



# Harford Land Trust News

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Spring 2022

# President's Message

Ben Lloyd has been a terrific president. He started with Harford Land Trust (HLT) as a volunteer, way back in 2006. When then HLT president Harry Webster decided to step down in 2014, Ben was the standout candidate to replace him and thus Ben's long and successful presidency was underway.

It bears mentioning that when the Army came looking for a partner for its Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program, after having been turned down by The Nature Conservancy, it was Ben who convinced them that HLT was up to the task. This program has brought over \$5m for land preservation in Harford County.

Ben has been a terrific president—quiet, steady, effective. What the heck...nothing succeeds like successor — so here we go!

I'm a firm believer that the most effective advocate for land preservation is the land itself. I can tell someone that saving a certain property makes sense because it offers excellent wildlife habitat, or because protected lands require fewer government services than developed lands, or because it promotes clean water by buffering a stream, or is a local food source.....or... whatever.

But nine times out of 10, people get most excited about preserving that property after they see it with your own eyes, walk on it, take in its natural beauty, absorb its human history, and be dazzled by it.

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I've had the pleasure to watch the land trust's membership grown over the past 30 years. So many of you feel just as I do—the land is the star of the show and together we can protect it.

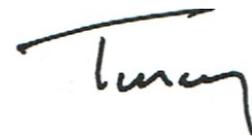
This is why, going forward, HLT will be providing more opportunities to get people outside, on the land.

**Take a Hike**, our 2022 do-it-yourself hiking challenge, is off to a great start. HLT's guided hikes, as part of this challenge, are starting in April. We are hosting **Earth Day clean-ups** in Creswell and Perryman. And HLT's popular **Kayak Poker Run** will be back on the Bush River this summer too.

I'm pleased to share that HLT is starting a new event called **Party to Preserve** on October 22. The fundraiser will be held outdoors on a spectacular, protected property in Darlington.

So, to conclude, building on Ben's wonderful accomplishments in his eight years as president, I think the future for Harford Land Trust looks bright.

With thanks,



H. Turney McKnight  
President

## Staff

Kristin Kirkwood

*Executive Director*

Nina Depkin

*Outreach & Development Manager*

Jackie Koehn

*Land Programs Manager*

# Meet the People who Make Conservation Happen

## HARFORD LAND TRUST'S 2022 BOARD OFFICERS



**Turney McKnight, President**

Turney joined HLT's Board in 1991. He is a retired attorney, decorated horseman, and beef cattle farmer in White Hall. Turney is the President of the Sumner T. McKnight Foundation. In 2020, he published *Tracks in the Sand*, a collection of his essays, many of which feature his reverence for the lands, waters, and people of

**Nancy Ann Sayre, Vice President**

Nancy Ann grew up on her family's Waffle Hill Farm near Churchville, raising Angus cattle and riding ponies across farms in the Deer Creek Valley. Her work in the Angus cattle and beef industries took her across the country and around the world, and back to Harford County. While raising a family here with her husband Michael, Nancy Ann worked in consulting and graphic

design and helped Deer Creek Beef market locally raised beef.



**Scott Kearby, Secretary**



Scott is retired and lives in Churchville with his wife Michele. He enjoys hiking, kayaking, and being on the water at Eden Mill or along the Ma and Pa Trail. Scott was a base civil engineer with the Air National Guard before joining the Harford County Department of Public Works. There he managed numerous road and bridge building projects as well as watershed protection and restoration

**Mike Zeller, Treasurer**

Mike is a Harford County native, now working for Kinsley Construction of York, Pennsylvania. He has an extensive background in agricultural services and business operations, having also worked as General Manager at Risser Grain. Mike and his wife Becky have three children and live in Seven Valleys,



Cover photo courtesy of HLT Take a Hike participant Lindsey Pope



## A New Home for a Growing Team

HLT MOVES TO A NEW OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN BEL AIR

HLT celebrated the opening of the new office on West Pennsylvania Avenue with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, January 28. After outgrowing the old office space on Hickory Avenue, the land trust moved to the street-level office in between Main and Bond Streets in late 2021.

“We’ve come a long way from our first office in a barn near Churchville,” said President Turney McKnight. “As we enter our fourth decade of preserving land in Harford County, this larger, more visible office space is befitting of the critical role that Harford Land Trust has come to play in the protection of land in our county.”

HLT was recognized for its work to preserve

land throughout the county with proclamations presented by County Executive Barry Glassman and Chief Advisor Billy Boniface, County Councilmen Chad Shrodes and Tony Giangiordano, Delegate Mike Griffith, and Roni Cassilly on behalf of Senator Bob Cassilly. Town of Bel Air commissioners Mary Chance, Paula Etting, and Erin Hughes as well as Town Administrator Jesse Bane presented the land trust with a gift to mark the occasion.

