Dear Friends of the Garden,

Over the years, we have encouraged you to “Come Grow with Us”. Apparently, it is working and some kind of magic fertilizer has been sprinkled on the West Virginia Botanic Garden. We finished 2017 with a year-end appeal goal of $30,000 and all of you helped reach that goal and more! In 2017, gardens were planted and parking was expanded for the ever-growing daily use of the garden. Hundreds participated in a wide array of activities and more children enjoyed summer camps. We hosted a fabulous and delicious dinner series, a Late Summer Night’s Dream that was the best party of the summer, and a celebration recognizing WVBG’s founder and workhorse, George Longenecker. For me it was hard to keep up with all the wonderful activity at the garden. Thanks to all the garden employees, volunteers and the direction of our past President, Bill Johnson. With Bill’s leadership and direction WVBG has made huge leaps and bounds and fortunately for us, he will continue his service as Board Treasurer.

Hopefully as you read this spring will be in the air and you are enjoying the longer days. Hundreds of bulbs were planted this past fall by our Executive Director and volunteers. I’m sure it will be a quite a show this spring and even more so in future springs to come. I am humbled that the Board asked and elected me as President. I hope to see you at the Garden this year and welcome your input and ideas.
Director’s Note
by Bill Mills, Executive Director

As I write this, the world outside my window is deeply frozen. There are far fewer tracks in the snow from passers-by and even cars, but there are the distinct tracks of skis and there are many tracks from creatures. These are my favorite tracks of all. Of course many deer travel here, but I have also seen squirrel, coyote, fox, rabbit and a plethora of delicate bird tracks. The natural world of the Garden is very much alive.

This fall Katherine Lewis from WVU set up a series of mist nets to study and band birds in the wetlands. Sparrows were her focus. Look for her article in this Newsletter. The Garden is used extensively as a classroom for University students. Many kinds of research are conducted here; water quality, taxonomy and plant pathology to name a few. It is always a pleasure to come across these scholars while they are conducting their research.

The response to our 2017 Annual Appeal was overwhelming. Over $36,000 has been donated, exceeding our $30,000 goal. We deeply appreciate every donation. Many donors commented on the good work that is happening at the West Virginia Botanic Garden. The Annual Appeal and membership donations help fund the very important day to day operations of the Garden. These financial commitments are a testament to the enthusiasm and belief of the community and the state for this organization. Contributions from around the state and region show that belief in our mission has grown far beyond Morgantown.

Grant funding from the City of Morgantown and Monongalia County Commission have allowed us to add additional parking and to clear away the final logs and debris from previous construction. We are thankful to them for their long time support.

The New Year brings forth a new slate of educational opportunities, nature and science camps, social opportunities, and newly planted and enhanced gardens. Keep your eyes out for a new series of dinners and picnics here at the Garden. Thousands of new bulbs will be blooming. We are hoping that recently-gifted mature tree peonies will come forth with their remarkably elegant blooms. They can be found at the entrance plantings as well as the lower parking lot.

Every day is unique at the Garden, be it for the quality of the sunset, the wetland filled with water from a passing storm, the scent of decaying leaves, a flock of warblers stopping by during migration, the call of the owls in the forest or a new friend you may meet while on a hike or run. I encourage you to visit often and experience these earthly pleasures. There is always something new to appreciate, good for the body and soul.

Wishing all a healthy and inspired 2018.

Bill Mills
Executive Director
On September 23, 2017, the WVBG hosted an appreciation event in honor of long-time Executive Director, George W. Longenecker. George was the founder and driving force behind the Garden for more than 30 years. Under his leadership, the WVBG was incorporated as a non-profit tax exempt 501 (c)(3) charitable organization. After years of searching, a location for the Garden was finally identified—the land that had previously housed the Tibbs Run Reservoir. In 2000, George began the grassroots effort to grow the Botanic Garden there and reenergized the organization needed to fund and to administer it. Since then roads, parking areas, and about five miles of trails have been constructed to connect the natural and designed garden areas. All the utilities and infrastructure for future development had to be brought down from Tyrone Road to the reservoir basin level. When this was accomplished, it enabled the WVBG to construct its first building, a solar-powered Welcome Center, which was completed in 2016. After all these years of dedicated service, George stepped down as Executive Director in 2016. In recognition of his pivotal role in the development of the Garden, the WVBG named a garden that he designed and created in his honor. He also became a Life Director of the WVBG Board of Directors and received a key to the City of Morgantown from the Mayor, William Kawecki. Singer/songwriter Chris Haddox performed a song he had composed in George’s honor. A photo memory book was presented that highlighted a small sample of the many experiences that were shared with George over the years. Event guests expressed their gratitude to George and his wife Caryol as everyone enjoyed refreshments and a slideshow in the Welcome Center.
Varieties, Hybrids, Sports, and Cultivars
by Jon Weems, Guest Contributor

