

Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

January 2008

2007 Sassafras Samplers' Review

At our regular membership meeting on January 8, SRA Science Committee Chair Ted Carski gave us an overview of our water testing



program for 2007 and a preview of what's coming in 2008.

Substantively, the story for 2007 was more of the same: the Sassafras Samplers' findings of excessive amounts of phosphates and excessive cloudiness were consistent with the data collected by DNR — and with our own observations of the algae blooms that

afflicted the upper River once again this year.

At each of the Samplers' 3 tests, the levels for phosphates and "turbidity" — or cloudiness — were unacceptable.

Ted had graphics from the Department of Natural Resources' "Eyes on the Bay" website showing the decline of dissolved oxygen (which marine life

needs to survive) and the rise in turbidity and chlorophyll (an indicator of algae blooms) over the length of the River and across the year from May through October. The May and October charts are shown on the second page of this *Update*.

Ted then led us through a review of the Samplers' results over the 3 years that

we've been doing water testing on the Sassafras River.

The results have been remarkably consistent from year to year: phosphate consistently above the "reference level" at all testing locations; pH results high in those areas most severely affected by algae blooms; and turbidity above the reference level in most tests in the upper River and gradually improving toward the mouth, where clarity is acceptable.

What's next? Ted will be recruiting and training more volunteers for 2008; contact him on 410 275-1316 if you'd like to participate. Additionally, Ted is exploring new ways of displaying and explaining our data — and looking forward to incorporating the Sassafras RIVERKEEPER into the testing program.

You Did It!

Your Sassafras River Association Board of Directors is proud to announce that, as of the most recent tally, **you** generously contributed \$10,660 to our special year-end appeal. Contributions from SRA members ranged from \$15 to \$1,000, and when added up **exceeded our goal** of matching a \$10,000 grant from the Shared Earth Foundation of Chestertown.

Our thanks to all of you for your response to the appeal and to the Shared Earth Foundation for giving us such an ambitious goal.

This is an enormous step toward funding and hiring our Sassafras RIVERKEEPER.

2008 SRA Calendar

Last month we sent you 2 documents, *Update* and our 2008 calendar. Comments or suggestions? Contact Elyn Vail on 410-648-6994 or vaile@baybroadband.net

Upcoming highlights:

- **March.** Focus on the Susquehanna.
- **April.** Project Clean Stream.

February 12 — How are the Fish?

We'll return to the Granary Restaurant at 7 p.m. on February 12 for our next meeting.

We will hear from Chris Wiggins, who is working on his master's degree in Environmental Science at Drexel University. Chris planned and has now completed a study of the effects of land use on fish commu-

nities of the Sassafras River. Chris will share his insights about how development and other practices affect the diversity and abundance of aquatic life. **Hope we'll see you there!**

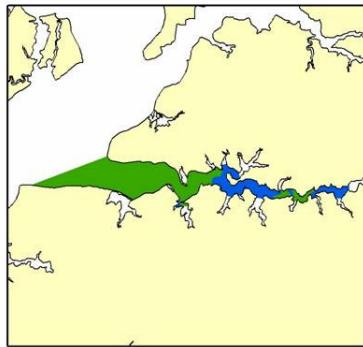


Our RIVERKEEPER Needs a Boat!

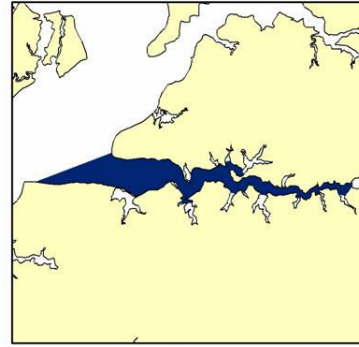
We're looking for an official Sassafras RIVERKEEPER vessel — a boat that our Riverkeeper can use to perform regular patrol looking for sources of pollution.

If you have or know of an available boat, please contact us. A boat donation would be tax-deductible!

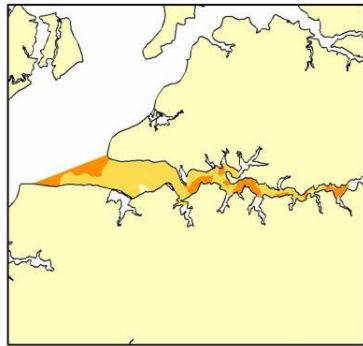
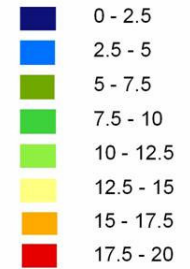
DNR Water Quality Mapping — 5/18/2007



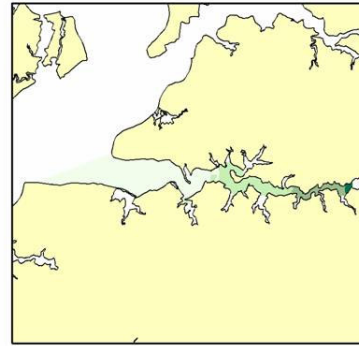
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l)



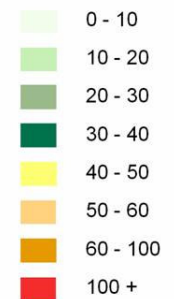
Salinity (ppt)



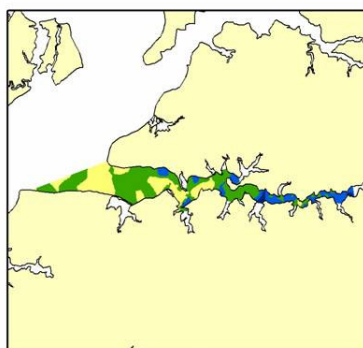
Turbidity (NTU)



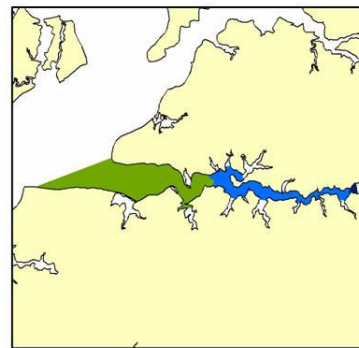
Chlorophyll (ug/l)



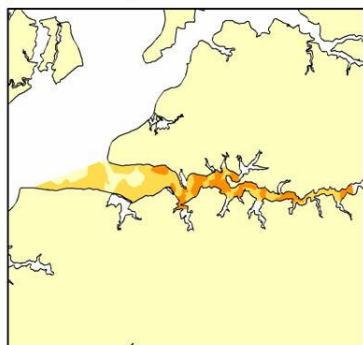
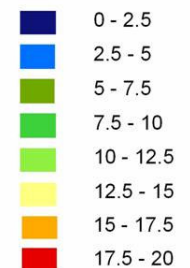
DNR Water Quality Mapping — 10/10/2007



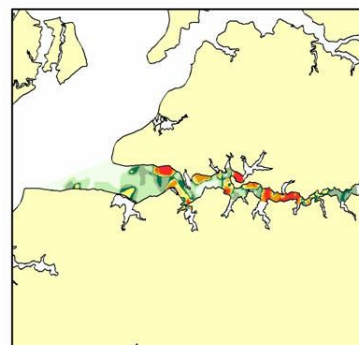
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l)



Salinity (ppt)



Turbidity (NTU)



Chlorophyll (ug/l)

