



Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

May 2005

“Septic Systems 101”

Tom Miller, Regional Extension Specialist in Water Quality & Environmental Programs at the University of Maryland’s Wye Research & Education Center, kindly filled in when our scheduled speaker had to bow out at the last minute.

Tom’s presentation couldn’t have been more timely, though. Last month we heard from DNR’s Jamie Baxter about the sources of and solutions to excess nutrients in the Bay. In that program we learned that the septic systems in our own back yards contribute more than 6 percent of the excess nitrogen to the Bay.

Tom gave us the basics of septic system operation and reinforced how critical it is to have your septic system

pumped out every 3 years to keep it functioning properly and to prevent the contamination of groundwater with harmful waste.

Bacteria are only part of the problem, however. Even the best-functioning traditional septic system **does nothing to remove nutrients**. It’s not designed to and that’s the source of that 6+ percent of the Bay’s excess nitrogen.

There’s good news on this front, too. Systems are now available — for both new construction and to replace failing systems — that will effectively remove nitrogen from septic system discharge.

Part of the “flush tax” funding will go to upgrading sep-



May morning, high tide on Swantown Creek.

tic systems, although the allocation process has yet to be determined.

For more information on septic systems and water quality, visit Tom Miller on line:

www.agnr.umd.edu/water

Sub-Aquatic Vegetation

We’ll get Mike Naylor back to talk about SAVs later this year when his schedule permits.

Two Big June Events!

In lieu of an evening meeting next month, we’ll take our awareness activities outdoors.

June 4 “Wade-In”

A day of fun and education for the whole family at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Grasonville, 10—2.

- Free T-shirts
- Free Food
- Living Shorelines demo

- Games for kids
- 1:00 pm — Wade-in to measure water quality.

We encourage everyone to come out for this event! **It’s our Bay.**

Visit our website for details: www.sassafrasriver.org

June 14 “Ag Tour”

Learn about nutrient management and farm profitability. 9:30—2:30, tour begins in Chestertown.

Contact the Vails (johnvail@crosslink.net or 410 648-6994) by June 7 to RSVP.

Volunteer Now!

We’ve got a lot of 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.

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!

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