



Harford Land Trust News

*"... our heritage,
our home,
our pride, and
our responsibility."*



President's Message

As most of you know, I'll be stepping down as Harford Land Trust Board President after eight years at the Annual Meeting next March. I am immensely proud of all that the HLT has accomplished over that time, and I am excited of what is to come in the years ahead.

We've grown in stature as an organization and when we speak, and more importantly act, people take note. We've expanded our outreach efforts and grown our support base among the county's citizens, business, and communities. We've accelerated the pace of our land projects and forged new partnerships. Most importantly, we've preserved some ecologically and historically irreplaceable properties.

None of these successes are because of me. They're because of our tremendous staff and volunteers. But it's also thanks to you, our members and supporters, who are like the wind in the sails of our organization, who keep us moving forward.

I specifically want to thank my predecessors Harry Webster and Ann Helton for their support and counsel over the years. Also, I want to express my gratitude to former Executive Director Peg Niland and former Vice President Rick Post for all of their help early in my term. And finally, my thanks to our Executive Director Kristin Kirkwood for all that she continues to do to move the HLT forward.

I am pleased that Turney McKnight has agreed to serve as my successor as President. Turney was one of the HLT's earliest board members and is by some distance the longest-serving board member in our history. I have no doubt that the HLT will be in safe hands with Turney at the helm, and I thank him for his willingness to serve. Of course, I'm always going to be willing to help and am happy to stay on the board for as long as the other board members choose to tolerate me.

If there's one last thing that I'd ask our membership to keep in mind it's this - *Everybody supports land preservation when it's easy.*

But the true test comes when it is hard. When the financial cost of a project is a heavy lift. When runaway inflation takes hold. When the next housing bubble bursts. When other worthy causes are competing for scarce financial resources. Or when the short-term gain that comes with cutting the ribbon on a new public building or funding a new government program supersedes the long-term gain of preserving a farm or a forest in perpetuity.

That is when we need you all to be champions of land preservation, to help us get the message out that the cost of preserving land is insignificant when compared to the cost of not preserving land.

With gratitude,



Benjamin Lloyd
President



Cover photo of Belle Vue Farm by Bethany Peck

Cover quote by Tom Horton, from *The Shape of Things to Come*

Page 6 Belle Vue Debut photos by Bethany Peck

Page 6 Belle Vue Celebration photos by Christine Sullivan

Meet HLT's Newest Board Member



Simply put, **Board Members make conservation happen.**

Interested in giving back to your community and being part of a team of committed conservation leaders?

Contact Kristin (kkirkwood@harfordlandtrust.org) for details.

Nancy Ann Sayre joined HLT's Board of Directors in April. Nancy Ann grew up on her family's Waffle Hill Farm near Churchville, raising Angus cattle and riding ponies across neighboring farms in the Deer Creek Valley. Nancy Ann has deep connections to Harford County, the agricultural community, and conservation. She is a welcome addition to the board.

"I feel fortunate to now be a partner in the same farm, and to hike and ride the same fields and trails with my daughter and grandchildren," said Nancy Ann, "Our farm and those surrounding us are preserved, and the conservation and stewardship efforts of my father and neighboring farmers have helped preserve a beautiful slice of Harford County."

Nancy Ann's work in the Angus cattle and beef industries took her to the Midwest, New Zealand, and New England, then back to Harford County. While raising a family here, Nancy Ann worked part-time in consulting and graphic design and helped Deer Creek Beef market locally raised beef. Now happily retired, she has more time to ride, travel and help manage Waffle Hill. Nancy Ann and her husband, Michael McGuirk, now live near Bel Air, just up the road from the McGuirk family farm.

"I have supported HLT since its early years and helped with the trail rides co-sponsored by HLT," Nancy Ann said. "Preserving the county's agricultural heritage and natural resources is important to me, and I look forward to being more involved in HLT's efforts."

