



# Harford Land Trust News

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2018

## HLT signs purchase agreement for Perryman Forest

Community donations, Army and County Government pledges fund deal

HLT is extremely pleased to report that we have secured donations and pledges of \$935,000, the agreed purchase price for the 32-acre Perryman Forest. The Trust entered into a purchase and sale agreement for the property in March 2018. This binding agreement specifies the sale price and terms under which HLT will purchase the property. The sale is contingent on many pieces still falling into place, but the biggest hurdle—funding—was just overcome.

Following an initial commitment of 90% of the purchase price from the U.S. Army (through Aberdeen Proving Ground's Army Compatible Use Buffer Program), we began a public fundraising campaign in November 2017. Generous supporters donated approximately \$19,000 for the preservation of this important property on the Bush River with over 60 households contributing. See a full listing of supporters on page 4.

HLT's communication about the importance of this project and the strong community support came to the attention of the Harford County Department of Public Works. The Watershed Protection and Restoration team, led by Scott Kearby and Christine Buckley, supported HLT's goals of ecological

conservation for the protection of water quality and recognized the project's strong alignment with the County's Green Infrastructure plan. With the support of County Executive Barry Glassman, HLT and the County subsequently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding outlining a pledge to cover the remainder of HLT's Perryman Forest funding needs.

The Harford Land Trust's first project was the Forest Green's Lake Preserve in Perryman in 1992, now a county park. The preservation of the Perryman Forest effectively expands the Preserve by 32 acres to the north. The tidal and non-tidal wetlands on the site are hydrologically connected through surface and subsurface flow to the Bush River and subsequently to the Chesapeake Bay, benefiting water quality by retaining nutrients and sediment. The property is characterized by upland forest and wetlands, also known as "tree swamps," and vernal pools, also known as "flatwoods." This type of ecosystem is only found in the Coastal Plain portion of the County, and is of limited occurrence.

HLT expects to close on this property within the next six months.

*Kayaker on Forest Green's Lake*





*To work with landowners, private and public, to conserve land and protect its natural resources, scenic beauty, rural character, and promote a healthy quality of life in Harford County.*

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*From the Director's Desk*

Hi all,

I'm closing in on my first year with HLT and could not be happier about joining the Trust. Every day brings new opportunities and challenges.

The winter has been busy. The HLT Board of Directors started down the path towards attaining national accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission last spring. For me, the process offers a valuable lens through which to assess our practices and make improvements over time. I've spent time with my nose in old files learning about HLT's history, land transactions, and ongoing land stewardship responsibilities. Thankfully, I have company in this task. Board members Ben Lloyd, Diane Jones, and Mike Zeller, along with Rick Post and Peg Niland are also part of HLT's accreditation team. Given HLT's extensive land preservation track record, reviewing our records and policies is no small feat. We'll continue to update members on this important process that is integral to the organization's long-term health and sustainability.

Winter is also a time for grant writing as government and private grants are essential to HLT's financial stability. We are off to a good start this year with generous contributions from the Sumner T. McKnight Foundation, the Office of the County Executive Barry Glassman, and the Chesapeake Bay Land and Water Initiative, a project of the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network and the Land Trust Alliance.

But the best part about my job is being outdoors in some of the prettiest parts of Harford County. We continue to explore new land preservation projects, and there is no better way to assess the values of a property than walking, looking, and listening. HLT volunteers Frank Marsden, Glenn Dudderrar, Dennis Kirkwood, and I monitored two-thirds of our conservation easement properties this winter and expect the finish the remainder in April. Peg Niland and our fantastic land steward team also spent time this winter attending to needed land management on HLT properties. And we hosted a hugely successful Annual Meeting at Falling Branch Brewery in lovely Highland.

I'm excited for what's to come in 2018 and hope you are, too.

With gratitude,

Kristin Kirkwood  
Executive Director







From left to right: Parker Crawl, Andrew Thompson, David Thompson, County Councilman Chad Shrodes, Tanner Crawl, Harford Land Trust President Ben Lloyd, Harford County Director of Administration Billy Boniface, and County Councilman Pat Vincenti (photo by Jean Kirkwood)

## Harford Land Trust honors Crawl and Thompson

The Harford Land Trust recognized the Crawl and Thompson families of Street, Maryland, with the organization’s prestigious Conservation Award during our annual membership meeting on Saturday, March 10, at Falling Branch Brewery in Highland.

