



# The Queen Anne's Chronicle

CELEBRATING QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

INFORMING THE CITIZENS

## GENERAL ELECTION: AT-LARGE, DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATES SET THEIR AGENDAS

Consistent with our mission of "Informing the Citizens", the Chronicle asked the At-large and District 2 candidates for County Commissioner for a statement about what their agendas will be if they are elected. (As readers will remember, the candidates from the other three Districts who won their June primary elections have no opponent from the other party in the upcoming general election; accordingly, the Chronicle has not invited further statements from them.)

On this page we begin the statements of the two candidates for the At-large seat. By County law, the person elected to this seat "shall hold the position of President of the County Commissioners for the first year of his or her term" and during that year "shall

preside over meetings of the County Commissioners". (After the first year, the President is chosen annually by a majority vote of the Commissioners.) On the next page we print the statements of the candidates for District 2.

We imposed a word limit on the candidates' statements and are printing the statements as they were submitted.

Readers are reminded that the Commissioner Districts are candidate **residency** districts only: **all voters get to vote for the candidates for all of the seats, not just the At-large seat.**

### SUZANNE HOGAN (D), CANDIDATE, COUNTY COMMISSIONER AT-LARGE

What are the principal issues and proposals that you want to have the County Commissioners address during your term in office, and what will be your position on these issues and proposals?

I entered the At-Large Commissioner race to use my experience and qualifications to protect the Eastern Shore lifestyle that still thrives in our small towns, our working farms, and our waterways, while looking for opportunities to help a new generation build their own lives here.

I believe residents have been clear about wanting to keep this county rural, and I honor that, but that doesn't mean we can't create long-term, living wage jobs here. My first priority is to build a



coalition of residents of diverse viewpoints and backgrounds to craft a shared vision of the county's economic future. A vision that reflects our rural heritage, considers voter sentiment about growth, but opens up new opportunities for current businesses to grow

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### JIM MORAN (R), CANDIDATE, COUNTY COMMISSIONER AT-LARGE

What are the principal issues and proposals that you want to have the County Commissioners address during your term in office, and what will be your position on these issues and proposals?

The principal issues I will address are increasing local employment opportunities, growing our commercial tax base, reducing taxes, and the environment. Most candidates approach these issues with unrealistic ideas that are totally beyond the Commissioners control. We cannot reverse the State mandates that have been passed down to us. Solutions for lower taxes must be internal.

The Watershed Implementation Plan - EPA's recent mandate - will place huge costs on the County if we fail to take decisive action to clean up the Bay. This is one of the



most significant differences between myself and my opponent. I have already helped the county take huge steps to improve the environment and avoid potentially hundreds of millions in future WIP costs to our taxpayers with the effort to finally service

*continued on Page 2*

## THE VISION WE SHARE FOR QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

- A predominantly rural county with small towns connected by creeks and county roads through fields and forest – *a great place to live;*
- A county that encourages agriculture, seafood and maritime industries, tourism and outdoor sports, small business and high tech enterprise – *a good place to work;*
- A county that is a faithful steward of its natural and cultural heritage – *a good neighbor for the Bay and other Eastern Shore counties;*
- A county in which development does not impair the quality of life enjoyed by all – *a community that protects the expectations and opportunities of all its citizens;*
- A county that supports the *highest quality of education* that seeks to fully prepare its citizens for the future.

– Queen Anne's County 2010 Comprehensive Plan, page 2

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## AT-LARGE, CONTINUED

### SUZANNE HOGAN (D), *continued from Page 1*

and new businesses to want to locate here.

My second priority is to get the county's fiscal house in order. We've had nearly \$20 million in county surpluses these last three years – taxpayer money that got transferred into county funds with no public input on how it gets spent. I'm confident we can do a better job of estimating revenues and expenditures, because after three years of surpluses I believe it's time to consider cutting tax rates on residents and property owners.

My final priority is making the needs of current residents our primary focus. After talking with voters for months, I've found that, regardless of where they live, our residents have similar concerns – the impact of vacant homes on neighborhoods, unease about crime and drug use, the disrepair of our roads, reduced services for seniors, and concern for our schools. It's time we got back to the business of local government and deliver the critical services that residents need to feel safe in their communities, on the roads, and in their decision to make this county their home.

### JIM MORAN (R), *continued from Page 1*

SKI with public sewer. I will follow through to make sure the environmental problem is solved while NOT incurring ANY burden to taxpayers not directly benefiting from this service. Those property owners who will be receiving service and paying their share will benefit with greater flexibility to improve their homes, avoidance of pump-out fees, and from increased property values. There is no better alternative.

Growing our commercial tax base needs to be a priority. There is no other means of providing local employment while

simultaneously reducing residential taxes and relieving traffic issues. We cannot stop beach traffic, but if our residents can avoid crossing the Bridge daily, they can avoid much of the wasted daily commuting time.

My time serving on the Economic Development and Planning Commissions helped clarify the problems and allow me to work realistic solutions. Assuring this growth takes place smartly, in strict accord with our Comp Plan, is workable with policy changes making the approval process less time consuming and expensive - removing deterrents to attracting high quality employers.