The Greater Bel Air Community Foundation was also present for the ceremony. The Foundation granted funds to the land trust in support of their purchase of new office furniture.



Photo by Christopher Stevenson

HLT's office features a large gallery of outdoor photos by local photographers including Edwin Remsberg, Frank Marsden, Megan Rigdon, and Scott McDaniel, a series of plein air paintings by local artists Michael Gaudreau and John Sauers, and a hand-crafted American Black Walnut table by former board member Jim Morris.

"Between the constant development pressure, the need for more public parks, and the race to protect as many farms and forests as possible – our work is busier than ever," remarked HLT Executive Director Kristin Kirkwood. "We are delighted to have found the perfect new homebase to continue serving Harford County long into the future."

"Harford County is proud to be home to one of the premier land trusts in the state, and we are excited to see them grow. Harford Land Trust has always been a great partner to my administration, and I look forward to their continued success in protecting our most valuable lands"

COUNTY EXECUTIVE BARRY GLASSMAN

# A Legacy That Will Endure

SHAWSVILLE FARM PRESERVED



Barbara Gruver and her husband Arthur bought their small farmette near Shawsville in northern Harford County in 1977. They kept bees on a fruit farm in Howard County but decided to purchase their own land after their hive was impacted by heavy pesticide use on a nearby farm.

Having recently moved from Seattle, the Gruvers didn't know much about Harford County, but bought 15 acres just south of Deer Creek after learning about the land from an advertisement in the newspaper. They called it Honeycomb Farm, but most often used the name Gruver Apiary.

The Gruvers went about a transformation of the plants on the property to extend available nectar and pollen for honeybees from March to October. The couple made a habit of taking weekly bee walks to see what was blooming and where the bees were feeding.

The farm was an ideal place to raise their three children, Nathaniel, Joel, and Heather. "I worked to have a sustainable life," noted Barbara. "I saw my children grow up with values

"I had never thought about leaving a legacy. But it is a concept people need to think about. A legacy does not mean money. It's a legacy of values that we pass on to our children and on to the land"

Barbara Gruver



*Photo courtesy of Barbara Gruver*

that I share.” The Gruvers were prolific gardeners and heated their home exclusively with wood.

After Arthur’s passing, Barbara rented her family home for 10 years while maintaining the larger property. In 2021 she decided that it was time to sell the property but not before ensuring its permanent preservation.

“I have seen what happens to the land when there are no legal restraints,” noted Barbara.

She called HLT in the fall of 2021 to explore her land preservation options. The nonprofit worked with Barbara to place a conservation easement on the property, ensuring that no additional subdivision or homes could be built on the property. The easement also includes protections for the forested section of the property which buffers a tributary of Deer Creek.

“We need to have institutions like [the Harford Land Trust], to have a bigger impact, to leave a greater legacy. We have to use government and nonprofit organizations to change the world,” reflected Barbara.

In early March 2022, Gruver sold the farm to

Laura Beth Resnick and her husband Jascha Owens of Butterbee Farm along with Laura Beth’s parents. The young couple plans to move their existing flower farm from a rented property in Pikesville to the Shawsville property.

“When we started Butterbee Farm ten years ago, we never thought we’d own our own land,” noted Laura Beth. “We are thrilled to continue Barbara Gruver’s legacy of regenerative agriculture at Hitchcock Road, and care for the many unique trees, shrubs, and bulbs that she and her family planted there over the years.”

Butterbee delivers flowers to florists from Baltimore to D.C., provides bulk flowers for weddings, teaches classes, and hosts small events.

After preserving and selling the farm, Barbara reflected, “I now see the legacy can go on without me.” Harford Land Trust is grateful to have played a small part in the story of this special property that is now protected forever.



Laura Beth Resnick and Jascha Owens grow blooms organically for florists, weddings, and flower lovers across Maryland and D.C. They are moving their business to Harford County after months of searching for their forever farm.

*Photo courtesy of Julie Hove Anderson*





# Save The Date

## Party to Preserve

fundraiser to support Harford Land Trust

**October 22, 2022**

**DARLINGTON, MD**

**4:00 PM**

# Celebrating Harford's Conservation Champions

## BRYON BODT PRESENTED WITH HLT'S CONSERVATION AWARD

HLT recognized Bryon Bodt of Churchville with its prestigious Conservation Award. The land trust commemorated Bryon's service to the county during the 2022 Annual Meeting on February 26.

