

## Fall Colors

by Michael Kieffer

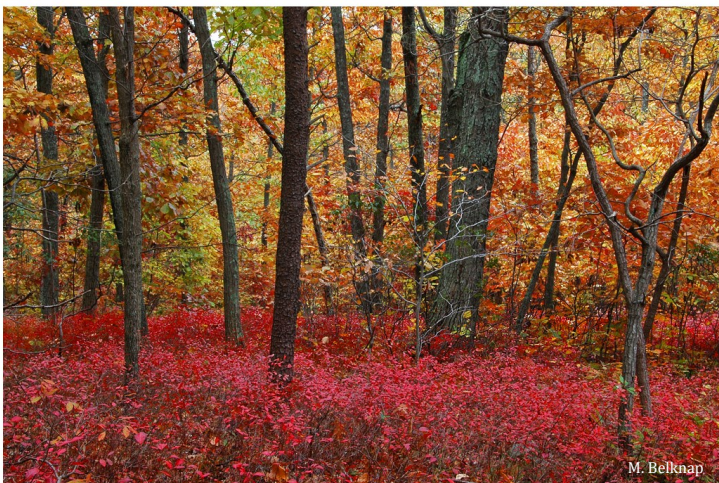
Autumn is a time when every hill, mountain, lake, and stream is basked in brilliant hues. One of the most pleasing aspects of this spectacle is the individuality of each tree. During the growing season, trees melt together, but for this brief window of time you can reflect separately on the leaves, branches, and trunks of each specimen. You may sympathize with their struggle to survive and share the glory of their individual accomplishments. Observe closely every year, and you could follow a tree's progress. Each tree has its own story to tell and it's in color.

The color explosion will soon begin. Dogwoods (*Cornus florida*), dwarf sumacs (*Rhus copallina*), black gums (*Nyssa sylvatica*), and Virginia creepers (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) will display brilliant reds and purples. Poison ivy (*Rhus radicans*), tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), American elms (*Ulmus americana*), and birches (*Betula spp.*) will add a fantastic lemony yellow. Red maples (*Acer rubum*), silver maples (*Acer saccharinum*), and sugar maples (*Acer saccharum*) will flash light gold with brilliant orange, pink, and red blush as hickories (*Carya spp.*) turn a golden tan.



As day length shortens and temperatures drop, broad-leaved trees reabsorb many essential minerals from their leaves and chlorophyll production stops. Chlorophyll is broken down and the accessory pigments, carotene and xanthophylls (oranges and yellows) in the chloroplasts become pronounced. At the same time a layer of cork cells cuts the leaf off from the stem. Photosynthetic products (sugars) are still being produced with accessory pigments, however, now there is nowhere for the products to go and they remain stuck in the leaves. Trapped sugars are chemically converted in the leaf to anthocyanins, which are the red and purple pigments we adore so much.

The intensity of color is determined to a large degree by the amount of sugar in the leaf. This is where weather becomes a major contributor. A good growing season that ends in a succession of mild days and cool, but not freezing nights, in early fall, creates the best color. Mild days prod the leaf into making sugar, while cool nights retard its withdrawal into the stem. Sugar trapped is turned into a myriad of colors highlighting each tree from the rest. Although, perhaps there is still a little magic involved.



Join BRMC this autumn as we focus on Fall birds, Blooms & Insects, Fall Ecology, Old Home Sites, & Winter Survival. We are excited for our 22nd Annual Halloween Safari, a guided night hike through the woods where you meet native "wildlife" that perform natural history skits. We hope you enjoy the season and, whatever happens, make sure you do not let the splendor pass you by.

# An Introduction Is in Order

by Dave Hutcheson

*SHOOTING THE  
BREEZE  
is a publication of  
Bull Run Mountains  
Conservancy, Inc.*

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Hello, my name is Dave Hutcheson, and I am the newest member of the BRMC family. I came on board in mid-June, taking on the role(s) of caretaker (for the Mountain House), communications manager, and volunteer coordinator. Not sure how those things could be any more diverse. And not only are they diverse, but this is a part-time gig. No pressure. The reality is this job is very doable, and more than that – it's fun!

Since the job is part property manager, part marketing guru, and part recruiter, you might be saying to yourself, "How on earth did they find someone with such an eclectic background? This person must be amazing!" Well, as much as I'd like to believe I am that amazing, the reality is I know very little about property management (aside from a certain level of competency in operating a lawnmower) and less about volunteer coordination. But I do know a thing or two about marketing and communications – it's where I've spent my entire career.

