



# Pocomoke Paddler

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 2

2009 SPRING NEWSLETTER

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The park comes alive in spring! Check out Park-ticulars to see what's new!
- MPS's alcohol policy is changing in 2009, read more on the back page.

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## AH-CHOOO, Pollen Attacks Again!

by Becky Nelson, MCC



A h - CHOOO! It's that time of year again: b e t w e e n spring cleaning and dusting off those gardening tools, many of us find ourselves reaching for a trusty bottle of Benadryl. Along with the first sticky-sweet breezes of spring come the dreaded runny noses and itchy eyes. It is a sad thing when a person must choose between burying her face in a gorgeous bouquet of sunny daffodils and spending the rest of the afternoon in the company of a Kleenex box.

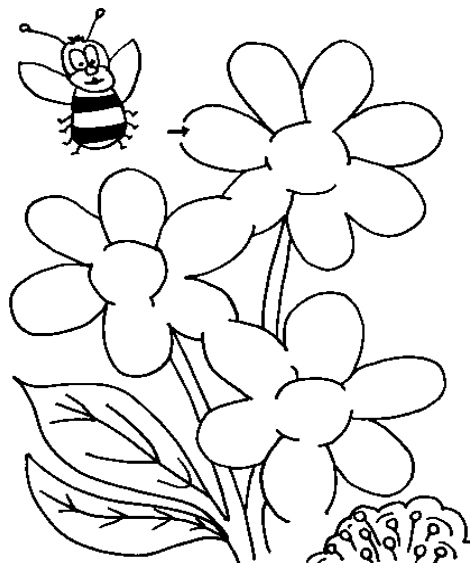
Spring is a season of growth and rejuvenation, but pesky pollen allergies put a damper on spring festivities for many of us. Pollen, however, is a key component in the reproduction of seed plants; without it we could kiss our honeysuckle-filled days goodbye, and just forget about those produce stand goodies later in the summer!

Most tree pollen falls in the spring, and around this time of year juniper pollen is especially prevalent on the Eastern Shore. Summer aller-

gies are mostly caused by grass and weed pollen, and fall allergies are mainly due to ragweed and other weeds which continue pollinating into the cooler weather. According to one source, oak trees, cereal crops, and ragweed are among the most vicious of allergy-causing pollen grains in Maryland. When we inhale these various pollen grains, cells located in our nasal passages release histamines. Histamines are chemicals that trigger our noses to run, our eyes to become inflamed, and a variety of other allergy symptoms.

These days we have a variety of options for treating pollen allergies, so we can

actually stop and smell the roses without throwing ourselves into allergic fits. For local, daily pollen and allergy forecasts look to The Weather Channel's website at <http://www.weather.com/activities/health/allergies/?from=secondarynav>. If you have severe allergies that limit your quality of life (and enjoyment of this glorious season) talk to your doctor about prescription medications and allergy shots. For the time being, let's just be thankful for all of the sweet sights and smells that those irritating little pollen grains bring about this time of year. Happy Spring!



**Can you make it through the maze? How can the bee get to the flower with the pollen?**

Maze: [www.kidscrafty.com/flowermaze.htm](http://www.kidscrafty.com/flowermaze.htm)

# Upcoming Events....

## April

### “Nature Journaling for Kids”

April 25th, 2pm

Join a naturalist as we learn how to sketch, record, and explore what is outside our back-door. Nature is always changing and a nature journal is an excellent way of keeping track of what is happening in the natural world! \$3 per person or \$10 for a family of four. Call today to make your reservations!



### Tree-mendous Celebration

April 26th, 12pm - ?

Join us at the Shad Landing sports field for a fun filled day to beautify Pocomoke River State Park. Bring something to drink to stay hydrated and bring your work gloves to help plant, mulch, and water 23 trees. If you enjoy working outdoors come help us celebrate earth day in a very green way. Come do your part! Call the park for more information and registration.

To make  
event  
reservations

Call

(410)632-2566  
extension 115

Email

pocomokepaddler  
@dnr.state.md.us

## May

### “Outdoor Survival”

May 17th, 1pm

You are lost in the woods, how would you survive? Join an experienced naturalist to find out some simple solutions for survival in the wilderness. \$3 per person or \$10 for a family of four. Call to make your reservations today!

