CHESAPEAKE WILDLIFE HERITAGE

Habitat works

The newsletter about restoring and creating habitat for wildlife
Winter 2008

CWH can help you keep your meadow in a dynamic state by performing herbicide spot spraying, chemical mowing, controlled burning, or tillage.

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.

Habitat Management Techniques

By Ned Gerber, Director/Wildlife Habitat Ecologist

Vegetation management is crucial to any wildlife habitat restoration effort. It is especially important if one is interested in the aesthetics of a site. People are a lot more picky than most critters. The plants present on a site will dictate what other species use the area. How those plants are managed seasonally/annually will determine if they remain or are replaced by others. Consider how and why meadows might be managed using various techniques.

Meadows are an ever changing scenario. Every site is different due to soils, size, soil seedbank, exposure, topography and a variety of other factors. In moisture rich states like Maryland, where trees grow in meadows if left alone long enough, there is a need to fight natural succession in uplands. Once native grasses and flowers are planted, a lot of energy is required to try to hang on to these non-forested areas. The fight is against thistle, trumpet creeper, tall fescue, sweet gums, and a host of other plants; however, it is well worth the effort in order to insure diversity in the landscape.

Mowing is the most commonly used technique to retard succession in meadows. People use it because it is inexpensive, easy and immediate. It is effective in that it kills some plants and appears to set back the successional clock to zero. However, mowing can limit plant diversity and is devastating to wildlife if not done very carefully. When selecting mowing as a management technique, it is important to avoid nesting season and to leave lots of unmown cover for wintering/nesting creatures. It is also beneficial to leave some shrubs, briar patches, and small trees to increase vertical structural diversity. This will increase both the numbers and species of birds and other creatures in the meadow.

If the choice is made not to allow trees or shrubs to grow in the meadow, it is beneficial to become familiar with the herbicides that can be used to control invasive woodies, as well as undesirable herbaceous species like Canada thistle. By spot spraying herbicides each fall, areas can be left unmown, providing great winter cover and next year's nesting cover. CWH can provide this site control or advice on safe herbicides to use and the various techniques used in applying them.

People often ask whether leaving small trees will become a problem when they eventually get too big and have to be cut down. The answer is no, IF property owners use some herbicides to control them as well. Simply spraying, bark painting, or mowing with a Diamond wet-blade chemical mower (it puts herbicide on the cut stump) allows trees and shrubs to grow in a meadow where desired, but not to "get away" causing the meadow to become a forest. There is scientific literature from power line rights of way showing that

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CWH Property Profile: Piney Creek Wetland Preserve

By Chris Pupke, Director of Development

Piney Creek Wetland Preserve is the oldest and smallest of Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage's wildlife management areas. Donated to CWH in 1986, Piney Creek Wetland Preserve covers only 13 acres but is used by a number of different wildlife species.

Located in Queen Anne's County on the east side of Piney Creek near Kent Narrows, the entire property is comprised of tidal wetlands. While the tidal wetlands provide valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife, the real value of the property is in the more than 2,700 feet of water frontage on Piney Creek. This intertidal zone is a non-hunted sanctuary frequented by many different species of waterfowl in the winter months, including Tundra Swan, Canada Geese and Scaup. The Osprey platform installed in the late 1980's has experienced many years of successful nesting Osprey.

The most challenging management issue on the property is controlling the Phragmites found throughout the property. To deal with this issue, CWH has been carefully applying herbicide to the Phragmites during the fall.

To date, CWH owns 1,001 acres of land. These properties are managed by our staff to maximize the benefits for wildlife and improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.

Piney Creek Wetland Preserve

John Ben Snow Memorial Trust Grant

By Chris Pupke, Director of Development

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage recently received a grant from the John Ben Snow Memorial Trust. The grant will support our efforts to restore wetlands in the Chester River watershed. This work will improve water quality and increase wildlife habitat.

