



**ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2011**  
JULY 1, 2010 - JUNE 30, 2011



Photo by Chris Pupke

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Wendy Stringfellow – Consultant  
Vaughn Weitzman – Seasonal Steward

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Following is a summary of the Maryland Environmental Trust 2011 Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly of Maryland, pursuant to the requirements of the Natural Resources Article, §3-203.10.

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1967 as a charitable organization, which included State support and funding with an independent Board of Trustees. In 1969, MET was assigned to the Department of Natural Resources for organizational purposes.

For more than four decades, MET has worked with the citizens of Maryland and partner organizations to foster the appreciation and conservation of scenic open space, natural areas and working farmlands across the State. With one of the largest portfolio of preservation and conservation easements in the nation, (8<sup>th</sup> largest according to the Land Trust Alliance 2010 Census Report), MET is a leader in its field. Indeed, MET holds easements on, and is responsible for perpetually stewarding these properties, some of Maryland's most iconic and culturally significant landscapes and properties.

#### **MET's Creation**

In 1967 MET (then referred to as "the Trust,") was established "to conserve, improve, stimulate, and perpetuate the aesthetic, natural, health and welfare, scenic, and cultural qualities of the environment, including, but not limited to land, water, air, wildlife, scenic qualities, open spaces, buildings or any interest therein, and other appurtenances pertaining in any way to the State. Through educational and other means, the Trust shall encourage and motivate the populace of the State and others to do so and shall promote continuing interest in and the study of these matters. The purpose of the Trust is of general benefit to the citizens of the State, and it is charitable in nature. Through educational and other means, the Trust shall encourage and motivate the populace of the State and others to do so and shall promote continuing interest in and the study of these matters. The purpose of the Trust is of general benefit to the citizens of the State, and it is charitable in nature."

MET's establishment, powers, and responsibilities are codified pursuant to Natural Resources Article § 3-201. MET has characteristics both of a unit of the Department of Natural Resources and an independent land conservation organization, and serves as the only statewide land trust. The statute clarifies MET's duties and directs it to:

- (1) Receive annual appropriations;**
- (2) Sponsor research and education programs pertaining to scenic or cultural qualities of the State and of financial grants to public and private agencies;**
- (3) Acquire and hold real and personal property of scenic or cultural to conserve it;**
- (4) Accept gifts, and apply its value to the general purposes of the Trust;**
- (6) Assist other units of the State, or private, public, or federal agency, foundation, or person, in furtherance of MET's mission; and**
- (7) Report annually to the Governor and to the General Assembly on MET's activities during the preceding year and provide recommendations or requests to further the purposes of MET.**

While MET holds all rights to several tracts of land, the vast majority of its property interests are in the form of conservation easements donated by landowners (and, in some cases, purchased using various sources of funding). Generally speaking, a conservation easement may be defined as a binding, legally recorded agreement between a landowner and MET which serves

to restrict future development activities on the land and thereby to protect it.

### **Governance**

MET is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees (the Board). The Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Delegates are ex officio members of the board of trustees. Of the remaining 12 trustees, three are elected each year for a term of four years. The Board carries out the powers and duties of the Trust.

### **Staffing**

In addition to Director Elizabeth Buxton, MET staff includes a Conservation Easement Program Manager, a Stewardship Program Manager, a Land Trust Assistance Coordinator and a Volunteer Coordinator, three regional Natural Resources Planners and various administrative support staff including seasonal and long term contractual employees and consultants. MET also relies of a corps of 25 -30 trained volunteers to assist with the regular monitoring of more than 1000 easement properties held by the organization. MET operates in an office located in the People's Resource Center (DHCD building) in Crownsville. At the conclusion of FY11, MET staffing was approximately 12 positions including full-time, part-time, and temporary staff.

## **Mission and Programs**

MET has four key focus areas:

- (1) To provide strong leadership while assisting in the negotiation, acquisition, and recordation of new conservation easements;**
- (2) To serve as a good and responsible steward of land already protected by such easements and;**
- (3) To provide training, technical assistance and support to non-profit land trusts in the State;**
- (4) To administer the Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) Program.**

MET pursues this work through three core programs: Conservation Easement, Stewardship, and Land Trust Assistance. MET also administers the Keep Maryland Beautiful program that provides annual grants to schools and non-profits for environmental and educational projects.

Partnerships with other local, state, and federal government agencies, local and regional land trusts, private, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector are critical to the ongoing success of MET. Among state agencies, a particularly close working relationship is maintained with DNR, the Department of Planning (Maryland Historical Trust) and Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA). MET works with over 50 land trust and conservation organizations including The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy and the Civil War Preservation Trust. MET is an active member of the Land Trust Alliance, the national association for land trusts.

## **Funding**

MET receives its operating capital from several sources. In fiscal year 2011, \$746,695 was allocated to MET. This included \$453,017 in general funds, \$180,588 in special funds and \$113,090 in reimbursable funds (SHA and DNR as Coastal Zone Management and Program Open Space [POS] administrative fee). In addition, MET was awarded grants from several foundations and corporations and received contributions from individual donors totaling \$118,177. Incorporating all income sources, the MET FY11 total operating budget was \$829,136. The summary of MET's financial position for Fiscal Year 2011 is included in the Appendices of this Report.

## **Conservation Easements and Their Stewardship**

Conservation easements - their negotiation, acquisition, recordation, and stewardship – are the heart and soul of MET. Easements are the primary mechanism by which MET works to accomplish its mission of preserving open space across the State of Maryland. Most of Maryland's recent permanent land conservation has been, and for the foreseeable future will be, in the form of less-than-fee interests in real property, specifically, recorded legal instruments known as deeds of conservation easements. A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and an eligible organization that restricts future activities on the land to protect its conservation values. The value of a conservation easement is the difference between the property's fair market value before and after the imposition of permanent development restrictions on the property.

