

Land Marks

Protecting Land Forever

Celebrating New Acres Protected



View of the Brandenburg property protected by an easement from American Battlefield Trust to MET and Frederick County.

It's been quite a year! Despite what 2020 threw at us, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) continued our work with landowners and conservation partners to protect an additional 1,379 acres. With limited staffing and working mostly from home, MET successfully negotiated the completion of seven new conservation easements on farmland, forests, and wetlands around the state. The new easements protected land in Frederick, Kent, Washington, Somerset, and Harford Counties. Six of the new easements are co-held with a land trust or county government partner. MET also completed two easement amendment projects that strengthened the conservation provisions of existing MET easements on 213 acres. Each conservation project represents a family committed to conservation. It was a pleasure working with these landowners during 2020 to permanently protect critical natural resources that will endure for future generations to enjoy.

MET collaborated with the American Battlefield Trust to protect a property in southern Frederick County on the eastern side of South Mountain at Crampton's Gap. Known as the

Brandenburg property, it is located within the Crampton's Gap Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Crampton's Gap was the site of a Civil War battle that was part of the Battle of South Mountain. The conserved tract of land is located along Mountain Church Road, a wartime farm road where the right flank of Union General William B. Franklin's troops progressed and engaged Confederate troops under the command of General Howell Cobb on September 14, 1862. The Brandenburg property is entirely within the "core" of the battlefield. MET co-holds the conservation easement with Frederick County.

MET teamed up with the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy to accept conservation easements granted on two separate farms for a total of 155 acres in Kent County. MET wholeheartedly thanks these landowners for safeguarding the farmland, forest, and Chesapeake Bay shoreline for the benefit of future generations. The two new easements were made possible with funding from the U.S. Army's Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB)

Continued on page 4



Director's Note

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mary Burke, *Chair*
 Major Gary Burnett, *Vice Chair*
 Julia Jitkoff, *Treasurer*
 Sarah Taylor-Rogers, PhD, *Secretary*
 Megan Benjamin
 Greg Bowen
 Diana Conway
 Megan D'Arcy
 Mark Hoffman
 Thomas Lloyd
 Lori Lynch
 Ken Montague
 Thomas Prevas
 Susanne Zilberfarb

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Senator Adelaide C. Eckardt
 Delegate Jim Gilchrist
 Tom McCarthy (*Governor's Rep.*)

TRUSTEES EMERITI

K. King Burnett
 Ellen Kelly
 John C. Murphy
 Henry A. Virts

STAFF

John Turgeon,
Director

Ann Gutierrez Carlson,
Conservation Easement Program Manager

Jon Chapman,
Stewardship Program Manager

Wendy Foster,
DNR Land Conservation Liaison

Michelle Grafton,
Land Trust Assistance Manager

Jacob Honn,
Volunteer Coordinator

Kelly Price,
*Fiscal Officer/Customer Relations and
 Administrative Director*

Over a year has passed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as we begin to glimpse our collective return to normalcy on the horizon, I find myself reflecting on the resilience that has carried us through these challenging times.

It is with immense pride that I recognize the MET staff, Board of Trustees, and of course, our partners and friends in the land conservation community, whose unfaltering resilience has allowed us not only to adapt, but to excel against the odds over the last fifteen months. This issue of *LandMarks* is filled with stories of innovation and perseverance that remind us of the importance of holding our ideals and values close amidst uncertainty.



Like most of us, MET's staff has been carrying out most of their work remotely, in accordance with Governor Hogan's executive order issued in March of 2020. Without missing a beat, our staff rose to the challenge of teleworking in land conservation — a seemingly impossible task — with vigor. We began conducting our volunteer easement monitoring training online with continued enthusiasm from supporters like you, reading this. Our Board of Trustees and its committees followed suit, holding their public meetings via video conference calls. Staff, volunteers, and partners have been able to continue with in-person easement monitoring visits on a limited basis, while following stringent social distancing measures to ensure the continued safety of our community. Where in-person visits were not possible, we implemented new technology powered by current and past satellite imagery to monitor the land we are charged with protecting. The pandemic called upon us as a conservation community to elevate our practices so as not to let our important work stall out — and I am happy to say that we have proven ourselves in answering that call.

It is because of the perseverance of our staff, Board, and land trust partners that we have had the privilege of protecting close to 1,400 acres of land across our beautiful state in 2020. Today, our total easement holdings cover approximately 1,300 properties.

The nonprofit Forever Maryland Foundation, which MET was instrumental in helping to establish in 2019, has not wavered in their commitment to ensuring our Keep Maryland Beautiful grants program remains successful in the ongoing pandemic. KMB, which is MET's oldest program, has touched so many towns and neighborhoods across our state. This spring, with the help of our funding partners at the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Community Development, MET and Forever Maryland have completed another round of grant-giving, resulting in a banner year for the program as described in this issue.

