

GHI Woodlands and Greenspace Caretakers Program

**Approved by the Board of Directors on November 15, 2018
With revisions of December 28, 2018, as approved by the President of the Board**

The Woodlands and Greenspace Caretakers Program is designed to allow individuals and groups to volunteer to help take care of our woodlands and common greenspace. For clarity, the GHI Woodlands are defined by the Forest Conservation Management Agreement (2018) and the GHI Greenspace consists of the common areas surrounding the interior network of paths and other non-personal areas including GHI rain gardens and pocket gardens.

- These programs will incorporate and replace the existing volunteer activities done by Weed Warriors and Trail Walkers and will be coordinated with Woodlands Work Days organized by the Woodlands Committee.
- Activities will be limited to the GHI woodlands and greenspace.
- Where trails connect to the Greenbelt City Forest Preserve or other public land, relevant policies will be considered.
- Activities will be done in accordance with GHI policies and the Forest Conservation Management Agreement.
- GHI Volunteers are covered under and protected by GHI's liability insurance.

Woodlands Caretakers agree to take responsibility for maintaining a specific trail or trail section, or parcel or part of a parcel. The scope of activities will be defined as part of a letter of agreement and could include removing litter, cutting back brush obstructing a trail ("brushing"), improving the trail tread, removing specific invasive species, and other activities to protect and conserve the GHI woodlands and their enjoyment.

Similarly, Greenspace Caretakers agree to care for one of the existing GHI rain gardens or pocket gardens. The degree of involvement will be defined by a letter of agreement between the person or group and GHI. This program is concerned with existing gardens. Any new gardens would require approval through the Pocket Garden Program.

The Woodlands Committee will issue the Caretaker a badge to authorize work in the designated area. The Committee will also post names of Caretakers on its website.

The Woodlands Committee will ensure that each Woodland area, trail or common greenspace under an agreement will be inspected at least once a year.

Anyone interested in joining the Caretaker Program can send a letter to the Woodlands Committee, explaining the area and activities they are interested in, what they would like to accomplish, and any relevant background they may have. The letter will be reviewed by the Committee, which will then interview the applicant(s) as a basis for approval of the application.

Woodlands and Greenspace Caretaker appointments will be for a period of two years. Applications for renewal will require a summary of activities during the previous two years to be considered.

**Caretaker Activity Agreement
For GHI Woodlands or Greenspace**

This agreement confirms that the person named below will act as a caretaker for the woodland area, trail, or greenspace described as follows:

.....
.....
.....

Activities under this agreement will include the following (strike out any that do not apply):

- [] Trail Maintenance
- [] Invasive Plant Removal, specify if limited to particular species
- [] Rubbish Removal
- [] Gardening and maintenance of existing flowerbeds, plantings, and landscaping
- [] Maintenance of a Pocket Garden
- [] Other, specify

- Other activities beyond those listed in this agreement, such as trail rerouting; new planting in woodland, e.g. for ecological restoration; or establishment of new plantings and landscaping in GHI common areas will be described in a proposal and only done after written approval has been received.
- Caretakers agree to seek appropriate advice and training in carrying out their activities
- Caretakers will make reasonable efforts to inform and involve residents of neighboring GHI units concerning their activities.
- Caretakers recognize and accept responsibility for risks that may be involved in physical activity and use of tools
- This agreement will last for two years and may be renewed by mutual agreement
- Groups will designate a group representative, and each member will sign an agreement

I hereby volunteer my services as described above, and agree to follow all applicable laws, regulations, GHI rules, and safety guidelines.

Caretaker: Name

Address

Email **Phone**

Signature..... **Date**.....

GHI Representative: Position.....

Name

Signature..... **Date**.....

**Caretaker Activity Report
For GHI Woodlands and Common Land**

Send to GHI Woodlands Committee, c/o GHI, One Hamilton Place, Greenbelt MD 20770

Name:

Time period from/...../..... to :/...../.....

GHI Parcel:.....

Trail/Trail section/subparcel.....

- Activities: [] Trail Maintenance
[] Invasive Species Removal
[] Gardening and maintenance of existing flowerbeds, plantings, and landscaping
[] Maintenance of Pocket Garden
[] Rubbish Removal
[] Other, explain.....

