

## MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

Meeting Held Through Email Due to Coronavirus Restrictions

### Attendees:

Gabrielle Oldham      Dori Murphy  
Ron Anderson          Kathie Jarmon  
Michael Morgan        Tom Frederick  
John Bennett

### Big Tree Program Update:

John reported:

For Cecil County, John Bennett met with Jennifer Coolahan, Business Services Specialist for the University of Maryland Donaldson Brown Conference Center in Port Deposit on 6/22/21. The U of M has reportedly budgeted \$1 million to upgrade the building and grounds and Ms. Coolahan is in charge of this project. We met to first identify all the registered big trees (11) on the property, locate them for possible signage and arborist evaluation, and discuss how they rank in the State. I also identified a number of other trees; some of which are being considered for removal as they are under-performing. We discussed possible native species replacements. I also noticed what appears to be a European beech, *Fagus sylvatica*, which we thought was an American beech when last we visited. I plan to return to measure and register that tree as it is rare to find one that is not a purple or copper cultivar.

On 6/17, Linda Barker and Marc Lipnick measured a new naturally occurring yellow birch (see photo) at Prettyboy Reservoir in Baltimore County which became the new State Champion at 174 points, besting the former champ in Harford at 134 points. Marc discovered this birch while hiking at Prettyboy. He believes he has found a couple other potential State champs but needs a hiking/measuring partner.

Throughout June, DNR Forester Melissa Nash has been measuring trees nominated as a result of her local newspaper article about the big tree program. She has measured 3 new trees—2 on public lands, one private. All three are new Garrett County Champions. (See photo of black oak at Friend's Delight State Park).

On 6/23, Joli McCathran and Joe Howard measured/re-measured 9 trees in Montgomery County. A new honeylocust became the new State Champion at 260 points (previous champ in BCity is at 236) and a new Bradford pear also claimed championship status at 198 points.

On 6/26, Jim Sherring, Wayne Merkel, Geoff Graff, Ted Moran, Mike Gallagher and John Bennett re-measured 7 trees and measured 7 new trees—total 14, in Harford County. Five were at the St. George’s Parish church and graveyard in Spesutia—which is a site highly recommended to visit—has one of the best collections of sugar maples in the State. 7 of the 14 are Harford County Champions and a couple trees rank #2 in Maryland. The Fallston sycamore, (see photo) which has had the greatest circumference of any living tree in MD since 2011, now has a circumference of 31’ 1” —compared to the Wye Oak at 31’ 2”. We agreed afterwards we need to double check the height on this tree—the batteries in the laser may have been wearing down, as the height jumped from 85’ in 2011 to 104’. As it stands, it equals the Wye Oak in total points at 506, and would capture the title of “Maryland’s Biggest Tree” away from the sycamore in Montgomery County.





### **Website Update:**

Ron reported that he updated the website as follows:

The June minutes were added to the website.

The July agenda was added to the site.

### **New Business:**

Most members commented on the severity of the cicada damage to trees. Hopefully almost all will recover and not be damaged too much. Just another stress factor on oaks though, which seemed to get hit hard.

Tom reported:

State offices were recently opened to the public. The next Board meeting will be on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Let me know your thoughts on holding in person meetings. Most likely we will need to meet in a “public space” so the public can attend. Now that the State of Emergency is over all public meetings will need to be advertised and open.

**Next Meeting:**

**August 4, 2021**