



Chesapeake Chat

SUMMER/FALL 2021

Director's Matters

Tips to help manage your NAI Account, emails, etc . . .

Hello NAI Members. Do you know ALL the benefits, training options and networking opportunities that come with your membership?

Most folks know all about the great magazine, Legacy, and the regional and national conferences but did you know there is also a book club, leadership training courses, weekly InterpTalks, awards programs, scholarships, a jobs board and more? And now, it's easier than ever to find them. Jamie King, our amazing NAI webmaster, created a brand new, easy to use Member Area on the NAI Webpage. Just go to <https://www.interpnet.com/> and sign into your account. You'll find the Member Area button at the very top navigation bar on your pc or mobile device. You can also go in through the Membership page. It's still in the top navigation bar and in the side or bottom box on a pc or mobile device respectively.

No matter how you get there, it's chocked full of cool stuff:

- The **Media Library** has lots of free resources including the Jobs Board and webinars and articles related to career development, climate change, Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusions, Management, Naturalist Interpretation, Programs, Social Media, Technology and Virtual Interpretation.
 - This includes **free webinar recordings** you can watch to earn recertification credits.
- In the **Membership Directory** you can look up contact information on other members and member organizations.
- The **Publications Archive** includes full back issues of Legacy from most of 1991 to the present and The Journal of Interpretive Research.
- Scroll on down to discover even more cool stuff like Upcoming Webinars, usually two a month so check back often, and Virtual Trainings and Community events.

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Region 2 Leadership: Executive Committee

- **Director**
Yvonne Johnson
Retired Manager
Frying Pan Farm Park
(703) 887-8983
yvonnejohnsonsr@gmail.com
- **Deputy Director**
Sammy Zambon
Visitor Experience Specialist
VA State Parks
(804) 624-7064
sammy.zambon@dcr.virginia.gov
- **Co-Secretary**
Susan Matthews
Administrative Specialist
ERT, Inc.
14401 Sweitzer Ln Suite 300
Laurel, MD 20707
tortugachip@hotmail.com
- **Treasurer**
Ken Rosenthal
Park Naturalist
Gulf Branch Nature Center
(703) 228-3403
krosenthal@arlingtonva.us

Region 2 Leadership continued

Committee Chairs

- **Awards Chair**

Dodie Lewis
Retired Manager
Claude Moore Park
(703) 965-8622
dmlewisva@aol.com

- **Outreach Chair**

Patricia Dietly
Green Spring Gardens
Alexandria, Virginia
(703) 624-0128
patricia.dietly@fairfaxcounty.gov

- **Scholarship Chair**

Christopher Kemmerer
Chief, Education & Interpretation
DCNR-Bureau of State Parks
(717) 425-5330
chkemmerer@pa.gov

Media

- **Region 2 Webmaster**

Jackie Raiford
Park Naturalist
Locust Grove Nature Center
(301) 765-8661
jacqueline.raiford@montgomeryparks.org

- **Newsletter Editor**

Cynthia Rabbers
Assistant Director for Campus Rec
Penn State University
(814) 360-0763
cjr147@psu.edu

Chapter Representatives

- **Beltway Chapter Chair**

Alonso Abugattas
Natural Resources Manager
Arlington County Parks
AAbugattas@arlingtonva.us



How To Be An Eco-friendly Paddler: Kayaking Virginia's Environmentally-sensitive Areas

Jessica Steelman

Kayaking is one of the best low-impact forms of water sports you can choose. No carbon emissions, no noise pollution, and no large wakes to cause erosion. Another great aspect of kayaking is the ability to explore areas in which boats can't reach, such as salt marshes and shallow, narrow creeks. With the increased popularity in paddling in recent years, and particularly over the last year during the pandemic, more and more people are beginning to reach areas that never saw many people in the past. More people now have access to deserted beaches, pristine marsh creeks, and cypress swamps than ever before. And while it's exciting to hear about more people exploring the great outdoors, higher visitation results in more impact on the natural resources, some of which are incredibly fragile.

First and foremost, we recommend that all paddlers adhere to the [7 Leave No Trace Principles](#) to establish a baseline knowledge of environmental stewardship. These principles cover things like tips on planning trips, how to dispose of waste, and encouraging everyone to "leave what you find."

Maybe you're new to kayaking, or maybe you're an old salt, but when you're exploring coastal Virginia's water trails, we encourage you to understand the waters in which you're paddling, and the specific lands you may be visiting. But researching this stuff ahead of time can be daunting – How do you know what's what? When can you visit? How can you visit? What's off limits?