The Snow Trust was established in 1975, two years after Mr. Snow's death. Originally from Pulaski, New York, Mr. Snow worked for Woolworth's and rose from being a stock boy to corporate director. The Snow Trust is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life through the support of the environment, journalism, community development, education, historic preservation, and arts and culture.

This grant will help CWH restore approximately 45 acres of wetlands in the Chester River watershed, including restoration projects at Kirwan Farm *(see article)* and at Mudford Farm near Sudlersville, Maryland.

Mudford Farm consists of 275 acres and is owned by the Biophilia Foundation. CWH is planning to restore 30 acres of wetlands, plant 20 acres of wooded buffers, and create 20 acres of warm season grass buffers. The farm will also have 90 acres of farmland left in production and 115 acres of woodland. When the restorations are complete, the entire property will be placed in a conservation easement to permanently protect the habitat from residential development.

The Chester River is on the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) list of "Impaired Waterways"—noting that

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Conservation Issue:

CREP Acres Decline Following Erhlich 'Fix'

By Chris Pupke, Director of Development

In 2003, the Erhlich administration set-out to 'fix' the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. CREP and its close relative, the Conservation Reserve Program, are the only significant habitat restoration programs available to private landowners. Established by the state of Maryland and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1997 to improve water quality and increase wildlife habitat in Maryland, CREP had fallen short of its initial goal of enrolling 100,000 acres of farmland in 5 years.

From the inception of CREP in October 1997 to the implementation of the 'fix' in 2004, almost 70,000 acres of land were restored to wildlife habitat in Maryland. In the 4 years since, only 3,600 acres have been enrolled in the program meaning over 95% of the work completed under CREP was completed prior to the 2004 regulation changes. *(See the following chart)*

Two of the CREP rule modifications reduced ditch buffers from 300 feet to 35 feet and made a lot of highly erodible land ineligible for the program. Clearly, neither of these changes would help water quality or wildlife, but the administration wanted to placate farmers who were opposed to the program despite its voluntary nature.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources officials claimed that the new regulations would "make CREP attractive in parts of Maryland where it has previously struggled." Unfortunately, rather than promote the program, the new guidelines helped significantly reduce the rate of enrollment in CREP. The near two-year closure of the CREP, combined with significant changes in the rules, took all the momentum away from this important Bay restoration effort.

CREP remains the simplest and most profitable method for private landowners to install buffers or restore wetlands. CWH is calling on the O'Malley administration to allow 150 foot buffers on ditches and 300 foot buffers along creeks and streams. CWH also believes land, with an erodibility index of eight, should be eligible for enrollment in the program.

CWH hopes the O'Malley administration will strengthen this program that is so valuable to wildlife and water quality. Despite all the "feel good" talk about other efforts, CREP and CRP are the only programs that restore significant acreages to improve water quality and increase wildlife habitat on private land.

Practice	CREP Report 2-10-04	CREP Report 9-10-06	% Completed by 2-10-04
CP 21 *(Filter Strips)*	39,084	40,491	96.5%
CP 22 *(Riparian Buffers)*	16,405	17,019	96.4%
CP 23 *(Wetlands)*	2,121	2,266	93.6%
CP 9 *(Shallow Water Areas)*	647	912	70.9%
HEL *(Highly Erodible Land)*	11,735	12,463	94.2%
TOTALS:	69,992	73,605	95.1%

Visit our website at www.cheswildlife.org

CWH-West Update:

The Maryland Theater Debuts its Latest Act – A Backyard Habitat Demonstration Project

By Geordie Newman, CWH-West Division Program Coordinator

What does CWH-West have in common with Bob Hope, Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Willie Nelson, the Temptations, and "American Idol" winner Taylor Hicks? They are all award winners who have displayed their craft at the Maryland Theater in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Located in the heart of Hagerstown's arts and entertainment district, the Maryland Theater has been entertaining the public since it was built in 1915. Over 81,000 patrons visited the Maryland Theater in 2005. CWH-West recently partnered with the Maryland Theater to create a backyard habitat demonstration site in the courtyard of the Theater. Using a design created by Melissa Gerber, CWH-West installed native plants as an educational opportunity for the thousands of patrons who visit the theater, as well as those who pass by on foot in downtown Hagerstown.

