



Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

December 2008

SWAP — Dirty Water for Clean!

This has always been one of our most iconic photos — it shows a blue-green algae bloom on the upper Sassafras River in 2005. That curious color — a vivid chartreuse — is not the color our River should be.

SWAP will be a scientifically robust, comprehensive analysis of the Sassafras River watershed. The end result will be a prioritized list of the specific actions that must be taken to clean up our River.



Why do we need the **SWAP**? Because, as the saying goes, “how do you know where you’re going if you don’t know where you’ve been.”

The SRA has an ambitious goal for 2009: we plan to complete, by December 2009, a **Sassafras Watershed Action Plan — or SWAP**.

We have to know that the plans we develop for the Sassafras watershed are the ones that will deliver the

biggest “bang for the buck” as we move forward. That’s what **SWAP** will tell us.

We know how to conduct the **SWAP** because the MD-DNR did it many times in the early 2000s and left us an outline. And we’ve enlisted a terrific list of partners to help in the effort:

- Kent and Cecil Planning and Zoning Offices
- Kent and Cecil Soil Conservation
- Maryland Departments of the Environment and Natural Resources.
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- University of Maryland & Washington College
- And others

We are committed to completing the **SWAP** by this time next year. That’s an ambitious schedule. But we’re confident that under the leadership of Kascie Herron, the Sassafras **RIVERKEEPER®** and our Executive Director, Kim Kohl, we will succeed at our goal.

In the end, the SWAP will serve not just the SRA; it be the roadmap for Kent and Cecil Counties — and for anyone else who seeks a role in restoring our River.

Quick Takes

- Many thanks to **Tom and Ginny Parker** of Kentmore Park for donating a kayak to the SRA. With her new craft, Sassafras **RIVERKEEPER®** Kascie Herron will be able to get into those shallow ponds and streams.
- **Cecil County** has received a delegation from the MD Department of the Environment to manage its own Bay Restoration Fund allocation. Cecil residents interested in a nitrogen-removing septic systems can call County Environmental Health Director Chuck Smyser on 410 996-5160. Kent County residents can call John Beskid on 410 778-1361.
- Read the Sassafras **RIVERKEEPER®**’s monthly column on page 2 and learn what she’s been up to with the **SWAP**.

January 27 — SWAP Stakeholders’ Meeting

Who’s a **SWAP** stakeholder? Everyone who lives, works, boats, swims, fishes, kayaks on the Sassafras — or just loves the River!

We’ll meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 27 at the Galena Fire Hall to explain the steps involved in completing the **SWAP** and to

get your best ideas about ways we can restore our River and have safe water for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

We’ll have speakers, refreshments, a door prize, and an opportunity for you to have your say. Bring your thoughts and concerns — AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Contact the RIVERKEEPER

The **RIVERKEEPER®**’s telephone number is (410) 708-3303 and her email address is riverkeeper@sassafrasriver.org.

Watershed residents and visitors with concerns about the River or specific issues are encouraged to call her.



RIVERKEEPER'S®

Corner

Although Europe was breathtaking: full of food, wine, history and art, I longed for home. I had an enjoyable and unforgettable experience, but I'm happy to be back in the United States, on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay, and especially to the shores of the Sassafras.

That said, much needs to be done in order to complete our **Sassafras Watershed Action Plan (SWAP)**. In the weeks since my return, I have been working diligently on a data inventory of the Sassafras Watershed, collecting whatever information I can find. I am building this inventory in order to complete an important component of the SWAP, the Watershed Characterization.

This characterization serves as an essential tool to educate our stakeholder's (you are a part of this group!) and our core team of advisors and decision makers. Without a complete understanding of our past and present conditions, we cannot make an informed decision of where to go in the future.

This characterization will help target our restoration and conservation projects where they are needed most. In completing the characterization, we will also become aware of places where more information is required.

These gaps in data will direct us to areas where further assessments and sampling need to be conducted.

As an initial step in the planning process, the characterization is a living and growing document which will evolve as we go forward. Meetings with stakeholders and the core team will prove vital to the completeness and accuracy of the characterization.

This means I need you! If you have any information, suggestions, accounts regarding any part of the Sassafras Watershed I want to know about it! What can you tell me about the Sassafras Watershed's history and current condition that might help direct future management efforts? If you can't think of anything now, don't worry. Just make sure you attend our stakeholders' meeting on January 27th, to share your thoughts.

I hope to see you there!

See you on the Sass

Kascie Herron
Sassafras RIVERKEEPER

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