

# Building An SRA-Lead Campaign to Raise the Level of Care for the Severn River

“TREASURE THE SEVERN”

June, 2015

# 1. Slogan

*Our slogan says that we deeply care about the Severn River*

**TREASURE THE SEVERN**

## 2. Vision

*Our vision is compelling to many and has imagery that is motivating and desirable*

When you wade waist deep in the Severn on a warm, summer day, look down. Can you see your feet? Let's fix that.

# 3. Mission

*Our mission is a clear, measurable, and achievable goal for our team that has a deadline. A concise goal that can be used to evaluate the relative importance of all that we do as an organization. The mission is not what we do, it' what we achieve.*

*“Build our impact and influence by growing our individual memberships 100% per year from 58 in 2015 to 1,856 by the end of 2020. ”*

# 4. Beliefs/Norms/Realities

*The things that we believe in. The values that define membership in the SRA.*

1. A **natural lawn** is a sustainable lawn. Lawn chemicals harm the river, backyard wildlife, and people.
2. A **protected forest** is a free, healthy water purification “plant”. Clearing forest for development is no longer acceptable in our watershed.
3. We need to **plant tomorrow’s trees today**. Large trees are taken down in an instant, but require a whole generation to replace
4. The **critical area law** protects our shared asset, the river. Violators of the critical area law are criminals and should be treated that way.
5. **Everyone that lives near a storm drain is waterfront**. The closer to your yard that you capture and infiltrate rain, the less harm to the river, and the less costly the solution

# 5. Recruitment to the Cause

*The elevator speech that provides the “hook” to draw people to join the SRA is a person to person interaction that defines the benefits in terms that broad numbers can identify with.*

1. The SRA is devoted to getting to the bottom of matters that affect the health of the river and cutting through the biases, politics, and misinformation that derail real solutions.
2. Our belief is that if we preserve the natural features of our watershed, we can
  - 1) restore the Severn River to health
  - 2) resolve problems with flooding, erosion, and mosquitoes
  - 3) make our neighborhoods more welcoming to wildlife, and
  - 4) preserve and enhance the value of our lifestyle.
3. Our members are motivated to making sensible changes in our yards, communities, and development policies to achieve these outcomes.

Consider joining the SRA or contributing toward its goals at [www.severnriver.org](http://www.severnriver.org).

# 6. Scorecard “Storyline”

*Our relationship with members of the watershed centers around a “rallying cry” that is explained and reinforced through our annual scorecard with explanations and interpretations of our shared goals provided through education sessions, newsletters, social media, press releases, and outings.*

## **Nutrients in the Severn: Too Much of a Good Thing**

The root cause of the ongoing decline in the health of the Severn River is too many nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus. Nutrients in the water are good... to a point. Small fish, insects, and crustaceans that form the base of the food chain need to feed on the algae that form from the nutrients. But, when there is too much, the water is overloaded with algae that dies, and decays. Some of the algae is toxic and causes fish kills, and all of the algae consumes oxygen and feeds bacteria as it decays. The bacteria can cause dangerous infections in people, pets, and marine life and makes swimming unsafe. Reduced oxygen from what we read about as the “dead zone” where no marine life can survive. Not even a slug! The water that is clouded by algae blocks sunlight so underwater grasses that put oxygen back into the water cannot grow. The Severn River has the largest and most persistent dead zone in Anne Arundel County because of excess nutrient loads.

So, if we want clearer water, more abundant marine life, and safer swimming, we have to 1) reduce nutrient loads (phosphorous and nitrogen) and 2) help get high nutrient stormwater filtered by plants and the ground before it reaches the river. The main sources of these nutrients are

- food, cleansers, and human waste that come from septic systems and water treatment effluent
- Fertilizers from lawn care products
- Phosphorus that is part of fertile soil that erodes and washes into the river
- Pet and wildlife waste
- Nitrogen in the air that is picked up by rain; much of this nitrogen coming from burning fossil fuels

There are many simple and inexpensive things we can do and habits we can change to all become more sustainable residents of the watershed. Consider joining the SRA to gain access to technical and financial resources that you may need to affect a healthier river.

