SATURDAY MORNING FIELD TRIPS

All-Day Hike to Top of Mount Rogers
Phil Shelton will lead this popular trip for hardy hikers to the highest peak in Virginia. Along the way, he will discuss the flora and fauna of the mountain. Participants should bring food, water, moleskin and clothes, including rain gear, appropriate for high-altitude weather. This is a TOUGH hike of about 9 miles roundtrip.

Birding by Ear

Alan Boynton will lead this bird identification trip starting around the community center, then stopping at spots along Laurel Valley Road toward Grindstone Campground. Bring your binoculars and field guides.

Wildflowers

Pat Mikesell of Radford University will lead his group on a Grindstone-area wildflower walk. Bring along those field guides and be prepared to see, identify and learn about lots of wonderful and interesting plants! This promises to be another great year for wildflowers and Pat’s trips always fill up fast!

Salamanders

Slippery, slimy, but oh, so beautiful, the many salamanders of our Mount Rogers area are some of nature’s most interesting and beautiful animals! Kevin Named of VHCC will be leading this walk. Kevin is sure to make this trip a memorable experience! Learn what these little guys can tell us about the state of our own environment.

Measuring Community Structure of a Deciduous Forest

John Kell of Radford University will lead his group to Grindstone where you’ll explore methods of surveying a forest to see how many trees there are per acre, what trees are present, what percent ages, etc. and do simple calculations to see what species seem most important.

Wilderness Walk

Dick Moose will lead this day-long, 9-mile round-trip through the Lewis Fork Wilderness, over Pine Mountain to Wilburn Ridge and back. Moderate to difficult. Bring food and water. Prepare for weather changes. Have affairs in order.

Invasive Weeds

Lindsay Majer with Equinox Environmental Consultants will lead a trip to explore the serious threat of invasive weeds to the Appalachian environment and discuss what can be done about such pests as garlic mustard, Russian olive, coltsfoot, multi-flora rose and other non-native plants. Learn how to identify these invasive plants and how to eradicate them. Bring gloves and cutters to actually practice plant control and removal.

Geology of Virginia Creeper

Once upon a time the Appalachians were taller and more rugged than the Rockies. Find out what happened and why we have the green and gently rounded peaks we know and love today with Leslie Bright of the Virginia Division of Mined Land Reclamation.

Disappearing Hemlocks

Steve Lindeman of the Nature Conservancy and Beth Merz of the US Forest Service will take you to visit an old-growth hemlock stand in the national forest and then you’ll take a look under the forest canopy at some shrubs and invasives with an emphasis on ecological processes.

Small Mammals of the NRA

Karen Francl, Ph.D., Radford University, will take you to check pre-set live traps in hopes of examining a sample of the small mammal diversity of this area.

No Child Left Inside

Naturalist Mary Alice Hardin and Carrie Sparks will introduce children to nature’s food webs and habitats through nature games and a close examination of owl pellets! Note: Adults welcome, but MUST be accompanied by a child. (Inquire about rental children.)

SATURDAY AFTERNOON FIELD TRIPS

Whitetop Mountain Hike

Eleanor Grasselli will lead a hike down from the summit of Whitetop Mountain back to the parking lot at Elk Garden, a distance of about 2.5 miles. Expect to see carpets of wildflowers and both see and hear birds in the forest. You’ll be looking for both wildflowers and birds, so bring along your field guides.

Geology of Virginia Creeper

Fred Newcomb of Marion Senior High School and a graduate of the University of Houston will lead this exploration of the cuts along the Creeper. It’s an easy walk considering you’re going back millions of years in time!

Appalachian Woodland Wildflowers

Become acquainted with spring Appalachian wildflowers as Claude Gereever leads an easy stroll that includes both lower and higher elevations. Bring field guides and hand lens. The spring flowers should be at their peak!

Fencerow Flora

Carrie Sparks will lead this easy walk to explore and identify plants in the fencerow and creek area of the community center grounds. Participants will prepare some natural remedies, teas and spring greens.

Stream Quality

Regina Donour, our biology teacher from Kentucky, will take you in the creek to find and identify aquatic insects to determine the water quality of Big Laurel Creek.

Treetop

Joel Keckler heads up the new horticulture program at Virginia Highlands Community College. Join him as he brings the unique insights of a horticulturist to this tree appreciation and identification trip into the Lewis Fork Wilderness. His focus will be on native trees and shrubs that are appropriate for landscape use.

Raising Mussel Babies

Take a tour of Virginia’s Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Center at Buller Fish Hatchery near Marion. Join Nathan Eckert and Joe Ferraro as they show you how they produce stocks of rare and imperiled species of freshwater mussels to be released back into the wild. Car-pool or meet at site. Limit of 20 participants. Please sign up in advance!

Young People in the Forest, Field and Stream

Join Mary Alice Hardin of Nature’s Powers as she introduces children (must bring parent!) to a close look at nature with activities in the forest, field and stream near the community center. Wear creek shoes and bring dry ones!

Flyfishing at Creek Junction on the Creeper Trail

Justin Laughlin, VDGIF, invites you to join the Trout Unlimited group for flyfishing instruction while he identifies all the water bugs for you. A Virginia fishing license, trout stamp and national forest permit are required if you plan to fish.

