



Landmarks

2023 STEWARDSHIP EDITION

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A Few Good Seeds

The Maryland Forest Service and the John S. Ayton State Forest Tree Nursery have completed a successful seed collection to grow the next generation of native trees and shrubs in the state.

The collection wrapped up in November 2023 and brought in thousands of pounds of seeds, berries and nuts, from white oak to witch hazel. The Maryland Forest Service and a cadre of seed hunters scoured forests and fields for tree nuts and berries to grow our future forests. New Forest Service staff that were hired under Maryland's 5 Million Tree Initiative have been busy hustling truckloads of seed bags of a variety of native species from county to county and across the Bay Bridge.

The response from an outreach campaign and coverage by WTOP and The Washington Post led to an outpouring of 200+ individual offers of seed or volunteer time from Maryland residents, and even as far as Oregon!

All the native tree and shrub seed that is gathered across the state eventually makes its way to the John S. Ayton State Forest Tree Nursery just outside the Caroline County town of Preston. Our state nursery grows 2-4 million bare-root seedlings annually for reforestation and tree planting projects and this seed is where it all starts. Each tree seed has its own tricks and timing to be aware of. Oaks, being the keystone species that anchors so many of our forests here in Maryland and one facing disease/health issues, are always a priority. White oak, in particular, germinates rapidly in one season and makes collection and delivery timeliness very important. On the opposite end of species seed, when hunting Eastern redbud seedpods or flowering dogwood berries, a collector's timeline can be a bit more relaxed and extend later into fall season. *(continued on page 3)*



Expanding Stewardship

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) has been hard at work this year improving its staff's capacity, updating policies and procedures, and collaborating with our partners to improve stewardship opportunities for easement property owners and land managers. As Maryland's statewide land trust, MET is committed to providing resources to further the goal of protecting Maryland's natural resources forever.

There have been a number of changes at MET over the past year. MET's longtime Stewardship Manager, Jon Chapman retired after 30 years of service. Josette Markline, who had been serving as MET's Stewardship Planner for the past two years, was hired as the new Stewardship and Monitoring Program Manager and immediately began the process of hiring new staff to help manage over 1320 easement properties covering 140,000 acres of Maryland. Thankfully, interest in conservation easement donations from landowners continues to grow, saving more Maryland acreage from development. With an ever increasing number of perpetual conservation easements, the capacity of MET's stewardship program also had to expand to keep up with proper management of its growing portfolio.

The Stewardship Team welcomed three new employees this year: Justyn Pinkney, Kevin Bull and Laural Paterini. All three bring a number of skills and related experience to the unit and will focus on monitoring easements, connecting with new easement landowners, and researching ways to ensure MET stays on top of implementing the latest methodology and technology. Be on the lookout for news on special projects as our stewardship team has already begun making major advancements in the program.

Justyn Pinkney joined MET to serve a one year internship through the Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps. The Corps program is managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust and places young adults with host organizations to receive hands-on environmental and leadership experience, training, and support. A recent graduate of Salisbury University, Justyn will be working on multiple projects throughout his yearlong placement with MET to gain experience in the natural resources career field. One of Justyn's major projects will focus on improving MET's outreach efforts and procedures for communicating with landowners. Please help Justyn fulfill his research obligation with us by responding to the survey that will be sent out in early 2024.

Kevin Bull is the new Easement Stewardship Planner at MET. Kevin graduated from UMBC in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in environmental science, focused in ecology. Shortly after graduating, he was hired by MET as a contractual Easement Steward from late 2011 to early 2013. Most recently, he worked for the Maryland Department of the Environment in the Water and Science Administration's Enforcement and Compliance Program as an inspector in both Howard and Carroll counties. MET was excited to welcome him back this year as he brings a wealth of experience in environmental law, regulations and best management practices for permitted water related activities.

