

With help, a tree grows in Frostburg

FOR THE FROSTBURG EXPRESS

FROSTBURG — Scouts from Troop 42, Frostburg, local Scout leaders, Lions club members from Frostburg and LaVale, as well as other area volunteers, under the leadership of Senior Patrol Leader Eric Stevens, took to the mud and fields on March 31. The landscape around the Frostburg Dog Park will be forever changed, with the addition of some 400 flowering trees.

Stevens, a student at Mountain Ridge High School, is seeking Eagle Scout status and the tree planting is to be his service project to obtain his goal.

"It has taken over a year from the beginning," said 15-year-old Stevens. "It truly was a massive project."

The project grew from Frostburg's 2011 Day of Caring and Sharing, when his Scout Troop 42 was doing fence work at the Frostburg Dog Park. One of the troop members noted that there were no trees around the park. That got Stevens thinking, and over the next 10 months the massive tree planting project began moving from concept to reality. Stevens studied the area and sought input from a variety of sources including the City of Frostburg and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. He soon learned that the project would have a major impact on the area.

Visual effects, both for the dog park and local residents, would be improved, noise levels reduced, watershed improvements, environmental impact on Georges Creek, improved animal habitat and, downstream, an improvement in Frostburg's impact on the Chesapeake Bay.

"It was huge," Stevens said. "I had to develop all aspects of the project: inventory, permissions, statistics, funding, timelines, and desired planting time for the tree seedlings." He found himself working several aspects of the project at a time, and will have spent hundreds of hours putting the project together, and finalizing it. One critical issue was funding. The project would cost nearly \$1,000. Stevens sought donations from friends, relative and community groups. The Lions Clubs of Frostburg, Lonaconing and LaVale took his pitch for funds to heart. As part of Lions Internationals' tree planting initiative for 2011-12, the project was perfect, and all three clubs made significant contributions to the project, both in funding, and ultimately labor, in helping complete the project. The projecting planting date of March 31 was rapidly approaching. Trees and supplies were purchased through the nurseries of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources. Stevens, with assis-



Teams of Lions, Scouts and other volunteers recently took to the fields and mud, assisting Scout Eric Stevens with his Eagle Scout project of planting 400 trees at the Frostburg Dog Park.

tance from the DNR, laid out the areas to be planted around the dog park in grid patterns to insure proper spacing of trees, and a mixture of varieties and colors. Four varieties of trees were selected for their suitability to the area, especially the amount of ground water: white oak, black cherry, sycamore, and red maple. Eventually,

these trees will absorb, hundreds of gallons of water daily, vastly reducing the amount of standing water in the area.

Lion Stephen Finger, district governor of Lions District 22W, said, "our local tree planting goal for our district is 1,800 trees, this project not only helps to achieve that goal, but will have significant impact

over the next five to 10 years on Georges Creek, and the Frostburg community at large, as well as moving Eric towards his goal of Eagle Scout." Melissa Stevens, Eric's sister, and a forester for the DNR, was part of the group of 23 youth and adults who were on hand plant-