

Land Marks

MET Protects 2,361 Acres in 2013

As usual, MET had a very busy year in 2013. It added 2,361 acres of protected land to its already impressive portfolio. Working with landowners and land trust partners, MET staff negotiated and recorded 25 conservation easements in 15 counties across the state. Most of these easements were donated and are co-held with a local or regional land trust. The easements protect important conservation purposes: scenic open space, relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife, or plants, historic and scenic resources, and/or provide public access. MET and the citizens of Maryland are grateful to the landowners for leaving a natural legacy for generations to come.

One of the highlights of the year was a conservation easement on Mt. Welcome, a mid-18th century farmstead with various outbuildings and a family cemetery located on 71 acres along Old Court Road in Granite. MET partnered with the Maryland Historical Trust to protect this **Baltimore County** historic landmark. The Hall family donated the conservation easement (post-mortem) through Hamilton Hall's estate to carry out the wishes of Hamilton and his late wife, Jacqueline Blunt Hall. Jacqueline was a descendent of Samuel Walters, patriarch of the family who developed the Waltersville quarry and built the house in 1750.

MET completed three other projects in **Baltimore County**. The Hybridoma Organic Fruit Farm in the Long

Green Valley Rural Legacy Area was protected by a conservation easement donated by Dr. Robert Hamilton. The 46 acre farm is dedicated to fruit production, featuring "pick-your-own" berries during peak season along with an educational mission to demonstrate sustainable land practices. "This year's mission has been expanded to encompass childhood education on solar energy production, honeybee husbandry and honey production, organic herb and spice cultivation, and medicinal lavender production," said Dr. Hamilton. The easement protects crop land from intensive development as *continued on page 4*



*Mt. Welcome in Baltimore County
(photo credit: Maryland Historical Trust).*



Director's Note

by Elizabeth Buxton, MET Director

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Last summer I participated in a workshop for land trusts Land financial advisors in Princeton, NJ. Hosted by the Land Trust Alliance, Morgan Stanley Wealth Management and D&R Greenway Land Trust, the three-day seminar inspired and expanded partnerships within the non-profit and financial communities to increase land conservation. At that workshop Stephen Small, Esq., who wrote the Internal Revenue Service regulations on conservation easements, reported that “2013 would be the best year since 1964 for landowners to donate a conservation easement on their land.” That is because the enhanced Federal tax incentive was set to expire at the end of the year and Congress, he surmised, was unlikely to extend them or make them permanent.

While we hope that Congress will make the tax provision permanent (H.R. 2807 and S. 526), we need to look at other ways to increase land preservation in Maryland. One of the most powerful incentives for conservation are transferable state tax credits. Five states (Colorado, Georgia, New Mexico, South Carolina and Virginia) have such a credit and have been very successful. These credits can be sold to individuals or corporations with high tax liability, generating immediate income for the donor.

Last year MET saw a significant boost in donated easements — 25 in total, protecting 2,361 acres statewide! This demonstrates that tax credits are a key factor behind MET's land conservation successes. In fact, MET has protected over 20,000 acres since 2006 — the year Congress approved the expansion of the federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations.

In addition to the federal tax credit, Maryland has provided a tax credit against state income taxes for donating a conservation easement on their land to MET (or the MD Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation) since 2001. While this benefit has been enormously helpful for conserving land in Maryland, it is very limited, and not all landowners are currently able to benefit from the credit. The maximum credit is \$5,000 per year for individual against State income taxes. The remainder of the credit (based on the appraised value of the easement) may be carried forward for up to 15 years for a maximum credit of \$80,000 (\$160,000 for married couples).

This spring, legislation was introduced to expand the existing State income tax credit for donated conservation easements [House Bill 789/Senate Bill 709] in the following ways:

- Existing \$5,000 credit (\$10,000 husband and wife) will be transferrable.
- Easements donated to DNR would also be eligible.
- Corporations and partnerships can qualify to take the credit.
- Charge owner of transferred credit 3% fee to offset administrative costs.
- Allows unused credits to be applied against the state inheritance tax upon the holder's death.

This expansion of the existing state tax credit will help land trusts attract more easement donors, especially farmers who are land rich and cash poor. While this tax credit is far less than other states provide, it is still significant. It has been proven that making the credit transferable

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Conservation Property Tax Credit

In 1986, Maryland passed the Conservation Property Tax Credit, which intends to conserve unimproved property that has not been used for commercial purposes. All Maryland income tax payers are eligible to apply for the tax credit. Donors are allowed to deduct 100% of the property tax for putting their land under conservation easement, and may carry forward the credit for up to fifteen years. Donations must go to the Maryland Environmental Trust and be approved by the Board of Public Works.

John Hutson Retires After 30 Years



MET staff celebrate John's contributions to land conservation at Galway Bay.

