



THE 500-YEAR FOREST FOUNDATION *Newsletter*

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Your contribution to the 500-Year Forest Foundation is an investment guaranteed to grow. Celebrate aging-natural forests and donate.

New Director — J. James Murray, Jr.



We are delighted that Jim Murray has agreed to serve on our Board of Directors. Jim taught at the University of Virginia for 36 years and became the Chairman of the Department of Biology where he held the Samuel Miller endowed chair. Now a retiree, he is presently Professor of Biology Emeritus. Graduating from Davidson College in 1951 with a degree in Biology, Jim attended Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. For many years he served as the Co-Director of University of Virginia’s Mountain Lake Biological Station.

He is the author of *Genetic Diversity and Natural Selection* and many papers on the evolution and population biology of polymorphic land snails. Jim was a past President of the Virginia Academy of Science. In 2009 he received the James S. Dockery, Jr. Award for En-

vironmental Leadership from the Southern Environmental Law Center. Jim twice served as president of the Virginia Wilderness Committee and has played a leading role in campaigns to secure congressional designation of wilderness areas in Virginia since 1969. The work of this group and other allies have increased permanently protected wilderness in Virginia to more than 216,000 acres.



One of Nature’s Loveliest Sights

This beautiful stream in the Kolb 500-Year Forest is flush with melting snow and rainfall. Hal Kolb says, “There is nothing prettier than a stream running through a forest. It seems to me that one of the great contributions of a mature forest is to store water for slow release and botanical nourishment.” Would that all streams, when emboldened, would flow with such clarity.

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500-Year Forest Reports

Brooks Kenny

Over the last several years Steve Brooks and Maxine Kenny have had a tough time finding help to tend to invasive control in their Clinch Mountain Preserve. Garlic mustard control was to be the focus this spring. The worker who was lined up came just two times. Now it appears that two local boy scouts, one an Eagle and one a Life scout, may be able to help during the summer time. Their effort will be focused on stilt grass and ailanthus control.

Gilvary

The results of the Chestnut Ridge Natural Area Preserve spring biotic inventory conducted May 9-12 by Shay Gariok and Kevin Caldwell uncovered two rare animal species: a green salamander (*Aneides aeneus*) and a singing male Blackburnian warbler (*Dendroica fusca*).



Green salamander photo by Michael Graziano

The Green salamander was found in a damp rock crevice just below the ridgeline in the north central property region. This species is listed by the VA Natural Heritage Program as S3, which means that it is rare to uncommon in Virginia with between 20 and 100 occurrences. The Blackburnian warbler was located just outside of the 500-Year Forest on the Gilvary property. The Blackburnian warbler is listed by the VA Natural Heritage Program as S2B, which means that breeding occurrences are “very rare and imperiled with 6 to 20 occurrences or few remaining individuals in Virginia”.

A total of 1 reptile, 2 amphibian, 2 dragonfly, and 9 butterfly species were added to the animal species list during the spring survey. The three surveys, summer, fall, and spring, have uncovered over 100 moth species of which 48 species have been identified. A total of 65 vertebrate and 59 invertebrate species have been documented on the property thus far. Several substantially sized sugar maple



Blackburnian warbler photo by Mike McDowell

trees, up to 38 inches in diameter, were documented in and near plot #10 in the lower, central property region.

Tasks yet to be undertaken include a breeding bird point count survey (14 points), a second 2010 attempt to collect additional moth species, additional plant specimen identification, tree-core drying/mounting/sanding/reading and related data entry, plot data entry, photo labeling, moth identification, additional GIS mapping, and database management. It is anticipated that work on the final report and geodatabase will begin in June and be completed by the end of July 2010.

Helms Phillips

Andy Graff of Old Albemarle Surveying has surveyed this property and marked the property and the 500-Year Forest boundaries. The total property consists of 205.5 acres. The 500-Year Forest’s area is 158 acres. The balance, 47.5 acres, is open land and overgrown old apple orchard. This 500-Year Forest is an exceptional forest. The surveyor located a northern red oak that was 48 inches in diameter at breast height. The 500-Year Forest changes in the easement will be considered for approval at the June meeting of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

Kolb

Hal and Jean Kolb are so fortunate to have Peter Mehring continue to help them with invasive control in their forest. In April and May he has divided his working time between oriental bittersweet and garlic mustard. It should be said that Hal and especially Jean spend many hours in their forest removing the noxious plants.

Japanese Knotweed *Another invasive plant*



Japanese knotweed, *Fallopia japonica*, is native to eastern Asia and was first introduced into North America as an ornamental plant in the late 1800s.

