



7130 Marshy Point Road, Middle River, MD 21220 www.marshypoint.org | 410-887-2817



## The Marshy Point Nature Center Council's Newsletter September-October-November 2023

## Sectioning Out Marshy Point

Daniel Dean, Research Chair

In the Summer 2022 Cattails issue, I wrote about the land patents that made up historic Marshy Point; the patents included Bonds Neck, Nicholson's Discovery, and Midsummer Hills. In the Fall 2020 issue, I began the Bond's family tree who owned the land during the mid-18th century until the beginning of the 19th century. Expanding on these two articles—which can be found on Marshy Point's website—we will look into one of the land subdivisions pertaining to Bonds Neck and Nicholson's Discovery as petitioned in the 1818 land records.



Cassandra Hamilton (nee Bond)—the only person with a marked headstone in our cemetery—had a sister named Priscilla who married Vachel Worthington at the Parish of St. Thomas on the 17th of November in 1757. Vachel's family is better known for their imprint in an area of Baltimore County called Worthington Valley. Some family members from this era were buried on family land but were eventually relocated to St. John's Church of Western Run. One such member is Vachel's brother, Samuel Worthington, as he owned some of Marshy Point along with other plots of land.

As we investigate this extended family and its ties to the community, we see a major change for Marshy Point beginning with the death of Samuel Worthington in 1815. He owned a portion of land located where Biscayne Bay Village is today. This property was part of the land patent from 1757 for Bonds Neck. He also owned a large area of our park from halfway down Marshy Point Road, which extended out to the northwest where the Amtrak line is today along with a section further northwest. This was part of the 1770 land patent for Nicholson's Discovery.

After Samuel's death, his son Walter Worthington submitted a petition (Liber Book WG 144, folio, pages 138-151). Walter requested that the land commission divide certain real estate from his father. The subdivisions shared land ownership with two other sons, Charles and John Tolly. By codicil, or an amended change, the land was to be divided between these three sons and revoked from the other siblings. However, two codicils were made due to factors such as Samuel's son, Samuel Worthington Jr., death in 1811 after his father's first draft of a will was documented (MSA Citation CM188-10, pages 20-27).

The result no longer holds large land masses like the former land patents. Lot numbers are now used for the plots and the siblings are named on the plats for their associated section, as denoted below.

For the portion of Bonds Neck:

- Lot 23 is given to John Tolly Worthington
- Lot 24 is given to Charles Worthington
- Lot 25 is given to Walter Worthington

1

For Nicholson's Discovery:

- Lot 24 is given to John Tolly Worthington,
- Lot 26 is given to Walter Worthington, and
- Lot 28 is given to Charles Worthington.

These sections are not necessarily where the siblings lived. Much of this land was considered part of their

legacy wealth and sold to the next grantee of a new generation. This set up subdivisions for the beginning of the railroad, community, and development. These were originally large tracts of land which have lost their personality from the original land patent names

#### Native Oak Tree Regeneration Study

#### Carl Gold

According to Dr. Nancy Sonti, a research ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service, growing a forest is "both an art and a science." The art part is comforting news to your author, whose worst grade in college was in "baby" biology. The science, however, is crucial. Trying to ensure the survival of an urban forest, i.e., to regenerate it, is referred to as urban silviculture. Fortunately, the Forest Service, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has assigned some smart people to help. Dr. Sonti is one of them. She recently led a walk-and-talk at Cylburn Arboretum in Baltimore City, just downwind of Pimlico Race Course. Cylburn is one of two sites in Baltimore City being used for the regenerative study.

Forests are managed, grown, or regenerated for many reasons: timber, watershed preservation, erosion control, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity. Absent assault, in an unfettered state of nature, forests regenerate themselves. Unfortunately, assaults come in many forms. Urban forests face not only encroachment from development, wastewater, storm water and surface runoff, pollution, impervious high temperatures, drought, and limited space, but also some of the same challenges suburban and rural forests face, namely deer pressure and non-native invasive species.

Municipal forestry services with strained budgets often focus solely on single street trees or horticultural, i.e., landscaped areas. While these are worthy endeavors, this concentration leaves pockets of forested land to fend for themselves. Non -native species prevalent in the Baltimore Metropolitan area include oriental bittersweet, Japanese stilt grass, multiflora rose, porcelain berry vine, English Ivy, and Japanese barberry. They thrive because they have no predators; not even deer will eat them. They crowd out spring ephemerals and other native plants, including native tree seedlings. Deer feasting on native species such as young tree saplings cause additional pressure. This combination creates a crescendo of problems: how is a forest to regenerate itself if all the young seedlings are eaten or subsumed by nonnative species?

