

Volume 12

Issue 2

Winter 2008

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

A Publication of Bull Run Mountains Conservancy, Inc.

Silver Lake Resolution

By Michael Kieffer

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy (BRMC) is so proud of the Herculean efforts of our members and friends to attempt to establish a 500 acre Silver Lake Natural Recreation Area (SLNRA). First, thanks to their efforts, and those of Sean Connaughton (the Chairman of the BOCS at the time), the developer of Dominion Valley was persuaded to proffer the entire 317 acre Silver Lake parcel to the county—leaving 231 acres for parks, open space and recreation. The original Dominion Valley proffer that was supported by the Planning Commission would have allowed 12 lake front homes to be built and would have all but cut off all public access to the lake. Second, their efforts aided the fight to hold the developer's feet to the fire and complete the environmental remediation of the old quarry site on the property, prior to its conveyance to the County. Without their support, the County would have had to foot that bill. Third, their efforts encouraged our land donor so much that the 268 acres we hoped would be part of SLNRA has been permanently preserved in an open space easement for a one family farm. No suburban homes will be built on that environmentally sensitive land. Fourth, and most important, their past, current, and future vigilance will guarantee that Silver Lake will only be used for passive recreational uses. The complete list of these passive recreation uses can be viewed at BRMC's Web site, www.brmconservancy.org.

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy has worked diligently for over 8 years to create a 500 acre Silver Lake Natural Recreation Area. We recently worked with the County Executive and the Prince William County Park Authority

(PWCPA) staff on a compromise proposal. After shaking hands on the proposal in principle, the PWCPA staff changed course on August 4, 2008. BRMC continued to seek a compromise proposal in late August. On September 17, 2008 PWCPA Board voted to adopt a resolution, which was strongly recommended by its Executive Director, that rejected all compromise proposals and required all 231 acres to be owned by the Park Authority.

Four members of the Board of County Supervisors have been very supportive of BRMC's efforts, but four remain solidly against creating the 500 acre Silver Lake Natural Recreation Area. This leaves the ownership and operation of Silver Lake in a permanent deadlock position. Michael Kieffer, Executive Director of BRMC, said that "Mr. Covington and Mr. Stewart have stated in meetings that they would not support any proposal if Mr. Stirrup did not support it." Mr. Stirrup has remained steadfast against creating a public-private partnership to own and operate a 500 acre Silver Lake Natural Recreation Area.

BRMC only wished to create a 500 acre Silver Lake Natural Recreation Area for the public, for you the citizen to enjoy. We never intended to delay the opening of Silver Lake to the public. At this point, our continued involvement seems to only delay opening the property to the public. Therefore, we regrettably formally remove our offer/proposal. We and our members, eagerly await the Park Authority opening of a 231 acre Silver Lake passive recreation park next spring.

Michael

NEW! Youth Outdoors Scholarship Program

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy and REI partner to offer Youth Outdoors Scholarship Program

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) has partnered with Bull Run Mountains Conservancy (BRMC) to offer twenty-five Youth Outdoor Scholarships for programs at BRMC. This partnership allows for over 425 hours of environmental education and natural recreation for children. The Youth Outdoors Scholarship Program encourages children to spend time in the field, learning about and enjoying nature. Each scholarship participant will receive waived fees for the BRMC program, an REI Nalgene bottle and an REI weatherproof journal.

REI and BRMC are offering the following Youth Outdoors Scholarships:

- **FOUR** awards for Winter Nature Camp: December 22-23, 2008
- **FIVE** awards for Nature Days: February 16, 2009
- **SIX** awards for Herpetology Camp: June 25-26 and June 29-30, 2009
- **FOUR** awards for Pre-School Nature Camp: July 13-17, 2009
- **SIX** awards for Summer Nature Camp: July 27-31 and August 3-7, 2009
(by demand August 10-14, 2009)



TO APPLY:

Fill out a brief application (found at www.brmconservancy.org) and one of the following depending on the camp your child desires to attend.