Brothers Parker and Tanner Crawl of Garden Fence Farm are the sixth generation to operate their family’s dairy farm along with their father, David, and other family members. Garden Fence participates in the Dairy Farmers of America cooperative which provides milk to leading customers such as Chobani and Kraft Foods. David and Marilyn (Crawl) Thompson founded Foxborough Nursery in 1978 and now manage the business with their sons Andrew and Brad. Foxborough is a wholesale plant nursery with over 900 cultivars.

The Crows and Thompsons permanently preserved their lands through Harford County’s Agricultural Land

### “The land is our life.”

David Thompson, Foxborough Nursery  
HLT Conservation Award Winner

Preservation Program over 20 years ago, accounting for nearly 800 acres of preserved farmland in a swath of countryside stretching from the Rocks along Deer Creek northward to Highland. The families are committed to environmental stewardship, agricultural best management practices, soil conservation, and passing a love of the land to the next generation.

President Ben Lloyd also acknowledged the recent passing of Dan Magness of Shawsville, HLT’s 2017 Conservation Award recipient. Other past recipients include Jim Thomas, Ed Snodgrass, Harry Webster, Millie Kreider, Sally Carnohan, Glenn Hedelson, and Frank Marsden.

**“If I had to do it all over again, I’d put every acre in ag preservation. It is without a doubt the right thing to do. I couldn’t be prouder that it has afforded me the opportunity to pass this onto my sons.”**

David Crawl, Garden Fence Farm and HLT Conservation Award Winner

# Perryman Forest Campaign

We are so thankful for the outpouring of community support for HLT's project to protect the Perryman Forest, the 32-acre flatwoods connected to the beautiful 100-acre Forest Green's Lake Preserve. Generous supporters donated approximately \$20,000 for the preservation of this important property on the Bush River in **2017 and 2018**. *We strive to ensure that our records are accurate and to properly acknowledge all donors. Please contact us if you see that we have made an error or omission.*

## **\$1,000 and above**

Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey M. Dresher

Anonymous donor in memory of John  
and Sue Hegeman

Mr. & Mrs. Peter A. Jay

Ms. Posie Lang Thompson in memory of  
Mary Ridgely Lang

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick O. Mitchell

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## **\$500—\$999**

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas L. Gibson

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**“I am making this contribution in memory of my mother, Mary Ridgely Lang, who spent many years dedicated to environmental efforts including the Committee to Preserve Assateague, the League of Conservation Voters, and her own efforts to bring attention to the watershed and marshes around the Bush River. She personally took a number of local politicians and sometimes developers on canoe trips into the marshes of the Otter Point Creek, Church Creek, and the shores of the Bush River to help educate them on the importance of preserving the area for the health of the bay. Today would have been her 104th birthday. I hope this contribution helps the effort to preserve another little piece of the shoreline.”**

- Posie Lang Thompson, Perryman Forest supporter, on November 24, 2017



# HLT permanently protects 104-acre Otter Creek Woods

HLT partnered with the Maryland Environmental Trust to permanently protect the 104-acre woodland tract, known as Otter Creek Woods, in Edgewood.

HLT gifted the conservation easement to ensure the area's rich ecological resources and scenic land along Willoughby Beach Road are safeguarded for the benefit of future generations. The easement restricts residential development but allows for a structure to support educational, recreation, and/or land management needs. Agriculture is limited to cultivation that is compatible with the forested landscape (such as beekeeping and growing mushrooms) and stream buffers are required.

