

The Severn River Log



SEVERN RIVER ASSOCIATION • BOX 146, ANNAPOLIS MD 21404 • severnriver.org • 443.569.3556 • JANUARY 2016

SRA has existed for 105 years. It couldn't have survived that long by standing still. Our original purpose was to protect and promote fish and game, and to develop public access to the river. Over the years, the concerns of the SRA have changed along with threats to the river and its tributaries.

Before centralized treatment plants, concerns focused on pollution from sewage; then a need for housing density limits and preservation of open space; then erosion and sediment runoff control at construction sites; and then storm water management.

This year we have continued several programs, revised some, and tried some new ones. Our oyster program is in its seventh year with Bob Whitcomb and his team of almost 500 volunteers. They host over 1,700 cages and 510,000 spat, a third of the entire statewide Maryland Grow Oysters (MGO) program. SRA's sanctuary reef has six years' of oysters filtering tidal water. They're doing well, with great growth and low mortality. Ann Jackson continued leading our stormwater grants: Ben Oaks Civic Association, Linstead Community Association, Severn Heights Improvement Association, and Olde Severna Park Improvement Association.

Our grants are often the start of something bigger: the county Watershed Protection and Restoration Program grants to Ben Oaks and Herald Harbor; a MD DNR grant to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and Hawkins Cove.

SRA participated in Project Clean Stream, switching from trash removal to tree planting at Rockbridge Christian Academy and the Quaker Meeting House. Oaks, magnolias and river birches were planted by over 100 volunteers under the expert guidance of Arborist Brian Duvall from Bartlett Expert Trees.

SRA had several watershed stewards leading the annual Jonas Green Park

Day of Service and Remembrance clean-up, and also provided funding for the new Bayscape project.

Richard Klein's Community & Environmental Defense Services (CEDS) and SRA provided several people to participate in the Greater Baltimore surveys of construction sites over the past three years.

Because so much land is in agriculture, farming is the main source of sediment fouling the bay, but construction sites produce 10 to 20 times more sediment per acre. Our watershed has few farms nowadays, so construction sites are our main issue. goo.gl/IvbtD8

The surveys showed an improvement (16% to 40%) in construction site erosion control in Anne Arundel County over those two years, so this year the focus shifted to Best Management Practices for stormwater control. goo.gl/8PDCMf

Several years ago SRA targeted a Jabez subwatershed as the most impaired area of the Severn, mostly tied to the construction of the I97 and Rt.32 intersection. A Severn Headwaters coalition was formed comprising SRA, the Severn Riverkeeper, county Planning and Zoning department, State Highway Administration (SHA), DNR, federal EPA and Fish and Wildlife Service representatives.

Charlotte Lubbert's tenacity as leader is paying off. We are beginning to see results as SHA initiates projects to manage quantity and quality of water running off I97, and DNR is beginning a similar project in the Severn Run Natural Area.

Our monthly education series continues with coordinator John Wright, and has led to many thoughtful discussions and actions by participants.

Our latest effort began with the realization that county inspectors have no way to spot many critical area viola-



Lynne Rockenbauch, SRA President

tions from land. With the donation of a Boston Whaler from SRA member Lynda Gallagher, and hard restoration work by Tom Guay with support from Smith Marina and others, SRA launched its first boat. It's already made oyster delivery runs and is on call for the next critical area violation.

Lee Meadows and John Wright put together a terrific fund-raiser at Belvoir Plantation manor house, constructed by Frances Scott Key's great grandfather. We toured the manor house, the arboretum, the largest copper beech in the state, fine Southern Magnolias, large boxwoods, the Sears catalog barn, a short exhibit of invasive species, and slave quarters recently discovered by state archeologists.

We urge you to take action to lessen your personal impact on the river, and to join with neighbors for an even bigger impact.

When you see violations of environmental or zoning codes, report them via contacts listed at goo.gl/p1b6KN. Your county councilman or constituent services representative can help keep the pressure on.

Volunteer to help the Severn River Association widen its reach as we consider launching a water trail, promoting floating gardens, and having fun together as we Treasure the Severn.