## DISTRICT 2

### FRED McNEIL (D), CANDIDATE, COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2



*What are the principal issues and proposals that you want to have the County Commissioners address during your term in office, and what will be your position on*

*these issues and proposals?*

Thanks...my top 10 issues

1. Build YMCA in Centreville
2. Construction of Career & Tech High School in Grasonville
3. Improve counties Economic Development efforts
4. Promote "smart" and "managed" growth
5. Protect the Bay and our environmental heritage
6. Support and promote our AG industry
7. Improve services to our Senior Citizen population
8. Improve our passive and active recreation programs being provided by County Parks & Rec Dept
9. Stagger election of County Commissioners
10. Creation of County Ombudsman who would report directly to commissioners

### STEVE WILSON (R), CANDIDATE, COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2



*What are the principal issues and proposals that you want to have the County Commissioners address during your term in office, and what will be your position on these issues and proposals?*

I have a number of interests or concerns that should be considered by my fellow Commissioners should I be fortunate enough to join them after November 4th. I would not formalize this as "an agenda" because matters still evolving may be settled by then, and the interests and wishes of other Commissioners, as they are made known, will rewrite the list. That said:

I regard the health and safety of the County as a highest priority; I would have a carefully executed review, by an outside party,

of Emergency Planning for the County. Were our citizens to experience a flood, blizzard, loss of electric, wind event, or other catastrophe, I want to know that the government has done everything it can to prepare. Perhaps that planning is in place now. That is something that I think every four-year term should establish at the outset. I would also review the 911 process and ambulance service, because any County like ours with no hospital depends on the best possible response and transport system.

I would immediately review the budget and capital plan with attention to cutting expenses and good forecasting because every government scheme involves spending, and if finances are mismanaged every other plan is pulled down.

I would suggest a reconsideration of such projects as the YMCA, County Office Building, Kent Island Sewer and others that will add to the debt burden of our citizens.

I would consider a shopping list of other concerns such as returning the Commissioner Meeting Schedule to one per week; recombining the Recreation Department (which has a large youth component) with the Park Department instead of having it in "Aging;" removing the enforcement of Animal Welfare from the Sheriff's Department to a more provident location; removing the "Beach Tax."

### AH, WILDERNESS!

"This September marks the 50th anniversary of the federal Wilderness Act, which created the National Wilderness Preservation System in 1964 and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of wild lands. . . Though it takes an act of Congress to officially designate federal wilderness, those who explore the Chesapeake region often find their own pockets of wilderness — and the profound sense of quiet aloneness — along rivers, streams, forests and Bay waters. . . In Maryland, one of six states that doesn't have a federally designated wilderness, the Maryland General Assembly recently added nearly 22,000 acres of state lands that have wilderness-like character, bringing the state total to nearly 66,000 acres. Within these acres, motorized vehicles are banned, and only low-impact activities such as birdwatching, hiking, fishing and hunting are permitted."

— *Chesapeake Bay Journal*, July 28, 2014

## CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY: SAVING THE BAY AND ITS WATERSHED

For the past 15 years, Washington College in Chestertown has increasingly emphasized academic programs that educate graduates to become champions and stewards of a healthy, thriving Chesapeake Bay and watershed, “in which natural systems and human communities are in balance”. That is the stated goal of the focus of the College’s Center for Environment & Society, established in 1999 and currently under the direction of anthropology and environmental studies professor John Seidel.

### Chester River Watershed Observatory

Earlier this year, in a ceremony attended by the Governor and regional and national environmental leaders, the Center launched its newest initiative, the Chester River Watershed Observatory. Equipped with research vessels, laboratories, and a host of sensors, buoys and other high-tech equipment, the Observatory aims to make the Chester River “the best understood watershed in the country”.

That goal involves not only intensive study and measuring of water quality with a variety of water-based sensors, but also monitoring, with remote and land-based sensors, of variables such as weather events, fish migrations, and agricultural and urban water management practices. Critical to the enterprise will be the hands-on engagement of researchers, teachers and

students in what the Observatory refers to as “good old river mud”.

The Observatory is partnering with a wide range of other institutions. For example, working with the Observatory, the Environmental Studies class of the Wye River Upper School in Centreville is placing a buoy in the Corsica River to generate water-quality data which the students will monitor and analyze.

Other partners are the Chester River Association, other Kent and Queen Anne’s County schools, the Naval Academy and the University of Maryland, state and federal agencies like DNR and NOAA, and relevant corporate partners like Teledyne and the Hach Company. Joining these participants are citizen partners owning thousands of acres of riverfront and farm lands up and down the Chester.

### Chester River Field Research Station

What can be called the “senior” component of the Center for Environment & Society is the Chester River Field Research Station, founded by a conservation-minded farm owner in the same year as the Center and cooperating with the Center from the outset before being merged with it in 2011. The Research Station, with its hundreds of acres of reestablished grasslands, hedgerows, woodlands and mud flats, remains located at its original site on the preserved 5,000 acres of Chino Farms in



Student-Built Data-Gathering Buoy

Photo credit – CES

Queen Anne’s County on the Chester River.

The Research Station began life, and continues today, as an effort to address issues arising from ecological conservation practices and wildlife habitat restoration on land adjacent to commercial agriculture:

- Do modern farming methods make it hard to reestablish habitat next to areas exposed to agricultural chemicals and practices?

