

MET Staff
FY 2024 Annual Work Plan
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024
Approved by MET Board on June 5, 2023

I. Land Conservation

Objective	Tasks	People tasks assigned to
<p>Conserve a minimum of 1,000 acres of environmentally significant lands through direct easement acquisitions, and by assisting other entities (i.e.. land trusts, local govts., other DNR units)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct outreach to local communities through regional gatherings, mailings, meetings with county officials and land trust partners to promote MET's easement programs and mission (focus on Prince George's County). ● Provide direct support to local land trusts to facilitate conservation easement donations and acquisitions that result in co-held easements. ● Improve process for handoff of completed easements to the Stewardship Program ● Support the Stewardship Program on amendment processing. ● Work with OAG to review and where necessary revise MET's model Deed of Conservation Easement to ensure legal sufficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ann Carlson ● Michael Mingus ● Ann Carlson ● Michael Mingus ● Ann Carlson ● Michael Mingus ● Cindy Hoffmann ● Ann Carlson ● Michael Mingus ● Josette Markline ● Ann Carlson ● Michael Mingus ● John Turgeon ● Josette Markline

Regional Conservation Networks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue participation with the Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance. ● Continue working with American Chestnut Land Trust on to coordinate the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance. ● Continue participation with the Delmarva Restoration and Conservation Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● John Turgeon ● Ann Carlson ● Michael Mingus ● Michelle Grafton ● John Turgeon ● Michelle Grafton ● Ann Carlson ● Michael Mingus ● Michael Mingus ● Ann Carlson
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II. Easement Stewardship and Monitoring

Objective	Tasks	People Assigned to Task
Accomplish on-going high priority initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with DoIT to complete development of ArcGIS monitoring collection tool. Transition staff and volunteers to the new tool through multiple training sessions in person and online. ● Actively pursue recruitment and hiring of diverse staff, including replacement Stewardship Planner, Long Term contractual, volunteers, seasonals, interns, etc. ● Conduct successor owner outreach and first-time stewardship/monitoring visits with successor owners and recent easement donors within 3 months of Easement transfer (Estimate 35 transfers and new owner visits). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Josette Markline ● Wendy Foster ● Josette Markline & John Turgeon ● Kelly Price ● Wendy Foster ● Josette Markline ● LTC & NRP III

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address (respond, track and complete or resolve) all incoming requests for information, easement interpretation, exercise of reserved rights, and other special requests, especially amendments (Estimate 25 reviews leading to formal decision to approve or deny). • Conduct intensive site visits and develop Current Condition Reports for designated high priority easements including older and those subdivided (Goal 35 of 250+ required) • Develop and record Notices of Easement for first decade of easements (1972-1982), to be filed at county land records offices. • Work with DNR's Coastal Services to complete analysis of land use and land cover on MET's easement portfolio and then to estimate Ecosystem Services benefits/value of each property and for the entire portfolio. Then work with DNR IT to import the results into LOCATE database for each easement interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josette Markline • LTC & NRP III • Wendy Foster • Josette Markline • LTC & NRP III • Wendy Foster • Josette Markline • Josette Markline • John Turgeon
<p>Incorporate LTA Standards and Practices into all aspects of Stewardship Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to document monitoring of 100% of easements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annually from high capacity co-holders 2. On The Ground (OTG) once every three (3) years for solely held easements and those 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josette Markline • Michelle Grafton • Wendy Foster • LTC & NRP III

	<p>co-held with low and no capacity land trusts</p> <p>3. Remotely using Lens in the other two (2) years. (1316 easement interests; 3.5 permanent staff)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit, train and support MET volunteers and interns to conduct solely held easements on the ground (Goal 175 visits [125 volunteer and 50 intern reports, respectively]). Supervise contractor and recruit and supervise interns to conduct remote monitoring using Lens (Goal 500 remote reports). Continue to increase reporting of local land trust (LLT) co-held easement monitoring through incentive payments, grants, technology sharing and collaboration with the LLT community. (Goal 450 reports). Engage Maryland Forest Service for development of Management Plans for three (3) MET fee simple properties. Develop MOU with Md Park Service re management of FP Smith property in Garrett County. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendy Foster Vol MD Vol Coordinator Josette Markline LTC & NRP III Michelle Grafton Josette Markline Josette Markline NRP III
<p>Implement updates of Stewardship program processes and policies to improve efficiency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with DNR IT to develop means to enhance tracking of stewardship processes in LOCATE database including landowner requests/concerns and new landowner processing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Josette Markline Cindy Hoffmann

