

Weyanoke Wildlife Sanctuary *Pathways*

Winter, 2011 www.chasnorfolk.org

Why WYenoke? Or, have you yet found your way to WYenoke? Before addressing those questions, I'd like to address a question intermittently asked of me by visitors, "How is the name of the Sanctuary pronounced?" Even committee members are divided on this; during our monthly meetings we hear both pronunciations used! To add a bit of complexity to the issue, I have recently discovered that the pronunciation of the locale was even more in question during the time of the Jamestown Settlement.

In a book entitled **The Powhatan Indians of Virginia**, author Helen C. Rountree states that: "The early English settlers actually pronounced the first syllable as either wye or way, to judge from the variant spellings in seventeenth century documents. Even those who met the Weyanock themselves heard both sounds, indicating that the real Indian pronunciation may have been somewhere between . . . the (variant) spellings of weanock, winaugh, winauk, wynauk, or wynauh." In a 1985 communication to Rountree from Ives Goddard, renowned expert on Algonquin linguistics, he suggested to her "that the Indians accented the middle syllable weh-yan-ock." However, the wye pronunciation (with a first syllable accent) has lasted in Virginia. So there's our answer!

And now, back to my original questions: Why WYenoke? The simple but profound answer might be because it's good for the soul! No matter what the season in life – outwardly, inwardly, or both – the Sanctuary offers novelty, beauty, mystery, peace and refreshment, even new friends. Have you yet found the way to WAenoke? If not, join us for one of our monthly Nature Walks



scheduled for the third Saturdays beginning at 9 A.M. We are located "at the bend" * of Armistead Bridge Road. Your Weyanoke friends will be waiting for you. All of us wish you a Happy Thanksgiving!

*This is the believed meaning of the name Weyanoke, referring to "The Virginia Weyanoke . . . at a spectacular bend in the James" River, and settlement location for 100 – 150 Virginia Algonquin Indians. **By Chairperson Tiffany Plomgren**



Woody Woodard's Operations Report:

To borrow a title from William Faulkner, it was surely a “Long Hot Summer”—at least during the first half—too hot to do much in our ongoing labors to develop and improve the Sanctuary. But a healthy storm in late July, hurricane Irene at the end of August followed by several days of drenching rain (which put us ten inches over the average for the year) the Sanctuary finally received enough rainfall to bring about a major recovery from the drought times of the past two years. Although the winds and rain laid low many plants in the meadow garden, both it and the woodland garden were proliferating with late summer blooms. The beautyberries were especially brilliant this year.

Committee members who in the spring “adopted” certain areas where there were new plantings have been diligent in caring for their “wards”. With only a few exceptions these springtime additions are maturing nicely. Anne Brooke and her committee of four have continued in this project to add more native plants to areas freed of English ivy. In October four dozen plants were ordered from two of our suppliers—Vickie Shufer and Woodlanders, Aiken, S.C. They were received within days and two planting parties were held, additions including various native viburnums, hollies and azaleas planted mainly on the hillside above Lambert's Creek.

Debora Mosher and her Master Gardeners continue their project to stabilize the creek bank near the observation platform with sod rolls, topsoil and various wetland plants—all funded through a special grant Debora received from the National Audubon Society.

The decision to replace sunflower seed with safflower in the birdfeeders has been a success. For several days the squirrels

Volunteer Mike Schoen plants a new tree in October.



tested this new food but soon realized that safflower seed was not for their palate and they gave up their efforts to bring down the feeders. Numerous birds, esp. the cardinals, find the safflower a special treat and early mornings often finds a concentrated presence around the four feeders. Occasionally I have scattered peanut “splits” near the feeders to placate the squirrels. Interestingly a number of birds including the brown thrashers, blue jays and mourning doves seem to enjoy the “splits” as much as the seed.

Visitors have been frequent, especially after the cooler weather arrived. A small but enthusiastic group has appeared on the third Saturday of each month for the bird and nature walk now led by CHAS member Elisa Enders. Although a September rain deterred some, in October the group was rewarded with a host of migrating warblers. Our pair of Cooper's hawks are still in

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Woody Woodard's Operations Report, continued.

residence, one who enjoys frequent bathing in the pond behind the “little house”.

On September 7, ODU associate professor Lisa Horth brought 20 of her senior and graduate students to observe and take samples of various plants as part of a class project to develop an herbarium at the University. Part of the exhibit will include both native and non-native plants found within the Sanctuary.



On Sunday, October 16, the Sanctuary celebrated the season with the second annual autumn Open House. It was an ideal autumn day—cool, breezy with lots of sunshine. Even with more widely publicized weekend festivals we attracted a goodly number—between 45 and 50 persons, mainly parents with children who were eager to experience Nancy Milner's treasure hunt. Prizes for those who completed the hunt together with a table filled with food and drink made for a fun-filled afternoon and the conclusion to the autumn season.