MET currently holds more than 1,000 conservation easements, covering nearly 128,000 acres, in perpetuity. Such

conservation easements protect an important variety of scenic open space including targeted ecological areas, wildlife habitat, working farms, forests and heritage areas statewide, and in so doing assist in achieving broader public policy goals. The importance of the Maryland State Income Tax Credit Program (a valuable incentive for land conservation) and the charitable contribution deduction for donation of perpetual conservation easements allowable under the federal Internal Revenue Service Code cannot be underestimated in fostering gifts of conservation easements to the MET and other land trusts.

### **Conveyance and Perpetual Stewardship of a Conservation Easement**

MET staff work diligently with landowners to assist and guide them through the process of conveying a conservation easement to MET. The conveyance process, which may take from a few months to more than a year for completion, typically includes the following procedures: landowner consideration of easement donation, site visit to the subject property by MET staff, research regarding subject property by MET, action (acceptance, acceptance subject to changes, or rejection) by MET Board of Trustees regarding proposed easement, follow-up site visit to subject property by MET staff, preparation of baseline documentation report regarding subject property by MET staff, ratification/approval by the Board of Public Works (in most situations), final preparation of deed of easement and execution of same by landowner and Director of MET, and recordation of deed of easement.

After the deed of easement is recorded, the long term work for MET begins. The "forever" deed restriction imposed with the gift and legal recordation of a conservation easement carries with it the long term

responsibility of stewardship and public trust. Accordingly, the success of MET in negotiating and recording over 1,000 easements has brought with it increased responsibilities relating to easement stewardship. As more and more easements are recorded, requisite stewardship of those easements will increase exponentially.

The stewardship process - so critical to the integrity of any easement program - consists of a range of activities essential to protecting land on which easements are donated for perpetuity. Key components of the MET stewardship program include: landowner support, education, and assistance relating to such issues as land management practices and interpretation of specific easement provisions (regarding, for example, property subdivision or amendments to deeds of easements); documentation and records management (to ensure, for instance, accurate details of ownership, boundaries, and structures for easements held); regular site visits to property under easement; and upholding the public trust to ensure correction of easement violations, preferably through voluntary action by the landowner but, where necessary, with counsel from the Office of the Attorney General.

The MET significantly enhanced its already-effective stewardship program in Fiscal Year 2011. Among its many accomplishments, MET successfully developed stronger partnerships with public and private partners, including the completion of many new cooperative agreements, thereby fostering more efficient preservation and stewardship of open space throughout the State.

The MET also progressed toward streamlining its processes for easement stewardship and meeting *Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices* with

benchmarks relating to property baseline documentation, file documentation, records management, site visits, and enforcement of deeds of easement restrictions. Perhaps most importantly, MET worked diligently to enhance working relationships and focus on the provision of technical support, education, and assistance to those through whom its success of its mission ultimately is made possible: the landowners who so graciously have donated conservation easements on their properties.

### **Conservation Easements Acquisition and Stewardship: Notable Accomplishments**

Fiscal year 2011 was another extraordinary year for the MET in advancing its mission of acquiring, recording, and stewarding conservation easements. The numbers are inspiring: 1,578 acres protected with 13 easements, and 321 properties received stewardship visits.

Other notable highlights:

- Held two regional events in Frederick County and St. Mary's County.
- Commissioned an organizational assessment by national consultant Marc Smiley that will serve as a road map for Land Trust Alliance (LTA) accreditation.
- Designed a 2012 calendar depicting MET properties for distribution to public.
- Adopted a stewardship strategy to help monitor all of MET easements annually.
- Held successful two day statewide conference for land trust community with 100 attendees.
- Awarded 17 grants totaling \$26,000 to non-profit organizations.

### **Lands Owned by the MET**

While the MET mission is accomplished largely through its conservation easements program, MET also has acquired land in various regions of the State. MET currently owns approximately 111 acres of land, acquired primarily through gifts from individuals.

### **Keep Maryland Beautiful**

The functions and activities of the Governor's Committee to Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) were transferred to MET in 1973. Since that time MET has awarded KMB grants annually and further developed the program to include the Bill James Environmental grants, Margaret Rosch Jones and the Jan Hollman Awards for projects that focus on environmental education. The funding for these awards is been made possible through the generosity of SHA.

### **Accreditation**

The land trust movement in the US has grown rapidly over the years and has become more professional, thanks in large part to the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), which has promulgated *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and provided funding to MET and other land trusts in Maryland to advance these practices and support strategic planning. They have also sponsored the Land Trust Alliance Commission, an independent program of the LTA to verify a land trust's ability "*to operate in an ethical, legal and technically sound manner and ensure the long-term protection of land in the public interest.*"

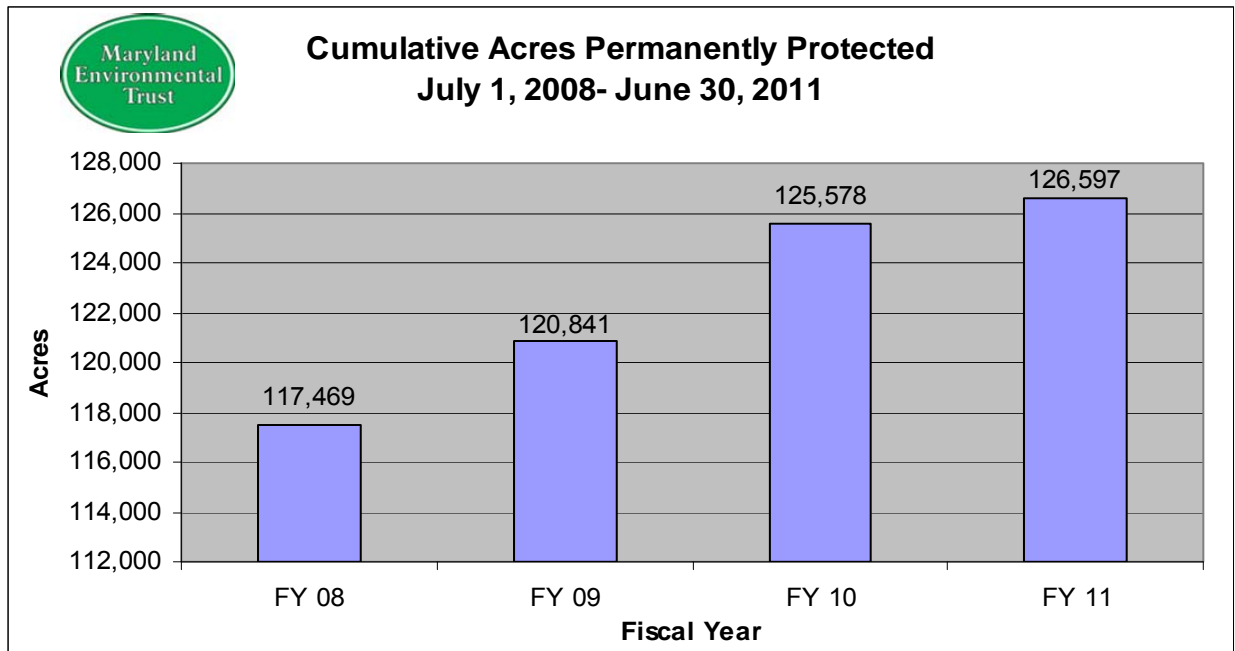
As part of its strategic planning process, with assistance from the Land Trust Alliance, the MET Board commissioned a *Maryland Environmental Trust Organizational Assessment Report*, by the Solid Ground Consulting Group,<sup>1</sup> which