Winter Nature Camp, Nature Days, Herpetology Camp, and Summer Nature Camp are intended for ages 7-12. For these camps, children must submit an essay that addresses the following: 1) Why I love nature 2) Two things that I want to learn more about in nature 3) One thing that I can do to help nature. Both typed and hand-written essays will be accepted. Please no more than 500 words. We are now accepting essays for all camp offerings. Awards will be announced at least two weeks in advance of the program start date.

or

Pre-School Nature Camp is intended for ages 4-6. For this camp, children must submit a drawing of their favorite plant or animal in nature. The drawing must be submitted 30 days before the program start date. Awards will be announced at least two weeks in advance of the program start date.

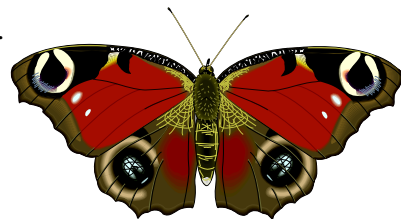
Please include in each application: name of child, age, address, phone number, and desired program.

BRMC will accept, process and award all scholarships.

Please contact BRMC at 703-753-2631 if you have any questions.

Mail all scholarship applications to:

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy
P.O. Box 210
Broad Run, Virginia 20137



Bull Run Mountains Conservancy Public Programs 2008/2009

HIKE WITH A NATURALIST

**1st Wednesday of Every Month
9a.m.—noon**

Our first Wednesday of the month hike (except January), for those members and nonmembers that don't like to hike alone. Come and discover some of the flora and fauna of the Bull Run Mountains.

This program is free; all are welcome.

TEA OF THE MONTH CLUB

**2nd Wednesday of Every Month
2p.m.—4 p.m.**

Each second Wednesday we enjoy a woodland tea party with freshly brewed herbal tea and light fare. We take a short hike in which we learn about a new variety of local flora and its medicinal values. We will then brew and drink tea made from the plants we collect.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$10/non: \$15

HOLIDAY VOLUNTEER PARTY

December 16th—Tuesday 7p.m.

BRMC invites all our volunteers to a Mountain House Holiday party to show our appreciation for all of your efforts. We will provide beverages including beer and wine. Please bring a potluck dish to share. Please RSVP to mk@brmconservancy.org, so we can be sure to have enough beverages.

WINTER NATURE CAMP

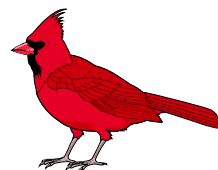
December 22-23

Monday and Tuesday, 9a.m.—4 p.m.

Join BRMC for a winter adventure and learn more about the winter woods. Birds are more easily seen in leafless trees and sounds are magnified in the winter stillness. Dress for the weather—snow makes these camps all the more fun. This program is intended for children ages 7-12.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$100/non: \$125



NEW YEAR'S DAY HIKE

January 1st—Thursday 9 a.m.

BRMC invites you to join us for our annual New Year's Day hike. We will meet at 9 a.m. at the Mountain House. This event substitutes for our "Hike with a Naturalist" in January.

This program is free; all are welcome.

BUILD YOUR OWN WORM BIN COMPOSTER

January 24th—Saturday

9:30a.m.—noon

Come learn everything you ever wanted to know about worms! Observe a working worm bin and discuss how these creatures create compost that can be used around your yard and garden. Construct your very own worm bin to take home with you! Start harvesting compost from your worm bin in several months, just in time for your summer garden. Building materials and worms will be supplied.

Pre-registration is required.

Members: \$75/ non: \$90

DYKE MARSH BIRD WATCHING FIELD TRIP

February 7th—Saturday 8a.m.—noon

Join a BRMC naturalist on a bird watching field trip along the Potomac River at Dyke Marsh in Alexandria, Virginia. Covering 380 acres, Dyke Marsh represents the largest remaining piece of freshwater tidal wetlands in the Washington Metropolitan area. Nearly 300 species of birds have been observed at the marsh. Meet at the Mountain House at 8a.m. to carpool to Dyke Marsh. At 9a.m. our bird walk will begin at the Haul Road, led by a Friends of Dyke Marsh volunteer. The walk is approximately 1.5 miles.

Pre-registration is required.

