

THE RIVER RUNS

News from the Cowpasture River Preservation Association

Range-wide Study on Rare Songbird Touches Down in the Allegheny Highlands

By Laurel Schablein, Conservation Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy

One of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s rarest songbirds, the Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA), has a population stronghold in Bath and Highland counties. Long sought after by birders, this diminutive species is now the subject of an international study funded by the National Science Foundation. Dr. Henry Streby, UC-Berkeley Postdoctoral Research Fellow, is leading the effort to better understand the range-wide long distance migration of GWWAs, as well as Blue-winged Warblers and hybrids between the two species.



The ‘light-level’ locators (above) track movements between wintering and breeding grounds by calculating the individual’s position using sunrise and sunset times. Each weighs only 0.45 gram.

These days, most animal migration studies employ real-time satellite tracking, but GWWAs are too small to carry even the lightest transmitters. However, recent advances in miniature archival “light-level” loggers called geolocators have offered a solution to tracking birds weighing in at only 8-10 grams (you could mail three with a postage stamp). Dr. Streby’s team initiated deployment of over 400 geolocators across the species’ entire breeding range, visiting 20 sites and working with many collaborators throughout the country.



GWWA shown in the photo was tagged at Chimney Run Farm, owned by Lee Elliott and Bill Jones, a CRPA Board member.

Here in the Commonwealth, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and The Nature Conservancy partnered with Dr. Lesley Bulluck and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to capture and “tag” GWWAs in the Allegheny Highlands, including sites in or near the Cowpasture River watershed. At one site, Chimney Run Farm, owned by Lee Elliott and CRPA Board member Bill Jones, the VCU crew deployed geolocators on four male GWWAs. Within two

weeks they had deployed 25 geolocators across both counties, including two on Brewster hybrids. GWWA males show strong fidelity to their breeding sites, and after wintering somewhere in the tropics later this year, the birds will return to be recaptured next spring, their geolocators removed, and the data downloaded. From that data, Dr. Streby’s team will be able to determine more



Drs. Bulluck’s and Streby’s crews at Chimney Run.

specifically where the individual birds spent their winter. This information is critical for land managers linking full life cycle conservation actions for this species on both their breeding and wintering grounds.

Inside This Issue

- Golden-winged Warblers
- From the President
- Executive Director’s Corner
- Annual Meeting Highlights
- Association News
- Member Spotlight
- Upcoming Events
- Annual Picnic Details
- Member Thank You

Board of Directors (2015-16)

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Lisa J. Beckstrom, Executive Director

Elizabeth Biggs, Accountant

DONOR RECOGNITION

Many of you have asked if there is a better way to list our donors in the newsletter so it is more clear if you are current with your membership. Please note that this issue includes a cumulative list of donors for the 2014 Annual Campaign (which started November 1, 2014 and ends October 31, 2015). If you don't see your name listed (page 9), then your dues is DUE by October 31, 2015. If I overlooked your donation, I apologize in advance for my oversight (please contact me if that is the case). Thanks, *Lisa*



From the President

Greetings Members,

My name is Monroe "Puggy" Farmer and I am your new Association President. It is an honor for me to have been elected as the leader of this dedicated, wonderful group of river stewards. And, I look forward to working with you, the river monitors and the Board of Directors to protect the beautiful Cowpasture River.



If you have any ideas regarding how I might improve my service to this Association, please don't hesitate to contact me. My goal is to keep the river clean. I can best do that by giving my total support to our outstanding monitors, who through rain, snow, heat and insects continue as the unsung heroes of this association. Month after month they monitor: bacteria, invertebrates, and the water chemistry at monitor stations spaced along the entire length of the Cowpasture. Each station has a volunteer station manager, who compiles the data at their station and forwards it to Lisa Beckstrom, our Executive Director. This information is not only forwarded to the State, but serves to alert the Association if any pollution is taking place. Through monthly monitoring, we are able to bracket the section of river first demonstrating pollution and focus immediately on the source of that pollution.

