Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
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All Good Things Must Come to an End

The board and staff of CWH bid a fond farewell to Richard Pritzlaff, CWH Landowner Services Manager.

After dedicating 12 years of hard work, time and energy to CWH, Richard accepted a position with the Trust for Public Land in Washington, DC. He will be doing much of the same thing as he did as manager of CWH Landowner Services program. He is now the Project Manager in charge of land acquisition projects in Virginia, Delaware and Maryland. Thankfully, we have not lost our reigns on him and we speak with him frequently about future land acquisition projects.

Richard accomplished a great deal for CWH. In 1990, Richard joined the CWH board, serving for 4 years, after which he was hired as the Development Director. As Development Director he doubled donations from our members and secured several major grants. This work provided a strong financial foundation for CWH. Richard eventually passed the position on to Chris Pupke in 1998 and founded CWH's Landowner Services program. As Landowner Services Manager he played a major part in preserving properties such as Bennett Point Wildlife Sanctuary, Spencer Farm, Rash Family Farm, Riverbend, and the Ewing Wetlands. He also successfully got CWH designated as a Cooperative Land Trust with Maryland Environmental Trust on donated easements and with DNR on CREP easements. This accomplishment has been integral in preserving many properties with existing habitat and habitat restored by CWH from development.

While at CWH, Richard helped to preserve over 1,000 acres of wildlife habitat, so we hate to see him go. Luckily, he will move on in his position with the Trust For Public Land, and will continue to help preserve thousands of acres of precious wildlife habitat. We wish him the best of luck in his new position and thank him for all he has done!

CHESAPEAKE WILDLIFE HERITAGE

Habitat works

The newsletter about building habitat for wildlife
Summer 2002

Forest, wetlands, warm season grass meadows and nesting structures provide a diversity of habitat for wildlife at Iron Mine Farm.

Habitat Works is published by Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to creating, restoring and protecting wildlife habitat and establishing a more sustainable agriculture, through direct action, education and research, in partnership with public and private landowners. We welcome your comments and contributions.

Landowner Spotlight
Putting a Land Ethic into Action on the Ground

Alice and Mark Bower, with the help of CWH, have broken ground on the 222 acre Iron Mine Farm in Talbot County to create a haven for wildlife as well as themselves. When purchased from a developer in the beginning of 2001, the farm was already subdivided into 7, possibly more, waterfront lots. Instead of selling each prime lot for financial gain, the Bowers decided to give up the cash benefit for the wildlife benefit and paid the county to have the lot lines removed. "We didn't want to see it cut-up and developed," remarked Mrs. Bower.

Prior to CWH's habitat restoration work, the farm included 54 acres of forest and 168 acres of agricultural land including over 1 mile of shoreline along Bolingbroke Creek. The farm is also home to the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel.

With a house site in mind, the Bowers embarked on a partnership with Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage to transform the farm into a wildlife haven with a diversity of habitat types. Their conservation plan consisted of replacing over 120 acres of agricultural land with productive wildlife habitat. CWH planted over 61 acres of upland wildlife habitat such as warm season grass meadows and riparian forest buffer. We also restored 59 acres of wetlands.

The hedgerows near the house site consist of trees and shrubs native to Maryland with colorful blooms including Wax myrtle, Red osier dogwood, Silky dogwood, Eastern red cedar, Persimmon, Winterberry, False indigo bush, and Northern bayberry. Other forested areas will include, Loblolly pine, Red and White oak, American beech, Flowering dogwood, Black locust and Pin oak, Green ash and Willow oak. "Now there is something (more than just soybeans) to look at," says Alice Bower.

As noted by Ned Gerber, wildlife habitat ecologist, "We were able to make a big difference for wildlife and water quality on this farm thanks to the Bowers and CREP. There were severely eroded gullies in the fields and little topsoil left from years of poor tillage practices on highly erodible slopes that never should have been row cropped to begin with. Most of the flatter areas consisted of hydric (wetland) soils which are not well suited for a profitable grain operation. This made it very sensible to restore it to wetlands. CREP habitat restoration drastically improved the farm's carrying capacity for wildlife, water quality, and profitability. The Bay and its wildlife need more folks like the Bowers who are willing to put their land ethic into action on the ground."

