

Hi Friends,

As the old saying goes, “the only constant is change” (Heraclitus). Like summer transitioning to fall, change has come to SCWC: We must move to a new facility. Our current location is experiencing the typical symptoms of a 100-year-old farmhouse and we cannot stay where we have been for the last 16 years. Due to health and safety reasons, we can neither rebuild nor renovate the farmhouse.

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), our landlord, has been working with us and the Montgomery County Council to identify suitable properties. As of this writing (mid-Nov 2011), the only one on the radar screen is in Potomac and it is far from ideal for our needs. And the clock is ticking as we have less than a year to move. Which is where you, our dear supporters, come in!

Do you own property in Montgomery County that could be donated, or sold “on the cheap,” to SCWC? Do you know someone who owns such a property? Ideally, it would have acreage and suitable structures including a main building, a barn and/or outbuildings for storage. We would be willing to consider naming a ward after the donor/seller in honor of their contribution. Think of the feeling you would have by leaving such a legacy, not only for your immediate family but also to the entire community. SCWC is the only wildlife-rehab facility in Maryland with paid staff, and is one of the largest of its kind in the mid-Atlantic region.

But as with all non-profits these days, times are tough. Donations are down as many people struggle to make ends meet, and it pains me to tell you that we are running in the red this year. So how do we make up for this shortfall? By robbing Peter to pay Paul: We take money from our already-depleted Building Fund leaving us with fewer funds for our new facility. “So what about the facility in Potomac?,” you may be thinking. Well, right now it is our only option and we are reluctantly planning to move there. However, all of us (staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, supporters) would prefer that we find a suitable property here in central Montgomery County. We have 16 years of roots here in Gaithersburg, and most of our staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors live nearby. We’ll move to Potomac if need be, but we would really prefer to stay in central Montgomery County., which is why we are appealing to the public we serve for help in obtaining a nearby property suitable for wildlife rehab. Will you please help? Contact me directly (FHoward@SCWC.org) with ideas, leads, offers, etc.

And as if trying to find our new home was not stressful enough, Hurricane Irene came along and deluged us with all manner of impacted wildlife, especially baby squirrels (my favorite wild animal)! But the babies have become juveniles, and we are over-wintering 108 of them! They need to be fed and cared for, and we are soliciting both food (mixed nuts, roasted pumpkin seeds and grocery store gift cards) and “cage furniture” of suitable wooden perches, the kind you can find in any pet store. So squirrel lovers unite! Please, we need your help. Anything you can do would be greatly appreciated.

Finally, a sad note and YES, yet another way you can help: In 2011 we are not participating in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) for the first time in many years. In fact, I have received dozens of emails from people asking why they cannot designate SCWC as the recipient of their generous payroll

deductions this year. Candidly, we thought we could save money in these tight times by only paying for a “mini” audit of our books instead of a full audit. We did save money with our auditor, but then later found out that CFC requires a full audit of the books for participating non-profits. Goodbye, \$20,000. OUCH. So for those of you who usually direct your CFC payroll deductions to SCWC but could not this year, would you consider writing a check directly to SCWC instead? We would greatly appreciate it, and we have learned our lesson and are doing a full audit of our books this year. We will be back in the CFC in 2012!

Hopefully this column has not left you down or in bad spirits. The holidays approach and we all have things to be thankful for. Yes, SCWC is facing difficult times and we have many challenges, but the mission of wildlife rehabilitation remains special, our dedicated staff and volunteers are special, and we have the best fans and supporters around! With your love and support, we will come through this better than ever.

Respectfully,

Frank Howard, *President, Board of Directors*