

1990—2010

20 YEARS OF FOREST STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION



*"Neighbor Helping Neighbor"*

Maryland Woodland Stewards

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November 2011

# MARYLAND WOODLAND STEWARDS

“We’ve converted our entire farm to forest.”

~Don Grove,  
Class of 1990

## Welcome...

For over 20 years, Maryland Woodland Stewards have reached out to Maryland’s individual woodland owners and managers to teach them sound forest management practices that result in better overall forest health and more abundant and diverse wildlife.

By passing along this gift of knowledge for over 20 years, the impact is profound. The goal of this report is to summarize 20 years of volunteer forest stewardship education, lessons learned, and discuss the importance of future the Maryland Woodland Stewards program.

## Introduction...

Maryland Woodland Stewards are carefully selected volunteers who receive intensive training and support from natural resource professionals. Learning about forest and wildlife management principles and practices opens up a whole new world to many volunteers who are eager to demonstrate practices on their own properties and encourage others. Their

knowledge and personal commitment makes them credible resources of forest stewardship information, as they use the concept of Neighbor Helping Neighbor to reach other individuals in their communities and organizations they engage.

Maryland Woodland Steward, Don Grove (pictured left), has become an advocate of forest and wildlife management and motivates many woodland owners to find professional assistance. Profiles of other Maryland Woodland Stewards are included in this publication, but there are many more stories to be told.

## Going Above & Beyond in Forestry...

Another great contribution of Maryland Woodland Stewards has been their willingness to take leadership roles in forestry and wildlife organizations in Maryland, such as forestry conservancy boards, the Tree Farm program, forestry associations, and many others. There are countless examples.

Maryland Woodland Stewards have made a difference.



## MARYLAND WOODLAND STEWARD PROFILE

### Don Grove

Maryland Woodland Steward Class  
Year: 1990

Acreage Managed: 85

Location of farm: Washington County

Residence: Don and his wife, Linda, currently live in Alaska.

Profession: Retired. Don was a truck mechanic, working night shifts. Farming

was his day profession.

Notable Facts: Don and his wife, Linda, have a journal of everything they have done on their property since 1968.

### Interview:

Q: Why did you take Maryland Woodland Steward Training?

A: “To learn about what I was doing. I grew up on a farm in St. James. I’ve always been a hunter but had no background in wildlife. I wanted to learn why things worked the way they did. I realized I needed training for wildlife and forestry. I met Jonathan Kays and Phil Pannill in 1990. I talked to them

about the program and using my property as a demonstration area.”

Q: What has being a Maryland Woodland Steward meant to you through the years?

A: “The greatest thing was extra time spent implementing a management plan, meeting with people who are really interested in wildlife and forestry and using our property as a demonstration area. Maryland Woodland Stewards share a common bond. I influenced one neighbor who was going to sell his mature forest to a buyer who just stopped by, to hire a consulting forester and the result was a doubling of the original offer. It was just like right out of the

## ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF PROGRAM

Originally called the Coverts Project, this educational outreach program originated in Connecticut when a local chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society, a non-profit wildlife conservation organization, looked for a way to improve wildlife habitat in New England by sharing forestry and wildlife-related research and education with woodland owners.

*Covert (pronounced kuhv-ert):  
a thicket that provides a sheltering habitat  
for wildlife*

Extension specialists from Vermont and Connecticut worked with the Ruffed Grouse Society to develop a neighbor-to-neighbor (also called peer-to-peer) volunteer training program.

In 1990, landowner, Sonny Newhall (see profile, page 12), had an interest in establishing a Coverts Program in Maryland. Sonny organized a meeting between Uni-

versity of Maryland Extension and Ruffed Grouse Society. As a result of this meeting, Maryland became the fourth state to establish the Coverts Program. In 1995, the Coverts Project operated in 12 states. The Ruffed Grouse Society generously provided funding for the Maryland program until 2005.

The name of the Coverts Program in Maryland was changed to Maryland Woodland Stewards in 2006 to more accurately reflect the program purpose and remove the confusion with military covert operations.

For a few years beginning in 2006, limited funding was provided by the National Wild Turkey Federation. After that time, University of Maryland Extension funded the program which limited the frequency of the program as well as the support provided to the volunteers.

*cooperator's text book. In 2006, Linda and I placed 72 acres in a conservation easement that borders a neighbor's forest easement. We wanted to assure that the forest would remain long after we are gone."*

**Q:** Is it important for the Maryland Woodland Steward Program to continue into the future?

**A:** "Yes! We've seen so much change. So much woodland acreage is being sold and divided into smaller parcels. We need young people to take up management of land and forests. Older people pass and the next generation is unable or unwilling to continue managing the land. The result is subdivision of property and many new owners. I know of farmers who's only retirement was their property and they had to sale. Educating our current landowners and farmers, as well as the younger generation, will be key to the future of Maryland's forests."