This project demonstrates how landowners can successfully manage their property for wildlife and water quality, greatly improve their farm income, and have a very valuable return on their investment.

Fire is Part of a Natural Cycle

Andi Pupke

For thousands of years wildfire has been a major force in determining biological diversity. Due to frequent interactions with wildfire, many species of plants and animals have created adaptations that permit them to survive and even thrive after a fire event. A good example is the Lodgepole Pine, which produces cones that remain tightly closed on their branches for many years. It's not until a fire comes along that there's enough heat in the forest to open the Lodgepole's cones and release the seeds inside.

CWH uses fire as a valuable tool for wildlife management in certain grass meadow communities. Several of our staff members have been trained to execute these burns. During the last few weeks of winter, before the spring rains return, our staff sets fire to some of the valuable grassland habitat we worked so hard to establish.

Neighbors often ask us why we have such incendiary tendencies. We explain that fire is a part of the natural cycle and has numerous benefits for plants and wildlife. For one thing, periodic fires reduce the build-up of brush, dried branches, and other so-called fuel sources. These materials act as kindling and increase the speed at which fires spread. Too much fuel leads to more intense and destructive fires that resist containment. CWH carefully plans prescribed fires to maximize the benefits to the meadow's ecology and maintain safety during the burn.

CWH staff begins a controlled burn of a warm season grass meadow at Adkins Arboretum.

In a recently burned meadow, the space around bunches of Little bluestem allows ground nesting birds room to forage for insects and allows annual weeds such as Goldenrod to produce a plethora of seed.

The Management of Fire

It's called a prescribed burn. And like a medical prescription, it's meant to be therapeutic. Such thinking, though, runs counter to common sense. After all, fires destroy plants and animals and turn seemingly beautiful habitats into wastelands. But fire also is a naturally occurring phenomena, and experts agree that landscapes need occasional fires in order to thrive.

Prescribed fires are fires burning under preplanned, specified conditions to accomplish specific planned objectives. A plan must also be prepared for all prescribed fires in case the fire moves out of prescribed conditions and becomes a wildfire.

Regardless of the type of ignition, before any fire is allowed to play its natural role, it must be carefully evaluated. The evaluation elements include location, predicted weather, fire behavior, effects on air quality, management costs, danger to public and private facilities, soil and water considerations, and public safety.

The use of prescribed fire presents opportunities to:

- Maintain thriving populations of plants and animals dependent on fire.
- Increase productivity by recycling nutrients and energy that are tied up in fuel accumulations due to climates which inhibit decomposition.
- Control fire behavior, intensity, location, and size to protect people, the environment, homes and other improvements.
- Control rate of spread and fire intensity to create a mosaic of burned and unburned areas.
- Manage fuels at natural levels and reduce the risk of wildfires.
- Manage smoke so it is dispersed as rapidly as possible and with minimum negative effects.
- Control fire intensity to reduce potential impacts on soil and water.

Benefits of Prescribed Burns

Early succession weed & grass communities are essential parts of habitat for many types of wildlife. With a disturbance such as fire, bare ground is exposed to stimulate seed producing annual weeds, an important food source for a variety of wildlife. Additionally, the roots of native bunchgrasses survive fire, allowing them to come back vigorously after a fire. This newly sprouted vegetation attracts the abundant insect populations that ground nesting chicks need during their first few weeks of life.

Cover returns more quickly to a meadow that has been burned than to one that has been mowed or disked. During the second year after burning, the vegetation thickens and ground cover increases, providing excellent nesting cover.

Using a strip-burning regime on a two to four year rotation provides strips of brood-rearing habitat alongside strips of nesting cover. It also provides weed seeds that serve as an important winter food.

Different plant communities are created with fire than with other types of disturbance, which increases diversity. Fire quickly releases nutrients that were tied up in the vegetation, so the sprouting forbs or legumes have fertilizer. Fire is the most inexpensive tool for setting back succession on old fields.

Some plants actually have seeds that only germinate readily after heat treatment by fire. Many plants, such as native bunch grasses, serviceberry and snowberry have the ability to sprout after their tops have been destroyed by fire. Other plants, such as willow, bunchgrass, and wildflowers grow fast and strong on the nitrogen that has been released by fire.

