

CATS Membership Meeting via Zoom, February 22, 2023, 9:30-11:00 am

Attendance: 59

Speakers: Jason Rutledge, Director of the Healing Harvest Forest Foundation and Kelly Walsh, Biological Woodsman Apprentice at the HHFF. Mr. Rutledge and Ms. Walsh spoke on the topic of “Horse Logging and Its Benefits in the Forest.”

While awaiting Mr. Rutledge’s arrival, Ms. Walsh described why she became involved in logging with Suffolk Punches, the breed of draft horse used by the HHFF. She explained that it combines her interests in ecology, woodlands and forestry science while allowing her to work with those wonderful horses. Woodland management utilizing this slower, more methodical approach fosters a more thoughtful analysis of which trees to take and which to leave compared to more traditional forestry practiced today. She did make it clear, however, that she subscribes to the use of “flexpower,” i.e., using power tools when that is the best option for the task.

When Mr. Rutledge began his portion of the talk, he described the mission of his foundation to promote restorative forest management. Since forests are in decline, sustaining practices are inadequate. Forests are the largest landscape condition in Virginia and are also the greatest contributor to human needs (think clean water, etc.) – so, protecting forests means protecting ourselves. The aim, said Mr. Rutledge, is to harmonize human practices with the natural world in a manner that allows woodlands to heal themselves .

A primary activity of the HHFF is to consult with organizations involved in forestry. Forestry workers need good information to do their jobs. The mindset taught to forestry workers, also, must switch from the idea of extracting natural resources into one of mimicking nature in order to restore its limited resources. Therefore, the HHFF’s philosophy of forestry management is to remove the “worst first.” Thinning the forest of declining trees allows the healthier specimens to grow with more vigor given their greater access to light and soil nutrients. At the same time, people possibly gain valuable forest products. It is an active management technique based on science; this goes beyond one type of environmentalist position of noninterference and simple preservation (which also ignores the problem of invasives, which Mr. Rutledge is very concerned about). Selective logging is essential for faster forest regeneration. And horses can be great for that, as the solar-powered, self-sustaining, environmentally-friendly sources of power that they are.

Business Meeting:

President’s Announcements: JoAnn Dalley

***A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the minutes from the January 2023 membership meeting.**

Since Michelle Cormier could not attend the meeting today, JoAnn presented a brief summary of the treasurer’s report:

- CATS is in excellent shape financially. All accounts are paid.
- The 2023 budget will be discussed and approved at the March 6 board meeting.
- The CATS website redesign/rebuild has started.

JoAnn attended a partnership meeting at Ivy Creek Natural Area and River View Farm (note: name change). ICNA RVF requested that those who lead walks, workdays or programs in the buildings or outdoors read their mission statement, land acknowledgement, and “leave no trace” outdoor ethics statement. (the Word document "Partner and Hike Leader info" is attached).

At the March board meeting, JoAnn plans to introduce a land acknowledgement statement for CATS as well. Anyone who wishes to attend a board meeting should email JoAnn no later than the Friday preceding the meeting so that she can supply the Zoom link.

Past President’s Report: Robin Hanes

Robin applauded the excellent report recently released by the Charlottesville Tree Commission and touched on a few of its key points. It will be posted on the website and she urged the membership to read it.

Incoming President’s Report: Gregg Korbon

No report this month.

Education Committee: Barbara Monfort

The Committee is working on the process for CATS to do more tabling.

Preparations for the 2023 tree stewards class is going well.

There will be a Zoom meeting on March 18 for anyone interested in becoming a tree walk leader. Sign up at TIF.

Barbara recommended a PRISM webinar concerning the spotted lanternfly.

Communications Committee: Mary Spear

The next membership meeting is via Zoom on March 29. Speakers will be Joan Maloff, PhD and Sarah Adloo of the Old Growth Forest Network. They will talk about work being done to protect old growth forests around the country.

Becky Cox and Chris Van are assisting with the CATS website rebuild. Becky has also taken over as Facebook manager and has started an Instagram account for CATS.

