

## **Spring Fun Helps Creek in Mt. Airy**

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On a beautiful early spring day in late March more than 100 youth and adults gathered to plant native trees and shrubs to help restore Woodville Branch, a small tributary of Linganore Creek that begins in Mt. Airy. Elementary, middle, high school and home schooling youth joined the effort, including representatives of three Boy Scout troops and six Girl Scout troops. Spirits were high as everyone signed in and gathered to see a demonstration of proper planting methods.

Soon more than 200 trees were being carried, one by one, to the locations around the park where holes had been prepared. Phil Pannill, Watershed Forester guided the placement of the Pin oaks, Northern red oaks, Persimmons, Red maples, Red buds, River Birch, Yellow Poplars, and Winterberry Hollies – each to a location ideal for its sun and moisture needs. Volunteers worked in teams, carrying plants to the proper locations,

removing the plant from the container and freeing the roots, checking the depth of the hole and adjusting it as needed, setting the root balls upright and carefully filling in dirt around them, tamping it firmly to remove any air pockets, and finally getting mulch to apply around the tree to retain moisture and limit competition from weeds.

Frederick County Government's Watershed Management Section partnered with the Mt. Airy Parks and Recreation Board and Beautification Commission to plant 625 native trees and shrubs on 6 acres in Village Gate and East West Parks just off Prospect Street on the north side of Mt. Airy along Woodville Branch. Almost 60% of the Woodville Branch stream corridor is eroded and 36% has inadequate vegetation along the stream banks. Mt. Airy wants to protect water quality and increase the recharge of ground water since its citizens rely on ground water for their drinking water supply. Woodville Branch flows into Linganore Creek and Lake Linganore, a key drinking water source for the City of Frederick and Frederick County. The lake is regulated by the Maryland Department of the Environment with a pollution "cap" for sediment and phosphorus.

Project partners include the Audubon Society of Central Maryland, the Maryland Forest Service, Western Maryland R, C, and D, and the Monocacy & Catoctin Watershed Alliance, [www.watershed-alliance.com](http://www.watershed-alliance.com). "We are delighted with this exciting partnership in Mt. Airy. Local citizens are doing their part to help improve water quality. The involvement of our Alliance partners has been key. We'd love to do similar projects including rain gardens and streamside plantings with citizens elsewhere in the Linganore watershed," said Kay Schultz, the County's Community Restoration Coordinator.

The project was developed during the Lower Monocacy Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS), completed in June 2004. The Lower Monocacy WRAS was a

planning initiative organized by Frederick County with technical assistance from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The WRAS planning process was guided by a broad community-based Steering Committee that included representatives from local non-profits, government agencies, conservation organizations, farmers, and other landowners. The Steering Committee analyzed data from DNR, hosted community meetings to solicit public input, and identified Mt. Airy as a high priority area for targeted restoration.

The County purchased the trees and stakes for the project with grants from the Maryland Department of the Environment under the federal Clean Water Act, the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Mini Grant program. The Chesapeake Bay Trust is a private non-profit dedicated to "promoting public awareness and participation in the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its Maryland tributaries." The Trust receives support through donations via the Tax Check off on the Maryland State Income Tax form, sales of the "Treasure the Chesapeake" commemorative Bay license plate, private donations, memorial gifts and support from the business community.

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