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## TALKING WITH CHINO FARMS: THE STORY OF THE GRASSLANDS PROJECT

*In the 1990’s, Dr. Henry F. (“Harry”) Sears, owner of Chino Farms in northern Queen Anne’s County, began an experiment in native grassland restoration of recently retired croplands, under the name of the Chester River Field Research Station. The goal of the experiment was to develop a protocol, a “treatment plan”, that would provide a practical, affordable means of creating grasslands habitat.*

*Today that experiment continues as part of Washington College’s Center for Environment & Society, to which in 2011 Dr. Sears transferred the operations of the Research Station, including its Foreman’s Branch Bird Observatory.*

*As the Chronicle put together our story on the Center, we became curious about what got Harry Sears started on this experiment in the first place, and what the results of it have been. In the following Q & A, “Chino” speaks principally for Dr. Sears, but also for his long-time collaborator and neighbor Evan Miles of Bluestem Farms; biologist and grasslands researcher Dan Small; Research Station avian biologist Maren Gimpel; and master bander Jim Gruber.*

**Chronicle: What motivated you – what were you trying to do – when you launched the grasslands project in the late 1990’s?**

**Chino:** The simple answer is that we were hoping to answer some questions about wildlife conservation, and about agricultural ecology as it interfaced with reclamation of previously commercially-used land. We wanted to find ways to enhance habitats, soils, and water quality, and to identify the costs and benefits of these for the farmer. We were naive enough then to believe that we could make definitive observations and be

able to make recommendations based on those observations.

**Chronicle: Why do you say “naïve”?**

**Chino:** For several reasons, as we will discuss, but at the outset because we didn’t realize how dramatically little was known about what we wanted to investigate.

We convened a conference composed of the ecology, wildlife, agriculture, and academic folk, including people from government and private offices that had been managing CRP

anecdotes, not the restoration protocols we were after.

**Chronicle: OK, so then what did you do?**

**Chino:** We accepted the reality that there were precious few data about what we were interested in. Following the conference, with the guidance of our academic collaborators, we identified a number of questions that could yield answers applicable to a larger environment than the specific locality of a particular study.

The loss of grasslands, the world’s most threatened ecosystem, was a topic that was beginning to be recognized at this time, and the consequent decline in grassland bird species like the Bobwhite Quail was something we were experiencing first-hand at Chino.

Also being recognized was that the eastern forest before European settlement was a mosaic of woodlands and grasslands, not an unbroken tree canopy, and certainly not the modern mid-Shore landscape in which most all the non-forested areas are either intensively cropped or developed for human habitation.

So we focused on questions relating to eastern grasslands – how to restore them, how they would interact with adjacent croplands, what threatened species they might support.

**Chronicle: Given the decision to focus on grasslands, how did you proceed?**

**Chino:** In the spring of 1999, we took a 230-acre block that had been in corn and soybean row-crop production, divided it into 12 fields separated by firebreaks planted in clover, and planted each 20 +/- acre field with a different mixture of nine native warm season grasses such as Little Bluestem and Indian Grass. We wanted to see, among other things, if blocks of grassland

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Grasslands at Chino Farms

Photo Credit – CRFERS

and other costly conservation programs.

The result of this conference was startling. No one had a clue as to how really to address the fundamental question, “Was any of this doing any good?” There was no answer even to simple questions, like the optimal size and shape of a restored area in order for it to have positive environmental impacts. All we had were restoration

## EDITORIAL: FAREWELL FOR NOW

In the spring of 2011 we undertook publishing a newspaper, a “chronicle”, whose sole focus was our County, and whose purposes, as declared in our front page title, were “Celebrating Queen Anne’s County” and “Informing the Citizens.” Now, nearly four years and twenty-one issues later, we have come to our last regularly published issue, while not ruling out the possibility of an occasional “special” issue in the future.

Looking back, I realize that our launch of the *Chronicle* must have been inspired – at least in part – by the Comprehensive Plan process that the County had just completed. Like most endeavors, there were flaws and frustrations in the Comp Plan process. But hundreds of citizens took part, they began by agreeing on a Vision of the County, they proceeded to examine closely many different aspects of the County, and they concluded with consensus recommendations for the future – all that made me want to understand the County better, and then to share what we learned about it.

We found out that there was so much to cherish and be proud of in Queen Anne’s County: our schools, our libraries, and our nonprofits with their dedicated staffs and volunteers; our productive farms and small businesses; our blessed-with-beauty big skies, our dark starry nights, our wooded wetlands, the peace and quiet of our open spaces and waterways – and so much more, that in 21 issues we could only scratch the surface.

In putting together the *Chronicle*, we quickly learned the truth of the old adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words” – something especially true when one is trying to communicate and celebrate the natural beauty of Queen Anne’s County. Accordingly, the *Chronicle* received an immeasurable gift when David Godfrey generously downloaded onto our computer over a thousand pictures he had taken in our County. His artistic eye and skill with a camera have been evident in every issue of the *Chronicle*. Thank you, Dave, for your always-engaging photos.

Part of the joy of publishing the *Chronicle* has been sharing Jane Scott’s articles featuring the wildlife of our area. She began contributing regularly to the *Chronicle* in the Jan/Feb 2012 issue with “Surviving Winter” and went on to provide us with 15 more delightful and informative articles on the creatures we encounter here in QAC. The pleasure of re-reading her articles is a good reason to look up past issues of the *Chronicle* on the Queen Anne’s Conservation Association website, [www.qaca.org](http://www.qaca.org). Thank you so much, Jane.

Besides expressing my appreciation to the many QAC citizens who contributed news and features to the *Chronicle*, and to our publisher, Queen Anne’s Conservation Association, for its support, I particularly want to thank a public-spirited couple in QAC whose generosity enabled us to have the *Chronicle* printed and sent free-of-charge to every household in the County. I appreciate, too, the many, many citizens who made a point of telling me how much they enjoyed reading the *Chronicle*. Finally, none of this undertaking would have made it into print without the encouragement and constant support of my husband, Jim. We know we will miss our work on the *Chronicle*, but it is time for us to have more time for the other parts of our lives.

