

## Audubon at Home in Northern Virginia

### Demonstration Sites: Native Landscapes in Northern Virginia



#### - Why and How to use this list -

##### Why

**A picture may say a thousand words, but when you're talking habitats, a living, breathing, functioning example acts as an entire library of knowledge.** If you are excited about restoring, managing or creating a native habitat, such as a meadow, woodland or stream then there's no better way to get started than exploring the real thing in the field. Walking through a local clean stream, flowering meadow or fern-filled forest gives you an image and template to work from, enabling you to correctly re-create that habitat on the properties you interact with.

**Many of us are surrounded by severely degraded habitats and may not know what a functioning Northern Virginia natural area truly looks like.** The sites on this list are local examples of properties that have either preserved or recently restored healthy native habitats. Visit the examples near your neighborhood and learn from them – use them as teachers. You and your neighbors can be students that treat your walks in these beautiful local preserves as classes. Learn to write on your landscapes in the language of native habitats.

**This list also includes native plant gardens, such as rain gardens, pollinator and butterfly gardens and shade gardens.** If you'd like to see a successful native plant garden and get a feeling and image for its design, sounds, scents and colors, then be sure to visit the one nearest your community.

## How

### **Preserved sites vs. Restored sites – what’s the difference?**

**Preserved** – This simply means that these sites have been protected and set aside in a manner that has allowed them to retain their natural, native, functioning ecology and have been preserved as healthy examples of their habitat type.

**Restored** – This refers to sites that were in some way degraded or missing certain native components and were then restored recently through human intervention in an attempt to return them to a more natural, functioning state. These are examples of restoration projects.

### **What to look for when exploring demo sites:**

- Vegetative Layers – Look for plant layers, such as groundcovers, wildflowers, shrubs, understory trees and canopy trees in a woodland. When exploring a meadow, look for grasses and wildflowers of different heights.
- Plant Communities – Observe which species or types of plants co-exist together in the same habitat.
- Wildlife-Plant Interactions – Take note of which butterflies, birds and other wildlife are associated with which plants and plant communities.
- Topography – Observe how the land moves, slopes and rises.
- Water Features – Look closely at the size, design and structure of the streams, wetlands and pools at these sites.
- Soil and Geology – Does your property have sandy or clay-like soil? Find a demo site that shares your soil type and learn what plants grow there. Are you in coastal plain, piedmont or mountain? Northern Virginia includes all three geological regions in its boundaries.

### **How did we create this list?**

This list includes local sites that ASNV staff, volunteers, chapter members and partners have had direct experience with. It is not by any means a complete list – there are other wonderful examples of native landscapes in Northern Virginia and we look forward to learning about and visiting more. Do you know one that you think should be on this list? Please contact ASNV and let us know!

### **Take your site exploration experience home with you!**

Don’t forget to have fun and take photos, notes and even sketches to bring home the images, information and knowledge gained from your explorations. And most importantly, **SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS** – neighbors, family, friends, students, teachers, church members, co-workers, etc. They may want to come *with you* to walk these sites and may have sites *of their own* to share with you.

**For all of the following sites**, you may want to enhance the quality of your visiting experience by contacting the appropriate organizations and property owners/managers to *ask specifically* for someone who can talk or meet with you about their native meadows, native woodlands, native plants or watershed management issues. At some of these locations the eco-friendly and/or native plant aspects of these sites may be tucked away somewhere and only a few of the staff are knowledgeable about them. Find the right person and they're more than happy to answer all your questions and even meet with you on site for a personal tour.

## **Wetlands**

### **Sites *Preserved* in native conditions:**

Streams:

- Webb Sanctuary, <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/default.asp?page=516>
- Fraser Preserve, [www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/virginia/preserves/art1235.html](http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/virginia/preserves/art1235.html)
- Prince William Forest Park, [www.nps.gov/prwi/](http://www.nps.gov/prwi/)
- Scott's Run Nature Preserve, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dranesville/Parks.htm#scotts\\_run](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dranesville/Parks.htm#scotts_run)
- Riverbend Park, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/)
- Hemlock Overlook Regional Park, [www.nvrpa.org/parks/hemlockoverlook/](http://www.nvrpa.org/parks/hemlockoverlook/)
- Fountainhead Regional Park, [www.nvrpa.org/parks/fountainhead/](http://www.nvrpa.org/parks/fountainhead/)

### **Sites *Restored* to native conditions:**

Streams:

