



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

For almost 60 years, the Accokeek Foundation has been a steward of the land. Through a partnership with the National Park Service, the Accokeek Foundation interprets the past, present, and future of agriculture and environmental stewardship at Piscataway Park. The Foundation's programs include interdisciplinary school tours for schools, historical and modern farm museum exhibits, heritage breed livestock conservation, natural resource stewardship and land conservation, and the Piscataway Cultural Landscape Initiative.

The park is open daily to visitors who enjoy a quiet landscape for recreation and reflection. Annually, thousands of school children visit for farm-based education, learning about environmental stewardship through a historical lens. With support from donors and members, the Accokeek Foundation provides a natural space for all to enjoy, for generations to come. Learn more: accokeekfoundation.org.

The Accokeek Foundation cultivates passion for the natural and cultural heritage of Piscataway Park and commitment to stewardship and sustainability.

People connected to the land and engaged in creating a sustainable world.

Patricia Williams, Chair

Milton Ablerich, Vice Chair

Virginia Busby, PhD., Secretary

James Potts, Treasurer

Lisa Hayes, PhD., President

Who We Are

Mission

Vision

Leadership

Letter From the President

On a hot day in August I found myself on the back of a hay wagon with a group of parents, teachers, and the Prince George's County Superintendent of Schools. We were getting a tour of the Accokeek Foundation's agricultural work led by high school students in the first cohort of our new Agriculture Conservation Corps. It was graduation day, and the nine participants in the 7-week internship program were sharing some of the lessons they had learned. As we bounced along a trail through the woods in Piscataway Park on our way to the Ecosystem Farm, I heard parents sharing stories of their teenagers' summer experience. I realized that here we had a program that tied every aspect of the Accokeek Foundation's work together — history and culture, sustainable agriculture, heritage breed livestock conservation, environmental stewardship — and did so in a way that will have a lasting impact.

Last year's new strategic plan created a framework for this year's focused approach to our vision of "people connected to the land and engaged in creating a sustainable world." At Soul Food Justice, we explored food and culture through the lens of social justice. Our Food for Thought Festival focused on food waste and recovery just as the USDA and EPA announced our country's first food waste reduction goal. Through a partnership with Branch Avenue in Bloom, produce from the Ecosystem Farm found its way to one of Prince George's County's food deserts even as volunteers invested hundreds of hours in helping grow that produce. That produce also became a part of the menu for our inaugural Taste of Fall Dinner. In addition to the transformative learning experience provided to students through Eco-Explorers: Colonial Time Warp, we introduced new weekend interpretation and Green History experiences, such as *Underspace! The Science of Soil*. This was definitely a year of digging deeper, as we planted and tended the seeds of change.

Thank you to our members, volunteers, donors, partners, and stakeholders for their investment in our mission. Their collective support makes it possible to serve the educational and recreational needs of local residents and provide national and international visitors with the opportunity to experience Maryland's remarkable natural and cultural resources.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda Hays". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "L" and "H".

NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

20

BLUEBIRD NESTING
BOXES MONITORED

61

NEW FLEDGLINGS



2,250

POUNDS OF TRASH
REMOVED FROM

3

MILES OF POTOMAC
RIVER SHORELINE

(~150 bags of trash)



The Accokeek Foundation works to enhance, promote, and protect the natural landscape of Piscataway Park. As stewards of 200 acres of meadows, pastures, wetlands, and woodlands, we are helping native species of wildlife, trees, and plants to thrive in their natural habitat.



15
TRAILER LOADS
OF INVASIVE PLANTS
REMOVED

*(i.e.: bittersweet, honeysuckle,
multiflora rose)*



500
INDIVIDUAL BALD
EAGLE SIGHTINGS

*with one active nesting pair and
two juveniles spotted
living, hunting, and flying
at Piscataway Park*

HERITAGE BREED LIVESTOCK CONSERVATION

60
POUNDS OF
FLEECE SHORN



9
HOG ISLAND
SHEEP BORN



Many people are aware of endangered species in the wild, such as sea turtles or spotted owls, very few realize that domesticated livestock species are also threatened. The Accokeek Foundation increases awareness about these special breeds of domesticated livestock by promoting and preserving heritage breeds through a managed breeding program, demonstration, and education.

Hog Island sheep wool is processed by a core of volunteer textile artists who help with the shearing, washing, carding, spinning, and knitting of Hog Island wool into products available for sale. Public events like Lattes with Lambs introduces these general audiences to our heritage breed livestock conservation program, building awareness for the need to protect and preserve these rare animals of livestock.

The Foundation's Heritage Livestock Conservation breeding program includes American Milking Devon and Hog Island sheep. For demonstration purposes, the farm is also home to Ossabaw hogs, various varieties of chickens: Buckeye, Hamburg, Silver Gray Dorking, Araucana, Dominique, Light Brahma, Speckled Sussex, and Welsummer; and turkeys: Black, Bourbon Red and Chocolate. Farm animals are incorporated in educational programming and public events.