In addition to the plant communities, a variety of birds benefit from fire. Different species of birds move into burned areas at different stages according to the successional changes in vegetation which occur after a burn.

Birds such as Killdeer and Horned Lark immediately move into areas that are burned and have changes in vegetation. Other birds like Bobolinks and Meadowlarks favor the grasslands with little or no woody vegetation which result 2-5 years after a burn. Birds including Kingbirds, Flycatchers and warblers typically use habitat that has been protected from fire or the woody vegetation that encroaches in unburned areas.

Controlled burns are an inexpensive and very effective way of helping meadows flourish. As you drive around during the last weeks of winter, take a look around to see if you can find any meadows that have been burned. If you keep an eye on them for a couple weeks after the burn, you will see how quickly they rebound and the lush green meadow that emerges.

By not burning an entire meadow at one time, wildlife such as this Eastern cottontail is left with a place to relocate during a controlled burn.

Visit our website at:www.cheswildlife.org

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CWH Loses a Dear Friend

CWH mourns the passing of one of its closest friends, Mrs. Elizabeth Nesbit.

She became a strong supporter of CWH during our critical formative years and remained so until her death in February of 2002. We often used her farm to show potential partners what a specific restored habitat type would look like on their properties. "Libby" was a passionate advocate for land protection and placed her beloved Walsey Farm in an easement with the Maryland Environmental Trust.

She understood that even protected land often needs additional habitat in order to fully benefit the wildlife resource. Mrs. Nesbit had a great concern about the impact of humans on the natural landscapes on which wildlife depends. Our cherished memories of her regard for all creatures will nourish our efforts to protect wildlife and their habitats in the future.

Endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrel visits woodland at Mrs. Nesbit's Walsey Farm.

Ask Andi

Questions & Answers about wildlife

By Andi Pupke

Q: One of the trees near our home was nearly stripped of bark from top to bottom by a woodpecker over the winter. Do woodpeckers kill healthy trees?

A: Woodpeckers do not kill healthy trees. If they are stripping the bark off a tree it was unhealthy already. Woodpeckers are looking for insects that have bored into the tree or are just under the bark. They locate prey on the bark and in crevices by visually searching and probing with their tongue. They find insects within wood by listening.

Some species of woodpeckers drill shallow wells in the bark of trees to drink sap and eat the insects that become trapped in the sap. These woodpeckers are known as "sap suckers." Other birds, such as Hummingbirds and Chickadees, also use the sap suckers' wells to drink from.

Woodpeckers can also cache food, like acorns, in trees. They excavate holes in the bark of a tree and shove acorns in them for safe keeping until they are needed during the winter. All woodpeckers are cavity nesters and they excavate their own cavities in living or dead wood. The size and shape of the cavity varies among species, but they normally choose a tree that has soft wood.

Q. Why are woodpeckers "attacking" my house?

A: We sometimes receive calls about woodpeckers damaging homes by drilling holes in siding.

Here are some reasons why they may be attracted to your home:

- The woodpecker may be attempting to create a cavity for a nesting site. Houses with cedar or other wood siding are especially vulnerable to this sort of damage.
- A woodpecker may have discovered your siding is infested with insects and is feeding.
- Disruption of native habitat increases competition for territory among these birds, leading them to find "unnatural" feeding and nesting sites. With wooded areas turning into developments and dead trees being cut for firewood, nesting sites are becoming more limited. Woodpeckers generally stay in one territory for life, so a bird may drill into a house that now occupies its territory.
- Woodpecker drumming can also be heard in the spring as they establish territories and signal mates. Apparently the woodpecker selects the instrument (your cedar house, metal poles, or down spouts) according to their resonant qualities. Drumming is usually a spring time event. Of course the drumming usually occurs on Saturday morning when you are trying to catch a few winks.
- Some types of foam insulation expand as temperatures increase, which can sound like insects in wood to woodpeckers.

Prompt action involving one or more suggestions below will likely reduce damage.

