



Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

January 2007

Tockwogh Rediscovered?

We began 2007 with a look back — more than 10,000 years!

Guest speaker John Seidel, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Environmental Sci-

ences at Washington College, held an audience of more than 50 spellbound with his presentation “Native Americans on the Sassafras.”

Beginning with the Paleo-Indians who occupied these lands at least 13,000 years ago (and perhaps much longer), Dr. Seidel led us, using a combination of historical geography and anthropology, through a landscape of rising sea waters, changing climate, and adapting human occupants.

February 13 — “Eyes on the Bay”

Our February 13 meeting (7 pm at the Granary Restaurant) will focus on the MD Department of Natural Resources’ ‘Eyes on the Bay’ program. ‘Eyes’ provides web-based real-time and near-time water quality monitoring for the Chesapeake Bay.

Our speaker, DNR’s Chris Trumbauer, will present



By the time John Smith arrived in the early 17th Century, Native Americans’ long-established cultures had far-flung trade routes, complex inter-community relationships, and a system of agriculture highly adapted to and in harmony with the local landscape.

We learned, too, about the science of anthropology and the work that Dr. Seidel and his colleagues have been doing in recent years along the Sassafras. They have developed sophisti-

Bay-wide ‘Eyes’ data and then connect it with our own Sassafras Samplers Snapshot data to give us a broader perspective on our own work.

Chris will also describe DNR’s plans for expanded monitoring on the Sassafras in 2007 and how our Snapshots will be used to augment the ‘Eyes’ data.

cated models — ground tested in our watershed — to predict where Native American settlements will be found. Dr. Seidel wowed us all when he rotated the John Smith map (which marks the headwaters of the Tockwogh at the “X”) about 90 degrees and the familiar outlines of the upper Bay and our own Sassafras River appeared.

Using his predictive model and the Smith map, Dr. Seidel believes that the Native American settlement of Tockwogh — shown as a rounded hut on the map — will ultimately be found either beneath Kentmore Park or on Shallcross Neck.

Our thanks to Dr. Seidel for a wonderful presentation and to Colchester Farm Community Supported Agriculture, which partnered with us and hosted the event.

Route 301 Bypass Update

The Project Team working on recommendations for the Middletown Bypass, which will connect Delaware Rt. 1 at the C&D canal with Rt. 301 at the MD line, presented its “preferred option” at several public sessions in Middletown on January 8 and 9. You can see the details at www.us301.org.

“Reaching for our Riverkeeper”

It’s a new year, and we’re calling 2007 the year of “Reaching for our Riverkeeper®.” That reflects our hope to raise the funds we’ll need to join the Waterkeeper® Alliance and hire a “Sassafras Riverkeeper.” Your membership contributions will be an important part of the effort!

Quick Takes

- On March 17 we’ll return to the Cecilton Fire Hall for a program *From Our Backyards to the Sassafras*, focusing on the role we all play as watershed residents in preserving the treasure that is the Sassafras River. We need volunteers to make this program a success. If you can offer some time — on the 17th or for some advance work, please call John Vail at 410.648.6994 or email johnvail@crosslink.net
- April 14 will mark the 3rd year that the SRA will participate in the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay’s *Project Clean Stream*, a Bay-wide clean-up effort. Last year our volunteers picked up more than half a ton of trash at 5 sites. You can be part of this year’s planning team! Contact Elyn Vail at 410.648.6994 or vaile@crosslink.net.