After 24 years of working for MET (30 total years working for the State of Maryland), John Hutson has retired as Conservation Easement Program Manager. During his tenure, John served as a Conservation Easement Planner for the Eastern Shore and southern regions of the state and negotiated hundreds of donated and purchased easements. On January 24, friends, family members and colleagues gathered at Galway Bay Irish Pub in Annapolis to celebrate John's accomplishments.

John had an impressive record of land conservation. As the longest serving staff member in MET's history, he recorded 263 conservation easements totaling 42,193 acres which represent 2.9% of all protected land in Maryland and 5.6% of all private land conservation (excluding county parks, DNR and Federal lands). These easements embody 33.2% of MET's conserved land and 25.2% of its portfolio of easements. The 42,193 acres are equivalent to 67.6 square miles or roughly 84% of the land area encompassed by Baltimore City or approximately twice (195%) the land area of Manhattan and 54 Central Parks.

MET's Director, Elizabeth Buxton, and Chairman, Jim O'Connell, praised John for his devoted work to land conservation. John was presented with a Governor's Citation, House Resolution, and Senate Resolution documenting his tremendous efforts to preserve and protect land for future generations. In addition, former MET Director, Tom Saunders, Vivian Mills from the Charles County Conservancy, and MET employees Jon Chapman, Megan Benjamin and Ann Carlson provided remarks and reflected on his career.

As a special token of appreciation, MET Board of Trustees and staff presented John with an original painting of the Hoffman farm, located in Frederick County and protected with an easement that John had drafted in 1991. Kesra Hoffman, artist and daughter of the landowners, captured a beautiful landscape

of sycamore trees along a farm lane on the Hoffman property. A scene that John instantly remembered as the location where his car got stuck in the mud! John's enthusiasm, selflessness, mentoring, patience and wonderful sense of humor will be missed by his colleagues at MET. All the best, John!



John Hutson and Liz Buxton with past MET Directors David Miller, Grant Dehart and Tom Saunders.



Jim O'Connell and Liz Buxton presenting the Hoffman painting.

MET Protects 2,361 Acres in 2013 *(continued from page 1)*

well as water quality on two tributaries of the Gunpowder River.

MET recorded an easement, co-held with the Land Preservation Trust, on a 34 acre portion of George Murnaghan's property located in the Worthington Valley National Register Historic District and Piney Run Rural Legacy Area in **Baltimore County**. The easement protects scenic views along Piney Grove Road as well as crop and forest land.

MET also worked with Marvin Tenberg to amend an existing easement in **Baltimore County** to protect additional acreage. Tenberg previously donated an easement on approximately 20 acres of forestland. The additional three acres protects adjoining forestland and water quality along Beaverdam Run and an unnamed tributary. "In 1987 there were large open areas, and I did not envision that virtually all of the open space would be developed. Increased development since then has made my original decision to protect this land very fortunate," recalled Mr. Tenberg.

In **Caroline County**, MET worked with the Frase family to protect their 48.7 acre farm. This easement protects 34.7 acres of agricultural land, 11 acres of woodlands, and a portion of Fowling Creek. The property is adjacent to a 2,162 acre block of protected farmland.

In **Carroll County**, MET accepted a 32 acre easement owned by David Caple along Green Mill Road. The easement is co-held with the Carroll County Land Trust, a partner of MET. Much of the property is pasture and the easement protects scenic views, as well as the water quality of unnamed tributaries to Beaver Run, which drains into Liberty Reservoir.

In **Charles County**, MET partnered with the Conservancy for Charles County to protect a 50 acre property with an easement donated by Horsehead Property, LLC. The easement protects agricultural land, woodlands, and pasture as well as a portion of Devil's Nest, a perennial tributary of Zekiah Swamp Run.

MET worked with three landowners in **Dorchester County** who voluntarily protected a total of 660 acres of wetlands, forest



Protected wetlands in Dorchester County.

land and farmland. Two of the properties are located along Parsons and Slaughter Creeks, near the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and protect rich natural habitat and sweeping iconic views that are representative of this area. The third property in Dorchester County is a 166 acre family farm along US Route 50. The easement protects wildlife habitat and scenic views that can be enjoyed for those traveling on that major highway.

Also in **Dorchester County**, MET and the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) permanently protected 226 acres of farmland along the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. The easement is located near the community of East New Market. It consists of 181 acres of agricultural land and 40 acres of woodland, and includes extensive forested shoreline along Cabin Creek, a tributary of the Choptank River. This family farm is an integral part of the region's rural setting and provides travelers with scenic views of agricultural fields backed by dense forests. The conservation easement will preserve the land's historic and scenic characteristics, providing both residents and visitors with an enriching experience.

In **Frederick County**, MET accepted an easement donated by Barry Salisbury. Ms. Salisbury was interested in protecting a tract of forestland on Catoclin Mountain. The property contains interior forest habitat and is adjacent to a larger swath of protected forestland with over 700 protected acres within a mile. Ms. Salisbury hopes her actions will encourage her neighbors to consider conservation easements on their own properties. "I am promoting conservation easements as a tool to help protect the open spaces, farms and woodlands, streams and meadows from Burkettsville to Wolfsville," she said at a dinner she hosted for her neighbors last year. "The character of the Middletown Valley is in jeopardy and we need to work together to protect it for future generations."