Laural Paterini is MET's new Easement Stewardship Specialist. Laural graduated with a bachelor's degree in Cultural Anthropology from UMBC. She also has extensive coursework in environmental studies, Geographic Information Systems, and computer science. Laural will be monitoring easement properties, collaborating with stewardship partners, and working with geospatial technology among other crucial tasks to forward MET's goals. Most recently, prior to joining MET, Laural worked with the Maryland Park Service as a Naturalist at Elk Neck State Park and as a Volunteer Coordinator and Administrative Assistant at Gunpowder Falls State Park.

Have you checked out MET's new Stewardship Resources webpage? MET recently added new resources to its website for landowners who are interested in enhancing the natural aspects of the properties. If you are interested in planting trees, improving pollinator habitat, or conserving shoreline from erosion, visit the site to find resources and technical assistance available: dnr.maryland.gov/met/Pages/stewardship-LOResources.aspx

A Few Good Seeds

(continued from page 1) In light of the tree planting push worldwide, sourcing seed to grow all those trees is an important issue, and community seed stewards are the immediate, on-the-ground response to that sustainability question. Beyond the Department of Natural Resources' Maryland Forest Service efforts, there are nonprofit partners like Potomac Conservancy pitching in on collection.

Look for MET to sow some seeds of interest for next autumn and engage all you woodland owners across the state who may want to be a tree seed donor and ensure a sustainable cycle of planting and building the next generation of forests.

For more information on seed collection from DNR's Maryland Forest Service and to learn how to help next season visit: dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/tree-seed-sourcing-101.aspx

This article was written by Francis Smith, Natural Resources Technician for the Maryland Forest Service

NEW STEWARDSHIP STAFF



Kevin Bull

Easement Stewardship Planner

Laural Paterini

Easement Stewardship Specialist

Justyn Pinkney

Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps Intern

QUESTIONS?

MET's website (dnr.maryland.gov/met) contains general information, but please feel free to contact Josette with specific stewardship questions or concerns at josette.markline@maryland.gov



Josette Markline

Monitoring and Stewardship Program Manager

If you have questions about volunteer monitors please contact Wendy at wendy.foster@maryland.gov



Wendy Foster

Easement Monitoring Specialist

Stewardship Corner: You Asked, We Answered

Q: Who do I contact if I have not provided MET with a copy of the management plan on my property?

A: To submit a copy of your property's Forest Management Plan, Soil Conservation Plan or other resources management plan to MET, please email your plans to Easement Monitoring Specialist, Wendy at: wendy.foster@maryland.gov

Q: Who do I contact to learn more about planting trees on my easement property?

A: For more information about Maryland's 5 Million Trees Initiative and to determine which of the Forest Service's many planting programs would be the best fit for you and your objectives please visit this survey: tinyurl.com/dnrplantingsurvey



Maryland Environmental Trust
100 Community Place, 3rd Floor
Crownsville, MD 21032

You are receiving this newsletter because your property is protected by a conservation easement with Maryland Environmental Trust.



2024 BOARD MEETING DATES:

- February 5
- May 6
- June 3
- September 9
- November 4

2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETINGS

All matters requiring Board approval are reviewed during the Board Meetings held at 4:00 pm at 100 Community Place, Room 3.218, Crownsville, MD unless noted otherwise. These are public meetings. Please contact MET if you plan to attend at (410) 697-9515 or met.info@maryland.gov.

The Maryland Environmental Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees responsible for reviewing and voting on matters such as landowner requests that result in a significant change or impact to conservation attributes of an easement property. 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; recording any other encumbrances on property; entering wetlands mitigation or restoration programs; changing use of property; making a boundary line adjustment; harvesting timber or construction of a new house.

If you plan to make changes to your property and are unsure whether notification or approval is required, contact MET's stewardship staff to help make that determination. It may take a minimum of 30 days for MET to review and approve the proposed activities. Please contact MET's Stewardship Program Manager, Josette Markline, to discuss your plans. All requests should be made in writing at least three weeks prior to the scheduled board meeting. Thank you!