## 20 YEAR SNAPSHOT

### 1990

- Coverts Program Begins in Maryland
- 30 Cooperators Trained

### 1995

- 165 Cooperators Trained

### 2000

- 276 Cooperators Trained

### 2005

- 370 Cooperators Trained
- Introduction of Woods in Your Backyard (2006)

### 2007

- Changed name to Maryland Woodland Stewards

### 2010

- 433\* Cooperators Trained

*\*Updated May 15, 2012. After further analysis, multiple names sharing one address record were found. These records were separated and counted individually.*

# MARYLAND PROGRAM RATIONALE

## **Who Owns Maryland's Landscape?**

Maryland's woodlands cover 42% of the landscape, or 2.7 million acres. Contrary to the common belief that most forest land is owned by the government or big industry, 76% of this woodland is owned by private landowners: more than 156,000 of them. Reasons for acquiring woodland are diverse, and include investment, wildlife habitat, timber production, recreation, and aesthetics.

Whatever the reason for acquiring property with woodland, it is the decisions of individual property owners, not the government, that have the most profound effect on the future of Maryland's woodlands.

## **The Effect of Individual Decisions**

Many trees in Maryland's woodlands are of marketable size. Therefore, the landowner decision to harvest woodland is critical since how it is harvested will affect wildlife and forest health for decades to come. Finding the balance between timber and wildlife objectives is critical. The landowner decision to convert a lawn or field to woodland by planting trees, as well as the decision to thin woodland, requires the application of sound forest management knowledge and practices. In some cases doing nothing at all to a woodland can have significant consequences. For example, if left alone, years of invasion by exotic shrubs and trees can have a dramatic effect on the biological

health and diversity of trees and wildlife. Maryland Woodland Stewards encourage landowners to get professional assistance before making management decisions.

## **Parcelization**

The goal of the Maryland Woodland Stewards program is to reach individual woodland owners and provide education. But, the challenge of reaching and educating these landowners has grown difficult due to the parcelization of the landscape, making Maryland's forest a patchwork of individual privately owned properties.

In the last few decades, the average size of wooded properties has declined dramatically. Today, more than 85% of wooded properties are 1 to 9 acres in size, a dramatic change from 1996 when only 65% were 1 to 9 acres in size.

As a result, many large tracts of forest previously owned by one or two owners are now owned by multiple owners who each have different objectives. The important wildlife and biodiversity benefits specific to large tracts of forest are lost in the shuffle.

Providing research-based forest and wildlife information to individual woodland owners, regardless of the size of the property, is critical to the future stewardship of our woodlands. The Maryland Woodland Stewards Program is key.

"I think it's one of the most important conservation programs ever created."

~Tom Patrick,  
Class of 1991



## **MARYLAND WOODLAND STEWARD PROFILE**

**Tom Patrick**  
**Founder and President,**  
**Windstar Wildlife Institute**  
**windstar.org**

Class Year: 1991

Residence: Tom currently lives in Fort

Worth, Texas, on a small property in the suburbs. Prior to moving in 2009, he managed a total of 33 acres of land in Maryland on two properties.

Profession: Journalism, Business Owner

Notable Facts: Tom started Windstar Wildlife Institute after becoming a Maryland Woodland Steward in 1991.  
www.windstar.org

## **Interview:**

**Q:** Why did you take Maryland Woodland Steward Training?

**A:** "The Maryland Woodland Stewards Program means a lot to my personal interest. I've always had a need to follow in my father's footsteps (Iowa Farmer) as being a good steward of land. Also, it was the right time in my life. Maryland Woodland Stewards training came just when I was

## NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR

Although many landowners learn about forest and wildlife management from various sources, only a few put what they learn into practice on their own woodlands. Fewer than 5% of woodland owners have a written forest stewardship plan for their property.

Peer-to-peer education takes a different approach by training knowledgeable volunteers who can share what they know through diverse networks that agencies or private professionals could never access.

Landowners who seek professional assistance for woodland management practices often do so after being encouraged by a

trusted friend or neighbor who has experience in woodland management. These friends or neighbors can provide impartial information and share their experiences without suspect motives. Hence the concept of Neighbor-Helping-Neighbor.

Rather than being trained to be professional foresters or wildlife biologists, Maryland Woodland Stewards are trained to be agents of change. They recognize the potential in a person's property, share important educational information, and encourage landowners to seek professional assistance to reach objectives.