### “Adopt-A-Raptor”

May 23rd, 7pm

Can you imagine an up-close encounter with a raptor? Have a chance to “adopt” one of these birds. Meet at the Shad Landing Nature Center Amphitheater. Program is Free, Public Welcome. Adopt an animal for a \$10 donation to care and feed the birds. **(Shad Landing does NOT charge a park entrance fee)**

## Sunday Morning Canoe Trips

Paddle the Pocomoke River with a naturalist. New theme every week! View the local wildlife and discover the rich history of the area. Meet at the Shad Landing Boat Rental Area by the river-front. First-come, first-served (no reservations necessary). \$20 per canoe or kayak, \$15 per solo kayak. Bring your own boat for only \$5 per person. **NO TRIPS scheduled for June 7 and August 9.**

## June

### Evening Paddle”

June 6th, 7-9pm

Enjoy an evening paddle down the serene waters of the Pocomoke. Discover the wonders that abound on the river as the sun sets. Meet at the Boat Rental Area by the river-front. \$20 per canoe or tandem kayak, \$15 per single kayak. Have your own canoe or kayak? Bring it along for just \$5 per person.



## Park-ticulars

What's going on at Pocomoke River State Park this Spring? For information and hours please call ahead before your visit at (410)632-2566.

### **Camp Store, Extension 107:**

Camper registration, snacks, fishing tackle, and a refreshing drink are a few of the items you can pick up at the camp store. The Shad Landing Camp will be open Friday through Sunday in April with extended hours beginning in May.

### **ORV Permits, Extension 107:**

ORV permits may be purchased our at the Camp Store during business hours only or your local DNR licensing office. Also in Salisbury, MD at the DNR Eastern Service Center, 201 Baptist Street #22, Salisbury, MD, (410)713-3840.

### **Boat House, Extension 107**

The Boat House will open mid-April based on weather and water temperature. Canoes, kayaks (double and singles) motor boats, and paddle boats may be rented. Call for boat rental fees and availability.

### **Trails, Extension 149:**

Hike the Trail of Change at Shad Landing, a 3/4 mile trail through the forest and cypress swamp. There are also several "camper" trails throughout the park that are marked by colored posts for easy hiking.

## Volunteer Corner



### **Bryan Feyock**

I started coming to Pocomoke River State Park to photograph the birds of prey that were in their Scales & Tales program, back in 1996. A few years after that, I attended one of the training programs at the park and started volunteering for the Scales &

Tales program. I've handled raptors before, but this program gave me that opportunity on a more regular basis, with a broader variety of animals.

While helping out with displays and shows over the years, I've seen the amount of interest that it draws from the public, and the valuable education it gives back. It's my hope that this program will continue.

## What's New?

Check out the park's 3 new All Access Picnic Pads! The picnic pads enhance the renovated sports field area by providing family picnic sites that are fully accessible from paved pathways. Also a new misting fountain has been added so that visitors can cool down after playing softball or volleyball on a hot summer day. This project was funded by a National Recreational Trails grant developed by park personnel.



### **Camping, Extension 107:**

Shad Landing is open year-round for camping and Milburn Landing is opening April 1st (electric, non-electric, and mini cabins). Call 1-888-432-2267 to make your reservations for the 2009 season.

### **Pool, Extension**

Splish, splash....The pool will open Memorial Day Weekend Monday-Sunday *except for Tuesday*. Call ahead for pool hours Passes are available for large groups and frequent visitors.

### **Nature Center, Extension 106:**

The nature center will be welcoming visitors on the weekends in April. It will open its doors full-time Memorial Day Weekend (when staffing is available). Call the park and dial extension 115 for hours of operation.

Teacher, Scout Leaders, and Civic groups...want to make your science lessons come to life? Environmental education programs can be scheduled for your group by calling the Nature Center. Schedule an environmental or live animal program today!

# There's Tannic Acid In My Water

By Kerri Liming, Volunteer



While walking through the swampy parts of the Pocomoke River State Park, you'll notice that there's a lot to, well... notice! The beauty of the mix of vegetation that grows there, such as the loblolly pine, the soft green ferns and the majestic red maples. You'll notice the sudden, cool dampness of the air on your skin created by the plants that live there in the swamp. You'll also notice something else—the water here is not blue, but *brown*. Contrary to what you might initially think, the water here is not dirty. This phenomenon is due to a substance called tannic acid leaching out of the bald cypress trees and into the water.

