



Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

April 2005

Tributary Strategies

At our April 12 meeting we had a wonderful presentation by Jamie Baxter, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Tributary Strategies Manager, about the sources of nutrient pollution in the Bay (and the River) and what the State of Maryland is doing to improve water quality in the Bay.

Nutrient pollution is the "Grand Challenge" of the 21st century, according to Mr. Baxter. Nutrient over-enrichment leads to algal blooms that deprive sub-aquatic vegetation of the sunlight they need to survive. When those algae die and sink to the bottom of our rivers and the Bay, their decomposition consumes oxygen that oysters, clams, crabs, and fish need to survive.

Where do the nutrients come from? Bay-wide data collected in 2002 indicate the sources of nitrogen:

Agriculture	39%
Point Sources	26%
Urban Non-point	16%
Forests/wetlands	8%
Septics	6%
Mixed open	5%

Maryland's approach is to identify new water quality strategies — based on levels of oxygen and water clarity which can effectively support diverse aquatic life — and to allocate goals among the Bay's Tributaries.

Under the strategy, everyone has a role — the farmer, the homeowner,



Credit: Wayne Gilcrest

Good farming practices with forested buffer, contour plowing, and corn left for wildlife.

the developer, the boater, the sewage treatment plant operator. We all have roles to play.

For more information, see the Tributary Strategies at :

[http://
www.chesapeakebay.net/
wqtributarymd.htm](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/wqtributarymd.htm)

Next Meeting — Sub-Aquatic Vegetation May 10, 7:00 p.m. at the Granary

At our next meeting — May 10 at the Granary at 7:00 p.m., we'll hear from the Maryland DNR's Mike Naylor, the "go-to guy" on Sub-Aquatic Vegetation (SAV).

We'll learn why SAV is both an essential element of Bay — and River — health as well as an indicator of that health. We'll also learn what grassroots organizations like ours can do to promote healthy SAV growth.

Volunteer Now!

At our April 10 Meeting we talked about activities and programs that will succeed only if **you** participate. Email mail@sassafrasriver.org (or write us at the PO Box) to tell us how you'll help.

April 30 — Chester River Association "Snapshot Day" evaluates water quality watershed-wide. We want to participate so we'll know better how to have our own "Sassafras Snapshot" next year.

June 4 — Upper Eastern Shore Tributary Team "Wade-In" at Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center on Kent Island. A day of family fun and education, 10 am to 2 pm.

July 4 — Sassafras River Parade. Help create a Sassafras River Association entry to send our message.

TBD — Sassafras River Sailing Regatta.

We also need **your** help to set up SRA programs:

- Sassafras Samplers
- Grasses for the Masses — SAV restoration
- SRA traveling information booth
- Adopt a Shoreline program for homeowners' associations

Have you joined yet?

Visit www.sassafrasriver.org and download a membership form today!