



PO Box 122
Port Republic, MD 20676

SUMMER CAMP ISSUE

THE PEEPER

Calvert Nature Society

www.calvertparks.org

February 2016

The Volunteer Experience

by Karyn Molines

If you visit Battle Creek or Flag Ponds, you'll encounter classes of children exploring and learning about Calvert County's natural heritage. The programs provide hands-on activities where children learn first-hand about animals of the forests, nesting behavior of terrapins, and how oysters clean Chesapeake Bay waters. We strive to maintain small group sizes, so that each person can have an intimate experience throughout the day.

Public, Private, and Home Schoolers

Schools account for the largest number of our programs. The majority of the students come through the CHESPAX program, the Calvert County Public Schools environmental education program. The Natural Resources Division has been teaching K, 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade students since the program started in 1989. In addition, students from Calvert County high schools, pre-schools and daycare centers, as well private schools, take advantage of the programs we offer. And this past fall, we developed new programs specifically for home school families.

In the coming year, park naturalists will offer more home school programs and re-vamp the first grade curriculum. Within the next three years we'll have developed a new program giving every ninth grader a meaningful experience in the nature parks learning about ecosystems and the impacts of invasive species.

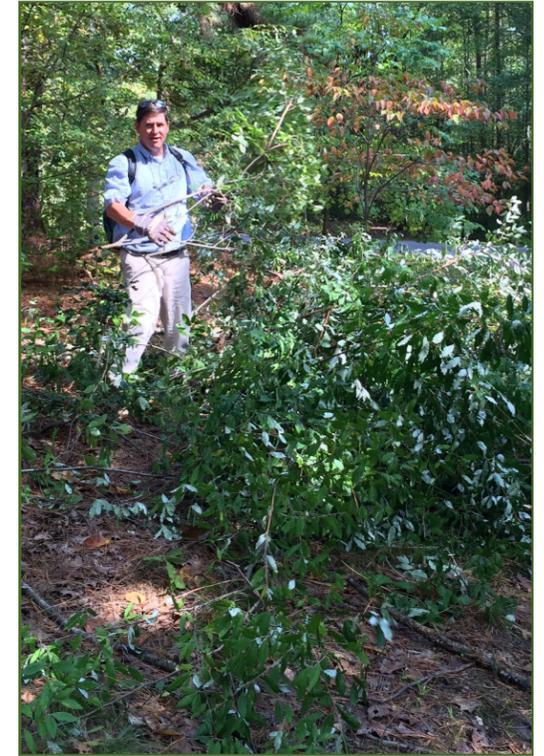
In 2015, more than 8,600 students, and their chaperones, attended 274 programs. This represents 65% of participants who attend all of our programs (including summer camps, kayak trips, public programs) throughout the year. Delve deeper into these data: we offer about 530 programs per year to more than 15,000 people.

Volunteers are Integral to Program Success

How do we do this with only three full-time and two part-time naturalists? With Volunteers!

Volunteers help to reduce the student-to-instructor ratio. As in all education, and more so in outdoor and environmental settings, a small group size allows for more active engagement by the student in the activities. Having volunteers to be able to break the classes into smaller groups enhances the engagement of the students and allows for more interaction with the instructor. They support the naturalist

(Continued on page 11)



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

JOHN SULLENS

Volunteering with CHESPAX is an enjoyable opportunity that I am grateful to do. The ability to get kids excited about nature and their environment is a joy and a pleasure. Children are innately drawn to the bay, the swamp, the meadow and the woods with a sense of wonder and excitement. As the instructor, it's magical leading kids to areas of the county they may not have previously experienced. To see how wide the eyes of a young boy or girl can get when they see the bay, a snake, an eagle or a crayfish chimney for the first time is special and special happens every day as I volunteer.

WINTER WONDERLAND at Kings Landing Park



Public Participation Protects Calvert's Quality of Life

Every year, Calvert County's 1,500+-acre nature parks host more than 42,000 people, in addition to the tens of thousands of children who attend our nature programs. The parks' woodland trails, wetlands boardwalks, and bay beaches provide refuge from busy lives; time to learn about our natural world and create memorable experiences filled with adventure and discovery.

The nature parks are merely a showcase of the variety of natural landscapes around us in Calvert County. The value of these green spaces is immeasurable. Besides maintaining our County's natural beauty and inherent high quality of life, they provide natural habitat and migration corridors for birds and animals while connecting people to nature via hiking trails and walkways. Our town centers should reflect these values in their development while providing sustainable economic markets for our communities and local businesses.