Plants all over the world produce this interesting acid. You can find levels of tannic acid in vegetables, fruits such as blueberries, and many different types of trees such as oak, hemlock, mangrove, and wattle. However, plants that

need to protect themselves from fungus produce larger quantities of it, like the bald cypress tree. A side effect is the leaching of tannic acid into the water turning it a *brownish* color.

To get a little more scientific, this acid is located on the surface wax or vacuoles of the plants and can also be found on the bud, root, seed and stem. Plants produce it to deter animals. The acid is just that—acidic, and has an astringent taste that keeps animals away. Furthermore, if the animal actually eats the acid, perhaps in a piece of unripened fruit it could make it difficult for them to digest proteins and plant cell walls.

Tannic acid has many other uses, not just in the plant kingdom. Take our True or False quiz (left column) and test your tannic knowledge!

## True or False Answers:

**1. True!** This practice can be dated back to 5000 B.C. in Egypt. Leather from animal skins is composed of collagen. Tanning these skins with the acid protects these areas from microorganisms. You can thank tannins for your favorite well-worn leather jacket.

**2. True!** It is found more typically in red wine than in white because it is made using the whole bunch of

grapes, the stem included, during fermentation. The tannins cause the astringent taste, the flavor that makes your mouth pucker a little when tasting red wine and allows the wine to stay drinkable for longer.

**3. True!** It is said the water in cypress swamps was important to pirates and explorers because the acid in the water kept it fresher longer!

**4. True!** The acid creates the tea's color and full-bodied taste. Even though tannic acid can hurt some higher animals' digestive systems, the amount present in wine and tea are not concentrated enough to do harm to humans.

**5. True (if you're a mouse)!** Plants high in tannic acid have been used in the treatment of colonic cancers in mice! For humans it is sold in powder form for problems, such as, diarrhea, controlling internal bleeding, regulating the GI tract. It can also be used topically on burns and for toothaches.

Next time someone asks why the water is so brown, tell them there's tannic acid in it. Come explore the world of the bald cypress and the wildlife that lives among, above, and below this distinctive tree. Join us for nature journaling on April 25th and see what else there is to discover!

True  
or

False

1. Tannic acid is used in making leather?
2. If you are a wine drinker, you have tasted the puckering taste of tannic acid?
3. Pirates sailing the Pocomoke River drank water high in tannic acid?
4. Speaking of brown water, tannic acid gives tea its color?
5. Tannic acid is used to help cure cancer?

# Park Quest, It's Not Just a Shore Thing!

By Steve McCoy and Dorie Coleman

In May of 2008, the Maryland Park Service (MPS) unveiled a new family-oriented program entitled Park Quest East. The program encouraged families to take to the outdoors and challenge themselves in exploring outdoor recreational activities in Maryland State Parks. When the program concluded two months later, almost 160 families had registered and the program was being hailed as one of DNR's most successful programs in years.



**The "Mighty Four Team" were the grand prize winner of 2008 Park Quest Finale.**

Park Quest was the vision of John Ohler, Manager of Tuckahoe State Park, and Gary Adelhardt, Manager of Pocomoke River State Park. Both veteran Rangers (and fathers), they had grown increasingly concerned with the lack of connection today's children have with the outdoors. The days when young people left home in the morning to spend the day exploring the wilds beyond their backyard fence have been replaced by X-Box marathons and 6 A.M. soccer

practices. We now risk raising a generation of children who have little or no appreciation for the significance of their natural resources or the issues that threaten them.

Rangers Ohler and Adelhardt had an idea that would get people, young and old, back outside to experience their natural resources in a non-threatening, family-oriented manner. The program, set in Maryland's Eastern Shore's state parks, offered families opportunities to hike, canoe, and explore the area's woodlands, waterways and public lands at their own pace and individual comfort level. Each park offered an activity, or "Quest," unique to its area and participating families were issued a special Park Quest Passport that was stamped upon completion of each activity. As an incentive, families that completed activities at each of the parks were eligible for a grand finale event, complete with games, competitions and prize drawings. The only requirement of the program was that each team must include at least one member under 16 years of age and one adult.

