains are also rich in Virginia and Civil War history. BRMC's recently completed Education and Interpretive Center is located adjacent to the southern 800 acres of the 2,500-acre Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve, on Beverley Mill Dr., just 15 minutes from Manassas, Middleburg, and Warrenton, Virginia.



Bat Study with Division of Natural Heritage,
2016

Volunteer Opportunities!

Bluebird Box Monitoring
Mountain House Native Plant
Garden

Butterfly Counts 2017

&

Youth Summer Internships!



Contact info@brmconservancy.org

GIVE LOCAL Piedmont

Support BRMC's Youth Outdoors
Fund!



Your gift also helps us compete for
grant monies & prizes!

GiveLocalPiedmont.org/BRMConservancy

Trail Talk

by Anna Ritter

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy (BRMC) was founded in 1994 as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization to protect the Bull Run Mountains through education, research, and stewardship. In 1995 BRMC, trading as Friends of Bull Run, obtained a lease from Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) to operate educational programs, sponsor research studies, and conduct stewardship activities on 800 acres of the mountains (not including High Point) for the benefit of the local and regional community.



We were excited to get started opening a trail system; creating and providing maps; maintaining waiver forms for users; helping sponsor and assist research studies; creating two demonstration trails to showcase sustainable trail construction; developing a Youth Outdoors program, teacher workshops, and a full calendar year of public program offerings; and working on projects to increase open space around the Preserve, which provide valuable wildlife corridors and buffer the Preserve, enhancing its protection.

In 2010, BRMC's lease expired and VOF took on the management of the Preserve, now deeded as a State Natural Area Preserve, a designation specifically for the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources. Since then, BRMC has provided year-round education programs and continued the legacy of research on the mountains begun by H.A. Allard in the early 1900s. Some research partners include Virginia's Division of Natural Heritage, The American Chestnut Foundation, and the Smithsonian Conservation and Biology Institute. This research develops our understanding of the landscape while increasing its conservation value. Through our professionally led education programs, we work to develop an appreciation of the outdoors and care for our natural resources—growing the down-to-earth land ethic for good stewardship.

To register for a program, fill out the form below and mail with your payment to:

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy, P.O. Box 210, Broad Run, VA 20137

Program registration is also now available online at www.brmconservancy.org/calendar.html.

For more information, call us at (703) 753-2631 or visit our web site at

www.brmconservancy.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City/ZIP _____

Home phone _____

Work phone _____

E-mail _____

Are you a BRMC member? _____

No. of people registering _____

Fee _____

Amount enclosed _____

Name of child[ren] if registering for youth camp

Homeschool Programs

\$5 per participant

Wildflowers, April 20th

Forest Succession, May 18th

Stream Ecology, June 15th

Hopewell Observatory

April 29th (Rain date: May 6)

Members: \$15/non: \$20

Migratory Bird Walk

May 6th

Members: \$20/non: \$25

Forest Succession

May 27th

Members: \$15/non: \$20

Herpetology Camp

June 19-20, 22-23

Members: \$100/non: \$150

Teacher Workshop

July 7th

\$20/participant

Summer Nature Camp

July 17-21, 24-28

Members: \$250/non: \$300

Budding Naturalist Camp

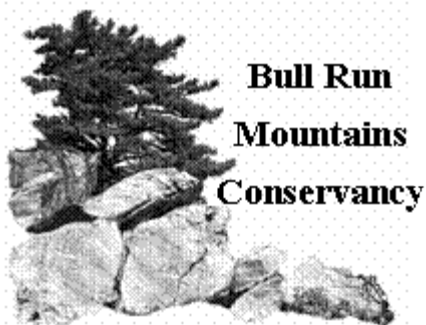
July 24-28

Members: \$125/non: \$175

Chesapeake Workshop

July 31-August 3

Members: \$200/non: \$250



Bull Run Mountains Conservancy

Education · Research · Stewardship

P.O. Box 210 · Broad Run · Virginia 20137
(703) 753-2631 · www.brmconservancy.org

Yes, I would like to become a member of Bull Run Mountains Conservancy.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Referred by _____

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Group | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustainer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$300+ Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000+ Benefactor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000+ Corporate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000+ Conservation Patron | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Please make your tax-deductible contribution to:

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy, Inc., P.O. Box 210, Broad Run, VA 20137

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy is a membership driven organization.

Become a member today and support our programs and support the public preserve. Your membership provides BRMC necessary funds to operate and shows our foundation and corporate supporters that the public values and appreciates the resource.

Membership Benefits:

- Support environmental and historical programs for all ages
- Support research and management of the natural area
- Discounts on all public programs and camps
- Quarterly newsletter including our program calendar

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy	2017 Calendar of Events
April 20	Wildflowers (Homeschool)
April 29	Hopewell Observatory
May 6	Migratory Bird Walk
May 18	Forest Succession (Homeschool)
May 21	Plant Ecology & Forest Succession
June 15	Stream Ecology (Homeschool)
June 19-20 & 22-23	Herp Camp
July 7	Teacher Workshop
July 17-21 & 24-28	Summer Nature Camp
July 24-28	Budding Naturalist Camp
July 31-Aug. 3	Chesapeake Watershed Workshop
Unless otherwise noted, all programs and events will meet at the BRMC Mountain House at 17405 Beverley Mill Drive in Broad Run, VA, across from the Bull Run Mountains State Natural Area Preserve trailhead.	Directions: Take I-66 to Haymarket exit. Go south on Rt. 15. Go west on Rt. 55 for 2.7 miles. Turn right on Turner Rd., then left on Beverley Mill Dr. to the Mountain House 3/4 mi. on left. Call (703) 753-2631 for more information or visit our Web site at: www.brmconservancy.org