- Donaldson Run Stream Restoration - Arlington, VA  
Contact: Jason Papacosma, [jpapacosma@arlingtonva.us](mailto:jpapacosma@arlingtonva.us)
- Daniels Run Elementary School - Fairfax, VA  
Contact: Jeanette Stewart, [inti@mindspring.com](mailto:inti@mindspring.com)
- Accotink Creek - City of Fairfax, VA  
Contact: Adrian Fremont [afremont@fairfaxva.gov](mailto:afremont@fairfaxva.gov)

Ponds:

- Lake Audubon, Lake Thoreu, Bulter Pond – Reston, VA  
Contact: Nicki Formeski, [nicki@reston.org](mailto:nicki@reston.org) (Reston Association) or  
Claudia Thompson Deahl, [claudia@reston.org](mailto:claudia@reston.org) (Reston Association).
- Meadowlark Gardens, [www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html](http://www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html)

## Woodlands

### *Preserved in native conditions:*

- Fraser Preserve, [www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/virginia/preserves/art1235.html](http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/virginia/preserves/art1235.html)
- Riverbend Park, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/)
- Scott's Run Nature Preserve, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dranesville/Parks.htm#scotts\\_run](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dranesville/Parks.htm#scotts_run)
- Prince William Forest Park, [www.nps.gov/prwi/](http://www.nps.gov/prwi/)
- Fountainhead Regional Park, [www.nvrpa.org/parks/fountainhead/](http://www.nvrpa.org/parks/fountainhead/)
- Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, [www.bansheereeks.org/](http://www.bansheereeks.org/)
- Hemlock Overlook Regional Park, [www.nvrpa.org/parks/hemlockoverlook/](http://www.nvrpa.org/parks/hemlockoverlook/)

### *Restored to native conditions:*

- Reston Association, [www.reston.org](http://www.reston.org)
- Blandy Experimental Farm, [http://minerva.acc.virginia.edu/blandy/RESEARCH/Research\\_Home.php](http://minerva.acc.virginia.edu/blandy/RESEARCH/Research_Home.php)
- Loudoun Valley High School, [www.loudoun.k12.va.us/lvhs/site/default.asp](http://www.loudoun.k12.va.us/lvhs/site/default.asp)
- Meadowlark Gardens, [www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html](http://www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html)

## Meadows

### *Preserved in native conditions:*

Naturally occurring meadows in the Northern Virginia area would have been created by fire, severe storm events, beavers, bison or Native Americans and would have been temporary – a changing mosaic of meadow clearings that appeared and disappeared at different sites across the landscape. As these influences are currently either managed (fire, beavers) or no longer present (bison, Native Americans) most existing meadows in Northern Virginia are created and managed by human intervention. The exception would be the few beaver wetlands that have been allowed to grow and change into wet meadows. Two good sites to see this are Huntley Meadows Park and Reston Association Parkland.

### *Restored to native conditions:*

Large Scale:

- Huntley Meadows Park, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley/)
- Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, [www.bansheereeks.org/](http://www.bansheereeks.org/)

- Riverbend Park, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/)
- Bles Park, [www.loudoun.gov/prcs/parks/other.htm](http://www.loudoun.gov/prcs/parks/other.htm)
- Rust Sanctuary, [www.audubonnaturalist.org/cgi-bin/mesh/sanctuaries/rust\\_va](http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/cgi-bin/mesh/sanctuaries/rust_va)
- Manassas Battlefield Park, [www.nps.gov/mana/naturescience/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/mana/naturescience/index.htm)
- Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, [www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/index.cfm?id=51611](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/index.cfm?id=51611)
- Meadowood Management Area, [www.es.blm.gov/lands/meadowood/index.php](http://www.es.blm.gov/lands/meadowood/index.php)

#### Small Scale/“Pocket” Meadows

- Reston Association Parkland, [www.reston.org](http://www.reston.org)
- Vale Historic Schoolhouse, [info@asnv.org](mailto:info@asnv.org)
- Daniels Run Elementary, [inti@mindspring.com](mailto:inti@mindspring.com)
- Meadowlark Gardens Regional Park, [www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html](http://www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html)
- Riverfarm, [www.ahs.org/river\\_farm/index.htm](http://www.ahs.org/river_farm/index.htm)
- Webb Sanctuary, <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/default.asp?page=516>
- Runnymede Park, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dranesville/Parks.htm#runnymede](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dranesville/Parks.htm#runnymede)

