

Annual report of Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust 2016-2017

In accordance with the Agreement, for 2016-2017 the Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust consisted of seven Trustees and the Executive Director. Trustees from Dominion Cove Point LNG LP were Paul Dickson and Mike Gardner. Trustees from Maryland Conservation Council (MCC) were Karen Meadow and Millie Kriemelmeyer. Trustees from Sierra Club Maryland Chapter were Lila West and Becky Hunter. Mike Rudy was the trustee elected by the organizational trustees to represent the community. Executive Director (Business Manager as of January 1) was Bob Boxwell.

The three member organizations approved the Trust's budget and appointed their Trustees.

Information from Dominion's Trustees has kept the Trustees advised as to the expansion project. With on-going construction at the plant, meetings for 2016-2017 have been held at the Trust offices.

The Trust continues to fund the Ruth Mathes Scholarship Fund. The College of Southern Maryland, Morgan State University, St. Mary's College of Maryland and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science each awarded scholarships for the year and received a check for \$2,500 for this calendar year. The board set aside the Dominion gift of \$250,000 in our account at Bernstein's to serve as the Ruth Mathes Fund Scholarship Endowment. Additional funds were provided for \$5,000 for St. Mary's College and \$2,500 for the College of Southern Maryland.

The Trust's investments remained with Bernstein. The annual audit was performed by Askey, Askey and Associates, CPA, LLC. Financial documents are available for review upon request.

The accountant is Fernandes DeGennaro and Associates and the bank accounts are with PNC.

An office was maintained at the Hellen Creek Forest and Wildlife Preserve (HCFWP) located at 11785 Clifton Drive in Lusby, Maryland.

The Trust held regular business meetings and its annual meeting.

The HCFWP and house were maintained by the Executive Director.

The acquisition of The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Hemlock Preserve is still in the process of being completed. We are currently working with Andrew Garth, Executive Director of Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT), to come up with the funding from other sources (Navy REPI program).

The Webster Street Marsh Preserve continued to revert to marsh.

Other potential property acquisitions were investigated.

The following reports for 2016-2017 were submitted by the Executive Director:

Correspondence

- Communications with TNC and Calvert County Department of Planning concerning transfer of ownership of the Hemlock Preserve to the Trust.
- Maintained a web site and Facebook account.
- Participated in the Sustainable Calvert Network (SCN) group to promote land preservation in the county.
- Sent a letter of endorsement for expanded version of a National Marine Sanctuary at Mallows Bay.
- Sent a letter to Maryland State Department of Natural Resources supporting no harvesting of the oyster sanctuaries established in the State.

Meetings

- The Trust sponsored and staff participated in Calvert County Landowner Preservation workshop at King's Landing.
- Hosted the June meeting of the MCC.
- Staff attended second Patuxent Conference.
- Staff attended update on State's Watershed Implementation Plan in La Plata.
- Board members attended meetings of the Maryland Conservation Council. Staff and Trustees attended chapter and local group Sierra Club ExComs.
- Staff attended the Calvert Nature Society (CNS), PTLT, and American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT) annual meetings.
- Staff attended meetings of the SCN.
- Staff attended meetings on Rural Legacy and county land preservation strategy with the State.
- Staff and board member attended public meetings concerning the upcoming Calvert County Comprehensive Plan revision.
- Staff participated in the Calvert County Environmental Conference held at Chesapeake Biological Lab (CBL) in Solomons.

Strategic Planning

- Provided information to TNC, Calvert County, and PTLT concerning the Hemlock Preserve acquisition.
- Contacted Maryland DNR and TNC personnel concerning status of hemlock population.
- Planned with local Girl Scout leaders for usage of HCFWP for camping and programming.
- Planned for two Boy Scout troops overnight camping trips.
- Investigated properties within the Patuxent watershed for preservation through county and State programs.
- Executive Director was active member of ACLT's new science committee.

Outreach

- Held four seasonal public outings and two workdays at HCFWP.
- Held two nature field trips at HCFWP.
- Planned for Calvert Green Expo at Annmarie Garden (AMG).
- Staff assisted Insectival event at AMG.
- Staff served on Calvert County Citizen's Green Team.
- Staffed a display and booth at Patuxent River Appreciation Days.
- Staff attended meetings as board member of the Southern Calvert Land Trust.
- Sponsored two public lectures (Horseshoe Crab Surveys and Insects Make the World Go Round) through CNS.
- Sponsored the 2017 Calvert County Science Fair.
- Provided display and staff for Morgan State University and Chesapeake Biological Lab open houses.
- Provided programming for the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Educators annual conference in Towson.

Education

- Provided programming for Boy and Girl Scouts troops in Southern Maryland.
- Provided assistance or programming for Chesapeake Public Charter School third grade.
- Worked with CHESPAX as advisor to schools on bluebird trails and nature trails.
- Assisted Appeal Elementary School Green School program.
- Staff helped plan and co-hosted the annual Master Naturalist classes in Calvert County.
- Staff helped establish Master Naturalist class in St. Mary's County and held field trip at Elms Environmental Center.
- Provided programming for Calvert Master Gardner Garden Smarter program.
- Provided programming for Calvert County library (Twin Beaches).
- Provided programs for two St. Mary's County garden clubs

Land Management

- Continued invasive plant removal efforts.
- Continued deer management hunting program.
- Continued biological monitoring programs for plants, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.
- Maintained trails and continued clean up of Hilltop and Hellen Creek sites.
- Maintained and repaired deer exclosures for native plant gardens at office and along streamside.
- Maintained and supplemented hummingbird/butterfly plot.
- Provided access for two Boy Scout winter camping events.
- Monitored properties for ACLT and PTLT.
- Monitored Hemlock Preserve for TNC reporting to Deborah Barber.

Research

- Provided over \$46,600 in funding for the following projects;
- Completion of Audubon Important Bird Area work. (\$8,990)
- Final report on 2015/2016 research on horseshoe crabs at Cove Point beach. (\$9,000)
- Funded 2017 horseshoe crab survey and monitoring. (\$9,799)
- Funded sora rail tagging and monitoring at Jug Bay. (\$8,000)
- Funded plant survey monitoring at Cove Point beach and marsh easement for RTE species with the addition of pumpkin ash population. (\$3,200)
- Final report on evaluation and dating of the black sands along the Chesapeake shoreline in Calvert County. (\$7666.40)
- Staff monitored bluebird trail at Dominion Cove Point LNG site. (see web site for reports)
- Staff monitored wood duck boxes off of Mill Creek Road in Lusby.
- Staff monitored Bald Eagle nest on Hellen Creek for DNR.
- Staff provided assistance in water monitoring sampling for the county.

Grants and donations

- Provided over \$32,400 in funding for the following projects;
- Sponsored the Calvert Green Expo at Annmarie Gardens at the \$250 level.
- Provided funding for St. Mary's County Envirothon (\$100).
- Provided funding for the Cove Point Beach Association road maintenance fund (\$100).
- Provided conduit for funding grant through Volunteer Maryland for a volunteer program for Elms Environmental Center.
- Provided funding to assist in the establishment of a Food Forest at the Double Oak property of the ACLT (\$500).
- Funded the fifth year of the Future Bay Leaders intern program request for the St. Mary's River Watershed Association (\$16,425).
- Funded intern for Calvert County to work on County's GIS program.
- Funded and participated in quarterly water monitoring for Calvert County. The combined funding for the county programs was \$16,486.15

Submitted May 23, 2017