Yews (genus *Taxus*) provide good illustrations of the rules for scientific notation of cultivated plant names. I hope trying to sort nomenclature out for the reader will help me get it straight in my own mind.

Gardeners have grown forms of the long-lived English yew, *Taxus baccata*, and the harder Japanese yew, *Taxus cuspidata*, for centuries. Both binomials show standard scientific notation, with genus written first and capitalized, species written second and not capitalized, and both genus and species italicized.

A 1960s nursery where I worked grew conical plants labeled *Taxus cuspidata capitata*. The third italicized word indicated a variety, a form growing true from seed but distinct from the typical form of its species. However, botanists pointed out that the typical form of the species *cuspidata* was also somewhat conical, so the plant previously known as the variety *capitata* was demoted to a cultivar, *Taxus cuspidata ‘Capitata’*. Cultivars are plant forms that are reproduced by cuttings or other vegetative means, generally because they don’t grow true from seed. In scientific notation, cultivar names are written in non-italicized or roman type, first letter capitalized, within single quotation marks.

Growers hoping to combine ornamental merit with hardiness have crossed English and Japanese yews and dubbed the results *Taxus x media*. The roman “x” after the genus name indicates a hybrid of species within that genus. *Taxus x media* plants grown from seed vary considerably. Growers propagate interesting plants by rooting cuttings. If the resulting plants display desirable traits, growers may append cultivar names. For example, a favorite yew from my nursery days was the Hatfield yew, *Taxus x media ‘Hatfieldii,’* a cultivar that arose from a hybrid.

Sometimes a plant produces a branch that looks very different from the rest of the plant, perhaps because of a mutation affecting gene expression. The unusual branch is called a “sport,” and the parent plant is said to have “thrown a sport.” If rooted successfully, sports may result in new cultivars.

My wife instigated a 2017 trip that got me thinking about yew nomenclature while bringing us to the original Irish yew, *Taxus baccata ‘Fastigiata,’* a cultivar of English yew. ‘Fastigiata’ means upright. Farmer George Willis found two unusual English yews with upright branching in 1767. He kept one and gave the other to the owner of an Ulster estate called Florence Court. George’s plant died in 1865, but the other plant lives on. This original Irish yew, pictured behind me at Florence Court, has become less upright with age and the effects of thousands of cuttings having been taken from it. The other photo shows me admiring a younger Irish yew next to the Florence Court gardener’s cottage.

Yews have lost some favor in American gardens because deer browse their foliage. However, yew species and hybrids have given rise to cultivars that remain superb ornamental plants for sites where deer may be excluded, plants that may give much pleasure even if their nomenclature seems arcane.
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We are extremely grateful for all the generous donations that have been made to the West Virginia Botanic Garden in the last year. Following is the list of Friends of the WVBG and other donors from January 1, 2017, through January 15, 2018.

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(Continued on page 8)
March 10, 1:00 p.m. **Site Inventory and Analysis**: Whether you are designing a landscape for a bare lot surrounding your home or redesigning an area because your needs have changed, all plans need to start with a site inventory and analysis. Through this design process, you will determine which features to keep and where change is desirable. With Master Gardener **Jan Mitchell**, learn how to inventory your yard, determine your needs, and make a base map. Most appropriate for adults. $5 for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

March 17, 1:00 p.m. **Kids’ Container Gardening: Little Sprouts**: Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day with us by creating a “wee ones” garden for leprechauns, fairies, elves, and the like. After planting we’ll journey to WVBG’s Fairy Garden area, where we’ll gather natural materials for decorating our container gardens and discover if those sneaky forest leprechauns have been up to any tricks! Led by WVBG Educator **Stacy Clovis-Woofter**, for children ages 3 and older with accompanying adult. $20 for WVBG members, $30 for non-members (price is per project).