specializes in strategic planning for land conservation organizations.

Completed in 2011, the draft assessment determined the need for improvement in seven areas of organizational effectiveness, including: “1) *Defined Constituency*, 2) *Strategic Plan*, 3) *Fundraising*, 4) *Organizational Structure*, 5) *Board Development*, 6) *Land Transactions-Land Management*, and 7) *Conservation Planning*.” It also provided a list of 33 more specific “*Recommendations, Synthesized*.”

### Conclusion

For MET, 2011 was a year of great achievement despite cuts to the state budget (the loss of a full time employee due to the Governor’s Voluntary Separation) and the uncertain future of the federal enhanced income tax incentives for donations of easements. Ever mindful of the outstanding contributions of its many donors, partners and volunteers, MET expresses sincere appreciation to all who so generously gave of their time, talents, and resources to foster open space land conservation across Maryland.



## **CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM**

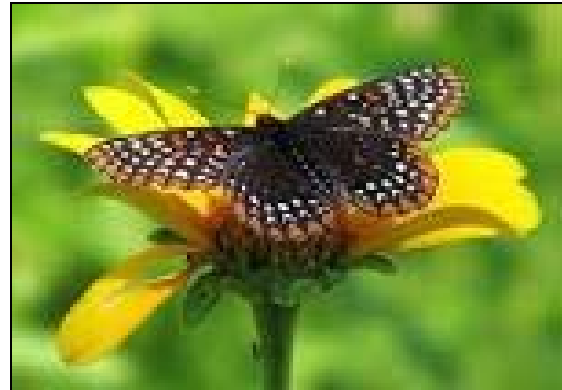
From the forested mountain tops of Garrett County to the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland boasts an ecological diversity and scenic beauty rivaled by few states in the nation. MET works with private property owners to permanently protect these valuable natural resources with conservation easements. A conservation easement is a legal agreement entered into voluntarily by a landowner and a government entity or land trust that permanently limits the uses of the land in order to protect its scenic, agricultural, woodland, wetland and habitat conservation values. An easement allows landowners to continue to own, use, and manage their property, and sell it or pass it on to their heirs. Conservation easements offer great flexibility and are tailored to fit a landowner's vision and goals for the property. The donation of a conservation easement is a reflection of a landowner's commitment to conserving scenic vistas and water quality for public benefit, ensuring the future viability of farming and forestry, and preserving the rural character and natural beauty of communities all across Maryland. This year MET protected a total of 1,578 acres on thirteen properties statewide. Nine of the 13 easements, or 69%, are co-held by MET's land trust partners. Landowners donated conservation easements on nine properties and sold conservation easements on four properties.

### **WESTERN REGION (Allegany, Carroll, Garrett, Frederick, Washington)**

This year 149 acres were permanently protected in the western region. Garrett, Allegany, Frederick, and Carroll Counties each had one easement recorded for a total of four easements in the region. Two of these easements are co-held with land trust partners: Allegheny Highlands Conservancy and Carroll County Land Trust. Of the protected land in western Maryland, 113

acres is located in DNR's Targeted Ecological Areas, 92 acres are designated green infrastructure, and 32 acres are located in Ecologically Significant Areas.

MET partnered with Allegheny Highlands Conservancy to protect important habitat in Garrett County through a conservation easement donation by long time landowner Vladamir Dupre. Though only 15 acres in size, Woodhill Sanctuary contains habitat for several rare, threatened or endangered butterfly species including the official State butterfly. The Baltimore Checkerspot was designated the official insect of the State of Maryland in 1973 and while once common in the region, the species has experienced significant declines in recent years. Woodhill Sanctuary is now one of only eight known Baltimore Checkerspot colonies remaining in Maryland.



Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly

In Allegany County, the Bartlett family donated a conservation easement on their 95 acre property, which is primarily forested and provides forest interior dwelling bird species habitat. Located in the eastern part of the county, the easement protects the forestland, habitat, water quality and the scenic view from Williams Road.

In Frederick County, the King family donated a conservation easement on their 18



acre property, protecting agricultural and forestland in a Targeted Ecological Area. The easement also protects the scenic view along Stottlemyer Road.

MET partnered with Carroll County Land Trust on another property with important habitat in Carroll County. Janet Brown donated a conservation easement on her 21 acre property that is surrounded by over 600 acres of protected lands. The property also contains threatened bog turtle habitat that is now protected under the conservation easement.

**CENTRAL REGION (Baltimore City/County, Cecil, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)**

This year 223 acres were permanently protected in the central region of the state. Of the four properties protected, two are located in Montgomery County and one each in Baltimore and Cecil Counties. A total of 20 acres of green infrastructure and 11.5 acres of Ecologically Significant Areas were protected with easements.

