



Meet Our Guest Naturalists and Program Leaders

Mitzi Fox is a Virginia Master Naturalist and the president of the Virginia Native Plant Society’s Piedmont chapter.

Betty Gatewood is a retired middle school teacher, watercolor artist, and Virginia Master Naturalist. She has provided cover art for the Virginia Native Plant Society’s Wildflower of the Year brochures, as well as illustrating two children’s books, *Milkweed Matters* (2017) and *Salmon Matters* (2018).

Sonya Lara is a poet and essayist. She received her BA in Creative Writing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her MFA in Poetry from Virginia Tech. Her work has appeared in *The Pinch*, *X-R-A-Y Lit*, *Shenandoah*, *Ninth Letter*, *AGNI*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *The Acentos Review*, and elsewhere.

Mara Meisel is a retired National Park Service ranger-naturalist. She was the long-time coordinator for Shenandoah National Park’s Wildflower Weekend, along with the Youth Wildflower Art Contest. Mara is the Big Meadows section leader for the annual Shenandoah National Park-Luray Fourth of July butterfly count for the North American Butterfly Association.

David Stapleton is a retired Virginia State Park and National Park Service ranger-naturalist. In his park career, he developed and presented interpretive programs on natural and cultural history.

Jean Stephens is a Virginia Master Naturalist and president of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club’s Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter. As a Park volunteer, she works on projects aimed at invasive plants and insects.

Leaves of Three is a student-based group whose goal is to teach the identification of and protection methods from poison ivy while hiking.

Richard Stromberg is a Virginia Master Naturalist and newsletter editor for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. He is also an editor, walk leader, and board member of the Virginia Native Plant Society Piedmont Chapter.

Kristin Zimet worked as a nature guide for Clarke County Parks and Recreation and Smithsonian Journeys. She is a docent for the State Arboretum of Virginia, a Virginia Master Naturalist, and board member of the Virginia Native Plant Society Piedmont Chapter.

“The Earth laughs in flowers.”

~Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet and philosopher

More than 850 species of flowering plants grow 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 misses the chance to spread thousands of seeds. A plant that is dug up is gone forever, and the loss affects insects, wildlife and everything else that's connected to it. If you love them, leave them.



Wildflower Weekend is sponsored by Shenandoah National Park and Shenandoah National Park Association. The Artist-in-Residence program is funded by generous donations to the Shenandoah National Park Trust.

Cover flowers (from left): Blue-eyed grasses, Marsh blue violet, Star chickweed



37th Annual WILDFLOWER WEEKEND



MAY 6-7, 2023

Wildflower Weekend Program Schedule

Saturday, May 6

Bird Song and the Meadow

9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Join our guest artist as we consider and reflect on the ways in which bird song interweaves itself into our daily lives. Participants are encouraged to bring a notebook and pen (or any preferred writing device). Meet on the meadow side of Byrd Visitor Center (mile 51).

Sonya Lara, Artist-in-Residence

Wonders of the Mill Prong

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Look for trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit, and more along this trail that never fails to delight wildflower lovers. 2 miles. Elevation change: about 400 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking (mile 52.4).

Kristin Zimet and Mitzi Fox, Guest Naturalists

Passamaquoddy Loop

9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Explore along the Passamaquoddy Trail towards Little Stony Man Cliffs and return on the Appalachian Trail while looking for trillium and more. Very rocky and steep in places. 3 miles. Elevation change: about 560 ft. Meet at Stony Man parking (mile 41.7, north entrance of Skyland Resort).

David Stapleton, Guest Naturalist

Spring Amphibians

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Experience vernal life for the many amphibians of the Park and learn the adaptations that allow them to thrive after their winter emergence on this easy walk. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center (mile 51).

Margo Roseum, Park Ranger

Leaves of Three

11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Take a moment to stop by this table to learn how to locate and identify poison ivy as this group raises awareness of the three-leaved plant and its prevalence along Virginia trails. Story of the Forest Trailhead (mile 51).

Leaves of Three, Guest Group

“Youth Art in the Park” Contest Recognition Ceremony

12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Join us to congratulate the winning artists in the Park's wildflower art contest. Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (mile 51).

Ramble on the “Layton Sisk Plateau”

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

We may find pussytoes, trillium, and perhaps a surprise or two in the fields and woods as we take the Skyland-Big Meadows Horse Trail to a former home site.

1 mile. Elevation change: about 150 ft. Meet at Upper Hawksbill parking area (mile 46.7). *Mara Meisel, Guest Naturalist*

Botanical Art Workshop

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Learn a few botany basics, along with tips on observation and journaling, then sketch and paint what you see. No art background is necessary. Meet on the meadow side of Byrd Visitor Center (mile 51). Wear walking shoes and long pants. Be prepared to sit on the ground or bring a folding chair. All art supplies will be provided. *Betty Gatewood, Artist & Naturalist*

Millers Head Hike

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Lyre-leaved rockcress and other uncommon plants might be seen on this hike to a view of the Shenandoah Valley. Very rocky and steep in places, with uphill return. 1.5 miles. Elevation change: about 250 ft. Turn at south entrance of Skyland Resort (mile 42.5) and follow signs to amphitheater at top of hill. *Stephen Paull, Park Biological Science Technician*

Snead Farm Loop Hike

1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Look for yellow lady's slippers along with other wildflowers on this hike through a former orchard and home site. 2.6 miles. Elevation change: about 490 ft. Meet at Dickey Ridge picnic area (mile 4.7).

Richard Stromberg, Guest Naturalist

Pollinators: Form Flowers Function

4:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Follow along as we discover the unique methods by which both flowers and pollinators charm the other to survive and thrive. PowerPoint program. Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (mile 51). *Karl Rand, Park Ranger*

Sunday, May 7

Spring Birds of Pocosin

9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Listen and look for warblers, tanagers, and other migrants near the spring and surrounding woods. Easy ½-1-mile stroll. Bring binoculars. Meet at Pocosin Cabin parking (unmarked, mile 59.5, east side of Skyline Drive). Limited parking. *Alan Williams, Park Ecologist*

Hiking the Hightop

9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Hike the Appalachian Trail looking for trillium and other wildflowers to the summit of Hightop Mountain and a terrific view. 3 miles. Elevation change: about 935 ft. Meet at Hightop Mountain parking (mile 66.7). Limited parking.

Mara Meisel, Guest Naturalist

Milam Gap to Tanner's Ridge

10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Discover a variety of flowers, as well as cultural connections, along this gentle section of the Appalachian Trail to a fire road. 2 miles. Elevation change: about 175 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking (mile 52.4).

Dani Goodman, Park Ranger

Spring Amphibians

11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. See description of Saturday program.

Jodi Davis, Park Ranger

Botanical Art Workshop

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. See description of Saturday program

South River Falls Hike

1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Look for early saxifrage, wild geranium and more on this trail to a viewpoint overlooking an 83-ft. waterfall. Steep 3.3 miles. Elevation change: about 900 ft. Meet at trailhead in South River Falls picnic area (mile 62.5).

Jean Stephens, Guest Naturalist

Reminders

- Wear sturdy shoes and bring water on all hikes.
- Evaluate your personal fitness and health to choose an appropriate program.
- Please don't bring pets on programs. Service animals are welcome.
- Come prepared for wet weather. Walks may be conducted in light rain, but will be canceled in case of thunderstorms.
- Length of trail listed is for entire hike. Elevation changes of less than 70 feet are not included.
- Learn more about Shenandoah's wildflowers at the Park's website: www.nps.gov/shen