Spring Walk at Saltville Well Fields

Doug Ogle will lead this nature exploration along the Helen Barrow Interpretive Trail through the well fields in historic Saltville. Leave Konnarock Community Center at 1 PM or meet at the trailhead at 1:30.
THE 35th ANNUAL MOUNT ROGERS NATURALIST RALLY

The 2009 rally will be based out of the Konnarock Community Center. It is located in Konnarock, Virginia, on VA 600 just about 1/2 mile south of the intersection of VA 600 and VA 603.

Thank you for your interest in the 35th annual Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally. We've assembled a wide variety of excellent field trips with leaders who are experts in their field and who are able to make it understandable and interesting for everyone from inquisitive amateurs to accomplished naturalists.

The Mount Rogers area, which includes Virginia's three tallest peaks, has long fascinated scholars and explorers. Not only is there a wide variation in altitude within a short distance (Damascus is 2,000 feet above mean sea level, the summit of Mount Rogers is 5,729), there are many different ecosystems and micro-ecosystems within a short drive or hike of each other. In addition, there are many interesting overlaps between the extreme ranges of “southern” and “northern” species of plants, animals, and folk.

HOW TO TAKE A FIELD TRIP

All field trips leave from the parking lot of the Konnarock Community Center unless otherwise indicated or announced on Friday evening. All times listed are actual departure times. Please allow extra time if you will need to register and to sign up with the field trip leader. (Some leaders take sign-ups on Friday evening and some trips fill quickly.) All trips will go out regardless of weather conditions! Come prepared with good boots or shoes, a sweater or jacket, and a raincoat or poncho.

LODGING

Two USDA Forest Service campgrounds—Grindstone and Bear Tree—are within 10 miles of Konnarock. For information or to reserve a site, call 1-877-444-6777 or go online at www.ReserveUSA.com. There are numerous bed & breakfast inns and rental cabins in the area. www.virginiablueridge.org has information and suggestions. Motels are available in Abingdon, Glade Spring, Chilhowie and Marion, Sugar Grove, Troutdale, Damascus, etc., all have good places to eat.

The 2010 Rally's speaker will be Kevin Hamed, who teaches biology at VHCC. His topic will be “Keeping a Watch on the Salamanders.” Dates of the rally will be announced later.

2009 RALLY COMMITTEE

Sam Hambrick, Carrie Sparks, Bob McKinney, Paul Brown, Beth Merz, Sara Shell, Harry Dean, Louise Tilson, Kevin Hamed, Leslie Bright, Brandy Nichols, Mike Nichols, Mary Alice Hardin

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, May 8
5:00 PM: Registration begins, Konnarock Community Center. Fee is $5 for each person 12 or older. Advance registration using the form on this brochure would be greatly appreciated!

5:30-6:30 PM: Chicken supper prepared and served by the Konnarock Community Club. It is located in Konnarock, Advance Center. Prepaid reservations for supper are absolutely, positively necessary. The cost is $10.00 per plate.

6:45 P.M. — Welcome, introductions of field trip leaders, last-minute announcements.

7:30—Featured speaker, Theresa “Tree” Dellinger, Ph.D. Virginia Tech

Saturday, May 9

7:00 A.M. — Continuing registration. Anyone who has not registered should do so. Registration is on an honor system, but your small fee helps insure the future of our rally.

8:00 A.M. — Morning field trips depart Konnarock Community Center. Please carpool as much as possible!

11:30 Lunch break (Hot dogs for sale.)

1:00 P.M. — Afternoon field trips depart Konnarock Community Center. Please carpool as much as possible!

Writing Roundtable

1:00 PM—Five area writers will lead a workshop to help you put those outdoor experiences into writing. Jim Minick, Dan Stryk, Fred First, Rick VanNoy and Bob McKinney will share ideas that will get you started. Essays, poetry, journaling and even crass commercial writing will be discussed. The guys will share from their published works and have books available.

PAST SPEAKERS

Dr. Steven Hopp, E&H .......................... 2008
Mike Pender, VDGIF .......................... 2007
Dr. Fred Hedbard .............................. 2006
J. Wallace Coffey .............................. 2005
Dr. Phil Shelton ............................... 2004
Dr. Donald Edward Davis, author ......... 2003
Doug Ogles, VHCC ........................... 2002
Chris Bolgiano, author .......................... 2001
Leonard Adkins, author ........................ 2000
Richard L. Hoffman, VA Museum of Natural History .................. 1999

Dr. Dellinger is a research associate on the front lines of the battle against the hemlock woolly adelgid, an almost microscopic insect threatening to destroy hemlock forests. The entomology department at Virginia Tech is part of a large-scale effort to manage the hemlock woolly adelgid in the eastern United States.

She is involved in both biological control research as well as chemical control explorations. Although it might seem strange that she is working in both areas, scientists now realize that the battle against the woolly adelgid is one of life or death for our majestic and ecologically vital hemlocks.

Her work encompasses the complete spectrum of both chemical and biological control activities including foreign exploration, quarantine evaluations, mass production, release and evaluation of approved insect natural enemies.

Solar Collector Demonstration

Jack and Diane Mason will set up various types of solar collectors at the community center and demonstrate them on Friday evening and all day on Saturday.

Dr. Theresa Dellinger of Virginia Tech

This year's Friday night speaker will be Dr. Theresa Dellinger of Virginia Tech.