I am a retired civilian optometrist and National Guard Army Officer. My last military position was Deputy Commander of the West Virginia Army National Guard Medical Command. My introduction to the Cowpasture River was at the age of six when I first came with my grandfather to "the camp on the river." The camp was built in 1919 and the property entered the family in 1911. Four years ago, my wife and I built our retirement home on the site of this old camp. Again, this position is an honor for me and I pledge to you to do my best to keep the river clean. Sincerely, *Puggy*

The Executive Director's Corner

Hello Again! I was fortunate enough to meet many members for the first time at our Annual Meeting at Camp Mont Shenandoah. For those of you that missed it, details about the meeting are included on Page 4 of this newsletter. I would like to extend a big thank you to Ann Warner for hosting this event at her camp, which is truly a special place!



The Board of Directors voted in new officers at our last Board meeting. I look forward to working closely with the new officers and would like to extend a thanks to those stepping down and their work over the last couple of years.

Since the Annual Meeting, I have been busy spending my time forging new partnerships with other conservation groups in the area. I will share details on this in our next newsletter. Until then, hope to see you at the Annual Picnic on Saturday, August 1!

Member Fellowship

Annual Meeting 2015



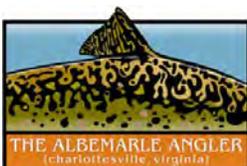
Approximately 70 members attended the 2015 Annual Meeting at the beautifully maintained grounds of Camp Mont Shenandoah. We couldn't have asked for a more lovely backdrop to this year's event. Along with enjoying the fellowship of members, guests had an opportunity to participate in a silent auction. Thanks to the generosity of many members, all of the silent auction items were sold and the profit from the auction went towards purchasing water quality monitoring supplies. Thanks to Ann Warner for being such a gracious host and for opening up her camp to CRPA members! Also, thanks to Marek Smith of The Nature Conservancy for his interesting talk on Biodiversity of the Cowpasture River and Josh Elliott for the wonderful meal.



Mike Whiteside looking over the many items up for auction.

Special Thanks To Silent Auction Donors:

The Albemarle Angler
Twin River Outfitters
The Red Lantern Inn (Jo Ann Gideons)
Fort Lewis Lodge (John and Caryl Cowden)
Phil Lucas
Peg Sheridan
Deb Sheffer
Nan Mahone Wellborn
Mike Whiteside



Welcome New Board Members

Welcome to Christopher Peters, Marshall Higgins, and Steve Van Lear - our newest Board members. Chris and Marshall's bios were shared with you in our spring newsletter. Steve Van Lear was nominated for and elected to the Board at the Annual Meeting. His bio follows:

Steve was raised in the Northeast but with his heart in Virginia, he attended Hampden-Sydney College. Upon graduation he moved out west. After living in Colorado for 13 years, Steve met his wife Kelly in Denver and they moved to the Los Angeles and San Diego area where they lived for 7 years and were blessed with two sons, Hunter and Quintin. In 1992 they moved to the Charlotte area where they still reside.

Steve's grandmother was Kate Wood, of the Nimrod Hall Wood Clan. During the summers, he had the great fortune of being brought as a baby to his family's cabin on the Cowpasture River by his parents. For 68 years his deepest source of solace, joy and peace has been tied to the river. Steve says it is "truly an honor to help preserve the beauty and love of this great river for generations to come."



New Board members Steve Van Lear (left) and Marshall Higgins (right). Christopher Peters not present at the time of this photo.

Goodbye to Departing Board Members

By Lucius Bracey, CRPA Board Member

On behalf of the Board and the entire membership, I would like to thank our three departing board members. Lou Robinson, Mike Whiteside and Chip Snead have brought a tremendous amount of history and practical experience to bear on the deliberations of the Board. Lou has long had a residence on the Lower Cowpasture and has long been a valued member of this organization. He has been a contributor of material for *The River Runs*, solicited material from others and arranged for its publication for substantial periods. He has also been a helpful advisor on technology matters for the organization.

Mike spends much time at a residence he and his wife constructed on the Cowpasture and they have hosted annual events of this organization there. He has served as the Water Quality Monitoring committee chair and has been instrumental in helping maintain the CRPA's monitoring efforts. Mike adds a very practical approach to our deliberations coupled with a watchfulness of the Cowpasture that has been invaluable. And his use of his "open air" C 7 jeep in the harshest of weather is symbolic of the kind of spirit we need to defend the river.

Chip's long tenure in municipal management has provided the board with a calming and thoughtful influence and an insight into government matters that we have not previously enjoyed. And his knowledge of agriculture in our region has added a much needed viewpoint to our deliberation.

We wish them well and look forward to their continued counsel.

