

THE COMMON GOOD

In my youth, I spent many hours with my father and brothers exploring Maryland's great outdoors and the natural treasures with which we have been blessed — from the mountains in the west to the stream banks of the Eastern Shore. Over the years, I have become even more of an outdoor enthusiast, appreciating not only the unlimited recreation and sporting opportunities we enjoy, but also — actually more so — a spiritual connection with the Earth and its creatures, and the inner peace and inspiration that connection brings.

More recently I have also developed a deep respect and appreciation for the men and women of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources — an appreciation for both the invaluable, challenging work they do and the intense passion they have for their mission.

Under the visionary leadership of Secretary John Griffin, DNR this year celebrates its 40th anniversary; four decades of Marylanders working for Marylanders to preserve our landscape, restore the health of our waterways, manage our fish and wildlife, host visitors to our public lands, and protect our resources and our citizens... to benefit our planet, our children and theirs.

As Governor, I have found the passion of the DNR team to be infectious and have relished my unique opportunity to partner with Secretary Griffin and his staff in the great work that they do. Together we have developed new programming and innovative tools to better track and target our efforts, to be more accountable to our fellow citizens, and to engage all Marylanders in caring for the treasured resources we share.

Today our interactive GreenPrint map is helping guide protection of our most important landscapes; and we have preserved nearly 25,000 acres of that landscape through Program Open Space since January 2007. BayStat is allowing the public to track our Bay restoration progress. Citizen stewards have planted and registered nearly 20,000 new



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trees since January, and waterfront residents in a dozen tributaries are growing oysters in more than 5,000 cages for planting in local sanctuaries next fall. Our Partnership for Children in Nature is working to make sure all Maryland young people are able to connect with nature and learn about our environment.

And, despite our current fiscal climate, our Smart, Green & Growing Initiative — of which all these programs are a part — is connecting citizens and programs to help us expand opportunities for our working families: the opportunity to learn and to earn, the opportunity to enjoy the health of the people we love, and to enjoy the health of the environment we love.

God gives us not only the intellect and imagination to harness nature but the intellect and compassion to protect and conserve it. And Team DNR is leading the way. The dedication, professionalism and pure joy they bring to their work make me proud to be a citizen of the State of Maryland and its Chief Executive. It is a personal and professional privilege to count myself as a member of their team and to wish them a happy 40th birthday.

Martin O'Malley
Governor