Unfortunately, as the county is developed, many Calvert green spaces are in danger of becoming "unconnected" from neighboring natural places, causing our natural resources to be fragmented and creating stresses on ecosystems. Calvert Nature Society (www.calvertparks.org) promotes projects that preserve our wildlife habitats, wetlands, forests and fields, but also encourages development that creates human-scale connections that will make our communities more walkable and enjoyable.

To ensure that Calvert County continues to grow in a sustainable fashion, it is important for residents to be active participants in the county planning process. At this juncture, there are several ways that the residents of Calvert County can voice their thoughts. We ask Calvert Countians to actively engage in the public process surrounding the following:

Prince Frederick Town Center Development – The public weighed in during the 2012 charrette, preferring that the Middle School and Armory sites be not just a retail and

residential center, but rather, "a community showcase." This property is now being considered for development. The proposed concept drawings and traffic studies (including Armory Square/Middle School properties) are accessible on the county website at <http://www.co.cal.md.us/index.aspx?NID=613>.

Comprehensive Plan – The 2004 comprehensive plan has a strong vision of vibrant town centers surrounded by thriving rural communities—a county that is dedicated to preserving the natural, cultural, and historical treasures that make Calvert "Calvert." As Calvert grows, we must work together to keep those visions at the forefront so that we may have thoughtful development projects in our Town Centers that will house and employ people of all incomes while maintaining our current high quality of life for all residents. The plan will be updated in the coming years, and it is very important that the current vision remains strong. Attending public hearings and/or understanding the County Commissioners positions fully will go long way in influencing how the plan is ultimately modified.

Funding for Land Preservation – Earlier in January, Governor Hogan restored land preservation funding for Program Open Space and Rural Legacy and other programs. Our Board of County Commissioners should follow that lead and fully leverage (spend) those state funds to conserve land in Calvert. We request that the Commissioners provide the \$1.5 million in land preservation money now.

There's a particular quality of life in Calvert, one that looks forward but remains in touch with its rural roots, connected, not just by roads, but by deeper community pathways... to its natural spaces through walking paths, hiking trails and access to its bounty of rivers, bays and creeks. We hope that all County residents will advocate for preservation of these values and we request that our elected officials continue to promote and fund the preservation of the resources and characteristics that make Calvert so special.

Anne Sundermann, Executive Director

Calvert Nature Society is dedicated to the protection and preservation of Calvert County's natural heritage and the creation of an environmentally literate and aware community. We provide opportunities for appreciation and understanding of our natural world through our outreach initiatives and in support of the mission of the Calvert County Natural Resources Division. Calvert Nature Society is a 501(c)3 organization.

Staff & Board of Directors:

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Gene Groshon, Naturalist
Shannon Steele, Naturalist
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Melinda Whicher, Park Manager, Kings Landing Park
Michael Rawlings, Office Assistant II
Jerry King, Building & Grounds Maintenance Worker

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Volunteer (cont'd from page 1)

staff by providing an additional layer of safety which is needed in a non-classroom setting.

Volunteers bring the community to the classroom. The students, teachers, chaperones, and even naturalists, benefit, because the volunteers bring their own experience and knowledge to the program. Volunteers demonstrate their environmental stewardship ethic to students. This interaction adds more to the "real world experience" that a field trip provides.

To be successful in reaching every student, it is critical to develop and expand our team of education volunteers. We're looking for adults who are available during the week, willing to commit to volunteering at least twice a month (preferably once a week). Volunteers are subject to a background check because they work with children. Volunteers go through a training which covers the content and activities, and shadow the staff and trained volunteers until they demonstrate the skills to lead a group on their own.

The ideal Teaching Volunteer will:

- Enjoy working with and teaching children.
- Be able to engage and lead groups of 10-20 people.
- Be willing to work outdoors, including heat, wind, rain, or cold. Volunteers may also be exposed to ticks, mosquitoes, poison ivy, and unexpected wild life.
- Be excited about exploring and spending time in nature, and be able to share this excitement with others.
- Be familiar with the park(s) where they are volunteering.
- Have general knowledge and interest of the local natural world and ecosystems.