The project did not go unnoticed by the local community as the Maryland Theater received the Hagerstown Beautification Advisory Committee's first place award for commercial landscaping. We hope this will not only influence the City of Hagerstown to enhance landscaping with native plants, but also to be an inspiration for landowners.

If you would like to learn more about plants native to Western Maryland or have a site visit to discuss your specific property, please contact Geordie Newman at 410.310.6270 or via email gnewman@cheswildlife.org.

(Habitat Management continued from page 1)

plant diversity, including that of some rare plants, can be increased on a site by spot spraying herbicides instead of mowing. Some of this work is being done by Robin Haggie, a CWH wildlife ecologist.

Meadows also benefit from strip discing and burning as both help expose bare ground, which many birds prefer and which other creatures, such as native ground bees, need to survive. Burning and discing also get rid of the thatch build up that mowing can leave. Thatch will mulch out forbs (wildflowers), which are important to insect diversity, as well as valued aesthetically.

Thinning the grasses in a meadow helps to maintain the forb component, as well as some important bare ground. Many warm season grass meadows are too thick for good plant diversity and bird use. CWH thins grasses with herbicide spraying, followed by controlled burning and/or tillage to rejuvenate the forbs.

The meadow manager also needs to be concerned with insect life in this habitat. Studies have shown that controlled burning has negative impacts on spider and butterfly populations within a meadow. It even has a negative impact on some birds' use of the meadow in the year or two immediately following the burn. Of course, allowing the meadow to become a forest would not be a positive development for meadow spiders, birds or butterflies either. Constant mowing would result in a thatch build up that would alter plant species and wildlife use as well. CWH believes the answer is to NOT treat more than 30% of the meadow with any one method in any year. An example would be doing a controlled burn on 30% of a meadow in February and mowing another 10% to 20% at that time. This would leave 50% of the meadow as undisturbed refuge going into the nesting season.

Meadows need to be disturbed fairly often if they are to retain their wildflowers and wildlife and not become woodlands or grass monocultures. CWH can help you keep your meadow in a dynamic state by performing herbicide spot spraying, chemical mowing, controlled burning, or tillage.

CWH at Work:
Kirwan Farm Wetlands

By Ned Gerber, Director/Wildlife Habitat Ecologist

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage recently completed the earth moving portion of two wetland restoration projects at the Kirwan Farm, owned by the Kent Island Heritage Society (KIHS), using the USDA CREP program. We are grateful to the Queen Anne's County Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency offices for their assistance in managing the details of the enrollment process. CWH also thanks the KIHS for caring about the watershed and its wildlife and allowing CWH to undertake the wetland restorations. These projects will provide habitat for wetland wildlife, as well as improvements to water quality in Kirwan Creek.

Residents of the Chester area have complained for many years that muddy water will wash over the state Route 552 (Dominion Road) after heavy rains. This water was running off of a sloped farm field at the corner of Route 552 and Parson's Island Road into a roadside ditch, and then into a culvert going under the road directly to tidal waters. A ridiculous CREP rule will not allow roadside ditch buffers to be entered in the program, even when the road is immediately adjacent to tidal waters! The Bay does not care where the silt and nutrient laden water entering into it is coming from.

Fortunately, there were about 12 acres of hydric soils located in the lowest portion of the field. This enabled CWH to design and build a berm to restore hydrology to these soils and create some wetland habitat for shorebirds, amphibians, waterfowl, etc. The wetland will also trap about 20 acres of agricultural runoff and remove significant quantities of sediment and nutrients from it. Water will be released slowly through grassed spillways instead of racing off the farm field and gushing into the creek through the roadside ditch.

