

Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet



The Women's History Month theme for March 2009, established by the National Women's History Project (NWHF), honors women who have taken the lead in the environmental or "green" movement, including Rachel Carson, from Silver Spring, Maryland, who was the founder of the contemporary environmental movement. Rachel Carson wrote her pioneering book, *Silent Spring*, while living in Silver Spring.

During March, we are not only honoring Rachel Carson, but also other Maryland women who are presently taking the lead to save our planet! Each woman listed below was nominated from our State and will be featured on the National Women's History Project's Website.

Roswitha Augusta is an entrepreneur, naturalist, and environmental filmmaker. In 1980, she established Augusta Properties, an apartment management company. Her profound love of nature prompted her to learn filmmaking and produce the award winning documentary, "Preserving the Future," about the conflict between preserving our environment and urbanization. Additionally, she hosts a cable television program about local environmental issues.



Rebecca Bell is the Environmental Education Specialist at the Maryland State Department of Education. She has provided outstanding leadership in embedding environmental issues into the state curriculum for all public schools. Bell has been honored as the Maryland Middle School Science Teacher of the Year, and was selected in 2008 to participate in the national Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Teacher at Sea program to help scientists monitor the changing ecosystem.



Lynne Cherry is the author/illustrator of *The Great Kapok Tree* and more than 30 award-winning children's books that teach respect for the earth. Her book, *Flute's Journey: the Life of a Wood Thrush*, focused national media attention on conservation efforts to save the 60-acre Belt Woods in Maryland, when Lynne had children write letters to save Belt Woods, which were read on CBS Sunday Morning News With Charles Osgood.



Dr. Mary Cleave was a mission specialist at NASA and flew on space flights in 1985 and 1989. Her extensive research is in the field of soil and water pollution with a special focus on the need for minimum river flow to help maintain certain game fish. She served as NASA Associate Administrator for the Science Mission and also managed NASA's Ocean Color Satellite Program in Washington, D.C.

Mary S. "Mimi" Cooper is an activist with a burning desire for positive change who has acted as an "environmental conscience" in many situations. She helped start a Baltimore hazardous waste day, is a director of the Rachel Carson Council, was on the National Conservation Committee of the Garden Club of America, and has taught at the Irvine Nature Center.



Caitlin Alexandra Dunbar's lifelong interest in nature and the outdoors lives on in the Caitlin Dunbar Girl Scout nature center established in her name by family, friends, and the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland following her sudden death from leukemia at age 15. This nature center offer stewardship activities on rescued wildlife and "hands on" environmental opportunities for Scouts and visitors to enjoy and appreciate.

Ilia J. Fehrer was one of the strongest pro-preservation voices in Maryland, heard not only when Assateague Island's future was in question, but also when ecosystems beyond her own coastal bays were threatened. It is because of her vision, advocacy and tenacity that we can and future generations will enjoy the Assateague Island National Seashore almost as our European ancestors found it.



Sharon Rose Matola worked in Belize where she became the prime mover in arousing consciousness of citizens and the Belize government to the fears of extinction of the country's wildlife and removal of wilderness areas. In 1991, she was founder and director of the Belize Zoo, which uses the zoo's wildlife preservation area to save at least 4 tapir species which faced extinction.

Dr. Diana Post is Executive Director/President of the Rachel Carson Council, a veterinarian, author, and environmentalist. Inspired by Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, Dr. Post became an expert in pesticide toxicology and has been at the forefront supporting regulations to protect people and animals from pesticide poisoning. She has authored extensive publications on pesticides, public health and the environment. Dr. Post is deeply committed to working for a healthier planet.



Ellen Silbergeld is an environmental toxicologist and researcher who was one of the individuals primarily responsible for having lead, a major environmental and health hazard, removed from gasoline. She has been an activist in addressing lead contamination in water and has worked for the Environmental Defense Fund, the University of Maryland Medical School, and the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University.

Janice S. Wiles is Executive Director of the Friends of Frederick County, Maryland, Programs of Land and Cultural preservation Fund, Inc. In 1984, when a fledging Brazilian democracy opened the door to free speech and organization, Janice Wiles provided support and guidance for Brazilians about managing and conserving natural resources. Today, many of those young conservationists hold positions of national leadership. In Frederick County, Maryland, she leads a grassroots movement encouraging sustainable growth, preservation governance and citizen involvement in decision-making.