Best wishes, QAC citizens – and long live the Vision We Share!

– Mary Campbell, Editor

## The Queen Anne’s Chronicle

The Queen Anne’s Chronicle is published by  
Queen Anne’s Conservation Association.

Jay Falstad – Executive Director

Mary Campbell – Editor

Queen Anne’s Conservation Association (QACA), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, is the Eastern Shore’s oldest conservation organization. Its mission is to promote stewardship of Queen Anne’s County’s natural resources and to protect its rural character and small towns while encouraging the management of prudent and sustainable growth.

### Queen Anne’s Conservation Association

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Back issues of *The Queen Anne’s Chronicle* can be accessed at [www.qaca.org](http://www.qaca.org)

## THANK YOU, CHRIS PUPKE

This past summer, Chris Pupke, the president of Queen Anne’s Conservation Association, announced that after many years of leading the organization, it was time for him to take a break and step aside.

Chris’ leadership and participation over these many years have been invaluable to the Association in ways that can’t be fully expressed. It has always been Chris’ steady hand and calm manner that have guided the organization in a way that no one else could have done. Moreover, on tough issues, like Four Seasons or FASTC, it was usually Chris who came up with new ways to tackle the challenges.

As Executive Director, I came to rely on Chris for guidance and ideas, and through all of these years, he’s never let me down. He’s always been supportive, always willing to take a call, hold a meeting, do whatever was necessary to support the organization. And like any good president of a board of directors, he kept things moving ahead, treating all concerned with respect and honesty.

Chris is a conservationist in every sense of the word. He cares about our collective environment, about the woods and waterways, about the creatures that inhabit this unique biosphere of ours. And his deep family roots in Queen Anne’s County have helped him give everyone who has worked with him an appreciation of why this gateway to Maryland’s Eastern Shore is worth fighting for.

While he’s promised to be no more than a phone call away, he’ll still be missed. I’m honored to call him a friend, colleague, and fellow conservationist.

On behalf of Queen Anne’s Conservation Association and its many supporters, we thank Chris for his service over these many years, and wish him and his wife Andi and their two boys, all the very best.

Thank you, Chris.

– Jay Falstad, QACA Executive Director



Chesapeake Sunset

Photo Credit – David Godfrey

## COMMISSIONERS’ MEETINGS

Here are selected items summarized from approved minutes and QACTV coverage of the County Commissioners’ meetings.

**July 22, 2014.** The Commissioners:

- Heard an update from the Animal Welfare League (AWL) by Board Chairman Robert Mueller, reporting that the AWL opened its doors in September of 2013, after entering a public - private partnership with Queen Anne’s County to assist in improved care of stray, abandoned and sick animals; that significant volunteer and financial support from citizens had been forthcoming; and that for its first fiscal year animals brought in to the AWL shelter were 887, animals out of shelter were 722, the euthanasia rate was 7%, and that total

animals in foster care at some point were 104.

**August 12, 2014.** The Commissioners:

- Received a report from Budget & Finance Director Seeman estimating that FY2014 revenues came in over budget by almost \$1.8 million while expenditures were \$1.1 million under budget, resulting in an addition to fund balances (*i.e.* a surplus for the year) of about \$2.8 million.

**August 26, 2014.** The Commissioners:

- Agreed, by a 3-2 vote (Commissioners Dumenil, Moran, and Olds For, Commissioners Dunmyer and Simmons Against), to join, and pay \$25,000 to, the Funk & Bolton-led coalition of counties attacking the Bay Clean-Up effort as “fatally flawed” because

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# BIRD BANDING AT CHINO FARMS

BY JANE SCOTT

They call it “the bird banding station”, but it is really just a small white hut set between the woods and hedgerows. Inside is a long table against the front wall with various pieces of equipment: metal loops with different size bands, special pliers to pinch them on, clipboards of charts to record the data, and plastic cones stuck in tubes on small scales. Behind the table is a line of wooden pegs along the rafter, as well as shelves of reference books on the back wall and a US map crowded with little red dots.



Male and Female Northern Bobwhite

Photo Credit – Maren Gimpel

## Bringing in the Birds

When I arrived the other morning, both the hut and the pegs were empty. The ornithologists, Jim Gruber and Maren Gimpel, together with Christie Phebus, a Washington College senior majoring in Environmental Studies, were all out checking the nets, but they soon arrived with clusters of white mesh bags, each containing a live bird, hanging from their belts. The bags were hung on the pegs in a line according to size.

Attending to the smaller birds first, Jim and Maren each removed one from its bag, gently cupping a hand over the bird's back and holding the legs between their third and fourth fingers while Christie entered the information on the chart. First, the species, age and sex; although the latter was not always immediately evident, as many young males look much like the females. They also measured the length of flight feathers and softly blew on the bird's breast feathers to expose the skin and see how much fat the bird was carrying: necessary fuel for its long flight ahead.

After the coded band was affixed to the leg, they placed the bird head down in the plastic cone to weigh it and finally released it through the open window, seemingly none the worse for its ordeal. I was impressed at how little the birds seem to mind all this handling. It's true some, particularly the catbirds, squawked a little, but most seemed to take it all in stride.

## Catching the Birds

The birds are caught in mist nets, a nearly invisible green mesh strung loosely on bars one above the other lengthwise along paths at the edge of the woods or fields. When a bird inadvertently flies into one, it drops into the fold of loose netting and is trapped. The nets are checked regularly and birds gently removed and put into those mesh bags for the trip back to the station.

