



The President's Bark by Dr. Geoff Patton, Ph.D.



Thanks to popular demand, the old “President’s Chip” is being replaced by this “President’s Bark”, as being more of a tree-centric message. So you can read easier, I’m going to modernize the format toward even briefer items with links to more info. This note from the MAGIC President is intended to let me air my beefs about the way things could be better for our forest friends. If we don’t speak up for them, they have no voice in the policy decisions of those people responsible for forest stewardship.

A serious issue that gets little notice is the slaughter of innocent wildlife by the normal daily activities of human lives. Birds crashing into windows, squirrels electrocuted on electric poles (often interrupting service), and road kills. Estimating New England data for 1993, Merritt Clifton, editor of Animal People Newspaper, estimated that nationwide the following animals are being killed by motor vehicles in the United States annually:

- 41 million [squirrels](#)
- 26 million [cats](#)
- 22 million [rats](#)
- 19 million [opossums](#)
- 15 million [raccoons](#)
- 6 million [dogs](#)
- 350,000 [deer](#)

(Data courtesy of Wikipedia; search “roadkill”, accessed 1/21/09.)

These figures don’t show the **foxes, bobcats, bears, birds, otters**, and others. What’s worse is that these deaths that diminish wild populations are largely preventable (also discussed on Wikipedia [site](#)).

Where you are familiar with an area, you may know of places where road kills are common. You expect to see carcasses there. Any place a patch of woods was bisected by a road. Where a stream is bridged. Where there are jersey barriers. Natural paths for wildlife movement intersecting roads mean continual mayhem and mutilation. You might not even see the body on the roadway, as the mortally-wounded creatures drag themselves out of sight only to die hidden.

Wildlife passages should be placed wherever a road cuts through a natural path. Signs and slower speeds should be employed. Even painting the roadway with white, reflective paint could help drivers

see in adverse conditions. In some places, high-tech animal detectors set off warning lights. We already do enough harm to animals through habitat loss, pollution, and “predator control”. We should not add to the losses through our own negligence and lack of responsibility.

Forest Jobs.

As MAGIC promotes **decoupling MD DNR** selling **logging leases** from subsidizing their budget (a clear conflict of interest), we also support using other revenue to help DNR help local forest-based communities through sources such as the “Reggie” fund ([RGGI – the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#)) that is bringing millions of dollars for energy conservation and environmental protection to states across the region. Contracting to pay people to work in control and eradication of exotic species from our forests could replace some logging, leaving our trees standing to fight global warming. Thus, no jobs would be lost, the forests could be protected, and both people and animals will benefit.

Also on the jobs front, there are interesting, well-paying jobs in forest ecology research waiting for those students who choose such a career path. Some require extensive education and that can be fun in itself. So can be the travel opportunities. Check out this [link](#) (pick the English flags). There are many organizations with opportunities at various levels, too. Earthwatch has this [site](#). So, encourage kids toward science, whether it’s forest science, animal science, or science writing. It’s just the ticket for curious minds.



MAGIC Treasurer and Communications Director Dr. Cheryl Kassed admires an ancient tree in Stafford County, VA's Crows' Nest Forest.

Hot Items -

MAGIC has joined a new forest interest group that you might also wish to track. Here’s the announcement: “A new group - the **Forest Conservation Group** - has been established in the **Chesapeake Watershed Network**. If you are involved in conserving or restoring trees and forests (urban, rural, along streams, whatever!), this group may be of interest to you. The group is organized as a result of the 2008 Forest Conservation Summit. The Summit created six "work groups" to develop various initiatives. Each of these work groups participates in the on-line Forest Conservation Group, and others are welcome to join, as well. Find out more about the group and the six work groups at this [link](#).”

The environmental movement is made of many groups with interlocking interests. One such group is Blue Frontier Campaign, hosting the Blue Vision Summit. If you are interested in issues related to clean oceans for people and wildlife, MAGIC suggests you to check out the Blue Frontier Campaign website [here](#) and the [Blue Vision Summit](#) March 7-10, 2009 in Washington DC.

The **Watershed Stewards Academy** is an initiative of Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works and Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center to train community leaders, called “Master Watershed Stewards”, to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater runoff in Anne Arundel County. The role of the Master Watershed Stewards is to engage and educate citizens, businesses and organizations within sub-watersheds on relevant environmental issues. They will coordinate small-scale restoration on private property such as installation of rain gardens, green roofs, rain barrels and septic retrofits as well as large-scale restoration efforts such as bio-retention areas or shoreline restorations on community property. The goal is to reduce the pollutant load carried from the land into our waterways.

Master Watershed Stewards will participate in an intensive **Certification Course**, including hands on training in restoration techniques and will complete a stormwater infiltration project within their sub-watershed. After certification is complete, Master Watershed Stewards will serve as a resource person and community leader, continuing to coordinate efforts to infiltrate stormwater and reduce pollutant sources within his/her sub watershed. Download more [info](#) and an [application](#) (requires Internet Explorer-compatible browser). Informational session is Wednesday, January 28th 6:30-7:30 p.m.

MAGIC hasn't put on **community volunteer activities** itself as our affiliate organizations often do those themselves. So, we are happy to encourage your interest in NPLD. “[National Public Lands Day](#) (NPLD) is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy. In 2008, 120,000 volunteers and community partners contributed an estimated \$42 million of improvements to over 1,800 public land sites – federal, state, city and county lands – in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.” (From their website.) If you are a member of an organization that wants to do NPLD, we encourage you to do so.

Speaking of our Treasurer and Communications Director, Dr. Cheryl Kassed recently attended an excellent training seminar on effectively communicating environmental messages. Sponsored by the League of Conservation Voters, the seminar, given in Annapolis by Dick Brooks of [ActionMedia.org](#), discussed strategies for clearly targeting environmental messages tailored to the receiving audience. Participants learned about using stories to illustrate a message for effective communication. People interpret messages in terms of what they already know. Because people jump to conclusions based on very few clues, the story is what is meaningful, NOT lists of facts. For example, saying WHY we are concerned about issues like global warming works. We want to say we care because rising ocean/bay levels will take away the land and livelihood of our fellow Marylanders; because we'll have to travel further north to find snow for skiing; and because the trees are dying in the forests that we love to hike. The message of the day was that communication uses values and concepts that the audience already knows. Saying what you mean so a listener can relate will increase the power and clarity of your communication.

The Hottest News of All -

We all like it when we get rewarded for reading to the end of a newsletter and finding a really get final item. This is it! The MAGIC Board of Directors voted at their January meeting to include “**land stewardship**” as a primary function. This means that MAGIC will work to advance land trust

acquisition of conservation lands, facilitate conservation easements, and promote Transfers of Development Rights for the purpose of preserving natural areas for wildlife. The Board recognizes that these activities are perfectly aligned with our [Mission](#) and can help us achieve our goals in a very direct manner. It also means that we will be partnering with even more organizations, such as the national Land Trust Alliance. You can expect to see even more action by MAGIC in the coming months and years.



The Directors vote for MAGIC to be an active land stewardship group.

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