

Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

September 2006

Route 301 Update

More than 40 people turned out to hear from Delaware and Maryland Officials about the developments on US 301 that will affect our watershed.

DelDot consultants Andrew Bing and Bill Hellmann gave a full presentation on Delaware's plan to make US 301 a 4-lane, limited access highway from the MD line to a new junction with DE 1 at the C&D canal. The earliest date for completion of this project is 2015.



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James Umekwe of the MD

Nellie Crockett Cruise a Tremendous Success

More than 60 people enjoyed an evening of good food, good music, and good company. Thanks to the Parishes for hosting us and to John Burke for organizing a great event.

SHA State Highway Administration presented details of the southbound weigh station SHA is building at the US 301/MD 299 intersection in the Sassafras River Headwaters. The weigh station will open before the end of 2006.

Pam Steinebach of DelDot briefed us on the northbound weigh station to be constructed in our watershed at the MD-DE State line, which will open in late 2007.

Finally, Cecilton Mayor John Bunnell told us about the ongoing Working Group of State, county, and local officials monitoring all these developments.

What's the SRA's role in these projects?

- Stay informed and attend public information sessions. We'll let you know about them.

- Make sure that MDE and its Delaware counterpart monitor stormwater management controls for effectiveness.
- Support the Working Group's efforts to ensure full funding for enforcement efforts.

We'll provide more information here and on the SRA website.

TURN THE PAGE!

Sassafras Samplers results for our first three tests are shown on the "dashboard" on the next page. Spend some time with the data and you'll start to see where our potential problems are. The Samplers will be on the River for our fall sample on October 14.

Don't forget, you can also check water quality on the Sassafras River any time at DNR's interactive website www.eyesonthebay.net

Committees Offer New Volunteer Opportunities!

The SRA Board just finished a strategic planning session to focus our activities for the next several years. To increase our effectiveness and get more members involved, we're committed to setting up an effective committee structure.

We're looking for volunteers to staff (or lead!) our program committees:

- Education and Outreach
- Science
- Advocacy
- Membership
- Volunteer
- Publicity

We'll be reaching out to you, but if there's something that interests you, email us at mail@sassafrasriver.org.

Membership News

We're at 144 current memberships now, representing more than 250 people!

Your SRA membership lasts for one year. We'll contact you on your anniversary date to remind you to renew. **If you're not a current member**, visit www.sassafrasriver.org and download a membership form today.

"Planning 101 -- The State Perspective"

How do the planning and zoning processes really work? What's a comprehensive plan? How does the Critical Areas law work?

We'll explore these and other important questions at our October 10 and November 8 meetings at the Granary Restaurant. In October we'll be fortunate to have Rich Hall of the MD

Department of Planning to teach us about the State's planning process and how it affects our counties.

Then, in November, we'll hear from the Kent and Cecil County P&Z directors — Gail Owings and Eric Sennstrom — about how the process works at the local level.

These presentations answer

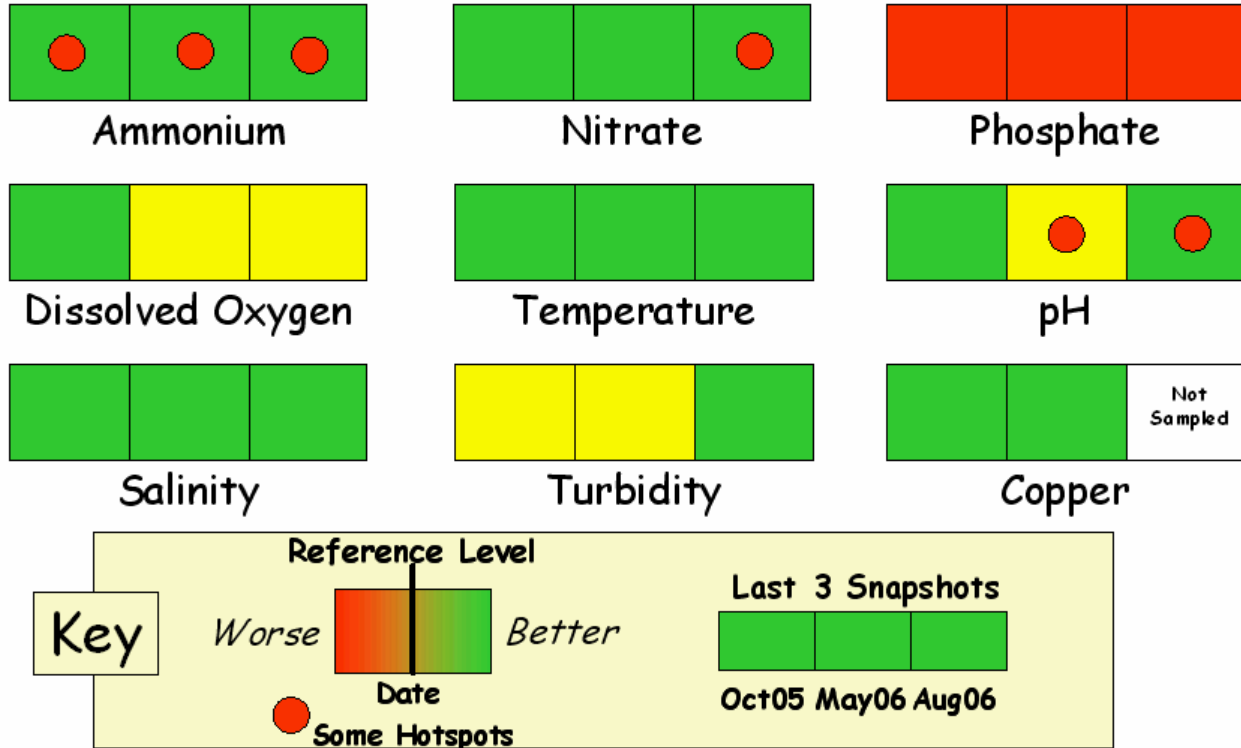
a desire that you, the SRA's members, expressed in July to learn about this important topic.



Sassafras Samplers Snapshot

Driving To Higher Quality

August 2006 'Dashboard'



Sassafras Samplers Dashboard

Thanks to Ted Carski for assembling our Sassafras Samplers data in such an easily reviewed format. The dashboard shows clearly that our most significant and consistent issue is the level of phosphate in the water. That's consistent with the data the State regularly collects and with our own experience — phosphate is the most important "limiting factor" in producing algae blooms on the River.

We sample 20 sites each time we go out, so the data represent the state of the River's tidal waters from the headwaters near Route 301 to the mouth at the Chesapeake Bay. "Hotspots" indicate that while most samples were within limits, there were one or more locations where the levels were higher.

We stopped sampling for copper in August 2006 because it didn't appear to be a problem on the Sassafras.