While there has been undeniable loss and hardship because of COVID-19, I want to take this moment to be grateful for the many ways that it, too, has brought us growth that will transcend the end of this pandemic. Looking back at the great successes awarded by our resilience in unprecedented circumstances, I am only optimistic about what the next chapter will hold for MET beyond COVID-19. Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to being together with you soon in the not-so-distant future!

Stay safe and well!
 John Turgeon

LandMarks is published on behalf of MET by the Forever Maryland Foundation

Senior Editors

John Turgeon, Director, MET

Wendy Stringfellow, President,
 Forever Maryland Foundation

Photo by B. Salisbury



FOREVER
MARYLAND

Enhancing and Advancing
Land Conservation

2021 Maryland Land Conservation Conference

Preserving for a Purpose

July 13 & 14, 2021

Tentative Schedule

Tues., July 13, 2021

8:30-9:00am

Registration & Breakfast

9:00am

Morning Sessions

10:15-1:45

Welcome & Keynote

Lightning Round

Lunch Presentation

1:45-6:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

**Evening reception with
complimentary food &
drink**

Wed., July 14, 2021

8:30-9:10am

Breakfast & Networking

9:15-2:45

Sessions

Lunch

Afternoon Panel

Connect, Conserve, Collaborate

Join us for an indoor/outdoor conference featuring keynote speakers, luncheon programs, lightning round, an evening reception and an array of sessions hosted by distinguished leaders in land conservation.

The Day 2 Summit will feature a session on *How to Lobby*, hot topics with County Council Chairs and preservation planning with your local government officials.

The club level at Ripken Stadium, home of the single-A affiliate Aberdeen IronBirds, is airy and spacious and provides the ability to pipe speaker presentations outside.

[Ripken Stadium](#)

873 Long Dr, Aberdeen, MD 21001

Thank you to the [Conference Planning Committee!](#)

Forever Maryland forges networks of diverse collaborators to provide pathways for all generations to connect with and care for the beautiful and vitally important lands and waters of Maryland that sustain healthy, vibrant, and economically resilient communities.

For more information about the conference visit:

forevermaryland.org/learn/#conferences

Celebrating New Acres Protected

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Above: View of property along the Chesapeake Bay in Kent County protected by an easement from Shell Point Farm & Forest, LLC to MET and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy.

program. The farms are located within the priority protection area for the Army's Aberdeen Proving Grounds and are rich in agricultural and natural resources.

A new conservation easement on 20 acres in Washington County donated to MET by the Blue Mountain Farm, LLC protects forested land within an ecologically important area of the state. The property provides important forest habitat and falls within a "Targeted Ecological Area," which is a designation by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as a high priority for conservation. Additionally, the property is part of an area classified by DNR as "Significant for Biodiversity Conservation" in BioNet, which is a project of the Natural Heritage Program of the DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service. The purpose of BioNet is to prioritize areas for terrestrial and



View of farmland in Kent County protected by an easement to MET and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy from Jennifer Debnam, William Langenfelder, and Kristen Nickerson.



Above: View of forested land in Washington County conserved by an easement to MET from Blue Mountain Farm, LLC.

freshwater biodiversity conservation. The property is also near South Mountain State Park and several thousand acres of protected public and private land.

Somerset County, MET and the Lower Shore Land Trust partnered to accept a conservation easement donation from the Insley - Layfield family. The conservation easement protects a 70-acre farm rich with agricultural and ecological resources. The property contains close to 60 acres of prime agricultural soils. The property is also located within the Pocomoke-Nassawango Important Bird Area (IBA) designated by National Audubon Society. Additionally, the property's forest is considered "Highly Significant for Biodiversity Conservation" by DNR's BioNet.

In Somerset County, the conservation easement granted by Larry Leese to MET and the Lower Shore Land Trust was featured in the Fall/Winter 2020 issue of LandMarks. This large acreage project was spearheaded by Lower Shore Land Trust with work on it beginning nearly a decade ago. MET was thrilled to join these efforts not long after they started. Thanks to much hard work, and the unwavering patience of Mr. Leese, approximately 1,067 acres are permanently protected. The easement was funded



View of property in Somerset County protected by an easement from Terissa Layfield and Daryl Insley to MET and Lower Shore Land Trust.

Celebrating New Acres Protected

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



Left and below: Views of marshland on the Leese property in Somerset County protected by an easement granted to MET and Lower Shore Land Trust.

