

**The Severn River Association, Inc.**

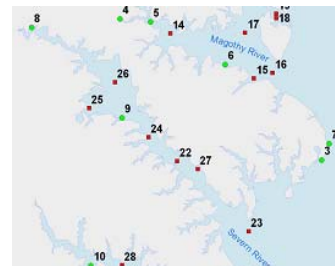
The meeting was **called to order** at Calvary Methodist Church at 2:07 PM by President Lee Meadows. All Officers and Board Members were present except John Wright who had the Flu and Kurt Riegel who was also excused.

The (Draft 4) **Minutes** from the 10-23-2014 meeting were Approved (Sally moved, Dan seconded) with one correction – in the “**Other Business and Announcements**” on page 5, the third sentence should read “She asked three residents with views of the bridge their opinion ....”

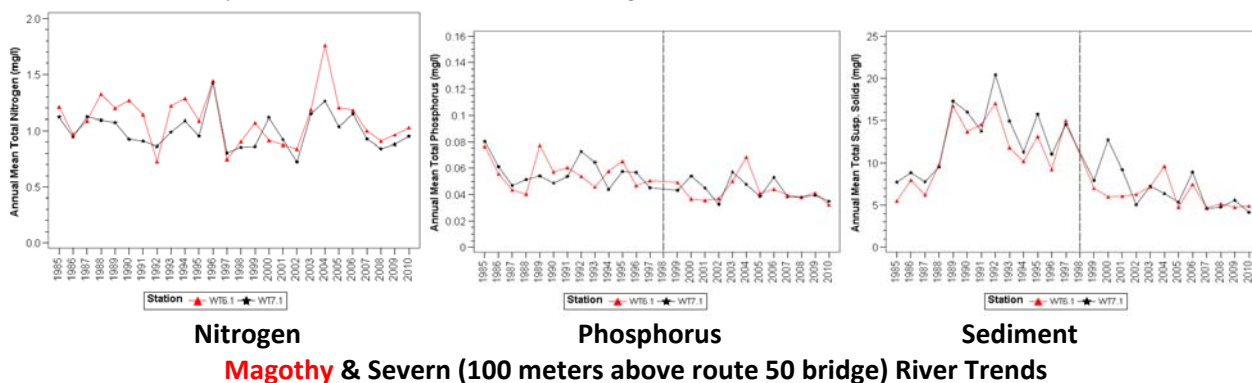
**Overview of 2015 issues – Lee Meadows**

**A. State of the River**

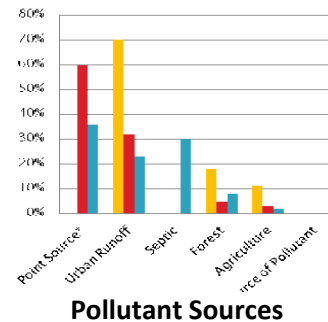
1. DNR Monitors 8 locations on the Severn. There have been dramatic improvements in Phosphate levels in the Severn as a result of Annapolis Sewage Plant improvements (currently 45% reduction that will fall to 34% of 2009 level giving a 30% reduction in River forecasted since 2010), and we anticipate a significant reduction of Nitrogen (18% less than 2010) in the Severn starting in Feb 2015 when the Annapolis wastewater plant will install Nitrogen filters to cut its Severn outflow by half. Sediment continues its long term reduction in the Severn.



