

Land Marks

Governor Recognizes MET Landowners



MET easement donors gather with Governor O'Malley.

On June 17 over 100 guests attended the Governor's Reception in Annapolis to celebrate land conservation in Maryland. The guest list included MET easement donors, major financial supporters, volunteers, local land trust representatives and Open Space Legacy Society members. Guests enjoyed a lovely buffet dinner and tour of Government House. The Georgian style mansion has served as the official residence of Maryland governors for the past 144 years. Governor O'Malley thanked the donors and land trust partners for their commitment to conservation and their desire to preserve our great state's farms, forests and irreplaceable natural resources.

During the program, MET's chairman, Jim Constable, *continued on page 4*



Governor O'Malley with Courtney and Tom Leigh.



Director's Note

by Elizabeth Buxton, MET Director

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When MET accepts a conservation easement, it agrees to steward the property and uphold the terms of the legal agreement forever. Most easement violations can be resolved without legal action. Sometimes, however, when the conservation values of the property have been compromised and challenged, MET must take a landowner to court.

Last month, MET successfully concluded litigation against a landowner of a MET-held conservation easement property by negotiating a court-approved settlement. The conservation easement protected, among other things, habitat for forest interior dwelling bird species, and prohibited timbering on 13 of the 31 acres on the Chesapeake Bay, in Cecil County.

The violation occurred in 2012 when the current landowner harvested 214 mature, wide-girth hardwood trees from the 13 acre protected forestland. Encouraged by the opening in the tree canopy, invasive Japanese stiltgrass flourished that spring. After lengthy but unsuccessful discussions with the landowner, MET filed suit to enforce the timbering violation and a second violation: dumping of construction materials. MET sought an award of unjust enrichment for the approximately \$24,000 that the landowner earned from the sale of the timber.

The settlement requires the landowner to eradicate the stiltgrass and replant trees in accordance with MET-approved eradication and reforestation plans prepared by DNR. This will cost about \$30,000 and MET has a judgment in that amount that will be cleared when the landowner completes all obligations. The landowner must pay MET \$7,500 to cover the increased costs of monitoring the property to ensure that the performance standards (including documented removal of the dumped materials, stiltgrass eradication, and tree planting) are met going forward. The Consent Decree includes a \$1,000 penalty for any payment point or deadline missed and MET can also return to court to file a motion for contempt.

Although cases like this are not common, land trusts nationwide are concerned that complex legal challenges to conservation easements will increase as conserved land changes hands. Subsequent landowners often do not understand the conservation easement that protects their land and do not share the passion for conservation that the original easement donor had.

In this case, the original donor and neighbors to the property alerted MET to the timbering and dumping. Two neighbors also attended trial and were prepared to testify as to their observations of the dumping. Having that network is so important. MET and all land trusts

need to nurture that sense of involvement by the community to protect conserved land.

MET attributes much of its success to its valuable working relationship with DNR. The DNR experts (Dan Rider (forestry), Kerrie Kyde (invasive plant ecologist) and James McCann (state zoologist)) put substantial time into preparing for trial and writing

the stiltgrass eradication and reforestation plans. Finally, I wish to extend a special thanks to MET's counsel, the Office of the Attorney General, for its representation of MET in defense of the easement.

I call this a win for conservation permanence.



Liz in the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, the last extensive tract of old-growth forest in the East.

*"I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree."*

-Joyce Kilmer, 1913



Stewardship Success: *Big Bottom Farm*

One of the historic barns located on the Raver's farm.

Doctors Susan and James Raver granted a conservation easement to MET in 1993 on their property on Evitts Creek in the Upper Potomac River watershed in Allegany County. Their house and scenic farm, also known as Big Bottom Farm or Clausen Farm, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Ravers have instituted a number of environmentally sound management practices and other improvements above and beyond the requirements set forth in the conservation easement. The extent of their actions demonstrates the love the Ravers have for their farm and an appreciation of the surrounding cultural landscape.

Through participation in USDA NRCS soil conservation programs for Pasture and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)/ Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), the Ravers have restored fields to “functional hay and grass production without pesticides and herbicides.” Using CREP participation in combination with their own funds and labor, the Ravers planted thousands of trees, within and outside the protective riparian buffer along Evitts Creek. They also participated in the Chestnut Tree Restoration Project jointly sponsored by the University of Maryland and Frostburg State University.

The Ravers have instituted additional watershed protections including obtaining a Forest Stewardship Plan, implementing timber stand improvements (commercial thinning) on their property and improved management practices by installing stock water tanks to keep the cattle out of Evitts Creek and its riparian buffer areas.

The Ravers' historic home may have been part of the ‘Underground Railway,’ as evidenced by the hiding spaces located beneath the roof. The property also includes a restored bank barn, circa 1840, a dairy shed and corncrib. The Ravers also maintain flower and vegetable gardens and a lawn “to honor previous generations of men and women who lived and raised families here.”