Suggested Donation: \$30

(Your donation will be split between Friends of Dyke Marsh and BRMC. For more information about Friends of Dyke Marsh, please visit www.fodm.org)

NATURE DAY

**February 16th—Monday
9 a.m.—4 p.m.**

Looking for a fun-filled educational experience on President’s Day? Then join BRMC for a nature-filled day of activities. We will spend the day exploring and investigating our preserve for the first signs of spring. Ages 7-12. Space is limited.

Pre-registration is required.

Members: \$50/ non: \$75

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT

February 10th—Tuesday 6:30 p.m.

Be part of our annual fundraising event at Grace Episcopal Church in The Plains. Join us for drinks, hors d’oeuvres, and lively conversation as we celebrate another progressive year as stewards of the Bull Run Mountains. Please contact us at 703-753-2631 or mk@brmconservancy.org for more details. Cost: \$50/person

WOODCOCK WALK and LECTURE

February 28th—Saturday 6—9p.m.

Join BRMC and Environmental Studies at Airlie for an evening lecture and walk to enjoy the American woodcocks’ spring territorial and courtship flights. We will meet at the Mountain House at 6p.m. and then drive to Clifton Farm to watch American woodcocks

perform flight displays that would amaze any world traveling birder.

Pre-registration is required.

Members: \$10/ non: \$15

AMPHIBIANS OF SPRING

March 4th—Wednesday

7 p.m.—9 p.m.

Last year we found hundreds of spring peepers, upland chorus frogs, wood frogs, and spotted salamanders along with lots of egg masses. Grab your red lights and boots. Let’s see what we can find this year!

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$10/non: \$15

OLD HOME SITES

April 4th—Saturday 8:30–11 a.m.

BRMC is thrilled to continue our exploration of old home sites with an extra treat. Go beyond the trails as we explore cemeteries, foundations, and clearings that mark past residences. Then sit back and enjoy a hot breakfast in the woods as Marcia Markey, a local historian, performs a historical re-enactment based on diaries, letters, and other primary sources. Space is limited and spots fill early.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$25/non: \$30

To register for a program, fill out the form below and mail with your payment to:
Bull Run Mountains Conservancy, P.O. Box 210, Broad Run, VA 20137
For more information, call us at (703) 753-2631 or visit our web site at
www.brmconservancy.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City/ZIP _____

Home phone _____

Work phone _____

E-mail _____

Are you a BRMC member? _____

No. of people registering _____

Fee _____

Amount enclosed _____

Name of child if registering for youth camp _____

Tea of the Month Club
Specify Month _____
Members \$10/non \$15

Winter Nature Camp
Members \$100/non \$125

Nature Day
Members \$50/non \$75

Annual Fundraising Event
\$50

Amphibians of Spring
Members \$10/non \$15

Woodcock Walk
Members \$10/non \$15

Old Home Sites
Members \$25/non \$30

Worm Bin Composter
Members \$75/non \$90

Dyke Marsh Bird
Watching Field Trip
Suggested Donation: \$30



Trail Talk

By Jennifer Helwig

Well, I survived my first Halloween Safari! Besides being such a fun and educational event, I was amazed by the caliber of our volunteers. Their hard work and dedication is what makes this event successful, and I am very proud to be apart of an organization that promotes this kind of volunteerism and stewardship. BRMC thanks everyone that contributed to Halloween Safari!

See you on the trails!



2008 Halloween Safari Cast: Bobcats played by Bess and Hannah Taylor; Bears played by Edith, Jeff, and Corinne Kleinman; Black Widow Spider played by Jennifer Helwig; and Bobwhite Quail played by Tyler Crossen

SHOOTING THE BREEZE is going electronic!

Help us to save money, time and trees by opting to receive the BRMC newsletter via e-mail instead of a paper mailing. To start receiving your newsletter electronically, send us an email at mk@brmconservancy.org.

If you would like to continue to receive your newsletter in the regular mail, don't worry, there is nothing you have to do! We are happy to continue to provide your newsletter to you via postal mail.

Make sure that you are on BRMC's email list! We send out news, announcements, and upcoming program information to all our members. To join this list, email mk@brmconservancy.org.