



Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

September 2005

Agriculture's Role in Preserving the Sassafras



Credit: Wayne Gilchrest

We had another superb "educating ourselves" session on September 13 with **Dr. Russ Brinsfield**, Director of the University of Maryland's Wye Research Center and Director of the Maryland Center for Agro-Ecology.

We know that farmers are active stewards of the lands and waters that make up our watershed. Dr. Brinsfield educated us about the challenges they face and the tools they have to carry out their essential role.

Dr. Brinsfield described how his years of research on the experimental fields at the Wye Research Center have demonstrated that **cover crops** are the closest thing we have to a "silver bullet" for reducing agriculture's contribution to excess nitrogen in the Bay by the 40 percent required under the Chesapeake Bay 2000 agreement.

We also heard late-breaking news — that the Governor has released an additional \$1.4 million to support payments for cover crops this year.

On the phosphorus front, Dr. Brinsfield reported progress in altering the composition of animal feed to reduce the amount of phosphorus in animal waste — particularly chicken litter.

IRS Recognizes SRA's Tax-exempt Status

In an "advance ruling letter" dated September 2, 2005, the Internal Revenue Service informed us that it had recognized the Sassafras River Association's tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Tax-exempt status is important to us for two reasons: it means that all previous and future contributions to the SRA are deductible to you, the giver, as charitable contributions; it will also make it possible for the SRA to apply for grants, many of which are open only to tax-exempt organizations, to support our programs.

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.

OCTOBER 15 - We'll kick off the Sassafras Samplers program at about 20 sites on the river. Most sampling will be done by boat. Email us at the website if you can participate, either as a Sampler or a boat captain — we need both.

Sassafras River Sailing Regatta. We're saving this event for next year.

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

- Grasses for the Masses — SAV restoration
- Septic Forum for Southern Cecil and Northern Kent Counties
- Adopt a Shoreline program for homeowners' associations

October 11 — Sub-Aquatic Vegetation

You may have read the article in the [Baltimore Sun](#) reporting that this has been a banner year for sub-aquatic vegetation on the Susquehanna Flats.

At our next meeting — October 11 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), who was quoted in the article.

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 organiza-

tions like ours can do to promote healthy SAV growth.



Harvesting eelgrass seed in Tangier Sound for future planting.

Credit: Maryland DNR

Have you joined yet?

More than 90 of your neighbors have shown their commitment to the Sassafras River by joining the SRA.

Visit www.sassafrasriver.org

and download a membership form today. Your contribution is tax-deductible!