It is now considered one of the worst invasive exotics in parts of the eastern United States. It can tolerate a wide range of conditions, including full shade, high temperatures, high salinity and drought. It is found near water sources, such as along river banks, low-lying and disturbed areas.

Japanese knotweed is a dense growing shrub reaching heights of 10 ft. The semi-

woody stem is hollow with enlarged nodes. Leaves are alternate, 6 in. long, 3-4 in. wide and broadly-ovate. Flowering occurs in late summer, when small, greenish-white flowers develop in long panicles in the axils of the leaves. Reproduction occurs both vegetatively (rhizomes) and by seeds. This makes this plant extremely hard to eradicate.

Photo: Inflorescence close-up photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut.

Grants for Invasive Plant Control

In the spring of each year we develop a written understanding with our 500-Year Forest owners about their program to control the invasive plants. We agree on an overall grant budget for each forest. It is their responsibility to employ the workers to perform this work. At the end of each month the owners send us the total of their payments and a description of the work that was done. We issue grant checks to cover their monthly payroll expenses for this purpose.



Ken Hotopp

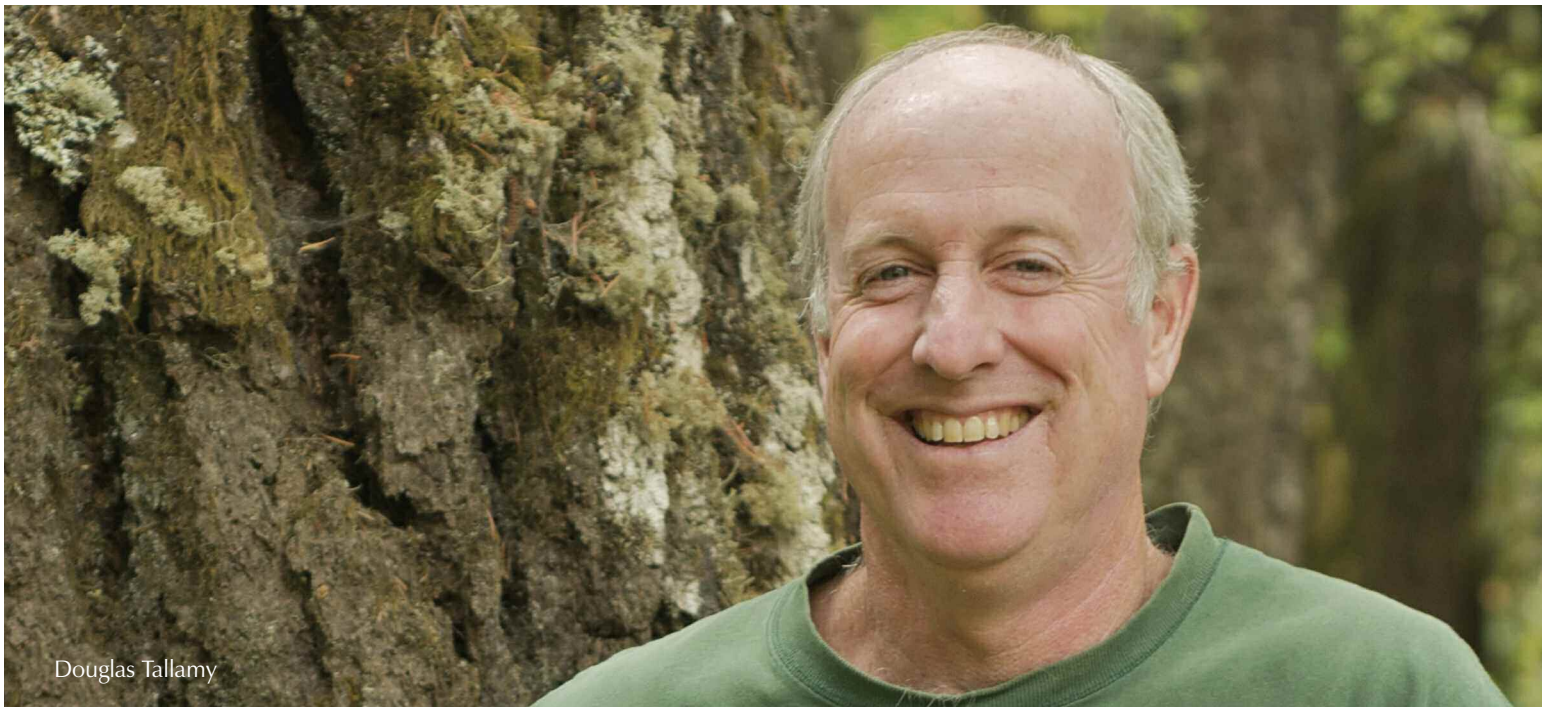
Snail Survey

Land snail hunters hope to include a protected forest on Chestnut Ridge in their search for rare species in western Virginia this year.

