



Nanticoke Notes

Welcome to the 2020 edition of the Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy (NRWC), newsletter keeping you up to date about the most recent happenings of your local land trust!

2020 has been the most difficult year in many for all of us, but along with our fellow area citizens, we maintain a positive outlook in the goal of making our local communities more remarkable places to live and thrive. This 2020 issue is published to keep our members and friends informed about NRWC activities that promote our commitment to preserving some of the finest places in the Nanticoke River Watershed in Delaware, Maryland and beyond!.

Draining one-fourth of Delaware's lands and endowed with outstanding natural abundance, diversity, and historical/cultural importance, the beautiful Nanticoke River is of inestimable importance within the entire Chesapeake drainage basin.

The NRWC is a federal 501c3 non-profit permanently managing over 500 acres of the Nanticoke's watershed expressly for protection of the health and enjoyment of YOU and your families, but also protecting our heritage of lands, sensitive wildlife habitats, preservation of agricultural lands and the diversity of our historical landscapes. We are passionate about the premise that "It is a basic instinct to protect the land you love" and we are doing this so that you, your families and future generations can enjoy the outdoors and the myriad benefits of nature.

We are very proud of the work we have been able to accomplish through the efforts of our faithful board of directors, site stewards, regional partners, donors, community members and volunteers and we invite YOU to join us as we work toward the goal of "protecting the lands we love"--we would consider it a privilege to welcome you!

Marlene Mervine, Executive Director

NRWC Site Spotlights

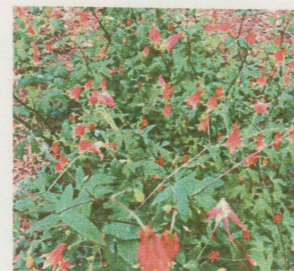
In each issue of "Nanticoke Notes" we spotlight one or more of our properties so you will have a sense of how diverse our properties are and how each of them fits into a unique conservation niche within the Nanticoke watershed. In our most recent past issue we spotlighted our Moore Farm and Foskey Farm Tracts - sites that spotlight the Nanticoke watershed's past and present agricultural heritage. Updates on these sites follow.



The Moore Farm Tract



In 2018 the NRWC partnered with the Chesapeake Conservancy and the USF&W Service to plant 8.5 acres of pollinator meadows at our Moore Farm Tract. Pollinator species nationwide are under extreme pressure, so we are hoping this project will be a great help to local agricultural and home gardening interests. This summer we have noticed quite an increase in the number and diversity of native pollinator plants at our site after only its third year! These meadows should provide increasingly valuable habitat for pollinators and be even more beautiful by next spring.



The Foskey Farm Tract

The NRWC owns a small garage on our Foskey Farm Tract which houses our hand tools, mower and the other tools and supplies necessary for maintenance of our lands. We envision this location to be the site of our **desperately** needed new office. We already have a small plan in place donated by Moonlight Architecture, Inc., and are seeking funding to help make this a reality. Having an office site right at the

Chapel Branch Nature Area would be a huge help in monitoring use of the nature area and in the coordination of events there. The small garage needed repairs when we acquired it and through the generosity of donors and proceeds of small Sussex County Human Services grants in 2019 and 2020, we have been able to replace the roof and deteriorated garage doors.

If anyone or any business would like to assist in this need in our community by assisting us with our important office funding need, or any small portion of it—or to donate materials or volunteer construction help, please contact us at 302-337-8847! The Nanticoke Conservancy is a federal 501c3 non-profit.

2020 Spotlight Site—The Rice Tract

One of NRWC's earliest land acquisitions was the 38-acre Rice Tract east of Seaford in July of 2003. The owners of this tract who acquired their property in 1971 were very concerned about land conservation and habitat preservation for wildlife in their neighborhood. The property was in an area of residential development and so would be under pressure for division into building sites—not an option that the owners hoped for. They approached the Nanticoke Conservancy about possibilities of how they could protect their land and also accomplish their goals for wildlife preservation on their land. The NRWC worked for some time with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Rice and arrived at an agreement with the

Rice's stating that they would agree to retain their ownership of the property via a life estate agreement, and whereby they would both retain rights to this beautiful forested tract until their passing. In addition, it was agreed that a conservation easement would be attached to the property deed protecting it in perpetuity, that no hunting or wildlife destruction would be allowed and that there would also be no public access allowed which would protect the sensitive habits from disturbance and the wildlife from any form of hunting. Mr. Rice was an avid outdoorsman and both he and his wife actively enjoyed walking their property and appreciating the birds and animals there who called this lovely woods home.

The Nanticoke Conservancy now owns and manages this and all of our other 18 tracts in accordance with easement requirements and monitors it regularly for encroachments to the parameters of the easement language. Approximately 350 of NRWC's 500 acres of lands are open to the public, but a few are with limited access according to the wishes and differing easement agreements between the land trust and donating landowners.

The NRWC gratefully acknowledges this beautiful gift of land that increases conservation goals within the Nanticoke watershed and Chesapeake Bay drainage basin.