March 18, 2:00 p.m. **Superfoods: How to Choose Them and How to Use Them**: March is National Nutrition Month. Join Certified Health Coach **MaryAnn Post**, as she encourages you to take a holistic approach to your well-being. We will discuss “superfoods”— what they are and how they can help improve your general overall well-being. Several resources will be shared and some of the more common superfoods will be available for tasting. A short walk in the garden is included in this workshop. Most appropriate for adults. $30 for WVBG members, $45 for non-members.

March 24, 7:00 p.m. **Woodcock Walk**: LeJay Graffious will lead a search for American Woodcocks displaying over the old reservoir from sunset to dusk. Come join us to witness this amazing spectacle! Dress warmly and bring a flashlight. All ages. Free.

March 25, 2:00 p.m. **Protecting Pollinators**: Local Master Gardener and Master Naturalist **Annette Tanner** will share information about bees and other local pollinators and discuss factors that are leading to their decline. Why should we care and what can we do to help? Most appropriate for adults. $5 for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

March 31, 10:00 a.m. **Amazing Eggs**: How much do you know about birds’ eggs? Some birds lay eggs the size of jellybeans, and some lay eggs the size of softballs. Eggshells can be a variety of colors. This presentation, featuring a live bird of prey from the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia and a take-home craft, will discuss some of the amazing things about eggs. All ages. $5 for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

April 3, 9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. (Session 1: Grades K-2); 1:00-4:00 p.m. (Session 2: Grades 3-5) **Spring STEAM Camp**: It’s spring break at the Garden! Join us for hands-on learning and inquiry-based investigations that incorporate science, technology, engineering, art, and math. Campers will build, create, collaborate, solve, and enjoy outdoor exploration at this spectacular time of year. Camps led by WVBG Education Director **Erin Smaldone** and WVBG Educator **Stacy Clovis-Woofter**. See WVBG website camp page for more information and to register. $35 for WVBG members, $45 for non-members.

April 6 & May 4, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. **Friday Family Walks**: Join WVBG Education Director **Erin Smaldone** on the first Friday of each month for a short story followed by a walk around the Garden concluding with a simple craft. This easy, casual walk is a great way for children and their caretakers to get outside and enjoy nature and the company of others. The trail will accommodate “off road” strollers. All ages. Free.

April 10, 7:00 p.m. **The Layers of a Garden**: Arm chair travel with **Bill Mills**, WVBG Executive Director, to the many gardens he has designed or traveled to. Discussion will focus on the seasonal sequence of these gardens and the many layers of flowers and foliage that make for a rich garden palette. Participants will learn about individual plants and their use in garden design as well as basic garden design concepts. Most appropriate for adults. $20 for WVBG members, $30 for non-members.

April 14, 10:00 a.m. **Nature in Spring**: Spring is a time of growth and renewal in the natural world. WVBG Education Director **Erin Smaldone** will discuss what plants and animals are doing in nature and the Garden during this time of year. The program will include a slide presentation followed by a walk. All ages. $5 for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

April 14, 1:00 p.m. **WVBG Boundary Walk**: Master Naturalist **Ellen Hrabovsky** will lead a hike through WVBG’s Hemlock and Old Growth Deciduous Forests, along our northeastern boundary line and discuss trees, wildflowers, and anything else that sparks interest. The walk will cover approximately 2.4 miles, requires stamina and closed toe shoes. Most appropriate for ages 8 and above. Free.

April 15, 2:00 p.m. **Put That Spring Back into Your Step**: Come join Certified Health Coach, **MaryAnn Post** as we talk about developing your own “moving plan”. This interactive workshop discusses the 3 components of fitness to include each week, nutrient rich snacks to sample, a walk in the garden and Q & A with a local personal trainer. Most appropriate for adults. $30 for WVBG members, $45 for non-members.

April 21, 10:00 a.m. **Earth Day Walk**: On the day before Earth Day, join Executive Director **Bill Mills** for a hike to some of his favorite places in the Garden. Starting at the Welcome Center, we will be crossing the board walk, and into the Rhododendron and Hemlock forest, ending with the Reservoir Loop. Water flow permitting, we may be crossing Tibbs Run. Walking sticks and appropriate footwear should be considered. All ages. Free.