Two years after the Ravers donated their easement to MET, they convinced James' mother to donate an easement on her farm property located on the boundary between Baltimore and Carroll Counties. They believe that future generations need to understand why land has been conserved and how conservation relates to land stewardship. Stewardship choices often influence the extent to which future generations benefit from land and from community resources. The Ravers

outstanding stewardship of their land serves as an example to others in Allegany County and throughout Maryland.

*CREP targets high-priority conservation issues and areas, removing environmentally sensitive land from production and introducing conservation practices to landowners and operators. Participants are paid an annual rental rate, over 10–15 year voluntary contract periods. GRP is a similar program, that helps landowners and operators restore and protect eligible grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grasslands under threat of conversion to cropping, urban development and other activities. **For easement landowners to participate in these programs, the actions must be above and beyond what is required in the conservation easement.***



The Raver's historic farmhouse, circa 1840, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Governor's Reception

(continued from page 1)

remarked, "We are grateful to the participating citizens and land trusts for helping preserve more than 21,000 acres under the O'Malley-Brown administration." Governor O'Malley presented citations to landowners who had donated a conservation easement from November 2012 to May 2014 and invited each recipient to the podium to explain why they had decided to protect their land with a MET conservation easement. Thanks to them "these beautiful lands will serve as a wonderful gift for future generations," Governor O'Malley stated. "These protected lands will benefit Maryland for all eternity, providing habitat for a variety of critical plants and animals, protecting forests that clean our air and water, and contribute to our goal of restoring the Chesapeake Bay."



Connie Lieder, George Wills, Ellie Kelly and Nancy Coudon relaxing at Government House.



Warren and Barbara Howard, Tom Hutcheson and Charles Steggerda.



Katie and Jim Constable with Governor O'Malley.



Landowner Reception at C&O Canal Lockhouse 49

MET, together with the C&O Canal Trust, hosted a reception for landowners on September 4 at the historic C&O Canal Lockhouse 49 in Clear Spring in Washington County. Guests had the opportunity to tour the restored lockhouse and talk with MET Staff about how to protect land with donated conservation easements.

Notes from the Field: Crow Farm and Vineyard

by Kayla Anthony, 2013-2014 MET Intern

It was a rainy day in the Delmarva Peninsula when I arrived at Crow Farm and Vineyard, Kent County's first and only winery. The farm — 365 acres of lush green countryside — lies between U.S. Highway 301 and the Chesapeake Bay, just outside Kennedyville, Maryland. It was my first time visiting the area, and I was astounded by the picturesque scene of rolling farmland and luscious vineyards.

Myrtle, a beautiful golden Labrador retriever happily greeted me as I exited my car. Two young farmhands were having lunch near the vineyard, resting for the industrious afternoon ahead. They engaged me in conversation about how they came to work for the farm. Both local Marylanders with a passion for sustainable food and local business, they seemed happy to be living this pastoral lifestyle.

It was immediately evident that Crow Farm and Vineyard is a family affair. Roy Crow and his wife Judy both grew up on farms in Maryland and are passionate about keeping this third generation farm alive. Judy gave me a tour of the farmhouse, a beautiful 1847 structure that now serves as a cozy bed and breakfast. She detailed her day-to-day duties — managing the B&B, working the farm, harvesting the vineyard, supervising employees. "If you want to keep the character of farming alive, you have to be creative," she said, stepping into a sunroom with a seemingly endless view of pasture. Almost as immense as the view was the task of financing their small farm, a challenging obstacle for many farmers.

As Judy and Roy strategically looked at the farm's finances, they realized tax credits through a conservation easement could significantly benefit their farming business model. Although an easement would protect part of their property forever, the tax credits would allow them to deduct up to 100¹ percent of their income and free up additional income to invest in the farm. The tax credits permitted them to renovate the farmhouse and plant grapes for the vineyard, which helped attract more visitors and kept the farm financially viable.

The Crows' easement protected 110 acres on the backside of the farm encircled with flowing willow trees. The easement is co-held by MET and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. "What we've done is use tax credits to allow us to invest our income in other parts of the farm — the winery, our B&B, and the grass-fed beef."

After donating the conservation easement, Judy and Roy planted four acres of grape vines. Their son moved back from

California to help plant and harvest. This year, Crow Farm and Vineyard will have 10 acres planted and a 5,000 case capacity for wine. "My intention is grapes," Judy said, as we walked to the tasting room. That statement was illustrated by the numerous awards hanging from bottles of Crow Vineyard wines. Their Vidal Blanc 2012 and the Barbera Rose won gold medals in the 2013 Maryland Governor's Cup Competition, awards given to Maryland's best wines.

My visit concluded with a glass of Crow Vineyard Vidal

Blanc. When I asked Judy about the origin of the Crow Farm name, she remarked, "Crows are very industrious and creative. They figure out a way to sustain themselves." Sustaining Crow Farm and Vineyard is exactly what Judy and Roy intend to do and they have successfully found ways to bring in visitors and keep the family farm in production.

As for the rest of the farm Judy said, "To us, the entire farm is preserved. We want to keep this farm alive for the next generation."

¹ The benefits mentioned in this article are based on the Enhanced Federal Easement Tax Incentive which expired at the end of 2013. There is current legislation pending in Congress to reinstate the enhanced benefit.



