

Volume 19

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SHOOTING THE BREEZE

A Publication of Bull Run Mountains Conservancy, Inc.

Aesthetic Necessity

by Michael Kieffer

Building appreciation for the natural beauty that surrounds us is the deepest goal of a naturalist. Since the birth of ecology, many extremely talented scientists have spent their careers proving the importance of all life and how everything in the natural world is connected. Why save the earth's biological diversity? If one part of an ecosystem is altered, the effect reverberates through the whole web of life.

Sometimes the arguments and studies scientists have used to prove the necessity of preserving natural communities or the negative effects of pollution and habitat destruction have become difficult for the average non-scientist to understand. Could it be that conservation advocates and enthusiasts have become so determined to scientifically demonstrate the importance of nature that an important argument for preserving the natural world has been forgotten? In the simplest terms, a conscious creature requires beauty for emotional and mental well-being. Is there anything more beautiful than nature, more inspirational, or more universally appreciated in all cultures, in all races, and in all human history?

We surround ourselves with plants in our homes. When we take a family photo, how many of us choose the mountain, or the sky, or one of many scenic natural backdrops? Cities can be extremely exciting with the bustle of human activity, but how many young lovers would be prompted by the sight of a street corner to ask a stranger to take their photo, compared to the park's duck-filled pond? We spend thousands of hours and thousands of dollars landscaping our yards in an effort to dwell in the most beautiful garden human art can contrive, but our endeavors always seem inferior to what nature gives us for free.

Art was spawned from our early human ancestors' connection with their environment. Music had similar roots. Surrounding oneself with nature seems a simple recipe for happiness.

In today's world, many in our country, especially those with limited resources, may never find their way to the natural settings of forests, preserves, or woodlands. If you provide an outdoor opportunity to someone—adult or child—who has never hiked a nature trail or been out of city streets, you may encounter an initial fear. But with patience, encouragement, and support, you may discover that this individual could easily become the most enthusiastic hiker. It is as if the longer the human soul is starved of nature's rawness, the greater the thirst, and the more wholly receptive one becomes to its powers.



Mike Belknap



Mike Belknap

In light of our intrinsic aesthetic needs, is it right that maximizing shareholder profits at all costs should negatively affect the underpinnings of life and of living? The wheels of progress threaten to overwhelm nature's silence, beauty, diversity, and abundance. May it be asked that the few who profit from the destruction of natural communities prove their activities are not detrimental to greater humanity, rather than that greater humanity prove nature's importance? Change begins with appreciation, if we wait until we have time to receive nature's bounty, it may no longer exist.

Evergreen

by Anna Ritter

The leaves have fallen, the woods are bare. But if you take a walk through the mountains at this time of the year, there's still plenty of opportunity to see bright spots of green among the otherwise brown and grey scenery. Here are a few species you might be likely to see:

American Holly

Ilex Opaca

A seasonally appropriate species for the winter holidays, American Holly is common throughout the Piedmont and Coastal Plain in Virginia. Its dark green leaves have a dull shine with sharp points around their serrated edges. Female trees develop bright red berries when fertilized by a male tree. While frequently seen out in nature, this is a lovely species to incorporate into your yard and garden for a bright spot of color during the winter.



Winterberry

Ilex verticillata

One of the few deciduous species of the Ilex genus, winterberry will lose its leaves at the end of the fall season. Its bright red berries, however, will persist throughout the winter months. Like the American Holly, female trees need a male nearby to produce fruit. The fruit is a popular source of food for winter birds and wildlife. This species can spread by root suckers, and often occurs in small colonies in the woods.



Table Mountain Pine

Pinus Pungens

A landmark of the Bull Run Mountains (check out the table mountain pine on the BRMC logo), this species thrives in nutrient poor soil found along ridge lines. Because of its distance from other populations farther west in the Blue Ridge, the population of table mountain pines in the Bull Run Mountains has become genetically distinct. This makes it one of the unique features of the mountains that the Natural Area Preserve status works to protect and preserve.



Virginia Pine

Pinus virginiana

While its table mountain pine relative thrives along ridge lines, the Virginia pine does well in lower elevation locations. Its cones are smaller, and each bundle of needles (a fascicle) usually has 2 greenish-yellow needles. This species is also known as scrub pine or Jersey Pine, and is common throughout Appalachia. Its needles are high in vitamin C, and can be brewed into a "winter tea."



