



THE GARDEN CLUB *of* AMERICA

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE**

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**THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA  
ANNOUNCES 2019 FOUNDERS FUND WINNER**  
*WINCHESTER-CLARKE GARDEN CLUB IS RECIPIENT OF A \$30,000 AWARD  
TO SUPPORT ABRAMS CREEK WETLANDS PRESERVE PROJECT*

Winchester-Clarke Garden Club, Winchester, Virginia, has been named 2019 recipient of The Garden Club of America (GCA) Founders Fund Award. The \$30,000 award was announced during the GCA's annual meeting in Boston on May 19. The funds will be used to help ensure the restoration of the disappearing wetlands habitat and provide educational resources for residents and visitors.

Abrams Creek Wetland Preserve (ACWP) is a 25-acre preserve that serves as an educational and recreational resource for the city of Winchester and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. This rare and unique habitat provides safe haven for over 300 plant species and 20 state-rare native plants, including blue marsh skullcap, pink spotted Joe Pye weed, and marsh thistle.

Currently, the preserve's marshes are being invaded by shade-producing trees, turning sunny marshes into shady swamps and threatening native wetland plants. The Founders Fund Award will be used to aid in the removal of these trees, providing the sunlight needed for plant survival. Additional plans call for the development of educational resources for children, residents, and visitors to the preserve. Working in partnership with the City of Winchester's Parks and Recreation Department and Shenandoah University, plans include a brochure used to educate adjacent homeowners and businesses on being "good neighbors" to the preserve. An audio walking tour focused on this site's rare habitats will enhance a paved Winchester Green Circle Trail running through the ACWP. An additional observation platform and signage will expand access to the lower marsh.

Two runners-up were awarded \$10,000 each by the GCA. The Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties, Poughkeepsie, New York will use the funds to create the Jane Colden Native Woodland Garden at Trailside Museums & Zoo at Bear Mountain State Park. The Garden Club of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, will use its award to help fund the completion of the Sniff and Savor Garden, a permanent, interactive and inclusive garden at the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden.

The Founders Fund was established in 1934 to provide monetary awards to projects proposed by GCA-member clubs in partnerships with community organizations. The award was endowed in memory of the GCA's first president, Elizabeth Price Martin (Mrs. J. Willis) of Philadelphia, who served from 1913-20. Generous gifts from clubs and individuals since have augmented the fund.

The first award of \$700 was presented in 1936 for English-language publication of the oldest known American herbal, the 1552 Badianus Manuscript, by Johns Hopkins Press. Since then, 87 Founders Fund winners and runners-up have received more than \$1.5 million to save thousands of acres of land and innumerable trees, restore historic landmarks, establish civic plantings, and conduct research and educational projects across the country. Projects are nominated annually by garden clubs that are members of GCA. Individual members of all GCA clubs vote among three finalists selected by a committee of regional representatives.

The GCA is a nonprofit national organization composed of 201 clubs with some 18,000 club members who devote energy and expertise to projects in their communities and across the United States. Founded in 1913, the GCA is a leader in horticulture, conservation, creative arts, historic preservation, and environmental protection.

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