Reforestation

Reforestation is the renewal of a forest after a disturbance. The Conservancy’s land, along with a vast majority of Maryland, was completely forested before European settlers arrived. The trees here at the Conservancy were taken down so that the land could be used for farm fields. Over the last decade, Conservancy staff and volunteers have planted thousands of trees in an effort to reclaim and reforest the land for the benefit of the wildlife and the community. The tree tubes you see on your hike protect these trees from deer damage. We have planted a variety of native hardwoods such as oak, maple, cherry, hickory, gum, sassafras and redbud.

Other Places to Visit at the Conservancy:

• Chickens and pygmy goats in the orchard area.

• 3-acre native plant Honors Garden

• Historic Farm house and outbuildings including the bank barn, carriage house, smoke house, and outhouse

• Our 63 plot Community Garden

Thank you so much for visiting the Howard County Conservancy. Come back soon!
Start at the Tulip Poplar trailhead next to the bank barn. Head down the hill about 90 ft, turn right and visit stop #1.

Stop #1: Bee Hives
Our bee hives are home to European Honey bees, and are maintained by the Howard County Beekeepers Association. These pollinators will fly as far as 2 miles from their hive to collect nectar and pollinate flowers.

Return to the trail; continue down the hill until you reach the mailbox on the left.

Stop #2 Butterfly Garden
This garden was created by girl scouts and is now maintained by dedicated volunteers. The garden is planted with coneflowers, black eyed susan, lobelia, mountain mint... just to name a few.

At the bottom of the hill, turn right at the kiosk. Follow the East Branch stream to Hodge Podge Lodge on your left.

Stop #3 Hodge Podge Lodge
Hodge Podge Lodge was a Maryland Public Television children’s show in the 1970s hosted by Miss Jean Worthley. Each program had a different environmental topic such as animals, plants and appreciation of the outdoors. The Lodge was taken down and reconstructed here at the Conservancy. We now use the Lodge as an environmental learning station. The combination is available from any Conservancy staff member.

Stop #4 - East Branch Stream
Near the Lodge is the East Branch stream, fed by an underground spring. Originating on Conservancy property, this stream joins the Davis Branch stream just north of our boundary before flowing to the Patapsco River. Based on studies of the macro invertebrates and other life found in the stream, the East Branch is believed to be a very healthy stream.

To continue on your hike, cross the bridge, remaining on the tulip Poplar Trail. About 60 ft on your left is a trail leading to the beech tree. This trail parallels the Tulip Poplar trail and rejoins the main trail at the top of the hill.

Stop #5—American Beech Tree
Beech (Fagus grandifolia) leaves are papery smooth on both sides. Its bark is a very smooth and steel-grey, making it a favorite for carving initials, dates and other messages. This is a destructive practice that seriously damages the tree.

A beechnut has a spiny case that opens into 4 parts when ripe revealing a 3 sided edible nut. Beechnuts feed a variety of wildlife in our forests including squirrels, raccoons and some bird species. Continue up the hill until you reach the post with the number 7. You are now at the wetlands.

Stop #6—Wetland
A wetland is a low-lying area of land that is saturated with moisture. Many natural wetlands have been filled in to create farmland, housing developments and industrial parks.

This wetland was created when a pipeline was installed through the field. It marks the point where the East Branch stream first appears at the surface. Plant species include cattail, jewel weed and skunk cabbage.

Return to the trail and look for the wooden post with the #8. The oak tree is straight ahead.

Stop # 7—Oak Tree
This tree is the oldest tree at the Conservancy. Oaks are known to be slow growing trees and though we do not know the exact age, we believe the tree was in existence before this land was settled.

Walk past the oak tree to the top of the hill and turn left. Follow the Tulip Poplar trail sign.

Take a moment to quietly observe wildlife in the bird blind on your left. Return to the trail, when you reach the Tulip Poplar trail marker turn left. The Snag is about 90 feet on your right.

Stop # 8—Snag
A snag is a standing dead tree. These trees are very important to the ecosystem because they provide food and shelter for insects and other decomposers, birds and mammals. This is a red oak tree snag.

You are now back at the butterfly garden/kiosk area. Follow the trail to the top of the hill. We hope you enjoyed your hike!