

Field Notes

A Lower Shore Land Trust resource for land managers, farmers, hunters, and naturalists

- Agricultural Pollinator Certification Program
- Maryland's Conservation Buffer Program
- Natural Lands Project: Restore Quail Habitat
- Invasive Species Restoration Updates from LES-PRISM
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- Land Trust Preserves 270 acres in Wicomico County
- Funding Conservation on Your Land Workshop
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LOWER SHORE
LAND TRUST

December 2021

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 @LowerShoreLandTrust
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Our Mission: Lower Shore Land Trust protects and restores natural resources, wildlife habitat and working lands to support and connect healthy and vibrant communities.

Lower Shore Land Trust's Agricultural Certification Program *Got pollinator habitat?*

Lower Shore Land Trust has expanded our Pollinator Certification Program to agricultural lands. Our vision is to promote stewardship, provide resources, and facilitate a network for landowners and farmers who are planting for pollinators. With enough natural habitat, pollinators can provide the pollination necessary for many crops.

Pollinator Practices and techniques include...

- Pollinator strips/Hedgerows
- Pollinator Meadows
- Integrated Pest Management
- No till practices
- Leaving over-winter habitat



Pollinator patch, Dan Small

Join our growing Pollinator Network! Email info@lowershorelandtrust.org, call 443 234 5587, visit lowershorelandtrust.org/pollinators, or visit our office to apply.

Maryland's Conservation Buffer Initiative Second Round of Applications Upcoming



Maryland Department of Agriculture is planning another round of applications for FY22. The application window will be ~6 weeks starting in early January. Contact your local Soil Conservation District for more details and see the website for forthcoming updates:

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/conservation-buffer-initiative.aspx

Three types of buffers are eligible for funding and free technical assistance: forest buffers planted next to waterways, grass buffers planted next to waterways or field ditches, and watercourse access control areas adjacent to pastures.

Funding for Maryland's Conservation Buffer Initiative is provided by the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund and the Environmental Protection Agency.



Adding Another Tool to the Toolbox: Natural Lands Project Comes to the Lower Shore

Generously funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Federation, the Natural Lands Project (NLP) is broadening its scope. The Partnership between Lower Shore Land Trust and Washington College is bringing resources for restoration of bobwhite quail habitat to the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland.

The Natural Lands Project is already doing amazing work on the mid- and upper- shore. Landowners who are interested in bridging agriculture and habitat restoration (and not to mention improving the water quality of our rivers and bays) now have another tool to accomplish this. In 2015, Washington College's Center for Environment & Society launched the Natural Lands Project. Working with partners, ShoreRivers and Duck's Unlimited, NLP has installed over 663 acres of native grasses, planted 18,000 native shrubs, and created 55 acres of wetlands on private farms in Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties. Now, these efforts will support restoration on the Lower Shore, a region with high potential for habitat restoration.

“I'm not against crops—we all eat—but they don't support wildlife. The only thing in a cornfield is a few deer having dinner. It's amazing what this has done. It's brought all kinds of species that weren't there. It awakened the land, and it opened my eyes.”

- Rob Leigh, NLP Landowner

Why is quail restoration so important? Northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), our native quail, thrive in early successional habitat, a habitat we saw a lot more of when farmland included hedgerows, fallow fields, pastures, and unkempt and woody field edges. Changes in agricultural practices and increased development have diminished this habitat causing quail to be extirpated from much of their original range. Despite these challenges, there is much we can do to help bring back this important habitat and, in time, quail.

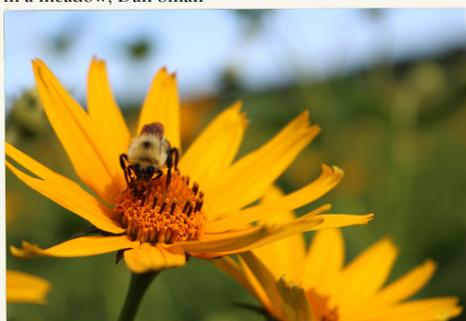
Do you live on the Maryland's Lower Shore and wonder why you no longer hear and see as much wildlife as you used to? Interested in restoring grassland habitat or wetlands on your property? We can help. Join a growing group of dedicated landowners on the Lower Shore interested in creating a balance on their properties between farming and wildlife!