When I was there in mid-September, the list of species was impressive. It included more familiar ones such as catbirds, cardinals, and Carolina wrens, but also some not so readily noticed by many of us: American redstarts, male and female; a young male hummingbird; a Nashville and a Tennessee warbler; several common yellowthroats; a juvenile white eyed vireo; two ovenbirds; a chickadee; five red eyed vireos; a downy woodpecker; and a blue grosbeak.

This last, however, was not in its slate-blue breeding plumage, so it was not only hard for me to tell that it was a blue grosbeak, but even Jim was uncertain at first as to whether it was a young second-year male or a female. (He decided on the first.) There were also two indigo buntings that were brown instead of blue, having completed their late summer molt, and several bobolinks, also in winter plumage, on their way to winter homes in the South American rice fields.

I was surprised to find that some of these birds were infested with tiny ticks, usually on the head or near the eye where they could not pluck them off themselves. They were picked off with tweezers and put in small vials to be sent to a lab at the University of Richmond to test for the bacteria that carry Lyme or some other tick-borne disease.

## Collecting the Data

The banding operation at Chino Farms runs from March to late May in the spring, and again from August first to the end of November, to catch both the spring and fall migrations. All the data collected here and at other stations throughout the country are sent to the US Geological Survey in Patuxent, Maryland and provide invaluable information about the health of bird populations, including their preferred habitats, migration routes, wintering areas, and reproductive success.

The data also tell us something about the impact of certain environmental conditions and whether certain management strategies are proving effective. Those little red dots on Chino's map represent birds banded here but captured at other banding stations or picked up by private citizens. Each band contains an 800 number and a number code that tells where the bird was banded.

Some of the birds caught that morning had, in fact, been banded already, perhaps at Chino only a day or so previously. Even so, they were again checked for fat and weighed again to be sure they were getting enough fuel for the long trip ahead.

I learned a lot during my morning at the banding station and feel comforted that such capable people are keeping an eye on our bird populations.

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*Jane Scott, a writer and illustrator, is the author of Between Ocean and Bay: A Natural History of Delmarva (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1991), and Field and Forest, A Guide to Native Landscapes for Gardeners and Naturalists (Blackburn Press, 2002), as well as other works. She traces her roots in Delaware back to the 1730's and now lives on Maryland's Eastern Shore.*



Maren Gimpel removes a Wood Thrush from the mist net

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# NEW CITIZEN SUPPORT FOR QAC LIBRARIES

The Friends of the Queen Anne's County Library, a new 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has been founded with the mission of becoming “a vital bridge between the community and library”. The Friends seek to generate financial support for library programs, increase community awareness of the library, and encourage greater use of the library and its resources.

At its inaugural annual meeting in January 2014, the Friends elected the first group of Directors. Officers elected include: Mary E. Jackson, President; Chloe Norton, Vice President; Penny Lins, Secretary; and Richard Graves, Treasurer. Also elected were Directors Sue Haddox, Maria Sarier, and Martha Walden. Library

Director, John Walden, serves as an ex-officio member, and Jim Malara serves as the liaison from the Library's Board of Directors.

As a private non-profit, the Friends operates independently from the library and without government funding. Individual and families are encouraged to join the Friends.

The \$25 Member level offers an exclusive Friends Library Card. Additional membership levels from \$50 to \$500 provide expanded benefits such as a two-day grace period on return of library materials, discounts for purchase of items at the Friends book sale, a behind-the-scenes tour of your library, and reserved seating at Friends events. Friend members are encouraged and

welcomed to serve on Friends Committees.

The Friends also seeks corporate or organizational sponsorships which will enable a company or organization to receive additional benefits such as sponsoring a program or event.

Friends' brochures are available in a number of local venues. Additional information on the Friends of the Queen Anne's County Library may be found on the Queen Anne's County Library web site <http://www.qaclibrary.org/connect-with-us/support/friends-of-the-library>. Like the Friends on Facebook <Friends of the Queen Anne's County Library>, call the library at 410-758-0980, or contact the Friends President, Mary Jackson, via email [marvejackson@atlanticbb.net](mailto:marvejackson@atlanticbb.net) or phone (443-262-8717).

## Center for Environment, *continued from Page 3*

- Does the habitat harbor insects or other organisms harmful to crops?
- How can USDA conservation programs like CRP and CREP best improve water quality and habitat?

Check out the Chester River Field Research Station at [www.washcoll.edu/centers/ces/crfrs/](http://www.washcoll.edu/centers/ces/crfrs/) or at [www.facebook.com/CRFRFC](https://www.facebook.com/CRFRFC). A separate article in this issue of the *Chronicle* contains an in-depth discussion of the origins and achievements of the Chester River Field Research Station by its founder, medical scientist and Chino Farms owner Dr. Henry F. (“Harry”) Sears.

### Foreman’s Branch Bird Observatory

The Research Station has developed in tandem with its major component, the Foreman’s Branch Bird Observatory, the only major migratory bird banding station operating on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Foreman’s Branch flows into the Chester from its sources five miles to the south. Its waters provide refuge to thousands of migrating and wintering ducks and geese and important stopover habitat for shorebirds as well as a breeding area for Wood Ducks.