Barbara Knapp donated an easement on her 10-acre Montgomery County property. The property is nearly entirely forested and is outstanding for its relatively natural habitat for the American Chestnut, a Maryland Rare/Watch list tree species. The easement protects this habitat as well as the scenic view from Davis Mill Road and Great Seneca Stream Valley Park.

Also in Montgomery County, the Hussman easement was the final easement to be completed to close a multi-year cooperative agreement with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). Through the agreement, MET was charged with targeting, soliciting, negotiating, and holding conservation easements to be purchased by WSSC. The Hussman family sold a conservation easement on their 17-

acre property. The easement protects water quality of the Triadelphia Reservoir and scenic views along Brighton Dam Road, a County designated “Rustic Road”.



Mt. Ararat Farm in Cecil County

In Baltimore County, MET and The Manor Conservancy worked with Monkton landowner Ellen Reeder to permanently protect her historic farm located within the Manor Rural Legacy Area. This 81-acre property is adjacent to other protected properties and is located within the My Lady's Manor National Register Historic District. The original house on the farm dates back to the late 1700s. The easement protects water quality along Nelson Branch, a tributary of the Gunpowder River, and scenic views along Hess Road.

In Cecil County, MET partnered with Cecil Land Trust, The Conservation Fund, DNR, MD State Highway Administration and the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway to help protect 115 acres of Mt. Ararat Farm. The easement protects scenic views from Route 222, Frenchtown Road, and the breathtaking vista visible to motorists traveling north on I-95/Tydings Memorial

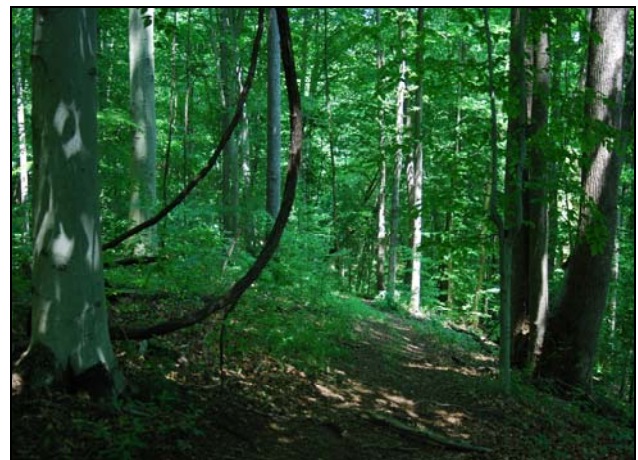
Bridge as it crosses the Susquehanna River. Additionally, the easement provides a vital trail connection for the Lower Susquehanna Greenway, protects 70 acres of forested stream valley, and 32 acres of Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The easement was purchased with a combination of funds from the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program, The Conservation Fund, and DNR's Program Open Space.

**SOUTHERN REGION (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Howard, Prince George's, St. Mary's)**

This year 631 acres were permanently protected in the southern region of the state. Two properties were protected under one conservation easement donation: the 547 acre Crownsville Woods property (owned by MET and conveyed to Anne Arundel County) and 84 acres of the County's Bacon Ridge Natural Area. There is a total of 540 acres of Green Infrastructure on the two properties, with 523 acres within a hub and 17 within a corridor.

In a report by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on biodiversity in the mid-Atlantic region, the property is identified as an important habitat for reptiles and amphibians. The property contains historical spawning area for yellow perch and river herring. The Crownsville Woods and Bacon Ridge properties contain 533 acres of potential forest interior dwelling bird species habitat. The two properties were identified by Maryland/DC Audubon as an Important Bird Area, following a six-day survey in spring 2007 by Audubon, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and South River Federation. The Maryland Historical Trust reports that the Crownsville Woods property contains three archeological sites. The site most accessible to the public is the Charles S. Waters Mill Site, AA-2049. It is listed in the Historic Sites Survey of

Anne Arundel County, which is located approximately 300 feet north of Chesterfield Road on the east side of Bacon Ridge Branch. One large mill stone has been recovered by Anne Arundel County. The mill race and many foundations are still visible. Also listed in the Anne Arundel County Historic Sites survey are 18AN498 and 18AN499, Hawkins Road I and Hawkins Road II, both of which are 19<sup>th</sup> century historic archeological sites. There are 330 acres of protected land within one mile of the two properties, which primarily consist of conservation properties purchased in fee simple by Anne Arundel County as part of the South River Greenway land protection initiative in the headwaters region of the South River. Anne Arundel County's goal is to preserve by fee-simple acquisition 1,100 acres in the Bacon Ridge Branch subwatershed. The conservation easement is co-held with our land trust partner, the Scenic Rivers Land Trust, Inc.



Crownsville Woods in Anne Arundel County

**EASTERN REGION (Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester)**

A total of 575 acres were permanently protected in the eastern region this year. Of the four properties protected, two are located in Queen Anne's County, one in Dorchester County, and one in Somerset County. All four of the easements are co-held with a land trust partner: 2 with Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC), 1 with the Lower Shore Land Trust and 1 with Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage. These easements protect a total of 82 acres of green infrastructure, 256 acres of Targeted Ecological Area and 129 acres of Ecologically Significant Areas.

In Queen Anne's County, two conservation easements were completed for a total of 486 acres. Brown's Branch Farm is a 219 acre property located in Church Hill in Queen Anne's County. The farm boasts a half mile of scenic frontage along the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway and nearly two miles of scenic frontage along Brown's Branch, a tributary of the Chester River. Travelers along this section of the Byway will forever enjoy views of the rolling fields and forests. In addition, the easement protects habitat for a federally listed endangered species found along Brown's Branch. This conservation easement was purchased with Federal Transportation Enhancement Funds. Former Congressman Wayne Gilchrest was instrumental in securing these funds to protect the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway. MET worked with ESLC, Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties along with the MD State Highway Administration on this collaborative effort.