Let's break it down by region:

Northern Neck

Westmoreland State Park: This park is known for its famous fossil beach where visitors can spot ancient shark teeth and other prehistoric finds. However, the park has some towering cliffs that are incredibly susceptible to erosion and very dangerous to walk under. Landing of kayaks is prohibited in these areas so keep your distance from the cliffs and obey all posted signage.



Region 2 Leadership continued

State Representatives

- **Delaware**
Kate Cane
Delaware State Parks
Kathleen.crane@delaware.gov
- **Maryland**
Amy Stahler Henry
Conservation Education Specialist
Maryland DNR
(410) 260-8828
amy.henry@maryland.gov

Tiffany Jenkins
Park Naturalist
Montgomery Parks
(301) 258-4030
tiffany.jenkins@montgomeryparks.org

Maggie Cavey
Communications Specialist
Maryland Dept of the Environment
(410) 537-3003
maggie.cavey@maryland.gov
- **New Jersey**
Vacant
- **Pennsylvania**
Christopher Kemmerer
Chief, Education & Interpretation
DCNR-Bureau of State Parks
(717) 425-5330
chkemmerer@pa.gov
- **Virginia**
Catie Drew
Prevention Program Manager
DEA - Community Outreach Section
(571) 776-2870
Cathleen.R.Drew@usdoj.gov
- **Washington DC**
Kaden Borseth
Learning Program Specialist
Smithsonian's National Zoo
(202) 633-0334
borsethk@si.edu
- **West Virginia**
James Hersick
(877) 840-9220
james@hersickwebster.com

Dameron Marsh Natural Area Preserve: Shorelines are typically closed from mid-April to mid-September to protect the nesting grounds of several threatened and endangered shorebirds species. This area is also critical habitat for the globally rare beach tiger beetle. Their larvae are under the sand in the intertidal zone, so tread lightly and refrain from digging or activities that cause heavy compaction of sand. Pets must be leashed.

Middle Peninsula

Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve: The sandy spit on the southern tip of the preserve is closed from mid-April to mid-September to protect several species of threatened and endangered nesting shorebirds. This area is also critical habitat for the globally rare beach tiger beetle. Their larvae are under the sand in the intertidal zone, so tread lightly and refrain from digging or activities that result in heavy compaction of sand. Pets must be leashed.

New Point Comfort Natural Area Preserve: Designated by the State as a Natural Area Preserve, this spot is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy. Stay on marked trails. Pets must be leashed. Landing of kayaks on preserve shorelines is permitted unless otherwise noted. Please be aware that most of the sandy shorelines along the tip of the peninsula are on private land.

Eastern Shore

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge: This refuge is home to threatened and endangered shorebirds, the once endangered Delmarva fox squirrel, wild horses, and a variety of migratory birds. Paddling inside the refuge impoundments is strictly prohibited. For information on where paddling is permitted vs. prohibited throughout the refuge, check out [this handy map](#).

Savage Neck Dunes Natural Area Preserve: This preserve has seen a sharp increase in visitation recently and it is possible that visitation could be restricted in the future. Please check the website before visiting. This spot provides more critical habitat for the globally rare tiger beetle. Their larvae are under the sand in the intertidal zone, so tread lightly and refrain from digging or heavy compaction of sand. Steep, fragile dunes exist at this site so it's important to stay on the trails and beach. Climbing dunes not only causes erosion, but it can also be incredibly dangerous.

Curious if you'll be paddling near any of these areas? Visit [this map](#) at the bottom of the blog to locate all of these & more environmentally and ecologically sensitive areas.



VirginiaWaterTrails.org #VWT #VirginiaWaterTrails

Meet the Board

Kaden Borseth (they/them)

Learning Program Specialist at Smithsonian's National Zoo

Hello, my name is Kaden and I'm excited to be the new state representative for the District of Columbia. I work at Smithsonian's National Zoo focusing on digital programs and volunteer training. My love of interpretation and connecting people through nature started many years ago when I worked for the National Park Service, and I have carried that through to various science center and natural history museum jobs over the years. I love informal science education, nature photography, climbing, suping, and anything outside.



