

NEWS RELEASE

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(RIDGELY, MD—January 8, 2024)

Adkins Arboretum, Shore Rivers Receive Grant to Educate Homeowner Associations

Adkins Arboretum received a 2023 Chesapeake Bay Trust Outreach grant to partner with ShoreRivers on a “Naturally Better Landscaping” project that strives to educate and empower local homeowner associations to adopt environmentally-friendly landscaping practices. The project was prompted by the passage of Maryland House Bill 322, which prohibits HOA governing bodies from restricting homeowners who employ landscaping techniques that benefit the environment.

By using native plants in conjunction with other environmentally friendly techniques such as leaving the leaves, reducing turf, and finding alternatives to toxic fertilizers and

pesticides, homeowners can help support wildlife and keep our waterways clean. Land, water,



Darran Tilghman, Director of Community Engagement for ShoreRivers, and Jenny Houghton, Assistant Director of Adkins Arboretum, present at Bay Bridge Cove HOA on Kent Island as part of the “Naturally Better Landscaping” project. Photo by Katie Drummond.

and wildlife are inextricably linked, and the choices homeowners make play an important role in safeguarding our environment.

During the initial “Naturally Better Landscaping” project year, Adkins and ShoreRivers have provided field experiences, site visits, and community presentations to Bay Bridge Cove and Chester Harbor HOAs in Queen Anne’s County, as well as Back Creek HOA in Talbot County. They have also developed garden concept designs and [online](#) and print resources. The project was featured in the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council's "Turning a New Leaf" conference in December.

Queen Anne’s County officials have welcomed the "Naturally Better Landscaping" project as a way to raise awareness about best landscaping practices and stormwater management. With their encouragement, Adkins has applied for a second year of funding in hopes of working with three new HOAs in addition to the HOAs currently engaged. Mallard Run HOA in Stevensville has already expressed interest.

To learn more about the Naturally Better Landscaping project, visit adkinsarboretum.org.

Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve at the headwaters of the Tuckahoe Creek in Caroline County. For more information, visit adkinsarboretum.org.

CUTLINE: Darran Tilghman, Director of Community Engagement for ShoreRivers, and Jenny Houghton, Assistant Director of Adkins Arboretum, present at Bay Bridge Cove HOA on Kent Island as part of the “Naturally Better Landscaping” project. Photo by Katie Drummond.

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