Also in Queen Anne's County, MET partnered with the ESLC, Queen Anne's County, and the USDA Natural Resources

Conservation Service (NRCS). A conservation easement was purchased on Home Farm using Federal Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program funds and matched with funds from the Queen Anne's County Critical Farms Program. Of the property's 267 acres, 238 acres are classified as prime farmland soils; these rich soils will always be available for farming because of the conservation easement. Home Farm is adjacent to a 3,866-acre block of protected farmland and is an integral part of the predominantly agricultural setting of the area. Scenic views of the fields can be enjoyed from Maryland Route 544. In Dorchester County, the Fooks family worked with MET and the ESLC to protect their 37-acre family property near Federalsburg. This forested property connects a 500-acre block of protected forest lands to the north with a 2,981-acre block of protected forest lands to the south. The property contains a DNR Ecologically Significant Area known as Marshyhope Sand Ridge Complex and is within a Targeted Ecological Area.



Browns Branch Farm in Queen Anne's County

In Somerset County, the Stoltzfus family donated a 52 acre easement to MET and the Lower Shore Land Trust. The property is entirely forested and provides approximately 2,200 feet of scenic road frontage along Back Shelltown Road. Adjacent to a 3,812-acre block of protected lands, the property is located in a rural section of Somerset County dominated by farmland and forestland. It is also within a GreenPrint Targeted Ecological Area.

### **STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

The donation of a conservation easement to MET is a major investment in the continued health, beauty, and enjoyment of Maryland's open spaces and the Chesapeake Bay. The permanent protection of land does not stop with the signing of the conservation easement. MET together with land trust partners has the responsibility to look after the land on an ongoing basis, through regular monitoring of the conservation properties. Stewardship involves a larger set of issues, which can include addressing landowner questions or concerns or requests for MET to approve various proposed structures or activities on the property. MET works with land trusts and partners to ensure that stewardship and monitoring procedures comply with or exceed the guidelines established by the Land Trust Alliance.

In 2011 MET and its cooperators together conducted monitoring visits to 321 easement and fee properties covering 41,143 acres, which represents 31% of the Trust's easement portfolio. Monitoring visits are conducted in order to document current conditions and assess compliance with easement requirements.

As part of its Land Trust Assistance Program, MET staff assists land trusts with

the inspection of co-held easement properties, enforcement of easement terms, and record keeping and documentation protocols. This year MET staff assisted land trusts with the monitoring of 26 properties, and land trusts monitored an additional 33 properties on their own.



MET staff conducts a visual inspection of an easement property on the Eastern Shore

Over the course of this fiscal year, MET addressed approximately 30 active stewardship issues, enforcement matters, and violations on easement properties. Working with the Office of Attorney General, MET resolved 20 stewardship violations. MET approved 14 requests for activities on easement properties, including two home sites, two subdivisions of lots or lot line adjustments, two new or reoriented accesses, four modifications to historic structures or viewsheds, and three amendments. All but one activity (demolition of a historic residence) was approved. Staff routinely review and deny activity requests that are clearly prohibited by easement language, only presenting to the Board those that have a likelihood of approval or which the landowner is insistent on having formally reviewed.

## **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

The Volunteer Program has become a valued component of the Stewardship Program. MET relies on a corp of 30-35 trained volunteers to monitor its easement properties and assist the staff as the inventory of protected lands grows.

At the end of its eighth year, the Volunteer Program continues to grow and provide much needed “feet on the ground” inspections and documented reports on the current land uses of the easement properties. This year 35 trained volunteers monitored 107 easements on over 8,900 acres throughout the state, toppling last years record of over 3,500 acres.

In the office, over 60 volunteer hours were devoted to a joint MET and ESLC project that resulted in the scanning and organization of baseline information for 78 coheld easements. In total, volunteers contributed more than 330 hours of their time to MET this year.

Volunteers are managed by a full time coordinator who ensures that all field reports are completed and meet MET standards. Simply put, volunteers enable staff to allocate stewardship resources effectively.

The Stewardship and Land Trust Assistance staff held a training session for 24 volunteers including MET staff and board members at Cromwell Valley Park in Baltimore County on April 17, 2011.



Volunteers hiking in Anne Arundel County

## **2011 Volunteers**

Bronwyn Belling  
Margaux Bereston  
Jennifer Bolin  
Ann Burchard  
Karl Christensen  
Susan Cohen  
Harry Coulombe  
Carrie Dike  
Sharon Dillon  
Jeffrey Dillon  
Christina Dzingala  
Scott Fetterolf  
David Godfrey  
Joe Hasuly  
David Hobson  
John Jones  
Caitlin Katrinic  
David Kieffer  
Dennis King  
Ted Kluga  
Myra Knowlton  
Alice Leaderman  
Arthur Meinecke  
Keith Mitchell  
Helen Overman  
Ken Pruner  
William Saunders  
Werner Schumann  
Elizabeth Schumann  
Katya Shpino  
Kevin Smith  
Stuart Stainman  
Sean Toole  
Ted Weber  
Charles Wells

## LAND TRUST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Land Trust Assistance Program supports the work of over fifty land trusts working in Maryland. The program is funded by a grant from Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Program from the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), National and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Land Trust Assistance Program helps build and sustain the quality and effectiveness of land trusts.

Land trusts are not-for-profit corporations designed to protect land from development using conservation easements, gifts or purchases of land, limited development, conservation buyers, or promotion of existing local, state, or federal easement programs. These land conservation organizations range from small groups operated solely by volunteers to large land trusts with multiple professional staff. A directory of Maryland land trusts can be found on the MET website. (See list on p. 16).

The Land Trust Assistance Program helps to promote land conservation and a number of national programs, specifically the *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

The Land Trust Assistance Program provides land trusts with:

- Technical Assistance – information and training, including webinars and the annual land trust conference
- Financial support, through the Land Trust Grant Fund, the Janice Hollmann Grant and the Aileen Hughes Award
- Targeting of Conservation Easements – information on State land conservation priorities
- Organizational support to ensure implementation of Land Trust Standards and Practices
- Conservation Easements and Land Conservation – new easements and easement amendments
- Cooperative Agreements

MET adopted a new model Cooperative Agreement in 2011. This agreement establishes the role for MET and land trust partners and outlines principles in land conservation. A signed cooperative agreement is required for land trusts to receive MET grants and potential tax benefits for fee simple owned properties.

