

## **SHA Native Plant Restoration Program Endorsements**

SHA's work to control invasive plant species from roadsides has been endorsed by numerous groups including the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy, the South River Federation and the Severn River Commission. Additionally, the Federal Highway Administration is an active partner in reducing invasive species along America's highways and provides funding for the efforts. Congressman Steny Hoyer recognized National Invasive Plant Awareness Week during his remarks in the House of Representatives stating, "Invasive plant and animal species are dangerous to regional ecosystems and carry with them serious negative effects on our economy."

***Deborah Landau, Conservation Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy:***

"Invasive non-native plants can crowd out native plants and provide low-quality food sources for wildlife. Many of the invasive plant populations that we control on our own nature preserves got their start on roadsides. The Nature Conservancy is happy to see SHA controlling these invaders before they spread into natural areas and forest interiors. Replanting the treated areas with native species will help ensure that they once again become welcoming habitat for the animals that call Maryland home."

***Jonathan McKnight, Biologist for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources:***

"Invasive plants do not provide the kinds of habitat and food that native birds and other wildlife need to survive. Uncontrolled invasive plant populations on highway corridors act as a constant source of infestation and wreak havoc upon natural areas. Controlling noxious vegetation will certainly encourage native plants to prosper."

***Erik Michelsen, Executive Director of the South River Federation:***

"Road corridors are a necessary part of modern society and they can present ideal opportunities for the protection and restoration of adjacent natural resources. The edge habitat they create is a perfect breeding ground for non-native, invasive plants. We applaud SHA's commitment to eradicate invasive plants and diligent work to re-establish native plant communities along right-of-ways. This will provide wildlife and water quality benefits, and will showcase the region's beautiful native plants for the thousands of drivers who travel state highways each day."

***Lina Vlavianos, Chairman of the Severn River Commission:***

"We understand SHA will replant the areas with appropriate native species and will implement controls to address storm water runoff during the entire removal process. Considering the invasive nature of especially the Bradford Pear, the SRC's position is that this plan can benefit the Severn River watershed. Specifically, we believe that it will enhance the biodiversity of the affected areas and is, therefore, consistent with forest best management practices."

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