GREEN HISTORY EDUCATION

68
BUSES
TRANSPORTING
3,206
STUDENTS FOR
EDUCATIONAL
TOURS



8
SCHOOLS
320
STUDENTS FOR
RICE PLANTING
PROJECT



A new initiative we call Green History draws visitors to the National Colonial Farm into discussions and activities related to current-day environmental issues and within the historical context of the pre-Revolutionary era and our founding as a nation.

Eco-Explorers: Colonial Time Warp is part of the Green History initiative. This program aimed at elementary and middle school students, traces the trajectory of environmental issues through time, creates perspective-shifting comparisons with our lives today, and helps participants make everyday decisions that affect the health of the planet. The program provides an opportunity for student participation throughout the experience. More than just a hands-on experience, students are playing roles. They're thinking, voting, debating, and imagining themselves in a different time for the duration of this interactive living history program.



At the end of the Eco-Explorers program, museum interpreters share a message with students, “We may not have the power to travel back in time, but there is a power that everyone has right here and right now – the power to change the future.” By shining a light on the decision-making process, this Green History program can empower students as agents of their own (and the planet’s) destiny.

Teachers and students alike find Eco-Explorers to be an engaging and thought provoking learning experience:

“Students are still talking about it and discussing how certain things we use every day can affect the environment.”

— 4th grade teacher

“I learned at the farm that what you do can affect your future.”

— 4th grade student

AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION CORPS

ACC
PILOT YEAR



9
HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS FROM
PRINCE GEORGE'S
COUNTY



The Agriculture Conservation Corps was created as an experiential learning framework for partnering with youth serving organizations, schools, colleges and universities. Participants engage in farm management and establish self-sufficiency by growing fresh, local produce using organic practices and taking these skills back to their own neighborhoods. Corps members participate in farm management, acquire transferable career skills, gain appreciation and a greater understanding of local food systems, and make informed decisions about their role in food production, farming, and healthy eating.

In 2015, nine high school students and one college student participated in hands-on interpretive experiences related to the ACC curriculum and had many opportunities to put into practice the theories and lessons they are learning in their classrooms. During this seven week program in 2015 students engaged in discussions on topics including:

- Water quality and conservation related to farming and fishing,
- Soil health and environmental testing,
- Benefits of seed saving and heirloom crops,
- Environmental justice and farm labor issues,
- A knowledge sharing session with lessons learned from a local Native American farmer practicing sustainable farming methods at his Virginia farm.



In evaluation meetings with students, we learned that students gained an understanding of land and water environmental issues, new critical thinking skills, as well as planning, management, and business skills related to urban farming. Corps members prepared individual career plans as part of their final project and included results and impact from their seven week experience in a final presentation to staff, board, and family on August 13, 2015.

ENGAGING PUBLIC AUDIENCES THROUGH INTERPRETATION

1,221
SPECIAL EVENT
ATTENDEES

3
NEW TOPICS
EXPLORED

*(soil science, water
conservation, food waste)*

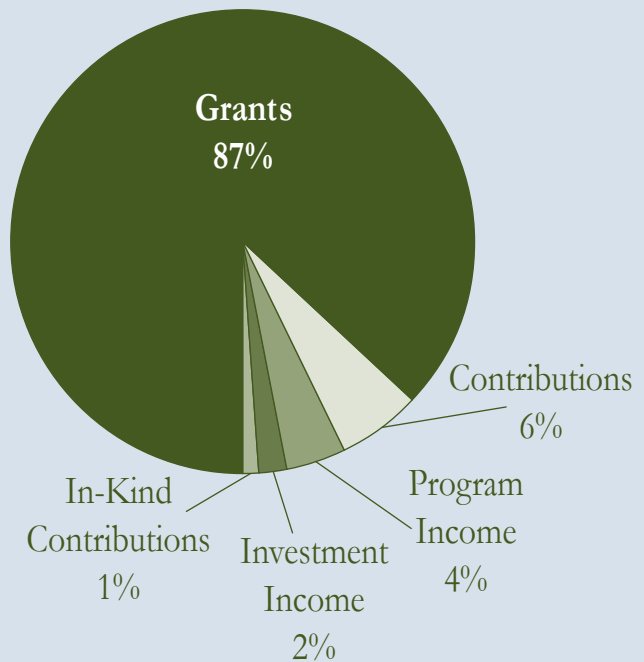


Underspace, a new exhibit, introduced in April 2015, asked visitors to enter a simulated underground space and find the differences between healthy and unhealthy soil. With support from interpreters and vivid “day-glo” exhibits visitors explored multiple ways they can help improve soil quality and health through their own actions.