*obtained from the Program in my communications to others in my Windstar work. I've used the Education Through Demonstration*

*wondering what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. The Maryland Woodland Steward Training was the answer; a natural match for me."*

**Q:** What has being a Maryland Woodland Steward meant to you through the years?

**A:** *"After being raised on a farm in Iowa, the training allowed me to get back to my farm roots. I've always enjoyed watching wildlife, hunting, hearing the sounds of nature, and being alone outside. The basics learned at the training helped me to create natural places for wildlife on my land. I created food plots, wood lot, bird houses, fruit orchard, wildlife meadow and wildlife plantings.*

*"It is fair to say that a result of the MWS Program was the creation of the Windstar Wildlife Institute, a national, non-profit conservation organization. I used the knowledge*

*Program model to show people around our demonstration area and created two wildlife certification courses, Wildlife Habitat Naturalist (WHN) and National Master Naturalist (NMN). I've put many of the resources obtained at the MWS Program to work in these courses. I've been able to reach thousands of people."*

**Q:** Is it important for the Maryland Woodland Steward Program to continue into the future?

*"It should continue. I think it is one of the most important conservation programs ever created. The Ruffed Grouse Society did a great thing to support it. There are a lot of people that buy property and do not have a conservation or agriculture background and it would help them do the best thing, to be a good steward. Most people want to do good but just don't know the first thing about it."*

### Woodland Myths

There are three common woodland myths addressed by Maryland Woodland Stewards when advocating for forest wildlife management in their communities.

*1) Leaving my woodlands alone is best for wildlife, tree growth and forest health.*

Leaving your woodland alone may not produce optimal wildlife habitat. Most forms of wildlife require varied types and ages of vegetation for food and shelter. In unmanaged forests, overcrowding often retards tree growth and makes trees more susceptible to disease and insect damage, and reduces the diversity of wildlife habitat.

*2) Managing my woodlands takes a lot of money and time.*

Improving woodland can actually increase your income while maintaining the environmental integrity of the landscape. Hiring professionals to do the work means that the time commitment is small.

*3) Careful management is a good idea, but my woodlands are too small.*

Woodland areas of any size can be managed to improve wildlife habitat and tree growth. Even small parcels of woodland can be maintained to enhance and create natural areas favorable for wildlife. In many cases, working with your neighbors can help to reach shared goals.

## HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

“...the future of forestry and wildlife management is a big question mark. Education is the key.”

~Rick Abend,  
Class of 1990



### MARYLAND WOODLAND STEWARD PROFILE

#### Rick and Kathy Abend

Class Year: Rick, 1990; Kathy, 2008

Acreage Managed: 106 (44 acres in forest)

Location of farm: Dorchester County

Residence: Same as farm.

Profession: Rick is retired from the National Security Agency as a Signals Conversion Officer and photographer. Kathy is a Registered Nurse, photographer, and artist.

Notable Facts: The Abends have been able to capture wildlife in natural habitat on film and canvas, as they are

Since 1990, 433\* people have graduated from the Maryland Woodland Stewards program. These individuals are carefully selected for the program.

The process of selection for the annual program begins by seeking respected community leaders and woodland owners/managers from around the state. This is accomplished by the Maryland Woodland Stewards Project Team who use an in-depth application and screening process. The result is the selection of up to 30 individuals who agree to:

1. Attend a three-and-a-half day workshop to learn about forest and wildlife management.
2. Develop and implement a forest stewardship plan for property they own or manage.
3. Spend 40 hours in outreach-related

*\*Updated May 15, 2012. After further analysis, multiple names sharing one address record were found. These records were separated and counted individually.*

both avid artists and photographers and operate Madison Bay Studios.

#### Interview:

Q: Why did you take Maryland Woodland Steward Training?

*“Ever since I bought my first piece of woodland, I’ve always sought out ways to educate myself to be a good steward of the land. In addition, one of my management goals has been to use the farm for conservation education. The Maryland Woodland Stewards project fit perfectly. Now that Kathy is sharing in the management of the farm, she needed to learn those same forestry and wildlife management concepts for herself.”*

Q: What has being a Maryland Woodland Steward meant to you through the years?

activities during the next year, advocating for sound forest and wildlife management practices in their community.

4. Report their accomplishments.

The result is a statewide network of resourceful people who share, encourage, and who have developed connections with natural resource professionals. The outcome is an ever-increasing number of people in Maryland who know how to manage their woodland for wildlife, aesthetics, enterprise, and many other objectives.

As an added benefit, many Maryland Woodland Stewards have been inspired to take leadership in conservation organizations at the local, state, and national level.