The Foreman’s Branch Bird Observatory was actually founded a year before the Chester River Field Research Station and then was known as the Chino Farms Banding Station. Today the Bird Observatory’s research focuses primarily on monitoring seasonal movements of migratory birds between their breeding and wintering areas. In a separate article in this issue, the *Chronicle*’s lead nature writer Jane Scott gives a more intimate account of the fascinating activities of the Foreman’s Branch Bird Observatory. For more on the Bird Observatory, go to [www.washcoll.edu/centers/ces/crfrs/bird-observatory.php](http://www.washcoll.edu/centers/ces/crfrs/bird-observatory.php).

### Archeology and GIS Labs

Two other key components of the Center for Environment & Society are the Public Archeology Lab, which allows students and community volunteers to research historic materials and process artifacts recovered from the Eastern Shore region, and the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Lab, founded in 2003 and currently under the guidance of Stewart Bruce, which utilizes cutting edge spatial analysis technology to work on a wide range of problems, including habitat and ecosystem mapping.

## What the Future Holds

As our accompanying article *Talking With Chino Farms: The Story of the Grasslands Project* demonstrates, there is no clear road forward to a Bay and watershed (or indeed any ecosystem anywhere) “in which natural systems and human communities are in balance”.

But if the ways to a new balance are to be found, they will likely be found one at a time, locally, by people involved with places of committed environmental learning like the Center for Environment & Society – and like the Wye Research and Education Center that we profiled in the last issue of the *Chronicle* and Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, on which we have a report in this issue.

That places like these are at work here in Queen Anne’s County is something else to celebrate about our special part of the Eastern Shore. We are not just waiting for others to find solutions – we are working right here and now to understand and restore the threatened but still extraordinary natural world in which we Eastern Shore humans have the privilege to live.

## Talking with Chino Farms, *continued from Page 3*

would be of more value to grassland birds than the prevalent CRP/CREP filter/buffer strips that may provide some cover for some birds, but also harbor edge-favoring predators such as foxes and raccoons.

That first summer we began comprehensive ecological studies of our grasslands, focusing especially on the population responses to the different grass mixes by Bird Species of Special Concern, including Grasshopper Sparrow, Dickcissel, Bobolink, and Bobwhite Quail. The results were immediate and remarkable.

The Grasshopper Sparrows arrived in the grasslands a month after planting, bred successfully, and sustained a large breeding population in the following years. Dickcissels, a nomadic species known for dramatic shifts in breeding range, were recorded beginning in the second year, including the first record of a returning Dickcissel in Maryland.

Prior to the installation of the grasslands block, only two or three coverts of Bobwhite Quail were present, whereas in a census in 2001 at least 24 different calling males were recorded.

Northern Bobwhite, Horned Lark, and Killdeer were confirmed as breeding in the grasslands, and several grassland birds such as Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Upland Sandpiper, and Vesper Sparrow were seen (some only occasionally) in the fields during migration.

### Chronicle: This sounds like a great success story.

**Chino:** And so it is – but only up to a point. Over the past ten years, we have learned some additional, humbling lessons that we couldn’t have learned in the first few years.

The most important lesson is that what we have made with our large grasslands plantation is really an artificial garden, even though it is beneficially used by many species and looks very much like what we imagine an eastern grassland prairie to have been.

The big problem is that our grasslands won’t stay that way on its own. The biology of this artificial garden is slowly working against the grassland habitat. Even with management techniques, like burning, that we can use at Chino because of

long experience and careful oversight, we are not succeeding in maintaining a diverse grasslands habitat.

And anyway, burning is hard or impossible for most landowners. A farmer or landowner has to have a way of planting something that will maintain itself as a viable habitat with a minimum amount of routine maintenance, or he will not do it.



Controlled Burn at Chino

Photo Credit – CRFRS

We have come to the conclusion that with the technology and techniques now known to us, a grassland habitat with the necessary diversity for use by grassland species is not *practically* maintainable over a decade (without being able to burn or have herbivores closely managed).

### Chronicle: What do you mean? Grasslands once planted just don’t go away, do they?

**Chino:** Maybe not in your garden – if you mow it all the time and put all sorts of chemicals on it. But that’s not a formula for usable grassland habitat. And remember: our goal is to create something that can be duplicated by farmers all over the eastern U.S. This implies a treatment plan that is not too expensive and does not require a lot of maintenance time. We don’t have that yet.

### Chronicle: What’s missing, then? What’s keeping you from a workable protocol?

**Chino:** We don’t know, or we’d have it. So it’s time to move

ahead, from Phase 1 to Phase 1B of our study.

The first part of Phase 1B will be to clearly identify those things that were wrong in Phase 1. The major identifiable problems we know today have arisen from the advice we obtained – from the most knowledgeable sources available – when we started: some of the grass species we planted grew to become monocultures or were otherwise inappropriate; the rate of seeds planted per unit area was excessive; and the exclusive use of warm-season varieties was possibly a mistake.

These are some of the variables we understand much better today, but more study is needed.

### Chronicle: What else?

**Chino:** Invasive species that are not part of a grasslands environment are an annoying issue. Hardwood trees, for example. A few are necessary. More than a few and you don’t have a grassland. Some, such as sumac, are part of natural grasslands, but in natural settings they are confined to patches. Yet in our experiment we have seen little evidence of their being confined!

Investigation of soil chemistry and nutrient availability related to cycled burning may shed some light on potential management strategies to control some invasives. Some noxious weeds and vines can be tolerated if they do not take over, but unfortunately in our Phase 1 they did.

These are some of the issues for Phase 1B. The planning for it is in the works.

