

MNPS 2004 Annual Fall Conference

Weekend Field Trips

Saturday, October 16, Field Trips

Registrations will be accepted at the Conference

Cove Point Marsh, Calvert County

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Leaders: Bob Boxwell and John Parrish

Directions: The easement property at Cove Point Marsh includes a variety of habitats including upland forest, ponds, fresh and brackish marsh systems, and a barrier beach. According to a study from 1999, over 696 species have been recorded on the site, including 52 species of trees and 63 species of shrubs. There are wet areas, ticks, and other pests to deal with. Binoculars and hand lenses are good, but please, no cameras. There is no fee.

Directions from Solomons: Head north on Route 2/4 out of Solomons. About a mile north of the light for Rousby Hall Road (Rt. 760), look for Cove Point Road on the right. Turn here and follow through the light. You will pass Cove Point Park on the left and Little Cove Point Road on the right. Look for the entrance to the Cove Point LNG property on the left. Go through the gate to the security office to sign the required release.

Flag Ponds Nature Park, Calvert County

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Leader: Rod Simmons

Description: Flag Ponds Nature Park is situated on the Chesapeake Bay and provides a glimpse into what the shoreline forests once looked like. The trails lead to the bottomland forests and to several impoundments once used for the fishing industry. Plan to visit again in the spring when the Blue Flag Iris, along with many woodland flowers are blooming.

Directions from Solomons: Take Route 2/4 North. Travel about 10 miles. Pass the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, and in about 3/4 of a mile turn right onto Flag Ponds Parkway. Follow the road to the Nature Center.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp, Calvert County

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Leaders: Joe Metzger

Description: Battle Creek Cypress Swamp is a Nature Conservancy preserve that is operated by Calvert County Department of Natural Resources. A 1/4 mile long boardwalk travels through a swamp of Bald Cypress trees. This is a very easy hike, aside from a steep staircase to the boardwalk.

Directions from Solomons: Take Routes 2/4 North. Travel about 15 miles and turn left at the light for Broomes Island Road (Rt. 264). In about 2 miles, turn right onto Gray's Road. Approximately 3 miles, turn left into the Nature Center.

Sight-seeing Cruise on the Bugeye, *Wm. B. Tennison*

Time: Departs at 2 p.m.

Leaders: Calvert Marine Museum staff.

Note: \$7. Register at the Museum.

Description: Take a leisurely boat cruise around Solomons Island. The cruise leaves from the museum. Please dress warmly.

Myrtle Point Park, Saint Mary's County

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Leader: Bill Burruss

Historic St. Mary's City

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Leader: Mary Alves

Description:

Historic St. Mary's City, a museum of history and archaeology at the site of Maryland's first capital, encompasses over 800 acres of land along the St. Mary's River. The field trip will feature a recent project carried out under the Critical Area Commission that involved the removal of invasive species and replanting of natives along a 1000' section of shoreline. There are also over 3 miles of trails through various habitat areas that are open to the public. Since the museum endeavors to represent the 17th century landscape, there is a commitment to using only native species on the grounds.

On Saturday, Grand Militia Muster, a colorful event featuring one of the largest gatherings of 17th century re-enactors, is scheduled. There will be ongoing musketry competitions, camp activities, and games. Events include a 3 p.m. artillery demo and inspection of arms and a 4 p.m. tactical training battle. All regular exhibits are also open. Admission cost will be discounted to \$5.00 (usually \$7.50). At 8 p.m. the public is invited to join the Militia in the State House for 17th century dancing. Instruction will be given. There is no charge for this evening event.

Directions from Solomons: Take Route 4 South, over the Thomas Johnson Bridge. Turn left onto Route 235. Turn right onto Route 489. Turn left onto Route 5. Continue into Historic Saint Mary's City. (Alternatively, you may continue on Route 235 and turn right onto Mattapany Road. Turn right onto Route 5 and continue into Historic Saint Mary's City.)