April 22, 2:00 p.m. **Kids’ Container Gardening: Pizza in a Bucket!**: Join nature enthusiasts and educators, **Bethany and Vada Boback** for a “Gardening with Kids” workshop. Join us on Earth Day to learn how to plant, care for, and eat what you grow. Workshop includes a “Make and Take” sustainable growing project. Open to children ages 4-14 with an accompanying adult. $20 for WVBG members, $30 for non-members (price is per project).

April 28 & May 28, 10:00 a.m. **Young Birders Walk**: It’s never too early to become a birder! This walk will introduce children of all ages and their parents to the wonder and joy of birds and bird watching. Bring binoculars and a bird guide if you have them. This walk is offered in conjunction with the West Virginia Young Birders Club and will be led by Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia’s Director **Katie Fallon**. All ages. Free.

(Continued on page 7)
April 28, 1:00 p.m. Useful Soil Science for Busy People: WVU Division of Plant and Soil Sciences Professor Louis McDonald will present an overview of the basic properties and functions of soils focusing on garden plant production. Program will include soil test report interpretation and appropriate amendment strategies. Most appropriate for adults. $5 for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

April 29, 2:00 p.m. Wetland/Amphibian Walk: West Virginia University Professor Jim Anderson will lead us to and acquaint us with the frogs, toads, and other amphibians found in a variety of wetland habitats. Be prepared to get your shoes muddy. All ages. Free.

May 5, 7:30 a.m. Spring Bird Walk: Join local birder Terry Bronson on an early morning bird walk. We will be birding by eye and ear to search in the bushes and boughs for our feathered friends. Bring binoculars if you have them. All ages. Free.

May 5, 1:00 p.m. Kids’ Container Gardening: Awesome Blossoms for Mom: Join us to decorate a cheerful garden pot filled with spring flowers for Mom, Grandma, Aunt, or a special friend in honor of Mother’s Day. Participants will also learn about West Virginia’s Anna Jarvis, who organized the first Mother’s Day service, and make a heartfelt card to include with their gift. Led by WVBG Educator Stacy Clovis-Wooster, this workshop is most appropriate for children ages 4 and older. $10 for members; $15 for non-members.

May 6, 2:00 p.m. Herbal First Aid Workshop: Please join Jen-Osha Buysse and Hannah Spencer with the non-profit The Mountain Stewardship and Outdoor Leadership (SOL) School for an introductory workshop on medicinal herbs. We will focus on some basic components in our herbal first aid kits, including tinctures, salves, and dried plants. Mountain SOL students will join in teaching the class, sharing stories of using their first aid kits in real life scenarios. We will also review simple herbal preparations to add to your kits. Each participant will bring home supplies for their own herbal first aid kit. A portion of the proceeds from the class will go to support the Mountain SOL School’s scholarship fund, which provides partial to full scholarships for Mountain SOL classes and programs. For more information on The Mountain SOL School, visit mountainsol.org. $20 for WVBG members, $30 for non-members.

May 12, 10:00 a.m. Libraries Rock! Rock Painting for Kids: Be a rock artist! Learn about the new rock-painting trend. Paint rocks to drop in your community, spread inspiration, and see where they turn up! This program is being offered by Cheat Lake Public Library in conjunction with the summer reading program. Wear clothes suitable for painting. Open to children ages 6-12 with an accompanying adult. $5/child.

May 12, 1:00 p.m. Terrarium Garden Workshop: What is a terrarium garden, how can you design your own, and what kind of maintenance will it need? Come find out during this hands-on workshop with Master Gardener Kelly Barnard. History, types, and maintenance of terrariums will be discussed followed by making your own to take home. Half gallon glass terrarium and all other materials included. Most appropriate for ages 12 and up. $45 for WVBG members, $55 for non-members.

May 19, 1:00 p.m. A Garden Tour with an Eye for Design: Walk the grounds of the Botanic Garden with Executive Director Bill Mills and look at the many individual garden spaces. There will be a discussion of the plants that have been used in each as well as an evaluation of the concepts of successful garden design. Consider bringing a camera or phone to document thoughts and inspirations. Most appropriate for adults. $20 for WVBG members, $30 for non-members.

