



2017 was an exciting year for the Conservancy. With the completion of our expanded environmental education center and growth of our programs, we were able to connect more people to nature than ever before!

Expansion Complete



PHOTO CREDIT: EMILY CALKINS PHOTOGRAPHY

Grand Re-Opening of the Gudelsky Environmental Education Center

The expanded **Gudelsky Environmental Education Center re-opened** in May of this year, **more than doubling our programming space**. Hundreds of campers, dozens of field trips, families and many community organizations have enjoyed the new space!



A great day at our Belmont summer camp!

Educational Programs

It was another exciting year for the Watershed Report Card program, both in Howard County and across the state. May marked the **first Statewide Watershed Report Card Summit**, held at the Statehouse in Annapolis. Students advocated for improvements to their watershed with elected officials based on their research findings. **Schools from 14 jurisdictions** collected data as part of the program, and **more than 50 teachers across the state were trained**. The Watershed Report Card also celebrated an expansion to every high school and earth science classroom in Howard County, with **complete curriculum integration**. This is a major milestone—fully integrating our programs into the student experience in Howard County. There were **16,656 student interactions** in this year's program alone!



PHOTO CREDIT: EMILY CALKINS PHOTOGRAPHY

Students assess their schoolyard as part of the Watershed Report Card program.

More than **1,600 elementary school children** experienced outdoor education at the Conservancy this year. Our “Buggin’ Out” and “Science of Soil” field trips were updated to align with new HCPSS curriculum. At the young scientist’s station, students in kindergarten and first grade identify a research question and then investigate trees and rotting logs to find organisms and answers to their questions.

This year, our professional development opportunities grew significantly. **We trained 1,135 teachers** from Howard County and around the state. Empowering teachers to integrate the natural world into their lessons allows our work to stretch far beyond our doors, and into classrooms across the state.

During our *Choose Your Adventure* summer of camp at Belmont and Mt. Pleasant, we hosted **586 campers**. They worked with naturalists on site and Skyped with professional scientists to explore topics from engineering to pollination and biodiversity.



PHOTO CREDIT: SKYSIGHT VIP PHOTOGRAPHY

The historic Montjoy Barn and farmstead at Mt. Pleasant.

Our Grounds

This year, **thousands of milkweed seeds** from our grounds were harvested. These seeds will be **planted at all 41 elementary schools** in the County to increase native plantings on school grounds, support third grade lessons on migration and allow students to see the life cycle of monarchs first hand.

Our **Community Garden and Master Gardeners Demonstration Garden** continue to thrive and support those in need. This year **1,724 pounds** of fresh, organic vegetables were donated to the **Howard County Food Bank**. Our honeybees were busy too; we now have **eleven hives** and **150 pounds of honey** were harvested this year in partnership with the **Howard**

County Beekeepers Association. Our bluebird boxes had a good year as well, producing **26 total nest sites, 60 eggs** and **41 young**.

Special Events

Public programs drew more than **4,715 visitors** to the Conservancy this year. Our fall festival attracted more than 1,500 - our biggest event ever held at the Conservancy! Other highlights included Fiddlers and Fireflies - a night of music and family fun, naturalist lead hikes at both Mt. Pleasant and Belmont, and a family Bio-Blitz event in partnership with the Maryland Biodiversity Project. Check our website for the **1,000+ species identified** through this exciting partnership!

Community Outreach

Conservancy programs “on the road” saw a **36% increase** this year, reaching nearly 3,500 people. With transportation costs rising, our outreach programs are becoming more important than ever before. Our owls, snakes and turtles love visiting with schools, libraries, retirement communities, and other groups across the county!

Belmont

Field trips and public programs continue to grow at Belmont, with pre-school and 5th grade programs our most popular. We are also establishing a **milkweed meadow** at Belmont to support the monarch butterfly population and educate our youngest scientists.

Ruth and Frances Brown Society

We were thrilled to reach our \$1.8 million campaign goal for the Education Center expansion thanks to the generous community support we received, and a \$100,000 bequest from an anonymous donor! To highlight the importance of planned giving in reaching our goal, and for the future of the Conservancy, we established the Ruth and Frances Brown Society. Together, we are investing in environmental education and preservation programs that hold the key to a healthy future for our community.



Families enjoying our annual Fiddlers and Fireflies event!