The CP-23 (wetland restoration) practice also allows an acre of upland soils to be enrolled for every acre of hydric soils restored. CWH utilized this rule to buffer portions of the roadside ditches that the berm did not cover. These buffers will be planted in native grasses, wildflowers, trees, and shrubs to further enhance the biological diversity of the site, as well as the water quality.

Waterfowl, such as this Green-Winged Teal, will enjoy the restored wetland at Kirwan Farm on Kent Island.

The smaller wetland restoration is closer to the Kirwan farmhouse and is only one acre in size. However, it has a 10-acre agricultural drainage area and should positively affect water quality and wildlife as well. We anticipate that this site will become more of a wooded type wetland complementing the extensive tree and grass buffers that CWH planted on the property several years ago. This previous planting included 35 acres of forested buffers and 14 acres of warm season grass meadows. The best farm soils on the property will remain available for agriculture, but now there will be a better balance between agriculture, water quality, and wildlife.

The wetland restoration will cost approximately $50,000, with CREP covering $30,000. A grant from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for $15,000 will also help with the cost for the wetland project. CWH will provide an additional $5,000 to fund work not covered by CREP cost-share assistance.

Wildlife Profile:

Eastern Wood Pewee *(Contopus virens)*

By Andi Pupke, Education and Outreach Director

One of the most easily overlooked birds of forested areas leaves us for the winter, but its lovely spring song *(Pee-ah-wee)* is one to look forward to in the spring. The Eastern Wood Pewee *(Contopus virens)* is a bird of the high canopy in wooded habitats. It is one of the late migrating neotropical birds that may linger in its breeding habitat until early winter. The Pewee spends the winter mainly in the northern reaches of South America.

The Pewee is a medium-sized bird with a grayish olive color above and a paler color below. It has whitish wing-bars. Sexes are similar, and it normally will sit in an upright position, typical of many flycatchers. It hawks flying insects and occasionally gleans insects from foliage or the ground.

This flycatcher is common throughout the eastern United States and southern Canada. It uses both the interior and edge of forested lands for breeding. In eastern North America, it favors deciduous forests, but also breeds in open pine woodlands in the South. It builds a small cup-like nest near the top of the canopy which is rather cryptic. Nesting success may be affected by forest fragmentation—cutting up a single large forest into several smaller tracts through actions such as logging, road building or development. Fragmentation opens the nest up to predation and parasitism.

The Pewee is still considered common throughout the eastern United States, but it has suffered significant population declines over the past 25 years as documented by the Breeding Bird Survey. Habitat loss, due to intensive logging and development, has greatly contributed to the population decline. Additionally, pesticides in forests and orchards can affect diet choices and lower fat stores in the birds.

PHOTO BY GREG LAVATY

The Eastern Wood Pewee **(Contopus virens)** *is still considered common throughout the eastern United States, but it has suffered significant population declines over the past 25 years as documented by the Breeding Bird Survey. Habitat loss, due to intensive logging and development, has greatly contributed to the population decline.*

Some experimental work in the Northeast suggests high population of white-tailed deer may lower breeding populations of Pewees due to disturbance of the intermediate canopy in heavily browsed areas.

Like all wildlife, even a bird as common as the Pewee, will continue to decline as their habitat is disrupted. Preserving woodlands, protecting them from fragmentation, and planting new woodlands are among the best ways to help Pewees and many other critters.

On-line Shopping Can Benefit CWH

Do you shop on-line? Do you know there's an easy way to help Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage when you make an on-line purchase? Many of your favorite retailers will donate a portion of the sale to various organizations, such as CWH, when you place your order through iGive.com. Currently there are more than 680 participating retailers.

Just go to iGive.com and register, designating CWH as your favorite cause. Then, whenever you're ready to make a purchase, go to iGive.com and place your order at the selected retailer. *(Orders must be placed through the iGive website in order for CWH to receive the donation.)*

Why not ***register now*** so that when you're ready to place your on-line order, you'll be helping CWH at the same time!

