



## Couple works with Potomac Conservancy

By Linwood Outlaw III -- Daily Staff Writer

WINCHESTER — Thanks to David and Julie Worthington, wildlife now has a home inside the city limits.

Potomac Conservancy representatives and city officials gathered near the married couple's home on Cedarmeade Avenue on Friday morning to take part in a dedication ceremony that featured the unveiling of an interpretive sign for a wetlands plot owned by David Worthington. The property will provide natural wetland drainage and a habitat for wildlife.

Worthington said the project began in 2006 when he bought the lot — which is roughly three-quarters of an acre — adjacent to his home and across the street from Frederick Douglass Elementary School. Since buying the property, he has worked with Potomac Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Ricketts Construction, Richmond American Homes and city officials to preserve the wetlands.

"I know it's been a labor of love. But I know it's been a lot of work as well," Mayor Elizabeth Minor told Worthington during the ceremony.

Worthington said the land is used by a variety of animals, including mallards, foxes, skunks, birds and even copperhead snakes. Flowers and plants also grow in the habitat.

Worthington said in addition to shelter and food for wildlife, the wetland provides stormwater runoff management by helping remove pollutants during storms.

"From a natural standpoint, this is a place where we can have our animals live. As we become more urbanized, we need to have places for animals to live," said Worthington, who works with his wife to preserve the property. "Animals are going to be here [in the city.] Here's a place that they can live and have their own freedom, without having to get in your house or get in your yard and cause a nuisance to you."

City Councilman Michael Butler said Worthington's wetlands project "sets an example for other people" to try and produce similar efforts throughout the area.

"It acts as a natural filter for the pollutants. It saves us money in the city [as far as] having to build extra capacity for stormwater. Nature knows best, period," Butler said.

Anne Merwin, senior director of policy for the Potomac Conservancy, said Worthington's property "shows that you don't need a big piece of land to provide really tremendous wetland and wildlife habitat."

"Frankly, it treats water better than just about any of our other facilities that we typically install," Merwin said. "And since stormwater is the fastest-growing and largest water quality [issue] in Winchester and in the Potomac as a whole, I think I would love to see more of these in the future."

Potomac Conservancy has been working to protect the Potomac River and its tributaries since 1993. In the next 20 years, the population of the Potomac watershed is expected to grow 10 percent each decade, which could add about 1 million inhabitants to reach a population of 6.25 million.

\* Contact Linwood Outlaw III at [loutlaw@nvdaily.com](mailto:loutlaw@nvdaily.com)