

# MOFFA NEWSLETTER

Maryland Organic Food & Farming Association

[www.marylandorganic.org](http://www.marylandorganic.org)

Fall 2012

## Land Trusts: Keepin' It Rural



If you're like me, it's painful to see good farmland become a subdivision. To my mind, while everyone needs a home, we need to be creative about balancing housing

needs and protecting productive land and

open space. Land trusts and conservation subdivisions are two critical tools in 'keepin' it rural'. (For more information about conservation subdivisions check out this link:

[www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/greendev/subdivision](http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/greendev/subdivision))

According to the Land Trust Alliance, "50 million acres of land in America will be lost to development in the next 25 years. That's over 5,000 acres a day." 50 million acres that

would have helped keep our air and water clean and be available to farm.

Land trusts are private, non-profit organizations that operate on the local, state, or national level, working in cooperation with landowners to "protect and conserve land for its natural, recreational, scenic, historic, or productive value". Interested landowners enter into a voluntary legal agreement with a land trust - called a conservation easement - to

**Over 5,000 acres a day are lost to development**

permanently restrict specific uses

of that land. (For example - limiting development on a property to one house of a specified size.) The landowner sells or donates the conservation rights to the land trust, but remains the owner of the property. Subsequent property owners are legally bound to follow the agreement. The land trust is responsible for monitoring land use and making sure the agreement is upheld. There are potential tax

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## Extreme Weather Drama

by Tanya Tolchin



For those of us farming in Maryland (and most everywhere else) climate change is hitting home. Whether it's the release of the new USDA Plant Hardiness Zone map, this summer's drought, last summer's flooding, or learning the new word "derecho", we have all been facing pretty regular weather drama. My children know exactly how to handle a tornado warning now, and it seems we are popping into our hall closet on a regular basis. We have suddenly made the shift from fighting impending climate change to scrambling to adapt and it is pretty overwhelming.

On our farm (Jug Bay Market Garden), we are thinking about extending the growing season both to avoid farming during the hottest part of the year and to spread out our risk over a longer growing season. We recently joined Heron There Farm to start a CSA in what we used to think of as the "off season". Other Maryland farmers like Evenstar Farm have been doing this for years, and it might become essential for the rest of us to follow suit.

One way MOFFA farmers can help each other is to share notes about adapting to climate change. I have so many questions. Has anyone found the most bolt resistant lettuce? Which generators work best to run essentials like irrigation during our increasingly common power outages? Do we need to increase our vigilance against new plant diseases and weed varieties and if so, how? How can we be better prepared both for warmer temperatures and extreme weather events? Does everyone else worry about their hoopouses when the winds pick up or has someone figured out the best way to secure them? What about using our proximity to Washington to help effect national policy on farming and climate change?

Adapting to climate change while running farm operations is overwhelming but working together could help us protect our farms and build a stronger MOFFA community at the same time. We could use our Facebook page, this newsletter

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SAVE THE DATE!

## 22nd. ANNUAL MOFFA WINTER MEETING

February 16, 2013

Maryland Department of Agriculture  
Annapolis, MD

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ALL ARE INVITED!  
**PASTURE PARTY  
FOR LAND CONSERVATION**

**Saturday, Oct 6, 11 AM - 3 PM**

**P.A. Bowen Farmstead**

**15701 Dr. Bowen Rd., Village of Aquasco, Brandywine, MD 20613**

**Celebrate Rural Living!**

Live Music \* Taste of Potluck - Starts at 12 Noon \* Hoops & Stilts for Kids  
Nature Scavenger Hunt - Starts at 1 PM

Sustainable Door Prizes \* "Prettiest Cow" Contest! \* Old Jar Flea Market/Farmer's Market/Artisans

"What Is It?" Farm & Home Items from the Past \* Antique Tractors & Cars

Birds of Prey/Pottery Making/Silent Auction \* Scarecrow Stuffing AND MORE FUN

Informative Displays

Sponsored by Black Swamp Creek Land Trust, MOFFA, Prince George's Soil Conservation District, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, & Patuxent Riverkeeper. Event is free. Donations encouraged. Call 301-502-3261 or email [Blackswamp@me.com](mailto:Blackswamp@me.com) for more info.

**October 6th!!  
Co-Sponsored by MOFFA**



20779

Tracy's Landing, MD

P.O. Box 36

MOFFA

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**MOFFA is** a non-profit educational organization. Our mission is to bring together the community of growers, consumers, and retailers in Maryland to support organic and ecological farming and local food production. We publish this newsletter, sponsor workshops, field days, and related educational activities, and speak on behalf of organic agriculture.

**Claudia Raskin, Editor**

**Submissions Welcome!**

**To contribute an article or information and for classified and display ads, call or email Claudia Raskin, (301) 785-2936, hcole77@aol.com. We reserve the right to edit submissions.**

**Advertising Rates**

Business Card Size @ \$10      Half Page @ \$40  
 Quarter Page @ \$20              Full Page @\$80

MOFFA Members receive a 50% discount on ad rates and may place one free 15-word classified ad per issue. (Editors reserve the right to refuse / edit all ads.)

**Support MOFFA. Become A Member!**

We need your support for grower and consumer education, organic certification, helping to shape public policy, and membership networking.