If you have these interests, skills, and talents, consider becoming an education volunteer. We're holding a training on Monday, March 14 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. where you can learn more about what is required to teach the CHESPAX 3rd grade Terrapin program. Attending the training does not commit you to volunteering, although we're certain once you see what a wonderful experience and opportunity it is, you'll be here more than once a week to help out. If you are a current education volunteer, please attend to share your experience and tips and tricks of the trade.

Check out this and other volunteer opportunities at www.calvertparks.org/volunteer.html.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

FRED BUMGARNER (seen above with wife Ginny)

In the process [of volunteering] I've become much more aware and appreciative of the natural surroundings in this area I call home. I've also come to greatly respect the mission of those who work hard to preserve our natural areas and seek to encourage students to take an interest in the environment. The rewards might seem insignificant, but to witness the enthusiasm and curiosity of young people as they are exposed to experiences in the outdoors is, as they say in the commercial, "priceless." The opportunity to visit our parks on a regular basis is enjoyable and an added bonus. Walking the beach alone at Flag Ponds, waiting for the naturalists to arrive with the students, is relaxing and therapeutic, and keeps me coming back for more.



Please support our

Barn Owl Nesting Box Project

SMECO's generous donation of poles for the barn owl box project will allow us to place boxes in locations where a barn is not available or accessible.

Consider donating through our Adopt-a-Box program. <http://calvertparks.org/Adopt-A-Box>.



WINTER LECTURE



Friday, March 4, 7:00–9:00 pm

Join us at the Nature Center,
Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Bees Are Not Optional

Speaker: Sam Droege
Biologist, US Geological Survey,
Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

The decline of honey-bee populations is a well-publicized phenomenon, yet the status of native bees is little known. In 2001, Sam Droege launched a pilot program of the first survey of North America's native bee population. Calvert County Natural Resources staff and volunteers have helped to collect bees from a wide variety of habitats in the nature parks, which has resulted in at least six new state records! Free

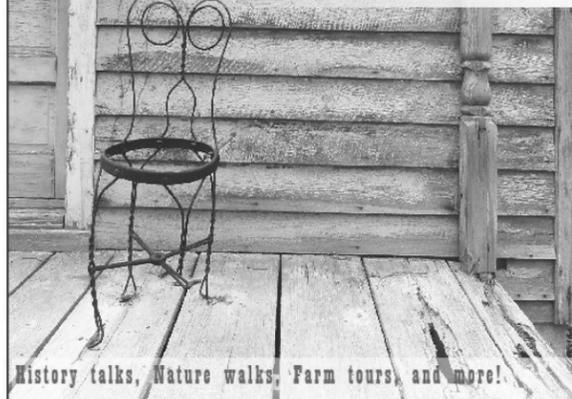
This event is supported by
the Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust.

Pull up a chair and join the fun.

Heritage Farm Day

Sunday, May 1
1-4 pm

Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm
2695 Grays Road, Prince Frederick



More Information at:
www.calvertparks.org



SPRING 2016 PROGRAMS



Calvert County Natural Resources Division
Calvert Nature Society

We have so many wonderful programs, we can't fit them all here.
See the web site for a full listing of all the upcoming programs: www.calvertparks.org.

Summer Camp Registration Dates: March 1, Members; March 15, Nonmembers

Online registration is preferred. Many programs fill quickly; by registering online you will know immediately if you are registered for a program.

For mail in or walk in registration, a registration form must be completed.

You can find the forms on the web site or at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp. Call 410-535-5327 or email CypressSwamp@co.cal.md.us for additional information.

NATURE PARK INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT WWW.CALVERTPARKS.ORG

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

Families can experience the fascinating natural world found in our area. These programs incorporate activities to entertain learners of all ages. Most programs spend time outdoors: dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear.

Reservations required. Adult participation required unless noted. Children must be the age indicated for each program.

Fee per program: Free for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family.

Leap Day!

Ages 3-5

Monday, February 29

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Leap long, leap tall -it's Leap Day!

Not every year has one, so we'll celebrate Leap Day by looking at animals that can make spectacular leaps.

We'll compare how far we can leap, too! Will include both indoor and outdoor fun.

Insect Hotels

Ages 6-9

Saturday, March 5, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Your children will have fun building some insect hotels to help these important little pollinators.

Nature Art

Ages 3-5

Tuesday, March 8

Session A: 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Session B: 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Art can be easily made from many things. We'll use items from nature to make your very own garden stepping stone. Wear clothes you can get dirty.

Spring Search

Ages 3-5

Wednesday, March 16

Session A: 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

What are some signs of spring...are we seeing them yet? We will have both indoor and outdoor activities to guide us as we search for spring.