MET signed cooperative agreements with the following local and regional land trusts:

American Chestnut Land Trust  
Bay Land Trust  
Catoctin Land Trust  
Conservancy for Charles County  
Eastern Shore Land Conservancy  
Lower Shore Land Trust  
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust  
Scenic Rivers Land Trust

### **MARYLAND LAND TRUST CONFERENCE**

On May 13 -14, MET hosted the annual Maryland Land Trust Conference, the only state-wide land conservation conference and training workshop for land trusts. The two day event was held at the Conference Center at Sheppard Pratt in Towson. Nearly 100 attendees from state, regional and national conservation organizations gathered to share information and network.

This conference provides training on best practices in land trust management, land transactions and stewardship. It offers a forum for learning about the most pressing issues facing land conservation today.

Nick Dilks, Treasurer for the Chesapeake Conservancy, was the keynote speaker and spoke to the role of the Conservancy in expanding conservation funding through ecosystem mitigation and trading, advocacy for federal funding around the Chesapeake and bringing payments to landowners.

A variety of workshops and sessions were offered at the conference including: emerging trends in climate change, restoration opportunities for land owners, bridging land conservation and historic preservation, and new partnerships in land conservation and accreditation of land trusts. A featured workshop was the Soulful Landscape – Creative Ways to Connect People, Place and Community by Erica Wheeler. A Maryland native, Ms. Wheeler is nationally recognized for using her landscape memories to tell stories of place and belonging. Her work helps kindle



Maryland Land Trust Conference

passion for inspiring and engaging others through writing and arts to care about the places land trusts protect. The Maryland Land Trust Conference was co-sponsored by The Abell Foundation, The National Park Service, The Conservation Fund, and The Trust for Public Land.

## **Maryland Land Trusts and Land Conservation Organizations**

### **CENTRAL REGION**

Baltimore Green Space  
Caves Valley Land Trust  
Cecil Land Trust  
Garrett Park Conservation Trust  
Greater Ruxton Area Foundation  
Greater Sandy Springs Green Space  
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy  
Harford Land Trust  
Howard County Conservancy  
Kensington Land Trust  
Land Preservation Trust  
Long Green Land Trust  
The Manor Conservancy  
Mount Washington Preservation Trust  
Neighborspace of Baltimore County  
Rockburn Land Trust

### **EASTERN REGION**

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy  
Lower Shore Land Trust

### **SOUTHERN REGION**

The Accokeek Foundation  
African American Land Trust.  
American Chestnut Land Trust  
Annapolis Conservancy Board  
Bay Land Trust  
Black Swamp Creek Land Trust  
Conservancy for Charles County  
Cove Point Natural Heritage  
Crownsville Conservancy  
Magothy River Land Trust  
North County Land Trust  
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust  
Scenic Rivers Land Trust  
Southern Calvert Land Trust

### **WESTERN REGION**

Allegheny Highlands Conservancy  
Carroll County Land Trust  
Carrollton Manor Land Trust  
Catoctin Land Trust  
Potomac Conservancy  
South Mountain Heritage Society  
Sugarloaf Countryside Conservancy

### **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

American Farmland Trust  
Biophilia Foundation  
Chesapeake Conservancy  
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage  
The Conservation Fund  
The Humane Society of the United States  
Wildlife Land Trust  
Maryland Alliance for Greenway  
Improvement and Conservation  
The Nature Conservancy  
Patuxent Conservation Corps  
Trust for Public Land  
Wetlands America Trust –  
Ducks Unlimited  
The Valleys Planning Council



## GRANTS AND AWARDS

MET presented a number of grants and awards at the Maryland Land Trust Conference.

### DILLON AWARD

Alverta and Louise Dillon, sisters and retired school teachers, donated a perpetual conservation easement and bequeathed their entire Garrett County property to MET in 1984.

Alverta and Louise were dedicated naturalists and were enthusiastic about conservation and enhancement of the many resources found on their land. Their generous bequest is maintained as an endowment to support the activities and mission of MET, in accordance with the wishes of the Dillon family. The Dillon Award is made annually by MET to a landowner for outstanding conservation.

Jerry and Bobette Harris were the recipients of the Dillon Award this year. They were honored with the Dillon Award for their work in preserving the unique landscape of the Eastern Shore by donating three conservation easements to MET and purchasing an easement property from the Biophilia Foundation. The easements combined protect more than 800 acres in Dorchester County and include water quality buffers and scenic views on the Honga River, Spicer Creek, Wallace Creek, Punch Island Creek, Dunnock Slough, the Chicomacomico River and the Chesapeake Bay. This large area is an integral part of preserving the scenic and rural landscape of Dorchester County and protects nearly 300 acres of productive agricultural land.



Liz Buxton and Chair Jim O'Connell present the Dillon Award to Jerry and Bobette Harris

### AILEEN HUGHES AWARD

MET presents the Aileen Hughes Award annually to honor the late Aileen Hughes, a true leader in the conservation movement. Aileen was a supporter of women's and civil rights, as well as the protection of our State's natural and cultural resources. Aileen Hughes was the President of the American Chestnut Land Trust for many years.

The Aileen Hughes Award is given to recipients for their leadership roles in the land trust community. The Award is given to an individual representing a Maryland land trust for leadership, partnership and innovation in a conservation project. The Award is presented as a cash sum to the organization represented by the individual and is funded by non-state funds from MET.

This year the recipient of the Aileen Hughes Award was Joanne Flynn, president of the Black Swamp Creek Land Trust. Ms. Flynn was recognized for her success over the last decade in promoting land conservation and small-scale sustainable farming in the rural tier of Prince George's County.