**Americans waste enough food to fill a 90,000 seat foot ball stadium every day. "Food waste is particularly egregious at a time when hunger is a growing problem. If we waste just 15% less, we could feed 25 million Americans annually! "**

**Natural Resources Defense Council**

**Gov. Martin O'Malley Weighs In -SAVING NICK'S ORGANIC FARM**

*The fight to Save Nick's Organic Farm is not over, and recently Gov. Martin O'Malley sent a letter of support to Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett and the Board of Education. Here is an excerpt:*

I believe we are about to make a big mistake in destroying acres of a productive organic farmland and its soils which could be a priceless asset to the education, health, and well-being of generations of Montgomery students. Specifically, I am writing in regards to Nick Maravell's Brickyard Educational Farm. It is my understanding that despite the inherent value of Mr. Maravell's farm to Montgomery County's students and to our State, its future is in jeopardy.

The initiatives offered at Mr. Maravell's organic farm directly align with

our State's priorities, including our Agricultural Literacy Program and our Farm to School Program.

In our State...where we believe in children growing healthy, growing educated, and growing strong; where we believe in sustainably growing food for a hungry world; where we believe in growing in our mindfulness, our awareness, and our understanding of the balance we must rediscover and reconcile with the other living systems of this one Earth we choose to share with future generations; we need more assets like Mr. Maravell's farm, rather than fewer.

Sincerely,



Governor

For more info, go to [www.SaveNicksFarm.org](http://www.SaveNicksFarm.org)

**BECOME A MOFFA MEMBER!**

**MOFFA Dues (per farm or family)**

Make checks payable to MOFFA & mail to MOFFA, P.O. Box 36, Tracy's Landing, MD 20779

One Year \$25. Two Year Membership \$45.

Name & Farm Name
Street
City
State / ZIP
Phone Number(s)
Email

- Yes, I prefer to receive newsletters via email.
- Yes, I am interested in volunteering.

*MOFFA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit education organization. Our mission is to bring together growers, consumers and retailers*

## Stanford University Study Misses The Point

A recent study by Stanford University found no difference in nutritional value between organic and conventionally raised vegetables and fruits.

Many in the organic community feel that Stanford has woefully missed the mark here, since nutrition is only one of a number of components of organics. As Ron Holter of Holterholm Farm in Jefferson says: [Organic] is a systems approach to food production that promotes environmental health, soil building, humane treatment of animals and cleaner living for the farmers producing the product. In conventional products, many, if not all of these parts of the system are routinely overlooked for the sake of cheap food that our culture expects and our government promotes.

The hidden costs of conventionally raised food to our environment - polluted water, degraded soils, waste - have to be factored into the equation. And compare these costs with the value of organic farming through pest and weed control, soil and nutrient management, and habitat rehabilitation, and organic is the only choice.

*Summer Creek Farm*

### McGeary OMRI Approved Organic Fertilizers

*No Manure-No Bovine Blood Meal-Cost Effective  
Fertilizers*

*By the Bag & By the Ton - Delivery Available  
Mixes Available \* 8-1-1 \* 5-3-4 \* 2-3-4 \* 3-5-3 \* 0-2-9 \* 6-0-4*

*Organic Premium Potting Soil - Approved for Organic  
Production Systems By MDA. Fertilizer charge mixed in,  
better moisture control than peat mixes.*

*Pro-Hoe - The Best, Toughest Rough Hoe. Made for  
professional use. Priced to afford. \$30 for most styles.*

*Organic Straw - Organic Grains - Organic Pullets  
Vegetables - Organic Plants  
Phone: 301-271-9399.*

*Email: [farmer@summercreekfarm.com](mailto:farmer@summercreekfarm.com)  
[www.summercreekfarm.com](http://www.summercreekfarm.com)*



**"Eating is an agricultural  
act."  
- Wendell Berry**



## Books Of Note

### **The Fight for Fordhall Farm**, by Ben & Charlotte Hollins

This British college age sister-brother team manage to save the family farm from the pressures of development, transform it from a tenancy to a stakeholder non-profit, and conserve the legacy of their pioneering organic farmer father. Inspirational! And a good read.

### **Heirloom: Notes From An Accidental Tomato Farmer**, by Tim Stark

This is an uneven book, somewhat overwritten. Nonetheless, it has its moments. There are the heirloom tomato seedlings that make the trip from a Brooklyn rooftop they've out grown to a farm in Pennsylvania. Or the way the author captures the relentless craziness of the farm season.

### **ATTN: PASTURED POULTRY PRODUCERS IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND**

Errol Mattox is putting together a SARE Partnership Grant Proposal comparing the performance, on pasture, of Cornish Cross meat bird lines from different hatcheries. Is there anyone in Southern Maryland doing pastured poultry who would have an interest in participating? Letters from cooperators due October 29th. Contact Errol at [threemaplesfarm@comcast.net](mailto:threemaplesfarm@comcast.net).

**Report on Urban Agriculture**, with a focus on Prince George's County, by Gul Guleryuz PG Planner, just published and available online at <http://www.pgplanning.org/Resources/Publications/UrbanAgriculture.htm> Check it out.

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or the winter meeting to share ideas. In the meantime, here are a few resources. There are many more to be found.

[climatechange.cornell.edu](http://climatechange.cornell.edu)

USDA Zone Map:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2012/120125.htm>

•More on the Zone Map: <http://>

[green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/rethinking-the-new-zone-hardiness-map/](http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/rethinking-the-new-zone-hardiness-map/)

Tanya Tolchin is a farmer, activist, & frequent contributor to the MOFFA News.

*(Continued from pg. 1)* advantages to conservation easements. Currently, more than 5 million acres of land in the United States are protected!

For more information about land trusts, join us at the Black Swamp Creek Land Trust's Pasture Party Oct. 6 (see page 4 for details), co-sponsored by MOFFA.

*C. Raskin*