Natural Resources News



In addition to her Service Award, Tania was presented the Bob Finton Outdoor Educator of the Year Award at the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) conference held in Ocean City, MD. The program recognizes an individual who demonstrates leadership and innovation in environmental and outdoor education. Bob Finton personified enthusiasm, innovation, and excellence in the field of environmental education.

Calvert County recognized Flag Ponds Nature Park Manager Connie Sutton (left) for 30 years of service and Naturalist Tania Gale (right) for 15 years. Thank you, Connie and Tania, for your many years of hard work and dedication!



Amanda DuPrey is our newest naturalist, teaching CHESPAX programs, leading the public nature programs, and assisting in the nature center.

For the full listing of programs,
go to
WWW.CALVERTPARKS.ORG

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

(cont'd from page 3)

Reservations required. Adult participation required unless noted. Children must be the age indicated for each program.

Fee per program: Free for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family.

Wacky Woodpeckers

Ages 6-9

Saturday, March 19, 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

We'll go on a hike and discuss the different woodpeckers we have in our area and finish with a craft.

Roly Poly Animals

Ages 18 months-5 years

Wednesday, March 30

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

After some indoor activities and a puppet show about roly poly animals, your children will explore the area surrounding Wisner Hall and will have fun rolling down the grassy hill.

Salamanders and Singing Frogs

All ages

Saturday, April 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Learn about our local spring amphibians, then join us for a hike to hear the frogs and toads sing.

Woodland Tea Party

18 months-5 years

Friday, April 15

Session A: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session B: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Bring your child and one of their stuffed animals to an outdoor puppet show. Take a hike through the forest and end with a tea party.

Full program descriptions are online at www.calvertparks.org.

PROGRAMS FOR 10-16 YEAR OLDS

(Including Junior Rangers Series)

These programs encourage developing minds to appreciate and protect the nature around them. Programs identified by the Junior Rangers Series logo are designed to create a group of young men and women with a strong, long-term commitment to preserving and protecting the landscapes, waterways, and natural resources of Calvert County. Adult participation is not required for these programs. Fee per program, unless noted: Free for members, \$8 per person for nonmembers.

Spring Bio Blitz Teen Overnight

Ages 12-16

Wednesday, March 23, 10:00 a.m. –

Thursday, March 24, 9:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

If you like to search for animals, and you don't mind getting dirty in the process, come on down. Bring lunch and a snack for Wednesday. Dinner and breakfast provided. \$25 Society members; \$40 Nonmembers.

Junior Entomologist

Ages 10-14

Monday, March 28,

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

For every human in the world, there are 200 million insects! Come to Kings Landing Park to learn all about insect anatomy and make a container to use on a bug hunt. We'll search for insects, and then learn some techniques for preserving and labeling our collections.



Celebrate Migratory Bird Day

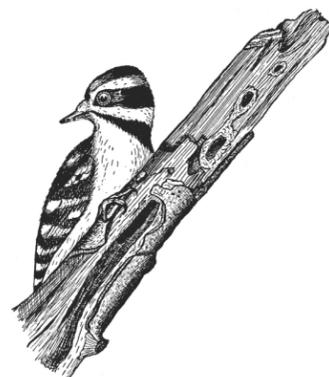
Ages 10-13

Saturday, May 14,

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Learn about our spring migrating birds, then join us for a hike to look and listen for them in the forest, wetlands, and along the beach.



SCHOOL'S OUT ADVENTURE

Don't let your child sit home on this day off from school-send them out to play! The day will include indoor and outdoor activities. Adult participation is not required. Fee is per child.

Mud Monsters

Ages 6-9

Monday, March 21,

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

and Tuesday, March 22,

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

This two-day camp will be full of adventures. We will wade into the swamp, use nets to look for amphibians, and, of course, play in the mud. Society members; \$40, Nonmembers, \$60.

At Home in the Woods

8-10 years old

Tuesday, April 26, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

We will spend this day off from school roaming the spring woods. We may hunt for salamanders, build forts, look for spring wild flowers. Society members, \$20. Nonmembers, \$30.

Ornithology Camp

Entering grades 3- 5

Monday, July 11-Wednesday, July 13,

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 14, 4:00 -10:00 p.m.