**JAN HOLLMANN GRANT PROGRAM**

The Jan Hollmann Grant Program is part of the Land Trust Assistance Program provided by MET to support land trusts throughout Maryland. The grants, named for a woman who exemplified citizen leadership of local land trusts in Maryland, allow land trusts to increase their education and outreach activities in pursuit of conservation easement donations. Hollmann co-founded the Severn River Land Trust and the Arundel Conservation Trust, and served on the Severn River Commission. She was named the Izaak Walton League’s Conservationist of the Year in 1989 and the Capital newspaper’s Person of the Year for 1990. Jan died of cancer in April 1990. MET’s tribute to Jan Hollman is this annual grant made in her honor for those local land trusts continuing in her footsteps.

These grants are usually targeted towards land trusts that demonstrate easement solicitation skills operating in regions of significant land conservation potential. The purpose of the Jan Hollmann program is to build the capabilities of the local organizations through small matching grants, with a particular focus on start-up assistance for new land trusts and fostering collaborations among neighboring organizations.

The Hollmann grant program supported five organizations. The grants funded a variety of eligible costs, including staff positions, landowner outreach programs, office supplies, insurance and internships. Funding for the Jan Hollmann Grants is provided by the State Highway Administration.

**Recipients of the Jan Hollmann Grants**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Potomac Conservancy	\$5,000
Charm City Land Trusts	\$5,000
Harford Land Trust	\$5,000
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust	\$2,800
Catoctin Land Trust	\$1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,800</b>

## **LAND TRUST GRANT FUND**

The Land Trust Grant Fund was created by the Maryland Legislature in 1990 with a primary purpose to provide interest-free loans to help local land trusts purchase conservation lands and easements.

Administration of the Fund was assigned by statute to the Maryland Environmental Trust. (§ 3-2A-02 (c)). Over the years MET has managed the fund so as to aid various land conservation projects throughout the state. These projects permanently protected 2,000 acres (as of June 30, 2011) through purchased and donated easements to MET and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF).

The loans made through the Fund have been highly leveraged. The Fund provides on average only one fifth of the project purchase price, the balance coming from local community and other private fund sources. In total, \$2.7 million dollars have been loaned from the Fund to land trusts, with an additional \$9.4 million coming from conservation partners. No expenditures or reimbursements were made during FY11; all outstanding loans had been repaid prior to the start of the fiscal year.

### **Administration of the Land Trust Grant Fund**

The original monies for the Fund came to MET by General Assembly appropriations in the early 1990's through POS funding. The Fund is part of MET's State budget (Object 14, Item 33). The basic Fund is held in the Fund's Reserve Account, and is a no-year budget item; appropriations for new projects are held for each fiscal year in the Fund's Active Account. The Fund Reserve Account is interest bearing, the Active Account is not. Repayments are initially made to the Active Account. The Fund is flexible in that monies, such as repayments,

can be transferred at the end of the fiscal year from the Active to the Reserve Account, and thus do not lapse.

Loans are given out and repaid in accordance with Land Trust Grant Fund Agreements that are completed for each project. The statute provides that loans can be made to a Maryland land trust for preservation and protection of open space and natural areas. The statute further provides that the MET may make the grants reimbursable to the Fund, and may require the dedication of a conservation easement on the property. (Md. Code. Ann., Nat. Res. §3-2A-01.)

As of FY 2009 the Fund had a balance of \$1,500,000 in the Reserve Account, and approximately \$253,000 in the Active Account. The Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2010 (SB 141/ HB 151) provided that, on or before June 30, 2010, the Governor may transfer to the General Fund \$1,500,000 of the funds in the Land Trust Grant Fund established under Section 3-2A-02 of the Natural Resources Article. That was done - \$1.5 million dollars of the Fund was diverted to the state budget, leaving a balance of less than \$300,000 to assist land trusts.

The Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2010 further provided that for FY11 net interest from special funds shall accrue to the General Fund of the State, and not to the Fund itself. The Special Fund Statement attached does not show interest accrued for FY11 due to this provision.

### **Recommendations**

MET's ability to assist its partners and provide a rapid response to protect

significant open space and natural resources has been drastically diminished; as of June 30, 2011, the Fund had a balance of \$115,447 available. Furthermore that balance is rapidly diminishing without any replenishment, since a portion of the remaining fund balance is allocated to MET annually to support costs of monitoring and other related administration costs.

The MET Board feels strongly that when the fiscal climate allows, the Fund should be replenished so that it may continue to serve as a critical source of bridge financing to land trusts in their efforts to protect open space. The Fund has worked effectively as a rapid response land preservation tool. In the past the Fund was available for grants and loans to land trusts at no interest when valuable resource lands are threatened by

development. No other State program is that flexible and available at such short notice.

The re-adjustment of land prices may spur demand for loan funds as public/private partnerships emerge to address local land use issues with voluntary conservation measures. The accrual of interest earned to the General Fund of the State further diminishes future funding for land conservation projects.

The Board of Trustees of MET recommends that the Fund be restored to its original levels and maintained and increased as soon as fiscally possible, and that the Governor and General Assembly thus support the program goals, to assist Maryland's land trusts in their efforts to preserve open space and the State's natural areas.



## KEEP MARYLAND BEAUTIFUL

The Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) program was the first program administered by MET. This program is funded by the SHA and provides grants to non-profit organizations and schools to support environmental education and demonstration projects that enhance and maintain the environment.

The Margaret Rosch Jones Award of up to \$2,000.00 is awarded to non-profit groups or communities for an ongoing project or activity that has demonstrated success in solving an environmental issue, whether local or statewide. This award recognizes those organizations that have been actively educating people in their community about litter prevention, community beautification, or eliminating or reducing the causes of a local environmental problem.



MPT volunteers participating in a tree planting activity

This year the recipients of the Margaret Rosch Jones Award are:  
*Antietam Creek Watershed Association, Braddock Run Watershed Association, C.A.R.E Community Association, Friends of Pataspco, Maryland Public Television, Marley Middle School, the National Aquarium, and St. Mary's River Watershed Association.*

Projects include community gardens, invasive plant removal, stream cleanups, rain gardens, and conservation education programs.

The Bill James Environmental Grant of up to \$1,000.00 is awarded to school groups, science and ecology clubs, and other nonprofit youth groups for proposed environmental education projects.

