

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With all the turmoil in the economy and the Real Estate market, Cecil Land Trust still had adequate opportunities to perform its mission in 2008.

We completed two Rural Legacy easements, Brown in the Northeast watershed and Howell in the Elk Creek watershed. Both easements were significant in that they not only protected productive farmland and forest habitat; they also protected two important family legacies. Currently, we have one Rural Legacy easement in the works and two property owners in line to proceed.

CLT and MET are also nearing completion of a purchased easement through the Dept. of Transportation Scenic Easement Program. The easement involves 114 acres overlooking the Susquehanna River. Garrett Island has resurfaced as an issue regarding the possible transfer of the island to the National Park Service from the Wildlife Service. The issue should be discussed to clarify CLT's position as to whether the move would be in the island's best interest.

On the donated easement side, we are having an on going discussion with three property owners.

Community outreach for 2008 included CLT's input into the comp plan update. Board member Sandra Edwards served as a committee member for the review and CLT submitted a Priority Preservation Areas recommendation.

Sandy Cope has been working to update our website with our new website designer.

Joanne Young coordinated a well attended land preservation workshop that emphasized the opportunities to protect land in 2009 due to the present incentives offered in the current tax code.

The Land Trust Alliance and MET are focusing attention on the need for local land trust to become more vigilant on monitoring easements and scrutinizing the value of donated easements before signing off on appraised values.

The IRS has been raising issues of accountability for non-profits in possible conflict of interest.

For the coming year, CLT has the opportunity to have a monitoring workshop to improve our volunteer monitoring base. The board should also consider the expansion of the Rural Legacy Area.

In closing, I would like to thank the officers, Edwin and Patti and Sandy, for continuing to volunteer the extra time they take in making this no budget organization function and a special thanks to Bob for manning the office.