Eastern Red Cedar

Juniperus virginiana

This species has a slew of common names, from eastern juniper to the eastern red cedar. It is a sturdy evergreen, and historically in our area is often used along roads and pasture fences. Female trees will produce fleshy seed cones, what we commonly call "berries." The fruit is popular with wildlife, especially Cedar Waxwings.



SHOOTING THE BREEZE
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Bull Run Mountains
Conservancy, Inc.

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Public Programs Winter 2018

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

January TBA, 2018—2p.m.-4p.m. "Citizen Science & PWCA"
with Kim Hosen, Executive Director of Prince William Conservation Alliance.

WINTER NATURALIST CAMP

December 28th & 29th, 2017 9a.m.—4p.m.

Join BRMC for a winter adventure and learn more about the winter woods. Birds are more easily seen in leafless trees and sounds are magnified in the winter stillness. Dress for the weather—snow makes the day all the more fun. *Ages 7-12.*

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$100/non: \$150

GEOLOGY & LIFE ON THE MOUNTAINS

January 20th, 2018, Saturday—10a.m.-noon

The geology of a landscape determines what plant life can subsist there, which in turn determines the animal life. Understanding the geology of a region is key to knowing its biodiversity, and so we'll look at the connections between the Bull Run Mountains' interesting geological history and how that has affected its biodiversity and history.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$15/non: \$20

WINTER VOLUNTEER PARTY

January 23rd, 2018—Tuesday, 6p.m.-8p.m.

BRMC invites all our volunteers to a Mountain House Holiday party to celebrate and show our appreciation for all of your efforts. It doesn't matter if you came to one trail workday, or every night of Safari—we want to say thank you! We will provide beverages; please bring your favorite dish to share.

Please RSVP to info@brmconservancy.org

WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP

February 3rd, 2018, Saturday—8a.m.-noon

Join BRMC and George Wallace, PhD biologist, Chief Conservation Officer at the Rainforest Trust, as we spend the morning birding. George has spent his entire career focusing on the conservation and study of birds, and will be spending the whole morning sharing this knowledge.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$15/non: \$20

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT

February 27th, 2018—Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

Grace Episcopal Church, The Plains, VA

Join us for drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and lively conversation as we celebrate another year as educators, researchers, and stewards of the Bull Run Mountains. We are pleased to have Dr. George Wallace, Chief Conservation Officer at the Rainforest Trust, as our keynote speaker. **Cost: \$50/person**

WOODCOCK WATCH

March 3rd, 2018—Saturday, 5–9 p.m.

Join BRMC and Environmental Studies on the Piedmont for an evening stroll, and sit to enjoy the American woodcocks' spring territorial and courtship flights. We will meet at Clifton Farm at 5 p.m. to watch American woodcocks perform flight displays that would amaze any world traveling birder.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$10/non: \$15

AMPHIBIANS OF SPRING

March 7th, 2018—Wednesday, 7–9 p.m.

Last year we found hundreds of spring peepers, upland chorus frogs, wood frogs, and spotted salamanders along with lots of egg masses. Grab your red lights and boots. Let's see what we can find this year!

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$10/non: \$15

Leopold's Preserve Monthly Naturalist Walks

BRMC is thrilled to be partnering with White House Farm Foundation to provide monthly naturalist walks on Leopold's Preserve

Each month focuses on a different natural history theme. Walks are free & open to the community.

First Quarter Schedule

January 20th, 1pm-3pm... Geology & Life on the Preserve

February 3rd, 1pm-3pm..... Winter Waterfowl
March 2nd, 5:30pm-7:30pm.... Woodcock Watch

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Cost: \$5 per participant including adults.

Geology & Life on the Mountains

January 18th, 2018, Thursday—10a.m.-12p.m. The geology of a landscape determines what life, plant & animal, can live there. Learn more about the mountains' geology and how that has affected its biodiversity & history. *All ages.*

Orienteering

February 15th, 2018, Thursday—10a.m.-12p.m.

