

Maryland Native Plant Society's
11th Annual Fall Conference

*Native Plants, Natural Communities, and
Geology of the Fall Line of Maryland*



October 12 - 13, 2002

This year's conference will take place at the Gabrielson Lab building of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge complex in Prince George's County.

Conference Program:

Please join us for our Friday evening Social at the New Deal Café, Greenbelt.

Light fare; vegetarian and vegan friendly. The café's location is 113 Centerway in Roosevelt Center. Directions: From 193 (Greenbelt Road) turn north onto Southway (where 295 meets 193). At the second stop sign, cross Crescent Road. There's the parking lot! The café entrance is opposite the movie theatre and facing the courtyard. Phone the New Deal Café: 301-474-5642. Attendees buy their own dinner.

Saturday, October 12

- 8:00-8:45 am – Late registration, coffee, breakfast (fruit, muffins, pastries)
- 8:45-9:00 am – Welcome, Karyn Molines, President
- 9:00-9:30 am – Overview of the Diverse Natural Communities of the Fall Line Area in Maryland, Rod Simmons
- 9:30-10:30 am – Geology of the Fall Line and Terrace Gravel Deposits, Robert Weems
- 10:30-11:15 am – Break, refreshments, poster session
- 11:15 am-12:15 pm – Fall Line Magnolia Bogs, Jim Long and Mark Strong
- 12:15-1:15 pm – Lunch

1:15-1:45 pm – MNPS Annual Meeting

2:00-5:00 pm – Field Trips

6:00 pm – Saturday evening Social:

Jasper's Restaurant, Rt. 3, Crofton
Something for everyone; vegetarian friendly.
Menu and directions will be provided at conference.
Attendees buy their own dinner.

Sunday, October 13

Field Trips:

Bryans Road Bog & Araby Bog – Rod Simmons

Chain Bridge Flats – Cris Fleming

Patapsco State Park – Louisa Thompson

About the Speakers:

Robert E. Weems, USGS Geologist

During his nineteen years with U.S. Geological Survey, Rob has worked primarily on the stratigraphy of the Atlantic coastal plain in South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland. In the course of his stratigraphic work, he has been able to apply his vertebrate paleontological background toward refining the dating and correlation of numerous stratigraphic units in the eastern and central United States, and he also has helped to develop a better understanding of the depositional environments of many of the stratigraphic units that he has studied. The results of his work have been documented in more than 60 scientific papers, 15 geologic maps, and 29 abstracts.

James P. Long, Physical Scientist and Coordinator of Friends of Mattawoman Creek

For many years, Jim has been actively involved with watershed and wetlands issues in the southern Maryland region, including the effects of urbanization. He has also helped to document the remaining Magnolia Bogs in Charles County.

Roderick H. Simmons, Field Ecologist

Rod has extensively surveyed the flora and natural communities of Maryland and Virginia, especially the inner coastal plain and piedmont, with an emphasis on geological conditions and plant associations.

Mark T. Strong, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

Mark is a taxonomic botanist who is a specialist in Cyperaceae (Sedge Family) and a student of the flora and natural communities of the Atlantic coastal plain, particularly in the southeast. He is especially knowledgeable of bog and coastal wetlands flora and plant associations.

Saturday's Field Trips:

Beaverdam Creek Bogs, Prince George's County

Lou Aronica and Jake Hughes

Little Paint Branch Bogs,

Prince George's County

Rod Simmons

Oxon Run Bogs, Washington, D.C.

James Rosenstock, National Park Service

Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge (2 trips)

Fred & Jane Fallon; Esther Woodworth

Sandy Spring Bog, Montgomery County

John Parrish

Suitland Bog, Prince George's County

Cris Fleming

Sunday's Field Trips:

Bryans Road Bog & Araby Bog, Charles County

Rod Simmons and Jim Long

Fall line vicinity, gravel seepage bogs with a characteristic assemblage of sweetbay magnolia, sphagnum moss, and other bog flora, including several rare plants. Bryans Road Bog is situated under a powerline easement and is surrounded by a variety of native, warm-season grasses, legumes, composites, and other plants that inhabit sandy soils of the coastal plain. Araby Bog is the most undisturbed of all remaining Magnolia Bogs and is surrounded by large expanses of Terrace Gravel Forest.

Chain Bridge Flats, Montgomery County

Cris Fleming

This site comprises the lower part of the Fall Zone of the Potomac River. The open, rocky shoreline is an unusual habitat, which supports prairie type vegetation. Along with the grasses and stunted trees are several rare species. Participants on this field trip should wear sturdy shoes and be prepared for scrambling over rocks and boulders. Meet at 10:00 am at the most southern parking lot on the Clara Barton Parkway (just north of Chain Bridge). Call Cris at 301-657-9289 to register.