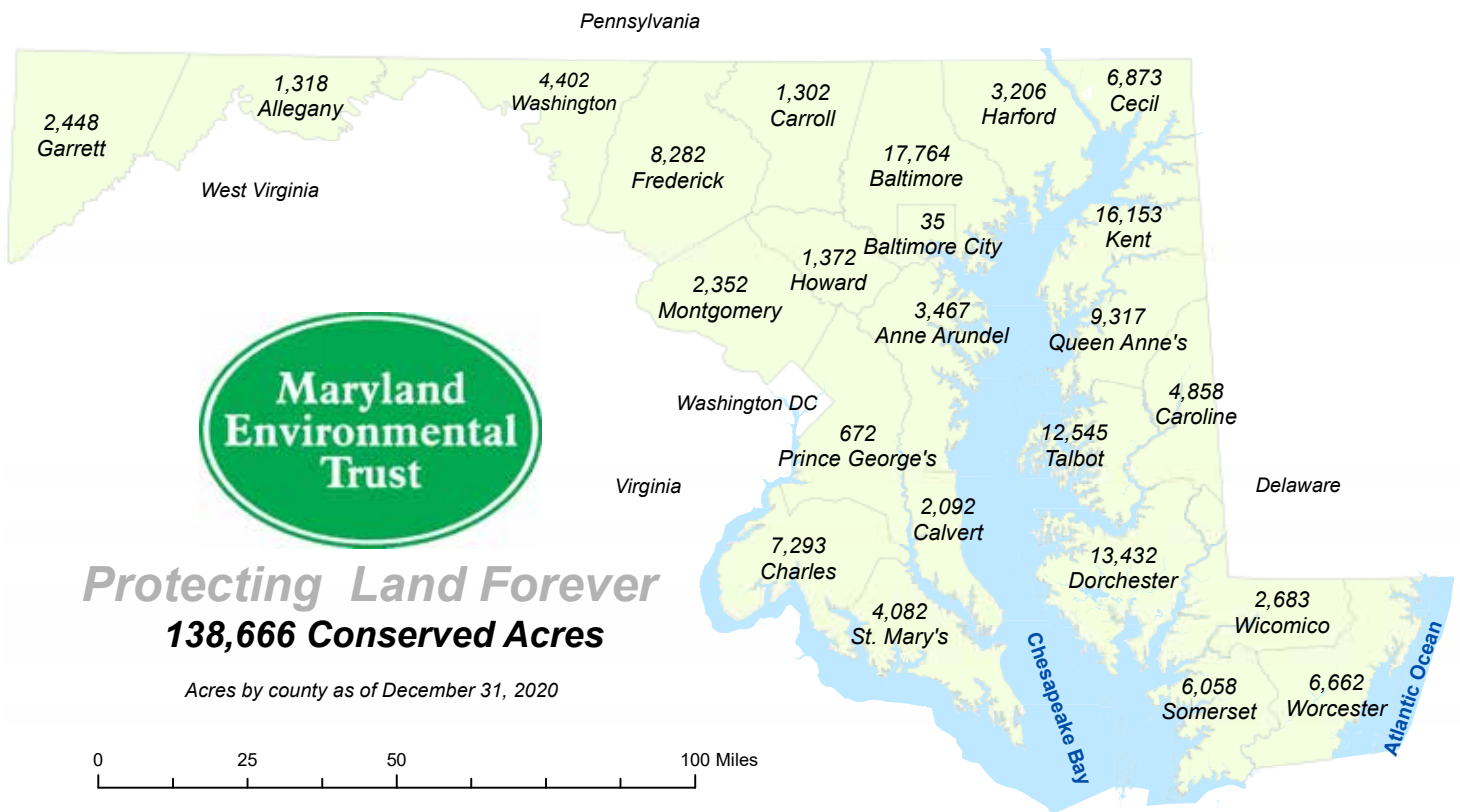
through a grant secured by Ducks Unlimited from the federal North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) to protect habitat for the American black duck. The black duck has been in precipitous decline over the past few decades leading to its designation as a species of conservation concern. The easement permanently protects approximately 36 acres of agricultural land, 330 acres of forest, 700 acres of emergent tidal wetlands, and thousands of linear feet of shoreline along Marumsco Creek and Pocomoke Sound.

In Harford County, MET and the Harford Land Trust accepted a donation of a conservation easement from Foxridge Drive, LLC protecting 48 acres near Havre De Grace. The property contains farmland, forest, and the headwater tributaries of the Rock Run, which flows into the Susquehanna River. The property is located within the Deer Creek Rural Legacy Area and within a significant biodiversity area according to DNR's BioNet. Harford Land Trust also holds a conservation easement on a property immediately adjacent to this new easement. Adjacent to the north is a 165-acre property protected with a conservation easement held by Harford County.





View of forested land in Harford County protected by an easement from Foxridge Drive, LLC to MET and Harford Land Trust.





2021 Keep Maryland Beautiful Grants Total \$312,500

The State of Maryland and the Forever Maryland Foundation are proud to announce that 91 Keep Maryland Beautiful grants totaling \$312,500 have been awarded toward environmental education, community cleanup, and beautification projects through the Keep Maryland Beautiful program. These annual grants are funded by Maryland Environmental Trust, a unit of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR); the Forever Maryland Foundation; the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD); and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

“These grants support the incredible efforts of citizens across Maryland who are stewards of our communities, our green spaces, and our waterways,” Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio said. “DNR is proud to partner with the Maryland Environmental Trust, the Forever Maryland Foundation, DHCD, MDOT, and of course the recipients themselves on this important part of our mission.”