(Continued from page 1)

Interested in a book club? Learn more at https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Certification/Training/Book_Club/nai/_certification/NAI_Book_Club.aspx

Two upcoming virtual trainings: one is a leadership institute and the other is about developing emotional resilience in the face of climate change. https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Certification/Training/Online_Training/nai/_certification/Online_Training.aspx

Learn more about certifications and trainings at https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Certification/Welcome/nai/_certification/Certification_Welcome.aspx?hkey=fa8b1be4-ee12-436d-ac61-7cdd7efd3926

Looking for some funding options? Check out the scholarship page at https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Certification/Scholarships/nai/_certification/Certification_Scholarships.aspx?hkey=ba77977f-1fbb-4e4c-a6a5-4cb49e5bede5 and the NAI cares program at https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Membership/Support_NAI/NAI_Cares_Donations/nai/_membership/Donations/NAI_Cares_Donate.aspx?hkey=434f8596-0f77-4c40-83e0-deee14404d99

Looking for something and not finding it? Have an idea of something to add? Reach out to your Chesapeake Region officers at <http://www.nairegion2.org/> or the national office staff at https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/About/About_NAI/Contact_Us/nai/_About/Contact_Us_Bios.aspx?hkey=207f2ca5-2613-4483-a7e5-2b855e7e9ce3

The NAI national office, staff and volunteers work hard to serve all the members and deliver professional, relevant information, trainings and resources.

Happy surfing at <https://www.interpnet.com/>

Yvonne Johnson

Director NAI Region 2



Closed Doors, Open Trails:

Montgomery Parks Creative Programming During COVID

Tiffany Jenkins (she, her, hers) Park Naturalist II, HFEE Division

The day the doors to our nature center closed due to Covid was scary, preceded by stressful months of uncertainty and loss. But as cliché as it sounds, I guess there is a reason they say when one door closes, another opens. I saw growth and creativity abound from our interpretive staff at Montgomery Parks as they met new challenges with new ideas. The obvious questions followed, with doors closed what could we create outside for people to do on their own? What could be self-guided, physically distanced, and still provide meaningful connections with the staff and the resource?

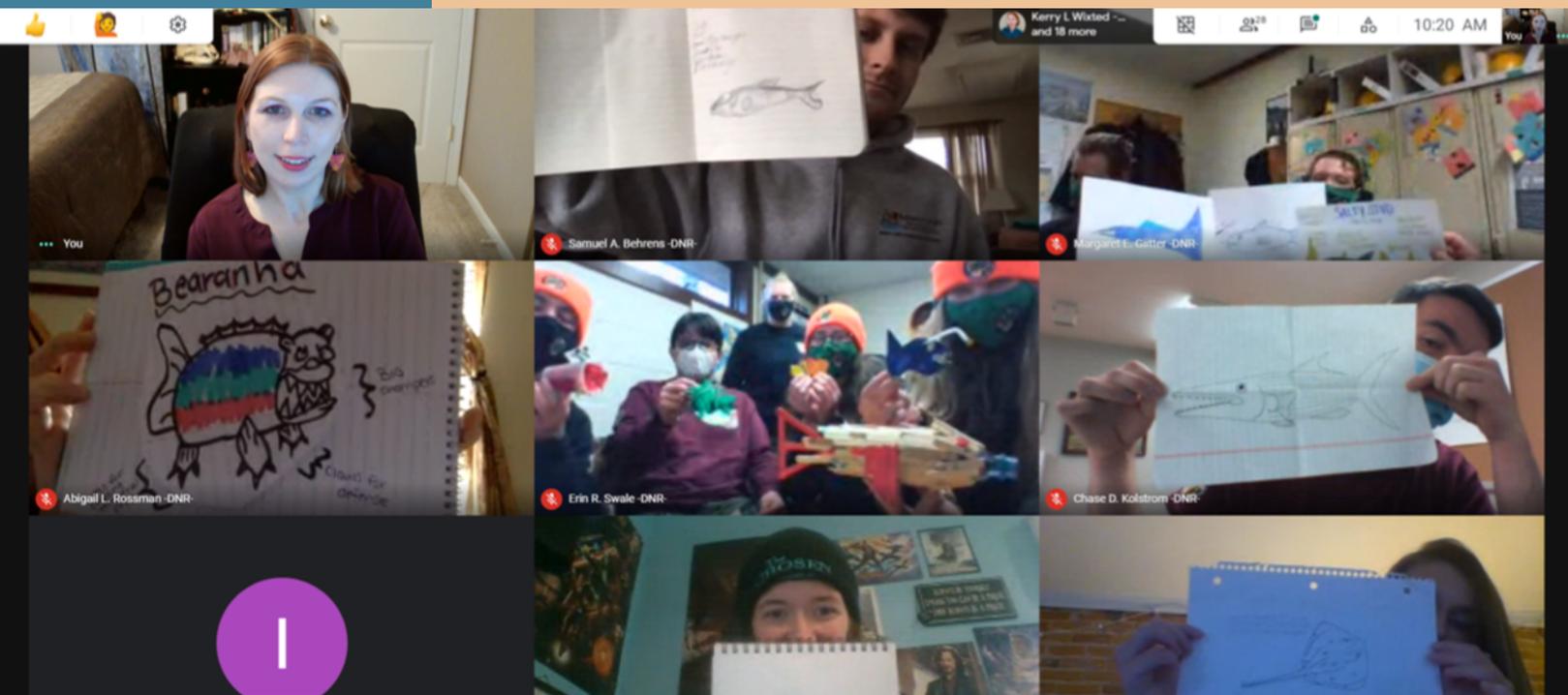
At Montgomery Parks we were lucky, we had a model already developed by Park Naturalist Jackie Raiford that had proven wildly successful with visitors pre-Covid. With limited space and staff at Locust Grove Nature Center, Jackie had created the program "Hike and Seek" out of the need to provide visitors with a self-guided experience on the trails. The popularity of the program grew, and with the same space and staff restrictions, Jackie began a timed entry system to meet the need. The program continues each month with a different theme. Participants are greeted by the naturalist and given an introduction to the experience before starting on the trail. Program materials are placed at different stations, and participants engage with trail challenges such as "use the clues to guess," I-spy, trivia questions, or storybooks, all of which are "look at" and "don't touch" activities – perfect for Covid. Whether participants are looking for fairy houses in the spring or guessing what skull they are looking at in October, each hike and seek is well-designed, fun, and engaging. When the trail challenges are completed, a prize is given by the naturalist staff to the visitor as they exit. The walk out is just one more opportunity for a community connection that people so desperately need right now.