**DNR Monitoring Points**



2. The bar chart shows major sources of (Left-to-right) Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Sediment. There are only two point source permits on the Severn: the Annapolis Waste Water Plant (8mm GPD, 99% of Point Source effluent, will go up to 13mm GPD when Chesapeake Harbour and other plants close) and the US Navy Waste Water Plant (100k GPD, 1% of Point Source flows into Severn). Neither produces measurable amounts of Sediment, and Septic Systems do not measurably contribute to sediment or Phosphorus. Annapolis started advanced treatment in 2010 and has now reduced nitrogen pollution by 28% with a goal of 35%-40% reduction. Septic Systems and Stormwater are the two other major sources of Nitrogen. 40% of our watershed is still on septic systems, in areas that are difficult to connect to public sewage. Upgrading septic systems is very expensive, so the most cost-effective way to achieve the balance of our nitrogen reduction goals is from treating storm water runoff. We also need to find way to more effectively stop septic tank flows into Severn, capture data from all eight DNR monitoring stations on the Severn faster, Publicize changes in TMDL, Clarity, and Algal Blooms, Help Community members capture County Grants, and Lobby for additional Annapolis wastewater plant improvements
3. The Severn is still suffering a major dead zone in summer. The clarity improved in 2014, but the dead zone got bigger. USNA oceanographic Professor Andrew Muller felt that the N<sub>2</sub> pollution is coming from the watershed, not from Annapolis. The source is still not settled. His data showed little movement of salinity up the river, indicating that the pollution is coming primarily from upstream. He is also monitoring Dissolved Oxygen. We need to merge the Severn RiverKeeper data with DNR data. Pierre Henkart said spring snow melt causes a large flow from Conowingo. Professor Muller tried to follow the depth of dead zones and stratification. Others say most pollution comes from the Bay. Dead zone in Round Bay does demonstrate sources above there.
4. A Speaker at the Severn River Commission meeting on Feb 5 at 4 pm will address oyster reef results.



## **B. Priorities from 2014 board meeting**

At the June 2014 Moard meeting, we agreed to prioritize activities by three criteria: (1) Impact on TMDL; (2) Good fit with SRA skills and Assets; and (3) Board member interest. Priority Programs are:

1. Headwaters initiatives with SHA/DNR/AAC – Charlotte will continue to lead this effort to correct the stormwater management problem at I-97 and MD 32.
2. Oyster Program – Bob Whitcomb will continue to lead this effort which continues to grow every year.
3. Community Stormwater Grant Program
4. Educational meetings

Project Clean Stream (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay) is a lower priority, but still an area of interest and support.

## **C. New issues that may impact priorities and activities**

AACounty is starting a Stormwater Grant program of \$20K-\$100K grants for up to three years for community and non-profit stormwater projects. First round of applications is closing Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. We are now working to evaluate grants for Pines and Herald Harbor and help them get DPW grants. Lynne is working with Ben Oaks.

Financial constraints – we had a \$3k decline in individual contributions in 2014, reducing income from 15K to 12K. One reason is the membership drive in 2013. Email is not enough – 1/3-40% need snail mail. Rusty was surprised that more oyster growers are not members – Lee felt snail mail is needed for that too. Need front-line designation for waterfront members. LM – 80% of present Community Members are waterfront Communities.

Leadership constraints – We need a new President in June 2015 Lee wants to focus on home tours as fundraisers. His wife is ill, so he must resign. The Nominating Committee is working on it – Mark has joined, Don & John staying and Bob W. will continue as Chair. We also need more committee heads who are active. The Community Council needs to get more active Community Reps. Rusty agreed to take on fund-raising.

## **Treasurer's Report - Lynne Rockenbauch – see attached Comparison & Proposed Budget**

2014 Summary – Bob W asked where is the income from purchases of oyster floats? Under Oysters. Missing \$400 that has not yet been paid. Working to get payment. They have proven too weak to withstand wakes – we are expecting replacements. The Warranty issue is holding up payment. They are installed across from Clement Creek.

**2015 Budget proposal – Lee Meadows.** Lynne asked if we can reduce Kurt's fee for editing the Log – Kurt is looking at that. Facebook is not popular enough yet. Can we reduce the complexity? Trying now to send specialized targeted emails to Community Reps.

Facebook is easy to get on with gmail or equal mailing address.

Outreach includes \$100 for refreshments at qtrly mtgs, \$300 for mailing.