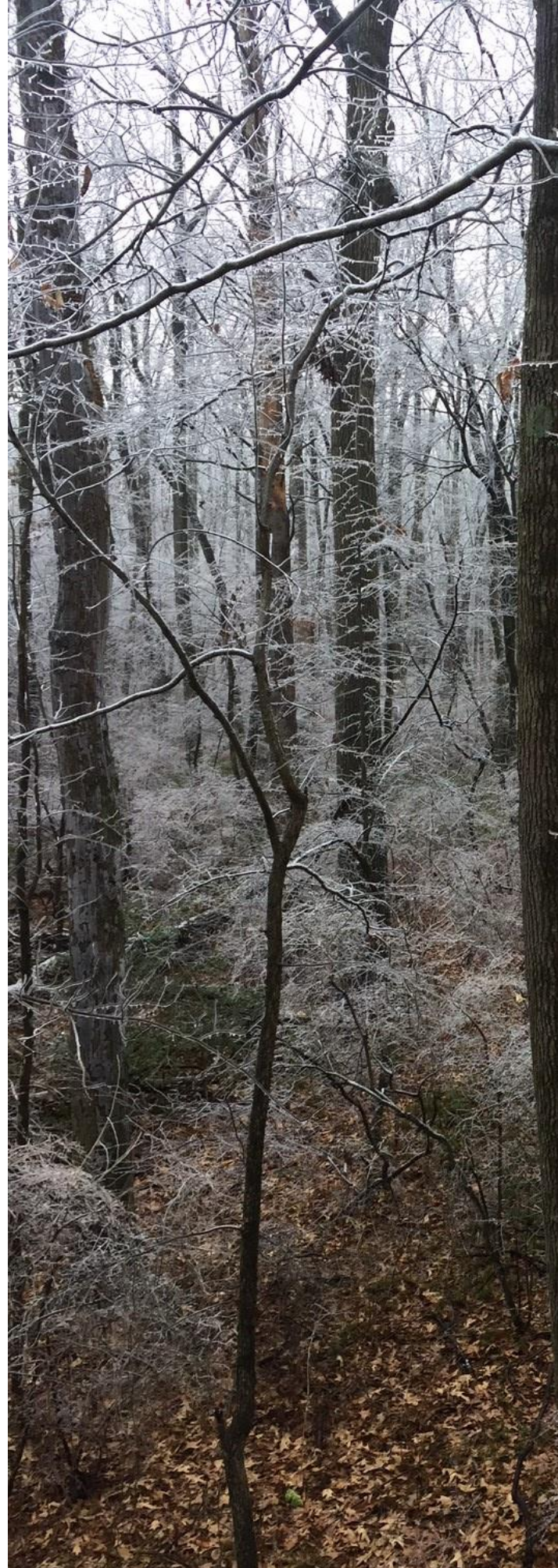
"We're pleased to partner with the Harford Land Trust to support their efforts to ensure that Harford County's most important natural and working lands remain an important part of the fabric of the community," Maryland Environmental Trust Director Bill Leahy said. "Local land trusts are critical to our ability to accomplish our conservation mission of long-term stewardship of Maryland's natural resources."

Otter Creek Woods comprises deciduous woodlands and associated vernal pools in a natural community known as flatwoods — the largest known intact woodland of its kind in Harford County. The vernal pools provide breeding and feeding habitat for a number of amphibians, invertebrates, and reptiles. The woodland is habitat for many bird species, including the Acadian Flycatcher, Hairy Woodpecker, Kentucky Warbler, Ovenbird, Red-eyed Vireo, and Scarlet Tanager.

"We are grateful to have been given this unique property so many years ago, and we are incredibly pleased to donate this conservation easement that will ensure the property remains protected forever," Harford Land Trust Executive Director Kristin Kirkwood said. "We value our strong partnership with the Maryland Environmental Trust and look forward to continued collaboration."

The Otter Creek Woods property was donated to Harford Land Trust about 20 years ago by Bob Ward, a local developer, to preserve the unique habitat and scenic character of the woodlands. HLT also owns the adjoining 60 acres of flatwoods on the south side of Willoughby Beach Road and will soon be donating a conservation easement on this property too.

