



Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

July 2007

Annual Meeting Highlights

On July 10 we returned to Turners Creek Pavilion — where the Sassafras River Association got its start 3 years ago — to review our progress and to talk about plans for the coming year. We also had four important special reports:

Ted Carski, our Science Committee Chair, briefed us on the May Sassafras Samplers results (reported in last month's *Update*) and also about a new SRA program: assisting the DNR with underwater grass sampling to verify data that the DNR is collecting via aerial photography. On June 23,



Ted and a group of volunteers examined 14 sites identified by DNR. We will try to have more information about this program at a future meeting.

We were also joined by **Chris Wiggins**, a new volunteer to the SRA.

Chris, who is working on his master's degree in Environmental Science at Drexel, has planned a study of the effects of land use on fish communities of the Sassafras River — which should give us some interesting information about how development and other practices affect the diversity and abundance of



aquatic life. The study will involve getting out on the River with seine nets to gather the fish samples. Chris needs volunteers for his effort. You can contact him at (215) 640-9081 or Christopher.Wiggins@ch2m.com. We'll provide more information about Chris' study as it progresses.

We heard that the **Cecil County Commissioners** have decided to move a Pilot Watershed Management Plan, which was previously slated for another County watershed, to the Sassafras. The study, funded by the DNR's Coastal Communities Initiative, will examine ways to manage development

growth in a way which compliments and preserves the County's natural resources. Angler Environmental of Manassas, VA will conduct the study and the SRA has already contacted Angler to express our keen interest in participating. Our thanks to the Commissioners for their focus on the Sassafras River.

Ellyn Vail, who represents the SRA on the Kent County TMDL Committee, talked about the Committee's efforts to identify and quantify ways to reduce the load of nutrients (particularly phosphorus) and sediments into the River. The County's effort — and a similar one in Cecil County — are part of a Maryland-wide strategy to restore the Chesapeake Bay.

Our special thanks go to **Gunner Roe**, "The Grillmeister", who provided delicious grilled chicken for



our picnic. You can find Gunner on the web at www.thegrillmeister.com or reach him on (410) 648-4605.

"Reaching for our Riverkeeper"

2007 is the 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

- **July 17.** Water chestnut removal, Starkey Farms, Galena. We're going to join with DNR to remove invasive water chestnut from a farm pond that drains into the Sassafras. If you can help, call (410) 648-6994 or john.vail@baybroadband.net.
- **August 4.** Betterton Day — we'll have our information and recruiting booth out. We need volunteers — call Joan Zellers on (410) 348-2364 or email joanz@atlanticbb.net.
- **August 18.** Sassafras Samplers. Our mid-summer testing will go off on Saturday morning. To volunteer, contact Ted Carski on (410) 275-1316 or jcrthc@dmv.com.
- **August 30.** Watch your mail or email for information about the SRA's summer social highlight — dinner and a moonlight cruise on the River! To volunteer, contact John Burke on (443) 206-3727.