Eagle Scout Ceremony

The NRWC was honored to support the nomination and attend the Eagle Scout ceremony of Tyler Willin of BSA Troop #182, Seaford on June 28, 2020. Tyler demonstrated extraordinary commitment in completion of his eagle project at the Chapel Branch Nature Area, locating and restoring all 42 of DuPont's original educational stop posts and several benches, building a table and repairing our kiosk. We wish him the very best for a successful future!



Another Spotlight: Partnerships & Donations

Partnerships are critical to the success of any non-profit organization **and the Nanticoke Conservancy is no exception. The NRWC has partnered with many groups during the past years to make your experiences** at our properties more enjoyable. If I have missed noting anyone's help, please know that it was an oversight. Thank you very much to all!

NRWC's faithful volunteer board of directors who have made us the success we are.

Invista Corporation for their generous annual support and, again in the early fall of 2020, their donated multi-loads of stone, grading and enlarging of our parking area, giving us additional space for public parking and also for regular mowing of this area.

Eric Zuelke for his donation of professional expertise and time in plant species ID.

The Seaford H.S. FFA who generously created a butterfly garden at Chapel Branch in October 2020 and have donated a huge amount of help at the nature area over the past 2 years.

Many kudos to Steve Cooper, NRWC President who, with tireless commitment, has assisted with the acquisition and monitoring of all our properties over many years.

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance for donating and planting of 15 trees, Moore Farm Tract.

Cheryl and Kenna Webster of Cut 'Em Up Tree Care of Delaware who donated several tree/stump removals in the past 2 years---our trails now much safer for thousands of walkers.

USF&W Service/Chesapeake Conservancy for the installation of our 8.5 acre pollinator meadows.

Sussex Outdoors for generous and important support.

Steve and Nora Childers of the DE Nature Society for volunteer trail maintenance and environmental teaching for students at Chapel Branch.

Moonlight Architecture Inc. for their donation of beautiful plans for our proposed office.

Bridgeville Lions Club for their continued commitment and important ongoing support.

Lank, Johnson & Tull, CPAS who provided storage space and their conference room to NRWC for bi-monthly meetings.

Sussex County Human Resources Department for funding assistance for our garage roof and doors.

Tidewater Utilities, Inc. for donation of water and PVC pipe for trail markers.

Many thanks to Carolyn DePew Swayze who donated expertise and much time in generously creating all three of NRWC's beautiful newsletters.

Jay Repa, a volunteer board member who has tirelessly worked to do mowing and mower maintenance for us at both Chapel Branch and the Foskey Farm.

The Seaford Star who has been so helpful in sharing our meeting notices and also in publishing stories about our acquisitions and workday notices.

Starbucks and Hungry Howies for generous donations of coffee café bar and prizes coupons.

Rich & Betsy Archer for the donation of gourmet sandwiches/desserts for the DNREC/Chesapeake Conservancy funders boat trip.

Many unknown volunteers who have also helped with removing downed branches and clearing portions of downed trees on our trails during the years and some small and other larger, but critically important, monetary donations.

NRWC Board of Directors

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Many Thanks to our Volunteers--the lifeblood of our land trust!

Stewardship of 500+ acres often presents unforeseen challenges that need immediate attention. Helping keep our site as the beautiful and important resources they have been for the last 28 years is because of the many volunteers who selflessly pitch in to help. We couldn't do this without YOU!! If you are able to help in any small way, or would like to assist during our semi-annual Clean-Up Day events, please contact Harry Brake, our new Volunteer Coordinator at: harry.brake@gmail.com

Opportunities to Help

NRWC just finished our most successful Semi-annual Clean-Up day ever on October 17th. So many volunteers joined us in working on big and small projects that you can see in this collage of photos. We established a Hay Scented Fern woodland garden, removed railroad ties along Woodland Road, planted a Loblolly Pine and 7 Red Cedar trees, added a few native Wild Columbine to the others at Post #1, planted cultivar Black Eyed Susan plants at the bike rack, removed much brush and small invasive trees from the forest around the parking area and mowed field areas, widened portions of our trails, started a new butterfly garden, began repair on the garage walls, removed trash debris from our streamside areas and completed much weeding!! We are very grateful for everyone who helped and especially to Tyler Willin who brought his 4-wheeler and wagon to assist!

Our next big Clean-Up day will be sometime in early spring before leaf-out. We are compiling a list of projects we would like to attack during the next spring's event and will let you know details via email in late win-



"Steps For Nature" — Time to Renew Your Donations!

Maintaining 500 acres of protected lands, 4 miles of trails, sensitive wildlife habitats and community volunteer coordination requires not only intense commitment, but partner funding---the tool that makes our passion for serving our communities and friends possible! Your support is imperative in maintaining the wonderful work that we do within our communities.

Please take a "Step For Nature" and consider generous support of the Nanticoke Conservancy to protect the lands we all love! Your gifts are fully tax deductible under our Federal 501c3 non-profit status.

Yes, I will help NRWC "Preserve the Very Best Places in the Nanticoke Watershed"!

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

E-Mail:

Donate at: Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy, P.O. Box 418, Seaford, DE 19973

Or through our website: nanticokeconservancy.org

