

Notes from Evergreen

Quarterly Update



- EHC builds Heritage Hoop House
- EHC and partners build 12 outdoor Learning Stations
- ACCEL program has successful first year
- Spring Artist Workshop Series enjoyed by all

Building the Heritage Hoop House

This spring, to support their goal of implementing and teaching best management practices in sustainable agriculture and forestry, the EHC Foundation and its partners built a “high tunnel” or “hoop house” style greenhouse, which will lengthen the growing season for seedlings and provide more favorable growing conditions than are typical for Western Maryland. This Project, which was subsidized by the Rural Maryland Council and the USDA Agricultural Management Assistance program, also demonstrates soil and water conservation via a rain water collection and drip-line irrigation system, as well as energy conservation via the use of solar energy to power the structure’s irrigation pump and its insulation system. Project participants included Allegany County Public School (ACPS) students who tested the EHC water supply that will be used for Hoop House irrigation and analyzed the soil at the Hoop House site. Frostburg State University and Allegany College of Maryland students also participated by helping to prepare the site and develop materials describing sustainable agriculture and forestry practices. The EHC and its partners will use the new Heritage Hoop House to support their agriculture, education, forestry, and research programs including growing native trees and plants that will replace invasive species, cultivating EHC heritage tree/plant species that are decreasing in numbers, growing plants to establish pollinator and wildlife habitats, and cultivating medicinal herbs. For more information on the Heritage Hoop House or EHC programs, visit www.evergreenheritagecenter.org, call 301-687-0664, or email foundation@evergreenheritagecenter.org.

The photo above shows the completed structure. Pictured below is the Heritage Hoop House while it was being built and Hana Crouch (EHC agroecologist) describing the Hoop House Project and its benefits to a visitor during a Gardening Open House event on June 1st (co-sponsored by Home Ground).



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Learning Stations Project

The goal of the Learning Station Project, a 2012-13 Project led by Frostburg State University (FSU) and sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), was to develop the first twelve of forty outdoor Learning Stations defined in the EHC's "Green" Site Plan, a 2012 project also led by FSU and sponsored by ARC. These Stations, which focus on forest ecology, soil and water conservation, climate change, and alternative energy solutions, will be used by the EHC Foundation and its partners including FSU, Allegany College of Maryland (ACM), Allegany County Public Schools (ACPS), the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), and the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resource for education, job training, and research, as well as by the general public for education and recreation. The EHC Learning Stations are part of a five year plan developed by the *Allegany County Collaboration for Environmental Literacy* (a partnership between ACPS, FSU, ACM, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Allegany County Head Start, the CBF, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust) that is committed to increasing student environmental literacy by 25%, providing at least one meaningful outdoor education experience for every child every year (as mandated by the *Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature*), and creating a **model for environmental education that is aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum and can be replicated across the State**. In addition, the Project supports the objectives of STEM (emphasizing science, technology, engineering, and math), *No Child Left Inside*, the *Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature* (requiring one outdoor environmental education experience per child per year), and Maryland's new **Environmental Literacy Graduation Requirement**.

Project Description: Project participants, including environmental education and science experts, FSU and ACM students and professors, ACPS teachers and their students, worked together on various aspects of the Project including: 1) designing the Learning Stations, 2) preparing Learning Station lessons for multiple age/grade levels, 3) defining accompanying lessons/activities for the classroom and schoolyard that extend and/or complement the Learning Station experience, 4) soliciting expert feedback on the proposed designs, lessons, and activities and incorporating the results, 5) obtaining the necessary tools and supplies for each Station, 6) packaging and installing/implementing the various station components, 7) creating the capability to share the Station lessons and other resource information online, and 8) having teachers and students at various grade levels field test the Stations and associated lessons. The majority of the work on the Project was conducted at the EHC. For more information on this Project or EHC education programs, visit www.evergreenheritagecenter.org, call 301-687-0664, or email foundation@evergreenheritagecenter.org.