## Wildflower Gardens

#### Shade Gardening:

- Meadowlark Gardens, [www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html](http://www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html)
- Greenspring Gardens, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/)
- National Arboretum, [www.usna.usda.gov/](http://www.usna.usda.gov/)
- Blandy Farm,  
[http://minerva.acc.virginia.edu/blandy/RESEARCH/Research\\_Home.php](http://minerva.acc.virginia.edu/blandy/RESEARCH/Research_Home.php)
- Reston Association, [www.reston.org](http://www.reston.org)
- National Wildlife Federation, Reston Headquarters, [www.nwf.org/news/contacts.cfm](http://www.nwf.org/news/contacts.cfm)
- Wetland Solutions Headquarters, [www.wetlandstudies.com/](http://www.wetlandstudies.com/)
- Loudoun Valley High School, [www.loudoun.k12.va.us/lvhs/site/default.asp](http://www.loudoun.k12.va.us/lvhs/site/default.asp)
- Daniels Run Elementary, [www.fcps.edu/DanielsRunES/](http://www.fcps.edu/DanielsRunES/)
- Tuckahoe Elementary, [www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/tuckahoe/](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/tuckahoe/)

#### Butterfly/Pollinator Gardening:

- River Farm, [www.ahs.org/river\\_farm/index.htm](http://www.ahs.org/river_farm/index.htm)
- Freedom High School, <http://freedom.groupfusion.net/>
- Hollin Meadows Elementary, [www.fcps.edu/HollinMeadowsES/](http://www.fcps.edu/HollinMeadowsES/)
- Chesterbrook Elementary, [www.fcps.edu/ChesterbrookES/](http://www.fcps.edu/ChesterbrookES/)
- Haycock Elementary, [www.fcps.edu/HaycockES/](http://www.fcps.edu/HaycockES/)
- Meadowlark Gardens, [www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html](http://www.nvrpa.org/meadowlark.html)
- Greenspring Gardens, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/)
- National Arboretum, [www.usna.usda.gov/](http://www.usna.usda.gov/)

- Blandy Farm,  
[http://minerva.acc.virginia.edu/blandy/RESEARCH/Research\\_Home.php](http://minerva.acc.virginia.edu/blandy/RESEARCH/Research_Home.php)
- Reston Association, [www.reston.org](http://www.reston.org)
- National Wildlife Federation, Reston Headquarters, [www.nwf.org/news/contacts.cfm](http://www.nwf.org/news/contacts.cfm)
- Wetland Solutions Headquarters, [www.wetlandstudies.com/](http://www.wetlandstudies.com/)
- Loudoun Valley High School, [www.loudoun.k12.va.us/lvhs/site/default.asp](http://www.loudoun.k12.va.us/lvhs/site/default.asp)
- Daniels Run Elementary, [www.fcps.edu/DanielsRunES/](http://www.fcps.edu/DanielsRunES/)
- Tuckahoe Elementary, [www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/tuckahoe/](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/tuckahoe/)

#### **Rain Gardening:**

- Yorktown Square Condominiums - Falls Church, VA  
Contact: Jeanette Stewart, [inti@mindspring.com](mailto:inti@mindspring.com)
- Meadowlark Botanical Gardens - Vienna, VA  
Contacts: Laura Grape (NVRC) or Asad Rouhi [asad.rouhi@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:asad.rouhi@fairfaxcounty.gov) (NVSWCD)
- Providence District Government Center - Fairfax, VA  
Contact: Ron Tuttle [ron.tuttle@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:ron.tuttle@fairfaxcounty.gov) (Fairfax County DPWES)
- Lake Accotink Visitor's Center - Annandale, VA  
Contact: Jim McGlone [jim.mcglone@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:jim.mcglone@dof.virginia.gov)
- Cub Run Rec Center, Centreville, VA & Mount Vernon Rec Center, Alexandria, VA  
Contacts: Ron Tuttle [ron.tuttle@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:ron.tuttle@fairfaxcounty.gov) (Fairfax County DPWES) or Christin Jolicouer [christin.jolicouer@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:christin.jolicouer@fairfaxcounty.gov) (NVSWCD)

**Take the next step and join...**

### **Audubon Society of Northern Virginia**

**- a local source for natural history, environmental education, conservation and native habitat exploration -**

If you are interested in learning more about Northern Virginia's native flora, fauna and the diverse habitats they call home, then be sure to take one of our classes, join us for a field trip, become part of our Audubon at Home program or join one of our volunteer committees. **Please get in touch with us** – (703) 256-6895, [info@audubonva.org](mailto:info@audubonva.org) or [www.audubonva.org](http://www.audubonva.org).