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete updates to Policy on the Delegation of Board Authority to Lands Committee and MET Director for select landowner requests. • Review and revise Stewardship and Volunteer Management manuals as needed to reflect new technologies and processes. • Ensure MET's property boundary GIS layer is accurate, and work with DNR and DoIT to manage-workflow for updates and integration into field tool and LENS remote monitoring tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josette Markline • Josette Markline • Wendy Foster • Josette Markline
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III. Land Trust Assistance

Objective	Strategies	People Assigned to Task
Ongoing and high priority tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address requests from co-holding land trust partners and provide direct and indirect assistance and information. Connect these partners with MET and non-MET resources (e.g. DNR units, FM, etc.) as appropriate. • Annually update MET's Land Trust Directory. The Directory is a public facing document that lists MET's land trusts and conservation partners who co-hold easements and/or have an executed and current Cooperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle Grafton • Michelle Grafton

	<p>Agreement with MET.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with DNR IT to improve LOCATE to develop fields and reports to capture, track and summarize land trust data and metrics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle Grafton • Cindy Hoffmann
Cooperative Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address (respond, track and complete) Cooperative Agreement renewals and new requests for Agreements with interested land trust partners. • Work with OAG to develop policies and procedures to address Cooperative Agreement terminations and grandfathered Agreements. • Work with OAG to develop procedures to follow when a land trust is not fulfilling the terms of their Cooperative Agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle Grafton • Michelle Grafton • John Turgeon • Michelle Grafton • Easement & Stewardship Program staff
Co-held Reporting for Jointly Held Easements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and process received co-held monitoring reports. Provide direct assistance to LLTs to facilitate co-held easement reporting. • Revisit monitoring incentive check payment process. Develop a better plan so that land trusts are receiving payments in a timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle Grafton • Kelly Price & Michelle Grafton • John Turgeon • Mona Rudnicki
MET Co-held Easement Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a priority list of co-held easements for possible assignment of interests from low-capacity land trusts to MET or higher capacity land trusts (LLTs). Complete at least one assignment project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle Grafton • Josette Markline

<p>Land Trust Training and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct a minimum of two “Land Trust Roundtable” educational sessions in FY 2024. ● Continue to disseminate a monthly e-newsletter to the land trust community to promote MET, land trust, and state governmental news. ● Work collaboratively with the Stewardship program and interested local land trusts on improving stewardship processes including training and education. ● Work with the Stewardship program and refine co-held reporting procedures and other co-held stewardship processes. ● Assist Forever Maryland as necessary with the 2023 Maryland Land Conservation Conference. ● Review Hollmann Grant program within Keep Maryland Beautiful and where necessary make recommendations to revise documents and program to better align and support MET’s current priorities. ● Provide staff support to MET’s Land Trust Outreach Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Michelle Grafton ● Michelle Grafton ● Michelle Grafton ● Josette Markline ● Michelle Grafton ● Josette Markline ● Michelle Grafton ● John Turgeon ● Michelle Grafton ● Michelle Grafton ● John Turgeon
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IV. Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) Grants

Objectives	Strategies	People Assigned to Task
<p>Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) to complete strategic operations and communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● John Turgeon & Kelly Price ● Michelle Grafton

	<p>plan for extended KMB Grants Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with MET Board, and CBT on finalizing grants review committee membership, program implementation plan, and budgeting. • Work with the DNR Secretary's Office and DNR FAS on obtaining expanded funding for KMB grants in FY 2025 that was passed by the legislature in the 2023 session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Turgeon & Kelly Price • John Turgeon & Kelly Price
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Chesapeake Bay Trust to implement and distribute KMB grants. • Review and make award recommendations on Hollmann and Hughes grant applications via KMB Grants program in support of MET's land trust strengthening goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelly Price • Michelle Grafton • John Turgeon
KMB Recordkeeping and Fiscal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with DNR FAS on grant memos and invoices • Conduct review, and develop intake processes (records transferred from Forever Md. to MET) for KMB grant records including applications, final grant reports and photographs, relevant communications, board or fiscal records, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelly Price • Kelly Price & Cindy Hoffmann

