

## **Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award Nominations for 2019**

The Conservation Awards Committee announces the finalists for the 2019 Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award. Ballots will be sent to all GCV member clubs on February 1 and should be returned to the GCV by April 30.

The winner will be announced at the GCV Annual Meeting in May. The finalists are:

### **Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve**

Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve (ACWP) is an extremely rare and unique habitat, providing safe haven for over 300 plant species, 20 state-rare and two found nowhere else in Virginia. This 25-acre preserve is an educational and recreational resource for the City of Winchester and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. This urban green space, a calcareous muck fen, is extremely distinctive because of its limestone bedrock, low acidity and high nutrient levels. Encroaching shrubs and trees threaten this treasure, as do residential and commercial development. Preserving this open, grassy and sun-filled habitat now requires people to do what nature once did on its own. Through time, money and energy, Winchester-Clarke Garden Club is partnering with the City of Winchester and Shenandoah University's Environmental Studies Program to conserve, educate and share this exceptional wetlands. Migrating birds and butterflies and naturalists from age 6 to 86 come along among the blue Marsh Skullcap. Through additional signage, accessible paths, an audio/internet walking tour, and working teams of garden clippers who remove invading species, an effort is being made to protect the marsh's rare native plants from being lost. ACWP is a place for students to learn, visitors to enjoy, and for rare plants to thrive.

### **Weir Garden at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley**

The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley (MSV) is implementing a \$9 million project to preserve 90 of its 214 acres. Part of this acreage will become 3.5 miles of biking, hiking, and walking trails known as *The Trails at the MSV*, and will be Virginia's largest public art park. More than \$8.9 million has been raised and the project is nearing completion. Major contributors include the City of Winchester and VDOT. In partnership with the Little Garden Club of Winchester, which has donated \$20,000 to date, we are applying for the GCV Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award for the creation of the "Weir Garden." This garden will serve as a storm water management tool, a naturally managed wildlife habitat and an educational tool for visitors. Large stone weirs and an ADA accessible trail will be created, including a 1.6-acre wildflower meadow of indigenous plants and grassy trails. The project will conserve natural resources, protect the environment by preserving green space within an urban setting, and utilize fallow farmland. The MSV has over 71,000 visitors annually and the park will be free and open to the public.