Service and Healing: Bringing Veterans and Nature Together

This project provided quality experiences in nature through environmental programs along a wheelchair-accessible, streamside nature trail at Woodend Nature Sanctuary. This was their first opportunity to focus on veterans, leading to new interest in environmental protection. Audubon Naturalist Society hired two program consultant veterans to help create and pilot new programs with outreach support from the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs. The consultants trained staff to work with individuals with PTSD or mobility differences to benefit 50 to 75 Maryland veterans, and assisted with evaluation, analysis and future planning.

While the core effort were self-management classes with elements of forest bathing, it was discovered during the program's development that veterans groups are interested in birding programs. Because of this, a beginning birding program at Woodend was created as a secondary effort.

Project Outcomes
- 8,000 publications produced
- 12 workshops with 75 attendees
- 52 participants with increased knowledge and awareness
- 48 participants with increased self-efficacy

Project Funding
$5,753- Chesapeake Bay Trust
$4,373- Trust- Healing Hunting
$1,017- In-Kind match
Total: $11,143*

Project Partners
- Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
- Vet Centers (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)

*Please note that “Service and Healing: Bringing Veterans and Nature Together” was funded through the Outreach and Restoration program. The Veterans' Engagement Mini Grant will fund up to $5,000 for