

Sassafras Update

Sassafras River Association
PO Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930

November 2009

SRA Hires Agricultural Outreach Coordinator

SRA welcomes Josh Thompson as Agricultural Outreach Coordinator. Josh is a fourth generation family farmer from Kent County, Delaware. Josh spent his youth roaming the corn and bean fields and low lying hardwoods of his family's grain and Standardbred operation in search of deer and waterfowl. It was during this time Josh developed his sense of stewardship for the land, the water that runs through it, and the wildlife that inhabits it.

Josh received his BS in Animal Science from University of Delaware's College of Agriculture. Post graduation he put his agricultural knowledge to work as the Agricultural Liaison for the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, and more recently, the Harpeth River Watershed Association in

Tennessee. Josh has worked extensively with small grain, poultry, dairy, and beef operations to develop conservation plans, improve nutrient and manure management,



enhance wildlife habitat, and decrease impacts on water quality. In addition Josh has developed watershed plans and has worked closely with septic, wastewater, and stormwater issues. He currently holds a nutrient consultant certification

from Delaware and has served as the environmental voice on numerous state committees.

In his new role, Josh will be networking with farmers in the Sassafras watershed to encourage participation in cost share programs and implementation of best management practices. Josh will also oversee SWAP restoration efforts that target agricultural lands.

Betterton Addresses Erosion Issues

SRA joined members of the Critical Area Commission, Kent Soil and Water Conservation District, Resource Conservation and Development and County Foresters to make recommendations to the Town of Betterton on erosion issues and buffer management plans.

The shoreline of Bayside Boulevard was identified as a medium to high erosion site during SRA's SWAP assessment. In addition to tidal erosion there is slumping of the bank due to overland erosion. In its current condition it is unlikely the bluff could withstand a severe storm event. Recommendations include a series of breakwaters to address tidal influence and a universal buffer management plan to ensure bank stability. SRA has offered assistance to the Town to coordinate these efforts.

2010 Legislative Preview

SRA was one of several sponsors for the Maryland League of Conservation Voters (LDLCV) Legislative Preview, held November 19 in Easton, MD. MDLCV brought together representatives from local and state environmental groups to discuss strategies for the upcoming legislative session.

Three legislative issues which directly effect Maryland's environment include the budget crisis, transportation and stormwater pollution. This session the Governor and his team will be grappling with a projected \$ 1-2 billion additional budget cuts. Just 2.7% of the State's budget is allocated to environmental programs and it's critical that programs like the Bay Restoration Fund and Chesapeake Bay

Trust Fund are fully funded. Transportation continues to negatively impact the environment with State policies focused on building more roads instead of technology that reduces dependence on cars. Transportation funds need to be redirected to target transportation efforts that create jobs, improve public health and the environment. A new stormwater pollution bill will require counties to implement a stormwater user charge on imperious surfaces, where an acre of storm water produces 40 times the runoff from an acre of mature forest. The backlog of green infrastructure repairs caused by stormwater runoff exceeds \$ 20 billion statewide. SRA will lend support to these issues and others that result in legislation for a cleaner, healthier environment.

Quick Takes

- **Sassafras Sampling Update, Tuesday, December 8, 6:30 pm, Granary Restaurant**
SRA presents sampling results from the 2009 Water Quality Monitoring season. The Sassafras RIVERKEEPER and Samplers are eager to share their findings, show how sampling is informing restoration activities and discuss the monitoring program for 2010. All our welcome!
- **SRA Memberships Make Great Gifts!**
This holiday season give the gift of Stewardship. Purchase your gift membership by December 16th and SRA will send a special gift card to your friends or family. Follow this [link](#) to purchase your gift membership now. Let us know it's a holiday gift in the dedication space provided.
- **SWAP Stakeholder Meeting, Feb 2010**
The next stakeholder meeting is in the works! The Sassafras Watershed Action Plan is currently under review by the Core Team and will be presented to the public mid-February. Check our website mid-Dec for date, location and time.

Last Chance for Linda Hall's Sassafras Sunset III
Only 25 tickets remain !
Drawing December 8th.
See www.sassafrasriver.org for details.



