

OCTOBER 2013



Think before you print!

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Hello MPEA Friends & Volunteers!

October has been a pleasant month in the environmental area. The road closure and detour are long gone so you can drive on over with ease. The trail conditions are fairly good and a little more progress has been made on the major trail repairs. Visitor traffic has picked up as is customary when the foliage begins to change color and drop to the ground. Two managed hunts are complete and two more volunteer events occurred too. Next month on November 26th we will be having our last invasive plant removal event with our partners the Master Gardeners. Please consider stopping by to see what these events are all about. Once you see how easy it you'll want to come to all of the events next year!

Pardon Our Progress

We appreciate your cooperation as we continue to repair problem patches along the trails. As you may have noticed our work is currently concentrated in the vicinity of interpretive post #16, the old concrete wading pool. To date four bad spots have been remedied with many more remaining. So far we have received very positive comments by trail users. Compliments are always most welcome! The work will slow down when the soil freezes and then resume in the spring.

Shrubbery

Tree shelters were a popular activity this month. Staff sheltered shrubs at a reforestation site and volunteers removed, repaired, or replaced shelters down in the seep area. If you know the way to the seep area go take a peek. Weed Warriors and assorted other volunteers have done a great job planting and raising shrubs there. In particular, the alder (*Alnus serrulata*) planted by HCC Service Learning students a few years back have really begun to take-off. The roots and stems became so extensive that we had to cut the shelters away piece by piece to avoid damaging the many-stemmed plants.

Important Dates

Two opportunities for guided walks in the environmental area are coming up over the next couple of months. Both are being organized by the Robinson Nature Center. Please check out their website for complete information. On Saturday, November 16th there is going to be an Owl Prowl Program and on Sunday, February 16th there will be a Winter Wonderland Hike. Mark your calendars and pre-register today!

Both of the October managed hunt dates are over. In November we will conduct three more managed hunt dates. All are on Mondays: November 4th, 11th, and 25th. Don't forget that we are closed until noon on those dates.



Upcoming Conservation Stewardship Project Dates:

Last Chance to Attend This Year!

November 26th
Trotter Road entrance
9 — 11:30 AM

NOVEMBER MANAGED HUNT DATES ARE:

Monday, Nov. 4th
Monday, Nov. 11th
Monday, Nov. 25th

If you would like to sign up to receive email updates and our monthly newsletter, or if you want to request to stop receiving them, please send a brief email to jclaffy@howardcountymd.gov

Check out the Howard County page for the Maryland Amphibian & Reptile Atlas (MARA) 2010-2014

<http://www.howardbirds.org/herpatlas/index-MARA.htm>

Odds & Ends

Here's a bit of bad news. We don't like to share bad news, but this is important. Kudzu (*Pueraria montana*) aka "The Vine That Ate the South" has been found on private property very close, perhaps a mile, from our border. The owner was provided with control information but it still underscores the need for each of us to be vigilant. Be on the lookout for kudzu because our best defense against this invasive plant is early detection and rapid response. Go here for more info: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pdf/pumo1.pdf>

In another MPEA first, we were recently the site of a music video production. A determined film school student went through the appropriate channels and was granted a permit for filming on park property. Visitors in the area at the time mentioned hearing the lovely sounds of guitar and a harp. No complaints were registered and no evidence of the event was left on site. Regardless of the footage, the activity was a success.

Interesting Link

Apparently the dreaded, invasive, Emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) has been good for some species: <http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/news/release/woodpeckers-and-eab>

I hope to see you out in the MPEA,
Jeff

Owl Prowl at MPEA

Saturday, November 16
Ages 12+ \$8 per participant
Join members of the Howard County Bird Club on a beautiful, moonlit walk through the woods of the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) as we look for owls and listen for fascinating night sounds. An adult must accompany children under 18. Reservations are required for this program.
Registration/Info: 410-313-0400.

Nov 16 MPEA 6:30-8:00pm

Robinson NATURE CENTER
JAMES & ANNE
Robinson Nature Center
6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044
www.howardcountymd.gov/RobinsonNatureCenter.htm
410-313-0400

Howard County RECREATION & PARKS



The Newsletter of the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

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The Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA), established in 1996, is 1021 acres in size and contains a diversity of habitat types. There are upland and bottomland hardwood forest, fields, wetlands, ponds, and riparian (riverine) habitats. The primary components of the MPEA's mission are natural resource management, education, research and recreation. **Successfully delivering our mission depends on the efforts of volunteers such as you!**

We're on the Web!

<http://www.howardcountymd.gov/mpea.htm>

AND

www.middlepatuxent.org

Middle Patuxent Environmental Area Conservation Stewardship Project

ONE-TIME VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME

No Experience Necessary

Please Carpool!

Meet Monthly on the 4th Tuesday from 9–11:30 AM

October 22nd: SAVING THE SEEP

Trotter Road entrance

For many years volunteers have been removing unwanted plants and replacing them with native varieties in the spring seep portion of the Woodcock Habitat Management Area. Much more effort has gone into maintaining the deer-exclusion tree shelters and in keeping the area weed-free. Decades ago this seep was rich with American woodcock activity. Today your work will aid in restoring this vital habitat that provides proper Timberdoodle feeding cover. At this event we'll continue with prior volunteers' work by cleaning off and repairing shelters and by re-checking areas previously cleared of Multiflora rose, Royal empress tree, privet, and other non-native, invasive plants.

November 26th: BARBERRY BONANZA 2

Trotter Road entrance

Japanese barberry is very tolerant of shade and can form dense colonies in a variety of habitats including closed canopy forest. This pesky plant reportedly changes soil pH and nitrogen levels as it displaces native herbs and shrubs. Research has also demonstrated an increased prevalence of Lyme disease in areas densely covered by barberry. For these reasons we are hosting a removal event. Using the same techniques we practiced back in March and June we'll keep digging up and uprooting these unwelcome intruders of natural areas.

The **Conservation Stewardship Project**, a joint program of the **Howard County Master Gardeners** and the **Howard County Recreation & Parks**, targets the problem of controlling invasive, exotic species in the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA). Volunteer work dates occur monthly from March through November, skipping July & August. Each date includes an educational component concerning the target invasive species or work area for the day.