Ask Andi

Questions and answers about wildlife by Andi Pupke, Education and Outreach Director

Q: ***I have a mockingbird in our yard that while on the ground will often spread its wings, then close them slowly. Is this bird having trouble flying?***

A: This behavior is called "wing-flashing"—it is not an indicator of a lame Northern Mockingbird. Sometimes called the American Nightingale, it is well known for its singing abilities. The wing-flashing display can be described as half or fully opening its wings in intermediate steps, showing off the big white patches. Its function is thought to be connected to stirring up insects and to distracting predators, especially snakes. If a snake is closing in on a nest, normally the male Northern Mockingbird will fly to the ground near the snake and begin flashing its wings to lead the snake away from its nest. Other types of Mockingbirds without the large, white wing spot also wing-flash, which may or may not startle insects. This behavior does not seem to be connected to protecting territory, which is mostly done through singing.

PHOTO BY GREGORY GOUGH.

The Northern Mockingbird will begin flashing its wings to stir up insects and to distract predators.

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the river is polluted by nutrients, sediment and bacteria. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources notes that 75 percent of nutrient pollution and 88 percent of the sediment pollution in the Chester River comes from agriculture.

In order to improve water quality in the Chester River, CWH works with landowners in the Chester River watershed to restore wetlands and plant riparian buffers. CWH's work with volunteer landowner partners has double the impact of improving water quality in the Chester River and increasing habitat for wildlife. Researchers at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center found that within five years of restoration, a CWH wetland can provide favorable habitat for over 60 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects and over 100 species of plants. In addition, CWH wetland restorations improve water quality. A study conducted in partnership with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center found that up to 70 percent of the pollutants that enter a wetland restored by CWH are filtered by the wetland.

We are very grateful for the support of the John Ben Snow Memorial Trust.

Donate Stock and Receive a Charitable Deduction

Donating appreciated stock is an excellent way to support CWH, the Bay and our wildlife. This type of donation is very simple and allows you to take advantage of tax laws to increase your gift to CWH and reduce your taxes.

For example, Mrs. Jones purchased stock for $5,000 several years ago. Today, this stock is worth $10,000. She decides to donate the stock to Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage and receives a charitable deduction for the full fair-market value of the stock ($10,000). In the 30 percent tax bracket, the deduction saves her $3,000 in income tax. Additionally, by donating the appreciated stock, she avoids paying capital gains tax of $1,000 (20 percent of the $5,000 gain). The actual cost of her gift is reduced to $6,000 ($10,000 less the $3,000 tax deduction and less the $1,000 capital gains avoidance).

If you are interested in making a chairitable donation, please contact the Director of Development, Chris Pupke.

Rose Pogonias
Frost's Prayer Answered

"Rose Pogonias" is reprinted from "A Boy's Will." Robert Frost. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co., 1915.

While doing research in partnership with the power company Atlantic City Electric (ACE), CWH's Robin Haggie found a small population of Rose Pogonia Orchids *(Pogonia ophioglossoides)*. The plants were found in a cleared, wooded, sphagnum bog along the power line right-of-way through the State of New Jersey's Beaver Swamp Management Area.

CWH has been working with Pepco, the parent company of ACE, to manage these rights-of-way in a manner that supports plant and wildlife diversity. By discontinuing the traditional maintenance mowing and substituting integrated vegetation management in a test section of the right-of-way, we gave this spectacular orchid a chance to survive and helped answer Robert Frost's prayer *(below in bold)*.

The Rose Pogonia, also known as the snakemouth orchid, is usually found in bogs. The seeds may lay dormant in the seed bank for 100 to 150 years before finding the appropriate conditions in which to grow. In addition to vegetative reproduction, it often spreads by sending runners through the soil with adventitious buds forming new plants. The Rose Pogonia is classified as threatened or endangered in many parts of its range and is the only member of the Pogonia genus that occurs naturally in North America.