*Otter Creek Woods in winter (photo by Dan Krug)*





# HLT partners with Falling Branch Brewery for 26th Annual Meeting



Over 100 people attended the HLT's annual meeting at Falling Branch Brewery on March 10. The brewery released its new Preservation Ale during the event to raise awareness of land preservation in Harford County. The Galbreath family farm, the home of Falling Branch Brewery, was permanently preserved through both the Harford County Agricultural Land Preservation Program and the Harford Land Trust 20 years ago. "We are honored to partner with the Galbreath family and Falling Branch Brewery for our annual membership event. The release of Preservation Ale, brewed with Harford County hops and barley, is the perfect way to mark this occasion," said Kristin Kirkwood, Harford Land Trust's Executive Director.

Also honored at the event was Linn Griffiths, a county science teacher for 30 years, for her 10 years of

service to the Harford Land Trust, most recently as the Secretary of the Board of Directors. Linn teaches biology and environmental science at C. Milton Wright High School and was the 2008 Maryland Presidential Excellence in Science Teaching award winner.

Sharyn Ashman was recognized with the Trust's Volunteer Award for her significant contributions as HLT's volunteer bookkeeper. A resident of Bel Air and retired CPA, Sharyn provides essential accounting and financial services to the Trust.

Bill Leahy, Director of the Maryland Environmental Trust, served as the meeting's keynote speaker.

*Clockwise from upper right: Jo Tyson, Secretary (photo by Chet Feldmann); Annual Meeting attendees (photo by Chet Feldmann); HLT pint glasses and Annual Report (photo by Scott McDaniel)*



# *Linn Griffiths's reflections on 10 years of service to HLT*

## ***Why is local land preservation important to you?***

I grew up in Aberdeen and then Darlington and came back here after college. I have seen so many changes in Harford County over the years and very few of them for the better. I also teach biology and environmental science to high school students. I want them to see and live in a preserved Harford County and reap its benefits.

## ***How and when did you become involved with HLT?***

Dennis Kirkwood actually told me about it to begin with, and David Miller was a neighbor and the office used to be right by my house. We had been members for a while when Dennis asked me to be on the board. I met with Harry Webster, president at the time, and Peg Niland and then began coming to board meetings in 2008!

## ***What was the biggest take-away from being on the Board?***

How a board works! I had never been on a board before and learned what an awesome responsibility it was! I also got to see the inner works of not only a non-profit, but a land trust. Most people don't really know what it takes to run this organization!

## ***What changes have you seen in the organization over the past decade?***

I have definitely seen us grow and reach more of the county. I don't think we are "the best kept secret" anymore! We have also made some great partnerships with other county organizations, and I think we have a definite voice in the county now.

## ***Is there one land project that sticks out in your memory?***

I think the Welzenbach property because I was there for all of its stages and have visited that property the most. It was wonderful to continue the preservation work in Edgewood.

## ***What do you want the public to know about HLT's work?***

We are Harford's only conservation group that works only in Harford County! If you really want to help this county ecologically, this is the most important group to be involved in or a member of!



Linn Griffiths—HLT Board member 2008-2018  
(photo by Chet Feldmann)

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Earth Day Clean Up**

April 21 | 9:00am  
HLT's Welzenbach Farm  
2800 Willoughby Beach Rd., Edgewood  
*Bring your work gloves! Lunch included.*

### **Caring for the Land: A Landowners and Educators Workshop**

May 15 | 10:00am—2:30pm  
Swan Harbor Farm  
401 Oakington Rd., Havre De Grace  
Email [peppig@maefonline.com](mailto:peppig@maefonline.com) to reserve your place by May 8. Space is limited!

### **19th Annual-Wade In**

June 4 | 1-4pm  
Anita C. Leight Estuary Center  
700 Otter Point Rd., Abingdon, MD  
*Join us as we pull up our pants legs and wade into Otter Point Creek to measure water quality. Great fun for all ages!*

### **Kayak Poker Run**

July 7 | 9am  
Flying Point Park, Edgewood  
*Watch our website, eNews, and Facebook for more details.*

### **Harvest Moon Dinner & Auction**

October 20 | 6-10pm  
Bel Air Armory





## HLT supports Norrisville interventions to the Public Service Commission and SB 691/ HB 812

We provided an update on the Transource Independence Energy Connection (IEC) project to our membership through our winter newsletter, and much has transpired since then. The HLT is not an advocacy organization nor do we have any intention of becoming one, but we remain deeply concerned about the precedent that this proposed project could set in Maryland and the effect it could have on how we preserve land.