The Native Oak Regeneration Study spans the Eastern Seaboard from Massachusetts to Maryland, with test sites in Springfield, Massachusetts; New Haven, Connecticut; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Baltimore City, Maryland. The Forest Service chose oaks for the study due to their crucial place in ecosystems. University of Delaware professor and leading native plant advocate Doug Tallamy has shown that one mature oak tree can host over 500 species of insects. The acorns a mature oak produces feed a diverse group of wildlife. Study participants collected over a hundred thousand acorns from white oak and chestnut oak trees in the test areas and more southern locations in Kentucky and Tennessee.

They were sent to Dr. Laura DeWald, a researcher at the University of Kentucky specializing in oak tree genetics. Once the acorns became saplings, a process that took a year, the Forest Service planted them at the four carefully chosen test sites. They excluded highly degraded forest areas—those overrun with non-native invasives or subject to uncontrollable deer pressure—due to the low likelihood of survival. Instead, they selected "good woods"—not problem-free, but with the following characteristics:

• some areas of open canopy so that enough light can reach the saplings

- a manageable number of non-native understory plants that can be removed and controlled
- an area that allows fencing to exclude deer
- accessible enough to allow monitoring

Cylburn Arboretum and Leakin Park, both in Baltimore City, each contain test areas. The Forest Service and volunteers removed non-native invasives and fenced the test sites, leaving existing native trees and vegetation undisturbed. Year-old saplings were planted in the spring of 2023 at the rate of 100 to 200 seedlings per acre.

The Cylburn study areas are reachable after a short hike. (The Visitor Center has directions.) Each sapling is marked with a colored flag delineating whether it is a chestnut or white oak. Depending on the site, the saplings are planted four or eight feet on center. At Cylburn, the four-foot-centered trees are in the midst of an established forest with a partial canopy opening created by felling a dead tree. The eight-foot-centered saplings are in an "oak orchard" next to an access road with no canopy and therefore no shade. The presumption is that the trees in the completely open area will grow faster and therefore need more room. Dr. Sonti also

expects a higher mortality rate in the canopy gaps, so "it's okay to have them planted closer together."

The scientists will measure the impact, if any, of seed source on tree performance and forest ecology by examining morphology, leaf production, root structure (including root collar diameter), and photosynthesis rates, considering the impact of both light and moisture. Since the saplings are protected from their two major predators, they hope that the study areas will regenerate. Forest ecologists realize that this study will take decades; oaks are slow growers that will outlive all of us. If successful, hopefully experts can develop a blueprint to expand regenerative areas and city planners can be convinced to direct resources to support this expansion. Even though a forest may look "good" or even healthy now, if its progenies are not allowed to survive and thrive, future generations will suffer. As Kim Pause Tucker, executive director of the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy, puts it, "humans are not separate from the environment."

Carl R. Gold, Maryland Master Naturalist, can be reached at cgold@carlgoldlaw.com, Twitter and Instagram @crgkoko.

## President's Message

#### Dave Oshman

I know this is "preaching to the choir," but we've finally begun seeing undeniable effects of manmade global warming. July 2023 was the hottest month ever recorded. That's 137 years of recording enough temperatures around the globe to get a reliable "global average temperature." Around Marshy Point, we can't deny that last winter was one of the warmest in memory. This past spring and summer, the rain was feast or famine. April was super dry, May was wet, but then it barely rained in the month of June. I know this because I was making sure all my vegetable plants in the community garden got sufficient water.

So, that's the "holy crap" message, but let's continue trying to do something about it. When my 17-year-old son commented on how hot it was outside, I reminded him, "This is exactly why I stopped eating meat." Many of you know of the devastating effects that red meat production has on our atmosphere. If you don't, search it up on the Internet. You'd be

surprised to learn how even simple changes to your diet can result in lasting, positive effects for our environment. I encourage you to take the time to explore ways that we can reduce our individual and collective, negative impacts on climate change. Just as I did with my son, share those ways and your experiences with your children-they are the ones who will be left to live with these lasting effects. It's one thing to be upset by these real-time changes, it's another to stand up and do something about it. We can each do our part to undo some of the damage before it's too late—if it isn't already.



## Spotted Lanternfly Invasion of Marshy Point Dave Oshman

With all due respect to the residents of Marshy Point that live under rocks, unless you're one of them, you've undoubtedly heard of the Spotted Lanternfly. The Spotted Lanternfly (or SLF for short) is an invasive insect native to China that was first spotted in the United States in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 2014. In October of 2018, it was spotted in Cecil County, Maryland. Since then, its spread has been steadily increasing into the surrounding Maryland counties. In 2022, at Marshy Point, there were about a half dozen reports of SLFs within the park, primarily from staff members and knowledgeable volunteers.