In Western Maryland, MET partnered with the Allegheny Highlands Conservancy to negotiate and record an easement donated by Ed and Donna Gates in the northeastern part of **Garrett County**. The easement protects the forest and interior forest habitat as well as the scenic view along Frostburg Road. According to Ed Gates, "We decided on the donation of a conservation easement because we wanted to ensure that the forest on our property



Horsehead Property in Charles County.



The Gates property in Garrett County.

will continue as a forest into the future, as habitat for forest-interior birds and other wildlife, and as a buffer that protects a small, spring-fed tributary of the Savage River.”

In **Howard County**, Charles Steggerda donated a 27 acre easement to MET and the Howard County Conservancy. The primarily forested property is located in the vicinity of several hundred acres of existing protected land. Water quality, interior forest habitat, and scenic views are afforded protection by this easement. This easement was a result of MET’s new partnership with Morgan Stanley.

Linda Leigh donated an easement to MET and ESLC on a forested and agricultural tract along the Sassafras River in **Kent County**. The easement protects 1,386 linear feet along the Sassafras River and provides boaters with views of dramatic cliff faces topped with forest, which is also home to the endangered Puritan Tiger Beetle.

Also in **Kent County**, MET worked with federal, state and local partners to purchase two easements of 421 acres and 160 acres on farmland along the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway. The easements were purchased using federal transportation funds set aside for the protection of scenic views along the Byway. MET, together with ESLC, Kent County, and the Maryland State Highway Administration have been working cooperatively since 2007 to permanently safeguard the scenic, rural and agricultural character of this landscape along the Byway.

The **Queen Anne’s County** government partnered with MET and ESLC to protect an urban property that provides green space in Stevensville and allows public access. The park will be open to the public and could possibly be the future landing site for a pedestrian bridge over U.S. Route 50, connecting the two sides of the Cross Island Trail that traverses Kent Island.

In **St. Mary’s County** a 25 acre forested site in the environmentally critical McIntosh Run watershed has been permanently preserved thanks to Vivian Marek, who donated a conservation easement to MET and Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust. Vivian says she has loved the property on Newtowne Neck Road near Leonardtown since her parents bought it in the early 1950’s. “I always wanted the place to remain as it was, especially after the development around it,” declared Vivian. By donating a conservation easement to the land trusts, the Marek family’s legacy will be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

The Parlett Family, LLC donated a 136 acre conservation easement to MET in Mechanicsville in **St. Mary’s County**. The easement preserves farmland, woodlands, and wetlands. A portion of Killpeck Creek, a tributary of the Patuxent River, flows through the property and is protected by the easement.

In **Talbot County**, 89 acres of agricultural land, 41 acres of woodlands, and a portion of Beaverdam Branch are now protected thanks to a generous landowner. This property is adjacent to a large block of land protected by conservation easements. MET co-holds this easement with ESLC.

In **Washington County**, MET accepted an easement donation on a small but important property bordering the C&O Canal and adjacent to a large block of protected property. The donation by Delbert Martin protects an undeveloped scenic view from both Remsburg and Bowie Roads as well as from the C&O Canal National Park.

Together, these 25 easements protect 2.82 miles of frontage along designated scenic byways; 920.93 acres of forest; 891.5 acres of prime farmland soils; 10.4 miles of streams and shoreline; and 1,313.9 acres of Targeted Ecological Area, which are lands identified as a conservation priority by the DNR.



The Parlett property in St. Mary’s County.

TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED IN 2013 (BY COUNTY)

Anne Arundel County » 95 acres	Dorchester County » 888 acres	Queen Anne’s County » 5 acres
Baltimore County » 154 acres	Frederick County » 6 acres	St. Mary’s County » 161 acres
Carroll County » 32 acres	Garrett County » 29 acres	Talbot County » 131 acres
Caroline County » 49 acres	Howard County » 27 acres	Washington County » 1 acre
Charles County » 50 acres	Kent County » 696 acres	Worchester County » 37 acres



String of Pearls Celebrates Easement Donors

Fairview Farm, Queen Anne's County

The sixth Chesapeake Bay String of Pearls ceremony was held on December 12 at the Easton Studio in Easton to recognize and celebrate those who have contributed to preserving lands in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The ceremony registered eight "Pearls" in the Chesapeake Bay String of Pearls Register, which is permanently displayed in the Circuit Courthouse in Annapolis.

As part of this celebration, organizers of the project partnered with local Plein Air artists who created paintings of the conserved properties. The paintings were exhibited at the ceremony. Dick Lahn, Director of the String of Pearls Project said, "Art creates the heartfelt connection to the natural landscape which is alive in all of us."