In the photo (L-R) Jemima Clark (EHC instructor), Karen Kelly Mullin and Julie Dieguez (experts in outdoor learning), and Elaine Raesly (manager of EHC environmental education) stand on top of the EHC Chestnut Circle. This 10ft-diameter circle of locust posts represents the size of a typical Chestnut tree before the species was attacked by a blight in the early 1900s. The EHC Chestnut Tree learning station teaches students and visitors about this majestic tree, the blight that ravaged the species, and how organizations are working to develop a blight-resistant Chestnut tree species.



ACCEL Program: First Year Results

In 2011, Allegany County Public Schools, the **Evergreen Heritage Center (EHC) Foundation**, Frostburg State University, Allegany College of Maryland, HRDC Head Start, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science formed the ACCEL partnership (Allegany County Collaboration for Environmental Literacy). Together, they forged and began to implement a comprehensive five-year plan to improve student environmental literacy by 25% county-wide and become a model for environmental literacy across the state. This plan supports Maryland's new environmental literacy graduation requirement (the first in the nation) and will also strive to ensure that all students have at least one outdoor environmental education experience every school year (as mandated by the *Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature*). The ACCEL plan, which is also aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum, builds upon **proven outdoor environmental education programs** such as those offered at the EHC, begins education efforts early **with preschool** (Head Start) children, provides **at least one meaningful outdoor experience per child per year** from preschool through grade twelve, "**raises the bar**" by using the scientific method and proven techniques to help students investigate and understand complex environmental issues, utilizes **assessment tools** such as topic-specific pre/post-tests, offers **field experience** (and science credentials) to college students who assist with outdoor experiences and create education materials as part of their course work, and includes a robust but flexible **professional development** program for educators. In 2012, Allegany County was the only County and Maryland to receive a multi-year grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to implement an environmental literacy plan. The results of the Plan's highly successful first year, just completed this month are:

- **Increased Environmental Literacy (E-Lit)**. Participating Life Science and high school Earth Science students achieved a 50% or better improvement.
- **Grade-Wide Meaningful Outdoor Experiences for Multiple Grades**. The ACCEL partnership successfully provided these educational experiences for 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and Earth/Space Science students, as well as eight classes of Head Start. In total, the partnership served **2934 students** or 98% of its 2990 student target.
- **E-Lit Professional Development for All Teachers**. The ACCEL partnership also achieved a key goal of educating **all ACPS teachers** (either directly or via their principals) on the new environmental literacy graduation requirement and providing sample activities that they may use to provide schoolyard experiences for their students.
- **Learning Stations and Lessons that can be used to provide additional learning opportunities**. ACCEL partners also exceeded their goal of developing EHC outdoor learning stations and lessons that can be used for both EHC learning and additional learning in the schoolyard. The team developed a dozen stations and an associated **54 outdoor lessons**, all aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum.



Students experience lessons at some of our Learning Stations.

Works in Progress

Pictured below are participants in one of this past spring's Evergreen Heritage Center (EHC) Artist Workshop Series, presented at the EHC by local artist and teacher Maggie Pratt. From left are Susie Bucchino, John O'Rorke, Nicole Halmos, Iris Halmos, Leon Fatkin, Shirley Giarritta, Glenna Durst, Susan Trice and Diane Engle. Not pictured is volunteer Jenna Balogh, who assisted with the event. The EHC plans to host a fall art workshop series that will incorporate painting with other forms of creative expression. All arts workshops are open to the public with no experience required. Please email foundation@evergreenheritagecenter.org or call 301-687-0664 for more information or to register in advance. The Evergreen Artist Workshop Series is made possible in part through support by the Allegany Arts Council.



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Upcoming Fall Art Workshops

- **August 18th:** The Sky's the Limit! Looking up to the heavens as inspiration for painting.
- **September 15th:** Visiting the Heritage Hoop House. Working with plants as food and art!
- **October 20th:** Fall Wonders. Working with the forms and themes of the season to create unique compositions with an autumnal flair.

For more information call [301-687-0664](tel:301-687-0664) or email foundation@evergreenheritagecenter.org. No experience required; just a desire to be creative.