The main responsibility of the communications role is, as you might expect, handling and growing the Conservancy's social media program. To me, this is where the job will be the most fun. I've reached that point in my career where most days are spent on things like planning, strategy, budgeting, and of course, death-by-Zoom. In other words, I never have the chance to get my hands dirty anymore. Here at BRMC, I'll get to do that – a lot – figuratively and literally. I'm looking forward to that aspect of it.

The caretaker role is really part office cleaner and part landscaper. At least I'll be able to use my lawnmower competence.

The volunteer coordinator piece is an opportunity to meet you – our members and volunteers – in person. One thing I do know about volunteers is that in most places – especially small nonprofits like BRMC – they are the lifeblood of the organization. It is no exception here. Without the volunteers and members that help with BRMC's various projects and events, chances are we wouldn't even exist. So even though I don't know you yet, let me take this opportunity to thank you for all you do.

I have little expertise in natural ecosystems or geology – although I have a great teacher in Michael! However, one thing I know is I love the land. Any land. All land. There are two reasons for that.

First, we're running out of it. It pains me to the core every time I see another housing development, strip mall, gas station or self-storage facility (how many of those do we need, by the way?) going up. Just take a ride through Haymarket toward the Conservancy and you'll see what I mean. The biggest draw of this position to me: the opportunity to have a hand, however small that may be, in protecting the ever-diminishing amount of land we have left.

The second reason I have a love for the land is that I spend quite a bit of time outdoors running, something I've been doing for more than 30 years. But truthfully, running is no longer something I *do*, it's part of who I *am*. It's something I do for sanity and a bit of soul searching. But I rarely get those benefits from running in the concrete jungle; I have to be away from it all.

One of my favorite spaces to run is Leopold's Preserve in Haymarket. I was a resident of the Villages of Piedmont (VOP), which surrounds the preserve, for nine years. Over the years I watched Leopold's grow from just a few small paths to the nearly seven miles of beautifully maintained trails it is today. I never knew anything about how important Leopold's Preserve was to our natural systems until I started reading the interpretive signs and listening to Michael. BRMC has a close relationship with the White House Farm Foundation, who owns and manages Leopold's Preserve. We hold many camps, volunteer projects and events there – including the upcoming Halloween Safari.

Do you know what a deer enclosure is? I didn't. Take a walk to Leopold's Preserve to see how a study plot is erected to keep deer out. Yes, keep deer *out*. Very impressive.

Let me change the subject from *me* to *you*. As I mentioned earlier, you – our members and volunteers, and let's add to that all the wonderful children and adults who take part in our various camps and events – are the reason we exist. So regardless of what skills and abilities I do or don't have, my *real* job is to serve you. And the truth is I can't do this job alone, I – *we* – need your help. Whether you donate, volunteer, or take part in an event like the Halloween Safari, the best thing you can do to help is to get involved.

Now that I've introduced *myself*, please introduce *yourself*. I'd love to hear from you! Give me feedback. Tell me your BRMC story. Drop a quick hello. It doesn't matter, every time I interact with the people we serve it's an opportunity for me to learn. And I have a lot to learn. You can reach me at [dave@brmconservancy.org](mailto:dave@brmconservancy.org).

See you on the trails.



# BRMC Public Programs

## Fall 2021



### HIKE WITH A NATURALIST

Thursday, October 7, 10 am (& every first Thursday of the month)

Join a professional naturalist to discover some of the flora and fauna of the local region. This program is free, meets at Leopold's Preserve (16290 Thoroughfare Road, Broad Run, VA 20137) and all are welcome. Please pre-register.

## BRMC'S 22ND HALLOWEEN SAFARI!

October 22 & 23

7:00p.m.—8:00p.m.

BRMC wants to take you on a night-time hike on Leopold's Preserve! Join us for live music and a fun filled nighttime adventure with all new animals!

Bring a flashlight & wear walking shoes.



Reservations \$10 in advance only

Pre-registration at [www.brmconservancy.org](http://www.brmconservancy.org)

### YOUTH OUTDOORS NATURALIST PROGRAM:

#### WINTER NATURALIST CAMP

December 21st & 22nd, 10a.m.—3p.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 the day all the more fun.

Ages 7-12.

Pre-registration required.

Members: \$100/non: \$150

### LEOPOLD'S PRESERVE

#### Monthly Naturalist Walks

BRMC is proud to partner with **The White House Farm Foundation** and its mission to enrich individuals with knowledge of and involvement with our natural ecological systems for monthly naturalist walks on Leopold's Preserve: 16290 Thoroughfare Road, Broad Run, VA 20137.