Five of the eight "Pearls" are landowners who protected their land with conservation easements co-held by MET and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC). They are:

ROY AND JUDY CROW

The Crows donated a conservation easement on their 110 acre Kent County farm to ESLC and MET in 2007. The farm is an integral part of the scenic rural landscape and is located within the view shed of Chesapeake National Scenic Byway. This property is also part of a block of more than 5,300 acres of protected land.

JENNIFER STANLEY

Jennifer Stanley donated a conservation easement on a 1.34 acre property in the Town of Oxford to ESLC and MET in 2012. The protected property will become a small public park allowing guests to enjoy the woodlands and the waterfront of Town Creek. Mrs. Stanley is the 2013 recipient of MET's Dillon Award.

KATHLEEN, APRIL AND MAYNARD WHITE

In 2006 Kathleen White, her daughter April, and son Maynard donated a conservation easement on their 60 acre farm in Queen Anne's County to ESLC and MET. The property consists of approximately one-half mile of road frontage along Bennett Point Road, and it is an integral part of the scenic landscape. The eastern end of the farm opens out on the Wye River.

**TERENCE R. BLACKWOOD, W. CALVIN GRAY, JR.
AND CONSTANCE M. GRAY**

In 1998 Terence R. Blackwood placed a conservation easement with ESLC and MET, on his 241 acre farm in Queen Anne's County. With a backdrop of agricultural fields, the shoreline of the Corsica offers a notable pastoral scenic view for water travelers using the area. The property contains 135 acres of active farmland and 100 acres of hardwood forests which provides habitat for interior dwelling bird species as well as the endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrel. The Grays bought Fairview Farm in 2002 and since that time have worked to preserve the surrounding landscape. The Grays protected an additional 318 acres of their own property.

ANDREW C. BRADLEY AND MARSHALL OWINGS

In 2011, Andrew C. Bradley and Associates donated a conservation easement on a 136 acre Kent County Farm to ESLC and MET. While working with Mr. Bradley on the conservation easement, a young farmer, Marshall Owings, was looking to purchase a farm and fell in love with this one. Mr. Owings shared Mr. Bradley's vision and love for the farm. ESLC and MET helped Mr. Bradley protect his farm with an easement which enabled him to sell the property to a landowner committed to conservation and farming.

The Chesapeake Bay String of Pearls Project honors conservation minded landowners in the District of Columbia and the six states of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The "Pearls" string together land protected from development and form corridors of land, water, wildlife, and people unified in harmony to maintain the health of the Chesapeake Bay region. MET is proud to support this project. For more information visit www.stringofpearls.org.



Marshall Owings of East Fork Farm accepts his "Pearl." From left to right: Robert Duckworth, Clerk of Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County and String of Pearls, Board member Marshall Owings, Senator Ed Reilly, Ann Gutierrez Carlson of MET, Rob Etgen of ESLC and Dick Lahn of the String of Pearls Project.

Director's Note

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greatly increases easement donations and offers a flexible and effective method for accomplishing land conservation goals. The State cannot possibly purchase all the important targeted land that needs to be protected to meet the BayStat milestones for the Chesapeake Bay restoration and to protect our water quality. The proposed changes will further increase the rate of land protection in accordance with the State's goals.

With the current rate of development in Maryland, we need to be creative in our approaches to conservation and growth management. We have seen interest at the legislative level from donors and landowners who would like to see the benefits of voluntary land conservation enhanced as a cost effective means of achieving public policy. Future possibilities include raising the limits on the state credit.

In closing, I encourage you to support the expansion of the State income tax credit to provide an additional incentive to landowners who wish to voluntarily protect their farms, natural areas, scenic open space and historic landscapes. The key to achieving the State's goals for sustainable growth, preservation, and its commitments regarding the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay lies in enhancing Maryland's existing land conservation programs. Conservation easements are the smartest and most economical way to protect important natural and agricultural areas of the state. The partnerships between landowners, public agencies and land trusts via tax credits have proven to be successful and resulted in thousands of acres of land permanently preserved for generations to come.

2014 Maryland Land Conservation Conference

The 14th annual Maryland Land Conservation Conference will take place on April 3-4 at the Claggett Center located in Adamstown (Frederick County). This year's conference will feature two full days of educational workshops, field trips, peer-to-peer networking and an evening reception. Department of Natural Resources Secretary, Joe Gill, has been invited to provide the keynote address.

The conference provides an opportunity for land trust staff, board members, environmental advocates, elected officials and planners from federal, state and local governments to network and exchange new ideas about the future of land conservation in our region. For more information about the conference or sponsorship opportunities, contact Michelle Grafton, Land Trust Assistance Coordinator, at mgrafton@dnr.state.md.us or visit www.dnr.state.md.us/met/events.asp.

New Faces at MET



In November, **Michelle Funches** joined the MET staff as an Easement Steward. She is assisting the Stewardship Program staff with monitoring co-held easement properties and resolving compliance issues.