Bobwhite quail, Dan Small



Purple coneflower in a meadow, Dan Small



Bumblebee on Oxeye Sunflower, Dan Small

Criteria:

- Enrollment of cropland, previously cropped land, or fallow land that is not enrolled in any conservation programs.
- Proximity to other participants, interested parties, or established habitat (not necessarily contiguous) to create 20 acres or more of habitat
- Areas adjacent to waterways (riparian)
- Natural land management for a minimum of 10 years

What we provide:

- Habitat design
- All seed and installation costs for grasslands
- Management plan and consultation throughout project
- A one-time incentive payment of \$650.00 per acre for land enrolled
- NLP can work in conjunction with CRP, EQIP, and other conservation programs.

Be a part of the growing Natural Lands Project story....

Contact Lower Shore Land Trust at 443 234 5587 or email Suzanne Ketcham at sketcham@lowershorelandtrust.org if you are interested in this program

Updates from the Lower Eastern Shore Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (LES-PRISM)

Cypress Park Restoration

In fall of 2020, Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member, and now Stewardship Coordinator at LSLT, Frank Deuter took on the restoration and invasive removal in the Olive Lippoldt Tidal Wetland Gardens in Pocomoke City. With the help of volunteers, LSLT donors, City of Pocomoke, Lowe's of Pocomoke City, and Pocomoke Middle School, and volunteers, this project has been a success.



View of Olive Lippoldt Tidal Wetland Garden, Frank Deuter

So far, we have been able to remove truckloads of invasives, introduce multiple native plants, install new signage has, and engage of the community. In addition to manual removal, this Autumn, we contracted with Delmarva Custom Spraying to treat invasives like Phragmites. We did this in order to help suppress the invasives throughout the winter months, and to encourage native growth in the spring. For especially persistent invasives, manual removal is often not enough on its own and chemicals must be used. We look forward in seeing how this project will progress in the next few years.



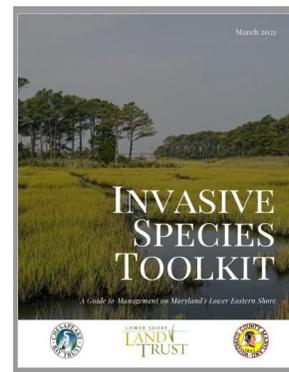
Interpretive signage to educate visitors, Frank Deuter



Walking Bridge in Wetland Garden, Frank Deuter

Managing Invasive Species this Fall

This is a great time to work on invasive management in your yard. During the fall, most perennial species like trees, woody vines, and grasses such as phragmites are busy sending energy to their roots in preparation for the winter making herbicide treatments more effective. If you know of any Bradford Pear (also called Callery Pear), phragmites, tree-of-heaven, or English ivy in you yard, now would be a great time to treat them with hack-and-squirt, basal bark, or cut stump herbicide treatments. These methods are an effective way to kill invasive species by applying the chemical only to the plants you wish to remove. Our Invasive Species Toolkit found on our website provides details on best practices on how and when to treat these and more problematic species in our region. Remember, The Label is the Law when using pesticides. If you are uncomfortable using chemicals yourself, work with a local, certified applicator to ensure effective and efficient pesticide use.



Callery Pear in fall

Soil Health Spotlight

Frank Deuter

Soil Is An Ecosystem

Soils contain more than just mineral matter and plants. They are also a vibrant ecosystem containing water, air, bacteria, protozoa, fungi, and nematodes; that are all consumed by arthropods (insects), earthworms, and eventually mammals, reptiles, and birds.