#### Fall Schedule

Sunday, Sept. 19th, 10 a.m.-noon—Fall Birds, Blooms & Insects

Sunday, October 17, 10 a.m.-noon—Fall Ecology

Sunday, November 21st, 10 a.m.-noon—Old Home Sites

Saturday, December 11th, 10 a.m.-noon—Winter Survival



WHITE HOUSE  
FARM FOUNDATION

WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PLEIN FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST

### HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS

All programs are 10am-12pm. \$5 per/participant, including adults. BRMC invites you and your child to spend an adventurous outing interacting with and learning about nature! We meet at Leopold's Preserve, 16290 Thoroughfare Road, Broad Run, VA 20137.

#### Late Summer Discovery Hike

**September 16th, 2021, Thursday—10am-12pm** Join us as we enjoy the last days of summer on the mountains, focusing on late-blooming wildflowers and summer insects.

#### Fall Ecology

**October 14th, 2021, Thursday—10am-12pm** We will be focusing on the life cycles of trees and fall color.

#### Old Homes & Succession

**November 18th, 2021, Thursday—10am-12pm** Explore the old homes at historic Thoroughfare and how the current landscape tells the story of past land use.

#### Winter Survival

**December 16th, 2021, Thursday—10am-12pm** We will focus on mammals preparing for winter.



# **BRMC's 22nd HALLOWEEN SAFARI**

**Bull Run Mountains Conservancy**

## **October 22 & 23**

**7:00—8:00pm**

**\$10 in advance only**

***Groups 15+/\$8 per person***

**Pre-register online or by mail.  
all ages!**

**User friendly trail @ Leopold's Preserve!**

Join BRMC for a non-scary night hike on  
Leopold's Preserve (16290 Thoroughfare Rd.,  
Broad Run, VA 20137).

A guide will lead you along the trail where you  
meet native "wildlife" that perform natural history  
skits. There is a new cast of animals each year,  
so don't miss it!

Join us for a night-time adventure, and live music  
by a bonfire!

**Contact us at:**

**(703) 753-2631**

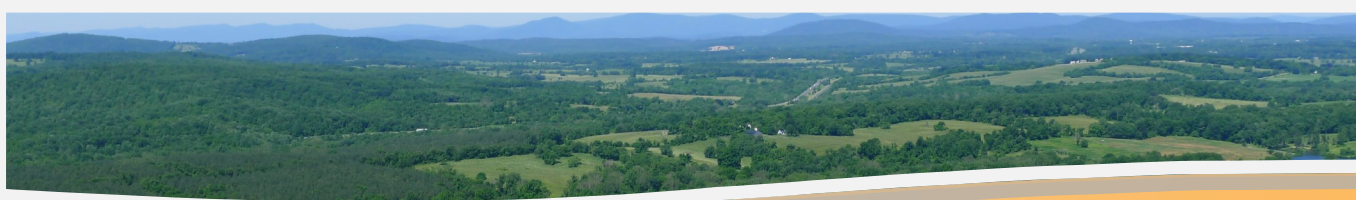
**[info@brmconservancy.org](mailto:info@brmconservancy.org)**

**[www.brmconservancy.org](http://www.brmconservancy.org)**

**P.O. Box 210, Broad Run, VA 20137**



## *Youth Outdoors Summer Programs 2021!*

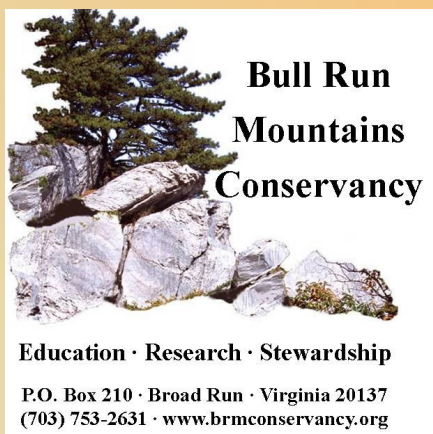


**Let's Get Social!**



Like, follow us, and share with your friends the latest information on our education programs, as well as partner updates and donor opportunities.





Yes, I would like to become a member of Bull Run Mountains Conservancy.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

- |                                                       |                                              |                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student                 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Senior         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family                  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Group          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustainer    |
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Please make your tax-deductible contribution to:

**Bull Run Mountains Conservancy, Inc., P.O. Box 210, Broad Run, VA 20137**

**Bull Run Mountains Conservancy is a donor driven organization.**

Become a donor today and support our programs and protect the mountains and region. Your contribution provides BRMC necessary funds to operate and shows our foundation and corporate supporters that the public values and appreciates this resource.

**Membership Benefits:**

- Support environmental and historical programs for all ages
- Support research in the Bull Run Mountains Region
- Discounts on all public programs and camps
- Quarterly newsletter including our program calendar