Judy Crow and Myrtle at Crow Farm and Vineyard.

Crow Farm and Vineyard located on the Eastern Shore in Kent County.

Kent County Farm Protected by Leigh Family

In the early 1970s, a developer asked the town of Betterton to annex the farm property adjacent to the Leigh family home. Rob and Linda Leigh opposed the development, which would have included a golf course and about 200 houses.

The development never came to fruition, and the farm was auctioned in 1997. Rob and Linda Leigh bought the property with the encouragement of the extended Leigh family, in the hopes of preventing another developer from building something not in line with the Leighs' vision of Betterton.

The Leighs immediately evaluated the property, which has been farmed since the 17th century, Rob Leigh said. They worked with Kent County Soil Conservation and the Department of Natural Resources. They put in five waterways to help control erosion, restored a 1-acre pond, planted about 1,800 trees to help absorb runoff, and planted some warm season grasses.

In December, the Leighs placed on the property a conservation easement held by the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy and MET.

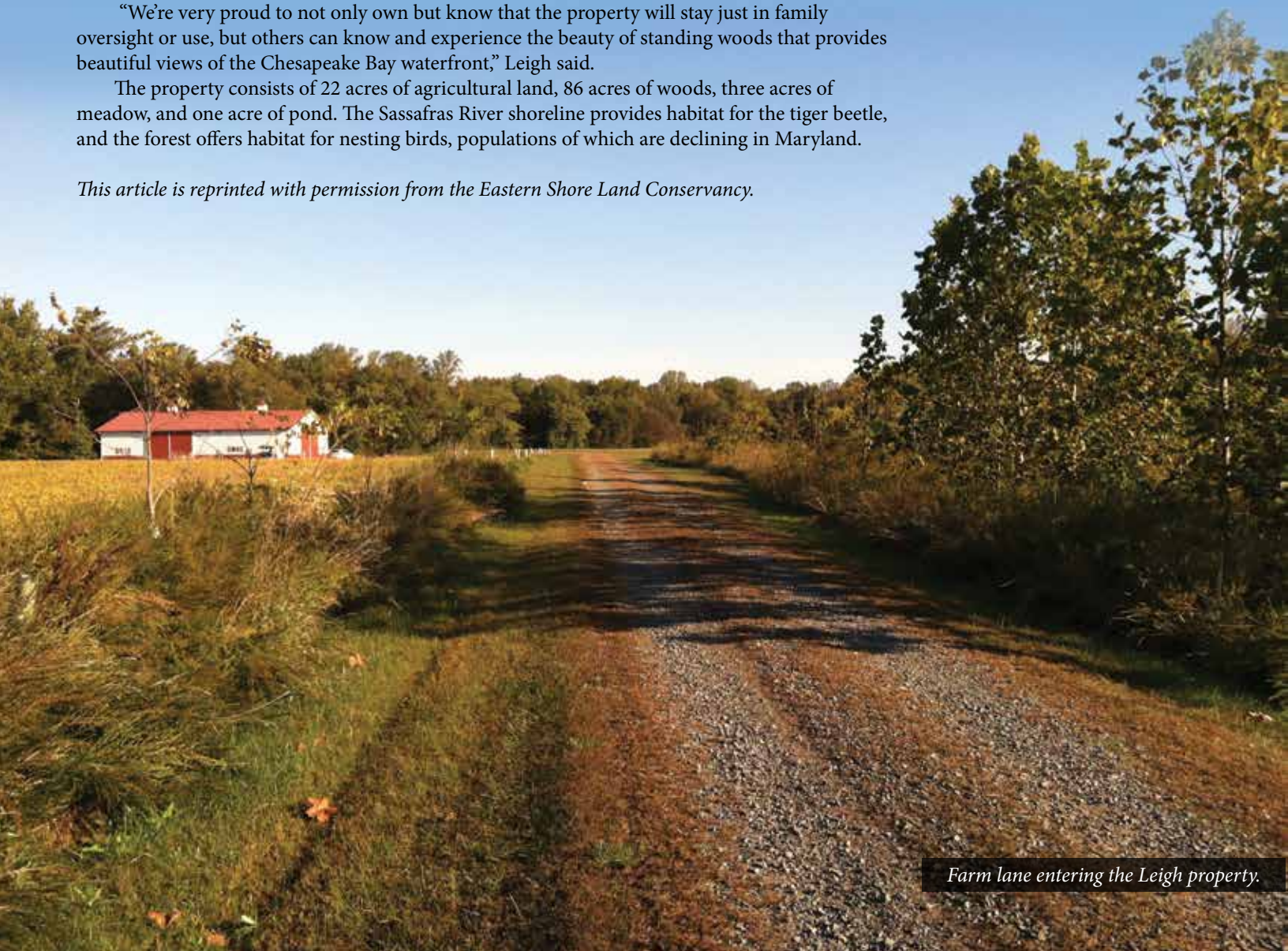
"We go up there as a family, and we camp on the farm," Rob Leigh said. "We do a lot of hiking and fishing, and it keeps us working hard, and it keeps us together."