#### Follow-up

The Maryland Woodland Steward Program Administrator leads a follow-up effort each

*“Literally hundreds of people have toured Abend Hafen over the years. What they have seen and learned has depended upon what year they were here and what time of year they were here.”*

*“As we continue to manage the farm using the multiple-use concept, we realize that we need to occasionally check back and rearrange our priorities. Since our recent timber harvest, we’ve put gathering firewood higher up on the list.”*

Q: Is it important for the Maryland Woodland Steward Program to continue into the future?

*“To me, the future of forestry and wildlife management is a big question mark. Education is key. As properties continue to get subdivided and our forest become*

year that helps measure the accomplishments and success of Maryland Woodland Stewards. Additionally, educational opportunities are provided to reunite Stewards from all class years.

First, each year a refresher course is offered about six months after the annual program training. During the course, there is a continuing education component and time is given to allow Stewards to network with fellow and past class members. In addition, new individuals are invited to the refresher course who are interested in the next program training opportunity.

Most refresher programs are organized by the Project Team in cooperation with volunteers. The attendance at refresher courses typically varies from 20 to 50 depending on the year. Typi-

cally, the group would start meeting at a specific location such as an Extension office, private property, state park, or other location where forest management techniques could be demonstrated. A few examples of notable multi-day refresher workshops include: Biodiversity for Farms and Fields, and Forestry and Wildlife Management on the Eastern Shore.

Each year a survey is distributed by the Project Team to Maryland Woodland Stewards of classes past and present. The survey results provide information needed to measure the impact of volunteer efforts. The stories and statistics abound.

Personal testimonials and statistics demonstrate that Maryland Woodland Stewards leverage the limited resources of professional educators. The Maryland Woodland Steward deliver the message of sound forest stewardship to woodland owners and managers far and wide.

In recent years, opportunities for Maryland Woodland Stewards have expanded to include an online network for Maryland's woodland owners, *Maryland Woodland Connect* ([mdwoodlandconnect.ning.com](http://mdwoodlandconnect.ning.com)), and a series of online seminars or "webinars."

*more fragmented, management and education efforts will become much more difficult. The more people you have to educate, the more difficult it will be. The more property owners you have to deal with to keep a gypsy moth outbreak under control, the more difficult it will be. It's hard to get people to work together. "Education, education, education... that's the only thing that can save our natural resources."*



A screenshot of the Maryland Woodland Connect website. The header features the title "Maryland Woodland Connect" and the subtitle "A Network for Maryland's Woodland Owners". Below the header, it says "Provided by the University of Maryland Extension". The navigation menu includes "Main", "My Page", "Members", "Photos", "Videos", and "Forum". The main content area is divided into sections: "UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION Solutions in your community", "Welcome!" with a description of the network, "Forum" with a list of topics like "Emerald Ash Borer" and "How do you use the winter to prepare for spring and summer?", and "Photos" featuring a large image of a wood duck. There are also "Sign Up or Sign In" and "About" buttons on the right side.

Maryland Woodland Connect is a network for Marylanders with an interest in forestry, wildlife and/or natural resources. Check it out to connect with fellow property owners, Maryland Woodland Stewards (volunteers of University of Maryland Extension), forestry professionals and educators from all around the state! [mdwoodlandconnect.ning.com](http://mdwoodlandconnect.ning.com)

# MARYLAND WOODLAND STEWARD CHARACTERISTICS

To date, 433\* individuals have been trained to be Maryland Woodland Stewards. Of this 433, approximately 74%, or 308, remain engaged by receiving program information, and are actively managing their own properties and/or educating others.

## ALL WALKS OF LIFE

Maryland Woodland Stewards come from all walks of life and professions. Among them are tree farmers, teachers, attorneys, engineers, physicians, writers, camp directors, homemakers, and government employees. They reside in 22 of the 23 Maryland counties. On average, they've resided in Maryland for 35 years and 20 years in their existing community.

As a result of Maryland Woodland Steward training, some individuals have taken up a forestry profession, or have become more involved in a forestry volunteer position.

## LAND MANAGEMENT

Volunteers manage 69,040 acres of land in Maryland with an average of 154 acres per volunteer.

Over the years, the average acreage owned by Maryland Woodland Stewards has decreased significantly (Figure 1).

This trend coincides with parcelization of the landscape into smaller ownerships from 1977 to 2006 due to population and development pressures (Figure 2). In 1977, only 55% of woodland owners had small acreage parcels from 1 to 9 acres. The percentage of small parcels increased to 65% in 1989 and 85% in 2006.

In general, larger acreage owners are more likely to engage in commercial timber harvesting while smaller acreage owners tend to focus on amenity related objectives like aesthetics and trails.

