



## Stewardship of Protected Lands

*Finalizing a conservation easement is only the beginning of TMC's long-term commitment to care for our preserved lands. TMC views stewardship responsibilities as a cooperative effort between TMC and easement landowners. Described below are the fundamental aspects of our stewardship program –what easement landowners can expect from TMC and how we can work together to uphold our shared commitment to land stewardship.*

**Annual Monitoring Visits:** The foundation of the TMC stewardship responsibility is the annual monitoring of every property under easement. The purpose of these annual visits is to ensure the terms of easements are met and provide an opportunity for regular communication between landowners and TMC. Monitoring is done by TMC Stewardship staff, Maryland Environmental Trust (co-held easements only) or trained Volunteer Land Stewards (collectively referred to as “Monitors”).

### Snapshot of our Monitoring Process

- Easement landowners receive a letter in the spring and a subsequent phone call during monitoring season to schedule a visit (the average monitoring season runs from April to November).
- Prior to the visit, the Monitor will familiarize themselves with the preserved property by reviewing easement terms, previous monitoring reports, photographs and maps of the property.
- The Monitor arrives at the Property at the designated date and time to meet with the landowner or another representative such as a property or farm manager.

The monitoring process involves walking the boundaries or areas of the property that are not easily seen (Please note monitoring can be done by motorized vehicle if permitted) and photographs are taken in order to record the present state of the property at the time of the visit. Important photograph documentation points include but are not limited to changes in the property conditions (eg. new construction), boundaries and required buffers. The Monitor discusses with the landowner any concerns, questions or future plans the landowner may have regarding the property. The Monitor can provide appropriate referrals and resources for additional professional expertise on land management and opportunities for enhanced conservation practices.

Upon completion of the monitoring visit, the Monitor will document the site visit in a monitoring report, which includes photographs and a photo documentation map. The report is filed at our office. Copies of the report can be sent to the landowner upon request. Copies of monitoring reports are sent to co-held agencies (e.g. Maryland Environmental Trust).

If follow-up is required, the landowner will be contacted by TMC's Stewardship Manager and additional site visits may be required to address specific questions or concerns.