Harford County is a national leader in farmland preservation, with over 50,000 acres permanently preserved. Harford County Government, the State of Maryland, the Harford Land Trust, the Manor Conservancy, the agricultural community, and others have all played a part in this. But in the noble task of preserving contiguous swaths of farmland, forests, and watersheds, have we been unwittingly creating superhighways to be traversed for future utility projects by private concerns, because they offer the path of least resistance? We genuinely don't believe that to be the case, which is why we are hopeful that the Public Service Commission will deny the Transource application to build a 230 kv line across preserved agriculture lands in Norrisville, and legislation will be passed to protect conservation easements from similar projects.

In February 2018, HLT submitted a letter of support for the county government's and landowners' interventions to the Maryland Public Service

Commission regarding the Transource application. We thank County Executive Barry Glassman, Councilmen Chad Shrodes, Pat Vincenti, and the entire County Council, and the Norrisville community for directly intervening in this case on behalf of preserved lands.

During the 2018 Maryland General Assembly session, Harford's state legislators sponsored a number of bills related to this issue and addressing some of the deficiencies in current law that has allowed the proposal to get this far. One of these bills, SB 691/HB 812, which had Sen. J.B. Jennings and Del. Kathy Szeliga as its lead sponsors, would ensure that lands that have been preserved at significant expense to Maryland taxpayers and nonprofits will only have those easements violated for transmission lines if there is no physical alternative route. Also, it provides that compensation for any property or right taken by eminent domain should be valued based on full commercial value rather than its value after preservation. The HLT sent written testimony in support of this bill, but unfortunately the House version died in committee, and the Senate version is unlikely to get a vote. Nonetheless we thank our legislators who worked to pass the bill and are hopeful that the issue can be addressed next session.

*Norrisville residents stand in opposition to the IEC project in October 2017 along 130-foot proposed right of way on Jolly Acres Road, White Hall (photo by Frank Ayd)*



## *Partner's Corner: Harford Bird Club explains bird irruptions*

Birdwatching, twitching, chasing or birding... no matter what you call it, the birdwatching industry has hit an all time high. According to US Fish and Wildlife, \$41 million dollars are spent annually by birdwatchers in the United States on trips and equipment. An additional \$14.9 million is poured back into the local economy on food lodging and transportation in various birdy locations. The birding hobby has created 666,000 jobs in the industry.

When big things happen in the birding world, the local economy benefits. The most recent birding boom in Harford County has been in Havre de Grace. The Snowy Owl, an arctic migrant, that only appears in Harford County approximately every four years is the most recent draw of birders to our beautiful county.

An irruption is defined as a dramatic, irregular migration of large numbers of birds to areas where they aren't typically found, possibly at a great distance from their normal ranges. A population shift of this magnitude could be attributed to a variety of factors. Most of the time it is due to a shortage of food in the natural wintering grounds. For example, if the crop of seed producing vegetation was poor, there are not enough seeds available for all of the seed-eating birds. In this case, they move south until they find copious amounts of seeds. Raptors such as owls and hawks do not eat seeds, but their food source is dependent upon seeds. If there are no seeds, the population of rodents and small

mammals decreases causing the raptors to fly to a location where seeds are plentiful and rodents are fat and happy.

When food is scarce, the population decreases; when food is plentiful, the population increases. In the case of raptors, who always irrupt individually and not as a flock, it is often the immature birds and females that are found outside of their area. This makes sense. The adult males have an established territory and are better at protecting that territory. Females and juveniles are forced to move in order to survive.

Irruption years are exciting, the obvious show stealer is the Snowy Owl, but many other birds can irrupt in Maryland. You may find Red-breasted Nuthatches, White-winged Crossbills, Rough-legged Hawks, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks and more.

Irruption years have heartbreaking undertones for the birds themselves. We turn them into temporary rock stars and talk excitedly about them on email and social media, but these birds are undergoing a change in their normal routine. Are they stressed? Possibly. Or maybe they have overcome that time period and are just hanging out where they know food is readily available.