Main activities and accomplishments:

Other comments:

Notes:

- An annual activity report should be sent to the Woodlands Committee each year, on or before January 31 for activities in the previous calendar year.
- Reporting of activities is a condition for renewal of agreements.

POCKET GARDEN PROGRAM PROPOSAL

The GHI community design includes numerous parks and four (currently) rain gardens which are connected by an extensive network of paths. The Woodlands Committee has established the Greenspace Gardner program to encourage member participation in maintaining these areas.

Many areas in our greenspace are “problem” zones — i.e. little or no vegetation seems to grow there. In most cases this is because that particular area is not suitable for grass. GHI members or groups can enhance these places by creating small low-maintenance gardens, called Pocket Gardens.

Examples of appropriate locations for pocket gardens are:

- Triangular spaces defined by the branching of two paths: In this instance, plans for a garden would include the entire space. (An existing garden of this kind is at 4 Ct Laurel Hill Road).
- Under a contiguous group or “grove” of trees: The chosen plot should be well defined by the tree canopy. The finished garden would be clearly delineated by ground covers, small evergreen plants and/or bushes. (Existing gardens are near the playground accessible through 14 Ct Hillside).

Among the things to consider in planning for a pocket garden are:

- Will the members in the surrounding units be supportive of the garden? Will they want to be involved and help maintain it?
- What species do you want to plant? Where will they come from? Plantings should be focused on native species, although non-native species that are well-adapted to our local conditions and that are noninvasive may be included. (Links to information on native plants and their characteristics are available at <https://www.ghi.coop/content/woodlands-links>).
- What kind of maintenance will the garden need? In the first year? In later years? Who take care of it if you move?
- Will you need any support from GHI staff to establish or maintain the garden? If so, what?

Pocket garden “DON’TS:”

- DON’T plant invasive species including English ivy, vinca, butterfly bush, purple loosestrife, etc. (see a complete list on the GHI website: <https://www.ghi.coop/content/v-plantings-hedges-trees-etc>)
- DON’T plant trees (any plant with an expected mature height of over 8 feet) without express permission of the GHI Maintenance Director.
- DON’T include synthetic or crafted materials in the garden such as gnomes, wind chimes, gazing balls, flower pots or planters, etc.
- DON’T place the garden in the center of a greenspace or in an area where it might make it difficult to see approaching traffic.

To apply to establish a pocket garden submit an application (see below) to the GHI maintenance office. The Director of Maintenance will review your application, discuss it with you and let you know if it’s been approved. Upon concept approval, mutually agreed upon particulars of the garden and anticipated maintenance requirements will be documented and signed. Then you will be issued a badge that will authorize you to establish and maintain a pocket garden in the specified area.

A small amount of funding may be available to assist in establishing a Pocket Garden. If you have requested startup money, your application will be forwarded to the Woodlands Committee for review prior to final approval. You will be notified as to the date and time of the meeting during which your proposal will be discussed.

If your application has been denied, you have the right to appeal that decision to the GHI Board. If you have requested startup money, your application will be forwarded to the Woodlands Committee for review prior to going to the Board for consideration. You will be notified as to the date and time of Woodlands Committee meeting and encouraged to attend.

PLEASE NOTE: New gardens in common areas can only be established with specific approval and commitment by proponent(s) to act as caretakers for at least two years. Unauthorized plantings are potentially subject to removal or mowing.

APPLICATION TO CREATE A POCKET GARDEN

DATE _____
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____ CELL PHONE - _____
EMAIL _____

Why do you want to start a Pocket Garden?

What knowledge and skills do you have that will contribute to establishing and sustaining this garden?

Where do you plan to locate the garden?

What plants will you include? Please attach a diagram/sketch of your garden plan.

Have you discussed the garden with the members in the surrounding area? Please attach a list of signatures.

When do you plan to install the garden? Do you plan to involve the community?

How will you maintain the garden?

Will you need support from GHI for your garden? If so, what kind?

Are you aware that the Pocket Garden Program anticipates that it will take an initial two-year commitment on your part to establish the garden?

SIGNATURE _____ DATE: _____