Because of these notable trends, the Maryland Woodland Steward Project

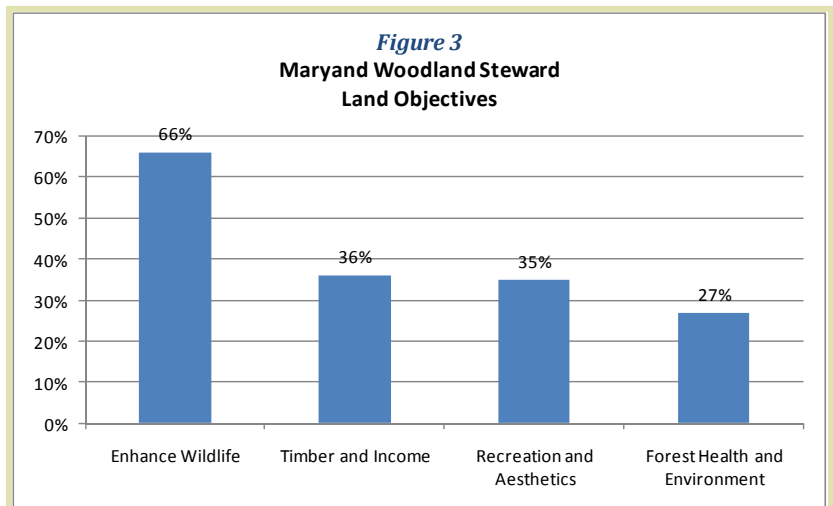
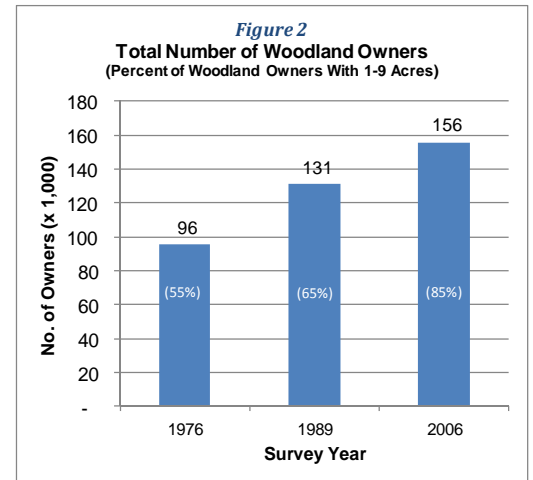
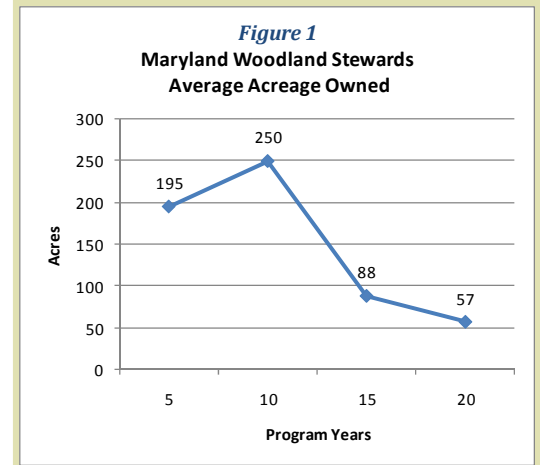
Team needed to address the needs for small acreage owners. As a result, in 2006, the *Woods In Your Backyard: Learning to Create and Enhance Natural Areas Around Your Home*<sup>1</sup> manual and workbook was integrated into the Maryland Woodland Stewards Program, addressing new land management concepts and needs for the small acreage woodland owner.

## LAND OBJECTIVES

Each year, volunteers selected for the training were asked to rank the management objectives for their property. The objective of enhancing wildlife in forests has been the constant, top objectives for the last 20 years, followed by timber and other forest benefits (Figure 3). This trend is expected since wildlife enhancement using sound forest practices is the key focus of the program.

<sup>1</sup>For more information about the manual and workbook, *The Woods in Your Backyard, Learning to Create and Enhance Natural Areas Around Your Home*, please visit: [www.naturalresources.umd.edu/EducationalWBV.html](http://www.naturalresources.umd.edu/EducationalWBV.html)

*\*Updated May 15, 2012. After further analysis, multiple names sharing one address record were found. These records were separated and counted individually.*



# HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP

## **EDUCATION THROUGH DEMONSTRATION**

For 20 years, *Education Through Demonstration* has been the motto driving the techniques used to educate Maryland Woodland Stewards. There is no better place than the woods to teach and learn the subject of stewardship.