“We are pleased to see our local communities receive Keep Maryland Beautiful grant funds for such innovative projects which will make an impact on our Maryland environment in many ways,” Forever Maryland Foundation Chair Steve Quarles said.

“Local volunteers and stakeholders are changing neighborhoods for the better through the Keep Maryland Beautiful program,” said Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt. “These Clean Up and Green Up awards will help our great partners continue to improve and beautify communities in all parts of Maryland.”

“MDOT is committed not only to a comprehensive transportation network, but also to environmental education, preservation and stewardship, and that’s why it’s important to contribute to the Keep Maryland Beautiful program,” MDOT Secretary Greg Slater said. “It’s good to know the funds MDOT provides goes to almost 20 different groups, ranging from community and neighborhood associations to conservancies and land trusts.”

Recipients included schools, nonprofit groups, municipalities and land trusts in 19 counties and Baltimore City. Many of these grants focus on developing and supporting communities, families, youth and students who take personal responsibility for the health of their communities, protecting nature in their backyards and seeking ways to help reduce or resolve environmental challenges.

Awards given this year were:

One **Aileen Hughes** award totaling \$5,000, awarded to an individual representing a Maryland land trust for outstanding leadership, partnership and innovation in a conservation project. The grant is awarded to the Maryland land trust in recognition

2021 KMB GRANT RECIPIENTS

Anne Arundel County

Annapolis Green
Langton Green Inc.
Russett Community Association
Scenic Rivers Land Trust
Severn River Association

Baltimore City

Baltimore Community ToolBank
Baltimore Green Space
Baltimore Oliver Community Association
Baltimore Star Project
Bon Secours Community Works – Department of Housing and Community Development
Central Baltimore Partnership
City Neighbors Foundation
Civic Works

Druid Heights Community Development Corporation
Ednor Gardens Lakeside Civic Association
Greater Baybrook Alliance
Gwynns Falls Community Association
HARBEL Community Organization
iCARRe Resource Center
Let’s Thrive Baltimore Inc.
Living Classrooms Foundation
McEldeery Park Community Association
MedStar Harbor Hospital
Overlea Community Association
Parks & People Foundation
Patterson Park Neighborhood Association
Sandtown South Neighborhood Alliance

The 6th Branch
The Heritage Crossing Resident Association
The National Aquarium
The Urban Oasis
Upton Gardens of Hope
Waltherson Improvement Association
Waverly Mainstreet

Baltimore County

3200 Carlisle Block Association Inc.
Back River Foundation t/a Maryland Waterways Foundation
Catonsville Manor Community Association
Dundalk Renaissance
Ellicott Mills Homeowners Association

Greater Patapsco Community Association
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
Harford Park Community Association
NeighborSpace of Baltimore County
Pahl’s Crossing HOA
Reisterstown Improvement Association Inc.
Sussex Community Association Inc.
The Manor Conservancy
Turner Station Conservation Teams
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Calvert County

American Chestnut Land Trust
Project Spudnik
Town of North Beach

of the individual's efforts and good work. The grant is given annually to honor the late Aileen Hughes, a true leader in the conservation movement.

Twelve **Citizen Stewardship** awards totaling \$17,500, given in honor of **Bill James**, who drafted the legislation that founded Maryland Environmental Trust, and **Margaret Rosch Jones**, former executive director of the Keep Maryland Beautiful program. These grants are awarded to schools, nonprofits and other community organizations whose missions are centered upon directly engaging community members in environmental education and stewardship. These grants also support organizations that demonstrate active engagement as defenders of the environment by developing innovative solutions to local environmental problems.

Sixty-five **Clean Up & Green Up Maryland** Grant awards totaling \$250,000. This grant was established in 2017 to help community groups and nonprofit organizations statewide with neighborhood beautification activities that include litter removal, greening activities, community education, and citizen stewardship statewide.



Living Classrooms Foundation, a recipient of a 2021 Keep Maryland Beautiful Grant.

Thirteen **Janice Hollmann Grant** awards totaling \$40,000, given to Maryland land trusts to increase capacity, support community programming and innovation and foster stronger, better connected land trusts. All grants require a 100 percent match from the land trust of in-kind services and privately raised funds. The grant is given in memory of Janice Hollmann, who exemplified citizen leadership of local land trusts in Maryland.



More information on the grants is available online.

Caroline County

Downtown Denton Main Street Inc.
Town of Hillsboro

Carroll County

City of Westminster
Downtown Sykesville Connection

Cecil County

Cecil Land Trust

Charles County

Beyond the Classroom Inc.
Charles County Government,
Department of Public Works,
Environmental Resources
Conservancy for Charles County Inc.
Keep La Plata Beautiful
Stella's Girls Inc.

