



## FOCUS ON...

# Environmental Stewardship

### Improving the Environment

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) is honoring its commitment to “Environmental Stewardship” – the goal of improving the overall environment while providing needed transportation infrastructure and mobility – during planning for the US 301 Waldorf Area Transportation Improvements Project. Beyond the standard environmental protection measures required by law, the US 301 Waldorf project team is investigating additional enhancement, conservation and restoration opportunities within the Waldorf area. In addition to receiving community feedback, an essential component of the study is the guidance the team receives from an interagency oversight group at each critical milestone.

### Identifying Environmental Stewardship Opportunities

During the study phase of a new transportation project, such as the US 301 Waldorf Area Project, SHA will work with local organizations, special interest groups, and state and federal agencies to identify environmental concerns. Then, in concert with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Conservation Fund (a national not-for-profit environmental conservation organization), SHA will develop a detailed ecological resource assessment of the Waldorf project area. SHA will also work with local community agencies and interest groups to identify community and cultural-based stewardship opportunities.

Examples of potential environmental stewardship opportunities include:

- Enhancement of degraded wetland resources
- Conservation/preservation of high quality ecological resources
- Stream restoration actions
- Watershed protection efforts
- Stormwater management retrofits
- Preservation and protection of culturally significant sites
- Improvements to public recreational facilities
- Support for environmental education initiatives

### Evaluating and Prioritizing Opportunities

Once identified, detailed evaluations are developed for each environmental stewardship opportunity. The evaluations consider the resources needed (including planning, design requirements, land acquisition or management and funding) and fully characterize the needed improvements and potential environmental and community benefits. Then the opportunities are “ranked” according to these criteria:

- Environmental Benefits
- Impacts on Other Resources
- Need
- Feasibility
- Benefit-to-Cost Ratio



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### **The Environmental Stewardship Plan**

The results of the ranking are compiled into an Environmental Stewardship Plan, which will become a part of the approved US 301 Waldorf Area Transportation Improvements Project. This plan will list the priority environmental stewardship opportunities identified and suggest an implementation plan to guide completion of projects. This plan will also benefit other interested partners, including environmental agencies, planning organizations, conservation groups, and other public interests in working toward improving the overall environment of the greater Waldorf area.

### **For More Information**

Or to request a project team speaker to meet with your community or organization, please contact Steve Hawtof, Project Manager, at (800) 548-5026 or email [shawtof@sha.state.md.us](mailto:shawtof@sha.state.md.us)

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