The beauty of the program is the timed entry model can accommodate 100 visitors in the course of a few hours. During Covid, numbers for programs led by naturalist staff were limited to very small groups, so this allowed for the nature center to reach larger audiences while maintaining state and county health guidelines. The no-touch, but intentional station activities still presented a cohesive experience even in the absence of a tour-guide or our usual sensory-based nature tools.

It didn't take long for the rest of our county nature centers to catch on to the timeliness and efficiency of Jackie's model and adapt it for their audiences. At Meadowside Nature Center, where I am located, pre-Covid large groups of toddlers and parents visited the center on a regular basis for story times, parent-and-me programs, and a monthly tot hike that the community was missing. I worked to adapt Jackie's model for our tot audience and provided seasonal self-led alternatives. Our themes varied by the season, but we included migrating animals, Groundhogs Day, a wilderness detectives hike, and a teddy bear picnic.

Brookside Nature Center has developed timed entry self-led experiences for a variety of age groups from toddlers to adults. Their experience-in-a-bag approach differs with the needed program materials taken onto the trail by participants. Participants are given a clipboard with the how-to on what games or experiments to conduct at each station.

With the Delta variant on the rise, it looks like we might be in for another round of programming challenges. The good news is we've had a year of experimenting, we've learned from one another, and we know, if need be, the self-led tour can still be an opportunity for memory making and connection.



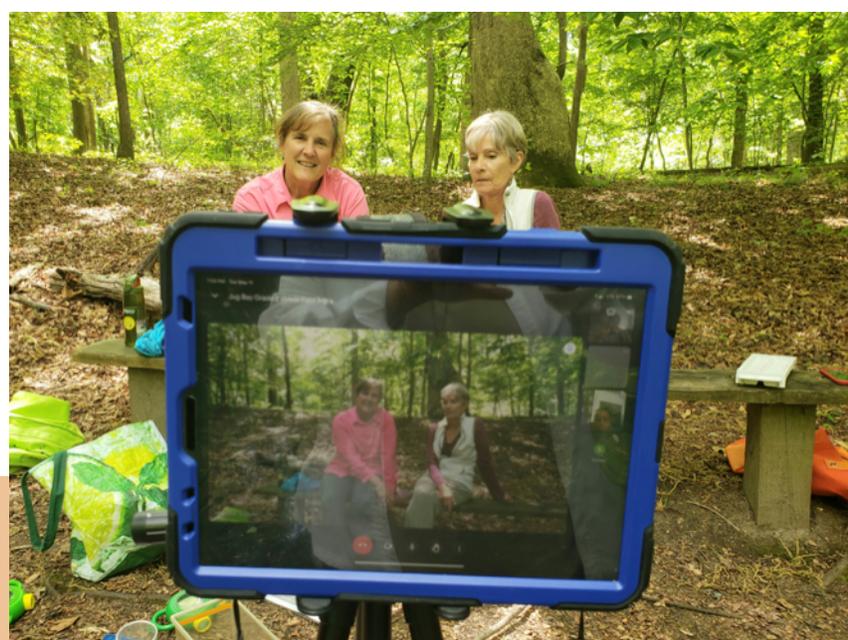
Tools of the Trade: Virtual Environmental Education

Environmental educators throughout the Department of Natural Resources depend on being outdoors to share our passion and love for Maryland's flora and fauna with our constituents. Some of the important services we provide to Marylanders include providing field experiences for school children, coordinating the Becoming an Outdoors Woman program, training Master Naturalists and teachers, as well as providing environmental education in our State Parks.