Location varies

Your children can explore the fascinating world of birds as they bird watch, check nest boxes, dissect owl pellets, and make bird feeders. Thursday evening will be a hoot! After supper over the campfire, the young birders will meet the nature center's live owls and will take a hike to look for birds at night.

Members: \$150; Nonmembers: \$180

Grades 4-6

Nature Photography

Entering grades 4- 6

Monday, July 25-Friday, July 29, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Photo presentation for families: July 29, 3:00 p.m.

Location varies

Your children will capture the natural wonders of Calvert County Parks on camera. In addition to fun camp activities, they will learn camera basics and picture-taking tips. After camp on Friday, families are invited to a presentation highlighting campers' work. Campers must provide their own digital camera. Members: \$150; Nonmembers: \$180.

Grades 6-8

Mountains to the Bay

Entering grades 6-8

Monday, July 11-Wednesday July 13,

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 14, 7:30 a.m. overnight trip

through Friday, July 15, 6:00 p.m.

Location varies

This week we will explore all things aquatic while learning the basics of getting around on the water using a variety of watercraft like canoes, kayaks, and river rafts. We'll explore different aquatic habitats as we retrace the path that water takes from the mountains to the Bay-in reverse. The last 2 days will be an overnight adventure to western Maryland, including tubing on Antietam Creek and rafting on the Shenandoah River. Come prepared to get wet and have fun.

Members: \$250; Nonmembers: \$280.

Grades 7-12

Adventure Camp

Entering grades 7-9

Tuesday, July 5-Wednesday, July 6,

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 7, 4:00 p.m. overnight

through Friday, July 8, 9:00 a.m.

Location varies

Come see the parks like never before as we explore the far reaches of our parks. Be prepared to travel by land and water as we set off on our adventures. We will end our week with a campout at Flag Ponds. Members: \$175; Nonmembers: \$200.

Patuxent Paddlers

Entering grades 9-12

Monday, July 25-Wednesday, July 27-

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 28, 9:00 a.m. overnight through

Friday, July 29, 9:00 a.m.

Location varies

Each day of this camp brings us up-close and personal with the Patuxent River and the creeks that surround Calvert County. Campers will learn paddling fundamentals: safety, strokes, and rescues-as well as learning firsthand about water quality and the natural history of the river. We'll end the week with a day-long paddle adventure and an overnight campout. Members: \$210; Nonmembers: \$240.



Bio Blitz Camp

Entering grades 8-10

Monday, August 1-Friday, August 5,

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Location varies

The Maryland Biodiversity Project was created to help catalog all of the living things in Maryland. As citizen scientists we will search different habitats to document what plants and animals we find. Be prepared to venture through creeks, look under logs and hike through forests as we go on our safari. We will even visit some parks outside of Calvert County. Members: \$150; Nonmembers: \$180.

SUMMER CAMPS

Fee is per Camper.

Pre-K & K

Early Explorers

4-5 years old

Monday, June 27-Thursday, June 30,
9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

We will set out on mini adventures throughout the park to explore our natural world. From the creek to the fields who knows what we may find?

Members: \$60; Nonmembers: \$75.

Grades 1-2

Creature Feature

Entering grades 1-2

Tuesday, July 5-Friday, July 8,
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Location varies

Send your children outside to explore nature with us. They will have a blast playing games, catching animals, and having close encounters with the nature center's live animals. Each day will feature a different group of animals: reptiles & amphibians, bugs, birds, and fish.

Members: \$150; Nonmembers: \$180.

Into the Wild

Entering grades 1-2

Monday, August 1-Thursday, August 4,
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Location varies

You don't need to go on safari to see wildlife-there's a ton of wildlife to be seen here in Calvert County, if you know where to look. During this camp, we will take the time to look closely for life under logs, stones, even in the mud! Using tools like nets, buckets, and shovels, we'll search high and low, on land and in the water for bugs, worms, fish and whatever else we can find. In addition to our outdoor explorations, games and journals will help us learn about Calvert County's "wild things."

Members: \$150; Nonmembers: \$180.



Grades 2-4

Sons of the Forest

Entering grades 2-4

Monday, July 18-Friday, July 22,
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

We will leave no stone unturned as we learn about the natural world around us sloshing in the swamp and hiking through the forest. We'll also do fun crafts, build survival forts and cook over a fire. The week ends with a challenge to the Nature Girls to show off the skills learned in camp.

Members: \$150; Nonmembers: \$180.

