

December, 2012

Dear Forest Steward:

It is our pleasure to invite you the application process to become a *Maryland Woodland Steward*. The Maryland Woodland Stewards program is an outreach of the University of Maryland Extension. The training process is meant to teach you, as it has 414 other Maryland woodland owners, managers, and environmentally-concerned citizens over the last 20 years, how sound woodland management practices can be used to make wildlife healthier, more diverse and abundant, while enhancing other forest benefits. In addition to improving larger forest properties, we continue efforts to target landowners of 1-10 acres.



Each year, a select group of 30 individuals is chosen from our applicants to participate in a three and one-half day seminar that emphasizes "*education through demonstration*." The workshop will be April 26, 27, 28 and 29 at Shepherd Spring Retreat Center in Sharpsburg, Maryland. Through this intensive seminar, participants learn about the ecology and management of Maryland's forests and wildlife, sources of professional assistance to help them, and how they can put this information to work on their properties and in their communities.

If you are selected to receive the training, the seminar cost, including lodging, meals, and reference materials, is only \$50. The 2012 is sponsored by American Tree Farm System via the Maryland Tree Farm Committee. After the training, participants, called *Maryland Woodland Stewards*, agree to return to their communities and actively serve for one year as advocates of wise forest and wildlife management. Stewards are asked to contribute 40 hours in outreach effort over the next year. The emphasis of outreach efforts is on "Neighbor Helping Neighbor," and Maryland Woodland Stewards share information in ways with which they feel comfortable. Some may have talents for speaking or writing while others are able to share through their job or local organizations. We greatly encourage using your own property or the property you manage to demonstrate to neighbors, friends, and relatives, the importance of good forest wildlife management.

The training will help you see the potential in your forest and others regardless of the size, and be able to recommend to others the professional assistance and resources available to better manage their properties. We request that Maryland Woodland Stewards get to know their local forester, wildlife biologist, Extension agent, master gardener, and others who are valuable contacts and sources of information.

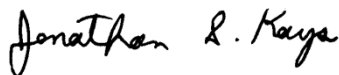
Please also refer to the brochure, application, and position announcement found on our website that clarifies what we are asking of participants, as well as an overview of the training workshop topics and activities. To be considered for the program, your completed application is due by February 10, 2012.

If you are selected to participate in the Maryland Woodland Steward training you will be considered a volunteer with the University of Maryland Extension. Being a volunteer provides you liability protection for activities you may undertake on behalf of the Maryland Woodland Stewards program. If you would like to contact another Maryland Woodland Steward in your area or have questions or concerns about the program please feel to call me directly.

It has been our experience over the last 20 years that the workshop opens the eyes of participants to a whole new world of knowledge they continue to use for the rest of their lives. Our society is so focused on technology that the opportunity to learn about the natural world of wildlife and forestry is a pleasant diversion. The workshop also allows you to meet other individuals with shared interests and many Maryland Woodland Stewards develop relationships with others that last for a lifetime. I would encourage you to visit the Maryland Woodland Stewards program link on our website ([www.naturalresources.umd.edu](http://www.naturalresources.umd.edu)) and read the accomplishments of program members and their personal comments regarding what they learned. Also provided is a recently completed 20-year report of the program. A detailed agenda and other information are also available.

Remember, **February 10<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for applications** and you will be notified by the end of February regarding your selection. We look forward to your interest and participation.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Kays  
Natural Resource Extension Specialist



Nevin Dawson  
Forest Stewardship Educator

*University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, or national origin.*