Dorchester County

City of Cambridge
Town of East New Market
Town of Hurlock
Town of Vienna

Frederick County

Brunswick Main Street
Catoctin Land Trust
Downtown Frederick Partnership
Town of Emmitsburg

Harford County

Bel Air Downtown Alliance Inc.
Harford Land Trust Inc.
Lower Susquehanna Heritage
Greenway

Howard County

Columbia Association
Patapsco Heritage Greenway
VolunTeens Co.

Kent County

Town of Galena

Montgomery County

Charles Koiner Conservancy for
Urban Farming
Urban Ecosystem Restorations Inc.

Prince George's County

Alice Ferguson Foundation
Keep Prince George's County
Beautiful
The Mission of Love Charities Inc.
Town of Edmonston

Somerset County

Smith Island United

St. Mary's County

Friends of St. Clements Bay

Talbot County

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
Tilghman on Chesapeake
Community Association

Washington County

Antietam-Conococheague
Watershed Alliance

Worcester County

Lower Shore Land Trust

Seeing from a Different Perspective

REMOTE EASEMENT MONITORING WITH LENS®

When Governor Hogan proclaimed a State of Emergency in March of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) had nearly finished preparations for its spring easement monitoring season. The governor's proclamation and subsequent restrictions on travel and field operations put a serious dent in MET's plans for monitoring, which usually involves visiting properties, meeting with their owners, and observing the landscape and land uses, all to verify adherence to conservation easement requirements. In some limited circumstances, staff were still able to make visual assessments of land use from public roadways, but for the most part, our monitoring efforts were shut down to avoid the potential of spreading the COVID-19 virus.

In response, staff began serious consideration of a technology called "remote monitoring." In its earliest form this involved observers in fixed wing aircraft flying over properties and taking photographs of areas of concern. Intermediate approaches had

staff or volunteers reviewing digitally delivered high altitude aerial photography and less often, satellite imagery, in a Geographic Information System (GIS). The newest approach has resulted from significant improvements in commercial satellite technology and distribution systems, which has allowed re-sellers to provide affordable access to commercial high resolution ("hi res") satellite imagery via the internet.

In November of 2020, MET began using Upstream Tech's Lens® system online to review imagery of our Eastern Shore easements solely held by MET. Lens® allows MET staff and volunteers to view our easement properties with multiple dates of hi res imagery presented side by side, and compare them by swiping back and forth, looking for changes in land use. It also allows us to enter notes about our observations, and to generate a digital or printed report that includes the photos we compared and our notes. And through the magic of the internet we can save the reports on our server and integrate them directly into our easement database.

When looking at imagery, our observers are scanning for major changes like new construction or clearing of vegetation that has occurred since the last time a staff member or volunteer was onsite. If a change is observed, a digital note is made, and the property flagged for follow up by easement stewardship staff.

The imagery we use in Lens® is equivalent to the best resolution visible in Google Earth, which begs the question, why don't we just use Google Earth? Because high resolution aerial imagery of rural areas isn't generally cost effective for commercial providers or their customers, and thus Google Earth imagery for rural areas is often two to three years old. Often, it is photography produced for a public agency like the USDA Farm Service Agency (taken every two years during the growing season) and the State of Maryland (taken every three years for half of the state at a time, before trees leaf out in the spring). High resolution satellite imagery, on the other hand, is acquired every few weeks by major producers such as Maxar and Airbus. Thus, when public imagery is more than a year old, we can order hi res satellite imagery for specific properties and dates in the Lens® system and use it to conduct our monitoring reviews.

In our pilot conducted between November 2020 and February 2021, MET staff and a handful of volunteers reviewed 145 properties and generated reports of their observations using the Lens® system. We found no clear violations of easement restrictions, and only seven instances where we should clarify in our next visit what a particular object or area was used for.

Observation 1





Similarly, there were seven instances where we should review with the landowner the potential for installation of wider shore or stream buffers. And this was all accomplished without putting staff, volunteers or landowners at risk of catching COVID-19, while also saving travel time and fuel to visit properties and conduct an on-the-ground visit, and best of all, seeing more area of each property in less time.

Where do we go from here? In the future, because we may not have met with the landowner for several years, we will be reaching out to owners and interviewing them about any recent changes they have made on their easement properties or any future construction plans or transfer to family or new owners. We'll also be working with Lens[®] to conduct reviews of MET's solely held easement properties in Western Shore counties, and those properties we co-hold with local land trusts that need our assistance to monitor. We also submitted a joint application with the Lower Shore Land Trust (LSLT) for grant funds to prepare a comprehensive GIS file of LSLT's easement holdings and to make Lens[®] available to LSLT for review of solely held and jointly (co-held) conservation easements. This grant was just awarded in April of 2021. Both organizations will now be conducting reviews, collecting data on time and labor savings, and presenting results in a roundtable forum at the end of the grant period. In the meantime, MET will be working with other smaller land trusts to prepare them for potential grant applications and future use of the Lens[®] system.

