Wildflower Weekend 2012 Program Schedule

Saturday, May 5

Appalachian Trail Beauties

9:30 a.m. to noon. (Repeats on Sunday)

Trillium, blue cohosh, Canada violets and more await as we hike northward on the AT. Meet at Bearfence parking area (mile 56.4). 1½ mile, **one-way** hike. Van will take drivers back to cars. Total climb: at beginning, about 140 ft.; then descend about 200 ft.

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

Wonders of the Mill Prong

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (Repeats on Sunday, different leader)

Birds, wildflowers and a splashing stream combine to make this one of the most enchanting trails to explore. 2 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8). *Kristin Zimet, Virginia Native Plant Society*

*Featured Program: Wild about Violets

10 to 11:30 a.m.

Discover the surprising diversity among violet species in this half-hour Powerpoint program, followed by a discovery walk in the vicinity of the visitor center. ½ mile. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (Milepost 51).

Ann and Rob Simpson, Guest Naturalists

*Fox Hollow Trail Hike

10 a.m. to noon

The mix of exotic plants and woodland natives tells a tale of human settlement and the land's return to nature. Pass by old rock walls, a small cemetery and spring. 1.2 miles. Total climb: about 310 ft. Meet at Dickey Ridge Visitor Center (mile 4.6).

Richard Stromberg, Virginia Native Plant Society

South River Falls Hike

10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Wild geranium, trillium and more flowers greet hikers on this trail to a viewpoint overlooking an 83-ft. waterfall. 3.3-miles. Total climb: about 910 ft. Meet at trailhead in South River picnic area (mile 62.8). Sally Hurlbert, Park Ranger

Gravel Springs Adventure

10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Explore different habitats in search of wild ginger, showy orchids and more. Mostly gentle with some short, very steep places. ½-mile loop. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6). Limited parking. Wendy Cass, Park Botanist

Bugs and Blooms

10 to 11 a.m. (Repeats at 1 p.m.) Designed for children ages 7-12.

Through fun-filled activities, find out how plants and insects rely on each other in the meadow. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51). *Regina Cardwell, Park Ranger*

*Stony Man "Rocks"

1 to 3 p.m.

Seek out woodland wildflowers as you hike to the summit of Stony Man Mountain (elev. 4,010 ft.) to learn about unusual plants found at high-elevation rock outcrops. 1.6 mi. Total climb: about 340 ft. Meet at Stony Man Nature Trail parking area (mile 41.7).

Cathy Mayes and Adele Baker, Virginia Native Plant Society, Old Rag Master Naturalists

Bugs and Blooms

1 to 2 p.m. (See description of 10 a.m. program)

*Snead Farm Loop Trail

1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Look for wildflowers as you hike through former orchard land past a stone foundation, spring house and the only remaining intact barn in the park. 2.6 mi. Total climb: about 500 ft. Meet at south end of Dickey Ridge picnic area (Milepost 5).

Richard Stromberg, Virginia Native Plant Society

Cultural Connections

2:30 to 5 p.m.

On a gentle hike along the Appalachian Trail, discover fascinating ways that people have traditionally used plants found in the Blue Ridge. 2 miles. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8). Sue Schaefer and Mara Meisel, Park Rangers

Sunday, May 6

Birds and Blossoms of Pocosin

8:30 to 10 a.m.

Look for tanagers, warblers and many more birds as you identify wildflowers near Pocosin Cabin and spring. ½ mile. Meet at Pocosin parking area (mile 59.5), unmarked, east side of Skyline Drive. Limited parking.

Diane Holsinger, Virginia Native Plant Society

Spring Birds

9 to 11:30 a.m.

Wood thrushes, warblers and other migratory birds are often attracted to the springs and surrounding forest here. Mostly gentle with some short, very steep places. ½-mile loop. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6). Limited parking.

Alan Williams, Park Ecologist

Wonders of the Mill Prong

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Follow a splashing stream to see how wildflowers and trees tell a story of the changing forest. 2 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

Tom Dierauf, Guest Naturalist

Appalachian Trail Beauties

9:30 a.m. to noon. (See Saturday's program description)

*Featured Program: Lure of the Limberlost

10 to 11:30 a.m.

Search for spring flowers on this gentle trail through a forest that has undergone major changes in recent years. Along the way, pick up some tips to help you take fantastic nature photos. 1 mile, at most. Meet at Limberlost parking area (Milepost 43). Limited parking.