Already, in 2023, hundreds of the nymphs have been spotted in the park. Within the park, their favorite plants seem to be the invasive multifloral rose and grape vines. Personally, I regularly see a few on my cucumber plants in the community garden. They mature in late July and will be highly noticeable on the trails throughout early autumn, so be prepared for sightings when you explore the park's trails.

There are two primary concerns with SLFs. First is the way that they feed. Nymphs and adults use their piercing mouths to suck sap from trunks and stems. This has been shown to cause problems to affected plants, such as reduced amount of produce, stunted growth, and physical damage. While the SLF feeds, it excretes a sugary substance called honeydew. While this sounds delicious, it attracts stinging insects and as the hot sun warms the honeydew, it begins to ferment and develops a rotten odor. The honeydew also gets colonized by a black, sooty mold which can cover leaves and reduce the tree's ability to photosynthesize.

All these things add up and, while rarely fatal, can stress any plants that are affected. The exception is the grape plant, which can suffer reduced winter hardiness, resulting in fatality. Currently in 2023, Maryland vineyards are seeing significant SLF infestations. New grape vines take approximately five years to produce viable wine grapes. If Maryland's vineyards are destroyed by SLFs, it will be an economic catastrophe.

The second concern with SLFs is that they have no natural predators in our area. It takes time for animals to realize that introduced species can be a food source. While anecdotal evidence has shown that people have seen birds eating SLFs, it clearly hasn't become the norm. The best we can do is to manually destroy them as we see them, although larger infestations can be treated with pesticides.

So, how do we manually destroy them? The first step is to learn to recognize them. The Maryland Department of Agriculture has created the visual on the following page to help identify them. The adults are about one inch long and are very distinctive looking. If you see one in the park, get ready to squash. These bugs jump very fast in a forward direction only, so the best way to squash them is to come at them from the front. As of the time of writing this, Baltimore County is still requesting that SLF sightings be reported. You will need a picture to report it at mda.maryland.gov/spotted lanternfly. So, before you squash, make sure to snap a picture with your phone for the sighting report, and then put on your SLF stomping shoes. Make it a game with your family and educate your children on why this is necessary and the differences between native and invasive species. It's quite satisfying knowing that you are helping the park and the state every time you squash one.

I had a firsthand experience late last summer with what we are likely to see in our area this year. While kayaking on the Susquehanna River in late September, just below Safe Harbor Dam, the entire river was covered with drowning SLFs. You could reach a paddle in any direction and hit one. While it was satisfying knowing that they would eventually drown, the experience was absolutely surreal and downright frightening to see the multitudes firsthand while understanding their devastating potential on our local ecosystem.

Faced with such overwhelming numbers, it is easy to become discouraged; I fell prey to it myself when first faced with dozens of nymphs in June of this year covering a rose bush near the Cassandor Hamilton archaeology site. But I remind myself just like with climate change—that even small actions taken by a single person can have lasting, positive effects. I suspect that Spotted Lanternflies are here to stay, but just like so many things, perhaps if each of us does our part by squashing a few, they will eventually be under control.

# WANTED: DEAD OR OR ALIVE THE SPOTTED LANTERNFLY



1st-3rd Instar (Late April-Mid July)



ADULIS (July-December)



4th Instar (July-September)



(October-June)

A new invasive insect that seriously threatens Maryland crops,

including grapes, apples, peaches, and many others.

If you see it... Snap it! Catch it! Freeze it! Send it! And, Report it to DontBug.MD@Maryland.gov

mda.maryland.gov/spottedlanternfly



Photos: Lawrence Barringer, PA Department of Agriculture AND Kenneth R. Law, USDA APHIS PPQ (egg masses photo)

#### Mushroaming, Near and Far

Every time I go into Nature, for some reason, I expect her to yield to me some treasure. Whether a seashell or shark's tooth when walking along the shore, an antler or turtle shell when hiking in the mountains, or perhaps something edible when meandering through the woods, somehow, I want to bring a piece of nature home with me.

That this doesn't happen often only makes it more meaningful when I do find something. This time of year, I find myself scanning the forests for fungi. Not long ago, I had a friend visiting from Lithuania, a place where mushrooms are so respected, they have their own section on menus. We were walking on a local friend's property and spotted several massive



golden chicken of the woods clusters, a small cluster of oysters, and a bolete. My Lithuanian friend, who is also a long-time mushroomer (I swear, it is in their blood), had never seen chicken of the woods. She offered to prepare them for us once we

were home. First, she boiled the mushrooms for about ten minutes to clean and soften them.Afterwards, she shredded the chickens and sliced the other mushrooms, and fried them in avocado butter with some chopped onions, a grated carrot, and salt and pepper. Simply delicious.