Wildflower Farm Tour, Anne Arundel County

Time: Starts at 5:00 p.m.

Leader: Sara Tangren

Description: If you can not stay for the evening social, head up to the Annapolis area to visit Chesapeake Native Nursery, a 5-acre wildflower farm. Sara will show off her late fall blooming species.

Directions from Solomons: Take Rt. 2/4 north. Rt. 2/4 divides north of Huntingtown; bear right to stay on Route 2. In about 15 miles, you'll go 1/4 way around a traffic circle to stay on Rt. 2. In 4 miles turn left onto Brick Church Road. Continue straight through the light at Central Avenue (Rt. 214). The road will end at Riva Road, turn right. In about 1/2 mile, turn right onto Aisquith Farm Road. Go to the white oval sign that says "Chesapeake Native Nursery" and follow the large red arrows to the wildflower fields.

Sunday, October 17, Field Trips

Please contact either the field trip leader or Karyn Molines at 410-286-2928 or kmolines@chesapeake.net to register. Registrations will also be taken at the conference. Conference registration is not required for Sunday fields trips.

Hellen Creek Preserve, Calvert County

Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Leader: Bob Boxwell

Description: Hellen Creek Preserve is a fifty acre wildlife preserve held by the Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust. Together with The Nature Conservancy's Hemlock Preserve over 120 acres of contiguous wooded area held in perpetual easement. The properties border Hellen Creek and we can expect kingfishers, great blue herons, ducks, and perhaps a bald eagle. A

variety of tree species include the American Hemlock. There are some wet areas and bushwhacking so be prepared for mud and insects. Please carpool as parking is limited.

Directions: *From Calvert Marine Museum:* Take Rt. 2/4 north and pass the light at the shopping center. Continue to the next left which is Mill Bridge/Coster Road. There is a left turn lane and light. Cross Rt. 2/4 and make a left to get onto Coster Road. Follow to Clifton Drive, a small private road on the right. Follow this gravel drive to the first left turn. Park by the house, which will be open for this trip.

From points north: Take Rt. 2/4 south towards Solomons. Turn right at the light for Mill Bridge/Coster Road. At next intersection turn left onto Coster Road. Follow to Clifton Drive, a small private road on the right. Follow this gravel drive to the first left turn. Park by the house, which will be open for this trip.

Historic St. Mary's City

Time: 10 a.m.

Leader: Mary Alves

Description: Please see the Saturday field trip for description.

Piney Branch Bog, Charles County

Time: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Leader: Cris Fleming

To register: Cris Fleming at 301-657-9289. Registration is required. If you register and later need to cancel, please notify the trip leader so people on the waiting list can attend. Because of the sensitivity of the habitat, the trip is limited to 8 people.

Description: The Piney Branch Bog has recently been purchased by the state of Maryland and is being managed by The Nature Conservancy. It is not a magnolia bog but has elements of both northern and southern bogs, including natural stands of northern pitcher plant and round-leaved sundew. Several state and globally rare species occur in the open areas under a powerline and wooded areas nearby. However, incursion by shrubs such as sweet pepperbush has reduced the open area in recent years.

Bring: Water, hat; wear long pants and long sleeves and old shoes that can get wet and muddy.

Directions: Piney Branch Bog is located a few miles northeast of La Plata near the development of St. Charles.

From the south: Take MD 5 to just after the bridge over Zekiah Swamp. Look for the Grace Brethren Church on your right and then turn left on Billingsley Road.

From the north: Take MD 5 for a few miles east of the intersection with US 301 near Waldorf. Look for a Meadows Farms nursery on your right and turn right on Billingsley Road. You also will see signs-for the county landfill as you approach Billingsley Road. Go 1.7 miles on

Billingsley Road and-park behind the Richards Office Building on your right (opposite the Aggregate Corporation sign).