Sassafras RIVERKEEPER'S®

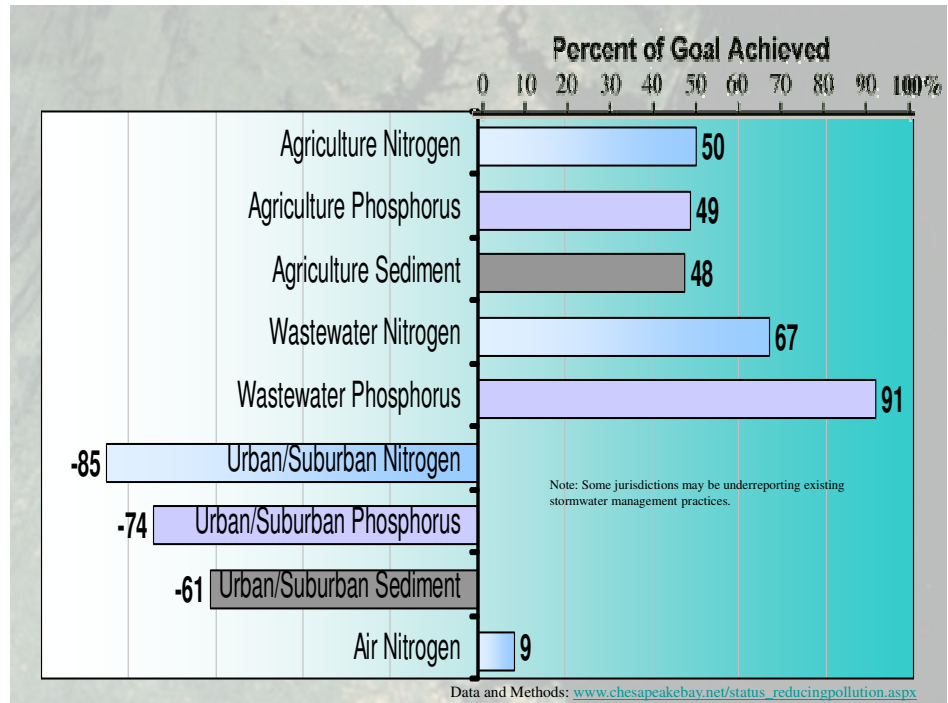
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Concerns or Questions?

The **RIVERKEEPER®** can be reached at (410) 708-3303 or Riverkeeper@sassafrasriver.org

A Pollution Diet for the Chesapeake Bay

After years of pollution bingeing, the Bay is finally going on a diet so that it may live a longer and healthier life. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is leading the initiative to establish and oversee a strict “pollution diet” for the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries with the goal of restoring water quality. The technical name for this diet is a Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL. A TMDL is a regulatory tool of the federal Clean Water Act which identifies the pollutant limit a clean waterbody can sustain and still meet its intended uses such as swimming and fishing. It includes point sources of pollution such as waste water treatment plants, and nonpoint sources such as polluted stormwater. The Sassafras River was listed as impaired for nutrients in 1996. In 2002 a TMDL established the total amount of Phosphorus that the Sassafras River could sustain and in 2009 an additional TMDL was written for PCB's. The Chesapeake Bay TMDL will be similar in tone but will combine 92 smaller TMDLs for individual tidal segments or major river basins (including the Sassafras) and will set restrictions on nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) and sediment pollution. The TMDL will identify pollution targets by geographic location and source sector (point and nonpoint). The Bay TMDL will also include a schedule of actions that will be taken to achieve reductions as well as a commitment to develop two year milestones at the county scale. Because TMDLs are a regulatory tool under the Clean Water Act, there will be EPA consequences for not implementing local plans and failing to meet the two year milestones. Such consequences may include: assigning more



This graph shows percentage of goals achieved of those set forth in the Chesapeake Bay Agreement originally signed in 1985 and resigned in 2000.

stringent pollution reductions to point sources, objecting to state issued permits, limiting or prohibiting new or expanded discharges of nutrients and sediments, withholding or reallocating federal grant funds. Because some TMDLs already exist for waterbodies in the Chesapeake Watershed, such as the Sassafras TMDL for Phosphorus, EPA has decided that whichever TMDL is strongest (Baywide or basin specific) will apply. For instance, if the Bay TMDL establishes a limit for Phosphorus which is stronger than the Sassafras TMDL for Phosphorus, this new TMDL will be applied to the Sassafras River with correlating implementation required by Kent and Cecil Counties. The bottom line is that action needs to be taken now and at the local level if the Chesapeake Bay is to be restored.

The EPA is hosting a series of Baywide TMDL public meetings through the month of December to ensure that federal, state and local officials and agencies are fully accountable to the public. These meetings will be held in Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia (all states within the Chesapeake Bay watershed). Navigate to our watershed events page www.sassafrasriver.org/whatwedo or to the EPA Bay TMDL page http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/tmdl/ChesapeakeBay/CalendarOfEvents_2009.html?tab2=5 for the meeting schedule.

See you on the Sass,
Kascie Herron
Sassafras RIVERKEEPER