The diversity of soils and what they contain is critical for life on Earth. Soils filter water - and important part of the water cycle - and are included in multiple other environmental processes. Soils provide many things:

- Habitat for beneficial organisms and microbes
- Nutrient recycling, such as the Nitrogen cycle
- Aids in decomposition of organisms and plant matter
- Carbon sequestration
- Prevention of erosion
- Reduction of runoff
- Reduction of pollution



Pollinators - both birds and insects - are vital organisms that should be encouraged to visit your crops. Pollinator meadows are a great way to convert an infertile or wet section of a field into a productive area of habitat that supports crop health. Using pollinator strips along your field drain channels (10' or more) provide beneficial habitat and help reduce runoff and erosion.

Limit mowing of your meadow and wait to mow in early spring to leave overwintering habitat for pollinators under leaves and leaf litter or in stalks.

Only use chemicals on your land when they are necessary. When they must be used, try to limit application to dusk and dawn when pollinators are less active.

Be Mindful of Your Practices - Promote Soil Health:

Get Your Soil Tested:

- Soil testing is a great way to know what nutrients your soil needs, save money, and prevent runoff.
- For more information about soil testing, ask your agronomist or visit:

<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/soil-testing-and-soil-testing-labs>

Use No-Till Methods & Technologies

- No-till drills and planters efficient seeders and also reduce compaction, and reduce fuel use and maintenance

Use Cover Crops

- Popular cover crops on the Eastern Shore are rye, wheat, barley, red clover and oilseed radish (great for compacted soils). Sunflower also helps to prevent compaction.

Crop Rotation

- Monocropping increases the chances of disease, the loss of fertility, causes erosion, and other environmental concerns.
- Eastern Shore farmers often rotate corn (cereal), wheat, rye, or barley (cereal), Soybean (legume), and oilseed radish (forage crop).



No-Till vs. Till methods

For more information on soil health and available cost-share programs, call or visit your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office.

Land Trust Preserves 270 Acres in Wicomico County

Jared Parks

The Lower Shore Land Trust (LSLT) is excited to announce the protection of a 270-acre farm on Rewastico Creek in Wicomico County. The property is a family-owned farm that includes approximately 70 acres of agricultural land and 200 acres of forest and forested wetlands. The protection of this property adds to an extensive area of protected lands in and around the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area (QCRLA). The landowners were among the first to show support for the expansion of the QCRLA in 2017, which added lands north of Cherrywalk Road including Rewastico Creek, most of the Paleochannel to the north and west of the City of Salisbury, and lands in the vicinity of, but not including, the Town of Hebron.

Maryland, and the Lower Eastern Shore in particular, provide a multitude of conservation options for rural landowners and a host of organizations and local, state, and federal governmental partners dedicated to the preservation of the landscapes that make this area so special. This project highlights the collaborative approach to achieving mutual conservation goals. Without the dedication of our partners- Wicomico County, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Rural Legacy Program, the U.S. Navy through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, Chesapeake Conservancy and Mt. Cuba Center, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Healthy Watersheds Consortium-- this project would not have been possible.