Bob Whitcomb asked for \$1k for Jonas Green to do memorial garden for Jake Jacobs. Last year's project was not approved by Parks Dept. Lee felt TMDL impact doesn't justify. Also spend \$1k of grant for tree planting. In addition. Bob W. moved to take it from reserve fund. Seconded by Sally. Need landscape architect to flesh it out. Motion Carried. Benches similar – now done at cost of \$2400 ea.

Project Clean stream – 1 church applied for grant, 1 other site looks good. April target date.

Watershed Audit mostly volunteer, no \$\$.

Oyster working.

Donations – Bay Journal, others.

Boat – will add expenses, but we hope to offset that with targeted donations.

Insurance is actually \$1669 – we just got the invoice.

Legal – Tom Guay proposed a Hall of Shame – Dan will help avoid legal action from such a listing.

Clearcutting is prosecuted as a civil offense, not a criminal offense. Hopkins Creek is suing the landowner responsible for that clearcutting.

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Income – hoping to get more churches to join. Need to use more snail mail. Mark's community tried sending invoices – worked well.

Maps – we sold 10 in the last quarter of 2014.

Fund Raising – house tours. 40 @ \$25. Need Docents. Proposed date is 6/13.

John may have some hats. Also have DVDs from 100th ann Annual Mtg

### **SRA Action Programs Status and 2015 Plans**

**Headwaters Coalition – Charlotte Lubbert:** The Committee had a meeting 12/20 – Erik Michelsen (AACo DPW) was present and asked for SRA help getting access to properties. Charlotte met with the Committee and they decided to get phone nos after which Charlotte will call the property owners to set up a meeting. They also will send letters to others. 4 people have reviewed the letter and have now have settled on the format & will send out to reluctant homeowners. She is now waiting for the right time to call. They also were going to contact Kurt Monday to have him contact the homeowners. They now have topography and phone numbers. Next meeting 3/27. Kaitlyn Sommers hasn't yet responded – draft was supposed to be out in December, now scheduled for 4/6 which conflicts with Easter. Fred Kelly & Lina Vlavianos said 4/6 is ok. SHA's letter was abrasive. AACo would like to do more, but designer needs access to properties to do design. Designer also doing SHA & DNR project designs. They will also meet 9:00-11:00 at Heritage – Charlotte will email details. Also reviewing plans. Mike Robinson is no longer involved.

**Stormwater Grants – Lee Meadows** – No report

**Oyster Growing – Bob Whitcomb** – No report – Oysters are hibernating.

**Clean Stream Alliance – Lee Meadows.** This effort is transitioning from stream cleanups to tree planting. The RockBridge property (formerly Belvoir Farms) and 2 churches (including the Quaker Church) are this year's projects. Bob W + Maureen will help, Lee is hoping to get a WaterShed Steward to lead effort. The closest stewards are in Arden and in Lee's community of Saefern. Rusty – what guidelines do we have? Lee – have WSS contacts, tree sources. All WSS are considered SRA members. This year is the first year for trees, still developing guidelines.