Nature Girls

Entering grades 2-4

Monday, July 18-Friday, July 22,
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Each day will bring a new adventure, wading in wetlands and exploring the forest to learn about the natural world. We'll also do fun crafts, build survival forts and cook over a fire. The week ends with a challenge to the Sons of the Forest to show off the skills learned in camp.

Members: \$150; Nonmembers: \$180.

Grades 3-5

Water World

Entering grades 3-5

Monday, June 27-Wednesday 29, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Thursday, June 30, 6:00 p.m. overnight through Friday,
July 1, 9:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

This week we will wade into some marvelous wet places like the creek, the swamp, and the Bay. As we go, we will learn firsthand about the animals and plants that depend on water-including ourselves. We'll end the week with an overnight so we can discover some watery places by the light of the stars. Come prepared to get WET and have fun!

Members: \$175; Nonmembers: \$200.

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Homeschool Teen Thursdays

Teen homeschool days will give your teen a chance to get hands-on experience with science and nature activities, provide an opportunity for service, and have fun while doing it.



Fee: Society members, \$20; Nonmembers, \$30.

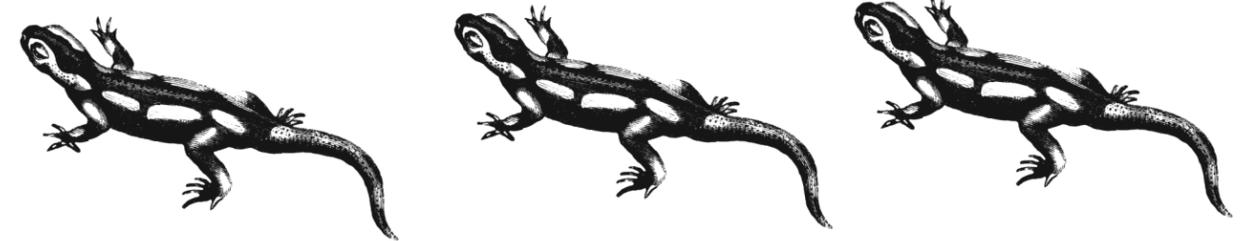
Salamanders in the Swamp

Ages 12-16

Thursday, April 7, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Designed for homeschool teens, we will focus on local amphibians and why they are important. We will divide our time between searching for animals and rehabbing the salamander traps and associated equipment.



Homeschool First Fridays

4-12 years old

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Friday, March 4

Friday, April 1

Friday, May 6

Friday, June 3

Session A: 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Session B: 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Free for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family per program. Please select only one session per day.

Our Winter/Spring homeschool series focuses on "phenology," the study of seasonal changes in plant and animal life-cycles, such as the date flowers begin to bloom or frogs start singing in the spring. Month to month, we will record our observations, as winter changes to spring.

Plant ID and Invasive Plant Removal

Ages 12-16

Thursday, May 26, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

This class will focus on invasive plants-how to identify them and understand the damage they do our native plants and animals.

Kayak Skills and River Life

Ages 12-16

Thursday, June 9, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Teens will learn kayak paddling and safety skills, while exploring the Patuxent River to discover the animals and plants that live there.

PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES

Reservations required. Unless otherwise noted: Free for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$8 per family.

Barking at the Moon: Coyotes in Calvert

All ages

Saturday, March 19, 1:00 -2:30 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp

Coyotes have been sighted in Calvert County! We'll discuss the life history of these elusive animals and how to identify them.

Flowers and Phenology

All ages

Saturday, April 23, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm

We will introduce the science of plant phenology, and then hike to identify signs of spring along the trails.

CAMPFIRE: Twilight on the Beach

All ages with adult

Friday, May 13, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Have a relaxing evening with your family and friends after hours. Bring a blanket or chairs and a picnic supper, if you'd like. We'll provide the s'mores.

Horseshoe Crab Survey

All ages

Saturday, May 28, 8:00-10:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Join us for this chance to see Flag Ponds at night! With luck we will see horseshoe crabs spawning at the water's edge or maybe bioluminescent comb jellies in the water!

ADULT PROGRAMS

Take time to learn about and appreciate the natural resources found throughout the County. These programs combine hiking through the parks, while learning more about the plants, animals, and other natural wonders.

These programs are geared towards adults and older teens.

Fees, unless noted: Free for Society members.

Nonmembers pay \$8 per person.

Nature Trivia

Must be at least 21 years old

Saturday, February 27, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Location: Kings Landing Park

Fees \$60/team

Think you are a nature expert, grab your friends and come test out your skills at Nature Trivia! We'll have beverages from some local breweries as well as fun prizes. Check our website for more updates on this event!