- Be persistent in chasing away, shouting at, banging pans, squirting water, etc. at a bird as it begins to drill.
- Nail plywood over the site being damaged.
- Hang aluminum foil or cloth streamers (3 feet long x several inches wide). Movement of these can scare the birds.
- Eliminate ledges or cracks the woodpecker uses as a foothold while drilling.

CWH Landowner Recognized

Congratulations to Larry Rash and family for being recognized as the "2001 Cooperator of the Year" by the Queen Anne's County Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The Soil Conservation Board gives one award each year to a community member who has used state and federal conservation programs for the maximum benefit for soil conservation.

Mr. Rash first contacted the NRCS office to inquire about placing buffer strips on his property. After being referred to CWH, so he could see what warm season grasses would look like on his property after several years of growth, it became evident that there was much more wildlife potential on the property than simply buffer strips. CWH pointed out to him that for every acre of hydric soil restored to wetlands he would be permitted to place an acre of grassed or forested uplands into Maryland's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The Rash family decided to maximize the potential of their farm by restoring a significant area of wildlife habitat consisting of wetlands, grasslands and woodlands.

Maintaining their best soils in crops, the Rash family decided to take 120 acres out of production (out of 176 acres of tillable land). As a result, they have significantly increased their farm income, greatly enhanced the quantity and quality of wildlife habitat, improved local water quality, conserved soil and still kept an area open for farming.

As an added bonus for wildlife, the family signed a majority of the farm into the CREP easement programs so the restored and existing habitat will never be developed or farmed again. This easement will permanently protect 30 acres for grassland, 45 acres of woodlands and 75 acres of wetlands on the Rash property.

Thumbs up to the Rash Family for being a great example of how CWH's work with landowners and it's involvement in this statewide effort makes a critical difference for wildlife and water quality in Maryland.

A Truax No-Till Drill extends an existing warm season grass buffer (lower portion of photo) to 300 feet at Schwaninger Farm.

Visit our website at:www.cheswildlife.org

A Northern flying squirrel takes up residence in a Carolina Chickadee nest made in a bluebird box.

Let your voice be heard!

E-mail Action Alerts

CWH frequently receives e-mailed "action alerts" from various environmental organizations alerting us of legislation soon to be up for vote in congress and the senate. They often include letters to congress and on-line petitions. Examples of recent alert topics include drilling at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, farm bills, EPA spending, etc.

If you would like us to forward no more than 4 of these environmental action alerts each month, so you can TAKE ACTION too, let us know. You can be assured we will not solicit you by e-mail, sell or distribute your e-mail address, nor will we send you any action alerts that we ourselves are not doing. If you have any questions, please contact Susanna at 410-822-5100.

To join our Action Alert please complete the form below and mail it to our office, sign-up on-line at http://www.cheswildlife.org and click on "Action Alert sign-up" or e-mail us at info@cheswildlife.org.

Name _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

To Be a Purple Martin Landlord

I walked up to the counter and smiled. The shopkeeper returned the smile.

"I'm thinking about putting up a birdhouse," I said. When he asked if I had a species in mind, I replied, *"How about Purple Martins?"*

"Okay," he said. *"I need to see two forms of ID, one with a recent photo."*

"I plan to use cash," I told him.

"It isn't a matter of credit, it's a matter of responsibility. I need ID to do a background check."

"To do what?"

"To do a background check. This is a serious matter. Many people are just not equipped emotionally to be a Purple Martin landlord."

"Isn't this sort of extreme?" I said.

"Sir," he said, *"Anything you say in my presence may affect your eligibility to purchase a Purple Martin apartment. Across most of North America, Purple Martins depend entirely on humans to provide suitable housing."*

"Wouldn't an alliance with woodpeckers serve them better?" I suggested.

He didn't smile. He just handed me a questionnaire and a document entitled, "Covenant to Assume All Obligations, Duties, and Responsibilities Concomitant with Purple Martin Landlordship," then he left to run the background check.

The questionnaire asked: "Are you now or have you ever been censured for negligence relating to the maintenance of Purple Martin colonies? Have you ever been a member of the House Sparrow Alliance, Starlings First, or any other organization whose objectives might undermine the martin social structure? Are you phobic about feathers, bird droppings, or feather lice?