This year the Bill James Grants were awarded to:

*Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School Green Club, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, Red Wiggler Community Farm and Manchester Valley High School Science Research.*

Projects include reducing stream erosion, native tree nursery and planting programs, blue crab and water salinity science projects and on-farm learning opportunities in educational programs.



Manchester Valley H.S. Students participating in an experiment on blue crabs

Recipients for the 2011 Keep Maryland Beautiful Awards

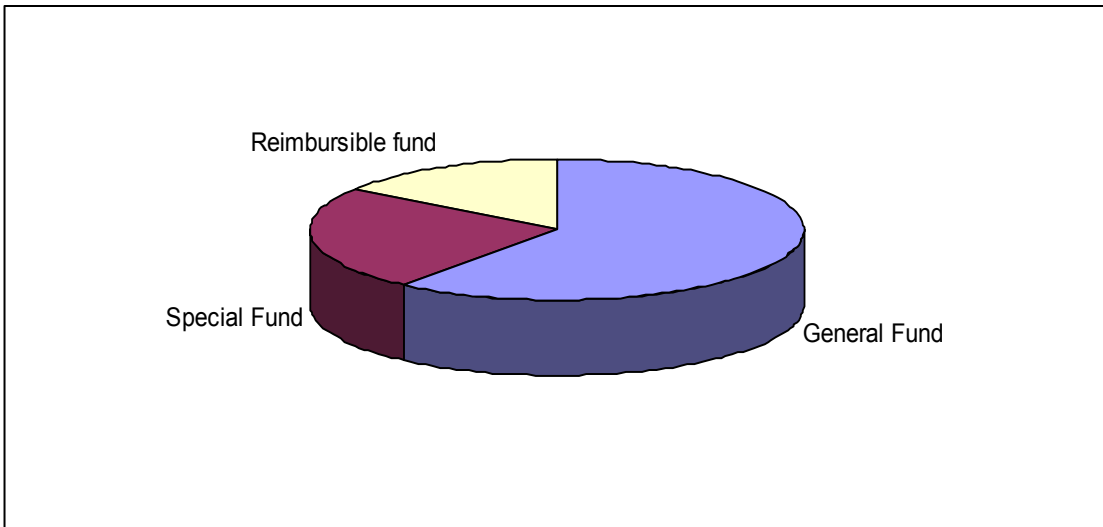
<b>Margaret Rosch Jones Award</b>	
Antietam Creek Watershed Association	\$1,000.00
Braddock Run Watershed Association	\$500.00
C.A.R.E Community Association	\$500.00
Friends of Patapsco	\$500.00
MPT	\$500.00
Marley Elementary School	\$500.00
National Aquarium	\$500.00
St. Mary's River Watershed Association	\$500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,500.00</b>
<b>Bill James Award</b>	
Dwight D Eisenhower Middle School	\$1,000.00
MD Dept Juvenile Services	\$1,000.00
Red Wiggler Community Farm	\$500.00
Manchester Valley High School	\$200.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,700.00</b>

Appendix 1

**MET Financial Statement - July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011**  
**State Administered Funds**

**FISCAL YEAR 2011**

Number of Authorized Positions	10 (2 contractual positions)
Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits	685,186.29
Total Operating Expenses (includes grants, contractual services, communications, travel, equipment, supplies and materials)	61,509.33
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>746,695.62</b>
<b>FUND SOURCES</b>	
Net general Fund Expenditure	453,017.00
Special Fund Expenditure	180,588.00
Reimbursable Fund Expenditure	113,090.62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>746,695.62</b>



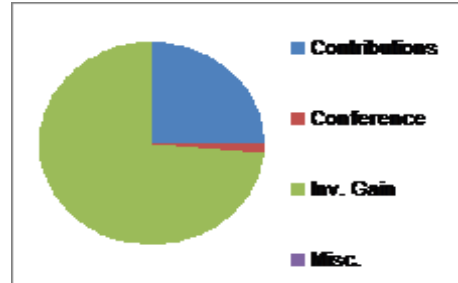
Appendix 2

**MET Financial Statement - July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011**  
**MET Administered Funds**

**REVENUES AND SUPPORT**

Contributions & Grants	111,502
MLTA Conference	6,675
MET Investment Gain	330,302
Miscellaneous	(104)
	<hr/>

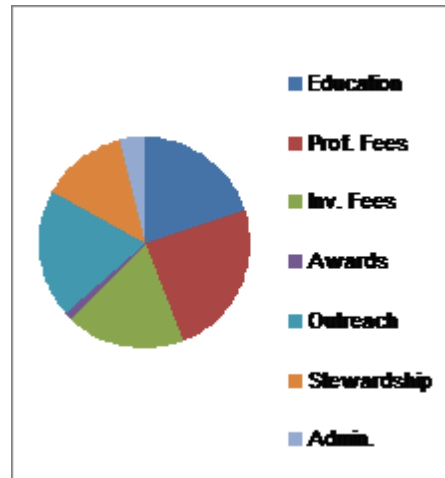
**TOTAL REVENUES** **\$448,375**



**EXPENSES**

LLT Education & Training	16,457
Professional Fees	20,030
Investment Fees	14,753
Awards	1,161
Outreach	16,075
Stewardship & Monitoring	10,832
Administrative Expenses	3,133
	<hr/>

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$82,441**



**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS** **\$365,934**



## Appendix 3

### Contributors

The Abell Foundation  
Scott and Carol Bartram  
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The Conservation Fund  
James W. Constable  
Wilson and Nancy Leigh Coudon  
Nessly and Susan Craig  
William and Sara D'Alonzo  
Robert and Julia Deford  
Delaware Community Foundation  
Lousia C. Duemling  
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Exxon Mobil Foundation  
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Gregory and Donna Greisman  
Ron Hamlen and Sue Fuhrmann  
Royce and Mary Hanson  
Theodore and Joan Hoffman-  
Hoffman Terryberry Gift Fund-  
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Edward and Dee Huber

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L' Aiglon Foundation  
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James Kaper  
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The Land Trust for Public Land  
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Bud and Nancy Virts  
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Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission  
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