Going forward, MET will be examining what the optimal frequency of on-the-ground versus remote monitoring will be. Land Trust Alliance standards allow land trusts to use remote monitoring four years out of five, and we will be weighing that factor with the costs and availability of public source hi res photography and commercial satellite imagery. In the meantime, if your easement is co-held with a land trust that is working towards accreditation or that has already achieved that status, you can expect the usual annual visit from a representative of that land trust. If, on the other hand, it's held solely by MET or co-held with a land trust that is in the capacity-building phase, you may or may not receive an in-person visit, but instead only a phone call for your landowner interview. Our objective is to remain in touch, and if you want to contact us first, please feel free to email or call Jon Chapman, Stewardship Manager, at 410-697-9519 or jon.chapman@maryland.gov.



FOREVER
MARYLAND

**ENHANCING
AND ADVANCING
LAND
CONSERVATION
IN MARYLAND**

ADVOCACY

OUTREACH

EDUCATION

MET is excited to announce its support of the Forever Maryland Foundation. This innovative and bold venture started operating in September 2019 to advance land conservation in Maryland through outreach, education and advocacy.

**Visit Forever Maryland at
www.forevermaryland.org**

New Faces at MET

ANN GUTIERREZ CARLSON

As of April 2021, Ann Gutierrez Carlson is MET's new Conservation Easement Program Manager. We are thankful to have Ann fill this role! During her more than thirteen years at MET Ann has worked with landowners and conservation partners to complete 83 conservation easements protecting over 15,300 acres of forest, fields and wetlands. Her passion for land conservation is well known throughout the state as she has worked with numerous local, state, and federal partners to further land conservation in Maryland. Most recently, she led MET's effort to update our Model Deed of Conservation Easement. Ann said, "I am thankful for the many opportunities I have had to explore the beautiful corners of our state and work with inspiring landowners to protect the natural beauty for future generations. I look forward to expanding on MET's great work."

Before coming to MET in 2007, Ann worked for both public and private conservation organizations and as a teacher. Ann holds a M.S. in Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a B.A. in Geography from the George Washington University. Ann is from Catonsville and now lives in Annapolis with her family. She enjoys hiking and volunteering as a tutor at the Stanton Community Center.



JACOB HONN

For the last five months Jacob Honn has served as the volunteer coordinator for the Maryland Environmental Trust, serving through Volunteer Maryland's AmeriCorps funded program. Jacob has been working with MET volunteers to ensure our solely held easements are monitored this year even while transitioning the volunteer program to a virtual setting. Jacob is a recent graduate of Earlham College. He graduated in May of 2020 with a degree in Biology. Jacob is excited to continue to develop the MET volunteer program while getting to learn more about conservation and positive land use practices. If you are interested in learning more about MET's Volunteer Program contact Jacob at jacob.honn@maryland.gov.



FAREWELL MICHELLE FUNCHES

MET said farewell to Michelle Funches in November of 2020 as she accepted a new position with Walker & Dunlop, a commercial real estate finance firm based in Bethesda, Maryland. Michelle first started working at MET in 2013 as a seasonal employee in the easement stewardship program. She then left MET in 2015 for a full-time position with the nonprofit Eastern Shore Land Conservancy in Easton, Maryland. In 2017 Michelle returned to work for MET in a new capacity as the Technology and Records Manager. Michelle's main roles involved overseeing MET's records and general technology needs, as well as managing our conservation easement database. Michelle, who recently became certified as an administrator of the Salesforce customer service management software, has been invaluable in managing MET's LOCATE easement database, which uses the Salesforce platform. Additionally, due to Michelle's foresight in obtaining laptop computers for all MET staff in prior fiscal years, our transition to teleworking during 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was relatively seamless. We were grateful to have her skills and expertise. MET would like to congratulate Michelle on obtaining her new position and wish her well in her professional endeavors.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

Diana Edensword Conway was elected by the MET Board to serve as a Trustee in September of 2020. She is a 30-year resident of Montgomery County, Maryland. She grew up in a Foreign Service family posted to Martinique, Haiti, Liberia, Jordan and France. She holds a BA in public policy from Brown University, and a JD from the University of Virginia.



Her community service includes:

- Co-founder, Montgomery Countryside Alliance;
- Co-founder, C&O Canal Trust;
- President, Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc.;
- Member of several County-appointed boards to include the Sustainability Working Group, Zoning Advisory Panel, County Executive Transition Team, Master Plan Advisory Group, Citizens Advisory Board for western Montgomery County; and
- Civic activist on numerous water quality and environmental protection issues.