# 7. Scorecard Framework

*To substantiate this story, we have thorough data collection from the creeks, headwaters, round bay and main stem of the river at various depths. Under the leadership of Dr. Andrew Muller, we gather and aggregate data from multiple sources, and assimilate, analyze, and interpret data. The following “critical few metrics” offer a summary look at status and trends in the health of the river.*

Strategic Goal:		Expected Outcomes:			
<b>Goal:</b>	<b>Make significant reductions in nutrient loads</b>	More Underwater Grasses	Safer Swimming	Reduced Algae	Improved Marine Habitat
<b>Progress Measures:</b>	Total Nitrogen Total Phosphorus	Acres of SAVs	Pct of Swimmable Days	Chlorophyll (Algae)	Dissolved Oxygen
<b>Contributing Factor Measures:</b>	Pct of Impervious Surface Acres of Forest	Water Clarity	Bacteria Level	Rainfall	Temperature

# 8. Ten Things That Our Individual Members Can Do

*The benefit of SRA membership is to get the technical, financial, and collaborative assistance to be a “sustainable” resident of the watershed.*

1. Reduce/eliminate fertilizers and pesticides
2. Install rainbarrels to buffer stormwater
3. Remove turf grass and invasive species and plant native plants and shade trees
4. Maintain a healthy buffer to the road and shoreline
5. Reduce soaps, food scraps, and chemicals that go into your drains, and maintain your septic system if you have one
6. Eliminate sediment migration, erosion
7. Reduce/remove impervious surfaces
8. Grow oysters and floating gardens on piers
9. Monitor local construction sites, BMPs, and compliance with local laws (critical area, forest conservation, other)
10. Pick up after pets

*Reduce Erosion!*

*Cleaner Severn River!*

*Improve songbird, wildlife habitat!*

*Safer swimming!*

*Resolve wet basements, flooding!*

*Improved Crabbing, Fishing!*

*Reduce Mosquitoes!*

*Healthier marine life!*

**Contact Rusty Gowland at [rustygowland@gmail.com](mailto:rustygowland@gmail.com) for membership information!**

# 9. Ten Things That Our Members Do With Their Community Associations

*Our members leverage their impact through their community associations and relationships.*

1. Encourage the Community Association to become and remain an SRA member
2. Set an example with the 10 sustainable actions and circulate them to neighbors
3. Master Watershed Stewards course recruitment
4. SRA Membership recruitment
5. Distribute SRA education session notices, press releases, and project workday announcements
6. Perform a Stormwater Assessment Program in your community
7. Execute an Oyster Growing Program (if water privileged)
8. Execute a Floating Garden Program (if water privileged)
9. Annual, invasive species removal days
10. Subsidized Community Association septic maintenance program

**Contact Lee Meadows at [lee.meadows@comcast.net](mailto:lee.meadows@comcast.net) for information about community association involvement!**

# 10. Ten Things That Members Come Together to Do For The Severn River Watershed

1. Severn River Headwaters Coalition (Charlotte Lubbert)
2. Planning and Zoning/County/City watch (TBD)
3. River Monitoring and Compliance Reporting – (Tom Guay)
4. Jonas Green Park Public Access Showcase – (Ken Hatch)
5. Oyster Growing Program (Bob Whitcomb)
6. Floating Garden Program (TBD)
7. Project Clean Stream Dump Sites (TBD)
8. Project Clean Stream Trees For Sacred Places (Maureen Burt?)
9. Public Access Expansion (TBA)
10. SAV Farming Program (TBA)

# 11. SRA Technical Support Offerings

## *The SRA Provides Technical Support To It's Members in the Following Ways*

1. Monthly Education Meetings (John Wright)
2. On-Demand Education Materials (TBD)
3. Severn River Stewards Network for Personal Contacts to Assist (Lee Meadows)
4. Oyster Growing (Bob Whitcomb)
5. Floating Gardens (TBD)
6. Annual Scorecard Production and Interpretation (Andrew Muller, Rusty Gowland)
7. SRA Website Content (Kurt Riegel)
8. CEDS Training for Construction Site and BMP Inspection, Monitoring, and Maintenance (Richard Klein)

# 12. SRA Financial Support Offerings

*The SRA Provides Financial Support to it's Members in the Following Ways*

1. Community Association Stormwater Grants (Ann Jackson)
2. Use of Master Watershed Stewards and Coalition members for free and/or discounted services (Lee Meadows)
3. Stormwater rebate application assistance (Rusty Gowland)
4. Native Plant Nursery Discounts (TBD)
5. Septic System Maintenance Subsidies (Rusty Gowland)

# 13. SRA Officer Roles

1. President (Lynne Rockenbauch)
2. Vice President (Rusty Gowland)
3. Secretary (Bob Vom Saal)
4. Finance (Lee Meadows)

# 14. SRA Operational Roles

1. Community Development (News Feeds, and FB Page) (Tom Guay)
2. Web Site Master (Kurt Riegel)
3. Nominating Committee (John Wright, Maureen Burt, Lisa Bender)
4. Membership Drive (Rusty Gowland)
5. Strategy Development– (Rusty Gowland)
6. Community association POC (Lee Meadows)
7. SRA, WSA Member networking (Lee Meadows)
8. Audit Committee (Ann DeMajistre, Lynne Rockenbauch, Lee Meadows, TBD, TBD)
9. Social Events (TBD)