



Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

April 2009

SWAP CONTINUES TO BUILD MOMENTUM

The SRA hosted the 2nd SWAP Stakeholder Meeting on April 14, with more than 100 participants. Kim Kohl provided a brief history of SRA for those not familiar with our growing organization. Former Congressman Wayne Gilchrest spoke movingly on the Sassafras, noting that each of us — as

well as the waterfowl, fox, deer, crab, catfish, perch, sorghum, soy, and corn — are part of this amazing watershed. Wayne called on all of those present to do their part in restoring the health of the River.

Paul Sturm, from the Center for Watershed Protection

and a member of SWAP's Core Team, presented preliminary findings and early



modeling results. In short, excessive nutrients from both point and non-point sources continue to degrade water quality. Stakeholders broke into groups and developed lists of goals they'd like to see SWAP address and the restoration strategies they believe would work in our watershed. Joanne Throwe from U of MD facilitated the outstanding responses. Stakeholders made bold recommendations — remove the Sassafras from Maryland's 303 (d) list, meet the TMDL, increase the fish, crabs and native grasses. These inputs will become the basis for SWAP Goals and Restoration Actions. All minutes and presentations are posted on our website, www.sassafrasriver.org.

Educational Forum, Tuesday, May 12, 6:30 pm

Our next Education Forum is scheduled for Tuesday evening at the Granary Restaurant. John McCoy of DNR and Frank Digialleonardo of the Corsica River Conservancy will speak about successful watershed planning and community participation.

PROJECT CLEAN STREAM

For the 5th consecutive year, on Saturday, April 4th, the Sassafras River Association participated in Project Clean Stream, the annual stream and shoreline cleanup sponsored by the Alliance for the Chesapeake and funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. In

our water-

shed, nearly 60 volunteers picked up more than a ton of trash at 5 sites in Kent County and one

site in Cecil County. In addition to SRA members, students from Washington College and Cub Scouts from Galena Pack 145 joined in the action. Otwell's Market in Galena even donated snacks for the volunteers.



Quick Takes

- Maryland Department of the Environment is currently testing multiple sites throughout the watershed for various water quality parameters such as nitrogen, phosphorus and suspended solids. This survey builds upon prior water quality data to provide an updated view of non-tidal tributary health. If you see MDE on the River say hello to our partners, Jen Jaber and Ian Spotts.
- SRA is actively recruiting summer interns. Experience in Geodatabase Management and/or Office Administration required as well as efficiency with Microsoft Office Suite. Experience with Excel and Access a plus. Call 410-275-1400 for details.
- **SAVE THE DATE**
July 21, 6:30 pm
SWAP Stakeholder Meeting and SRA's Annual Meeting at Turner's Creek Pavilion.

Concerns or Questions?

Contact the RIVERKEEPER

The RIVERKEEPER can be reached at (410) 708-3303 and her email address is riverkeeper@sassafrasriver.org

State-wide, including new sites in Virginia and Delaware, 2,638 volunteers at 156 sites cleaned up more than 320,310 pounds of trash! 2009 was the most successful statewide clean-up yet!

A huge thank you to those volunteers who gave up a Saturday morning for the good of the watershed! And if anyone is missing a dishwasher contact John Burke!.



Sassafras

RIVERKEEPER'S®

COVE

Advocacy Update

Each year the state of Maryland undergoes a 90 day legislative session wherein all proposed bills are sent to the House of Delegates and the Senate for review. These bills are either accepted and passed or dismissed. Bills are often dismissed if they are new or have weak support. A bill is often presented several times before it is passed. For the 2009 legislative session there were over 3,000 bills introduced, of which 2000 made it to committee. SRA had a presence on the ground and strongly supported and/or testified on behalf of seven bills addressing phosphorus-free fertilizers, Bay funding, cover crops and BNR septic. Of those SRA supported, two passed the House and Senate. These were the Bay Restoration Fund and the Bay Restoration Act.

A local issue that has received much attention from the community and SRA Advocacy Committee, is Indian Acres Campground in Earleville, located on Back Creek. There has been much discussion surrounding zoning decisions and the residency status of those at the campground. SRA is ultimately concerned about the impact Indian Acres — including any zoning changes — may have on the River.

When the campground was first constructed, it was divided into “Glens” or subsections. Currently in each of these Glens there is a service building/comfort station with a sewage dump station to serve the campsites in that Glen. This is where waste water (grey water) and sewage is disposed of in Indian Acres. There are no sewer lines serving individual campsites and installing on-site sewage disposal systems is prohibited. However, over the years some campsites in

Indian Acres have been converted into full time residences. The Cecil County Commissioners have recently been discussing how to address the issue of upholding Indian Acres as a campground and seasonal residence.

Given that most of Indian Acres is within the critical area, adjacent to Back Creek and the Sassafras River, SRA is concerned with how waste disposal in the campground is affecting the health of the Sassafras. In a formal letter to the Cecil County Commissioners, Kim Kohl, SRA's Executive Director, and I expressed our concerns with how the densely populated area of Indian Acres impacts the health of the Sassafras. We requested that the Commissioners make SRA aware of any proposals that they are considering and allow for our involvement in the process, before making any decisions regarding residency of Indian Acres. We hope that the Commissioners will consider the Sassafras River as a primary factor when deciding what actions should be taken.

Another issue that has resurfaced in our watershed, is the proposed rubblefill in northern Kent County. In July 2008, I sent a letter to the Kent County Commissioners expressing SRA's concerns surrounding a proposal to convert Kent Sand and Gravel on Alexander Rd. in Massey to a “construction and debris ‘rubble fill.’” Because of the proximity of the

sand and gravel operation to Jacob's Creek (a tributary to the Sassafras), it poses a potential threat to the fragile and already impaired waters of the Sassafras. However, on March 3rd, 2009, the minutes of a closed session meeting between the County Commissioners and representatives of a newly incorporated firm called “Kent Recycling and Land Reclamation,” indicated that there was discussion “for business to locate in Kent County and assistance from the County to enable this business proposal.” Kent Recycling and Land Reclamation shares its principal address with Kent Sand and Gravel, LLC.

SRA has concerns about this process and will continue to monitor the situation. Stay tuned for new developments.

And, as always, if you see or hear anything that you think might be threatening the health of the Sassafras Watershed please pick up the phone and call me, 410-703-3303.

See you on the Sass,

Kascie Herron

Sassafras RIVERKEEPER®

