



Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

October 2005

Sampling the Sassafras



Credit: Gary Collings

Collings, Joe Costello, Ted Zang, Ted Carski, Janet Ruhl, John and Ellyn Vail, Howard Green, Charlotte Staelin, Chuck Voorhees, Elliot Fuhrman, Leo Vollmer, and Betsy Gibbs met at Turners Creek Pavilion for training in the testing procedures. They were joined by SRA Board Member Wayne Gilcrest, who came to wish the group well.

Rodger Dawson, scientists from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources who have been testing the Sassafras since early August in connection with the algae blooms the River has suffered this summer. They reported that the algae appears to be abating — and declining gradually, without an oxygen-depleting collapse. That's good news for fish and other aquatic wildlife.

The "Sassafras Samplers" — our very own water testing program — got a great kick-off on Saturday, October 15, thanks to the hard work of Ted Carski. Ted worked with our partners, the Chester River Association and the LaMotte Corporation, to devise a testing protocol and put together test kits for a team of eager volunteers.

After the training, the volunteers set out in 5 boats, each of which sampled water in 4 locations, covering the river from the headwaters to Grove Point. At each site, samples were tested for pH, temperature, ammonia, nitrate, phosphate, copper, dissolved oxygen, biological oxygen demand, and turbidity.

While the Sassafras Samplers' results of will undoubtedly be affected by the recent heavy rains, we will be fascinated to learn what the result tell us about this "snapshot" of the River.

The crew of hearty Sassafras Samplers — Dave and Mary Segermark, Gary

Ted also sampled the length of the River for salinity. He and Janet were joined in their boat by Celia and

Ted is performing some secondary tests this week and plans to report the results of the Samplers kick-off at the November 8 meeting.

November 8 Meeting — Preserving Farmland

We know that profitable, productive farms are a key to the protection of our watershed.

ESLC Executive Director Rob Etgen will tell us about land conservancy programs and how we can help. Join

us at the Granary Restaurant in Fredericktown at 7 p.m.

Come learn how the *Eastern Shore Land Conservancy* is working to preserve critical farmland across the Eastern Shore and to Preserve the unique rural character of our area.



New Logo

Did you notice our new logo? We've added a splash of the River to our distinctive Sassafras leaves. Thanks to Jackie Reese for finding a designer to help us with the more colorful look.

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.

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

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

- Septic Forum for Southern Cecil and Northern Kent Counties. We need help setting up this major meeting, which is planned for March.
- Project Clean Stream. Can it possibly have been 6 months? We need to think about planning our clean-up next April.
- Adopt a Shoreline program for homeowners' associations.
- Green Schools. We'd like to set up a plan to partner with some of our local elementary schools.
- You'll be hearing about our annual membership renewal soon.

Have you joined yet?

More than 100 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. Remember, your contribution is tax-deductible!