Board of Directors

Benjamin Lloyd
President

H. Turney McKnight
Vice President

Jo Tyson
Secretary

Michael Zeller
Treasurer

Deborah Bowers

Hon. William Carr

Lee Depkin

Diane Jones

Scott Kearby

Daniel Krug

Samuel Martin

Nancy Ann Sayre

Jeanne Sisk

Staff

Kristin Kirkwood
Executive Director

Jackie Koehn
Land Manager

Sharyn Ashman
Volunteer Bookkeeper



Another Conservation Victory

43-acres of forest near Emmorton permanently protected by Pitts family

Forty-three acres of forest at the southern end of Patterson Mill Road near Emmorton are now permanently protected. Thanks to the generosity of Edward Pitts, 87, his wife, and children, the property will always be an oasis in the heart of Harford County's Development Envelope.

“Everyone in my family, all of my six offspring, are just so delighted that their heritage will result in this beautiful piece of property being protected for perpetuity.”

EDWARD PITTS

The Pitts family donated a permanent conservation easement to the Harford Land Trust and the Maryland Environmental Trust in July. This method of land protection is different than the more well-known programs in Harford County in that no money changes hands. Donated conservation easements are recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a form of public charitable gift.

Pitts first contacted HLT in the summer of 2019. Over the course of two years, the land trust worked with Edward Pitts and his family to realize his vision of permanently protecting the forested land along Bynum Run.

The property hugs the waterway for about a third of a mile along the one-way section of Patterson Mill Road near the intersection with

Wheel Road. The mixed hardwood forest and small tributary stream provides habitat for local wildlife, absorbs excess nutrients from stormwater runoff, and sequesters tons of carbon annually. The forest also safeguards against accelerated streambank erosion and threats to aquatic species in Bynum Run.

“I really always loved Bel Air, and I thought to myself, here is this land, it’s right in the middle of the action, it’s our way of just quietly thanking Bel Air for all the years that we have lived there.”

EDWARD PITTS

The land was previously farmed and void of trees when Pitts purchased the property in 1976.

He reminisced, “I spent the next 40 years going through the woods and cutting the pernicious things. We would prune around the ash and oak saplings and as a result, over the years, we have speeded up plant succession quite considerably and the land has gone back to its original condition after having been a farm. It’s been a long proposition for us, and my family has been invested in that land both as labor and enjoyment for a great many years.”

The protection of the forest eliminates the potential for up to 200 homes on the property. The property will remain privately owned without public access.

“Conservation donations, like the Pitts’, are an expression of love for the land and the people that will come after us. Harford Land Trust is honored to have played a part in this generous gift to Harford County, ” said HLT’s Executive Director Kristin Kirkwood.





Celebrating 30-Years of Land Preservation at Belle Vue Farm

On October 2nd, under perfect fall skies, over 300 people joined together at Belle Vue Farm on the Oakington Peninsula to celebrate our collective conservation efforts over the past thirty years.

Each year, the income from HLT's fall event supports the organization's work of land

preservation throughout the coming year. Over \$40,000 was raised thanks to HLT members and local business supporters.

Your generosity means that HLT will be ready for the next big project. Every acre that we protect begins with supporters like you. *Thank you!*



There is prosperity in sharing. HLT greatly values our local businesses that support conservation.

Annual Sponsors



Eileen & Harry V. Webster, Jr. • Ann and Art Helton, Millbrook Farm

River Birch



Blue Valley Farm • Ben Boniface Deer Creek Valley Fund

Dogwood

Jeffrey and Jo Tyson • Jim and Sarah Morris • APGFCU • The Kelly Group • M&T Bank • Dillon and Heather Yeung • Watershed Environmental LLC • Cat Sense Feline Hospital • Gunpowder Valley Conservancy • O'Neill Enterprises • Green Trust Alliance • Bartlett Tree Experts • April Bliss Interiors

Beech

Harford Financial Group • McComas Funeral Home • Jarrettsville Federal Weyrich, Cronin and Sorra • Bobby's Portable Restrooms • The Mayo Family Band

What does “Protected Forever” really mean?

As a Harford Land Trust member, you care about making sure treasured landscapes throughout Harford County are preserved, forever. But how? What does it mean for a forest or wetland, farmland or meadow to be preserved and protected year after year?