Rob Leigh said the property has been important to his entire family, including his late grandparents, his late father John Leigh; his late brother John Scott Leigh Jr.; his sister, Harriet Russell; his wife, Linda; and their children Thomas Howard Leigh and Jeffrey Scott Leigh.

"We're very proud to not only own but know that the property will stay just in family oversight or use, but others can know and experience the beauty of standing woods that provides beautiful views of the Chesapeake Bay waterfront," Leigh said.

The property consists of 22 acres of agricultural land, 86 acres of woods, three acres of meadow, and one acre of pond. The Sassafras River shoreline provides habitat for the tiger beetle, and the forest offers habitat for nesting birds, populations of which are declining in Maryland.

This article is reprinted with permission from the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy.



Farm lane entering the Leigh property.

Record Attendance at Annual Conference

The annual statewide Land Conservation conference took place April 3-4 at the beautiful Claggett Conference Center in Frederick County. The event received record attendance; more than 200 people from 115 organizations across the Chesapeake Bay region convened for two-days of training and networking.

This year's conference offered 35 education sessions on a variety of topics, including conservation partnerships, managing working lands, marketing and fundraising strategies, water quality, resource management and landscape conservation strategies. The conference also included field trips to conserved land in the area and a reception with local beer, wine and music in the Claggett Center barn. South Mountain Creamery provided homemade ice cream to all the guests!

Joe Gill, Secretary of the MD Department of Natural Resources, provided the keynote address and spoke about the importance of environmental messaging when communicating with the general public about land conservation. He cited many examples. A copy of the Secretary's talk is available online at http://www.dnr.state.md.us/met/pdfs/2014_MET_KeynoteAddress.pdf.

Conference sponsors included The Abell Foundation; American Forest Foundation; Brewers Association of Maryland; Civil War Trust; Chesapeake Conservancy; The Conservation Fund; Ecosystem Recovery Institute; Ecotone, Inc.; Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust; Land Trust Alliance; Monocacy Brewery Company; National Park Service (Chesapeake Bay Office); Potomac Conservancy; O'Donoghue & O'Donoghue LLP; The Trust for Public Land; and Wright, Constable & Skeen, LLP.

Conference photos courtesy of Cate Calson.



Conference participants listen to session speakers.



Grow a Forest Get free trees!

Are you tired of mowing your lawn? By converting your lawn to forest you can reduce maintenance and mowing responsibilities while improving water and air quality. Through the *Lawn to Woodland* program, Maryland's Forest Service provides landowners, who wish to convert unused lawn of one-to-four acres, native seedlings, **free of charge**. Planning for the woodland conversion is completed with the help of the landowner and post-planting monitoring assistance is also available, at no cost. The only requirement is minor maintenance in the planted area to assist tree growth.

Lawn to Woodland supports the Forest Preservation Act of 2013, which established a statewide goal of maintaining the current level of tree cover – 40 percent – across Maryland. Read more about this program for Maryland landowners in the *Lawn to Woodland Brochure* located online at www.dnr.maryland.gov or call 410-260-8531.



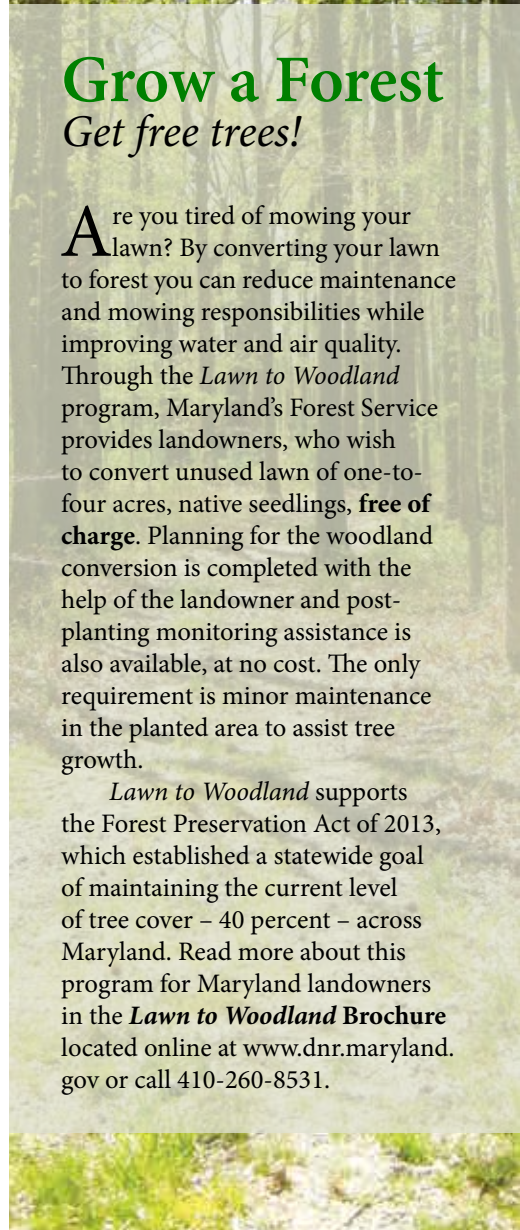
Megan D'Arcy, Sean Robertson, Kevin Case, Karen Edgecombe, Mary Burke and Tracy Lind.



