



SCENIC RIVERS LAND TRUST  
PROTECTING ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY'S LAND AND WATER

April 11, 2025

James Gonsalves  
President, Bay Ridge Civic Association  
80 East Lake Drive  
Annapolis, MD 21403

Re: Support for Year-Round Deer Management Program in the Bay Ridge Conservation Easement

Dear James:

At the April 8th SRLT Board meeting, Lily Openshaw, Outreach Chair for the Bay Ridge Civic Association (BRCA), presented a briefing on the critical ecological degradation occurring in the 103-acre Bay Ridge Conservation Easement, commonly referred to as the Big Woods.

The long-term sustainability of this vital forested area is in jeopardy. The Big Woods' regenerative capacity has been severely compromised, with minimal native ground cover and a lack of understory plant diversity. A near-monoculture of American holly now dominates the understory, while the few emerging canopy trees are overwhelmingly sweet gum. These conditions are directly linked to an overabundant deer population.

On behalf of BRCA, Ms. Openshaw requested SRLT's support for expanding the existing deer management efforts in the Big Woods. Specifically, BRCA proposes following the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recommendation to transition from seasonal hunting to a year-round deer management and culling program. BRCA is committed to implementing this program in a manner that is safe, humane, and effective.

The SRLT Board acknowledges the severity of the deer management challenges facing Bay Ridge and approves BRCA's request to shift from a seasonal hunting program to a year-round, ecologically focused deer management initiative as long as BRCA remains 100% compliant with DNR's policies. As this program is rooted in forest management and not designed for recreational hunting, SRLT finds it consistent with the purpose and restrictions of the Conservation Easement.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Renner, President