Emily's last tree ID class saw 220 people register. CATS has also benefitted from generous donations coming in through the registration process.

Tim's next webinar on tree choice, planting and care already has 90 registrations.

The CATS email list on MailChimp has grown too large for the free version; we need to get a paid subscription.

Members will soon receive an email announcement for the new tree walk leader class, which will be online on March 18.

Anyone interested in tabling should contact Barbara M, Anne B, or Mary.

JoAnn thanked Jacki Vawter for her hard work as our former Facebook manager and Martha Orton who is continuing as an administrator (JoAnn is the second administrator and Becky, Martha and JoAnn are all able to post on FB for CATS).

Robin touched on her trip to Alaska to dedicate a forest to the Old Growth Forest Network and urged the members to come to next month's membership meeting.

Projects Committee: Kathy Nepote

Kathy thanked the many members who have turned out for projects so far this year.

Last month's activities included:

- Invasives control at Walker School
- Pruning twice (and again tomorrow) at Berkmar
- Tree maintenance at Darden Towe
- Cleanup and maintenance at the VA Department of Forestry

Upcoming projects include:

- Maintenance at Greenleaf on March 9
- Possible planting at Chris Greene Lake on March 11 and March 18
- A meeting later this week with students from APO to see if they'd like to help at

Jackson-Via

More to come after the committee meets on March 8. Check the calendar and sign up on TIF.

Albemarle County has generated a waiver form for when CATS works on County land. It is going to be reviewed and probably amended.

New and Continuing Matters: JoAnn Dalley

JoAnn invited anyone interested in attending the Woods and Wildlife conference to carpool with her.

She has written an annual report summarizing CATS activities in 2022. It will be posted on the CATS website soon. She will also present it to Rob Farrell at the VDoF.

JoAnn reiterated that any member may attend the board meetings simply by emailing her no later than the Friday before the meeting so that she can forward the Zoom link.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Brill



Mission and Vision Statement for Ivy Creek Natural Area and Historic River View Farm

Current as of 2023

Our Mission

Connecting people to the past and present by honoring the land, history, and community.

Our Vision

To inspire and engage our community in the stewardship of our natural resources and our rich African American cultural history.

Elevator Speech

Hello, welcome to Ivy Creek Natural Area and historic River View Farm. We are so happy to have you here today. This area has recently been added to the National Register of Historic Places due to the significance of the history of the land and the people. This was originally a farm that was purchased in 1870 by a formerly enslaved man named Mr. Hugh Carr. Through hard work, he was able to become one of the largest African American landowners in Albemarle County. He and his wife Mrs. Texie Mae Hawkins had seven children, many of which went on to become educators and community leaders in Albemarle County and throughout the country. His daughter Mrs. Mary Carr Greer was an outstanding educator who went on to become the first female principal at Albemarle Training School. Conly Greer, her husband, was the first African American Extension Agent in Albemarle County. It is because of their hard work and community leadership that we can celebrate this land and its cultural history as well as natural history.

Land Acknowledgement

This land known as Ivy Creek Natural Area and River View Farm is part of the Monacan Nations traditional homeland and territory. We recognize that this land is important to their history, culture, and future. Today the Monacan's are one of the only Federally recognized tribes in Virginia and they have their own museum in Amherst County, which we encourage you to visit.

Safety Speech for Tours

Today we will be traveling over rocky and uneven ground that may have other tripping hazards. If it has rained recently the ground and trails may be slippery, so please watch your step. Being out in nature has inherent risks such as being exposed to insects such as ticks, different weather elements such as rain, and plants such as poison ivy. Please take the appropriate steps to protect yourself from these risks as you see fit. Ivy Creek Natural Area and River View Farm takes no responsibility for personal injuries that may occur while on this tour.

Leave No Trace Speech

Ivy Creek Natural Area is a nature preserve and is a special place where plants, animals, rocks, and all parts of nature are protected. Please do your part to help protect this amazing place by staying on the trail, do not collect any items including rocks, seeds, flowers, or flora or fauna. As always, remember to **Leave No Trace by taking only pictures and leaving only footsteps.**