



Sassafra River Association

P.O. Box 333
Georgetown, MD 21930
www.sassafra river.org

August 12, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The Galena Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) receives and treats roughly 60,000 gallons of sewage a day. Raw wastewater received by the plant is treated in a sewage lagoon that was designed and built in 1962. Although sewage lagoons have been used to treat wastewater for many years particularly in small communities, such as Galena, they are not capable of matching the pollutant removal efficiencies provided by newer wastewater treatment technologies. Lagoons simply do not provide the environment needed to remove significant amounts of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) from wastewater streams. As you are aware, both nitrogen and phosphorus have caused water quality degradation in both the Sassafra River and Chesapeake Bay and are key pollutants of concern in both of these important aquatic resources.

Because of the sewage lagoon's inability to significantly reduce nutrient loads, the Galena WWTP delivers a disproportionately large amount of both nitrogen and phosphorus to the Sassafra River. The Sassafra River is on Maryland's 303 (d) list of impaired waters for nutrients. due to the increased number of algal blooms that have been occurring within the River in recent years, a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for phosphorus was written to address this impairment. Unfortunately, the TMDL has been written to allow both point sources (Berterton WWTP and Galena WWTP) to contribute roughly half of the phosphorus load that is delivered to the river, despite the fact that the two WWTPs treat wastewater from less than 600 homes and businesses and that the urban areas served by these municipal treatment plants make up less than 5% of the total watershed area.

The Sassafra River Association (SRA) is a not for profit watershed organization, representing over 500 members in the watershed, whose mission is to protect, restore and advocate for the health of the Sassafra River. SRA's key deliverable for 2009 is a Sassafra Watershed Action Plan, a scientifically robust plan which includes restoration strategies to address impairments and restore the health of the Sassafra. SRA has partnered with more than 25 public and private entities with expertise in watershed planning to guide the development and execution of this plan. 28 preliminary strategies have already been identified. Top prioritized strategies include the upgrade of both Galena and Berterton WWTPs to Enhanced Nutrient Reduction technology. In order to better protect the Sassafra River from nutrient enrichment, the Galena WWTP must be upgraded to ENR now.

SRA's restoration strategies cover a wide spectrum, from increasing cover crops and upgrading homeowner septics to addressing storm water run-off from Highway 301 and educating youth groups, homeowner associations and business on best management practices. Each of us has a role to play in restoring the River. Upgrading Galena's WWTP to ENR decreases nutrient loading immediately and also serves as a motivational signal to other stakeholders in the watershed that it's time to do their part. SRA recognizes the resource constraints placed upon a small town such as Galena and wholly supports efforts to find grant funding to offset the cost of an ENR upgrade. After reviewing the state's list of prioritized WWTP upgrades, it appears that upgrading a smaller plant such as Galena would significantly reduce nutrient loading to the Chesapeake ecosystem, perhaps even more so than a larger WWTP. SRA will continue to advocate at all levels until Galena's WWTP upgrade is complete.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Kohl". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Kim Kohl
Executive Director

Cc: T. Bass, Galena Town Administrator
P. Bourne, P.E., Galena Town Engineer