Michelle previously worked for the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department mapping park projects. She holds master's degrees in Environmental Science and Public Affairs from Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs. She received her undergraduate degree in Environmental Science and Policy from University of Maryland and is a lifelong resident of Prince George's County.



Sheila Orwig joined the MET staff in November as the new Office Manager and Fiscal Officer. Sheila provides administrative assistance and is also responsible for accounts receivable/budget matters, procurement, website oversight and records management.

Sheila previously worked as a program coordinator for a non-profit domestic violence advocacy agency on the Eastern Shore. Originally from Virginia Beach, Sheila lives in Cheltenham in Prince George's County with her husband.



In December **Julia Jitkoff** was elected by the MET board to serve as a new trustee. Julia, a Baltimore County resident, is President of Peregrine Resources Inc., a private investment and management company based in Texas. She has been active in civic and cultural organizations relating to the arts, environment, conservation, and education and has served on numerous boards. She has over 40 years of involvement in agribusiness, including cattle, cash crops, orchards, water rights and plant nursery. Her investment experience includes stocks, bonds, oil and gas, timber, and real estate.

Julia is also a professional sculptor and ceramist and has been shown in New York City, Saratoga, San Antonio, Aspen, Florida, New Jersey, and Maryland. She enjoys travelling, hiking, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. She and her husband own a horse farm in Glyndon.

Land Trust Roundtable: *Cultivating Board Excellence*

Despite an early snowstorm, 19 representatives from 8 organizations attended the Land Trust Roundtable on December 9 at the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore in Salisbury. Peter Lane of the Institute for Conservation Leadership led the 3 hour workshop entitled *Your Board at Its Best: Cultivating Board Excellence*. Participants learned important steps to strengthen board leadership and make their organizations more efficient, effective and enjoyable. This special event was made possible by a generous grant from the Land Trust Alliance and support from the Lower Shore Land Trust.

The roundtable meetings are held quarterly and provide land trust staff and board members an opportunity to exchange ideas about the challenges relating to land conservation. These meetings are free and open to representatives of land conservation organizations. For more information about the next Land Trust Roundtable, please contact Land Trust Assistance Coordinator Michelle Grafton at mgrafton@dnr.state.md.us or 410-533-4627. The next roundtable will be hosted by the Battle Creek Nature Education Society at Kings Landing Park (Huntingtown, MD) in the summer.



Peter Lane is Director of Program Services at ICL.



MET Celebrates Land Conservation

The view of Lake Roland from Tyrconnell.

MET and the Land Trust Alliance celebrated private land conservation with more than 110 landowners last October at Tyrconnell, a Baltimore County property located on 27 scenic acres overlooking Lake Roland. Guests enjoyed a locally-sourced dinner prepared by Chef Jerry Pellegrino of the Waterfront Kitchen. Special thanks to Wells Liquors and Boordy Vineyards for providing the local beer and wine for this event.

Guests explored the historic mansion and strolled the grounds which feature a quarter-mile allée and formal gardens designed by landscape architect Arthur Folsom Paul. The evening was magical and the weather was perfect for this outdoor event!

Chairman Jim O’Connell made brief remarks about MET’s role in land conservation. “MET plays an important role in

permanently protecting natural, historic, and scenic resources through donated conservation easements,” he said. “We are proud of the success MET has seen in the last 47 years.”

Daniel Beard, Development Committee Chairman, and David Cooper, Vice President of the Land Trust Alliance, addressed the importance of building relationships and coming together to utilize talents and resources toward land conservation effort.

Tyrconnell was originally built in 1826 for the O’Donnell family who relocated here from Canton, a 1,900 acre estate in Baltimore City. In 1919, Tyrconnell was extensively renovated by the Baltimore firm Mottu and White. Tyrconnell is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and protected in perpetuity by easements held by MET.



David Cooper, Tom Hutcheson, III, Katie and Jim Constable, Jim O’Connell and Elizabeth Buxton.



Guests enjoying cocktails on the terrace.

Focus on the Board

A Conversation with Ajax Eastman

by Wendy Stringfellow

On a crisp sunny autumn day I had the pleasure of interviewing one of MET's most active board members, Alice Eastman. Ajax, as she likes to be called, has been involved with MET since 1971 when it was mostly known for its role in the Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) program. While the KMB program was prominent in Maryland, Ajax became interested in joining MET because of its mission to protect land.

Ajax has the distinction of serving on the Board with MET's founding fathers, the late Senator Bill James and the late Delegate John Clark. She recalls them as "great guys" and "real statesmen who were instrumental in creating MET and who were able to accomplish great things for the environment."

When you joined MET what were your biggest concerns?

Loss of land, particularly agricultural land. I recall an oil company wanting to build an oil refinery in Anne Arundel County. Thankfully that never happened. I was also concerned about the landscaping along Maryland highways — they were planting invasive plants.