The Harford Bird Club is a great resource for those of you wishing to get more information and learn your local birds. The club offers field

trips with local birding gurus almost every weekend. Every other month a newsletter is produced sharing the highlights of the previous trips and other birdy news. Months that don't see a newsletter include a club meeting. The meetings offer social interaction with other self proclaimed 'bird nerds', snacks or dinners and a guest speaker to educate and inspire your birdy habits. You do not need to be a member to attend a meeting. Come check us out and see what you think. We'd love to have you!

Here's to your luck and the prospect of seeing the bird of your dreams in your backyard! We look forward to working with the Harford Land Trust on future projects that benefit birds and birdwatching in Harford County!

**Amanda Koss**  
Vice President  
Harford Bird Club



*Snowy owl (photo by Joe Subelofsky)*

# HLT to partner with Abingdon Fire Company for training exercise in Edgewood

As you drive along Willoughby Beach Road, you see signs indicating the 266 acres of permanently protected land by HLT. One of these properties is the Welzenbach Farm, purchased by the Trust in January 2016. Since then, we have continued the farming lease with Jones Family Farm, hosted Harford County's Arbor Day Event during which we planted hundreds of trees with community members, improved a stream buffer, performed studies on a future erosion project, and carefully evaluated the long term use of the property and its benefits to the Edgewood community.

As we responsibly manage all our properties, we sometimes have to make tough decisions. One of those decisions is to remove the structures on this property. We know the old Welzenbach home has been a landmark since 1900 and it will be heartbreaking for many to see it go. This decision was not made lightly but we are confident that it is the right decision for safety reasons and will allow expanded community enjoyment of the property in the long run. We have offered the house and outbuildings to the Abingdon Fire Company for a training exercise.

After careful inspection of the house, it was determined to provide an excellent training burn due to its age and construction. According to the Abingdon Fire Company, "There is no substitute for live fire training; especially, [training] in a home within our

service area." Unfortunately, suitable donated homes that are amenable to training burns are rarely available. Training academies attempt to simulate fire conditions but there is big difference in the quality of the training exercise. Typically, local fire companies train at West Chester Tactical Village, which is costly, results in wear and tear on the companies' apparatus, and requires the department to leave their duty area for the day.

Our volunteer land stewards have been preparing for the demolition by removing all items required by the Harford County Health Department, the Harford County Department of Inspection, Licenses, & Permits, and the Abingdon Fire Company. There will be a longer period of smoke than a typical house fire, because fires will be set, extinguished, and reset to facilitate training. Unlike an accidental house fire, all toxins (asphalt tiles/shingles, cleaning chemicals, etc.) have been removed. We do not know the date when this will occur as it cannot happen on a windy or unfavorable day. But the next time you drive down Willoughby Beach Road, it might look a bit different. We appreciate everyone's understanding of the need to do this for the safety of the community and our volunteers.

*Left: HLT land stewards and volunteers removing asphalt singles, carpet, and furniture at the Welzenbach property in March 2018; Right: Spring in White Hall (photo by Jean Kirkwood)*







## OUR MEMBERS ARE THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO.

Thank you to the many members and other supporters who **contributed in 2018**. *We strive to ensure that our records are accurate and to properly acknowledge all donors. Please contact us if you see that we have made an error or omission.*

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*We sincerely apologize for omitting the following generous 2017 sponsors in the printed, hard-copy version of our 2017 Annual Report - Adams Chevrolet, Carsins Run at Eva Mar, Foxborough Nursery, Harford Financial Group, Jones Junction, Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit. All donors are acknowledged in the Annual Report posted on our website.*



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# SAVE • THE • DATE

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*7th Annual*

## **Kayak Poker Run**

**Saturday, July 7, 2018**

**Flying Point Park, Edgewood**

Join HLT and the Ben Boniface Memorial Fund for a morning on the water in support of land preservation in Harford County.

Check [www.harfordlandtrust.org](http://www.harfordlandtrust.org) for more information soon.