

SEPTEMBER 2013



Think before you print!

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Hello MPEA Friends & Volunteers!

We are experiencing the best weather of the year. The leaves are just starting to change color too. Do yourself a favor and go outdoors for a while! Many other people have been doing just that and they headed over to the environmental area. Because the autumn warbler migration is in full swing as well, each morning we have a small crowd of visiting Birders. Birdwatchers are great; those with binoculars are always happy to tell you of the exciting things happening bird-wise within the MPEA. Also this month we hosted several events: a volunteer outing to remove invasive vines, a nature center-led walk about medicinal plants, and a school field trip. Other news for this past month includes a visit by a surprising animal as well as the answer to one of our most popular questions.

Old MacDonald

Would you believe that visitors saw a pig in the MPEA? Me neither. As it turns out, for a brief time it was a real possibility. Apparently a resident along Trotter Road had a livestock escape and there really was a pig on the loose. A staff member witnessed firsthand the round up and safe return of the pig to its owner. It just goes to prove that you never know what you will see when you come out for a visit!

New Website

Over the years too many people to count have inquired about the Middle Patuxent Environmental Foundation. After all, the Foundation is listed prominently on our main entrance sign and that is all that people knew about them. Who are they? What do they do? and other similar questions can now be answered by going to their website:

www.middlepatuxent.org.

Please check out their site but keep in mind that it is still brand new and several of the areas are still under development.

Important Dates

The times for our managed hunts for white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are rapidly approaching. As such there are a few preparations we will be undertaking. Steps such as mowing parking areas, readying the check station, and the marking of the trails to the hunt stands will take place soon. In fact, most of the trails were marked already by volunteers. The first hunt date is Monday, October 14th. Following dates are: October 28th, November 4th, November 11th, November 25th, January 9th, January 23rd, and February 20th. Remember that the MPEA is closed to the public until noon on the managed hunt dates.



Upcoming Conservation Stewardship Project Dates:

October 22nd
Trotter Road entrance

November 26th
Trotter Road entrance

All times are 9 — 11:30 AM

FIRST MANAGED HUNT DATE IS ON MONDAY OCTOBER 14th.

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>

Miscellany

A few other activities took place to round out the month of September. There was a fantastic presentation on oysters in the Chesapeake Bay at the nature center. The talk was presented by the Shell Recycling Alliance of the Oyster Recovery Partnership. Later this year look for an oyster shell recycling drop-off point at the Robinson Nature Center! At the end of the month we conducted another Conservation Stewardship Project with the assistance of the Howard County Master Gardeners. Volunteers spent three hours removing invasive vines from mature trees bordering Clegg's Meadow. Plus we hosted a fieldtrip from River Hill High School's Advanced Placement Environmental Science class. The students conducted an activity on tree identification.

Interesting Links

We have two environmental-themed links this month. Both concern birds. One is good news. The other is just depressing (but important). First, for those coffee drinkers out there, here is another study about the benefits of growing coffee in the shade.

<http://conservationmagazine.org/2013/09/birds-boost-coffee-yields/>

Finally, here is a short clip that brings home the problem with marine plastic pollution.

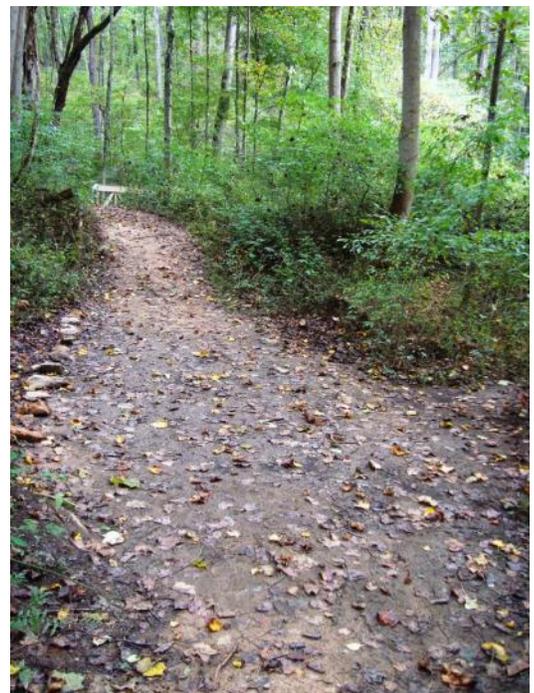
<http://www.upworthy.com/people-should-know-about-this-awful-thing-we-do-and-most-of-us-are-simply-unaware>

I hope to see you out in the MPEA,

Jeff



Here we have two photos of dirt. Just kidding. The picture above is of a muddy problem spot on the trail. The picture to the right is the same spot after we fixed it. Water should now flow from left to right and off of the trail. Time will tell!





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>

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

September 24th: TENACIOUS DE-VINING

South Wind Circle trailhead

Clegg's Meadow, our largest grassland, contains a riparian buffer planting site and a small Cedar glade that volunteers have spent many seasons nurturing and protecting. Additionally, the meadows are surrounded by mature stands of native hardwood trees. Slowly these majestic meadow neighbors are succumbing to the ill effects of invasive vines. We'll navigate the grassy edges in order to de-vine the mature trees. If the weather cooperates we'll include a guest who will talk about Monarch butterfly natural history and demonstrate butterfly capture, tagging and release methods.

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.