Master Gardeners Report

Each time the new Master Gardeners began to work in the Weyanoke Sanctuary, there were exclamations and comments about: finding new plants never seen before, sighting colorful array of flowers, leaves, and mushrooms, removing (ongoing) the invasive plants, talking about the principles of native plants, and experiencing a great sense of peace and quiet that is pervasive in the Sanctuary. With their helping hands and positive attitude, much has been accomplished throughout the newly established areas as well as the woodland garden, the meadow, and especially around the platform. These new - found friends are: Marty Basden, Connie Brown, Karen Cowen, Charles Mahone, Bo Saks, Eric Sherwood, and Donna VanKeuren.

The Weyanoke Sanctuary welcomes these new Master Gardener Volunteers who view the woodland scenery with wonder and curiosity. When first introduced to this project, they asked how can this bit of natural world be found in the busy city of Norfolk? With much enthusiasm they dug right in, getting their hands dirty, but they also were learning more about native plants. What have they accomplished?

1. Completely renewing the platform area by rebuilding the shoreline with salt-water tolerant plants. (This was an eye-sore.)
2. Cutting down at least 25 ligustrum trees and replanting young trees, wildflowers and woody native shrubs in the exposed and barren areas.
3. Transplanting ferns, woody phlox, greek valerian, obedient plant, tree seedlings, coreopsis and other perennials into areas from which the ivy has been removed.
4. Contributing to the over-all beauty and preservation of the sanctuary by weeding, pruning, and planting new perennials, hence making a commitment to the philosophy of the Weyanoke Sanctuary.

The money from the National Audubon Grant has been used to improve the Sanctuary in two major areas: the renovation of the platform area and increasing the diversity of plants in the meadow and the woodland gardens. Some of the new plants that the grant provided are: wild ginger, downy sunflowers, golden ragwort, meadow beauty, toad shade trillium, and foam flowers. Next year the Master Gardeners will continue to expand the working areas. By using native plants we all enter into a wonderful way of looking at a landscape in an urban environment – one that is not rigid – but one that is more natural, but best of all, one that works. **Report by Master Gardener Debora Mosher**

Weyanoke Sanctuary's Trees

Some of you may have noticed the Identification Tags put alongside of a number of the trees in the Sanctuary. Our thanks go to Byron Carmean, who spent a morning with Woody and me pointing out and identifying our beautiful trees. Byron is well know in the tree world and has travelled widely in Virginia along with Gary Williamson measuring trees and finding Champion Trees.

Of interest - we have a Champion Tree in our Sanctuary: a ligustrum! (editor's note: in this photo, visitor David Taylor measures our champion.)

Our thanks too to Alice Magee, who made the markers.

Report by Susan Hubbard





WANDERING THE PATHWAYS OF WEYANOKE

by Mike Schoen

It's happening again! The lush green mantle of summer is slowly being replaced, and the pathways are turning red, yellow, orange, and brown. Virginia Creepers are weaving a carpet of red and yellow on the forest floors. Leaves are falling, allowing the sunlight to filter down through the trees in sharper rays, causing light to reflect off of everything. And the birds are migrating!

The changes to the pathways this year have been heightened by Hurricane Irene and all the other water we've gotten, surely the wettest year in a long time. Irene wasn't too mean to us. However, she did take one of our biggest trees, the "raccoon hang out" on the south side of the sanctuary, where the raccoons liked to nap high on the branches - all in preparation for a wild night out no doubt. Our tree will be missed.

This tree fell away from the paths, fortunately, and so was no problem. Other large branches came down on the paths, very large and very dangerous branches. They appeared to be down, but instead were merely hanging, with only dead, rotten pieces as support. Anyone trying to claw their way through this mess could well bring it all down on top of them. Luckily our intrepid chain saw crew reacted quickly, and the path was cleared in no time. Please be careful when walking these pathways after storms. Give us a chance to clear the dangerous fallen branches, and/or trees.

All of Irene's redecorating wasn't so bad though. She added a newer, thicker layer of carpeting to our pathways of pine needles, leaves, and branches that she shook loose; and the water brought out all sorts of dormant life. The very reclusive Indian Pipe was

out in profusion; after many sparse years great clusters of them scattered everywhere.



The spiders loved all the insects brought out by the moisture. The results of their annual competition for coolest web was really hard to judge this year. The "writing spiders" had the edge with all their intricate designs. To build their webs across the paths in such a way to keep them from being disturbed, that's genius. They always leave one lower corner that small animals, and birds, and you, if you stoop, can get through without destroying the web. Do they teach that in Spider College?



