



# News from Masonville Cove Environmental Education Campus

*An urban wildlife refuge partnership*

A Monthly Newsletter MAY 2017 Volume 5 Issue 5

### MAY Open Hours

The Conservation Area is open to the public:

Mon-Fri 9am-4pm

Sat 9am-1pm

Closed on Sundays

**Campus Closed on 5/27-29**



### FREE Programming for Families.

To reserve your spot, email [programs@masonvillecove.org](mailto:programs@masonvillecove.org) or call 410-246-0669 x102

**Sat, 5/6 9:30-10:30am, 11am-12pm** Science Alive for kids <5: Seeds of Spring!

**Fri, 5/19 10-11am** Science Alive for kids <5: Slithering Snakes.

**Sat, 5/20, 10-11am** Family Outing: Wildflower and Pollinator Hunt

### Other [FREE] Opportunities to Connect with Nature

For more information or to pre-register call 410-246-0669, x100. [events@masonvillecove.org](mailto:events@masonvillecove.org)

**Tue, 5/9 10am-12pm** MC Stewards- Explore native plants and tidy up the raised bed gardens

**Wed, 5/17 9:30am-12pm** Citizen Science- Scientific Monitoring

**Fri, 5/26 1-2pm** Guided Nature Walk-Explore the upland and tidal wetlands

### MCEEC Contact Information

1000 Frankfur Avenue, Baltimore MD 21226

Phone: 410-246-0669, ext.100

Website: [www.masonvillecove.org](http://www.masonvillecove.org)

Email:

For inquiries related to educational programs, [info@masonvillecove.org](mailto:info@masonvillecove.org)

For inquiries related to volunteering, [friends@masonvillecove.org](mailto:friends@masonvillecove.org)

### Thanks to our volunteers!

UMBC Shriver Center Peacekeeper fellows did a service project at Masonville Cove on 4/7/17. The group of 11 graduate students jumped in working on a variety of projects: they cleaned microscope lenses and checked focus w prepared slides; they cleaned seating mats with soapy water and rinsed them; they prepared materials for environmental education projects; and they cared for our beloved critters by scrubbing algae in all the tanks and changed water and filter in one of the turtle tanks.



MES volunteer Bill Tittle of Masonville Cove partner Maryland Environmental Service put in 4 hours extracting weeds from the raised bed gardens. He filled one contractor bag! Now if you want to try and outdo Bill, volunteer at the MC Stewards event on May 9th. We welcome weed warriors!

We've enjoyed regular visits by volunteer Ann and her daughter Maggie (our youngest volunteer). They came out for the Citizen Science event that monitors wildlife and water quality at the Cove.

### Stem IT3 group from North County High School does shoreline cleanup

The group was taught by MC partner Maryland Environmental Service. Their day at Masonville Cove focused on the challenge of urban runoff. During their time at Masonville, the students filled 12 bags amounting to 139.5 pounds of trash. They contributed to the world-wide citizen science project by reporting types of trash found on shorelines around the world (International Coastal Clean-up); and their contribution



will be part of the annual report that brings together information from other coastal cleanups. The goal is to shed light on most common items that end up on shorelines, and the most harmful things that get into the environment. During the clean-up one of the students happened upon a diamondback terrapin

hatching that likely was laid in a nest HERE at MASONVILLE COVE! The hatchling was on a plastic bag, and was moved a few hundred feet to the more protected tidal wetland. A very exciting and memorable day indeed!



**Scenes at Masonville Cove:** Osprey pair on nesting platform; Mulberry tree in early spring; MES volunteer working in raised bed gardens; new raised beds planted by Ben Franklin students and National Aquarium and USFWS staff.

**Limelight on Diamondback Terrapins.** One of the most captivating animals at Masonville Cove is 'Squirtle', a diamondback terrapin rescued from the Patapsco River ice some years ago, who resides in one of the tanks in the Great Room of the Education Building. There is some debate about Squirtle's gender but no debate about what a friendly creature it is. Children are fascinated by its mustachioed markings and by how Squirtle' swims in its tank alongside them.

Diamondback terrapins live in brackish water of estuaries from Cape Cod to Corpus Cristi. The diet of terrapins consists mainly of hard-shelled mollusks like snails, barnacles and clams, which they crush with their strong jaws.

Females are about 50% larger than males at maturity. Females have larger heads and thinner, shorter tails than males. In the Chesapeake Bay male terrapins mature at 4-5 years and females begin to lay eggs at ages of 8 years. Eggs incubate for as little as 50 days to as much as 200 days. The little fellow pictured above probably overwintered in the nest. Hatchlings are preyed on by small mammals as well as birds. Sometimes nests may fail because of flooding or long droughts.



**The Osprey Webcam is back online.** Frederick and Harriet have made a nest! This year and last the osprey pair was displaced from their nest by Canada geese. With a little help from US Fish & Wildlife Service, the geese gave up the nesting space and the osprey pair returned to make another nest. We wish them well-- Frederick and Harriet are determined birds. Check out their progress <https://www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay/ospreycam.html> .

**Save those cardboard tubes from paper towels, plastic wrap and aluminum foil.** Drop them off at Masonville Cove by mid-June. The BEE SMART team needs these longer tubes (not TP size) for a catapult project with students—sounds like challenging fun!

**Encounter Urban Wildlife.** Masonville Cove is a safe way to explore urban wildlife. The campus offers free community programs such as the Family Outing on May 20 and a Guided Nature walk on May 26(see the calendar, above). You can explore on your own using our walking trails. The Campus is open weekdays from 9am-4pm or on Saturdays from 9am-1pm. On May 19<sup>th</sup>, Masonville Cove is one of the sites for the Baltimore Birding Weekend. The event is sponsored by the Patterson Park Audubon Center and Conservation Community Consulting. Go to <http://baltimorebirding.com/> for more information and to register.

## About Masonville Cove and the Campus...

Masonville Cove is located on 70 acres of water and 54 acres of cleaned-up land including wetlands, nature trails, and a protected bird sanctuary. The Masonville project developed from mitigation tied to the creation of a Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF) by the Maryland Port Administration (MPA). This created an opportunity for the local residents and schoolchildren (from Brooklyn, Curtis Bay, and Cherry Hill) to connect with their natural environment and participate in meaningful stewardship projects related to Masonville Cove and their communities.

MPA worked with the community associations from Brooklyn and Curtis Bay, the Living Classrooms Foundation, and the National Aquarium to create the Masonville Cove Environmental Education Campus (MCEEC). Maryland Environmental Service coordinates the mitigation project. The MCEEC has been a model for community involvement and environmental awareness from its inception to its opening as a landmark urban environmental education center. The sustainable growth of this urban wilderness conservation area and its wetlands will remind the community that they are a part of something positive for generations to come.



- A Partnership among:**
- Maryland Port Administration**
  - Living Classrooms Foundation**
  - National Aquarium**
  - Maryland Environmental Service**
  - US Fish & Wildlife Service**