

CHARLES COUNTY LANDSCAPES

Newsletter of the Conservancy for Charles County, Inc.
www.conservecharles.org 301-932-5714

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Tom Roland Receives Conservancy's Heritage Award



Hal Delaplaine, Conservancy President, presents the Heritage Award to Tom Roland at the Waldorf Jaycees. *Text courtesy of Hal Delaplaine and photo courtesy of Brian Clark.*

The Conservancy was pleased to honor Tom Roland with the Heritage Award at the September 2016 Annual Meeting. The Conservancy cited Mr. Roland for preserving open space and expanding public outdoor recreation and environmental education through his leadership in planning and developing the county's park system over a 38-year career.

A native of Prince George's County, Mr. Roland came to Charles County in the 1970s. With an education in estuarine science and outdoor recreation and experience working for the Maryland-National Capital Park and

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President's Message: 2016 in Review

2016, our twentieth year, was a landmark year for both the Conservancy and the county. With our focus on stewardship, we monitored all 26 of our conservation easements and our one fee property and provided information and assistance to easement landowners when it was needed.

Our outreach program had an active year, too. We exhibited at a number of venues, including Artsfest, the County Fair, and Nanjemoy Heritage Day. We spoke about the Conservancy's mission and accomplishments at the SMADC Agriculture Summit and Nanjemoy Community Meeting. In collaboration with the Port Tobacco River Conservancy and Charles County Parks Division, and with more than two dozen North Point High School students, we planted more than 2,700

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Get Your Tickets!

The Port Tobacco Players will stage "Don't Dress For Dinner", a fast-paced bawdy French farce by Marc Camoletti about multiple marital infidelity and duplicity, mistaken identity, and confusion.

Dates/times are January 20 through February 5, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 3 pm. Call (301) 932-6819 for reservations or buy tickets at www.ptpplayers.com. **A portion of each ticket sale will be donated to the Conservancy! Thank you Port Tobacco Players!**

- Scoping meeting for proposed Mallows Bay National Marine Sanctuary March 7, 2017, 6-9 pm, Charles County Government Building Auditorium, La Plata; for information:

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-bay/>

Conservancy Welcomes New and Returning Board Members



CCC welcomes Matthew Simpson (left) and Austin Doherty (right) to the Conservancy Board.



President Hal Delaplaine thanks Lynne Wheeler, outgoing Board member, for her service to the Conservancy.

The Conservancy welcomes two new Board members-- Austin Doherty of Nanjemoy and Matthew Simpson of La Plata. Matthew Simpson is a general practice attorney who has a passion for the law, sailing, history, animals and the outdoors. A native of Charles County, Mr. Simpson is a third generation lawyer, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. He has seven years of experience as an attorney, and earned his juris doctor degree (J.D.) from the University of Baltimore School of Law. He is a member of the La Plata Business Association, the Charles County Conservancy and the Maryland and Charles County bar associations.

Mr. Simpson has always enjoyed nature and outdoor activities and appreciates the opportunity to work with the Conservancy in its work to help preserve Charles County's heritage and future. Mr. Simpson owns a home in La Plata where he lives with his 25-pound rescue cat, George.

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Easement Spotlight: Mount Vernon Viewshed

In 2014, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union donated a conservation easement to be jointly held by the Conservancy and the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) on 65 forested acres on the escarpment north of Bryans Road for the purpose of shielding the view of an adjacent subdivision from Mount Vernon.

The property was a designated "targeted ecological area" by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and has a Green Infrastructure rating of "excellent". It is 90% forested and 50 % wetlands. Immature bottomland hardwoods buffer 2,215 linear feet of Pomonkey Creek and provide excellent wildlife habitat especially for Forest Interior Dwelling Species such as songbirds. The forested escarpment slope includes immature upland mixed hardwoods, predominantly beech, poplar, oaks, and hickory. No building or structure and no timbering are permitted on the slope.

There is currently a residence and a number of sheds and other structures on the open land which may be replaced, but no additional dwelling is allowed nor is any subdivision of the property. The height of any building or structure is limited to 35 feet. Exterior lighting, siding, and roofing are carefully regulated to be non-obtrusive and non-reflective. New utilities, including renewable energy systems and satellite dishes, are permitted within the height restriction but cellular communication towers are prohibited.



The Conservancy's newest easement protects the view from Mount Vernon as well as forest and stream habitats. Photo courtesy of Hal Delaplaine

Bald Eagle Nest Data Needed

The recovery of our national symbol, the Bald Eagle, is considered one of the greatest conservation successes of the 20th century. The 44 nesting pairs detected in Maryland in 1977 represented an all-time low for the state. However, as actions were taken to reduce the declines (e.g., banning harmful pesticides like DDT), Bald Eagle populations recovered to the point that they were removed from the federal threatened and endangered species list in 2007. Today, the Chesapeake Bay region is home to the largest concentration of Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states, with an estimated 600 or more nesting pairs. In Maryland, Charles County has the second largest number of Bald Eagle nests!

Although organized surveys of Maryland's Bald Eagle population were discontinued in 2005, the existence of threats such as pollution, increased frequency of violent storms, coastal development, and collapsing fish populations prompts the need for continued monitoring of Bald Eagles in our state. The Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership, a group of organizations working to conserve birds and their habitats, is looking for your help to document the nesting success and productivity of Maryland's Bald Eagles.

