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NEWS FROM THE DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

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DNREC Partners with Boy Scouts and EARTHNTX in Tree Planting Conservation Effort at Blackbird Creek Reserve

On Saturday April 4, about 40 boy scouts and leaders from the Del-Mar-Va Council joined with DNREC and EARTHNTX, an environmental education nonprofit organization, and planted 1,000 native trees at Blackbird Creek Reserve near Townsend – a component of the Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve. The tree planting event was part of a long-range conservation plan by DNREC's Division of Soil and Water Conservation to protect and preserve one of the most beautiful and ecologically valuable areas in Delaware.

"The boy scouts did an outstanding job, planting native bare root and potted seedling trees, including Persimmon, Northern Red Oak, Loblolly Pine and Easter Red Cedar, as part of our restoration effort at the Blackbird Creek Reserve," said Kimberly Cole, Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve manager. "We appreciate the scouts and EARTHNTX efforts to conserve one of Delaware's valuable estuarine areas."

The tree planting event was a partnership between DNREC's Division of Soil and Water Conservation and EARTHNTX, an environmental education non-profit that provides science-based, outdoor-oriented and hands-on environmental programs for children and youth organizations, schools and families. EARTHNTX partners with national and local scouting organizations and provided funding for this project's trees.

"Hands-on tree plantings are a great way to get kids to take action for the planet and connect with the outdoors. In years to come they can watch the trees grow as they do – reinforcing the importance of the experience and helping to build a sense of stewardship for our shared



Del-Mar-Va Council boy scouts and leaders planted about 1,000 trees at Blackbird Creek Reserve.

environment," said Amanda Benner, EARTHXT program director.

Ten year old Braedon Carter of Cub Scout Pack 76 of Hartly was one of the enthusiastic planters at the Reserve. When asked why he was spending his Saturday at this project, Braedon responded that he has done a great deal of planting in his young life, hopes to do a lot more and "wanted to help the earth."

Henry Paul from Boy Scout Troop 29 of Landenberg, Pennsylvania said he has done a number of similar projects and enjoys planting trees because it's rewarding and not tedious. The thirteen year old sees his work as important because "trees help the ecosystem and provide shelter for a number of animals."

Scott Hansen, Del-Mar-Va Council program director said, "Community service has been an important part of scouting since its inception in 1910. There's nothing better to help scouts connect with their communities and environment than hands-on experience. This tree planting brought together around 40 volunteers from cub scouts packs from all over the Delmarva Peninsula."

The Blackbird Creek Reserve and St. Jones Reserve are two components of the Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve (DNERR), a cooperative program between the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Delaware Coastal Programs and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The goal of the program is to establish, protect, and manage natural estuarine habitats for research and education. The Blackbird Creek and St. Jones Reserves include both brackish and freshwater estuaries, and represent the diverse estuarine ecosystems found throughout the Mid-Atlantic. For more information on the DNERR, visit www.swc.dnrec.delaware.gov.

About EARTHXT

EARTHXT is a national non-profit organization working to protect the future on earth for all species through programs that help children and youth learn about and protect the environment. EARTHXT provides fun, science-based, outdoor-oriented and hands-on environmental programs for children and youth organizations, schools, and families. Through national and local partnerships with Girl Scouts of the USA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts, and others, EARTHXT aims to help create a generation of environmental stewards. EARTHXT's flagship program, Trees for the 21st Century, is a unique educational and tree-planting program for children ages 6 to 18, involving science-based learning, tree-planting, and ongoing stewardship activities. www.earthxt.org.

About the Boy Scouts of America Del-Mar-Va Council

The Boy Scouts of America, through the Del-Mar-Va Council, currently serve and provide program opportunities for over 9,000 youth throughout the Delmarva Peninsula including over 5,000 in the state of Delaware alone. Hundreds of qualified adult volunteers carry out programs in three distinct groups: Cub Scouts (boys ages 7-10), Boy Scouts (boys ages 11-17), and Venturing (boy and girls ages 14-20). Each summer, thousands of scouts finish their year by attending a summer camp program at Rodney Scout Reservation in North East, Md. or at Henson Scout Reservation near Seaford, Del.

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