She and her husband Bill have three grown children and live in Potomac with three beehives, two mutts and a 20-lb cat. She is fluent in French, and decent in Spanish.

Land Trust Roundtables Go Virtual!

Maryland Environmental Trust wraps up its ninth Land Trust Roundtable series. This year's twist — Roundtables go virtual! Started in FY2013, Land Trust Roundtables are typically held semiannually and provide land trust staff, volunteers and board members an opportunity to come together, share experiences, and exchange ideas about the challenges relating to land conservation.

However, because of COVID, MET pivoted these in-person meetings to a virtual platform. While partners disclosed that they missed the opportunity to network and meet in-person, the virtual platform did cut down on the drive time. This year's Roundtable series was attended by more than 68 representatives from 42 organizations (including 25 land trusts).

For more information on this series or Land Trust Roundtables in general, please visit MET's events page at dnr.maryland.gov/met/Pages/roundtables.aspx.

THE RECENT SERIES INCLUDED TWO MEETINGS:

Stewardship and Monitoring Challenges for Land Trusts during COVID-19

The November 2020 Roundtable focused on monitoring and stewardship challenges during the COVID era. This was the Maryland Environmental Trust's first virtual Roundtable and was an opportunity for land trusts and conservation partners to reconnect during COVID and discuss new experiences and ongoing stewardship challenges.

What's New? Updates to MET's Model Easement and Cooperative Agreement

MET's second virtual Land Trust Roundtable in March 2021 formally introduced the updated Model Deed of Easement, the updated Cooperative Agreement, and the new Land Trust Toolbox on MET's website.



Distanced Volunteerism

A core aspect of any successful volunteer program is human connection. Like most organizations, the Maryland Environmental Trust's volunteer program has faced several new challenges over the last year. One of the biggest hurdles we have had to tackle is the transition to a fully socially distanced program. Whether it is the connections volunteers make with each other or with people in the community in which they serve, these personal connections are often key reasons why people choose to volunteer their time and energy.

That said, prioritizing creating and maintaining connections can seem to be at odds with the social distancing of COVID-19. As we have transitioned to completely virtual training and volunteer environments, MET has been able to continue to efficiently monitor easements and maintain a wonderful group of volunteers.

As an organization, we are fortunate that our volunteers can perform their responsibilities independently and socially distanced, which has allowed us to continue to maintain our easement monitoring capacity. However, with the loss of the in-person training, we have begun to ask ourselves how we can bring that personal connection back into the program even as we

“We are fortunate that our volunteers can perform their responsibilities independently and socially distanced, which has allowed us to continue to maintain our easement monitoring capacity.”

continue to maintain social distancing. So far, we have emphasized the importance of communication, trying to keep our virtual doors open to our volunteers, especially our newest volunteers. In doing so, volunteers can be assured that they are supported even if that support is not in-person.

In addition, we are about to start hosting regular virtual open-hour sessions. Volunteers are encouraged to join and ask any questions they may have or share any good stories or experiences with each other. By continuing to implement further strategies, we hope to foster camaraderie and community within our volunteer team, strengthening our program even as we continue to maintain our distance.

Volunteer Training Update

Easement monitoring during the COVID-19 pandemic has been especially challenging. MET's Stewardship staff and volunteer program shifted from the desired face to face landowner visits to no-contact visits. Previous volunteer monitor training sessions were also done on-site and in-person. Time was allotted during training sessions for field exercises for volunteers to practice using our KoBo field data collection application. With great effort and attention Jacob Honn, MET's 2021 AmeriCorps member, worked on improving our volunteer program. He modified all training material and our training processes for online sessions.

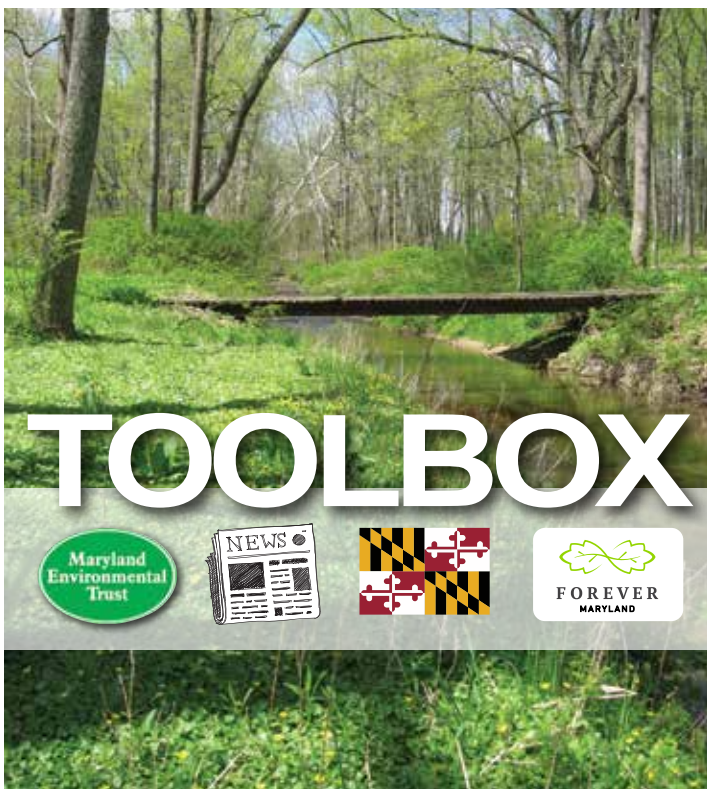
MET hosted our first online training session in November of 2020. We took the feedback we received from participants and made a few more tweaks to our training process. Two additional trainings were held in January and February of this year resulting in 37 qualified new Land Steward volunteers. “The level of interest we have received is wonderful,” said Wendy Hershey, MET's Land Conservation Liaison. “We've always received a good response to our in-person trainings, but the online training response rate far exceeded our expectations,” she added. Over 220 people registered for MET's online sessions. Change is not always easy, but sometimes it is what we need most and can turn out wonderfully.