James R. O'Connell, DNR Secretary Joe Gill, James W. Constable and Geb Byron



Conference participants network over lunch.



New Faces at MET



MET is pleased to welcome **Philip Hager** as a Trustee. Previously Phil served as an Allegany County Area Representative from 2008 to 2012. He has over 20 years of professional experience in planning. Phil currently serves as the Director of Land Use, Planning and Development for Carroll County. Formerly he was the Planning Executive Director for Allegany County where he managed all aspects of county-wide Comprehensive Planning. He initiated a pioneering comprehensive planning process utilizing a watershed based approach. Phil also served as the Project Manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Worcester County Director of the Department of Planning, and as a Planner with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. He has a master's degree in Public Administration from the George Washington University of Government and Public Policy and a bachelor's degree (Magna Cum Laude) from Frostburg State University.



Toby Lloyd was recently appointed as a new Area Representative from Montgomery County. Toby is the owner and president of Turnrow, LLC, a farm and land consulting company focusing on conservation, farmland assessment and investment advisory. Turnrow also provides marketing and communications services, helping agriculture and environmental organizations develop effective messaging for target audiences. Toby has a master's degree in Geographic and Cartographic Sciences from George Mason and a bachelor's degree from Washington College.



John Turgeon joined the staff in July as the Conservation Easement Program Manager / Southern Region Planner. He replaces John Hutson who retired in March of this year after serving 24 years with MET.

John brings close to fifteen years of land conservation work experience in both the non-profit and local government sectors. He comes to us from the Willistown Conservation Trust, a non-profit land trust near Philadelphia, PA, where he worked for ten years, first as Associate Director and then Director of Land Protection. John also successfully led the Willistown Conservation Trust through the land trust accreditation renewal process.

From 2000 to 2004, John worked for Montgomery County, where he served as senior planner for the county's "Legacy Open Space" an initiative designed to protect the county's critical natural and cultural open space resources. In previous positions as a planner for the cities of Gaithersburg and Frederick, Maryland he worked primarily on urban forest conservation planning. John holds a bachelor's degree in Geography from the State University of New York College at Plattsburgh, and a master's degree in Regional Planning from the State University of New York at Albany. He now resides in Annapolis and is looking forward to spending time kayaking on the Chesapeake Bay.

New Online Application for Easement Activities

MET is pleased to announce the launch of a new application form to help conservation easement landowners request approvals of activities (such as location of a new residence/Dwelling Unit, subdivision of the property, new structures in scenic viewsheds, location of a new means of access to a residence/Dwelling Unit, etc.) more easily. The online form will help streamline the review process.

To submit a request, download the application on MET's website at <http://dnr.maryland.gov/met/stewardship.asp> or email the Stewardship Program Manager, Jon Chapman, at jon.chapman@maryland.gov to request a copy.

2014 Awards Presented at Annual Conference

Each year, MET recognizes conservation efforts and outstanding leadership in the Maryland land conservation community. At an evening reception during the 2014 Maryland Land Conservation Conference, this year's recipients were recognized. The following awards and grants were presented by MET Chairman, James O'Connell and Joseph Vervier, Chief of Landscape Operations Division at the Maryland State Highway Administration.

Dillon Award was presented to Dr. Robert G. Hamilton for the protection of his farm in Baltimore County. This award is given to a landowner who exhibits outstanding conservation in honor of the spirit and legacy of the Dillon sisters of Garrett County who donated a conservation easement and then bequeathed their property to MET in 1984. Dr. Hamilton's Hybridoma Organic Fruit Farm is a 46 acre farm dedicated to fruit production in the Long Green Valley Rural Legacy Area. The organic farm features "pick-your-own" berries during peak season along with an educational mission to demonstrate sustainable land practices.



Recipients of the Janice Hollmann Grants: Miriam Avins for Baltimore Green Space; Jeremy Rothwell for Cecil Land Trust; Hal Delaplaine for Conservancy for Charles County; Ben Lloyd for Harford Land Trust; Kate Patton for Lower Shore Land Trust; and Ann Jones for Land Preservation Trust



James R. O'Connell presents Dr. Robert G. Hamilton with the Dillon Award.



Dr. Hamilton's Hybridoma Organic Fruit Farm in Baltimore County.



Karen Edgecombe (left) is presented the Aileen Hughes Award by MET Trustee and Awards Committee Chair, Constance Lieder.

Focus on Volunteers: *Werner and Elizabeth Schumann*

by *Jamie Salabogi*

After 59 years of marriage, Werner and Elizabeth Schumann have a deep commitment to each other — and to MET. For the last eight years, the octogenarian monitoring team have volunteered their time to assist MET with monitoring its easement properties in and around Montgomery County. They love that volunteering affords them opportunities to enjoy nature and meet and talk with the landowners who love their land and are dedicated to land conservation.