Mattawoman Creek Tidal Freshwater Marsh, Charles County

Time: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Leader: Jim Long

Note: Canoe rental will be approximately \$15. Registration is required. If you register and later need to cancel, please notify us so people on the waiting list can attend.

Description: The tidal freshwater marsh is a highly diverse habitat that is among the most prolific communities in terms of annual biomass generation. At the same time, these marshes are an uncommon phenomenon globally. Mattawoman Creek, also known as one of the most productive anadromous fish nurseries in the Chesapeake Bay system, retains excellent examples the tidal freshwater marsh. We will paddle into a peaceful setting surrounded by Maryland Wildlands where we should see wild rice, the native lotus (past bloom but stunning nonetheless), acres of emergent plants, and communities characteristic of the transition from aquatic to forested landscapes.

Bring: Lunch, shoes suitable for getting wet, windbreaker if breezy. Binoculars are often helpful.

Directions: From Solomons, use Rt. 4 south to cross the bridge to Rt. 235. Turn right on Rt. 235, which will turn into Rt. 5. Continue on Rt. 5 to Waldorf. (As you cross the railroad tracks in Waldorf, you will be entering the Mattawoman watershed.). At the light marking the intersection with Rt. 301 in Waldorf, you will leave Rt. 5 by simply proceeding straight through the intersection, on Rt. 228. Take Rt. 228 until it ends at Rt. 210, the Indian Head Highway. Bear left to take Rt. 210 south toward Indian Head. Drive into Indian Head, and a half-block before the road ends at the gate to a Navy facility, make a left onto Mattingly Ave. The put-in is at the end of this road; there is parking on the left prior to the put-in.

Parker's Creek Loop Trail, American Chestnut Land Trust, Calvert County

Time: Noon - 3 p.m.

Leader: Marcy Damon

Description: We'll explore the northern side of Parker's Creek, following a loop trail down to and along the creek. The trail passes through pawpaw groves, oak and hickory forests, and a forested wetland. The terrain is moderately steep in places.

Bring: Please bring a water bottle and a snack. Dress for the weather! Wear comfortable hiking clothes and shoes/boots, hat, windbreaker, warm jacket.

Note: The trip will be canceled due to lightning or heavy downpour.

To register: Marcy Damon, 443-482-2156 (w), 410-535-6813 (h), mdamon@cbf.org.

Directions: *From Calvert County Marine Museum and points south:* Take Rt. 2/4 north toward Prince Frederick. Go past the Rt. 231 intersection and Walmart. Turn right at the next light for Dares Beach Road. Go 2 miles east and turn right onto Double Oak Road (a very small side road.) In about one mile, turn left onto the lane across from open field, past house to designated parking.

From points north: Take Rt. 2/4 south toward Prince Frederick. Go past the Fox Run Shopping Center and Calvert Middle School on the left. Turn left at the next light onto Dares Beach Road. Go 2 miles east and turn right onto Double Oak Road (a very small side road). In about one mile, turn left onto the lane across from open field, past house to designated parking.

Jefferson Patterson Park, Calvert County

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Leader: Mary-Stuart Sierra

Description: Jefferson Patterson Park contains one of the most complete archeological sites in Southern Maryland, both Native American and early colonial settlements. Rolling fields and spectacular views of the Patuxent River are worth the visit! The Maryland Archeological Lab and the Estuarine Research Center (formerly Academy of Natural Sciences, now Morgan State Univ.) are both housed at the Park.

Directions from Solomons: Take Route 2/4 North. Just north of St. Leonard, turn left onto Parran Road, which will end on Mackall Road. Turn left and follow the road several miles to the park entrance on the left. When you are on Rt. 2/4 and you come to the light for Broome's Island Road (Rt. 264) you've gone too far, but can still get there. Turn left at the light then in about 2 miles turn left onto Mackall Road. Follow Mackall Road to the Park entrance on the left.

Araby Mansion, Charles County

Leaders: Ellie Cline and Les Craven