V. Communications

Objectives	Strategies	People Assigned to Task
<p>MET Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to disseminate stories, special features and messages regarding land conservation topics through all MET outlets/media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Newsletters ○ Website ○ Press Releases ● Work with Stewardship Program to connect easement landowners, via MET's media and outreach efforts, to sources of funding and expertise for implementing enhanced stewardship projects on their properties, prioritizing programs in other DNR units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Michelle Grafton ● John Turgeon ● Michelle Grafton ● Josette Markline ● John Turgeon
<p>MET's Paper and e-Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop two monthly e-news bulletins. One for MET's organizational e-news which is distributed primarily to easement landowners. The second to MET's co-holding and other conservation partners. Complete a total of 24 email bulletins in FY2024 (two each month). ● Develop MET's Landmarks Newsletter, to be distributed in the spring. Content is an annual summary of activities and successes (mailed to all audiences). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Michelle Grafton ● John Turgeon ● Michelle Grafton ● John Turgeon ● MET Program Managers

VI. MET Board Managed Funds

Objectives	Strategies	People Assigned to Task
Annual Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute Stewardship Fund Appeals to new easement donors. • Work with MET Board Chair on reinvigorating MET's Open Space Legacy Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Turgeon • Ann Carlson • Kelly Price • John Turgeon

VII. Operations and Organizational Management

Objectives	Strategies	People Assigned to Task
LTA Standards & Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review organizational progress toward meeting LTA Standards and Practices. • Ensure consistency of MET records retention with LTA Standards and Practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Turgeon • Kelly Price • Cindy Hoffmann • Cindy Hoffmann • Kelly Price • John Turgeon
Systems and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue updates in MET's Salesforce database and Locate software application. • Implement use of the new web-based field data collection tool for easement monitoring. • Work with DoIT regarding support needs for the new Field Data Collection Tool. • Ensure MET staff have technology and training necessary to complete all tasks assigned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cindy Hoffmann • Kelly Price • Josette Markline & Wendy Foster • Kelly Price • Kelly Price • Josette Markline • Kelly Price • Cindy Hoffman

<p>MET Records</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement MET’s records retention policy once it is approved by MSA. ● Continue work to achieve getting all essential documents to digital format and removing all unnecessary paper. ● Work on better organizing T Drive folders to include deletion of non-essential documents. ● Manage and respond to PIA requests in accordance with State requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cindy Hoffmann ● Kelly Price
<p>Ongoing Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance staff access to available training and professional development opportunities. ● Work collaboratively with DNR FAS on annual stateside budget, CZM and POS grants, monthly MET expenditures and projections, state credit card expenses, FS18 logs, fleet management, and the use of R-stars budgeting software. ● Work with the MET Finance Committee and contractual bookkeeper to provide oversight of MET Board managed funds. ● Work with Mona on the private side check distribution process. ● Work collaboratively with DNR HR on personnel and performance matters regarding PEP’s, MS22’s, policies and procedures, telework schedules, new hiring, and contacts. ● Continue to explore ways that MET can obtain increased funding and personnel to help meet MET needs and priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● John Turgeon & Program Managers ● Kelly Price ● John Turgeon & Kelly Price ● Kelly Price & John Turgeon ● John Turgeon & Kelly Price ● John Turgeon & Kelly Price

VIII. Land Trust Revolving Loans

Objectives	Strategies	People Assigned to Task
<p>Establish Processes and Procedures for MET to Administer the Land Trust Revolving Loan Fund Starting in FY 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the DNR Secretary’s Office and DNR FAS on establishing the loan fund in the FY 2025 budget as provided in statute. • Work with the DNR Secretary’s Office and FAS on obtaining adequate staffing to administer revolving loan program. • Establish application procedures and eligibility criteria for revolving loan applicants in accordance with statute, such that applications for loans can be submitted beginning in FY 2025. Consult with OAG for legal advice as needed. • Work with the MET Governance Committee on selecting members of the Land Preservation Rapid Response Advisory Committee in accordance with statute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Turgeon • Kelly Price • John Turgeon • Kelly Price • Wendy Foster & Kelly Price • John Turgeon • Ann Carlson • John Turgeon • Wendy Foster

IX. 40 x 40 Land Conservation Implementation Grants

Objectives	Strategies	People Assigned to Task
<p>Establish Processes and Procedures for MET to Administer the 40 x 40 Land Conservation Implementation Grant Program Starting in FY 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the DNR Secretary’s Office and DNR FAS to provide grant funding in the FY 2025 budget as provided in statute. • Work with the DNR Secretary’s Office and FAS on obtaining adequate staffing to administer revolving loan program or seek outside contractor. • Establish application procedures and eligibility criteria for grant applicants in accordance with statute, such that applications for grants can be submitted in FY 2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Turgeon • Kelly Price • John Turgeon • Kelly Price • Kelly Price & Michelle Grafton • John Turgeon • OAG