The Schumanns have shared a lifetime of achievement and adventure. Despite both being German, they could not have been on more opposing political sides. Werner was Christian and, growing up under the Nazi regime, had been a member of the Hitler Youth. Elizabeth was Jewish and had fled Germany in 1938, prior to the most violent brunt of the Jewish persecutions. Post WWII, after learning of the holocaust, Werner became disillusioned with Germany. Living in war-torn Berlin, he was eager to escape this history and seek out better opportunities. At the age of 21, he immigrated to the United States, arriving with just five dollars in his pocket. Settling first in Chicago, he found his first job within seven days in a still photography studio.

It was during this time he began attending a young adult discussion group where he met and fell in love with Elizabeth. Reciprocating that love did not come as easy for Elizabeth because, as she puts it, “she was a Jewish girl with a good education, and he, a German non-Jew with no education and four years younger.” Elizabeth had attained a master’s degree in Social Work while Werner had never completed high school. Werner had his first date with Elizabeth after one whole year of asking!



Werner and Elizabeth filming a documentary.

Werner was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he received training in motion picture photography, a life-long dream of his. Upon discharge, and with help from the GI Bill, Werner attended UCLA, where he earned a degree in motion picture production. Werner has filmed, directed, and produced many documentary films on a variety of topics from social issues, architecture, nature, history, education, and health; earning him numerous awards for his work.

Elizabeth worked as a therapist and instructor of graduate-level students, where she earned a reputation as the most vied for instructor among the students. Elizabeth retired at age 70 to work with Werner on his most treasured film, a documentary about the meaning of America to him. Now well into retirement, Werner and Elizabeth both feel very fortunate in their careers, marriage, family, and travel experiences, with notable experiences at Machu Picchu, the Galapagos Islands, and New Zealand. Werner stays busy these days teaching courses centered on his career and documentary films, and both of them stay active and connected to the land through their volunteer work with MET.

We sincerely appreciate the dedication and contribution of time that Werner and Elizabeth have given to support the stewardship of MET’s conserved land!



Werner and Elizabeth Schumann.



Canoeing on Muddy Creek.

Volunteer Appreciation Event

On May 17th MET volunteers and staff gathered for the annual Volunteer Appreciation Event held at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) in Edgewater. Attendees enjoyed lunch under a green canopy on the banks of the Rhodes River, followed by a guided canoe tour on the marshy Muddy Creek, lead by SERC’s own Mark Haddon.

Volunteers learned about SERC’s efforts to study the effects of climate change and track over 50 species that live in Muddy Creek. The group saw abundant wildlife along the creek, including snakes, great blue herons and a bald eagle! 579 acres of the SERC property are protected by an easement held by MET and Scenic Rivers Land Trust.



Volunteers embark on a canoe ride.

MET relies on our 39 trained volunteers to help monitor its easement properties statewide and accomplish important tasks within our office. The volunteers were celebrated for their remarkable contributions made throughout the year, including monitoring more than 250 conservation easement properties and contributing more than 500 hours on office projects.

“The Volunteer Program continues to receive rave reviews from the volunteers and landowners alike and has more than doubled in the past year,” said Elizabeth Buxton, MET Director. “The volunteers really enjoy visiting protected and rarely seen landscapes and learning about the colorful history of the land direct from the landowners while touring the property.”

If you are interested in joining MET as a volunteer, please contact Jamie Salabogi at (410) 514-7908 or email jamie.salabogi@maryland.gov.

With deep gratitude and sincerity, MET would like to thank all of our volunteers for their valuable contributions and continued commitment to land conservation!

IN KIND DONATIONS

- Ronnie Adams
- Shannon Allen
- Derek Baumgardner
- Andrea Blohm
- Jason Boothe
- Andrew Brignole
- Ken Brown
- Ann Burchard
- Christine Cadigan
- Cate Calson
- Susan Cohen
- Carrie Dike
- Jeffrey Dillon
- Eric Dirksen
- Christina Dzingala
- Stephen Fogle
- David Godfrey
- Christine Hammer
- Pamela Hargest
- Joseph Hasuly
- David Hobson
- Carol & Peter Holland
- Tom Hutchenson/Morgan Stanley
- David & Nancy Kieffer
- Emily Kimak
- Toby Lloyd
- Brittany McBride
- Christine McCreary
- S. Patrick Pence
- Ben Peterson
- Werner & Elizabeth Schumann
- Kevin Smith
- Stuart Stainman
- Don & Marsha Sweet
- Melissa Tully
- Charles Wells
- Joseph Yates

Keep Maryland Beautiful Grants

In May 2014, MET awarded \$35,000 in grants to schools and non-profit groups engaged in environmental education and community beautification projects through the Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) program. These grants are partially funded by the Maryland State Highway Administration and are given annually.

The Margaret Rosch Jones Award is given in honor of the first executive director of the KMB Program. These grants are awarded to an ongoing project or activity that has demonstrated success in solving an environmental issue, whether local or statewide. The award recognizes organizations that have been

actively educating people in their community about litter prevention, community beautification, or eliminating or reducing the causes of a local community problem.