**Septic Systems Program Development – Rusty Gowland.** Septics account for 30.3% of Nitrogen pollution in the river, but a much smaller percentage in the Bay. 25% or 55,000 homes in AACo and 40% of the 45,000 homes in the Severn River watershed have septic systems. Many are old and failing. Systems in the Critical Area are the first priority, since 80% of any seepage goes into the river, septics that are farther away have less impact. AACo offers assistance with 2 upgrades – they will pay up to \$10,000 of the connection fee to connect to a public sewer, and they will fund 100% of the capital cost of system upgrades to remove more nitrogen, up to \$20,000 each. They will only fund half of that if the homeowner is high-income. The source of the grant money is the Flush Fee, which limits the availability of funds. 43 homes were connected to public sewers last year, 25 so far this year. They hope to connect 193 - 230 this year. 80% of the flush tax income is going to these connections, 8% to cover crops, 12% to upgrades. Most of the earlier money went to bonds for wastewater treatment plant upgrades. Homeowners wishing Upgrades should apply to the Health Dept via their website – grants are issued by March. Septics in the Critical Area have a good chance of getting a grant. Most applicants have failing septic systems. Tom Guay upgraded his system last Fall around Thanksgiving. A Treatment tank stirs and oxygenizes the effluent, so it needs electricity also. AACo takes care of maintenance for the first 5 years. Failing system grants are expedited. His is gravity fed – some need pumps and backup power. Herb Wilson installed his new system. The alarm goes off frequently. It cost \$25k, of which \$13k was subsidized. Bob W noted that the Health Department definition of failure is total leach field failure – non-failed systems are still giving off lots of N2. We really need more focus on proximity – the Critical Area should be the main priority, not failure. 20k systems will cost about \$200mm to upgrade, so AACo can only fund about 1% per year. Lisa suggested we should go to communities with the most septics and make a presentation on their effects on the river. Arden, Epping Forest, Sherwood and others are prime targets. Any system over 50 years old is potential trouble. Rusty will follow up on presentations. Other options include rain gardens behind the septic field. Education is important – septic starters are not effective and bleach is deadly.

**Educational Meetings – John Wright.** John was out with the Flu. See Flyer recently distributed. February = Conowingo at CBF. American Rivers head will present proposals. March is Septic Systems with AACo Health Dept and Tom Guay as speakers.

**Critical Area Enforcement – Tom Guay** Please read the Log article – there are no press releases yet. Tom plans a Wall of Shame for violators on our Facebook page. This is one use of our new boat fleet. A Chinese group published an App

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to identify local permitted polluters – it had some effect on choices. EPA has that info on their website, but our issues are not with industry so they are less important to the EPA.

**SRA Community Association POC training.** A committee of Lynne Rockenbauch, Lee, and Mark Lister was tasked to study and report on the following issues regarding our Community Representatives (Points of Contact):

1. Do we agree that POC training is needed? I don't believe that we are getting what we need from our POCs. We need them to help make us an effective organization.
2. What sort of training do we want?
  - a. A reference sheet on the web and a periodic notice to POCs to use it may be all we need.
  - b. Face to face training – for new POCs and interested members?
  - c. Other?
3. What do we need our POCs to do?
  - a. Maintain our contact list for the community. What contact info do we really want? Currently we ask for both email and mailing address of president, treasurer, and SRA POC. Do we want to continue asking for all of these?
    - i. Some communities have community PO Box and community emails, such as president@hoa.org. Many do not.
    - ii. We need at least two contacts to ensure that we don't lose contact. One can be a general community address (for reaching the president and the treasurer). We need at least one email - this should be the POC - for regular community communications. If we want to send invitations or bills in the mail, we need real addresses.
  - b. Post upcoming meetings, calls for volunteers, and accomplishments of SRA in community newsletter or minutes, as appropriate.
  - c. Follow SRA on facebook.
  - d. Volunteer to help or recruit a volunteer to help with at least one activity per year.
  - e. More?

**2015 Budget Adjustment & Approval** Bob W moved to approve the 2015 budget as amended above, Ken Hatch seconded. Motion carried.

**New Business**

There is a meeting at AACC tonight to hear Russ Stevenson's presentation, 7:00-9:00

**Trash Free America – BobWhitcomb** – they are lobbying to ban microbeads in personal care products – these are damaging fish & wildlife. They also hope to ban plastic bags statewide, and may also include a 10c deposit on paper bags. Rusty suggested this would be a good educational meeting topic. The data on MicroBeads are particularly shocking. A third priority is tightening up enforcement of dumping & littering. Bob W. will provide contacts and more information by email.

**Scheduling April and July Meetings** The next Board meeting will be 4/9 from 2:00-4:30, the 6/18 Annual Board meeting will be at 1:00 The Annual Membership meeting will be 6/16 at 7:00. This will be low-key as nobody has volunteered to organize a big meeting.

**Meeting was Adjourned** at 4:49 PM Charlotte moved, Lynne seconded.