Bryon is a full-time decoy carver. He began carving in 1977 and shortly thereafter apprenticed under Jim Pierce, a renowned Havre de Grace decoy maker.

HLT recognized Bodt for his years of volunteer service with numerous national and local environmental stewardship organizations.

"Bryon's humble manner and unwavering commitment to care for our natural resources is an example to us all," said Kristin Kirkwood, HLT's Executive Director. "When I told him about the award, he was quick to say that he didn't do his work for the recognition. In my mind, that makes him even more deserving."

Bryon is a lifelong member of the Izaak Walton League of America, the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, and the Upper Bay Museum. As a member of the Harford County chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, he spends a great deal of time at the Chapter's Melvin G. Bosley Conservancy in Edgewood. The Conservancy encompasses over 400 acres of sensitive habitat in the Otter Point Creek estuary where Bodt manages a wood duck nesting program.

He has also volunteered with Harford County's Anita C. Leight Estuary Center, Steppingstone Museum, and Harford Land Trust.

He was part of the inaugural class of Harford County's Master Watershed Stewards academy in 2017 through which he installed a floating wetland to improve water quality at Ladew Gardens in Monkton.

Each year HLT presents its Conservation



*Photo courtesy of Bryon Bodt*



Award to an individual or group who has made a significant contribution or performed a special act that leads to the improvement or protection of Harford County's natural resources.

With this award, Bodt joins other celebrated local conservationists including recent recipients Lawrason Sayre and Deborah Bowers.

# Celebrating the Past, Protecting the Future

## HISTORIC MILL GREEN MILL PRESERVED



The Bottiglieri family had been searching for a multi-generational home for about six months prior to purchasing the Mill Green Mill property in Street in March 2021. The 45-acre property stretches along Broad Creek for over half a mile and is listed on numerous historic registers.

“The property had everything we were hoping for and was a place that we could see ourselves raising our boys. Between the open fields, creek for swimming and fishing, forest, and historic characteristics there isn't much more we could ask for. A property like this is something that you come across once in a lifetime. And we were able to make this dream a reality because of my dad,” said Ian Bottiglieri.

Tom Bottiglieri, partial owner of the Mill Green Mill property, wanted to be close to his family to enjoy the nature the property has to offer and to spend time with his grandsons as they grow up.

Ian and Meg Bottiglieri wanted a new home with a little bit of land in Harford County for their growing family. And after seeing so much

development Northern Baltimore and Harford Counties, they were committed to land preservation.

Ian explained, “If we were fortunate to find such a property it felt like a duty to do our part and help preserve this landscape to prevent development and help maintain something that makes this part of Maryland so unique”.

During their property search, the Bottiglieris contacted HLT to learn more about land preservation. They even vetted numerous properties with HLT to make sure they were good conservation candidates.

After purchasing the Mill property on Mill Green Road, Ian wanted to preserve the land as soon as possible. HLT and our state partner Maryland Environmental Trust accepted the generous gift of a donated easement thereby permanently preserving the property in March 2022.

Jackie Koehn, HLT's Land Programs Manager reflected, “The Bottiglieris' commitment to land



*Photo courtesy of the Bottiglieri family*

“We feel a duty to do our part so this unique part of Harford County history is preserved either for future generations of our family or other families who will come after us.”

IAN BOTTIGLIERI

House (Sam Archer) at Harford Community College and Belle Vue Farm (Eliza Parker).

preservation was truly inspiring. They were unwavering in their desire to protect the Mill Green Mill from day one.”

The historic Mill and Miller’s House date back to 1827 and 1743, respectively, and remain largely intact. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Maryland Historical Inventory of Places, and is located within the Mill Green National Register Historic District.

Notably, the property is also recognized as a National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site. The Mill Green Mill property is the birthplace of Margaret Morgan, whose kidnapping from Pennsylvania lead to the United States Supreme Court Case Prigg v Pennsylvania and ultimately the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The property is one of only three Harford County Network to Freedom sites and the only privately owned site, the others being Hays-Heighe

The historic importance of the property is not lost on the Bottiglieris. “We feel a duty to do our part so this unique part of Harford County history is preserved either for future generations of our family or other families who will come after us. It is fantastic that we were able to get this property conserved and that we can look back as a family that we helped further preserve the history of the Mill Green Mill,” noted Ian.

The property also has immense ecological benefits including its lengthy floodplain and forest buffers along Broad Creek. With two little boys, Ian, Meg, and Tom are looking forward to taking advantage of the creek’s numerous fishing and swimming holes.

“We currently have three generations of our family living on the property and hope that we’re here long enough to see additional generations enjoy it too exactly as it is now,” said Ian.



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# Thank you to HLT's 2022 Annual Sponsors



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