Back then I was involved with the *Return to the Returnable* campaign, which was a bottle bill. We were trying to get a return deposit on containers. Rather than clean up constantly it would be better to recycle. We worked hard for 10 years to get it passed, but the manufacturer and retailer lobbyists were established and strong at that point, so it never passed in Maryland.

What were your concerns about Maryland in the 80s & 90s?

Wetlands, wildlands, setting aside species rich land. We were able to protect 14,000 acres over 25 years. Glendenning listened to us when we talked about preserving wildlands and he championed it when he became governor. Between '96 and '97 we added another 25,000+ acres of protected easements from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore. First was Savage River State Forest, then Cunningham Falls. All over the state we have preserved wonderful areas, different landscapes.



Ajax kayaking at sunset with friend on Lake Sebago, Maine in 2012.



Ajax and her husband, Tom, hiking on Rattlesnake Mountain, Maine.



What are your concerns today?

Wind turbines along the Appalachian Ridge. They don't produce enough energy to make them worthwhile. My main concern is that they are on the major flyway of neotropical birds and raptors' migration routes. We call them aerial Cuisinarts. They only run 13%-35% of the time in Maryland and they destroy the habitats of endangered species. The only reliable form of energy is nuclear.

How can MET make an impact in the future?

Continue to preserve and protect land for future generations.

Ajax continues to be an advocate for environmental causes, is physically active and is very involved with her children and grandchildren. On the day of our interview, Ajax had just arrived from her daily three mile morning walk (it was 28 degrees outside). She has spent the past six summers at Camp Wohelo, located on scenic Sebago Lake in Raymond, Maine, where she lives in a cabin and teaches children about nature.

Ajax has been involved in environmental and conservation issues since 1970, having served as past President of the Maryland Conservation Council, and on numerous State boards and commissions. She served as Co-Chair of the Maryland Wildlands Committee and was instrumental in the establishment of the State's Wildlands Preservation program in 1973. In 1996, 1,100 acres along the Gunpowder River near Hereford were renamed the Hartline-Eastman Wildland as a tribute to her efforts in land preservation.

This year members of the General Assembly considered the expansion of the Wildlands Preservation System to include another 21,890 acres of state-owned land. Presently 43,773 acres of wildlands are protected.

Ajax served 26 years on the MET Board of Trustees (1971-97) during which time she served as Vice Chair from 1973-78 and Treasurer from 1978-90. Ajax was named trustee emeritus in 1999.

Thank You to MET Volunteers!

An important aspect of any land trust is the protection of the site specific conservation values of each easement through regular monitoring of the property. The Land Trust Alliance recommends that every eased property be visited at least once per year. With the latest easements recorded in 2013, MET now holds more than 1,070 conservation easements totaling more than 130,000 acres throughout the entire state! It is an immense job that is not possible without the contribution of volunteers, and what a contribution they've made just half way through fiscal year 2014!



Land steward volunteer training in December.

Here's a quick look at the numbers...

Since July 2013, the volunteer program has grown from 20 to 32 volunteers, most of whom serve as Land Stewards who help with the monitoring of protected properties.

138 easement properties in 13 counties have been assigned to volunteers for monitoring. Equally important are the contributions of our office volunteers who have donated a total of 300 hours of service through the end of February.

We rely on our dedicated volunteers to accomplish the work of MET. Not only do they contribute to monitoring and office assignments, they are a source of inspiration and positive energy.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING VOLUNTEERS:

Andrea Lynn Blohm	Christine McCreary	Joe Hasuly
Andrew Brignole	Dave Godfrey	Kevin Smith
Ann Burchard	David & Nancy Kieffer	Ronnie Adams
Arthur Meinecke	David Hobson	Shan Allen
Brittany McBride	Dennis King	Stephen Fogle
Carol & Peter Holland	Don Sweet	Stuart Stainman
Carrie Dike	Eric Dirksen	Susan Cohen
Charlie Wells	Gina Im	Theodore Sheppard
Christina Dzingala	Heather Foley	Werner & Elizabeth
Christine Hammer	Jeffrey & Sharon Dillon	Schumann

Target Invasive Species:

Japanese Stiltgrass

If you live in Maryland, you have most likely encountered stiltgrass. This highly aggressive non-native annual grass is common to disturbed sites and is rapidly spreading in shaded woodlands and along roadsides and streams. The plants are bright green in color and between 2 to 3 feet tall, with short alternating lance-shaped leaves differentiated by a distinctive silver midrib.

Japanese stiltgrass alters the structure of natural plant communities and reduces biodiversity by displacing indigenous herbaceous vegetation through its dense growth, which rapidly forms monocultures that are sometimes acres in extent.

As with most invasive plants, stiltgrass spreads swiftly. It has no natural predators — deer reportedly ignore it — and it quickly overtakes native plant populations. Currently, the most effective way to control stiltgrass is to prevent its spread. Yearly hand-pulling usually works for small populations, while larger populations may require the use of pesticides.