The Bald Eagle nesting season in Maryland starts in October, with pair formation and construction of large stick nests in the upper crotches of tall trees. Eggs are usually laid in February, but pairs in our area occasionally start laying their eggs in January. The clutch of 1–3 eggs usually hatch by mid-April, and the nestlings fledge in May–June. For this effort, volunteers will be asked to visit a nest several times from about March to June to collect information on nest occupancy and number of young. Training will be provided but participants will need their own binoculars or spotting scope. Care will be taken to respect private property and to not disturb the nesting eagles.

You can help by becoming a Nest Monitor or reporting nest locations. For more information, please go to <https://marylandbirds.org/bald-eagle-nest-monitoring/>



Ecosystems Services: Benefits Provided by our Natural, Agricultural, and Aquatic Resources

In August 2016, Drs. Elliott Campbell and Christine Conn from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) presented the findings of an ecosystem services assessment case study to the Planning Commission, with whom they have partnered in this effort. Ecosystem services can be thought of as contributions that the environment makes to the wellbeing of the Maryland public. These services include benefits from forests, wetlands, and our waterways, such as the provision of clean water and air, avoidance of erosion, reduction in flooding, pollination of crops, value for fish and wildlife including harvests, and recreation. Wise decisions include consideration of ecosystem services, as it is cheaper to conserve than to restore or replace, if that is even possible. In order to assign a value to ecosystem services, present value and return on investment were considered as well as what we pay in one way or another for those services. The DNR study assigned a dollar value per acre per year and mapped stormwater abatement, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, nutrient uptake, groundwater recharge, and air pollutant removal values.

The study found that Charles County's ecosystem services sum to over \$500 million per year, the 4th highest county value in Maryland! Forests, protected lands, and wetlands contribute the most to this value, especially in Nanjemoy Creek, Zekiah Swamp, and Mattawoman watersheds. Watershed and Rural Conservation Districts, protected lands, and floodplains provide benefits valued at over \$2100 per acre per year. The study demonstrates the economic benefits of minimizing development impacts and also has implications for mitigation requirements.

A report containing the results of the study will be provided and a web-based tool is planned so that decision-makers can consistently consider the economic impacts of ecosystem service loss and/or preservation when considering proposed projects.

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Planning Commission, he was well-positioned to direct the expansion of Charles County's parks from eight to 31 and from 867 acres to more than 4,000 acres. Some of his more notable recent acquisition projects include the Indian Head Rail Trail, Friendship Farm Park, Maxwell Hall, Mallow's Bay, and most recently Port Tobacco River Park and the corridor that will eventually become the Popes Creek Rail Trail.

Roland is a past recipient of the Bureau of Land Management Director's Four C's Award for outstanding natural resource planning and the Maryland Governor's Citation for outstanding service related to development and operation of Charles County's park system. Most recently, Mr. Roland was recognized by the Mallow's Bay National Marine Sanctuary Steering Committee for his efforts in preserving and promoting Mallow's Bay.

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trees and shrubs over two April weekends at the future Port Tobacco River Park. For the third year in a row, we were a sponsor and exhibitor at the Southern Maryland Crop Conference.

Finally, after five tumultuous years, the county achieved a new Comprehensive Plan. Working with the Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County, we helped to guide the outcome and produce a road map to a better future for everyone in Charles County where growth is better directed to where it belongs and natural resources and rural landscapes are not squandered.

In accomplishing the above, we operated at break even as is our policy. Our operating income came from dues and donations (42 percent), grants (37 percent) and fundraising events (21 percent). Our operating expenses were dominated by insurance -- liability and directors and officers-- at approximately 30 percent and by leasing and operating our office, 30 percent. Stewardship took 20 percent and all other programs combined took 20 percent. These breakouts are an accurate reflection that we are a small, all-volunteer organization and that we exist only because of the support of you-- our members, our friends, and our community. We thank you.

Board Members, continued from p. 2

After receiving a B.A. in Philosophy and a Master's in Library and Information Science from Catholic University in the early '70's, Austin Doherty spent his entire professional career working in large Washington, D.C. law firms. He left his last position as Chief Knowledge Officer with Hogan Lovells US LLP in 2010 after 33 years. During those decades his work included management of support staff active in the areas of research, litigation technology, patent and trademark prosecution, and legislative lobbying.

Austin and his wife were weekenders at their home along the banks of Nanjemoy Creek from 2000 to 2009, and have been full-time residents since 2010. He reflected that "we feel extremely fortunate to be domiciled in the midst of such quiet beauty. We also feel obliged to do our part to protect the earth as it is given to us in its natural bounty. I joined the Conservancy because it seemed to me that its mission mated with the provisions of the new Comprehensive Plan pointed to the best way forward for our County."

Mr. Doherty recently became Treasurer for the Conservancy, a role that Rick Viohl has performed so ably since 2005. Many thanks to Rick, who continues to serve on the Conservancy Board. The Conservancy also thanks outgoing Board member Lynne Wheeler for her contributions during her term.

Two incumbent directors were re-elected—Nancy Schertler of Newburg and Millie Hamman of Nanjemoy. Other directors returning to the 10-member board include Lloyd S. Bowling, Sr., vice president Gwen Brewer of Lothian, Brian Clark of Waldorf, secretary Ellen Cline of Indian Head, president Hal Delaplaine of La Plata, Cindy Greb of Leonardtown, and Richard C. Viohl, Jr. of Nanjemoy.

Editor's Note:

Please contact me by April 15 if you have a story, photos, or announcement to share for the spring newsletter, due out in May 2017.

Gwen Brewer

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

Please renew or join for 2017!

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!

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.**

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301-932-5714

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



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