So what did DNR's environmental educators do when in March of 2020 they realized that they would not be able to help Maryland students and adults explore the environment in person? Answer: quickly adapt to teaching adults and students virtually. Educators learned how to use various online learning platforms, some previously unknown, including, Zoom, the Google Suite, Nearpod, Mentimeter, Padlet, and YouTube.

During the pandemic DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service educators presented over 147 programs reaching over 6,700 constituents. They created more than 63 professional development workshops that taught Marylanders about a wide range of subjects including the benefits of native plants to how to attract pollinators to your garden. They also created a plethora of online resources and webinars that allowed educators within and outside DNR to reach many new audiences all over the state.

The Maryland Park Service staff produced more than 30 "Virtual Ranger Experience" videos since 2020. These short, 3-minute video clips were produced in the field by staff at State Parks on a variety of topics, ranging from virtual Scales & Tales programs with live animals to tours of the Harriet Tubman Visitor Center, and some fascinating discoveries about the history, flora, and fauna found on our public lands. These popular videos were promoted through social media outlets on a regular basis and were a new way to connect with State Parks during the pandemic. But more than just entertaining, these videos were useful to enhance virtual teaching. All of the Virtual Ranger Experience videos are still available for viewing on the DNR YouTube channel, accessible though the department website.



Bee at Home (Wild at Schools)

- Build a mason bee home relay
- Mud, pollen, egg
 - ~25 trips for mud
 - ~15-35 trips for pollen






Kerry Wixted (she/her)

Start Video
Participants 36
Share Screen

Realizing that people were spending additional and unplanned time at home- both indoors and out- the Park Service developed a way to connect the public to place-based nature and stewardship essentials at home. The Park Service launched a new program called "Create Your Own State Park," encouraging families to turn their home or yard of any size into their own State Park. This is accomplished through a variety of different activities that were developed -- from identifying plants or trees already on site to creating a campsite or picnic area. This program was an ideal way to connect families to nearby-nature experiences, encourage conservation at home and help expand native habitats for wildlife.

With support from DNR grant funding, Caroline County schools were able to partner with Pickering Creek Audubon Center, through which the center's experts could train teachers of Environmental and Earth Science and American Government through virtual platforms and onsite visits. Virtual outdoor learning investigation videos and activities were created to enhance student's learning. Program materials were also translated into Spanish. This work continues on the high school level to enhance the County's environmental literacy plan.

Despite the hardships of the pandemic, DNR's environmental educators and Park Rangers rose to the task of continuing to educate Marylanders on the importance of preserving and protecting our vital natural resources. What was learned from this experience will be used going forward -- DNR educators will continue to reach new audiences virtually through online webinars and providing training videos through online platforms when staff can not be there in person.

Amy S. Henry is a Conservation Education Specialist with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Chesapeake and Coastal Service.

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Growing Our Future From The Seeds Of The Past



SAVE THE DATE
March 1, 2022



Spring Workshop 2022



NAI REGION 2:

Delaware

District of Columbia

Maryland

New Jersey

Pennsylvania

Virginia

West Virginia

Submission Guidelines

Each edition will be theme-based so if you have something to contribute short or long refer to the table below for upcoming deadlines and themes. Submissions for other sections can be sent at any time but if it fits in with a particular theme send it by that edition's deadline otherwise it will be used for a future edition.

Recommended lengths for submissions: 500-600 words for articles
 100 words for each tip or trick

Pictures should be submitted as an attachment to your email. Other materials may be sent in the body of your email or as an attachment.

If you have any suggestions for a theme for future newsletters, please send your suggestions or requests. Themes can be anything related to interpretation that would be of interest to the region.

Newsletter submissions including calendar items should be sent to:

ChesapeakeChat@gmail.com

	Deadline	Theme
Winter Newsletter	January 15	For the Love of Interpretation, Work around the Workshop theme, Nature Self Care (around Earth Month)
Spring Newsletter	April 15	Creative Camps/Interp, Experience Summer
Summer Newsletter	July 15	Field Trip Tricks and Tips, Experience Fall
Fall Newsletter	October 15	Interpreter Gratitudes, Creative Winter Programming, Experience Winter

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.interpnet.com/2/



**National Association for
 Interpretation Region 2
 Chesapeake**