The Chester River Field Research Station is re-dedicated to its goal: **to establish a protocol enabling a landowner to plant and easily maintain a grassland habitat providing the diversity to support threatened species, from soil microorganisms to megafauna, that enhance the environment.**

We have a lot of great people involved, and we’re moving forward.

**Chronicle: Thanks, Chino – this is an important ongoing enterprise for the Eastern Shore. We wish every success for you and your collaborators at Washington College and elsewhere.**

# THE ARMORY IN CENTREVILLE BEGINS A NEW LIFE

BY MARY MARGARET REVELL GOODWIN

D-Day. Even the sound of it spoken out loud brings a lump in the throat and the heart beats faster. How much more physically and emotionally impacting it must have been for those men actually there that day, packed like sardines in open landing ships, feelings of cold, sea-sickness and salt-water spray piled on their fears of what lay ahead. They had to stand, no room to sit, many nervously smoking what was likely their last cigarette, the smell drifting in the sea-spray over all. They were to be landed on the beaches of France, dumped into German fire raking those beaches.



Company K in their new military overcoats moving into formation on the corner of Commerce and Kidwell  
- Centreville History Collection of M.M.R. Goodwin

## The Men from the Centreville Armory

Many months before, the men of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 115th Regiment, 29th Infantry, had boarded the train just off Railroad Avenue in Centreville. Some of them would never return, but instead remain with the hundreds of thousands who bought freedom for all of us with their lives. Much of Company K's initial military preparation, and certainly their comradery, had been developed over months and months of training at the Armory on Commerce Street in Centreville. It had been their "home at home", a place of bonding as well as training for war.

Company K had been organized in 1920, and originally it trained in a building that no longer exists: the multi-purpose movie house, fire house, post office and recreational building known as the Opera House. It once stood in what is now the parking lot for Edwards Pharmacy and was the center of Town life at the turn of the century. Then in 1926 a stand-alone Armory building was determined to be truly needed, so the new, shining Armory of Centreville was built to house Company K, the Maryland National Guard unit for this region.

The Armory was like a massive brick centurion in a neighborhood of beautiful old Centreville homes. There was no room for a parade field at the Armory, so training took place amongst the homes of the neighborhood, on the sidewalks, incorporating into the general atmosphere of the Town its love of the men whom everyone knew. It turned out, though no one knew it at the time, that training on the streets of Centreville would be far more appropriate than training on big parade grounds (which they also would go through) for the kind of door-to-door effort in small towns that so many of the men would actually undertake in France.

## The Armory in Peace and War

The Armory, besides its military uses, became the center for all important social gatherings: high school graduations, agricultural meetings, dances. Both Queen Anne's High School and Kennard High School had graduation ceremonies on the stage in the huge main hall of the Armory. This stage and the rooms attached to it had not been in the original plans for the Armory. Fortunately, Mr. DeCoursey Thom, a descendant of Governor Robert Wright, donated \$5,000 for the stage and the special rooms attached to it. The stage significantly changed the atmosphere of the big hall and made the room much more compatible for social functions.

In spite of its grandly polished wood floor, poultry and rabbit competitions were held annually in the hall. Agricultural meetings that would affect local policy for years to come, particularly dairy meetings, were held in the hall. Several major agricultural award dinners were held in the hall.

To the delight of the men of the Town, the owner of the New York Restaurant, Tony Kontos, organized professional boxing matches held in the hall. The Town's papers loved these events so much that they became an excuse for some of the most poetic pugilistic prose ever seen in local papers.

By the 1980's, however, the Armory had become the "white elephant" on Commerce Street, an enticement to random efforts to break in, falling into increasing degrees of decay. Ammunition had been stored there over the years, and there was a firing range as well. Asbestos had been slathered throughout the building, in particular all over the basement.

## The Armory Restored

The requirement of removal, under strict new federal rules, of all the asbestos prior to any public use threw cold water on re-purposing schemes for the Armory, such as an assisted living facility, a day care center, and other ideas. The building went into private hands several times. Any project for reusing the Armory would take great courage and involve significant costs.

Finally, along came Chrissy Aull, founding Executive Director of the Wye River Upper School, who with her Board had the imagination to see the possibilities – and the courage to take on what so many had walked away from.

Plans were developed for giving new life to the Armory as a school to be nestled in the heart of Centreville's historic neighborhood. Along the way, the Maryland Historical Trust joined the effort, assuring the Armory's historical status would not be lost. That this was accomplished with an addition to the building housing an elevator was another major triumph: the grand appearance of one of Centreville's great buildings brings the past into the future.



The Armory Restored, with WRUS Students

Photo Credit – Katie Theeke/WRUS

There will now be years and years of students who will benefit from the redefining of the Armory into a first-class educational institution. A building that was home to men who fought for our freedom against the forces of destruction has now become home to generations of new young men, and now women too. Their knowledge gained in the Armory-Now-School will still work to keep our country free, whether in war or in peace.

Centreville Historian Mary Margaret Revell Goodwin has led the War of 1812 commemoration on the Eastern Shore. She is completing a book on the War of 1812 on the Eastern Shore and working on a major new book, enriching and updating Emory's late 19th century account, on the history of Centreville and Queen Anne's County.

## Commissioners' Meetings, continued from Page 4

it allegedly fails to take into account "the largest contribution source" of pollution to the Bay, namely, "the Conowingo Dam during major storm events and on a day-to-day basis."

**September 9, 2014.** The Commissioners:

- Adopted, Commissioner Dunmyer opposed, Ordinance No. 14-03 allowing in the County free-standing electronic signs of up 60 square feet of surface area with copy that can change daily but cannot include pictorial images or features that simulate movement.