## **OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS**

The woods is the outdoor classroom for the workshop, and outdoor field sessions are threaded throughout the program.

Some field sessions reinforce indoor classroom teachings about forestry and wildlife ecology, while others introduce new lessons and demonstrations. In the outdoor classroom, participants learn how to use forestry measurement tools like the tree scale stick, clinometer, prism, and increment borer.

Participants visit woodlands where they learn valuable lessons on sustainable forestry through good forest stewardship.

The real-life examples and lessons abound in the outdoor classroom.

## **EDUCATORS**

The planning and coordination that goes into bringing in the highest quality teachers and speakers at the workshop is impressive.

There is an extensive showing of forestry educators and professionals, providing a high quality education program. The professionals and educators include, and are not limited to:

- Natural Resources Extension Educators
- Forestry and wildlife professionals from the Department of Natural Resources
- Private forest industry professionals
- Service providers in land preservation
- Long-time Maryland Woodland Stewards

## **MATERIALS AND TOOLS**

Indoor training educators use various media methods to deliver education. Mainly, information is presented through slide shows. There are many handouts and other reference materials used during indoor training. In the field, forestry tools are brought along to teach techniques.

The bulk of the reference material is included in a large binder that is given to each participant. This reference tool includes over 75 extension bulletins, factsheets and other publications organized by the following subjects:

- Maryland's Forests
- Woodland Management
- Wildlife Management
- Management Planning

Much of the material provided at the workshop is also provided online at [www.naturalresources.umd.edu](http://www.naturalresources.umd.edu)



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Maryland Woodland Stewards own and/or manage 69,040 forested acres, using sound forest and wildlife management practices learned through their Program Training.

Annual surveys were sent to Stewards most years throughout the twenty year life of the program. The average response rate was 30%<sup>1</sup>. The resulting data demonstrate the following impacts.

### Outreach

- Each year, Stewards shared forest and wildlife management information on a one-to-one basis totaling an average of 2,326 people per year.
- An average of 63% organized forest or wildlife events. These events include field tours, displays, and programs for community groups.
- An average of 51% participated in a forestry or wildlife event each

year.

- An average of 26% used media and internet to inform and educate others each year.
- An average of 30% distributed contact cards, website information and program brochures each year.
- An average of 38% reported efforts resulting in other landowners seeking professional forestry assistance and receiving management services. Over the 20 years of the program the average ranged from 55% to 27%.

### Volunteer Time

- Maryland Woodland Stewards contributed an average of 2,343 hours per year in education and outreach efforts, or a total of 39,830 hours during the life of the program. The average value of volunteer time over the 20 year period of 1990 – 2006 is \$15.56 per hour.<sup>2</sup> This means that average

hours spent per year by volunteers who participated in the survey can be valued at \$36,464. Put another way, a full-time person works 2080 hour in a year. The average volunteer time is equal to 1.1 full-time worker per year.

- Maryland Woodland Stewards averaged 12,739 hours per year in management efforts on their properties over the life of the program. Using the average volunteer time of \$15.56 per hour described above, the average volunteer time can be valued at \$198,218. This would amount to the time spent by 6.1 full-time workers per year.

<sup>1</sup> Although non-respondents may not be as active as respondents on average, it can be assumed that they are also contributing to the described activities at some level. Additional program funding would allow for non-response bias surveys and, in general, closer follow-up contact with program participants.

<sup>2</sup> According to [www.independantsector.org](http://www.independantsector.org).

## MARYLAND WOODLAND STEWARD PROFILE

### Sonny Newhall

Class Year: 1990

Acreage Managed: 170

Location of farm: Garrett County

Residence: Same as farm.

Profession: Retired Montgomery County Firefighter

Notable Facts: Sonny is responsible for getting Coverts in Maryland by arranging the original meeting with the Ruffed Grouse Society and University of Maryland Extension in 1990. This meeting led to 16 years of support by

the Ruffed Grouse Society. Sonny was Outstanding Tree Farmer in 1987 and has also had great influence for the change in several hunting laws on the county and state level.

### Interview:

Q: Why did you take Maryland Woodland Steward Training?

*"I inherited property in 1980 and didn't know what to do with it—I didn't know anything about forestry or wildlife. There was no place to get information. I worked with Ernie Metz (DNR forester) and DNR wildlife biologist to develop a management plan in 1981.*

*"I found out about Mid Atlantic Forest Stewardship program offered in*

*Frederick in the early 1980's and it was a great help. However, educational opportunities beside this were few and far between."*



**Website**

[www.naturalresources.umd.edu](http://www.naturalresources.umd.edu)

The Forest Stewardship Education website is a one-stop portal for private woodland owners to find information about their woodland, upcoming educational opportunities and events, and research results. They can also read the quarterly newsletter, “Branching Out,” and find contact information for Extension specialists.

