

The 2011 WVNPS Annual Meeting Hikes!

This year's annual meeting was a huge success and hikes were well attended. Twenty-five people met at the Forest Service Office to embark on hikes to Blister Run Botanical Area/National Natural Landmark and the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO). Blister Run contains an approximately 150-acre mature, balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) swamp. The swamp represents the southernmost natural extension of balsam fir in the country. The NRAO is a unique resource for Radio Astronomy and is home to the Robert C. Byrd Green Bank Telescope, the largest fully steerable dish in the world. Scientists from around the world use the Green Bank Telescope to study virtually all types of astronomical objects known, from planets and comets in our own Solar System to quasars and galaxies billions of light-years away. Participants had the opportunity to listen to a talk about native seed collection and participate in a 2 hour hike around the property or enjoy the NRAO tour.

Over one hundred plant species were recorded at these two sites including Large Round-Leaved Orchid (*Platanthera orbiculata*), Mad-Dog Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora* L. var. *lateriflora*), Crested Woodfern (*Dryopteris cristata*), and Bog Goldenrod (*Solidago uliginosa*). A special thanks to Jim Vanderhorst for diligently tracking our species list. **Our comprehensive species list is available here.**

Unfortunately, we also encountered a few non-native invasive species the first of which was Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*). But, the invasive barberry was no match for our weed warrior, Judy Dumke, who quickly took care of the problem (see picture below).

The weather held out beautifully until the afternoon. Light showers kept us company as we scouted the NRAO for native seed to help with restoration projects on the Monongahela National Forest. Together, the group collected over thirty large sacks of witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*), common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*), and much more. Some of the seed was sent to the Natural Resources Conservation Service – Alderson Plant Materials Center to be grown in containers. Additional seed will be directly sown in disturbed areas.

The final hike occurred on Sunday morning and was led by Elizabeth Byers, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. The group visited both Gaudineer Scenic Area and Glade Run. Glade Run is a 60 acre headwater wetland that includes rare plants such as long stalked holly (*Ilex collina*) and glaucous willow (*Salix discolor*). Glade Run is part of an outstanding botanical area that includes Shavers Fork with its community of rare and disjunct species and one of the few surviving stands of old growth forest at the nearby Gaudineer Scenic Area. Although it is estimated that West Virginia once had nearly 500,000 acres of high elevation virgin red spruce forests, only a few small stands remain today. The 50 acres of virgin red spruce at Gaudineer Scenic Area is perhaps the best such stand remaining in the State.

Thanks to our trip leaders Kent Karriker, Todd Kuntz, Randall Lesser, and Elizabeth Byers.

[Gaudineer Scenic Area Plant List 9/22/11 \(pdf\)](#)

[Blister Run Plant List 9/24/11 \(pdf\)](#)

[Greenbank Plant List 9/24/11 \(pdf\)](#)



Group gathers at the Forest Service Office for a Safety Briefing and to Car Pool



Judy Dumke, Weed Warrior, Proudly Displays Her Conquest (Japanese barberry)



Kent Karriker discusses the differences between mountain holly and long-stalked holly



Elizabeth Byers looks at lichens



Large Round-Leaved Orchid spotted at Blister Run



Todd Kuntz, Monongahela National Forest, talks to WVNPS members about native seed propagation



Randall Lesser, NRCS Alderson Plant Materials Center, talks about restoration projects on the National Forest



Modern botanizing



Modern botanizing



Group shot



Robert C. Byrd Green Bank Telescope, the world's largest fully steerable single aperture antenna, at the Greenbank National Radio Astronomy Observatory



WVNPS Members collect seed at Blister Run Botanical Area



Jim Vanderhorst makes sure he has all the species marked down for the trip's master list



Lovely shelf fungus

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