



## Check Out the New Conservancy Website and Facebook Page

The Conservancy webpage is better than ever, largely thanks to the efforts of Nancy Delaplaine who led the charge to update the site. Have a look at [conservecharles.org](http://conservecharles.org), and note that you can now pay for memberships or give donations from the website using PayPal. We also have a Facebook page thanks to the efforts of Board Member Rick LaNore! It is a great source of the latest news of interest on environmental and land use matters in Charles County. We hope that both of these tools will help us to keep members better informed, increase visibility of the organization and build membership and support.



## Deanna Wheeler Receives Conservancy's Heritage Award



Hal Delaplaine, Conservancy President, presents the Heritage Award to Deanna Wheeler

Photo courtesy of Russ Talcott  
Article text courtesy of Hal Delaplaine

## Next Annual Meeting Sept. 25- Featuring Award-winning Comedian Robert Mac!

The 2015 Conservancy Annual Meeting will be held on **Friday September 25<sup>th</sup>**. Invitations for dinner reservations will be sent out in mid-August and reservations must be received by September 19. Plan now to attend- this is our only meeting for the membership and our only fundraiser. It is a great opportunity to spend time with fellow Conservancy supporters.

This year we again have Comedian Robert Mac to entertain us! His brand of "intelligently designed comedy" was a big hit last year. Mr. Mac is a former Grand Prize winner on Comedy Central and has appeared at a number of highly acclaimed events throughout the country.

For more information, contact Lloyd Bowling, Event Coordinator, at 301-934-4130.

The Conservancy was pleased to honor Deanna Wheeler of Nanjemoy with the Heritage Award at the September Annual Meeting. Ms. Wheeler has been a teacher and advocate of environmental science and awareness for the children of Charles County since 1987, as well as a public-spirited volunteer, and a community environmental activist. She backs up her enthusiasm for "leaving no child inside" with a unique breadth of experience and initiatives that cannot help but inspire, excite, and energize children of all ages. The variety of outdoor activities and environmental programs she has spearheaded is astonishing and has brought her notice at international conferences and on national network television. Perhaps most remarkably, in 2009 and 2012 she had the good

*Heritage Award continued on p.4*

## Conservancy Outreach: Fun for All Ages

Every year Conservancy members donate their time to help spread the word about our organization and its mission. We regularly set up our booth at ArtsFest (photos below) and the Charles County Fair, and usually have a presence at several other events as well. Our booth includes activities for kids and adults alike—how many of you have taken our quizzes on tree leaves, former landmarks, and watersheds? We also display a map with locations of our easements and feature some photos of these special natural areas. We are always looking for help at these events— if you can assist, please contact us at [charlesconservancy@hotmail.com](mailto:charlesconservancy@hotmail.com).



(Above) CCC Treasurer Rick Viohl chats with the adults while someone is having fun doing a leaf rubbing. (Below) Howard Dent, Conservancy member, shows off some home-grown oysters. *Photos courtesy of Hal Delaplane*



## Additional Recent Conservancy Activities

- 15 easements were monitored in 2014
- Hollman Award was renewed
- One new easement was recorded in 2014
- Provided testimony at several public hearings

## Airport Land Use Study Released

In April 2015, a report on a land use study for potential changes at the Maryland Airport was completed (available at [http://www.charlescountymd.gov/sites/default/files/pgm/planning/draft\\_mdairport\\_study\\_apr-15-2015.pdf](http://www.charlescountymd.gov/sites/default/files/pgm/planning/draft_mdairport_study_apr-15-2015.pdf)). On July 13, Hal Delaplane, President, offered the following comments on the study on behalf of the Conservancy at a meeting of the Planning Commission.

According to the draft report of the Airport Land Use Study, about 40 percent of the 6,000-acre study area is permanently protected state-owned natural resource land. Most of the rest is zoned Rural Conservation, RC(D), which is to be rezoned Watershed Conservation District.

Aside from the airport itself and the failed tech park which the public now owns, most of the acreage zoned for industrial and business park use is the triangle lying along the east flank of the airport and bounded by Pomfret Road (Rt 227) and the state's Mattawoman Wildlands. It is mostly undeveloped upland forest and steeply sloped stream valley except along Ray Road which ends in a privately owned forested tract where the Conservancy and the Maryland Environmental Trust jointly hold a conservation easement.

*Airport Land Use Study continued on p.4*





## Conservancy Organizational Assessment Results

In March 2015, an assessment of the Conservancy as a land trust organization was completed by Donald J. Owen, Senior Executive Consultant, Lands Trails and Parks Consulting LLC, with support from a grant from the Northeast Regional Office of the Land Trust Alliance. Conservancy Board members participated in the assessment by sharing their knowledge of the organization and offering ideas for improvement, essentially doing a guided self-assessment. Mr. Owens also reviewed Conservancy documents and processes to see how they measure up to the benchmark Land Trust Alliance's (LTA) Standards and Practices. This assessment gives the Conservancy a good idea of what needs to be done if the organization decides to work towards certification by the LTA.

What are we doing well? Strengths of the Conservancy noted in the evaluation include commitment of Board members, well-defined and simple mission, good internal financial practices and record-keeping, monitoring of the majority of easement properties by a well-trained group of volunteers, and participation in the TerraFirma conservation defense insurance program. The Conservancy was also noted to provide exceptional conservation value in the area and has good working relationships with agency partners.

Several organizational challenges were also identified: relatively young organization that is still developing; lack of well-developed fundraising capacity and narrow donor base; need to increase and diversify operating revenue sources (\$10–20,000 per year); lacking some easement documentation, and need to appreciably increase the dedicated stewardship and conservation defense fund to be prepared for potential easement violation issues or other challenges.

