



V. Wilson Freeland, Director  
Karyn Molines, Division Chief

**CALVERT COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES  
NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION**

Courthouse, 175 Main Street  
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678  
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*Board of Commissioners*  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Local Naturalist Selected as State Outdoor Educator of the Year**

PRINCE FREDERICK, MD — Tania Gale, a naturalist with Calvert County Natural Resources Division was recently presented the Bob Finton Outdoor Educator of the Year Award at the 2016 Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) annual conference, held in Ocean City, MD.

“Tania Gale was nominated in recognition of the impact she has made over the past fifteen years as a naturalist and educator.” said Karyn Molines, Natural Resources Division Chief. “She is a dedicated and tireless naturalist, always striving to learn more, and to share her love of nature with everyone.”

The MAEOE Robert Finton Outdoor Educator of the Year Award program recognizes an individual who demonstrates leadership and innovation in environmental and outdoor education. Bob Finton personified enthusiasm, innovation, and excellence in the field of environmental education. This award honors his memory by rewarding the efforts of those who strive for these qualities.

The award is given to an individual who is a non-formal practitioner of outdoor education and works “in the trenches,” as Finton did. Each year, Gale designs and leads over 20 programs for families—allowing more than 300 parents and children to explore the forests, fields and waters and learn about the important natural and cultural history of Calvert County.

The diversity of subjects Gale teaches highlights her knowledge, creativity, and ability to tailor programs for participants that range in age of 18 month olds to adult. For example, “The Great Creek Wade-In” encourages parents and children to get their hands and feet wet to learn about the fish, insects, crayfish, and mud that makes the creek a special habitat. Everyone comes back, wet, muddy, and happy!

In the past year, Gale has worked with more than 30 teens and pre-teens camping and hiking throughout the county and across the state. Survival skills, archery, and shelter building are popular activities; and teaching about the environment and the animals are central to her approach. Gale also promotes stewardship activities and integrates volunteer opportunities into the programs. Fellow naturalist Gene Groshon believes that Tania’s programs incorporate the desire for adventure and discovery while **overlaying content** and environmental ethics.

Gale’s enthusiasm for introducing children to the outdoors environment drove the development of a natural play space at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp, and plans for natural playgrounds are being planned at the other nature parks throughout Calvert County.

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**Notes to editors**

**Comment [AMS1]:** Not sure what that means. Perhaps ‘imparting knowledge and environmental ethics’



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The Calvert County Natural Resources Division preserves, manages and operates natural resource areas to provide compatible outdoor recreation and educational opportunities for the public. For additional information about the Calvert County Natural Resources Division, please call 410-535-5327.

The Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) encourages, engages and empowers the community to understand, responsibly use and promote the natural world. We provide Professional Development and resources to support providers of environmental education in schools, nature centers, and informal settings throughout the state, who encourage students to explore, investigate and act. Environmental actions improve the health of the schools and communities in which Maryland's children learn and live.

Photos are available. Contact Karyn Molines, 410-535-5327, [molinekl@co.cal.md.us](mailto:molinekl@co.cal.md.us)