A week later, I flew to Lithuania with mv friend, who lives in a small town outside the capital, surrounded by birch and pine forest. There's a glacial lake about a twenty-minute walk from her home, and to get there, you take a straight path through the forest. Foraging opportunities are everywhere—wild, lowbush blueberries, raspberries, and even

a few cranberries were all in seeason. We were on the lookout for the forest's greatest treasure of all (at least, as far as I was concerned)—mushrooms, known as grybai in Lithuanian.

Lithuania is home to more than 380 types of edible mushrooms, including chanterelles (which have the most adorable name voveraitės, or little squirrels), umbrella mushrooms (which, true to their name, can grow caps up to 12 inches wide), and no less than three types of boletes.

However, as carefully as we looked, no matter how deeply we went into the woods, we only spotted a single edible mushroom, umede (Russula), a mushroom with so little flavor compared to the many edibles in Lithuania, locals don't even bother picking it; Nature decided to hold onto her most delectable treasures this time.

As my trip was coming to a close, I was still keeping my eyes peeled for the edible treasure that the Lithuanian forests would potentially yield to me. Alas, my search was fruitless—or rather, mushroomless. I had to make do with buying chanterelles from the elderly ladies at the market, who clearly had much stronger mushrooming-sense than I, and like all Lithuanians I've met, never revealed their special harvesting spots....and who could blame them? I'd thought that the little squirrels would taste better if I'd found them myself, but they were just as special and delicious as if the forest Herself had sprouted them just for me.



#### Senior Naturalist's Report

#### John Lehman

Can you hear it? A far off call that brings you back: tea-cher, Tea-cher, TEA-cher – the mixed forests of Marshy Point have been echoing with it all summer long. The cries of the Ovenbird have grounded us all this season as staff enjoyed the vibrant rose mallow, cumulus clouds, summer storms, spring tides, summer camps, community science projects and natural interpretive programs. If you have ever had the pleasure of observing an Ovenbird, casually foraging on the forest understory, you can appreciate its deliberate passage through the leaf litter. The Ovenbird does not rush as it goes about its business; it understands the significance of patience. It's a great lesson or reminder from this bird that was named for the shape of its nest...

Rangers Lauren and Bailey have been occupied all summer with providing fantastic programming, games, crafts and outdoor time for the youth that attended our summer camps. Campers were able to wade into the Saltpeter, Canoe the Dundee, play



in the mud, go netting for fauna and most importantly of all, they got to be outside. Great work this summer Lauren and Bailey, I am sure your interpretation created long, lasting influence.

As promised from my last report, Marshy Point hosted a SAV Watchers Training opportunity for the public this season. Remember, SAV is Sub-Aquatic Vegetation, or any plant that grows under the water and has roots. A big thank you to the folks at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Resource Assessment for organizing the training. This opportunity enabled attendees to start the fun and fantastic journey of monitoring submerged aquatic vegetation throughout the Chesapeake Bay. We learned about the various species and their respective ecology, and then went out and got our hands wet by surveying any SAV that we could find.

After the training was held, Naturalist James Duffy got to work. James organized and led two SAV Watch Workshops for the tail end of the summer.



The species data he and the participants collected was recorded then sent to the Chesapeake Bay SAV Watchers for long term-data analysis, and conservation/restoration efforts. Well done James and thank you to all the participants!

As quickly as the summer arrives, it whisks away even faster. Nowadays, the early morning dew settles over the partridge pea as the thermometer reads 71 degrees F. I cannot help but feel the pang of preemptive farewells to the summer residents, foliage and flowers. However, I know with the cooler mornings come the splendid autumns here on the coastal plain. This brings amazing events such as our Members Fish Fry on September 12th, Fall Festival on September 23rd, and Trail Guide Training from September 26th through 28th. If I don't happen to see you at one or all of the events, I am sure you'll find me under the Southern Red Oaks saying "until next time," to the Ovenbird.







Marshy Point Nature Center 7130 Marshy Point Road Baltimore, MD 21220



## Support Marshy Point Nature Center

Help support Marshy Point by becoming a member! Our annual memberships are valid January 1 – December 31. Membership fees vary by type, which includes individual, single senior, senior couple, and family options. Members receive special program discounts, have access to priority summer camp registration—including a \$25 discount for family membership holders—and are invited to members -only events. Membership fees support the nature center and park by funding programs, scholarships, animal care, exhibit development, trail maintenance, and more. You can begin or renew your membership on our website or by completing and returning the membership registration form; fees may be paid by check made out to MPNCC, with cash, or on our website.

Marshy Point Newsletter Staff Editor: Gerry Oshman Layout and Design: Briana Searfoss