Ann and Rob Simpson, Professional Photographers and Naturalists

Marvelous Millers Head

1:30 to 4 p.m.

Look for uncommon plants as you hike down a rocky ridge to an observation platform and view of the Shenandoah Valley. Very steep in places, with uphill return. 1.5 miles. Total climb: about 250 ft. Meet at Millers Head trailhead: from Skyline Drive, turn into **south** entrance of Skyland (mile 42.5), pass stables, and keep to left when road forks. Park at top of hill, near amphitheater. *Sally Hurlbert, Park Ranger*

Franklin Cliffs Stroll

2 to 3 p.m.

You may be surprised at the variety of wildflowers you can see just a few steps from your car. Look for woodland flowers by the parking lot, then take a short walk onto the cliffs in search of moss phlox and others. ½ mi. Meet at Franklin Cliffs Overlook (Milepost 49).

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

*Denotes new program this year

Length of trail listed is for entire hike. Elevation changes of less than 70 feet are not included.

Reminders

- Wear sturdy shoes and bring water on all hikes.
- Evaluate your personal fitness and health to choose an appropriate program.
- Pets are not permitted on Wildflower Weekend walks.
- Come prepared for wet weather. Walks may be conducted in light rain, but will be canceled in case of thunderstorms.
- Learn more about Shenandoah's wildflowers at the park's website: www.nps.gov/shen

More than 850 species of flowering plants are found in Shenandoah National Park. About 70% of them are native. Many native woodland wildflowers thrive in the dappled forest sunlight of springtime. They race to bloom and attract pollinators before overhead trees become fully leafed out, and shade engulfs them. Hot summer sunshine is too strong for them. Now is their time.

Please help to ensure that wildflowers will be around for generations by leaving them unharmed. A flower that is picked can miss a chance to spread thousands of seeds. A plant that is dug up is gone forever, and the loss affects all things connected to it. If you love them, leave them.

"To learn something new, take the path that you took yesterday." ~ John Burroughs

Meet Our Volunteer Naturalists

Adele Baker is a certified Virginia Master Naturalist. As part of her volunteer work with Shenandoah National Park, she monitors the rock outcrop on Stony Man summit and its indigenous rare plants. Adele is a board member of the Old Rag Master Naturalists, the Virginia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation and the Shenandoah National Park Association.

Tom Dierauf is a retired forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry. He is on the advisory board of the Flora of Virginia project, and has helped to compile plant taxon descriptions for the upcoming Flora. He has enjoyed hiking, backcountry camping, fishing and discovering wildflowers in Shenandoah for more than 40 years.

Diane Holsinger is a member of the Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and the Mycological Association of Washington, D.C. She teaches classes on mushrooms at Blue Ridge Community College and has taught Master Naturalist classes on wildflowers, mushrooms, and birds. Diane conducts bird surveys for the U.S. Forest Service and the Smithsonian Institution.

Catherine Mayes is treasurer of the Virginia Native Plant Society and its Piedmont chapter. She is a certified Master Naturalist and education chair for Old Rag Master Naturalists. Cathy is secretary of The American Chestnut Foundation and chairman of its Virginia chapter. Through the park's Adopt-an-Outcrop program, she helps protect the fragile ecosystem on Stony Man summit.

Ann and **Rob Simpson** teach at Lord Fairfax Community College. Ann is program leader for the science department, teaching general biology, anatomy and physiology, and nature photography. Rob is professor of natural resources, teaches general and field biology, and is program head of the nature and outdoor photography curriculum. Their books include *Shenandoah National Park: Simply Beautiful* and *Wildflowers of Shenandoah National Park*.

Richard Stromberg is a Virginia Master Naturalist and a hike leader, trail maintainer, and rare plant monitor for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. He is a board member of the Piedmont Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society, and is past president of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Chapter, Master Gardeners Association. He volunteers as a rock outcrop rare plant community monitor for the park.

Kristin Zimet worked as a nature guide for Clarke County Parks and Recreation, Capon Springs Resort, and Smithsonian Journeys. She is a docent for The Nature Conservancy at its Ice Mountain Preserve, WV, and for the State Arboretum of Virginia. Kristin is a member of the Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and is a Virginia Master Naturalist.