Stalking the Wild Timberdoodle

13 years-adult, under 16 with an adult

Wednesday, March 23, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Ward Farm Recreation & Nature Park

We'll stroll along the fields listening for the breeding display of the American Woodcock (also known as a Timberdoodle). Dress for the weather, wear sturdy hiking boots.

Wildflower ID for Beginners

Ages 16 years through adult

Friday, April 8, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

This class will teach you to "key-out" local plants using the popular Newcomb's Wildflower Guide. Geared for adults, but teens 16 or older may attend. Co-sponsored with the Maryland Native Plant Society.

KAYAK TRIPS

Participants must be at least 9 years old to accompany an adult in a double kayak, and at least 12 years old to ride in a single kayak.

Those under 18 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Program Fee per person (except where noted): \$15 for Society members. Nonmembers pay \$30 per person. \$10 discount if you bring your own kayak.

Mother's Day Kayak Trip

Sunday, May 8, 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Kings Landing Park

Bring mom for a relaxing tour of Kings Landing Park by water. We will look for flowers, birds and other wildlife as we tour the marshes.

War of 1812 Kayak Trip

Saturday, June 11, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Jefferson Patterson Park

During the War of 1812, the largest naval engagement in the history of Maryland took place at the mouth of St. Leonard Creek. Come take a tour of the waterfront from the perspective of the sailors in battle over 200 years ago.

VOLUNTEER

If you are interested in these, or other volunteer opportunities, please contact **Maya Huchla** by email at huchlam@co.cal.md.us or at the Nature Center on weekends, 410-535-5327.

Amphibian Monitors. Volunteers are needed each day to help monitor amphibian populations at Flag Ponds Nature Park. Volunteers, after a training with the naturalist and trained volunteers, will check our drift fence traps in the morning to identify, count, and measure salamanders, frogs, and toads captured in our bucket traps. Animals are then released. Volunteers should be willing to commit to 2-4 days per month. We need volunteers for weekdays and weekends. Families can volunteer, but at least one adult must be responsible for data collection and animal safety.

Bird Nest Monitors. We continue to expand our bird nest box monitoring and we need more boxes built! If you are handy with a hammer and screwdriver, you can help build bird boxes and put them up in the parks. We also need volunteers to visit the nests throughout winter to get them ready for the spring nesting. Families are welcome to participate.

CHESPAX Educators. Are you available for a few hours during the week to help teach children about animal diversity, terrapins, or oyster populations? We use volunteers to help teach CHESPAX environmental education programs for Calvert County schools. New volunteers will be trained by staff and experienced volunteers. For adults; all volunteers must undergo a background check to work with school children.

Events. Help out at our display table at the County Fair, Patuxent River Appreciation Day, and other outreach events. Volunteers generally work in 2-3 hour shifts.

CALVERT STEWARDS

Volunteer Opportunities

Assisting at the parks is a rewarding way to raise awareness of the importance of our natural lands. Use your experience to help preserve our future in Calvert County by becoming one of our Calvert Stewards. Some projects are appropriate for families, and most qualify for the Junior Rangers programs. Programs are free, unless noted.

Terrapin Training

Adults

Monday, March 14, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

If you would like to share your love of the outdoors with children, come to the training session for our 3rd Grade Terrapin Program. Discover why local students are studying terrapins and learn about the activities that you will help lead. Volunteers with this program are subject to a background check.

Prothonotary Warbler Information Session

Ages 10 to adult, under 18 with adult

Tuesday, March 29, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

After a short presentation, volunteers will trek around the park to learn the nest box locations and prepare them for the season. Volunteers can monitor them as little as once or as many as 12 times between April and July.

Salamander Study Work Day

Ages 10 through adult (under 16 must accompany by adult)

Friday, March 11, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Come find out more about our local salamander populations and this volunteer program which helps to keep tabs on their populations at Flag Ponds Park. Join the naturalist in getting the traps ready for the spring season. Bring work gloves and wear clothes that can get dirty-we'll be doing some digging.

Spring Swamp Wade-in

Adult volunteers only

Saturday, April 2, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Flag Ponds Nature Park

Join other park volunteers for this nighttime adventure into the swamp at Flag Ponds. We will wade into the swamp and, with luck, we will find spring peepers calling and spy on other swamp animals in the water.