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The mushrooms liked the wetness most of all. Never have there been more, and more varied, mushrooms along the pathways. We had fungus among us for sure. You could see anything from pin head size clusters, to elk horn coral style, to six-inch across fungi, to delicate flower-like singles, and so many clusters popping up that you expected to see Smurfs running around somewhere.

The box turtles seemed to be enjoying them and could often be seen munching away on the mushrooms. In fact, they could be seen doing other things too, assuring us there would be little turtles to see next year.

All this moisture seems to have helped in other ways too. Our plants, newly planted and older ones, are growing more and more, and feeding more and more birds. The migration season this year brought an astonishing number and variety of birds through the Sanctuary. Walking the pathways in the mornings, in the quiet (except for all the chirping) with the early morning light filtering through the trees, could show you more birds, up close, than you could imagine. We even had a flock of Great Blue Herons, resting up and dining. There were a dozen or more of them, perched in the trees, flying up and down the creek. What a great sight! Then there was a pair of Vultures on their way to another destination, lounging in the pines.



It's always an exhilarating experience wandering the pathways of Weyanoke, always pleasant, and always surprising.

We have requests from time to time for permission to have events in the Sanctuary such as weddings and birthday parties. Also, visitors sometimes wish to bring their pets, dogs **and** cats, into the Sanctuary to enjoy a good walk. We have to say **no**, as we are bound by the Deed between the Audubon Society, our sponsor, and the Nature Conservancy, conveyor of the land.

Here is the specific language spelled out in the deed: Use of the Sanctuary is **subject to the express condition that the premises...shall forever be held as a nature preserve, for scientific, educational, and aesthetic purposes and shall be kept... in their natural state, without any disturbance whatever of habitat or plant or animal populations, excepting only the undertaking of scientific research and the maintenance of fences and foot trails....**

The Deed further specifies that if we do not comply with these rules, the Conservancy can **terminate our right of entry** onto the premises. We don't want that to happen! Thank you for helping us honor the requirements of our Deed.

Weyanoke Recognizes Elisa Enders, New Nature Walk Leader

Eliza was raised on a farm in Halifax County, North Carolina. Her father was a birder, so from an early age she began an appreciation of the mysteries of the avian world. After completing her university training at North Carolina State in Raleigh with a degree in engineering, she moved to Tidewater Virginia in 2000 where she has been employed in her profession at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth. She soon became a member of the Cape Henry Audubon Society, and this year she has

assumed the position of Treasurer of CHAS and also has agreed to lead Weyanoke bird and nature walks for the coming year. Welcome, Elisa, and thanks for your enthusiasm and dedication.



Report - Weyanoke Sanctuary, Oct 15, 2011, by Elisa Enders

It was a nice day for a visit to Weyanoke. It started off as a quiet morning, but by the creek, there was a lot of activity in a few of the hackberry trees. Most of the warblers were by the creek, and I was surprised to see as many warbler species as we did. Pine Warblers were probably around too, but we never found one. Many new plants have been added to the property (azaleas and viburnums mostly), and the Indian Pipes can be found in the woods. While leaving the sanctuary, I thought I heard a Winter Wren, but it called only once, so I am not certain. Here is list of birds seen:

Cooper's Hawk 1
Downy Woodpecker 3
Northern Flicker 1
Blue Jay 6
American Crow 4
Fish Crow 1
swallow sp. 2
Carolina Chickadee 3
Tufted Titmouse 2
Brown Creeper 1 (heard only)
Carolina Wren 1
American Robin 14
Gray Catbird 3
Northern Mockingbird 2
Brown Thrasher 3
European Starling 3
American Redstart 1
Northern Parula 3
Bay-breasted Warbler 1
Bay-breasted/Blackpoll Warbler 2
Black-throated Blue Warbler 2
Yellow-rumped Warbler 16
Black-throated Green Warbler 1
Eastern Towhee 2
Northern Cardinal 4

Weyanoke Mission Statement

The mission of the Weyanoke Wildlife Sanctuary is to protect the forest, meadows, marshlands and creek and to preserve the native plants within its boundaries — thereby creating an environment where wildlife will flourish and people can experience and be nourished by the natural world. Our stewardship is conducted in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy, the Cape Henry Audubon Society, the local Master Gardeners, other organizations and community volunteers.

Hours for touring the Sanctuary: the gate is open on Saturdays, Sundays, and major holidays, from 9 am to dusk. Pick up a brochure with a map of the paths as you enter. You may arrange group tours at other times by phoning Mike Schoen (757) 390-4099. Weyanoke Sanctuary is in West Ghent, Norfolk, at the terminus of Armistead Bridge Road.

A note from your editor: to conserve precious funds, we are printing this issue of **Pathways** in black and white but the online version remains in full color. We urge you to subscribe to the email version, which is free for you and for us. Contact your editor: NancyMilner@cox.net.

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