There are links to many other agencies and organizations that can help the woodland owner get the professional assistance they need.



The website remains relevant and contains critical information on new issues in Maryland, such as emerald ash borer.

Webinars and other video resources are available for viewing at the user’s convenience. If it has to do with forest and wildlife management, you will likely find the resources on this website.

**Shared Sense of Purpose**

By tapping the volunteer efforts of concerned and conservation-minded citizens throughout the state, Maryland Woodland Stewards has leveraged the limited resources of forestry and wildlife professionals to introduce sound forest wildlife management to thousands of Maryland residents and woodland owners.

The guaranteed support of The Ruffed Grouse Society for 16 years was pivotal to the success of the program, and it facilitated a shared sense of purpose between public and private agencies and organizations.

The future of the program will depend on securing new partners who share in the objectives of the Maryland Woodland Steward Program and who can provide financial continuity essential to a successful ongoing volunteer training program.

Maryland Woodland Stewards is a model of effective peer-to-peer education that expands with the training of each new group of enthusiastic volunteers. The best evidence of the effect is expressed by the volunteers themselves.

**Q:** What has being a Maryland Woodland Steward meant to you through the years?

*“I met a lot of nice people with similar interests that has resulted in long term personal relationships. Don and Linda Grove, for example. I connected with other*

*people that helped me and I got to know professionals in West Virginia and with the United States Forest Service that I would not have met otherwise.”*

**Q:** Is it important for the Maryland Woodland Steward Program to continue into the future?

*“Yes. The program helps people interested in managing land appropriately. It takes effort, but the program sparks great interest. My son, Andy, has continued the tradition of talking to others about proper forest management. Andy is continuing where I left off.”*

Pictured left: Sonny, Pat, and Andy



## IMPACT

As a result of the Maryland Woodland Stewards training, volunteers are equipped to be more effective and motivated to engage in activities that they otherwise would not have. Below are a few examples:



### MARYLAND WOODLAND STEWARD PROFILE

#### Mimi Wright

Class Year: 1995

Acreage Managed: 300 acres

Location of farm: Dorchester Co.

Residence: Same as farm.

Profession: Part time crop and tree farmer, part time volunteer. Retired from a management position at AT&T/Lucent.

Notable facts: Mimi has represented private forest landowners at the state, national, and international level in groups like the Maryland Agricultural Commission, the American Tree Farm Operating Committee, and The Forests

- Incorporated forest stewardship plans into a subdivision that she developed and was given a state award by the DNR Forest Service
- Created a non-profit organization that developed a volunteer outreach education program and other education courses to improve residential wildlife habitat.
- Several volunteers have been

selected as Maryland Tree Farmer of the Year.

- Took on positions of leadership with the Maryland Forests Association, Forest Conservancy District Boards, and other local organizations such as youth groups, land trusts, civic groups, and sports clubs.
- Organized the Maryland Woodland Owners Association and the Baltimore Woodland Owner Network.
- Donated or sold a conservation easement to a land trust so the land would not be developed.
- Sought help with estate planning to assure the succession planning of the property to the next generation.

Dialogue, respectively. In 1996, Mimi organized a two-day refresher course for 45 MWS volunteers.

#### Interview:

Q: Why did you take Maryland Woodland Stewards training?

A: *“Although I owned forest land for many years, I lived in Bethesda and I wasn’t very confident in my management skills. I enrolled in the training when I moved to my forested property because I thought I could learn something to benefit myself and others. The training added to my knowledge and gave me the confidence to be a vocal proponent of good forest stewardship.”*

Q: What has being a MWS meant to you through the years?

A: *“I bought my land because I thought it was a good economic investment, but stewardship has turned out to be much more rewarding than I ever thought it would be. The rewards of good manage-*

*ment and active involvement are both financial and social. I have been exposed to many cultures and people across both the country and the globe through my participation in related organizations - it has widened my horizons.”*

Q: Is it important for the MWS Program to continue into the future?

