March 26th: **BARBERRY BONANZA**
Trotter Road entrance

*Berberis thunbergii*, aka Japanese barberry, is a formidable foe of the environmental area. Multiple events for successive years are needed to get this nuisance under control. Do not fear this invasive though, as our persistent helpers have been quite adept at removing it. On this date we’ll dig, yank, and wrench these spiny shrubs from the ground. We’ll revisit previous work sites and find new ones. Long pants and shirt sleeves recommended. Spine-proof gloves are a must! Erin Jones, Epidemiologist, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and her colleagues will share information about ticks and Lyme disease.

**April 23rd: EPHEMERAL ADORATION AND PULLED GARLIC MUSTARD**
South Wind Circle trailhead

Traditionally this has been our best attended event and for a good reason. Not only will we spend a fair deal of time pulling up invasive Garlic mustard, we’ll also search for and identify many species of spring ephemeral flowering plants. As a bonus we try to coordinate our trip with the gorgeous blooming Virginia bluebells located in numerous, riverside patches. The actual route we’ll take is governed by where we find the mustard. Come prepared for vigorous Garlic mustard removal paired with a peaceful search for some of the prettiest, but short-lived, flowers the MPEA has to offer.

**May 28th: PATHWAY TO RESTORATION**
Wood Elves Way path

Better late than never! Its’ been 2+ years since we helped with a restoration project along the stream paralleling the Columbia Association pathway. Surely some Garlic mustard has re-grown by now. It has been late in the season to leave behind mustard plants with seeds so we’ll supply the trash bags if you provide the pulling power. We’ll also dig up other invasives you find such as Multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, and Autumn olive on this seek and destroy excursion.

**June 25th: BASKETGRASS AND BARBERRY**
Trotter Road entrance

Non-native, invasive plants are a real threat to our ecosystems and our habitat restoration efforts. Dr. Vanessa Beauchamp, Assistant Professor of Biology, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Towson University will speak about the ecology of Wavyleaf basketgrass, a relative newcomer and very challenging species, and a citizen-science initiative to map its current distribution. The remaining time will be spent dealing with our nemesis Japanese barberry.

**July & August: No PROGRAM**

**September 24th: TENACIOUS DE-VINING**
South Wind Circle trailhead

Clegg’s Meadow, our largest grassland, contains a riparian buffer planting site and a small Cedar glade that volunteers have spent many seasons nurturing and protecting. Additionally, the meadows are surrounded by mature stands of native hardwood trees. Slowly these majestic meadow neighbors are succumbing to the ill effects of invasive vines. We’ll navigate the grassy edges in order to de-vine the mature trees. If the weather cooperates we’ll include a guest who will talk about Monarch butterfly natural history and demonstrate butterfly capture, tagging and release methods.

**October 22nd: SAVING THE SEEP**
Trotter Road entrance

For many years volunteers have been removing unwanted plants and replacing them with native varieties in the spring seep portion of the Woodcock Habitat Management Area. Much more effort has gone into maintaining the deer-exclusion tree shelters and in keeping the area weed-free. Decades ago this seep was rich with American woodcock activity. Today your work will aid in restoring this vital habitat that provides proper Timberdoodle feeding cover. At this event we’ll continue with prior volunteers’ work by cleaning off and repairing shelters and by re-checking areas previously cleared of Multiflora rose, Royal empress tree, privet, and other non-native, invasive plants.

**November 26th: BARBERRY BONANZA 2**
Trotter Road entrance

Japanese barberry is very tolerant of shade and can form dense colonies in a variety of habitats including closed canopy forest. This pesky plant reportedly changes soil pH and nitrogen levels as it displaces native herbs and shrubs. Research has also demonstrated an increased prevalence of Lyme disease in areas densely covered by barberry. For these reasons we are hosting a removal event. Using the same techniques we practiced back in March and June we’ll keep digging up and uprooting these unwelcome intruders of natural areas.
The Conservation Stewardship Project, a joint program of the Howard County Master Gardeners and the Howard County Recreation & Parks, targets the problem of controlling invasive, exotic species in the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA). Volunteer work dates occur monthly from March through November, skipping July & August. Each date includes an educational component concerning the target invasive species or work area for the day.

The MPEA, established in 1996, is 1,021 acres in size and contains a diversity of habitat types. There are upland and bottomland hardwood forest, fields, wetlands, ponds, and riparian habitats. The primary components of the MPEA's mission are natural resources management, education, research and recreation.

For more information contact: Master Gardener Aylene Gard at (410) 992-9889 or Jeff Claffy, Assistant Natural Resources Manager, MPEA at (410) 313-6209 or jclaffy@howardcountymd.gov

Driving Directions:

South Wind Circle Entrance to MPEA - Route 29 to Route 108W towards Clarksville OR Route 32 to Route 108E. Turn onto Trotter Road to South Wind Circle (about 1 mile). Enter the circle and proceed to trailhead on left (opposite Misty Top Path).

Trotter Road Entrance to MPEA - From U.S. 29 at 32: Take 32 west to the Great Star Drive exit. Turn right onto Great Star Drive. Then make a right onto Summer Sunrise. Continue to Trotter Road and make a left. Proceed about 1 mile to the parking area on the right just beyond the small traffic circle.

From U.S. 29 at 108: Take 108 west and continue past Centennial Lane. Proceed past Harpers Farm Road to Trotter Road and make a left. Continue to the parking area on the left. If you reach the small traffic circle, you've gone too far.

Wood Elves Way Pathway at the MPEA - From U.S. 29 at 108: Take 108 west and continue past Centennial Lane. Proceed to Harpers Farm Road and make a left. Just after passing Hobbit's Glen Golf Course turn right on Willow Bottom Drive. Turn left on Wood Elves Way and proceed ½ mile to pathway entrance at the cul-de-sac. Parking is on-street only. Do not block private driveways.