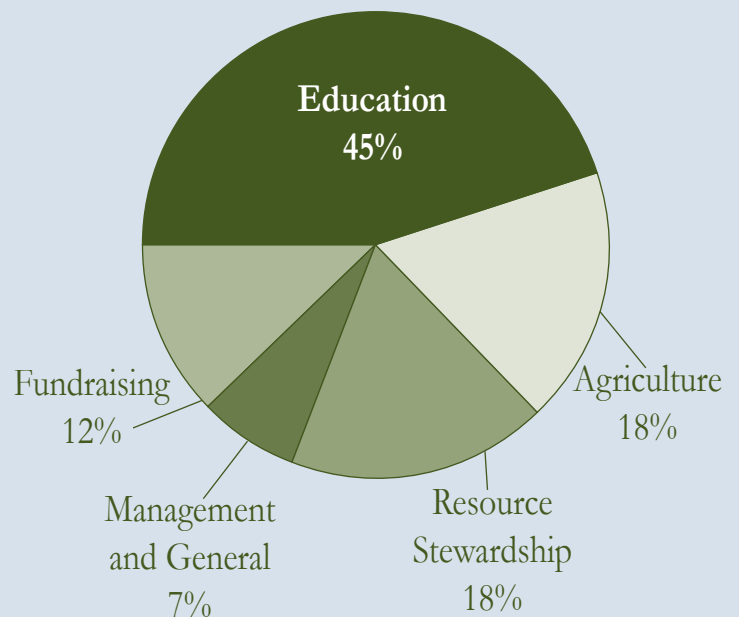
By summer, weekend interpretive programs focused on water usage and conservation. In June, an interactive exhibit provided insight on modern agriculture’s water needs while asking visitors to evaluate their own water footprint. Foundation staff encouraged visitors to consider reducing their water usage by undertaking and reporting on their own Water Footprint Challenge.

Financials

FY 2015 REVENUES \$1.08 MILLION



FY 2016 EXPENSES \$1.32 MILLION





Soul Food Justice

Access to healthy food is important to creating a more sustainable and equitable food system. Health and food access in underserved communities continue to be social justice issues for all Prince George's County residents. Recognizing these issues, the Accokeek Foundation hosted Soul Food Justice in February 2015. Co-hosted by

Joe's Movement Emporium in Mt. Rainier, Maryland, this community event featured dialogues and discussions with a local audience revolving around family heritage, cooking, growing local, and the economic realities of finding healthy, fresh foods.

Panelists and presenters included historians, educators, authors and food experts from around the region: **JuJu Harris**, culinary educator and author, Arcadia Center for Sustainable Agriculture; **Dr. Psyche Williams-Forsen**, culinary educator and author, Arcadia Center for Sustainable Agriculture; **Tambra Raye Stevenson**, founder of NativSol Kitchen; and **Christopher Bradshaw**, founder and Executive Director, Dreaming Out Loud/Aya Community Markets.



At the end of the day, audience members were empowered with stories and shared experiences on family, cultural differences, economics and access while enjoying healthy alternatives to their favorite foods.

"There is this community in the kitchen, around the table, in Africa you have a gathering of women who make different dishes, come together, to cook, eat and feed their families."

**Thought
Provoking
Events and
Discussions**





Food for Thought

Held at the historic National Colonial Farm in Piscataway Park in September 2015, the Food for Thought festival brought our community together for an engaging exploration of one thing that unites us all – food. Our event theme, From Waste to Recovery, looked at creative approaches to reducing the amount of food wasted

annually and featured nationally and locally recognized authors and food activists: **Jonathan Bloom**, journalist, author of the novel *American Wasteland* and many articles on food waste for *The Washington Post*, *National Geographic*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*; **Alexander Justice Moore**, chief development officer at DC Central Kitchen and author of *Food Fighters: DC Central Kitchen's First Twenty-Five Years on the Front Lines of Hunger and Poverty*; **Mary Louise Webb**, Vice-Chairperson of the Charles County African American Heritage Society, author of her personal memoir, *Life on the Farm With Grandma and Grandpa: Growing Up on a Farm in Southern Maryland*, and former board member of Accokeek Foundation; and **Nancy Sabella-Rousell**, former advisor for corporate responsibility and sustainability for a large supermarket chain.



Each year Food for Thought dives into a topic related to creating a more sustainable food system, offering dynamic panel discussions, theater performances, demonstrations, games and exhibitors. In 2015, visitors joined cooking demonstrations and sampled locally produced food while learning from local vendors doing their part to reduce food loss and promoting more sustainable diets.

Food Waste Facts: Up to 40% of the food produced in the U.S. never gets eaten. From losses at the farm to waste in the home, Americans are throwing out over \$150 billion of food each year.



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Thank you to our foundation, corporate, and government partners for support of programs, operations and special projects: Anacostia Trails Heritage Area • Amazon Smile • Chaney Enterprises • Community Foundation of Southern Maryland • The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region • Corina Higginson Trust • Earthshare • Friends of Old Time Banjo • J.E. Rice Insurance Agency, Inc. • Marpat Foundation • Merrifield Garden Center • Merrill Lynch Global Wealth Management • MGM National Harbor • MOM's Organic Market • Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union • National Park Service • Old Line Bank • Pepco Holdings, Inc. • Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail • RGK Foundation • Romano Vineyard & Winery • Susan Gage Caterers • Tanta-Cove Garden Club • United Way of Charles County • United Way of the National Capital Area • Wallace Genetic Foundation • Wegmans

The Accokeek Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to land stewardship, sustainable use of natural resources, and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources of Piscataway Park. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

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