

Howard County Conservancy 2009 Accomplishments



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During two thousand nine we saw our programs grow in many ways. Thanks to your support we continue to strengthen and grow as an organization as we care for the legacy left to us by Ruth and Frances Brown-Mt. Pleasant farm.

Educational Programs

Forty-two elementary schools brought 3,937 children to the Conservancy for school programs this year. Our programs are an outdoor extension of classroom learning. This year we added new interactive stations for our elementary programs such as *whose scat is that?* and *leave no trace*.

We also welcomed our first group of **middle school students** for outdoor education at the Conservancy. Learning stations for this program include stream monitoring, the Patapsco River, farm history and a study of storm water issues and solutions. Students have found the Davis Branch stream has good water quality and quite a variety of stream insects and crustaceans such as crayfish, water pennies, caddisflies, stoneflies, riffle beetles, and dobsonflies. This program is a partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Howard County Public School System.



Middle school students study invertebrates found in the Davis Branch stream

Special Events

More than 1,600 people enjoyed our public programs this year. Our **Fall Festival** grew to more than 400 attendees who enjoyed hayrides, pony rides, blacksmith and beekeepers demonstrations, music, crafts and more! **Fiddlers and Fireflies** continued to be a popular event, ending with dancing in the barn

and catching fireflies in the meadow. The **free monthly Wonder Walks** included wonderful presentations on owls, insects, bees, trees and wildflowers.

Our winter lecture series featured **nationally acclaimed nature photographers and authors** like George Grall and Doug Tallamy. And, our annual Conservation Film Festival brings to Howard



Visitors enjoy our free monthly Wonder Walks

PHOTO BY GEORGE GRALL



Students participate in the "Web of Life" game



PHOTO BY SCOTT SINNETT

Our new community garden is off to a great start



Hayrides and hay bales were popular activities at our annual Fall Festival

County some of the best and most recent independent films on nature and the environment.

A beautiful spring rain fell during our annual **Wine in the Garden** fundraiser, so the wine was enjoyed indoors. Attendees sampled fine wine and food as they bid on local art and handcrafted items at the auction.

Nature Center

Our three rescued **baby terrapins** were returned to the wild, and three new babies joined us. Visitors love to observe these animated little guys and our adult terrapin, Torope. Several **Monarch butterflies** emerged from their chrysalis in our nature center, were tagged and released. **Two new pygmy goats** also joined us this year. Lily and Rocky are enjoying their new home and love when our animal care volunteers take them for walks on the grounds.

Finally, our permit to house a non-releasable **owl** has been submitted to the federal government. A barred owl is currently at the Virginia Raptor Center waiting to make the Conservancy its permanent home.

Our Grounds

It is hard to miss the beautiful new **Community Gardens** when you visit. This project was completed in a few short months with some terrific volunteer leadership; and the plots sold out within a month. It is wonderful for visitors and school children to see their community growing their own food and we are pleased that surplus vegetables are donated to local food banks.

Through a partnership with the Howard County Forestry Board a new **Arboretum Walking Tour** was established at Mt. Pleasant. Signage and maps are available for this tree identification walking tour. Consider taking this self-guided walk on your next visit!

Scouts continued to take an active volunteer role. Projects this year included:

- Completion of our owl's enclosure
- Repair of our goat's shed roof (hopefully they won't eat this one!)
- New compost and mulch bins for the Community Gardens
- Installation of a chimney on Hodgepodge Lodge, to restore it to its original state
- Educational display for Montjoy Barn

Green Schools

The Conservancy worked with our partner organizations, Howard County Public School System, Howard County Recreation and Parks and Howard County Master Gardeners, to support Howard County Schools in their efforts to become certified as **Maryland Green Schools**. Green schools incorporate environmental practices across grades and curriculum and promote community stewardship. This partnership, in its third year, has helped double the number of green schools in the county to 18. Teachers attended a series of training programs at the Conservancy; and more than 120 supporters joined County Executive Ken Ulman and Superintendent Sydney Cousin as we congratulated newly certified schools at an awards ceremony in October.



Young terrapins on our raise and release program



This barred owl will call the conservancy home