

2016 Highlights



In its sixth year, Conservation Montgomery is an all-volunteer 501c3 nonprofit. Our board of directors accomplishes our mission with support from other volunteers and members of the organization. Tax-deductible financial support from members and donors allows us to pursue projects like those outlined below.

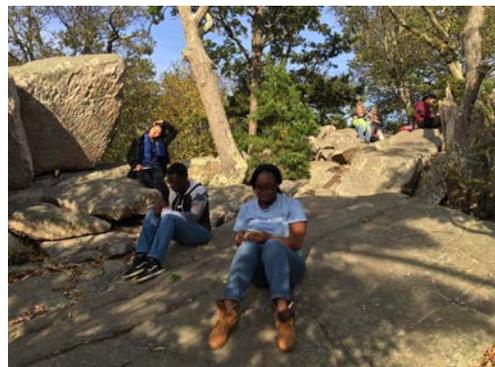
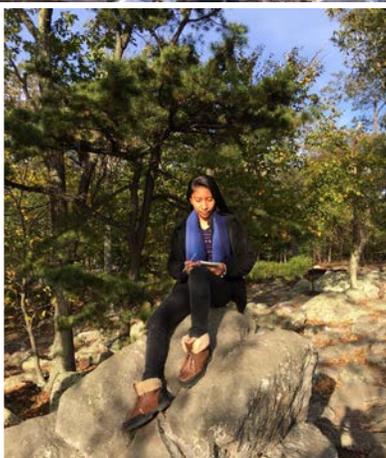
Environmental education and awareness

Working with community members to foster a conservation ethic

This year, Conservation Montgomery continued to promote awareness and environmental education. A third year of **Home Tree Care 101 (HTC101)** classes was supported with a generous grant from the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), allowing us to hold 2016 spring and fall classes and produce a new series of Home Tree Care 101 videos that will be posted soon on our website. Certified arborists teach these hands-on classes to help homeowners learn more about caring for trees on their private property. With proper care, trees -- our work horses of the environment -- can live longer and be less hazardous in severe weather. HTC 101 is held outdoors in neighborhoods throughout the county.



With assistance from Montgomery-Blair High School teacher Anne Mathews and a second grant from the Takoma Foundation, we continued our **Young Environmental Writers (YEW)** project in 2016. We took high school students on winter, spring and fall hikes to teach them about the value of nature and environmental writing. This fall, we hiked around Sugarloaf Mountain and enjoyed spectacular views of the Agricultural Reserve from the summit. Last spring, we guided teens on a hike through the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. The YEW project has resulted in a collection of student work published on our website. We honored Ms. Mathews this year with our first *Joe Howard Environmental Award* for her service and dedication to the YEW project.



Parks stewardship and local environmental advocacy



Protection of ecological integrity in our parks and county green space is one of our highest priorities. Over the summer, the Planning Commission voted on final passage of a comprehensive Countywide Parks Trail Plan that links local trails to larger trail systems throughout the county. In four years of meetings, the Trails Working Group (TWG) sorted through the environmental and physical difficulties of siting sustainable trails. Conservation Montgomery has been well-represented on the TWG. We supported full funding in the annual Parks budget, concentrating on natural resource based protections and improvements to stream valley and conservation parks and restoration of historic structures within our 35,000 acres of award-winning parklands. Recently, we have joined the call for converting the old Silver Spring Library location to a public park, which will add 2.3 acres to the current Ellsworth Park. County land use documents have recommended this site since 2000. Silver Spring has the largest shortage of parkland in the county. By advocating for the transfer, we propose planting a significant number of tree species to add ecological improvements where impervious surface currently prevails.

We continue efforts to increase county tree canopy cover, through implementation of the recent street tree law and by supporting full funding for stump removal to make way for new planting. Our board opposed wholesale expansion of sewer in Glen Hills to protect sensitive headwaters in the Piney and Watts Branch streams and supported the environmental aspects of the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan to improve community quality of life, air quality and provide green space. We advocated for increased parkland in the Westbard Sector Plan through restoration of the Willet Branch natural channel. As part of meeting county water quality restoration goals under the Clean Water Act (MS4 Permit), we supported the DEP Green Street Program to control roadway runoff through retrofits, planting and improved road design. In 2016, we also worked with county agencies to clarify "311" procedures for requesting new street tree planting and one of our board members edited a county technical manual used for implementing the new roadside tree law adopted by the County Council in 2013.

Keeping the community informed and engaged

Conservation Montgomery hosted another field trip to view champion trees in 2016 with a fall **Big Tree Tour** led by Joe Howard, a member of the Montgomery County Forestry Board and a lifetime member of this nonprofit. Our group traveled by bus to visit and learn about a dozen of the oldest and largest champion trees in the eastern part of the county.



In 2016, we continued to communicate the importance of protecting natural resources right where we live with outreach at the annual *Greenfest* event and through email notices to members and supporters. And with support from one of our donors, we were able to launch a re-designed ConservationMontgomery.org website.



For more information: www.ConservationMontgomery.org
Please help support our work by making a tax-deductible donation.
Conservation Montgomery - P.O. Box 7292 - Silver Spring, MD
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Our Combined Federal Campaign number is 72945.

