

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Spruce Forest Restoration in the Central Appalachians

The *Western Mountains Chapter of the Maryland Native Plant Society* will hold its regular meeting at Frostburg State University, Compton Science Center, Room 328, on Tuesday February 16th. The guest speaker will be Dave Saville, Program Coordinator for the West Virginia Highland Conservancy's Red Spruce Ecosystem Restoration Program. His presentation titled, "Restoring the High Elevation Red Spruce Forests of Central Appalachia" will begin promptly at 7:00 pm. The public is welcome to attend this free program.

Red spruce and red spruce-northern hard-wood forests once dominated the highest elevations of West Virginia, over one million acres. Extensive logging in the late 1800s and early 1900s reduced much of the mature forest in the Appalachians, including the red spruce-dominated stands. Today less than 50,000 acres of high elevation red spruce forests remain in the State. Besides being reduced in size, the remaining spruce forests are highly fragmented. The Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative (CASRI) is a partnership of diverse interests with a common goal of restoring historic red spruce-northern hardwood ecosystems across the high elevation landscapes of Central Appalachia. It is comprised of private, state, federal, and non-governmental organizations which recognize the importance of this ecosystem for its ecological, aesthetic, recreational, economic, and cultural values.

Dave Saville grew up in Western New York in a horticultural/agricultural family. He attended West Virginia University earning a BS in Resource Economics and MS in Forestry. He has been active with the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy for many years, serving in various administrative, programmatic and project level capacities. He helped found the Morgantown Farmers Market and the West Virginia Land Trust. He worked for nearly a decade on a successful legislative campaign leading to the passage of the Wild Monongahela Act, signed by President Obama in 2009, it protected nearly 40,000 acres of Wilderness on the Monongahela National Forest. Dave has also spent considerable time in academia, formerly at the West Virginia Water Research Institute at WVU, and currently in the Biology Department at Wheeling Jesuit University where he is working on a water quality study of the Upper Ohio River. A plantsman and amateur botanist, Dave sold cut flowers at the Farmers Market for many years. He enjoys collecting seeds from native plants to be grown and used for restoration purposes. He helped organize, and works to facilitate the work of, the Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative.

Directions: From I-68 take exit 33 (Braddock Rd & Midlothian Rd exit). Follow Braddock Road approximately 1.3 miles to stop sign. Turn left onto Park Avenue. Drive a short distance and turn left, following signs for the Compton Parking Lot.

The *Maryland Native Plant Society* promotes awareness, appreciation, and conservation of Maryland's native plants and their habitats, working to preserve Maryland's natural heritage through education, research, advocacy and service activities. MNPS sponsors programs, workshops, field trips and an annual conference. Membership is open to all who are interested in Maryland's native plants and their habitats. For more information, visit mdflora.org. The *Western Mountains Chapter* has formed to expand the efforts of MNPS on the Allegheny Plateau and Ridge & Valley physiographic provinces of the central-Appalachians. Residents of western

Maryland, nearby Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and anyone else interested in learning more about and conserving the native plants of this region are invited to join. For more information contact Liz McDowell, Chapter Coordinator, at 301-895-3686.