# FOR THE BIRDS AND THE BAY - CHESAPEAKE WILDLIFE HERITAGE: RESTORING QAC WETLANDS, WOODLANDS AND GRASSLANDS

BY CHRIS PUPKE

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage (CWH) is a private, non-profit organization that works with landowners throughout the Chesapeake Bay region to restore, manage and protect wildlife habitat such as wetlands, meadows and woodlands. Founded in 1980, CWH owns more than 825 acres in Queen Anne's County.

## CWH's Properties in QAC

The 540-acre Barnstable Hill Farm is located on Kent Island and has 5 1/2 miles of water frontage on Kirwan Creek and Prospect Bay. It was donated to CWH by the Bennett/White family in 2000. More than 100 acres of wetlands and 50 acres of buffers (wooded and grassed) have been restored on the farm. It is the largest wildlife refuge on Kent Island and one of the largest in the County.

The Bennett Point Farm, owned in partnership with the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, is on the Wye River near Queenstown. CWH has restored 107 acres of wetlands on the farm and planted a 30-acre forest buffer along the Wye River.

The 13-acre Piney Creek Wetland Preserve is near Kent Narrows and provides valuable shoreline habitat.

## Working with Other Landowners

Beyond restoring and managing the habitat on CWH's own land, CWH works with other landowners throughout the County. This work has included planting 50 acres of warm season grass buffers and 20 acres of forested buffers at the County's Conquest Preserve. Two recent examples of working with private landowners are Mudford Farm and Talisman Farm.

- Mudford Farm is a 283-acre farm near Sudlersville at the headwaters of Red Lion Branch, a major tributary of the Chester River. CWH worked with the landowner to restore 40 acres of wetlands and plant 40 acres of warm season grass buffers on the farm. The entire property was placed in conservation easements to permanently protect it.
- Talisman Farm is located on Eastern Bay south of Grasonville. A partnership with the landowner led to CWH restoring 100 acres of wetlands (see photos) and planting 40 acres of warm season grass buffers.

Currently, CWH is working to restore 37 acres of wetlands on four different properties in Queen Anne's County. The properties range from Kent Island to Barclay, including a five acre wetland at CWH's Barnstable Hill Farm.

## The Benefits of Restored Wetlands

Through this work and habitat projects on dozens of other properties in the County, CWH is improving water quality and increasing biodiversity in Queen Anne's County. A study conducted by CWH and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center found that up to 45% of the sediment, 50% of the phosphorus and 70% of the nitrogen pollution that enter a wetland restored by CWH can be filtered by that wetland.

Additionally, 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. A separate survey conducted at CWH

wetland restoration sites revealed four species of dragonflies and damselflies (Odonates) that had not yet been officially documented in Queen Anne's County. A Monarch butterfly tagged in a restored wetland at CWH's Barnstable Hill Farm was recovered 1,960 miles away overwintering in Central Mexico.

## Working with the Farm Community

CWH also works with area farmers to reduce the negative impacts agriculture can have on water quality. One example is its partnership with Crop Production Services (CPS) in

Centreville. CWH purchased a "nutriplacer" with funds provided by a grant from the Biophilia Foundation. This piece of equipment places liquid fertilizers, principally nitrogen and phosphorus, about four inches below ground, thereby improving the uptake of the nutrients by the crop and reducing the amount of fertilizer that washes off the field. The nutriplacer is loaned to CPS free of charge so that CPS may utilize it on farm land in the County to help local farmers increase their yields and reduce their nutrient run-off.

CWH meets a critical need in the efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay. It is one of the very few environmental organizations whose work has a direct and immediate impact on water quality and wildlife. Support for this work comes from USDA Farm Bill Conservation Programs, grants and gifts from generous individuals. For more information about CWH or to schedule a site visit to learn about how you can increase habitat for wildlife on your property, go to [www.cheswildlife.org](http://www.cheswildlife.org).

*Chris Pupke is Director of Development for Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage. He is the past President of the Board of Queen Anne's Conservation Association and has served for many years on the Board of Camp Wright on Kent Island. He lives outside of Centreville with his wife, Andi, and their twin sons.*



*Decades of poor farm management created a gulch in a farm field near Grasonville, resulting in sediment and nutrient pollution in the nearby Hoghole Creek. Working with the landowner, CWH designed and restored a wetland in the field. This pair of photos shows the field before and after the wetland restoration (follow the tree line in both photos for perspective). By restoring this wetland (and many like it throughout the County), CWH is increasing habitat for wildlife and improving water quality in our streams, creeks and rivers.*



*Photo Credit - CWH*

## \* A Calendar \* \* Of Verses \*

### OCTOBER: AUTUMN THOUGHTS

Come to me, O ye children!  
For I hear you at your play,  
And the questions that perplexed me  
Have vanished quite away...  
In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,  
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow;  
But in mine is the wind of Autumn  
And the first fall of the snow...

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

### NOVEMBER: FALLING LEAVES

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,  
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes...  
Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
What if my leaves are falling like its own!...

— P. B. Shelley

### DECEMBER: FIRESIDE READING

Send the ruddy fire-light higher;  
Draw your easy chair up nigher;  
Through the winter, bleak and chill,  
We may have our summer still.

Here are poems we may read,  
Pleasant fancies to our need:  
Ah, eternal summertime  
Dwells within the poet's rhyme!

— Ina Coolbrith