The southern Appalachian Mountains are a center of evolution for several animal groups, including land snails. Comprised of dozens of species, land snails help form soil and move the nutrient calcium up the food chain. Ranging from 1-30 millimeters in size, these small animals are ubiquitous in forest habitats. High-quality forests such as the Gilvary 500-Year Forest in the Chestnut Ridge Natural Area Preserve, in Giles County, Virginia, are places where rare snail species might find refuge.

A team of searchers hopes to conduct a one-day field survey sometime between June and November led by Ken Hotopp of Appalachian Conservation Biology in Bethel Maine. Methods will involve visual and hand searches, sieving of leaf litter and forest floor debris, and moving/replacing rocks and logs. Collected specimens will reside at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History's mollusk collection.

While the team may not be able to make a complete search of every habitat, it will result in a preliminary list of the land snails that call the Gilvary 500-year Forest home.



Douglas Tallamy

Bringing Nature Home by Douglas W. Tallamy

a book review by Jean Kolb

Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants by Douglas W. Tallamy, professor and chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, University of Delaware, Newark, New Jersey. Timber Press, 2007. Updated and expanded paperback edition, 2009.

This book will challenge your thinking about the plants in your yard or wood lot. Do they contribute to a healthy ecosystem, or do they help disrupt it? Tallamy makes a strong case for using native plants in landscaping because native insects — a major part of the food web — depend on them, and birds, in turn, depend on the insects. Not surprising since, as Tallamy points out, “pound for pound, most insect species contain more protein than beef.”

For millennia, our native insect herbivores and native plants have been evolving together and working out their relationships. A number of insect species have become “generalists” able to eat several types of plants, but most are “specialists,” dependent on only one plant genus. If it isn’t there, neither are they. For most insects in both groups, the leaf chemistry of alien plants is unpalatable or even toxic. These plants may be advertised as “pest free” — aesthetic to the gardener — but when they dominate suburban landscapes, they disrupt natural habitats and abet insect extinctions.

Some of these non-native plants are also invasive, such as Bradford pear and autumn olive. They are not only avoided by native

insects, they escape and overrun natural areas, further reducing biological diversity.

If you still need a reason to use native species in your landscaping, the chapter entitled “The Costs of Using Alien Ornamentals” will tell you about the accidental introductions, including sudden oak death fungus, hemlock adelgids, and Japanese beetles, that arrived here on imported nursery stock.

Bringing Nature Home is filled with impressive color photos of both plants and insects, including surprisingly beautiful caterpillars. Tallamy, who writes with quiet humor and extensive knowledge, recommends appropriate native plant species, tells which insects use which plants, and gives glimpses into some little-known insect behavior. He also answers many questions a home owner may have about using native plants. Although he is primarily addressing suburban dwellers, whose lawns and gardens collectively cover thousands of acres, what he has to say applies to everyone who plants a tree, shrub, or flower. With the number of extinctions increasing, Tallamy reminds us that “the ecological stakes have never been so high.”

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What we do is only possible with the support of people you see on this list.
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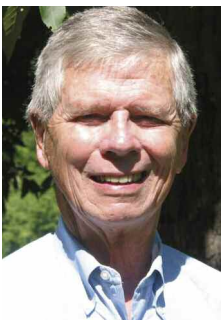
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500-YEAR FOREST
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President's Letter



Ted Harris

It has been a busy spring. I am behind in sending this news letter to you. Happily two prospective 500-Year Forests have consumed my time. The Helms Phillips 500-Year Forest conservation easement is up for approval by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation at the end of June. Dan Watson of Calloway, Virginia is in the process of having a 500-Year Forest easement consummated and hopefully we will have more to say about his forest in our next newsletter. Dan and I have a common hero, Aldo Leopold. It also now appears that Donald and Joanna Sunshine are making plans for a 500-Year Forest.

Of course we are excited about having Jim Murray on board, as a director. His contributions to conservation in Virginia have been phenomenal.

It's an exciting time for our owners and the rest of us involved when a discovery of a rare plant or animal takes place in a 500-Year Forest. The Blackburnian Warbler is a creature of mature forests. Perhaps the snail survey will uncover some rare species.

The search for my replacement has been proceeding at a slow pace. I will focus on this effort with more vigor this summer and fall.

Your support is the key to our conservation efforts. Your contributions are our life blood. Many thanks to those of you who are helping us with these special forests.

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