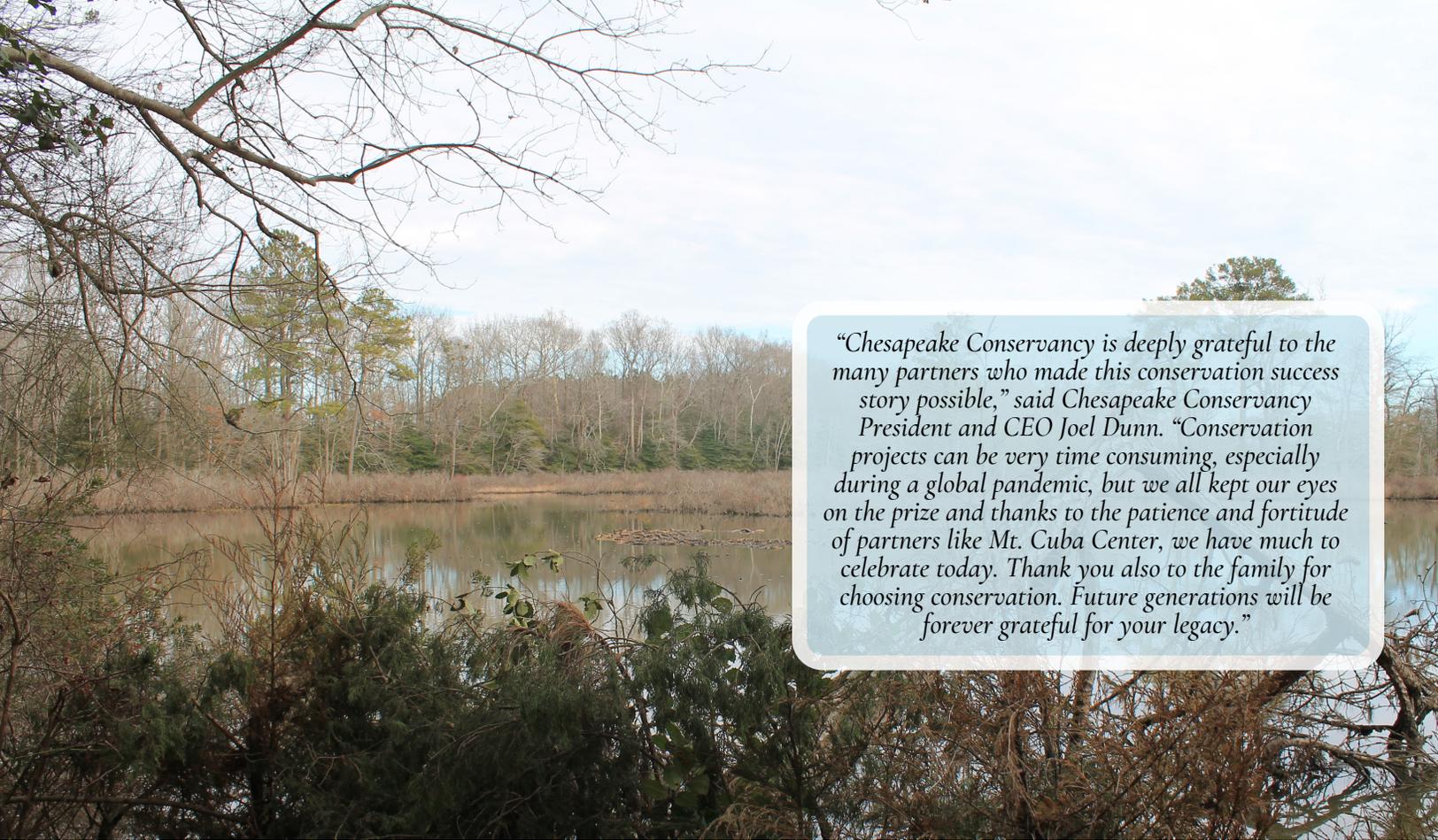
LSLT was able to garner extra financial support for the project due to the property's location in the Nanticoke River watershed, a priority watershed for the Chesapeake Conservancy and the U.S. Navy through the Department of Defense REPI program. Protection of the property ensures water quality benefits for the Nanticoke River while limiting development that could be incompatible with the aircraft testing mission of the Atlantic Test Ranges and Naval Air Station Patuxent River.

Rewastico Creek Floodplain, Jared Parks

“Working with landowners to help them preserve their family legacies is a pleasure and an honor. Finalizing this project was especially gratifying given the many trials and tribulations we had to overcome. I am grateful for the dedication of the landowners and all of the many partners that stuck with me through it all. The preservation of this farm is a true testament to what can be done when we all come together with a common purpose” said Jared Parks, LSLT Land Programs Manager.



No-Fill vs. Fill method



“Chesapeake Conservancy is deeply grateful to the many partners who made this conservation success story possible,” said Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn. “Conservation projects can be very time consuming, especially during a global pandemic, but we all kept our eyes on the prize and thanks to the patience and fortitude of partners like Mt. Cuba Center, we have much to celebrate today. Thank you also to the family for choosing conservation. Future generations will be forever grateful for your legacy.”