May 19, 10:00 a.m. A Garden Tour with an Eye for Design: Walk the grounds of the Botanic Garden with Executive Director Bill Mills and look at the many individual garden spaces. There will be a discussion of the plants that have been used in each as well as an evaluation of the concepts of successful garden design. Consider bringing a camera or phone to document thoughts and inspirations. Most appropriate for adults. $20 for WVBG members, $30 for non-members.

May 20, 2:00 p.m. Planting Containers: Join Executive Director Bill Mills as he plants the many varied containers of the Welcome Center. Hanging baskets, haymows and pots both large and small will be featured. The basics of container gardening will be emphasized, from plant varieties to soil and fertilizer. Most appropriate for adults. $20 for WVBG members, $30 for non-members.

May 26, 10:00 a.m. Unexpected Invasives: A look at why some plants are invasive, what is the result of their invading, and what can be done. Join George W. Longenecker, Professor Emeritus, Landscape Architecture, WVU for a presentation on the identification and ecology of invasive plants in our region. A short walk will follow. Most appropriate for adults. $5 for WVBG members, $15 for non-members.

May 27, 2:00 p.m. Reconnecting with Nature for Youth and Parents: Amid busy lives we can often lose our connections to nature, yet a mindful walk in the woods can often restore these bonds with nature, and with each other. Join WVBG Educator Stacy Clovis-Wooster, in a walk to focus on the interconnections found in the natural ecosystems of WVBG, with optional discussion points to reaffirm our personal connections as well. This easy to moderate walk is most appropriate for youth ages 6 and up with accompanying parent, grandparent, or guardian. Free.

* All activities take place at the West Virginia Botanic Garden, 1061 Tyrone Rd., Morgantown, WV 26508 unless otherwise noted.

* Programs will last 1.5-2 hours unless otherwise noted.

* Please refrain from bringing your pet to activities. Thank you.

* Please register for all activities online at www.wvbg.org.
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Thank you again for your support! We apologize for any errors. Please notify us of any mistakes or omissions.
Long ago and far away on the campus of West Virginia University was a collection of small shops and bars somewhat cloistered into an area known to the locals as “Sunnyside”. And in the midst of this college chaos was one special establishment in which I realized the last seasons of my “misspent” youth. If you walked to the near top of Sunnyside’s grade you found a hole in the wall called the Stadium Inn. To some it was known as a rowdy biker bar; to those of the “jersey” crowd it was a slum, but in actuality it was a tolerable little place with a usually peaceful blend of patrons and on any given night could be found a lower class of hippie that claimed this tavern as their own. On occasion a Harley Davidson could be seen parked inside by the rest room doors but the strange ambiance created by incense, gasoline fumes, and oil stains helped give it the personality we all grew to love.

On rare occasions a local band would play live “sets,” although it was always the same band playing poorly the same “sets”, but it was in this place I learned to embrace a different standard in music as Bruce Springsteen, the Grateful Dead, Little Feat, Van Morrison, the Allman Brothers, Bob Marley, and Traffic were all part of the nightly music fare. The sweet refrains would blast from Cerwin Vega speakers strategically positioned in all four corners. Most nights it really was a rockin little place, yet at times it took on a mood that was mellow and pensive as well.

The Stadium Inn was also the “town hall” in a sense for a group of local “free spirits” that took part time residence there; well at least during normal business hours. Every night of every season they held court and helped to make up the bar’s character just as much as the smoke, wet slippery floors, and “out of order” rest rooms.

At some point during the summer of 1979, on one of their late night confabs, this group contrived the idea of setting up an “encampment” so to speak at the old Tibbs Run reservoir as they made a “statement” by walking away from society. The decommissioned reservoir would eventually become the home of the West Virginia Botanic Garden but back then it was a skinny-dipper’s Mecca and offered to the trio a combination of woods, a fresh water lake, and relative solitude as they “relocated”...well, at least anytime the bar wasn’t open.

So with as much logistics as bar room stratagem could generate they set off on their adventure with tarps, plywood, various articles of kitchen accoutrements, and any and every other equipment they deemed necessary for their back to nature getaway. It was as if a dysfunctional version of “Survivor” had made its way to West Virginia except with no TV cameras and in casting a “tribe” consisting only of misfits.

