

Annual report of Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust 2017-2018

In accordance with the Agreement, for 2017-2018 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. Business Manager (formerly Executive Director) 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 2017-2018 have been held at the Trust offices or at the Patuxent Business Park in Lusby.

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. The board agreed to award a \$2,500 toward Aimee Beardsmore to continue her educational efforts at Towson State University.

The Trust's investments remained with Bernstein Wealth Management. 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 were with PNC until February of 2018 when they were moved to the Community Bank of the Chesapeake. In addition a short-term investment account was opened with Bernstein Wealth Management to provide a better return for funds previously kept in a money market account 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 Business Manager.

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 sales agreement and easement have been approved and signed by TNC. We await the signature of the REPI group to finalize the transaction.

The Webster Street Marsh Preserve continued to revert to marsh.

The firms of Cumberland & Erly L.L.C. and Watts, Tieder, Hoffar, & Fitzgerald L.L.P. were retained by CPNHT for the purpose of pursuing property in bankruptcy on Turner Road in Lusby, Maryland. A winning bid was submitted on April 2, 2018. One hundred sixty-nine acres of farm land and forest along Hellen Creek were acquired.

The following reports for 2017-2018 were submitted by the Business Manager:

Correspondence

- Communications with TNC and Calvert County Department of Planning and Zoning concerning transfer of ownership of the Hemlock Preserve to the Trust.
- Maintained a web site and Facebook account.
- Signed onto letter with the Sustainable Calvert Network (SCN) group to promote return of funding for land preservation in the county.
- Sent letter in for board concerning the draft Calvert County Comprehensive Plan.

Meetings

- The Trust sponsored through the Sustainable Calvert Network a forum on Land Preservation workshop at Calvert High School and a commissioner candidate forum in Prince Frederick.
- Hosted the May meeting of the MCC.
- Staff attended third annual Patuxent Conference.
- Staff met with St. Mary's County Parks and Recreation Department concerning potential areas of cooperation.
- 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), Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT), St. Mary's River Watershed Association (SMRWA) 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.

Strategic Planning

- Provided information to TNC, Calvert County, and PTLT concerning the Hemlock Preserve acquisition.
- Planned for two Boy Scout troops overnight camping trips.
- Met to plan usage of property for Girl Scout programming.
- Investigated properties within the Patuxent watershed for preservation through county and State programs.

- Business Manager was an active member of ACLT's science committee.
- Provided input to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources outreach on park usage.
- Met with staff at the Leonardtown campus of the College of Southern Maryland to re-establish their nature trail.

Outreach

- Held four seasonal public outings and three workdays at HCFWP.
- Staff attended meetings as board member of the Southern Calvert Land Trust.
- Staff served on Calvert County Citizen's Green Team.
- Staff assisted Insectival event at Annmarie Gardens.
- Staffed a display at the Chesapeake Biological Labs open house in September.
- Helped update the Backyard to the Bay booklet for Calvert County.
- Staffed a display and booth at Patuxent River Appreciation Days.
- Sponsored two public lectures (Bugs Make the World Go Round and MOTUS Monitoring Avian Migration) through CNS.
- Sponsored the 2018 Calvert County Science Fair.
- Held two Great Backyard Bird Count events.
- Staffed a display at the Calvert Memorial Earth Day celebration.
- Provided display and staff for Morgan State University and Chesapeake Biological Lab open houses.
- Staffed display at Farm Heritage Day at Biscoe Gray County Park.

Education

- Staff helped plan and co-hosted the annual Master Naturalist classes in Calvert County.
- Staff helped plan programming for the second Master Naturalist class in St. Mary's County.
- Provided programming for Calvert Master Gardner Garden Smarter program.
- Assisted the Summer Camp at the Elms Environmental Center (EEC).
- Provided programming for teacher's workshop at St. Mary's College (SMC).
- Owl prowl for environmental studies class for SMC
- Staff helped plan field trip programming at the EEC
- Provided assistance or programming for Chesapeake Public Charter School third grade.
- Provided programming for the Francis Duke Charter School kindergarten classes.
- Held a program for an Intergenerational Summer Camp for the Harvest Fellowship in Lusby.
- Taught a lesson to home school students at Immaculate Heart of Mary in St. Mary's County.
- Provided programming for the St. Mary's County Tech Center environmental studies classes.
- Provided programming for the Ridge Elementary School Earth Day celebration.

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.
- Established two new habitat plots (pollinator pockets).
- Provided access for two Boy Scout winter camping events.
- Monitored properties for PTLT.
- Provided plat maps for potential land acquisitions.
- Monitored Hemlock Preserve for TNC reporting to Deborah Barber.

Research

- Approved over \$52,000 in funding for the following projects;
- Funded 2018 horseshoe crab survey and monitoring. (\$12,300 completion in 2019)
- Funded sora rail tagging and monitoring at Jug Bay for 2018. (\$13,000 completion in 2019))
- Funded plant survey monitoring at Cove Point beach and marsh easement for RTE species with the addition of pumpkin ash population. (\$3,200)
- Funded survey of beetle populations associated with a marsh plant, lizard tail. (\$6250)
- Funded monitoring of Important Bird Areas by DC/MD Audubon. (\$17,219)
- 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 including flow rate monitoring.
- Ran two point counts for the Important Bird Area on ACLT property.

Grants and donations

- Provided over \$33,000 in funding for the following projects;
- Funded support of the ACLT science committee projects (\$8,903)
- Funded building an oyster reef with St. Mary's River Watershed Association (\$8,909).
- Funded second grade Chespax program at Annmarie Gardens (\$5,998).
- 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 funding through Volunteer Maryland for a volunteer program for Elms Environmental Center (\$9,000).

Submitted June 19, 2018