Prevent the introduction of Japanese stiltgrass by avoiding disturbance to vegetation and soil in natural areas. Small infestations can be hand-pulled. Plants can be mowed when flowers are blooming, but before seed set. Herbicides can be effective, and should be applied before plants set seed.



Stiltgrass is identifiable by its short lance-shaped leaves and distinctive silver midrib.

Landowner Spotlight

Jean Hicks Reflects on Preserving Maidstone



Maidstone is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and protected by a conservation easement held by MET.

Jamie Salabogi and volunteer, Gina Im, recently sat down with easement donor Jean Hicks and her children Michael and Jacqueline to learn about the history of *Maidstone*, an 18th century Medieval style house in Calvert County. Jean, who will be 98 years young this year, was one of MET's first easement donors in 1976 and she still remembers the early days when land conservation in Maryland was in its infancy. "MET was just getting organized," she recalled. Although land conservation practices were rather new at the time, she and her late husband Earl wanted "to find the best way to protect the property from future development." MET provided them with a mechanism to do just that.

Jean says she has no regrets today and it is easy to see why. In an area that is frequently targeted with new developments, *Maidstone* stands undisturbed, hidden beyond a hill off Chesapeake Beach Road (MD 260) in Owings, affording it an extraordinary level of privacy. As Jean puts it, "Over the hill, you're in another world." The house and outbuildings are bound by 117 acres of forest, agricultural fields, tobacco barns and an impressive English-style garden designed by Earl Hicks. Besides the numerous boxwood and rose varieties, Jean dotes most on her May-tree (common hawthorn, native to Britain), because "a garden is not a garden without a May-tree" according to Earl's favorite writer of children's books and Winnie the Pooh Author, A.A. Milne in his poem *The Wrong House*.

The house has a rich history as one of the oldest surviving homes in Maryland. The property was owned by the prominent Chew family from 1683 to 1745. The house has been dated to

1751 by dendrochronology. Its steeply sloping roof and charming traditional colonial-style porch create a picturesque scene amid the rolling hills and gardens. Jean's son Michael speaks fondly of his childhood growing up on the property, while her daughter Jacqueline feels a sense of peace knowing that her childhood home will remain protected forever. "Most people don't have that luxury," she added.

Today, activities on *Maidstone* keep Jean busy. She plans to resume renovation work on the house later this year and is currently gearing up for the farming season in May. Lately Jean has enjoyed watching the geese that have taken temporary residence on her land, speculating, "The geese feel the same way about the open space as I do ... it's a great place to land."



Jean Hicks, center, with daughter Jacqueline and son Michael. Jean holds a photograph of her late husband Earl Hicks.



Conservation Land for Sale

This property is currently listed for sale on MET's Conservation Land for Sale webpage. Visit www.dnr.state.md.us/met/ to learn about other protected properties for sale or to list your property.

MET Adopts Solomons Island Rd.

On a beautiful crisp October morning, MET staff and volunteers cleaned up litter along a .86 mile scenic stretch of Solomons Island Road in southern Anne Arundel County. Nine bags of trash and two bags of recyclables were collected along the stretch of highway. "We are happy to take a few hours out of our day to help keep Maryland's highways beautiful," said MET Director Liz Buxton. "We encourage anyone looking to get outside, get some fresh air, and help keep our lands and waterways clean to join us for upcoming clean ups." After the clean up, volunteers enjoyed lunch at the South County Café in Deale.

The next two clean up dates are: Thursday, March 20 and Thursday, June 12. Volunteers will be treated to lunch at Honey's Harvest at Herrington Harbour South Marina in Rose Haven following the March clean up. If you are interested in helping and would like more information, please contact Wendy Stringfellow at wstringfellow@dnr.state.md.us. MET will provide training, gloves, vests, and bags. Your participation will help reduce unsightly trash along Solomons Island Road and ultimately help protect the Chesapeake Bay.

Since 1967, MET has partnered with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to help keep Maryland beautiful. The Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) program began as a roadside clean up campaign and has evolved into an annual grant program. MET is proud to be part of SHA's Adopt A Highway program.



MET staff and volunteers collected 9 bags of trash and 2 bags of recyclables.

2014 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SCHEDULE

The Board of Trustees (BOT) meets 6 times a year on the first Monday of each month (except in September when it meets on the second Monday due to the Labor Day holiday).

The board meetings begin at 6:30 pm and are held at the People Resource Building, 100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD, unless notified otherwise. These are public meetings. Please contact Shiela Orwig at 410-514-7901 if you plan to attend.

THE REMAINING SCHEDULED MEETINGS FOR 2014 ARE:

April 7	BOT Meeting
April 3-4	MD Land Conservation Conference
June 2	BOT Meeting
September 8	BOT Meeting
October 7	BOT Meeting
November 3	BOT Meeting

Easements sometimes require advance notification and/or written approval for certain activities. If you are unsure whether notification or approval is required, contact MET stewardship staff to help you 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!