Gary, Herb, and long haired Stew were the main residents, although they would occasionally take in a straggler. Gary was an auto mechanic who when he wasn’t on “bivouac” lived in a room above his parent’s garage. Herb was a self-proclaimed “artist” that had been released from a State Mental Hospital after maniac depression pushed him into a suicide attempt. And long haired Stew was a disabled veteran who moved to Morgantown from a small country town in hopes of attending college. Now whether that was truly his master plan wasn’t clear as he never registered for a class and relinquished to spending his days between the Mountainlair plaza, a local plasma donation site, and any and every party he could find. In considering the whole group, Herb to me was definitely the most interesting as he and I often enjoyed talks of art, humanity, and the “paths” of a person’s life.

I never spent a night at the “camp” though I did frequent the reservoir on occasional days. The real truth was I didn’t want to know about their cooking, hygiene, or even sleeping conditions. On my days off I would enjoy their company and the solitude of the lake... but nights I opted for the privacy of my own “tribe” and my own “camp” so to speak. I had running water, a hot shower, electricity, and a mattress. Yea, by that point in my life I had become a more “civilized” hippie.

The companionship spent the best part of that summer living in the woods, enjoying nature, and from what I heard amassing a copious amount of garbage. In the end what happened to the “camp” or the garbage I can’t say (Continued on page 10)
for sure. I knew it would all come to a conclusion with cold weather, but it was rumored that rain and mud put it to an end long before that happened. Hey, a West Virginia Woodstock it wasn’t...and long haired Stew was sure no Wavy Gravy.

As for me, 1979 was the last year of my out and out rebellions. The onset of 1980 would bring the dawning of new directions in my life and new “hopes” for the future. It was the conclusion of the days of long hair, misplaced anger, and searching for those “harbors” we all look for in this world of storms.

I flash forward by some 35 years and surprisingly many things haven’t changed. I dread to say in some ways I still look, dress, and think the same. I still listen to somewhat the same music. I still work in the same profession. I still follow the same religious beliefs that I had “put on hold” during those “radical” times. I fulfilled my hopes and dreams of having a wife, family, and grandchildren. I still have big dogs and spend as much time as I can in the woods. I guess you could say I am even more “civilized” hippie then I was then.

And as for the Botanic Gardens...at some point during 1980 the reservoir was drained. The residents of the nearby neighborhood and its developers forced the hand of the land owner in having it deemed an “attractive nuisance” and emptied it for the “public good”. I’m thinking in truth the “tribes” and their visitors were more a nuisance then the lake itself. Actually I’m glad I was, as we used to say, “out of the scene” by that time and didn’t see it all happen; it would have been all too sad to have witnessed the death of a paradise.

But these days I actually spend as much time at the “reservoir” as I did then. Many evenings, weekend mornings, or an occasional afternoon off are spent wandering its wooded trails and just enjoying the solitude found there. So if the question were to be asked, “Would I rather have it the way it was then, or the way it is now?” I think the fairest answer I could give is, I would rather have it the way it was then, WITH the exception of me the way I am now...a compromise for the best of both worlds. Upon wondering in the woods these days I find real peace where in the past I found only longing. I more fully embrace the wonders of nature where in the past I viewed them from a distant smoke filled haze. In the woods now I find a serenity of spirit, where in the past I found only hollowness and spiritual vacuum. For once in my life it’s as John Denver once put to pen, “The man and the mountains are brothers again.” So I guess when it comes right down to it I don’t know how this should end. My friends, we are all children of our Mother Earth. Enjoy this world and all the beauties she possesses. Do so respectfully, do it with wonder and awe, and do it thanking God for this great gift. And I guess the best advice I can give is... “Love Your Mother” and find a way in your life to be happy.

Wintering Bird Community Use of West Virginia Wetlands
by Katharine Lewis, Graduate Student, West Virginia University Division of Forestry and Natural Resources; Wildlife and Fisheries Resources

In West Virginia, there are 24 conservation easement wetlands established through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program—a service administered through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Most of these restored wetlands are new: the oldest being established in the early 90’s, the newest in 2011. Because these sites have never been evaluated in terms of their functional ability as wetland habitat for wildlife, my research project involves conducting bird surveys and mist-netting at these sites to determine the wintering avian community, as bird species tend to be good indicators of a fully functioning and healthy habitat.