In 2021, HLT completed our annual monitoring of over 1,400 acres throughout the county. Each conservation easement is as unique as the property. Their allowances and limitations are tailored to the existing conservation values and desired future uses of the land by the property owner. Our conserved lands reflect the different landscapes of Harford County, creating a mosaic of large agricultural parcels, marshlands, forested areas, and rural and urban residential lots.

To protect the integrity of these preserved lands, easement monitors schedule visits with landowners, walk property boundaries and interiors, and make detailed reports of their findings. HLT staff and volunteers note any changes in existing or new buildings, riparian buffer widths, upland erosion, invasive species, and land uses. This documentation is especially important as private ownership of conservation lands changes hands and is passed on to a new generation of landowners.

Land monitoring and stewardship are vital to keeping track of the status of what happens on the land and ensuring that all activities are consistent

with the easement and providing the opportunity to make adjustments before too much time, energy, and money must be invested into easement compliance.

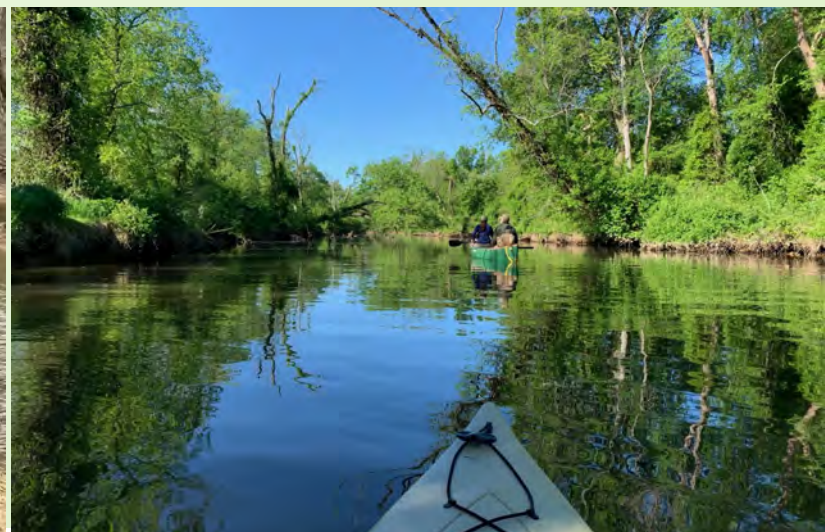
Monitoring is also a great opportunity to grow into an even better steward of the land because it helps us become more familiar with each property’s ecosystem, the needs of the plants and animals that live within them, and how your actions directly affect their welfare.

“I had driven past these properties countless times – on my way to the grocery store, going to visit friends, or visiting a local park – without knowing the magic that was hidden just behind the roadside tree line. Discovering these serene and fantastical lands, filled with melodic streams, curious critters, and funky flora (Jack-in-the-pulpit is a personal favorite) has been delightful.”

JACKIE KOEHN, HLT LAND MANAGER

As more forest lands, water resources, recreational areas, wildlife habitats, and agricultural resources become conserved through conservation easements, more stewards will be needed to help monitor these areas to ensure they’re protected forever. If you are interested in becoming a monitoring volunteer, please keep an eye out for our upcoming volunteer training opportunities.

Photo





WE MOVED!

**Harford Land Trust, Inc.
22 W. Pennsylvania Ave. St. 2
Bel Air, MD 21014**

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bel Air, MD
Permit No. 68

Harford Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting HLT. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Solicitation Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State for the cost of copying and postage

Belle Vue Circle



Starting in 2021, all individual and family supporters making gifts to Harford Land Trust of \$1,000 or more each year are welcomed into the Belle Vue Circle.

When you become a Belle Vue Circle member, you are among the visionary leaders committed to investing in the organization protecting Harford County's treasured landscapes and quality of life—the Harford Land Trust.

As a Belle Vue Circle member, you get to know HLT's work more deeply alongside a growing community of fellow conservationists. You'll enjoy insider land preservation updates, invitations to special events and property tours, and additional recognition.

Consider a gift today and join!