Do you have any physical limitations that might impair your abilities as a Purple Martin landlord?"

I had to promise to erect the box in accordance with mandated guidelines, to check the box weekly for pests, to replace nesting materials halfway through the breeding cycle, and to measure the nestlings and plot their development.

"It must be signed in purple ink in the presence of a witness," the returning clerk advised. *"Your background check came up negative."*

He then removed some cards from the drawer and held one up. *"Look at the ink blot and tell me what you see,"* he said.

"Mother Theresa feeding mealworms to young martins?"

"Good. How about this one?"

"Lenin removing the capitalist yoke from the necks of the downtrodden Purple Martin masses?"

"Excellent!"

After passing this and a stress test, then field stripping and reassembling a Purple Martin apartment while blindfolded, he let me take the pledge of Purple Martin management.

He then showed me a basic, five-star-rated Purple Martin apartment complex.

"How much?" I asked.

"Four hundred dollars."

"Four hundred dollars?"

"That includes the pole, pulley, and predator guard. Installation is extra."

"Isn't there an easier and less expensive way to attract birds to my yard?"

"Sure," he said as he held up the basic-looking bird box.

"What's this?" I asked.

"A wren box."

"Do I need to take a course in environmental ethics or submit to weekly inspections by the Wren Police?"

"Nope," he said. *"Just hang it up and the wrens will do the rest."*

"Sounds like Purple Martins could learn a thing or two from wrens," I joked. The clerk didn't smile.

"Sir, let me remind you that anything you say in my presence. . ."

I bought the wren box.

Reprinted with permission from Pete Dunne of the Cape May Bird Observatory

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CWH Calendar

July 15, 2002

PHRAGMITES SPRAYING APPLICATION DEADLINE
For more information call Sandy at 410-822-5100.

September 19, 2002

MONARCH TAGGING AND TALK
See these amazing butterflies up-close before they take off to Mexico! Time to be announced. Call 410-822-5100 to register.

September 20, 2002, 9:00 a.m.

BENNET POINT CLEAN-UP
Join Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage for a volunteer roadside cleanup as part of the "Adopt a Road" program. Help us keep Bennett Point Road beautiful. Please call 410-822-5100 for details.

Insects: What would we do without them?

With Summer upon us, and bugs abound, here is a little reminder of how beneficial they really are.

Insects influence their environments in 5 key ways:

1. They aid decomposition, stimulate the breakdown of organic materials, enhance soil fertility and plant growth, burrow in soils and increase its porosity and water holding capacity.
2. They eat plants and influence where their hosts can grow. Sometimes they kill trees and other plants to reduce competition, and many times they feed on trees without killing them, in ways that actually improve the health and long term growth of trees and forests.
3. They are a key food source for other animals, playing a major role in the food chain.

A male Black Swallowtail frequents many habitats including open fields, fence rows and pastures.

4. They help disperse seeds, fungal spores, and even other invertebrates from one place to another.
5. They are pollinators, and in this role also help control the movement of plant species.

Through this multiplicity of roles, forest insects can help to control plant succession, dictate which plants will be allowed to grow or thrive in particular areas, and invigorate plant communities.

☐ *Yes! I would like to join with Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage to help build and preserve wildlife habitat.*

I am enclosing $ _____ as my tax deductible contribution.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

☐ Please send me information on the Planned Giving Program.

Please make your check payable to Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, or charge to:

☐ Visa ☐ M/C Account # _____

Signature _____ Amount $ _____ Expiration Date _____

☐	$30	Individual Habitat Guardian
☐	$50	Family Habitat Guardian
☐	$100	Habitat Protector
☐	$250	Habitat Sponsor
☐	$500	Habitat Benefactor
☐	$1,000	Habitat Conservator
☐	$2,500	Habitat Steward
☐	Other	_____

Please mail to: Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, P.O. Box 1745, Easton, MD 21601
CWH is a private nonprofit organization designated 501(c)(3) by the IRS. A financial statement is available upon request.

CORPORATE MATCHING: Don't forget corporate matching contributions. The company you work for or are retired from may be able to match your donation to CWH. Check with your personnel office to obtain a matching gift form. Mail the form to us along with your tax-deductible donation. We do the rest.