By the conclusion, nearly 160 teams had registered. With catchy team names such as "The Wright Stuff" and "Bikini Bottom Bunch," the teams plunged into the activities with enthusiasm, eagerly

updating DNR's Park Quest website with tales and photos documenting their experiences. Finally in August, families that had completed all six quests gathered at Pocomoke for the grand finale event.



**Teams are encouraged to participate and explore at their own pace and comfort level.**

"It was a wonderful event and without a doubt we will be participating next year," said Maureen Greenlees, a member of the Mighty Four Team from Salisbury. The team took first place in the day's competitions and walked away with four bicycles, helmets and bike racks.

Ultimately, the success of Park Quest depends on the commitment of Marylander families to get outside and get back in touch with the natural environment. When established at a young age, a respect for and an appreciation of the natural world generally continues for life. Maryland Park Quest is one way that DNR and the MPS are ensuring that the treasured natural resources they work so hard to protect and promote do not go unappreciated by future generations.



Want to become a  
Park Quest Team?  
Here's How...

- ◆ Starting April 11th, learn more and register online at [www.dnr.state.md.us/parkquest/](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/parkquest/) or by contacting the MPS at 410-260-8186 between the hours of 9a.m.- 4 p.m., Monday - Friday.
- ◆ Park Quest will be limited to the first 300 teams that register.
- ◆ The Quest officially begins on May 9 and ends on July 26.
- ◆ Teams will be asked to document their experiences on the Park Quest website. In addition, DNR, in partnership with Maryland Public Television, will be offering teams the opportunity to record video of their Quests.

## Pocomoke River State Park

3461 Worcester Highway

Snow Hill, MD 21863

PHONE: (410)632-2566

FAX: (410)632-2914

www.dnr.maryland.gov

EMAIL THE NATURALIST:

pocomokepaddler@dnr.state.md.us



MARTIN O'MALLEY, GOVERNOR



JOHN R. GRIFFIN, SECRETARY

The facilities and services of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or physical or mental disability. Call toll free in Maryland 1-877-620-8DNR ext. 8780, TTY via Maryland Relay: 711 (within MD) 800-735-2258 (out of state) or visit [www.dnr.maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov). Accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. Seven days advance notice is requested.



Attention:

Boat Safety Course

Saturday, May 30th

8am –5pm

Call the park for more information at (410)632-2566

# Changes in Alcohol Policy



The Maryland Park Service provides outdoor recreational experiences for millions of visitors each year. Our State Parks feature recreational amenities, as well as campsites, full-service cabins and picnic shelters where families can enjoy nature-based activities that are close enough to home for everyone to enjoy.

To maintain and ensure a safe, family-oriented outdoor recreation experience for all park guests, the Maryland Park Service has modified its policy regulating the consumption of alcohol in State Parks. This policy has been adopted in the interest of all park patrons to restore the family atmosphere of State Parks while still allowing for the appropriate consumption of alcoholic beverages under a special permit process.

### Answers to Commonly Asked Questions:

#### **Can park visitors consume alcoholic beverages in State Parks?**

After March 31, 2009, alcohol is permitted only in campgrounds, picnic shelters and full-service cabins. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in **all other** State Park areas, including:

- day-use area
- beach areas

- other areas with picnic tables not associated with a designated shelter and all other undeveloped areas
- impoundments and lakes where gasoline motors are prohibited.

Effective November 1, 2009, alcoholic beverages will be prohibited in all State Park areas, including campgrounds. The only exceptions will be full-service cabins, and designated picnic shelters with an alcohol permit.

#### **Why is the Maryland Park Service changing its alcohol policy?**

The Maryland Park Service is altering its alcohol consumption policy to ensure a *high quality, safe experience* for all State Park visitors. This change will...

- (1) Reduce impacts on state facilities and natural resources;
- (2) Ensure the safety of park patrons, park staff and Natural Resources Police officers; and
- (3) Ultimately reduce the incidence of undesirable behaviors of park patrons who consume alcohol to excess.
- (4) Reduce the incidence of drunken driving.

For more information on the new alcohol policy check out <http://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/alcoholfaq.html>.

Have a fun and safe summer in 2009!