



Maryland News



Trail specialist, Dan Hudson of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), reviews potential trail routes with Rick Leader, Executive Director of the Scenic Rivers Land Trust. Photo: NPS

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2014



CURRENT PROJECTS

- 1. Bacon Ridge Natural Area**
Anne Arundel County Dept of Recreation and Parks
- 2. Bear Creek Land and Water Trail**
Gray Manor & Northshire Community Association
- 3. Canal Towns Bicycle Sojourn**
Canal Town Partnership, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park
- 4. Gunpowder Valley Strategic Conservation**
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
- 5. Open Space Conservation Plan for Baltimore County Growth Area**
NeighborSpace of Baltimore County
- 6. Urban Ecosystem Restorations-DC Metro Area**
Urban Ecosystem Restoration
- 7. Walkable Bikeable Berlin**
Lower Shore Land Trust

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

Recent Successes

Conserving Land for Livable Communities

NeighborSpace of Baltimore County - a local urban land trust - is taking enormous strides to create livable and sustainable communities for residents within the county's designated Urban Rural Demarcation Line or URDL, one of the oldest growth boundaries in the country. Ninety percent of the county's 813,000 residents live within the URDL on one third of the county's total land area.

At the request of NeighborSpace, NPS staff began working with the land trust in 2012 to create a first-of-its kind model for strategic conservation planning within inner-ring suburbs. By evaluating lands based on social, economic, and environmental criteria, land trust staff and board will be more effective in protecting high-valued properties for public open space. In clearly describing goals and defining criteria, the land trust and NPS staff worked collaboratively with many partners building broad consensus and unifying land conservation efforts.

As strategic planning continues, NeighborSpace has taken steps to refine its mission, strengthen organizational capacity, and build financial support. The 2013 annual breakfast, entitled "Retrofitting SubURDLia," featured urban planning experts who discussed implementation of the strategic plan and the importance of public open space for livable communities. NeighborSpace received the Jan Hollman Grant Award as well as grants from the Raush Foundation, Baltimore Gas and Electric, and Catonsville Women's Giving Circle to support the initiative.

Current Projects

1. Bacon Ridge Natural Area Master Plan

Project Partner: Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Crownsville
Congressional Districts: MD - 1, 3

Project Goal

Develop a resource management plan guiding public recreational use while protecting the area's important natural resources.

NPS Role

Guide a collaborative planning process among diverse partners to develop a resource management plan balancing public recreation use with natural resource protection.



Volunteers assisting the Lower Shore Land Trust were acknowledged at an annual Conservation Day featuring crabs and kayaking. Photo: NPS

2. Bear Creek Land and Water Trail

Project Partners: Gray Manor and Northshire Community Association
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Baltimore County
District: MD - 2

Project Goal

Develop a 1.5-mile land trail along Bear Creek connecting schools, neighborhoods, and parks while interpreting historic events associated with the Battle of Baltimore (War of 1812). Develop paddle-craft access sites along the upper reaches of Bear Creek.

NPS Role

Facilitate preparation of a conceptual land and water trail plan, build

organizational capacity, and leverage funds to build trail and water access sites.

3. Canal Towns Bicycle Sojourn

Project Partners: Canal Towns Partnership, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park
NPS Contact: Beth Porter
Location: Canal Towns in Maryland
Congressional District: MD - 6

Project Goal

Establish the 184-mile Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and its historic Canal Towns as a nationally-recognized and promoted network linking park users with scenic, historic, and recreational resources and high quality visitor services in the towns.

NPS Role

Assist with developing the Canal Towns' Bicycle Sojourn - an event that will positively impact the participating communities' economically and improve interaction with and support for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park.

4. Gunpowder Valley Strategic Conservation Plan

Project Partner: Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Baltimore County
Congressional Districts: MD - 1, 2, 6

Project Goal

Develop and implement a land conservation strategy delineating high-valued resource lands to unify and guide conservation efforts throughout the Gunpowder River watershed.

NPS Role

Facilitate preparation of a strategic conservation action plan, build diverse partnerships guided by the Community Conservation Initiative of the Land Trust Alliance, and leverage financial support.

“With guidance from the NPS, Anne Arundel, of the County Recreation and Parks, has recently established a partnership with the International Mountain Bicycling Association to design environmentally-sensitive trails throughout the natural area.”

- Christopher Carroll, Chief of Northern Parks and Trails; Anne Arundel, County Recreation and Parks

Current Projects

5. Open Space Conservation Plan for Baltimore County Growth Area

Project Partner: NeighborSpace of Baltimore County and Baltimore County

NPS Contact: Wink Hastings

Location: Baltimore County

Congressional Districts: MD - 1, 2, 3, 6,7

Project Goal

Develop a strategic conservation plan to target high-value lands for public open space within the Baltimore County urban growth area. The plan will provide the basis for sound decisions and meet applicable Land Trust Alliance requirements for accreditation.

NPS Role

Guide a collaborative process to prepare a conservation plan, strengthen and diversify partnerships, and leverage funds for conservation efforts.

6. Urban Ecosystem Restorations-DC Metro Area

Project Partner: Urban Ecosystem Restoration, Urban Land Institute, and Land Trust Alliance

NPS Contacts: Wink Hastings, Beth Porter

Location: Washington Metro Region

Congressional Districts: DC - 1; MD - 4, 5, 8; VA - 8, 10, 11

Project Goal

Establish a land trust to model the process for land conservation and protection in highly urbanized regions, integration of ecosystem restoration and environmental services, and the development of innovative approaches to land protection.

NPS Role

Assist with establishing organizational structure, articulating conservation objectives and criteria, and building collaborative partnerships.

7. Walkable Bikeable Berlin

Project Partners: Lower Shore Land Trust and Assateague Island National Seashore

NPS Contact: Wink Hastings

Location: Town of Berlin and Worcester County

Congressional District: MD - 1

Project Goal

Create a regional trail plan to guide trail development connecting community institutions, natural resource lands, and public parks and to advocate for community-based natural and cultural resource protection.

NPS Role

Facilitate the development of collaborative partnerships, community-based support, and organizational capacity to implement trails plan.



The natural beauty of Sinepuxent Bay and Assateague Island will soon be accessible by a multi-purpose trail beginning in Berlin, Maryland. Photo: NPS

We're Here For You!

Could your project benefit from NPS Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.



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2013 Nationwide Partnership Success

1,357 Miles of Trail Developed

736 Miles of River Conserved

20,270 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at www.nps.gov/rtca



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Recent Successes cont.

A major theme of the conservation plan is “gray to green,” that is, the identification and conversion of underutilized impervious surface (mostly parking lots) to pervious surface suitable for storm water management, as well as public education and enjoyment. The county has established a remediation fee to offset the cost of managing storm water, thus providing possible future funding for the conservation of lands to mitigate storm water pollution.

In support of another NPS-assisted project - the Bear Creek Trail in southern Baltimore County - NeighborSpace is currently negotiating a trail easement that will complete the right-of-way for this neighborhood trail to connect four public schools and enhance interpretation of the War of 1812.

“Our relationship with NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance staff has certainly increased our credibility in the community and honed a greater sense of responsibility among our board to help communities create valued public places on lands we protect.”

- Barbara Hopkins, Executive Director, NeighborSpace of Baltimore County



Volunteers from a local church assisted NeighborSpace in clearing a recently-protected parcel for open space in East Towson. Photo: NeighborSpace of Baltimore County

ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program staff provide technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.