

# Gov. Markell Celebrates Arbor Day at Blackbird State Forest

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**Delaware Celebrates Arbor Day at Blackbird State Forest – Adds 85 Acres of Sussex County Forestland Thanks to Open Space Program**

[Photos included – [click on images for full-size, high resolution versions](#)]



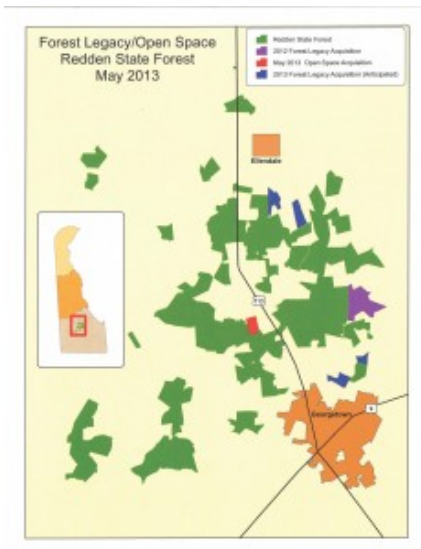
Delaware observes Arbor Day: Schoolchildren help plant a flowering dogwood near the Blackbird Forest Education Center.



Stephen Venable of Milford's Honor Academy had the winning poster in Delaware's Arbor Day Poster Contest.

TOWNSEND, DE (May 7) –At Arbor Day ceremonies at Blackbird State Forest, the State of Delaware announced it had completed the \$595,000 purchase of the historic Wilson Farm, an 85-acre parcel of forestland that will become part of the 12,500-acre Redden State Forest near Georgetown, Sussex County. The deal was funded by Delaware's Open Space Preservation Program and marks the latest acquisition in its multi-year "Green Horizons Project" to sustain working forests, improve water quality, and protect wildlife habitat in key environmental regions on the Delmarva Peninsula. In May of 2012, Delaware purchased 339 acres of forestland that are now part of Redden State Forest. In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program, plans are in the works to purchase an additional four parcels within the next year.

"Preserving Delaware's open space is an important part of maintaining Delaware's quality of life," said Governor Jack Markell.



Red section of the map shows 85-acre Wilson Farm, purchased by the State of Delaware with \$595,000 of Open Space Program funds and added to Redden State Forest near Georgetown.

Located west of U.S. 113 between Ellendale and Georgetown, the new acreage will be added to the existing Jester Tract of Redden State Forest. The land will be sustainably managed by the Delaware Forest Service for multiple objectives will be available to the public for recreational uses such as hunting, hiking, and wildlife observation.

“Thanks to the generous support of the Markell Administration and members of the General Assembly, future Delaware residents and visitors will enjoy this area for many years to come ” Valenti said.

The Forest Service also honored Delmarva Power for its certification as a Tree Line USA utility by the National Arbor

Day Foundation, and for its sponsorship of the 2013 Delaware Arbor Day Ceremony and for underwriting Arbor Day school programs throughout the state.

At Arbor Day, Governor Markell honored winners of the Delaware Forest Service's annual School Poster Contest, and the overall state winner, fourth-grader Stephen Venable of Milford's Honor Academy.

**Photos and captions:** (click on photo for hi-res image)

**New Castle County Winners**

Kindergarten – Giana Zamichieli – Kathleen Wilbur Elementary, Bear

Grade 1-2 Kate Connolly – The Independence School, Newark

Grade 3-4 Maya Rigor – Christ the Teacher, Newark

Grade 5 Julianna Thawley–Christ the Teacher, Newark

**Kent County Winners**

Kindergarten SuNora Lewis – Booker T Washington Elementary, Dover

Grade 1-2 Emma Crane – W.B. Simpson Elementary, Camden-Wyoming

Grade 3-4 Miranda Pantoja– Holy Cross, Dover

Grade 5 Naomi Bright– W.B. Simpson Elementary, Camden-Wyoming

**Sussex County Winners**

Kindergarten Brooke Rhue – Rehoboth Elementary, Rehoboth

Grade 1-2 Brittany Valentin-Pegueros – H.O. Brittingham Elementary, Milton

Grade 3-4 Stephen Venable – Honor Academy, Milford

Grade 5 Grace Winston – Winston Learning Academy, Milford



Governor Markell greets families at the state's Arbor Day ceremony at Blackbird State Forest





Stephen Venable of Milford's Honor Academy had the winning poster in Delaware's Arbor Day School Poster Contest.



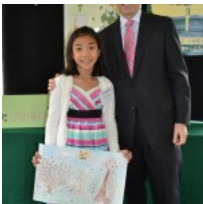
Gov. Markell recognizes fourth-grader Stephen Venable of Milford, winner of Delaware's annual Arbor Day School Poster Contest.



Gov. Markell honors Julianna Thawley, a Grade 5 student at Christ the Teacher School in Newark.



Gov. Markell honors Kate Connolly, a first-grader at The Independence School in Newark.



Gov. Markell and Maya Rigor of Christ the Teacher School in Newark.



Gov. Markell and Giana Zamichieli, a kindergarten student at Kathleen Wilbur Elementary in Bear.



Naomi Bright, Grade 5 student at W.B. Simpson Elementary in

Camden-Wyoming.



Gov. Markell and Emma Crane, Grade 1 student at W. B. Simpson Elementary in Camden-Wyoming.



Gov. Markell and Miranda Pantoja, Grade 4 student at Holy Cross School in Dover.



Gov. Markell and SuNora Lewis of Booker T. Washington Elementary in Dover.



From left, Rep. David L. Wilson (R-35), Fifth-grader Grace Winston of Milford, and Rep. Harvey Kenton (R-36).



From left, Rep. David L. Wilson (R-35), Rep. Harvey Kenton (R-36), State Forester Michael A. Valenti and Stephen Venable, fourth-grader Stephen Venable of Milford, winner of the state Arbor Day School Poster Contest.



Grace Winston, 5th Grader from Milford's Winston Learning

Academy, with Governor Markell.



Brittany Valentin-Pegueros, Grade 2 student at H. O. Brittingham Elementary in Milton, with Gov. Markell.



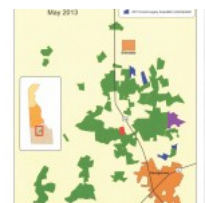
Brooke Rhue, kindergarten student at Rehoboth Elementary, with Governor Markell at Arbor Day.



From left, Michael Casmay and Michael Trotta from Delmarva Power accept the Tree Line USA award from Delaware State Forester Michael A. Valenti. Delmarva Power sponsored this year's event and paid for all the trees that will be planted at school events throughout the state.



Schoolchildren gathered at Blackbird State Forest to observe Arbor Day by planting a flowering dogwood near the forest's education center.



Red section of the map shows 85-acre Wilson Farm, purchased by the State of Delaware with \$595,000 of Open Space Program funds and added to Redden State Forest near Georgetown.