This year's recipients of the Margaret Rosch Jones Award are:

- **Western Maryland Resource Conservation & Development Council** for developing Frostburg Grows as a solution to environmental problems;
- **Friends of Tuckahoe & Martinak State Parks** for their 14th annual "Bay Awareness Days" providing hands-on environmental education activities and service learning projects; and
- **Blue Water Baltimore** for their installation of a native plant garden that will be used as an outdoor classroom.

The Bill James Environmental Grant is given in honor of Senator Bill James who drafted legislation creating MET and incorporated the activities of the Governor's Committee to KMB. This year's grant recipients are:

- **Colonel Richardson High School Environmental Club** for funding to build an outdoor classroom as an extension of the educational nature trail;
- **Newborn Holistic Ministries Jubilee Arts Program** to develop vacant lots into Jubilee Arts and Youth Garden;
- **Ward Museum of Wild Fowl Art** for the offset of direct expenses related to the eBird classroom program;
- **Berlin Intermediate School** for funding to plant and maintain a butterfly and pollinator garden as well as to revitalize an existing school garden space;
- **South River Federation** for a two-fold environmental education project with the Bywater Boys and Girls Club in Annapolis, MD;
- **G.W. Carver Elementary School** for the expansion of the school vegetable garden providing fresh produce to the school students;
- **Kennard Elementary School** for the expansion of the school's rain garden;
- **The Thomas Jefferson Elementary Middle School and Civility Music** to increase sustainability through environmental education and teaching the principles of Permaculture;
- **Roland Park Country School** for the design, construction and implementation of a model rain garden on school grounds; and
- **National Commission on Teaching and America's Future / Lakeland Elementary School** to establish an environmentally friendly vegetable and native plant garden.



Blue Water Baltimore, in partnership with Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. and Cross Country Elementary School, led a project to replace 18,000 square feet of blacktop with grass, trees and a new playground, eliminating several hundred thousand gallons of storm water runoff.

Many of these grants encourage youth and students to develop a sense of stewardship and personal responsibility for their natural world, stimulate a better understanding of environmental issues and help reduce or resolve an environmental problem.

For more information about the KMB grant program, please visit MET's website. The deadline for applications is March 31.

MET Announces New Chairman and Officers

MET elected new officers at its May 7 meeting. They are: James W. Constable, Chairman, Honorable S. Jay Plager, Vice Chairman, Doris Blazik-White, Treasurer and Steve Quarles, Secretary.

Jim Constable succeeds Jim O'Connell, who completed his second term as chairman on May 31. Mr. Constable joined the Board of Trustees in 2007 and has served as vice chair since 2010. The new chairman stated, "I'm excited to identify more way to protect land in Maryland and help steward the 1,070 easements MET currently holds." Jim is a partner at Wright, Constable & Skeen, L.L.P. in Baltimore and is president and chairman of the Manor Conservancy. He was also appointed to the Rural Legacy Advisory Committee in March 2014 and is the former chair of Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission.

"As an easement donor himself, Jim Constable is deeply committed to MET's mission to perpetually protect land," said MET Director Elizabeth Buxton. "We look forward to his leadership as MET moves forward in 2014."



Jim Constable

Jay Plager, joined MET's board in 2008 and has served as treasurer since 2010. Judge Plager is a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, DC. Doris Blazek-White, joined MET's board in 1998 and is a partner in Covington & Burling LLP in Washington, DC. Steve Quarles also joined MET's board in 2008 and is a partner in Segwick Law Firm, and former chair of the Environment & Natural Resources Group of the Washington, DC law firm of Crowell & Moring LLP. K. King Burnett was also elected trustee emeritus after serving 42 years on the Board of Trustees.

Stewardship Wish List

MET welcomes donations of equipment in good working condition to support the work of staff, volunteers and interns. If you are interested in donating any of the items below to MET, please contact Jon Chapman, Stewardship Manager, at Jon.Chapman@Maryland.gov or 410-514-7904.

- Compasses (*primarily for volunteers*)
- Four wheel drive (4WD) vehicle
- Laptops capable of running GIS software and Windows 7 (*minimum 2.1 GHz processor, 8 GB RAM, 500 GB hard drive*)
- Canon Powershot G series digital camera with viewfinder

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SCHEDULE

The Board of Trustees meets the first Monday of each month with the exception of January, July and August. Board meetings begin at 6:30 pm and are held in various locations around the state. These are public meetings. Please contact MET if you plan to attend.

2014: October 6 | November 3 | December 1

2015: February 2 | March 2 | April 6 | May 4
June 1 | September 14 | October 5 |
November 2 | December 7

Easements sometimes require advance notification and/or written approval for certain activities. Please see MET's website for information and application. If you are unsure whether notification or approval is required, contact MET stewardship staff to help make that determination. Activities that might require approval or notification include:

- Constructing any new buildings or structures
- Renovating or enlarging existing structures
- Conveying property (provide contact information on new owner)
- Subdividing property
- Signing any other encumbrances on property (e.g. right-of-ways, ingress/egress, other easements)
- Entering wetlands mitigation or restoration programs
- Changing use of property (e.g. from forested lands to agricultural lands)
- Making a boundary line adjustment
- Harvesting timber

For complex matters, it may take a minimum of 30 days for MET to review and approve the proposed activities. Please contact Jon Chapman, Stewardship Program Manager, at 410-514-7904 to discuss your plans. All requests should be made in writing at least three weeks prior to the scheduled board meeting. Thank you!