A saturated meadow,
Sun-shaped and jewel-small,
A circle scarcely wider
Than the trees around were tall;
Where winds were quite excluded,
And the air was stifling sweet
With the breath of many flowers,—
A temple of the heat.

There we bowed us in the burning,
As the sun's right worship is,
To pick where none could miss them
A thousand orchises;
For though the grass was scattered,
Yet every second spear
Seemed tipped with wings of color,
That tinged the atmosphere.

We raised a simple prayer
Before we left the spot,
That in the general mowing
That place might be forgot;
Or if not all so favoured,
Obtain such grace of hours,
That none should mow the grass there
While so confused with flowers.

Planned Giving to CWH Lowers Taxes While Supporting the Bay

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage encourages you to think about wildlife when you are planning your estate. A planned gift to CWH can lower estate taxes for your family, support wildlife and the Bay, and, depending on the type of gift, provide some income for a beneficiary.

What is a planned gift? It is a gift of cash, securities or real estate made with careful forethought. Planned gifts can be simple and straight forward or more complicated. These gifts should always be reviewed by your financial advisor or estate planning lawyer, especially in light of recent tax law changes.

It is important to remember that the repeal of the estate tax in the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 only applies to one year (2010). Estate tax exemptions will rise from the current $2,000,000 exemption to $3,500,000 in 2009. Unless Congress acts, the estate tax will reappear in 2011 with a $1,000,000 exemption. In addition, heirs may face increased capital gains taxes on highly appreciated assets they inherit from your estate beginning in 2010.

The most basic type of a planned gift is a bequest. The donor designates in his or her will an asset to be given to CWH upon their death. Bequests can lower estate tax burdens and allow you to determine where your money will go rather than to the federal government. Including CWH in your will is as simple as adding a codicil that names "Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, Inc." as a beneficiary.

You can also use a life insurance policy as a charitable gift. New policies can be purchased or old policies transferred to make CWH the recipient of the death benefits. Certain tax deductions are permitted for this type of gift.

Charitable Remainder Trusts are probably the most complicated common form of a planned gift. However, Charitable Remainder Trusts are a popular device for individuals to give a significant gift to a charity, receive some tax breaks and provide income for a family member.

Planned gifts are a wonderful opportunity for you to support CWH's work for wildlife and the Chesapeake Bay, while preparing your estate to ease the burden on your family. Please call our Director of Development, Chris Pupke, if you have or would like to make a planned gift to CWH.

☐ ***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 _____ Security Code _____

☐ $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.

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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.

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Burrisville Easement

By Chris Pupke, Director of Development

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage recently helped protect 43 acres of wildlife habitat near Centreville when the owners of the property donated a conservation easement on the property to CWH and the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET). The easement not only ensures that no more houses will be built on the property, but also protects the wildlife habitat existing on the property. The added protection of the wildlife habitat goes further than most traditional conservation easements.

Streams (tributaries to the Chester River) border the south and east sides of the property for more than 2,500 feet. The Yellow Lance *(Elliptio lanceolata)* is known to occur near the property. This mussel species is considered to be globally rare with less than 100 estimated occurrences and is of unknown status in Maryland.

The property contains approximately 18 acres of mature woodlands and 25 acres of shrub/scrub habitat and meadows. The easement prohibits commercial logging of the woodlands so that an old-growth woodland will eventually be established. The shrub/scrub habitat and meadows will be actively managed to provide habitat for Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-breasted Chat, Field Sparrow and many other species of wildlife.

Easements protect wildlife habitat such as this 43-acre property near Centreville.

The property is adjacent to more than 550 acres of protected land, including Cross Trees Farms, where a CWH and MET conservation easement protected 25 acres of woodlands in 2004. Since 1997, CWH has permanently protected 2,642 acres of wildlife habitat on 15 different properties. If you are interested in protecting your habitat, please contact us.