

Botanical Society of Washington – 2008 Field Trips

Bear Island, Potomac Gorge

(Montgomery Co., Maryland)

Saturday, April 12th, and Saturday, April 19th – 9:30 am

Dan Nicolson, Trip Leader

As in recent years, our 2008 BSW field season opens with two spring field trips to Bear Island, in the Potomac Gorge on the Maryland side of the river upstream of Washington, D.C. As usual, **Dan Nicolson** (Smithsonian) has offered to lead participants along a route including roadsides, towpath edges, and the rocky, riparian, and alluvial habitats of Bear Island, including a substantial segment of Section “A” of the rugged Billy Goat Trail.

This year, we will be taking a somewhat different route, about a mile longer, because of trail closures due to various management concerns, including possible between-pond visitor transport of recently identified frog pathogens, and spread of invasive non-native plants by visitors straying off the marked official trails. Also, native plant habitat is being restored in the compacted soils of some of these former unofficial trail segments.

Note that this year’s trips are a bit later in the season than we’ve usually done on Bear Island, so we may see a somewhat different sampling of the Gorge’s spring ephemerals. We will particularly seek and note species in flower (woody and herbaceous), and compare our lists with those from previous years. While we won’t be able to visit all of the places that we have in past years, we should see a similar richness of localized microdiversity as in previous years.

This trip includes ***rugged, uneven terrain and occasional rock-scrambling***. No facilities are available beyond the parking area.

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For either trip, meet promptly at **9:30 am** in the parking lots at Cropley, across from the Old Angler’s Inn, 10801 MacArthur Blvd., between the Beltway and Great Falls, Maryland. Do not park in the private lot at the Inn itself! (From Washington, this area is easily reached by taking the Clara Barton Parkway upstream to its end, then turning left onto MacArthur Blvd. and continuing to the Old Angler’s Inn.) Bring lunch and water; and wear mud-tolerant shoes also suitable for rocky terrain. We expect to return to the parking area about 3:00 pm either day.

First trip – **Saturday, April 12th**, 9:30 am, Bear Island, Montgomery Co., Md., *details above*.

Second trip – **Saturday, April 19th**, 9:30 am, Bear Island, *details above*.

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Background information:

- ❖ Topo map of trip area:
 - <http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?lat=38.98448&lon=-77.23986&s=24&size=1&u=6&datum=nad27&layer=DRG25>
- ❖ Potomac Gorge:
 - http://www.nps.gov/cue/projects/pogo/04_January_Bioscience_Cohn_.pdf
 - <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/maryland/preserves/art662.html>
 - <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Publications/ZooGoer/2005/6/potomac.cfm>
- ❖ Vegetation Ecology of the Gorge:
 - http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/pogotext3.pdf
- ❖ Billy Goat Trail:
 - <http://www.nps.gov/archive/choh/Recreation/Trails/greatfallstraildescriptions.pdf>
 - <http://www.nps.gov/archive/choh/Recreation/Trails/greatfallstrailmap.pdf>
- ❖ Species list (year 2000 BSW trips):
 - <http://www.botsoc.org/bearislandlist.pdf>
- ❖ Trail closures & frog pathogens:
 - http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/maryland/files/tadpoles_and_blazes.pdf

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Check the BSW web site (<http://www.botsoc.org/>) for the season's schedule, as well as other meeting notices and field-trip announcements.

– *Larry Morse, BSW Field Trip Chair, 2008*
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