Plants, Soils, and Seasons Along the Patapsco,

Patapsco Valley State Park, Baltimore County

Louisa Rogoff Thompson

At the edge of the Piedmont, complex geology has produced a variety of soil types, with different plant communities on each. We'll explore the typical Piedmont oak-hickory forest plus the chestnut oak-mountain laurel association found on the steepest, most eroded slopes, and the richer plant community of diabase-influenced Montalto and Relay soils. We'll also see the trees and shrubs of the riverbank, floodplain, and upland seepage areas.

Why do some plants grow in one spot, and different ones a few feet away? At the Fall Line, diverse microhabitats abound, and we'll explore the factors that determine which species grow where. We'll dig down to look at the vertical profiles of several different soils and learn how to interpret a Soil Survey to find out what plants to expect where. This is a rare opportunity to get a better understanding of how soils form, how they differ, and what difference it makes. MNPS' Patapsco Stewardship Project met here periodically and photographed the plants during spring and summer; we'll bring photos of the deciduous plants so you can see the entire plant community. 1-5 pm. Meet at far end of Avalon Parking Lot. Bring a snack and water. There are restrooms at parking lot (no opportunities during hike). Leisurely pace, but with steep uneven terrain and loose rocks, not suitable for people with difficulty walking. Wear shoes with deep tread.

The Patapsco River arises from headwaters in Carroll County and serves as the Howard/Baltimore County line, then widens on the coastal plain to become Baltimore's Inner Harbor. In its piedmont section it has carved a steep river gorge, deeply cut in turn by frequent first order streams. Eroding down through soluble rock, it has exposed a variety of more durable rocks from ancient geological formations, which were folded and re-folded and then tilted at a sharp angle as continents joined, then separated, and the Appalachians were born. Far older than either the mountains or the coastal plain, the Piedmont was once a mountain itself, now weathered down to a mere 200' altitude here at the Fall Line. Rich clay soils derived from highly weathered rock give rise to lush plant communities - except where slopes are steep and only thinly covered with soil.

This landscape changes every few hundred feet, as different combinations of slope, exposure, soil type, and water emerging from cracks in the rock create varying habitats. Rich, black soil formed from diabase rock supports maidenhair fern, redbud, and blue cohosh. Thin, poor, or acidic soils favor the heath community. In places, mountain laurel and chestnut oak spring forth from cracks in huge, near-vertical rock faces. We'll likely see early lowbush blueberry and spotted wintergreen as well. Where the slope lessens, we'll find a dry-mesic oak-hickory forest. And wherever water is forced upward along tilted underground folds, we'll find pawpaw, ironwood, witch hazel, hemlock, or hazelnut - even sycamore! - far above the river. If we have time, we will also explore floodplain soils and successional changes due to Hurricane Hugo and Tropical Storm Agnes.

Directions: The Avalon Area of Patapsco Valley State Park lies in Elkridge (Howard County). Take I-95 to I-195 East toward BWI. OR take I-295 (Baltimore-Washington Parkway) to I-195 West toward I-95. Take the first exit onto US 1 South toward Elkridge. Immediately turn right onto South Street. Immediately turn left into the park. Follow entrance road to control booth, and pay entrance fee (\$2.00/person). Continue along entrance road until it ends at a T intersection. Turn left and cross the river. Immediately turn right into parking lot, and go to far end.

Directions to the Conference:

The conference location is in the Prince George's County section of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge. The Gabrielson Lab building is accessed from American Holly Drive, which is directly across Laurel-Bowie Road (197) from Powder Mill Road. Take 295 (BW Parkway) North or South to the Powder Mill Road exit east to its end and crossing at 197. Follow American Holly Drive to its end and turn left onto Beech Forest Road. Building on left. (The 197 exit from the parkway is currently torn up and too confusing to use for directions. The Powder Mill Road exit is much simpler and not out of the way for people coming from the north.) From Routes 3 or 50, take Collington Road north (197) to the stoplight at Powder Mill Road. Turn right onto American Holly Drive. Note: Collington Road becomes Laurel-Bowie Road when it crosses Annapolis Road (450).

Conference Registration Information:

The registration fee includes lectures, field trips, breakfast, coffee, and refreshments.

\$35.00 member fee

\$50.00 non-member fee

\$8.00 optional lunch box fee

(Lunch box includes a wrap, chips, and a cookie from the New Deal Café.) Drinks will be provided.

Please note: Non-members joining MNPS with registration and members of other native plant societies or the Botanical Society of Washington can register at the member fee.

Please return to the conference main page to access the registration form. Thanks!

If you have any questions regarding the conference, please contact Meghan Tice:

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301-809-0139