CSM opens new nature, fitness trail at Leonardtown campus

Posted by Alan Van Wormer On 07/03/2018

LEONARDTOWN, Md. - The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) celebrated the opening of a renovated Nature and Fitness Trail on the college’s Leonardtown Campus, Monday, July 2. The trail is open to the community and is intended for both educational and recreational use.

The trail is less than half a mile and was created before CSM purchased the campus property in 1997. The year-long renovation of the trail included widening and clearing the path, rebuilding two bridges over a creek, landscaping, signage for the trail and tree identification.

“The nature trail is truly an asset for the Leonardtown Campus,” said CSM Vice President Dr. Tracy Harris, who initiated the renovation project. “I saw the restoration of the trail as a learning lab environment where we could highlight the beauty and benefits of the trail by providing interpretive signage and markers for enhanced learning opportunities for our biology faculty, staff and students, as well as environmentalist conscientious enthusiasts.”

(Right) College of Southern Maryland President Dr. Maureen Murphy welcomes guests to the Leonardtown Campus trail, saying, “Today we celebrate a year’s worth of hard work and the people who have helped to make this trail new again.”

The college’s Wellness staff was also enthusiastic about the opportunity to expand the campus’ fitness options, Harris said.

The trail is located on the college’s Leonardtown Campus, behind the Wellness and Aquatics Center. New ivory and green signs point visitors to the trailhead. The wide, mulched trail winds through a forested area on the campus, crossing a creek created by runoff from the Town Run Stream, up and down some hilly areas and includes views of massive, old trees and plenty of native flora.

“This campus trail is covered with beautiful trees, streams and wildlife, which I believe we have a duty to preserve and protect,” Harris said. “The goal of the project was to create an environmentally safe and healthy nature trail that enhances the learning opportunities for CSM and the community.”

(Right) Describing the restored Leonardtown Nature and Fitness Trail as both “a work in progress” and “labor of love,” CSM Vice President Dr. Tracy Harris, who initiated the renovation project, thanks Dominion Cove Point for its corporate stewardship and partnership.

Multiple community partnerships assisted the renovation project, led by Dominion Energy, which provided a $10,000 grant for the project. “Dominion Energy is committed to supporting environmental stewardship and education, which are both embodied in this nature trail and outdoor lab,” said Mike Frederick, vice president – LNG Operations at Dominion Energy Cove Point. “The opportunity to explore a watershed stream environment will benefit not only CSM students but also the local community.”

Other major partners include Program Director for the Natural Resources Management Program at the Dr. Forrest Career and Technical Center John Spinicchia, Director of Environmental Planning and Conservation at Naval Air Station Patuxent River Kyle Rambo, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust Director Frank Allen, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Dave Gailey, Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust Board of Trustees Business Manager Bob Boxwell and CSM Biology Professor Tracey Stuller.

The July 2 ceremony officially opened the CSM Nature and Fitness Trail with CSM Board of Trustee Chair Ted Harwood, Vice Chair Brad Bates, Leonardtown Mayor Dan Burris and CSM staff and faculty joining the ribbon cutting and walking the trail.

The trail will be open for college and community use from dawn to dusk. No golf carts, all-terrain vehicles or bicycles are allowed on the trail and pets need to be on a leash.

(Right) “Supporting this trail is one of the many ways we like to help; we are helping you [CSM] help the community,” said Dominion Cove Point Media/Community Manager Karl Neddenien.

“There is much anticipation from the CSM community and the Town of Leonardtown for the opening of this trail,” Harris said. “The nature trail provides a scenic, tranquil view of nature in Southern Maryland and the opportunity to learn and invest in our environment.”

The ribbon is officially cut thanks to the many supporters and community groups that joined CSM to revive and renew the Leonardtown Nature and Fitness Trail.

For information on other ways CSM is pursuing environmental sustainability, visit https://www.csmd.edu/about/environmental-sustainability/.

View additional photos from today’s ribbon cutting and reopening of the Leonardtown Nature and Fitness Trail http://csmphoto.zenfolio.com/leontrailopens

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