I am conducting surveys and mist-netting at the WV Botanic Garden to compare the conservation easement wetlands in the state to other wetlands throughout the state that are managed and available for public use. This will help me to determine if the wetlands restored through the conservation easement program are functioning as other wetlands in West Virginia in terms of their winter bird habitat.

The Botanic Garden has a diverse wintering community of birds including species such as song sparrows, dark-eyed juncos, eastern bluebirds, Carolina wrens, downy woodpeckers, northern cardinals, golden-crowned kinglets, white-breasted nuthatches, and chickadees.

I am also using mist-nets to catch birds and band them as a way to determine how accurate my visual and auditory surveys are. In the winter, songbirds are not typically singing or defending territories. Therefore they tend to stay low in vegetation and are sometimes difficult to detect. By using mist-nets I can confirm the presence of species at a wetland site. While banding at the Botanic Gardens, I have been able to catch northern cardinals.

The data I have collected at the Botanic Garden has allowed me to determine the typical wintering bird community in wetlands across West Virginia, and has contributed to some preliminary findings about the habitat associations of some species found in winter wetland habitat.
Join the Friends of the West Virginia Botanic Garden Today!

WVBG Members Receive Discounts at Businesses

Members of the Friends of the West Virginia Botanic Garden at the *Contributor level or above* can receive discounts by showing their membership card at the businesses listed below. A link to discount amounts and any restrictions that apply can be found on the WVBG website membership page.

- Benson’s Lawn Systems Inc.  
  Morgantown, WV
- Highland Landscaping, LLC  
  Buckhannon, WV
- Perennial Favorites, LLC  
  Huntington, WV
- Sunshine Farm and Gardens  
  Renick, WV
- Caldwell Lanscape Design, LLC  
  Masontown, WV
- Mary’s Greenhouse-Terra Flora Landscaping  
  Elkins, WV
- Rich Farms Nursery  
  Smithfield, PA
- Flowerscape  
  Charleston, WV
- Greenleaf Landscapes Inc.  
  Marietta, OH
- Modern Homestead at Tathams  
  Reedsville, WV

Year-round Learning and Fun for Children at the WVBG

by Erin Smaldone, Education Director

Children love spending time outside in nature. The open spaces, endless plant and animal life to take in and explore, and constant sensory input is hard to beat. At the WVBG, there are many opportunities for children to engage their sense of wonder in the natural world. Summer Nature Camp is one of the best ways. We offer a variety of camps for children ages four to fourteen. This spring we are also offering half-day camps on April 3. Please register online at www.wvbg.org. Another great way for children to learn and explore at the Garden is through a school field trip. Ask your child’s teacher to contact me to set one up! We also offer a number of weekend programs geared toward families as well as the Family Walks held on the first Friday of each month. Check our online activities schedule (and page 6 of this newsletter) for seasonal offerings and to register. If you have questions, you may contact me at Erin@wvbg.org or 304-322-2093.
Volunteers Are at the Heart of Our Garden

by Kay Jones, Volunteer Coordinator

During 2017, many volunteers gave time and energy helping the Garden grow with approximately 3,500 hours of service. Volunteers are always needed and appreciated at the Garden.

If you like digging in the dirt, there are opportunities to maintain the trails and do heavier labor. If you enjoy planting, weeding, watering, and mulching, join the garden maintenance crew.

Weekends are the busiest times at the Garden when many guests venture out for nature walks. Garden Greeters or Hosts greet, meet, inform, and orient guests in the Garden on weekends and some holidays. If you enjoy meeting new people and would like to welcome them to the 85 acres of woods, trails, and gardens at WVBG, this might be the volunteer role for you. Many scheduled events take place at WVBG requiring volunteers to plan, organize, advertise, set-up, take down, clean-up, and more. If you are interested in volunteering to assist with special events, please let us know. Garden Representatives are often needed to assist with scheduled educational presentations. These volunteers welcome participants, manage registration, share information about the Garden, introduce presenters and assist as needed.

If you are interested in volunteering, please complete the online application at wvbg.org or contact Kay Jones, Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@wvbg.org with questions.

WVBG Featured in History Publications

The Fall 2017 issue of Goldenseal, the state’s magazine of traditional life, included Barb Howe’s story on reservoir caretaker Ralph Lemley. We were also featured in “Crossroads: Exploring the Vibrant Connections between People and Place,” by Bob Beatty in his edited An American Association for State and Local History Guide to Making Public History (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).