



Teri Batchelor at a tree planting in 2019

BRITTANY HASAS, MARYLAND FOREST SERVICE

transferred to West Virginia University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree in forestry in 1978.

She worked briefly with the State of Virginia Department of Forestry then transferred to Maryland, where she worked as project manager and forester for the next 41 years. Her first position with the Maryland Forest Service was managing the Baltimore County Forestry Project, supervising a staff of five forest rangers. After working there for more than two years, Teri transferred to the Kent and Queen Anne’s County Forestry Project in 1981. The transfer presented new opportunities to grow in her career, and in 1992, Teri became the Upper Shore Project Manager, expanding the geographic area under her supervision to include Caroline and Talbot counties. As project manager, she oversaw delivery of all Forest Service programs across the Eastern Shore.

“Teri was outstanding at everything she did,” Eastern Regional Forester Matt Hurd said.

Over the course of her career, she planted more than 3,000 acres of new forests—an estimated 1.3 million tree seedlings. In addition, Teri helped hundreds of private woodland owners each year achieve their land management goals, whether for improving wildlife habitat or growing forest products. In total, she gave professional forestry recommendations covering more than 36,000 acres of woodland in her career. With her husband, Ted Batchelor, they decided in 2009 to plant 4.5 acres of Christmas trees on their 290-acre family farm, which they named Bakers Lane Christmas Tree Farm.

Sharing her love of forestry with all age groups and interest levels came naturally to Teri. Through

Margaret Teresa “Teri” Batchelor 1956–2020

By *Kenneth Jolly*

Forty-one years ago, none of Maryland’s Department of Natural Resources Foresters were women. That all changed on June 13, 1979, when the Maryland Forest Service hired Teri Batchelor.

Born and raised in Kent County on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, Margaret Teresa “Teri” Dickerson always enjoyed

the outdoors and decided early in life to pursue a career in forestry. She was undeterred by the fact that in the 1970s, forestry was almost exclusively a male-dominated profession. In high school, she was already breaking new ground when she applied to attend the Department of Natural Resources’ Forestry Career Camp and became the first female attendee.

After high school she entered the pre-forestry program at the University of Maryland, and after two years

local presentations and hands-on workshops, she spread the knowledge that trees do more than just provide shade on a hot day—that they clean our air, protect the Chesapeake Bay, and prevent soil erosion. She made sure every Arbor Day in the Upper Shore Project felt like a holiday to school-age children, complete with a poster contest and Smokey Bear appearances. Her outreach efforts earned her the prestigious Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Arbor Day Activities from the International Society of Arboriculture.

Teri worked with local officials to participate in national community tree management programs such as Tree City USA. She also served as executive secretary of the Kent and Queen Anne’s County Forestry Boards.

“Teri was a fixture—her experience was unmatched,” Kent County Forest Board Chair Andy Simmons said.

Teri’s influence extended beyond the Maryland Forest Service. She was active in a number of professional forestry organizations, including serving as a governor-appointed member of the Maryland State Board of Forester Licensing for 15 years, with 5 years as vice chair. She also served on the Maryland Forests Association Board of Governors for 6 years as a professional forester representative.

While still a student, Teri had joined the Society of American Foresters, the primary national organization of professional foresters in the United States, and was an involved member throughout her career. In 1982, she was first elected to serve on the Maryland-Delaware Executive Committee and

continued to serve on the Executive Committee in various leadership positions for the next 38 years. For this career of service, Teri received an honor that very few achieve when she was named a Fellow of the Society of American Foresters in June 2020. Teri is believed to be the first and only woman to ever receive this honor in Maryland. She died a month after receiving this honor at the age of 63.

For these amazing accomplishments, Teri Batchelor has forever made her mark as Maryland’s “First Woman of Forestry.”

Kenneth Jolly is the Acting State Forester of Maryland. This article is adapted from “From the Field: Teri Batchelor,” published in the Fall 2020 issue of Maryland Natural Resource magazine.



Teri Batchelor at the beginning and late stages of her career. She enjoyed being both a forester and an educator. Giving presentations to landowners, like on this “Discover Your Woodlands” field tour in 2014, enabled her to combine the two.



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