A: *“It’s important for the program to continue encouraging better management of private land, and improving awareness of free services like the soil conservation office, the county forester, Extension, and Soil Conservation Districts. It’s also essential for the program to continue creating spokespeople for the environmental and economic benefits of well-managed forests. Stewards are important ambassadors of private forestland owners to elected officials and the public. I think Stewards have the education and the facts to support their story when they’re educating others. It’s not just emotional hype.”*

## THE FUTURE OF MARYLAND WOODLAND STEWARDS

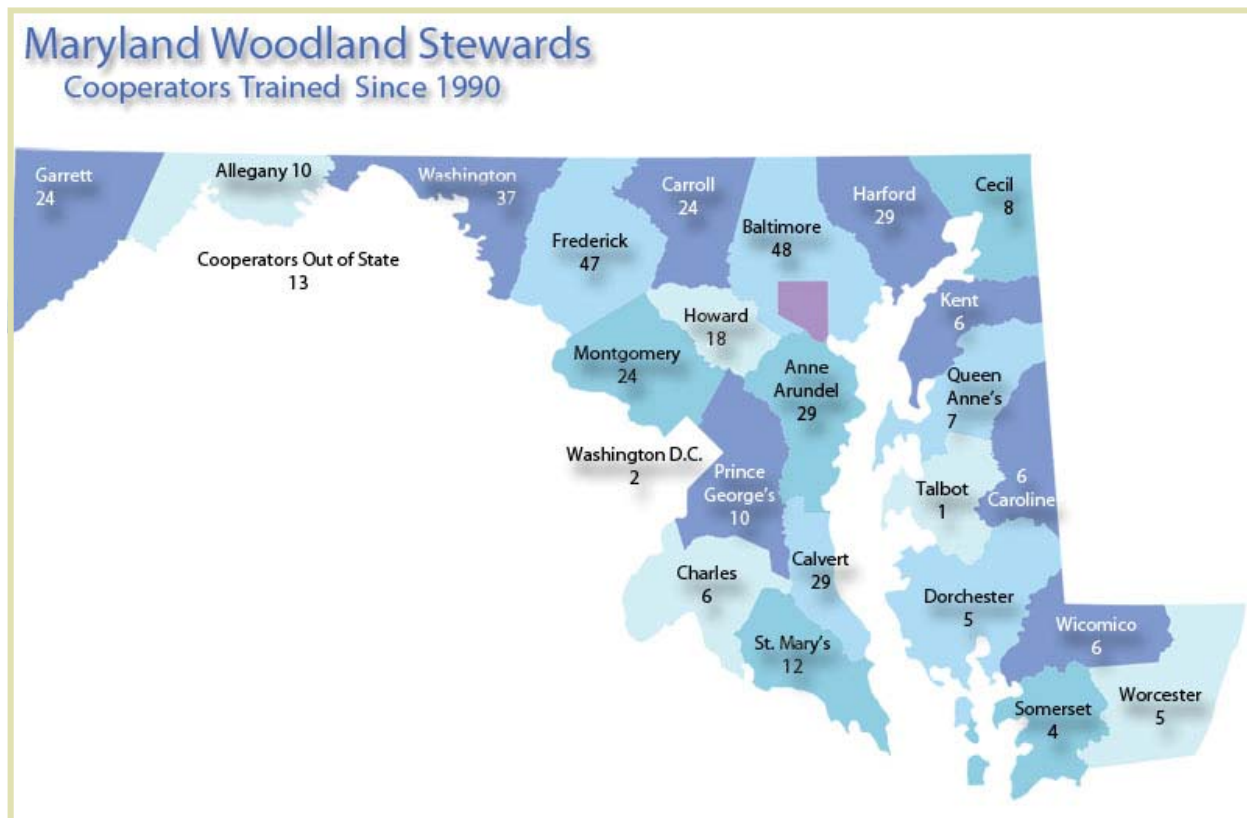
The training provided by the Maryland Woodland Stewards (MWS) Program sparks a profound life-long change in many people in the way they think about and view forests. They look forward to applying what they learn to the land they own or manage. They are also motivated to share this knowledge with others in their own unique way. MWS reaches landowners and citizens through their communities and social networks with a forest stewardship message at a rate that is unmatched by the limited number of forestry professionals today.

Maintaining the MWS program, like any volunteer network, requires the commitment of financial resources. This report demonstrates that the payback far exceeds the investment. From 1990 to 2006, the Maryland Woodland Stewards Program enjoyed many years of success due to the support by The Ruffed Grouse Society. But

now, MWS Program seeks continuous support by key forest and wildlife organizations to continue the benefits into the future.

As woodland ownership continues to change with new generations taking responsibility for land, it is imperative to have a volunteer network such as the Maryland Woodland Stewards to help landowners find the professional assistance, credible information, and resources needed to make educated forest stewardship decisions.

With three-quarters of Maryland woodlands owned by over 150,000 private landowners, it is the individual decisions of these stewards that will dictate quality of our future forest and wildlife resources. Maryland Woodland Stewards can help Maryland reach its vision of a future full of lush healthy forests, abundant wildlife, and diverse ecosystems.







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