MET Launches Land Trust Toolbox

Maryland Environmental Trust's Land Trust Toolbox is an online directory featuring MET and other governmental resources, services and tools. The new Toolbox connects Maryland land trusts to resources, tech and data that support daily programming.

The Toolbox is located online and is a one-stop-shop of information for new and established land trust representatives. The tool is designed to help Maryland land trusts navigate through the various programs and resources provided by MET and other governmental agencies.

For more information visit MET's Land Trust webpage at dnr.maryland.gov/met/Pages/landtrusts.aspx.



For more information visit MET's Land Trust webpage at dnr.maryland.gov/met/Pages/landtrusts.aspx

2021 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING DATES (Remaining)

June 7

September 13

November 1

The Board of Trustees meets the first Monday of each month listed above with the exception of the September meeting, which is on the second Monday of the month due to Labor Day.

The board meetings begin at 4:00 pm and are held at 100 Community Place, Third Floor, MHT Board Room 3.218, Crownsville, Maryland, unless notified otherwise. These are public meetings. Please contact MET if you plan to attend.

NOTE: Because MET's office is currently closed to the public in accordance with Governor Hogan's executive order in response to COVID-19, Board meetings are being held via conference call until such time as MET's office can re-open. Conference call access information is posted on the agenda for each Board meeting, which can be found on MET's website here: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/met/Pages/agendas.aspx>

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's 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
- Recording 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 410-697-9519 to discuss your plans. All requests should be made in writing at least three weeks prior to the scheduled board meeting. Thank you!



Protecting Land Forever

100 Community Place, 3rd Floor
Crownsville, MD 21032
Tel: 410-697-9515
Email: met.info@maryland.gov
www.dnr.maryland.gov/met

Address Service Requested



This newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper using soy-based inks.



Thank You to Our Recent Contributors

Processed July 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

Please donate to our Easement Stewardship Fund. Thank you for your support!

Open Space Guardian \$1,000-\$4,999

Mr. Nichols Meitinis
Mr. George Murnaghan
Riepe Family Foundation
The Brown Family

Habitat Hero \$500-\$999

Mr. Ethan Assal
Mr. Gary P. Carver
Mr. James Christhilf
Mr. Samuel Yaffe

Land Supporter \$100-\$499

Ms. Christina Allen
Ms. Diana Conway
Ms. Elaine Christ
Mr. Terry Dunkin
Mr. John Eshleman
The Bramble Foundation
Exxonmobil Foundation
Mr. Richard E. Gold
Mr. Jim Highsaw
Mr. Henry H. Jenkins II
Mr. James Kaper
Ms. Barbara Knapp
Ms. Kathleen Pontone
Mr. George Ruann
Mr. John Turgeon
Mr. Douglas G. Worrall
Ms. Gita Van Herden

Friend \$10-\$99

Ms. Megan Benjamin
Ms. Lauren Case
Ms. Patricia Clark
Mr. Andrew Devillier
Ms. Susan Gordon
Mr. Ronnie Hay
Mr. Darryl Harris
Ms. Cathy Tipper

Open Space Legacy Society

Dr. and Mrs. Gary P. Carver
Ms. Constance J. Lieder
The Honorable S. Jay Plager
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Schmaljohn

Thank You to Our Recent Easement Grantors in 2020

American Battlefield Trust
Blue Mountain Farm, LLC
Daryl Insley and Terissa Layfield
Foxridge Drive, LLC
Jennifer A. Debnam, William H. Langenfelder, and Kristen L. Nickerson
James O'Connell and Kenneth O'Connell
Shell Point Farm & Forest, LLC
The Revocable Trust of Larry E. Leese
Mildred and Rudolph Coulbourne