Hello MPEA Friends & Volunteers!

Time is short lately or rather time to get everything done is running short. However, if you have followed our activities from season to season and year to year you already knew that autumn is one of our busier periods. Busy is good though. If you head on over for a quiet walk in the woods just be prepared for others to be there too. Squeezing in many hikes before winter temps and 5 o'clock darkness sets in seems to be high on many people’s priority list. The change in foliage color is bringing in additional foot traffic too. With over a thousand acres, don’t worry about a crowd. There’s plenty of room for all of us to enjoy the sights and sounds of fall.

Closings

The yearly press release announcing the 2014-2015 Deer Management Program was recently sent. The dates that the MPEA will be closed until noon are: October 14th, October 30th, November 11th, November 20th, January 8th, January 22nd, February 5th, and February 19th. In the few intervening weeks before the first hunt in mid-October you are likely to see a flurry of activity as we make final preparations. Customarily we wait until just before the actual hunt dates in order to mow the hunter parking spots. This allows for the peak of Monarch Butterfly migration to pass through our locale before we cut those meadow areas. There are a few other odds and ends to take care of but the important message for you to remember is that we are closed until noon on hunting days.

Changes

The steady progress on trail drainage improvements continues to elicit mostly positive comments from frequent trail walkers. Everyone has noticed the two sections of turnpike that were installed but many smaller, not-so noticeable improvements have been made as well. If you were wondering what the “turnpike” is or where to find it, look for the areas where you used to walk through mud. Now the trail is slightly elevated and, more significantly, dry. There have also been very few negative comments about the recent changes and that is understandable. Believe me; we are mindful of the disturbances we are creating because we are also responsible for fixing them too. Please feel free to ask any staff about what they are doing or why or even just to mention any concerns that you have.

Staff News

More good news has befallen us in the form of a graduate school intern. Maddie Koenig will be working with us one day per week for the next nine months. Although she is undertaking a few projects of her own, you are just as likely to see her lending a hand to staff and volunteers in the field. Maddie made her debut assisting with this month’s Conservation Stewardship Project, which by the way, resulted in the removal of vines from many meadow-side trees. Our last two CSP events for the year are coming up: one on Oct. 28th and the last on Nov. 25th.
I hope to see you out in the MPEA,

Jeff

Interesting Links

A volunteer of ours asked to share this useful website where you can find species-specific information and distribution maps for invasive plants and animals. Here it is: 
http://www.eddmaps.org/Species/ There is a lot of info available so be sure to click around.

The second link points to a few photos of a cat-like critter in Africa riding on other animals. It sounds silly but it is actually interesting because claims have been made that this is the first time a wild mammal has been photographed riding another wild mammal.

http://wildlifeact.com/blog/camera-traps-catch-strangest-behaviour/

Here are two native plants recently found in the MPEA. Maddie took the photos and identified the species. Above is Wingstem (Actinomeris alternifolia). Below is Arrow-leaved Tear Thumb (Polygonum saggitatum). The name may sound vaguely familiar as we spend a great deal of time talking about non-native, invasive Tear Thumb (Persicaria perfoliata).
The Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA), established in 1996, is 1021 acres in size and contains a diversity of habitat types. There are upland and bottomland hardwood forest, fields, wetlands, ponds, and riparian (riverine) habitats. The primary components of the MPEA's mission are natural resource management, education, research and recreation. Successfully delivering our mission depends on the efforts of volunteers such as you!

We’re on the Web!

http://www.howardcountymd.gov/mpea.htm
AND
www.middlepatuxent.org

DITCH THE DISPOSABLE BOTTLES

REDUCE

USE REUSABLE BOTTLES

www.howardcountymd.gov/rap