Rewastico Mill Pond, Jared Parks

The Maryland Rural Legacy Program (RLP) provides funding to preserve working lands and wildlife habitat while supporting a sustainable land base for natural resource based industries by acquiring conservation easements from willing landowners within locally designated areas in the state.

“Mt. Cuba Center is committed to protecting open spaces and native flora throughout our region,” said Ann Rose, Mt. Cuba Center’s president. “We thank the Lower Shore Land Trust and Chesapeake Conservancy for leading this important conservation project, which will preserve these forests, fields, and wetlands for generations to come. We are pleased that our support will help save the many plant and animal species that call the Nanticoke River watershed home.”

The partnership with the U.S. Navy and Chesapeake Conservancy brings valuable funds to the table that matches the state funding to enhance the program’s ability to deliver more conservation. LSLT works with Wicomico County, which is the local RLP sponsor, and landowners to preserve properties with conservation easements in the QCRLA that extends from Quantico Creek north to the Delaware line. Since the QCRLA was established in 2000, over 5,000 acres have been preserved in perpetuity through the Rural Legacy Program in Wicomico County.

To learn more about LSLT and land conservation and restoration programs, please contact Jared Parks at 443-234-5587 or jparks@lowershorelandtrust.org.



About Mt. Cuba Center

Mt. Cuba Center is a botanic garden that highlights the beauty and value of native plants to inspire conservation. Once the private estate of Pamela and Lamot du Pont Copeland, the public garden opened for general admission in 2013 and now spans more than 1,000 acres. It features captivating blooms along garden pathways in formal and woodland settings, picturesque meadows and ponds with stunning vistas, and more than two miles of scenic trails throughout its natural lands. Mt. Cuba is recognized as a leader in native plant research and open space preservation, having protected more than 13,000 acres in the mid-Atlantic region. In 2021, it was voted one of the top five best botanical gardens in North America by USA Today readers. Additionally, it was awarded The News Journal’s Top Workplaces 2021 and Delaware Today’s Best of Delaware for “Best Place to Experience Nature” and “Best Workshops” for its gardening, conservation, art, and wellness classes. Learn more at mtcubacenter.org.

About Chesapeake Conservancy

Chesapeake Conservancy’s mission is to conserve and restore the natural and cultural resources of the Chesapeake Bay watershed for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. We empower the conservation community with access to the latest data and technology. We partnered to help create 194 new public access sites and permanently protect some of the Bay’s special places like Werowocomoco, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park, and Fort Monroe National Monument. www.chesapeakeconservancy.org

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SAVE THE DATE Funding Conservation on Your Land: Options for Landowners

JANUARY 20, 2022 9:30 AM

Rockawalkin Community Hall
6772 Rockawalkin Rd, Hebron, MD

LAND MANAGERS, HUNTERS,
LANDOWNERS, FARMERS:

Hear from conservation program experts on:
Black Duck Habitat, Northern Bobwhite Quail,
Maryland's Buffer program, Wetland Restoration

For more information or to sign up, please contact sketcham@lowershorelandtrust.org or call 443 234 5587.

Larry Leese Awarded 2021 Stephen N. Parker Conservation Legacy Award

The award is given in honor of renowned conservationist, Stephen Parker, to recognize a landowner or conservation practitioner for their contributions to private land conservation on the Lower Eastern Shore. This year's recipient, Larry Leese, worked with the Lower Shore Land Trust for nearly a decade to permanently protect over 1,000 acres of land he owns along the Marumsco Creek and Pocomoke Sound.

"This portion of Somerset County and the natural resources it supports have always been important to me, so I spent years piecing this property together to protect what I could. though it was a long process, I greatly appreciate the hard work of Ducks Unlimited, Lower Shore Land Trust, Maryland Environmental Trust and all the other partners who helped me realize my vision," said Mr. Leese.

Steve Parker is remembered for his work as Director of the Virginia Coast Reserve with The Nature Conservancy, a long-time board member of the Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore, and as a board member of Lower Shore Land Trust.



Kate Patton presents award to Larry Leese