Member Spotlight

Welcome Dale Perry

Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Clifton Forge, with family still there. I left the area to work at Newport News Shipbuilding almost 30 years ago. When I retire from the Shipyard I will be moving back home.

What is your connection with the Cowpasture River or area?

Having grown up in Clifton Forge I spent many a day and night fishing, paddling, tubing and just enjoying the Cowpasture. With friends and family having property and camps along the river I always had access. It is a treat when I get a trip home and get to spend a little time on the Cowpasture.

Why did you join the CRPA?

I finally found a piece of property to purchase on the Cowpasture in 2012, fulfilling a lifelong dream. My next goal is to build a new camp on the property. It is in the Griffith area. My best friend and his family gave me a membership for my birthday. Owning property on the river means taking responsibility for it, and being a member of CRPA helps achieve the need to keep the river clean and pristine. I want to see the river stay this way.



Upcoming Events



Members at the spring Walton Tract Clean Up: (front row) Bucky Wells (Potomac Hunt Club), Dale Perry, Lisa Beckstrom; (back row) Dave Peters, Marek Smith, Joe Wood.

-CRPA Picnic/Family Fun Day will be held on Saturday, August 1, 2015 at Lynchburg Camp. Details and registration information are listed on page 6 of this newsletter and at <http://www.cowpastureriver.org/events>.

-Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Training event will be held on Saturday, August 8, 2015 (rain date is Saturday, August 15, 2015). This training is a collaborative effort with Virginia Save our Streams (VA SOS) and the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) and will help certify some of our current monitors through the VA SOS program and also provide an opportunity for any members interested in getting involved with our monitoring program to learn more! **Limited spots are available for this free training.** Please contact Lisa at directorcrpa@gmail.com or 704-930-8243 to register.

-2015 Mid-Atlantic Volunteer Monitoring Conference *Bridging the Water Quality Data Gap* will be held from August 6-8, 2015 at the Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA. Information about this conference can be found at <https://vcwq.wordpress.com/>.

-Walton Tract Clean Up, Saturday, October 24. If you are interested in helping out with this, please contact Lisa at directorcrpa@gmail.com or 704-930-8243.

Annual Picnic/Family Fun Day

When: **Saturday, August 1, 2015**
Time 3:00-5:00 pm (float, socialize, games), 5:30-6:30 pm (cocktail hour), 6:30 pm (dinner).

Where: **Lynchburg Camp**
From Exit 29 on I-64, Lynchburg Camp is 8.5 miles north on Route 42 (Cowpasture River Highway). There is a brown street sign on the left that says Lynchburg Camp Rd. Come down the gravel drive and bear right across the bridge and follow signs to parking.

From Millboro Springs, the camp is 8 miles south on Route 42, just past the county dumpsters on the right side.

Activities: Swimming, canoeing/kayaking, summer yard games like badminton, corn hole and croquet are planned. There will also be a 1-2 hr float from upstream down to the picnic site starting about 3:00 pm (contact Lisa if you are interested at directorcrpa@gmail.com)

Eats: Dinner will be catered and beverages will be provided

Bring: Lawn chairs, family and friends, wading/swimming/floating togs, sunscreen, insect repellent and other gear you might want. **No dogs please.**

Cost: Adults \$15, Children 12 and under \$8**

Questions? Contact Lisa Beckstrom, directorcrpa@gmail.com

**** You can pay on site, but please let us know you're coming asap. We need a head count by July 28.**



Picnic Reservation Form

Send this form with your check to CRPA, P.O. Box 215, Millboro, VA 24460 before July 28

Adults _____ at \$15 # Children _____ at \$8 Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Thank You To Our Loyal Watershed Members

Includes dues and gifts received between November 1, 2014 and July 1, 2015. If you don't see your name listed, it is time to send in your dues. Thanks for your continued support and welcome to our new members. **Bold** = dues/gifts since last issue.

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In Memory of:
Garnett Bailey Moneymaker
Martha Ruggles



Cowpasture River
Preservation Assn.

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- \$100 Headwaters Circle
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- \$500 Wallawhatoola Society
- >\$500 Bedrock Patron
- Junior Membership(s): 15 years and under; Cost = 4 hrs./year volunteer service

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E-MAIL _____

- I prefer not to have my name published as a contributor.
- I am interested in becoming a volunteer river monitor.
- I want to help save valuable resources, please send my newsletter by email.