

# Report from the Conservation Committee

May 16, 2008

## VHS Business Meeting

1. The Conservation Committee current includes the following members: Tim Christensen, Sarah Orlofske and Todd Fredericksen. Various information has been placed on the webpage including the document "Homeowner's Guide to Protecting Frogs – Lawn and Garden Care" published by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

2. The Conservation Committee presents the following tasks and statuses:

a. "Conservation of Reptiles and Amphibians in Virginia" presentation (originally Task #3).

(1) The final draft of the initial version has been completed. Feedback was received from VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF). This presentation was given to two Master Naturalist Chapters (Historic Rivers on February 7, 2008 and Tidewater on March 20, 2008) as a preview to solicit initial input. Both Chapters concur that it would be useful and that members would be interested in participating. Additionally, it was presented to 2 members of the Loudon County Amphibian Monitoring Program (LAMP) on March 29, 2008. Reception by LAMP participants was equally positive. The Committee recommends the final draft be presented to the membership during the Fall 2008 meeting or be placed on the website for the membership to review.

(2) Initially targeted audiences for this version include Master Naturalist Chapters and school teachers. Other possible forums include Cooperative Extensions, Reptile Weekend @ VLM, VDGIF' Outdoor Education Program, corporate landowners, homeowner associations and neighborhoods. Specially tailored programs could be developed for students, 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

(3) This is intended to be a managed program. It could include use of copywrite materials, designation of instructors with a "Train the Trainer" program, preparation of Trainer information packets, documenting

the presentation (audience, date, location), reporting feedback, evaluating opportunities for expansion, develop information packets and periodically reviewing & updating the presentation & other materials. Much of this work is still under development.

b. Promoting and Participating in the WildlifeMapping Program (originally Task #4). Including data on herpetofauna would help biological databases. A link to the VDGIF's WildlifeMapping Program was included on the VHS website. WildlifeMapping Workshop was given by Tim Christensen to VHS members, Master Naturalists and LAMP participants at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve in Leesburg on March 29, 2008. Discussions with VDGIF Watchable Wildlife Section staff began for consideration of a WildlifeMapping Workshop made available for interested members during the Fall 2008 Meeting.

c. Partnering with other non-profit natural resources-focused groups (originally Task # 5). The Committee proposed partnering with other non-profit natural resources-focused groups. Initial coordination was made by the Committee with the Virginia Chapter of The Wildlife Society (VTWS). An exchange of website links between VHS and VTWS was completed. The VTWS at one time was planning a "Virginia Fish and Wildlife Summit" conference in 2009 with the primary goal to centralize fish and wildlife professionals in Virginia in order to improve coordination, information sharing and professional development. This could be a good opportunity to develop conservation efforts. They indicated they would welcome VHS' participation in the conference. No other details have been provided, but Tim is serving as a VHS point of contact as plans progress. No new information is available at this time.

d. Threats to Herpetofauna Poster (originally Task # 6). The Committee proposed designing charts/posters that illustrate threats to herpetofauna. The suggestion is to have separate materials for anurans or amphibians as one group and one for turtles & snakes or reptiles as another group. This could potentially be made available for sale through the VHS Store, provided to schools, etc. Proceeds could go towards specific conservation-related projects. No further action has taken place since its proposal.

e. Federal Duck Stamp Promotion. Thanks to a great idea by Joy Ware, VHS is promoting the purchase of Federal Duck Stamps. Joy displayed a Duck Stamp poster (borrowed from the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge) during Reptile Weekend at the Virginia Living Museum in February. She recommended more effort by VHS in promoting Duck Stamp purchases to help support the Refuge System. Ninety eight cents of every dollar generated by the sale of Federal Duck Stamps goes toward purchase or lease of wetlands within the National Wildlife Refuge System. This supports efforts towards habitat for herpetofauna. Information about Federal Duck Stamps was incorporated into the VHS website.

f. Loudoun County Amphibian Monitoring Program (LAMP). Tim met with LAMP participants in March 29, 2008. LAMP is a community effort to monitor amphibians in that county. LAMP may serve as a template/standard by which other counties/municipalities could create similar programs. It is recommended that LAMP representatives provide a presentation about their program at the Fall 2008 meeting. Conservation Committee members are looking more into this program.

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