Your Conservation Easement

Understanding Landowner Responsibilities

Since its first easement in 1972, MET has accumulated 1,076 easements protecting 130,000 acres statewide. Some of the eased properties are still owned by the individual who granted the easement and some are owned by descendants who are familiar with the easement restrictions created to help preserve the property's conservation attributes. Many properties, though, have changed hands and are now owned by successor owners with less knowledge of the easement's terms.

If you have recently sold your conservation easement property, please take a moment to provide us with contact information for the new owner. If you are a successor owner and have recently purchased a property with a conservation easement held by MET, please send us your contact information so we can update our records.

MET would like to help you understand the easement that encumbers your property. Industry data indicates that 85% of easement violations are associated with successor owners (From the Land Trust Alliance), so MET Stewardship staff seek to be proactive in helping each successor landowner understand the terms of the easement on his/her property. Every easement is unique. MET and the original landowner tailored the easement restrictions to protect conservation attributes of the property that you now own, so it is important to look at your own easement — rather than to general guidance about what easements do and do not allow — and seek MET input prior to conducting certain activities.

MET staff (and trained volunteers) monitor easement properties regularly and notify landowners in advance of monitoring visits. Though your presence isn't necessary, we'd like to talk with you when we inspect the property so be sure to respond to our letter or email to tell us which times would be most convenient for you.

From time to time, MET will also send Stewardship Surveys. Please respond promptly with updated contact information and

information on any contemplated changes in land use or activities potentially needing our review or approval. Depending on your easement's language, these may include:

- building a new residence/dwelling unit
- replacing or expanding an existing accessory residence/dwelling unit
- converting an accessory structure to a residence/dwelling unit
- creating a new access point to an existing or contemplated residence/dwelling unit
- creating a new lot or parcel through subdivision
- adjusting lot lines with a neighbor
- allowing a utility company or neighbor a right of way across your property
- building accessory structures visible from a scenic byway, navigable waterway or battlefield
- hosting temporary commercial events or activities (e.g. concerts, festivals, weddings, family reunions, fundraisers, etc.) for more than 150 attendees
- building new structures to sell agricultural or forestry products
- selling non-farm goods or services from an existing structure.

MET values your continuing commitment to the conservation of Maryland's unique open spaces and resource lands. Let's keep the communication lines open and work together to jointly steward these special places.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

If you are a new owner of an easement property or if you have general questions about your easement: Contact Joan Lally, Stewardship Coordinator at 410-514-7914 or jrlally@dnr.state.md.us.

If you have specific questions or seek an interpretation on the permissibility of specific activities: Contact Jon Chapman, Stewardship Manager at 410-514-7904 or jchapman@dnr.state.md.us.



THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT CONTRIBUTORS

(September 1, 2013 – February 28, 2014)

Every effort has been made to properly acknowledge all contributors. Please contact Wendy Stringfellow at 410-514-7905 if a listing is in error.

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Online Donations

MET now accepts online
donations on our secure
website. Visit MET's website at
www.dnr.state.md.us/met.



This Land is Protected Forever

MET provides landowners with a sign to be displayed on their conserved property. If you are a landowner with an easement and wish to have a sign, please contact Jamie Salabogi at jsalabogi@dnr.state.md.us or call 410-514-7900 to request one be mailed or delivered at your next monitoring visit.



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Help Build the Stewardship Fund!

With every conservation easement MET agrees to hold, it accepts the responsibility to monitor the property and uphold the terms of the easement in perpetuity. MET relies on contributions to its dedicated Stewardship Fund to support the ongoing stewardship expenses including staff, and volunteer training, transportation, data management, communications and photography. Unrestricted contributions to MET can also be made to support general operations.

Please consider a **tax-deductible** contribution to MET this year. With your support, MET can ensure the permanent protection of Maryland's diverse natural, scenic, and historic resources. Thank you for your support!

Did You Know?

MET was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1967. By statute, MET is governed by a citizen-led Board of Trustees that includes representatives of the Governor and State Legislature.

MET serves as the statewide land trust. The mission of MET is to protect land from development through donated conservation easements. A conservation easement is a perpetual legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that permanently limits the uses on the land in order to protect its conservation values. It ensures that a property shall not be developed or subdivided beyond an agreed limit. The land is thereby protected and preserved while the landowner retains all rights of ownership and privacy. An easement is binding on all future landowners.

MET accepted its first easement donation in 1972, a time when land protection was still in its infancy. Today, MET is one of the oldest and most successful land trusts in the nation. Working with 56 local land trust partners, MET has permanently protected over 130,000 acres on more than 1,070 properties, primarily through voluntary conservation easements.



Leave a Legacy Become a member of the Open Space Legacy Society (OSLS)

The OSLS honors individuals who have provided for MET in their estate plans. If you would like to become a charter member please contact Elizabeth Buxton at 410-514-7903 or Ebuxton@dnr.state.md.us. Members of the OSLS will be invited to a special annual event with the MET Board of Trustees and recognized in MET publications.