

Habitats highlighted in conference

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WYE MILLS On Sept. 25 and 26, the Maryland Native Plant Society and Environmental Concern of St. Michaels will co-sponsor a conference, "Biodiversity of Maryland's Eastern Shore," to be held at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills.

"The Maryland Native Plant Society annual conference highlights a different region of the state each year to learn more about our natural habitats and native plants," said Karyn Molines, conference chairman.

"Maryland's Eastern Shore offers a wide variety of habitats old-growth forests, wetlands, Delmarva bays each with interesting rare and common plants. The speakers and field trip leaders provide information and experiences for both the amateur and professional naturalist."

The conference begins Saturday morning with illustrated lectures on the Shore's natural habitats and plants. Wesley Knapp, ecologist/botanist for the Maryland DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service, will present an overview of natural communities, discussing distributions and diagnostic rare and common plant species. Dr. Joan Maloof will discuss Eastern Shore Forests, including the history. Maloof, author of "Teaching the Trees: Lessons from the Forest" and professor of biology and environmental studies at Salisbury University, will share the results of her work on the Nature Conservancy's Nassawango Preserve. The morning ends with a discussion by Dr. Sara Tangren about wild lupines (*Lupinus perennis*), a rare plant found growing on the Delmarva Peninsula. Tangren is the founder of Chesapeake Natives.

Following lunch, participants will travel around the area for field explorations. Trips are planned to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Pristine Pines Delmarva Bay, Wye Island natural Resources Management Area, Adkins Arboretum and a wetland plant identification workshop at Environmental Concern. Additional field trips will be held Sunday, Sept. 26.

At the Saturday evening dinner and social, Nick Carter will discuss watersheds. Carter was a biologist and ecologist for Maryland DNR for 35 years, analyzing the impacts of habitat alteration on aquatic resources and developing strategies to protect ecosystems.

The conference is \$65 per person, \$55 for members and \$15 for students, which includes lunch. The social is an additional \$30 per person and includes dinner. Vegetarian meals are available. The Maryland Native Plant Society website, www.mdflora.org, has additional information about the conference, including online registration. For information about Environmental Concern, visit www.wetland.org.

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