What does this mean for the road ahead? The Board has laid out a work plan for 2015 and beyond to address many of these issues and to ensure that we continue to shine in the areas that are our strengths. Board members are working on completing easement files, identifying strategies to increase capacity by engaging more members, developing additional needed policies, and exploring options for fund-raising and donor engagement. But the Board can't do this alone— we need your help and ideas to continue to maintain improve the Conservancy! How can you help?

## Maryland Biodiversity Project

Maryland is home to an amazing array of plants and animals. Where can you go for some basic information about what is out there, and where can you go to get help identifying what you find? One very useful resource in recent years has been the Maryland Biodiversity Project.

The Maryland Biodiversity Project is focused on cataloging all the living things of Maryland. Their goal is to promote education and conservation by helping to build a vibrant nature study community. The project was started in June 2012 by Bill Hubick and Jim Brighton. They have already cataloged nearly 16,000 species, including over 6,000 species with photographs, and feature the work of more than 400 naturalists and photographers. Check it out at [www.marylandbiodiversity.com](http://www.marylandbiodiversity.com)!

Just recently, this project became a 501(c)3 non-profit at the state and federal level. Tax-exempt donations will be applied to on-line resources and outreach, events like BioBlitzes, equipment, and ultimately assistance with managing the huge volume of photos and data they're now processing. Their public charity status is also a key step in allowing them to partner formally with state agencies and academia. If you are interested in supporting this effort, click the Donate button in the top-right of any page on the Maryland Biodiversity Project website.

*Heritage Award, continued from p. 1*

fortune to participate with scientists on two Arctic expeditions to the Bering and Chukchi Seas aboard the Coast Guard ice breaker Healy, sharing the experiences and data with her students via blogs and live shipboard webinars.

Somehow, Deanna has been able to carve out time from her teaching to serve as a community environmental leader with great effect that has brought her numerous awards from organizations throughout the county and around the state. Here are a few highlights. She served on the county Rural Commission from 2000 until it reported in 2002. Also from 2000 to 2009 she coordinated a community effort that produced the Nanjemoy Land Use Vision. Finally, in 2000 when Douglas Point was threatened with sand and gravel mining, she formed the Nanjemoy–Potomac Environmental Coalition (NPEC) and helped lead a citizen campaign that resulted in a joint federal–state acquisition of the land for conservation and public use. She continues to lead NPEC as president to this day.

Thank you, Deanna, for your exemplary leadership and involvement in the well–being of the county and especially its children. Keep up the good work!

*Airport Land Use Study, continued from p. 2*

Viewed from satellite, the airport is an opening in the canopy of a Green Infrastructure forest hub that is part of the largest contiguous forest in Maryland east of the Alleghenies. Almost all of the study area is within a DNR–designated Targeted Ecological Area, meaning it is one of the state’s most ecologically valuable lands and is a priority for preservation through Program Open Space. Further, it contains two of National Audubon Society’s Important Bird Areas and is also a BioNet Tier 1 and Tier 2 landscape, meaning it is Critically or Extremely Significant for biodiversity conservation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service includes it in its Chesapeake Rivers National Refuge Complex. These and other special environmental designations mean the land is eligible for federal and state funding for preservation.

Despite all the time and effort that has been put into such schemes as the cross–county connector and tech park, which are still being promoted in this proposal, there is still no coherent economic vision for the western county. The airport lacks a compelling linkage between increased activity “inside the fence” and a need to develop surrounding employment land. Indeed, the Economic and Market Assessment concludes on page 52: *“...there is no market justification to expand the current inventory of employment–land in the study are...[It] is not currently competitive to attract large, stand–alone non–aviation uses. Maryland Airport is well suited to expand “inside the fence” activity, while also serving as an asset for the County’s larger economic development marketing and recruitment strategy.”*

□

In commenting on the 2002 EA, the National Park Service foresaw significant long–term effects on Mattawoman while the National Marine Fisheries Service went further, saying the project would be devastating to the watershed, its wetlands, and instream habitat. It would be a poor bargain to trade such an enormously important natural resource for a business venture of dubious prospect.

**Editor’s Note:**

*Please contact me by November 15 if you have a story, photos, or announcement to share for the winter newsletter, due out in December 2015.*

*Gwen Brewer*

*3wigeons@verizon.net, 410-741-9129*

## There's still time- please renew or join for 2015!

Please indicate payment of your membership dues only, donation only, or both when you send in the form below. Remember that your dues and donations to the Conservancy are tax deductible. Your dues and donations are critical to continue our work.

You can also renew or join from our website using PayPal at [conservecharles.org](http://conservecharles.org)!

Don't let your membership lapse- we need your help to preserve the natural and historical landscapes of Charles County!

**Please join us to help preserve Charles County's natural and historic landscapes. Fill out the form below to become a member or otherwise contribute.**

Annual dues—

\_\_\_ individual \$35      \_\_\_ family \$50      \_\_\_ student \$15      \_\_\_ organization \$100

Dues and contributions are tax deductible. The Conservancy is listed as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-exempt organization with the State of Maryland.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (if organization membership): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send the Newsletter by e-mail only to conserve resources** \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Added contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check out to "Conservancy for Charles County, Inc." and mail with this form to:  
Conservancy for Charles County, P.O. Box 1358, Waldorf, MD 20604

**Conservancy for Charles  
County, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1358  
Waldorf, MD 20604

**Phone:**  
301-932-5714

**E-Mail:**  
info@conservecharles.org

**Quiet forests.  
Green and golden fields  
crisscrossed with streams.  
Historic homes, silvery  
cedar barns, scenic roads.  
All worth preserving for  
today and forever.**



# CONSERVANCY for Charles County, Inc.

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.conservecharles.org](http://www.conservecharles.org)

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Conservancy for Charles County, Inc.  
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