Landowner Spotlight



Susanne and Shannon Bohrer protect their farmland and scenic view in Frederick County.

The land conservation profession often revolves around statistics – number of acres protected, miles of shoreline preserved, and value of development rights extinguished. At MET we try not to lose sight of the fact that behind every one of our easement properties is a landowner. And each landowner has a story to tell. Landowner Spotlights is a series that captures and shares those inspiring stories.

When Shannon and Susanne Bohrer purchased their Frederick County property in 1975 they were drawn to the rural setting and desire to become a part of the farming community. Through the years they built up their home and farm, cared for their horses and gardens and in the process their connection and roots grew deeper in the land and community.

In the past several years the Bohrers have become increasingly concerned about the development of agricultural lands in Frederick County, one of the fastest growing counties in the state. The proximity of the county to Washington, DC and its open land makes it particularly attractive to developers. In their quest to help protect against the development of important farmland, the Bohrers looked into the county and state purchased agricultural preservation programs, but found that they were not

the right fit for them. That's when neighbors who had protected their farm through MET suggested that the Bohrers contact MET.

Happily, the Bohrers property was a great fit and in July 2014 they donated an easement through MET to permanently protect their property. Now, the Bohrers are elated to know that this special place will be available long into the future for agricultural use. The easement protects the view of the rolling agricultural fields and the Catoctin Mountains in the distance along Sixes Road and Tom's Creek. By protecting the land from being developed, the Bohrers are also giving back to the agricultural community of the future by ensuring that this land will be available.

The Bohrers are proud of their contribution to preserve Maryland's rural landscape. This property will be protected from development and adds to the protected land in the area. A testament to their vision of the land being available for future generations can be shown in their optimistic act of planting apple seeds and walnut seedlings. They believe that there is still more work to do and hope that some of their neighbors may consider protecting their property with a conservation easement so that more of the rural landscape will remain open and viable for agriculture.

Help Build the MET Stewardship Fund

With every conservation easement MET agrees to hold, it accepts the responsibility to monitor the property regularly and ensure that the terms of the easement are upheld forever.

MET relies on contributions to the Stewardship Fund to support the ongoing stewardship expenses including staff and volunteer training, transportation, data management, communications and photography. Unrestricted contributions to MET are also accepted to support general operations.

MET qualifies as a charitable organization by the IRS. Please consider a **tax-deductible** contribution to MET this year. With your support, we can continue to protect Maryland's diverse natural, scenic, and historic resources. We are grateful for your generous support!

Keeping Maryland Beautiful

MET Removes Litter Along Solomons Island Road

In June, MET staff picked up litter on our adopted one mile stretch of Solomons Island Road in southern Anne Arundel County. Despite the rain, poison ivy, ticks and occasional spritzing by trucks, ten large bags of trash were collected along this scenic stretch of highway.

Since 1967, MET has partnered with the Maryland State Highways Administration (SHA) to help Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB). The KMB program began as a roadside clean-up campaign and has evolved into an annual grant program. MET adopted our stretch of Solomons Island Road (MD Route 2) in August 2013 as part of SHA's Adopt A Highway program.

MET staff is committed to keeping Solomons Island Road litter free. Let us know if you want to join us in this effort.



MET staff Michelle Grafton, Ryan Walker, Liz Buxton and Jon Chapman cleaning-up Solomons Island Road.

Delmarva Fox Squirrel: On the Road to Recovery



The Delmarva fox squirrel, a large, silver gray squirrel, lives in mature hardwood and pine forests, only on Maryland's Delmarva Peninsula. It was listed as federally endangered in 1967 because of concerns about a reduction in distribution to only 10 percent of its historical range. The efforts of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), landowners and conservation partners to protect the habitat of this species has paid off. In its most recent evaluation of the species USFWS found that populations are now sufficiently abundant and well distributed to withstand future threats. The Delmarva fox squirrel is no longer threatened with extinction and the USFWS recommends delisting this species.

MET is thrilled to have played a part in the recovery by working with landowners to protect over 26,400 acres of the squirrel's habitat. Thank you for playing a part in the success story of this indigenous animal of the Eastern Shore.

VOLUNTEER OBSERVERS NEEDED

To ensure health of Delmarva fox squirrel populations, the US Fish and Wildlife Service is looking for volunteer monitors. If you see Delmarva fox squirrels on your property, please send your observations (and pictures if you have them) to DFS@fws.gov. For more information, please visit (www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay/endsppweb/DFS/index.html and <http://dnr.maryland.gov/naturalresource/fall2002/squirrel.html>).



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(March 1, 2014 - August 1, 2014)

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