

MEADOW NEWS

Spring 1998 Meadowview Biological Research Station Newsletter

Dear Reader:

I would like to tell you about the exciting projects Meadowview Biological Research Station has done, or is currently involved in, and how they meet the Meadowview mission of discovery, research, propagation, reintroductions, and education.

One of our major efforts in 1997 was a census of Atlantic white cedar on the western shore of Maryland. White cedar grows in the same seepy, boggy habitats as pitcher plants and we felt this research was definitely justified to determine the vigor of a major tree species in the bog ecosystem and to look for important associate species. We presented our paper at a white cedar symposium held at Christopher Newport University in August where we reported a little over a thousand adult trees in nine sites, two of which were discovered as part of the survey. We also determined that one of these sites contained purple pitcher plant 20 years ago and we have hopes of a reintroduction in the future.

We found the census such a useful means of evaluating these ecosystems that we are currently engaged in a census of longleaf pine in Virginia. Longleaf pine reaches its northern limit in southeastern Virginia and is almost extinct in that state. Longleaf was used for flooring (southern yellow pine) and turpentine and grows in association with white cedar and pitcher plant bogs. Longleaf represents another linchpin species that needs to be preserved to maintain the integrity of these delicate ecosystems. Meadowview gathered seeds of Virginia longleaf in the fall of 1997 and is raising them for reintroduction to the wild.

Reintroductions of the yellow pitcher plant in Virginia are on track in 1998 with an extensive seeding and rhizome planting at Brad Whitehead's in Sussex County and restoration of a sphagnum bog with the Virginia Department of Transportation in Prince George County. Our proposal to form a committee of public and private sector to oversee plant introductions has been approved by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and we hope to have the program on-line by the end of 1998. We have also succeeded in convincing Anne Arundel County to remove a storm drain which silted and destroyed part of the naturally open Arden pitcher plant fen. We are still lobbying to get Piney Branch Bog in Charles County, Maryland preserved. We also reintroduced the federally endangered mountain sweet pitcher plant and associate species at a boys camp in Henderson County, North Carolina.

In the education arena we have provided talks on bog gardening and conservation at several society meetings and are working with both Spotsylvania High School and Airfield 4-H Center in Virginia and Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. The Spotsylvania High School students are members of future farmers of America and have counted and sown two pitcher plant species in their greenhouse as well as learning how to make cranberry cuttings. Arlington Echo Center has one of the few western shore Maryland white cedar populations and we have developed a bog restoration plan for that colony as an educational opportunity to visiting students. Airfield 4-H center enlisted five students to help in our longleaf pine census and in less than a

day they counted and measured over 900 trees. As a bonus, when we first met with the Airfield staff and visited their property we succeeded in discovering a new colony of purple pitcher plant!

Volunteers Pat Bingham, Leif Jacobson, Nancy Penick, and Anne Simpson have provided invaluable assistance to Meadowview. Repotting, division, and plant bed construction is underway thanks to their efforts. Rebecca Twing provided layout and design for our plant catalog.

We presented our paper on how powerline easements are acting as refugia for rare plant species at an international symposium on right-of-way management in New Orleans in February 1997. Powerline easements are serving as significant habitat for many rare bog species and it is important that the proper management of these sites be recognized by utility companies. Papers on pitcher plant biochemistry and genetics have been accepted by both HortScience and Plant Science. We also presented a paper at the Virginia Academy of Science in May 1997 on how quail plantations can function as self-supporting biopreserves and suggested that a pilot, fire-maintained quail plantation be established in Virginia to help maintain rare plant biodiversity. In May of 1998 we are presenting our paper on "Conservation and Restoration of Seepage Wetlands on the Coastal Plain of Maryland and Virginia" at the Conservation of Biological Diversity in Annapolis, Maryland and we have four papers to present at the Virginia Academy of Science on a variety of subjects.

We are trying to increase our membership in 1998 to help fund these important conservation initiatives. If you are not a member we invite you to obtain an annual membership and get the benefit of a 50% discount on our bog plant species. Your financial support is vital to our continued operations. If you know someone else who is interested in our work sign them up as a member! Perhaps you would like to become a Meadowview volunteer and participate in some of these activities? I thank you for your interest and if you would like to visit our facility please call me at (804) 633-4336 for an appointment.

Sincerely,

Phil Sheridan, Director
Meadowview Biological
Research Station