Join us to explore the mountains off trail as we navigate the old fashioned way—with a compass and topo map. *Best for ages 7+*

Spring Emergence

March 15th, 2018, Thursday—10a.m.-12p.m. Warmer temperatures means the mountains are awakening from the winter months—we will focus on the emerging spring ephemeral wildflowers and amphibians' mating rituals. *All ages.*

Winter on the Preserve

by Holly Geary

Leopold's Preserve is a 380 acre conservation area located between Haymarket and Broad Run and surrounds the Villages of Piedmont Community. There are over 7 miles of nature trails winding through woods, wetlands and open meadows. The Preserve also encompasses several water features, observation decks and interpretive boards.



The Preserve's name was inspired by the works of Aldo Leopold. A man considered to be the father of wildlife management and wilderness systems in the United States. He was a conservationist, forester, philosopher, educator, writer, and dedicated outdoor enthusiast.

Any season you will find numerous flora and fauna, but Leopolds Preserve is especially notable for bird watching. Due to a high concentration of plants, bushes and trees bearing berries and nuts, the preserve is home to a number of species.



Beautyberry



Winterberry



Juniper Berries

A recent list of birds as identified by a local bird expert, Lyt Wood in May of 2016 includes:

Great Blue Heron	Great Egret	Green Heron
Redwing Blackbird	Broadwing Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Hairy Woodpecker
Yellowthroat	Goldfinch	Indigo Bunting
Orchard Oriole	Canada Goose	Blue Jay
Wood Duck	Towhee	Field Sparrow
Red-eyed Vireo	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Cedar Waxwing
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	White-eyed Vireo	Wood Duck

BRMC conducts monthly nature hikes and lectures. These events are free and open to the public. Please join us.

Reference: www.Leopoldspreserve.com

Volunteers



Thank you to Andres Santiago for completing his
Eagle Scout Project.

The Mountain House now has a three new wooden picnic
table sets. We're looking forward to breaking them in come spring.
Stay tuned for volunteer opportunities this spring.



Help us end the year strong!

Generous donors have provided **\$16,500**
in end of the year matching funds.

Join today, increase your membership level, or simply
make an additional donation and double your support.

www.brmconservancy.org

We have already raised **\$7,185** towards our goal.

Thank you to everyone who has already
contributed to this match.

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

Winter Naturalist Camp

Dec. 28 & 29, 9a.m.-4p.m.

Members: \$100, non: \$150

Geology & Life on the Mts.

Jan. 20th, 8:am-12p.m.

Members: \$15/non: \$20

Winter Waterfowl Workshop

Feb. 3rd 8a.m-12p.m.

Members: \$15/non: \$20

Woodcock Watch

Mar. 3rd-5p.m-9p.m.

Members: \$10/non: \$15

Amphibians of Spring

Mar. 7th, 7p.m. -9p.m.

Members: \$10/non: \$15

Homeschool Programs

\$5 per participant

Geology & Life on the
Mountains

Jan. 18th-10a.m.-12p.m.

Orienteering

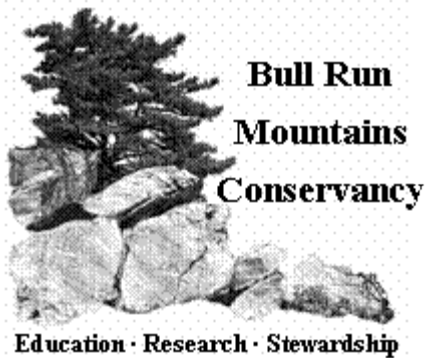
Feb. 15th-10a.m.-12p.m.

Spring Emergence

March 15th 10a.m.-12-p.m.

Monthly Naturalist Walks On Leopold's Preserve Free Event

- Jan. 20th, 1p.m-3p.m
- Feb. 3rd, 1p.m.-3p.m.
- Mar. 2nd, 5:30-7:30p.m.



P.O. Box 210 · Broad Run · Virginia 20137
(703) 753-2631 · www.brncconservancy.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	2018 Calendar of Events (Winter)
Winter Naturalist Camp	December 28th & 29th
Geology & Life on the Mountains	January 18th (Homeschool)
Geology & Life on the Mountains	January 20th
Winter Waterfowl Workshop	February 3rd
Orienteering	February 15th (Homeschool)
Annual Fundraising Event	February 27th
Woodcock Watch	March 3rd
Amphibians of Spring	March 7th
Spring Emergence	March 15th (Homeschool)
Monthly Speaker Series	TBA
<p>Directions: 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.</p> <p>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.</p>	