

The Severn River Log



SEVERN RIVER ASSOCIATION • BOX 146, ANNAPOLIS MD 21404 • severnriver.org • 443.569.3556 • APRIL 2010

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Anchorage Swim Club
Annapolis Conservancy Board
Annapolis Neck Peninsula Fed
Annapolis Roads Prop Ownrs Assn
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Bay Ridge Civic Association
Bay Ridge Trust Inc
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Belvoir Farms Homeowners Assn
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Ben Oaks Civic Association
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Brown's Pond Improvement Assn
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Bywater Church Crab Creek Assn
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Chesapeake Landing Condo
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Eastport Yacht Club
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Greater Odenton Impr Assn
Herald Harbor Citizens Assn
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Indian Hills Community Assn
Indian Landing Community Assn
Kensington Community Assn
Kilmarnock Homeowners Assn
Lake Forest Community Assn
Lindamoore Improvement Assn
Linstead Community Association
Maynadier Homeowners Assn
Murray Hill Residents Association
Olde Severna Park Improv Assn
Oyster Harbor Citizens Association
Palisades Civic Association
Pines Community Improv Assn
Point Field Landing Commun
Riverview Manor Commun Assn
Round Bay Community Assn
Rugby Hall Community Assn
Saefern Saddle & Yacht Club
Saltworks on Severn Citizens Assn
Severn Heights Improvement Assn
Severn River Garden Club
Severn River Swim Club
Severn Sailing Association
Severn School
Severna Forest Community Assn
Sherwood Forest
Shipleys Choice Community Assn
St John's College
Trollhaven Homeowners Assn
Venice Beach Citizens Assn
Wardour Improvement Assn
Wells Cove
West Annapolis Civic Assn
West Severna Park Commun Assn
Winchester on the Severn

Meetings of the Severn River Association are at 7 PM on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, at the Calvary Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Blvd, Annapolis MD 21401, free and open to the public – nice people dedicated to protecting, preserving and restoring the Severn River watershed!

Can Individuals Fix the Severn River?

For decades people have worked by themselves and through their governments to limit pollution and end practices that harm the environment.

While both private and public efforts have brought some victories, we have had very little success even in halting the decline of the Severn River and the Chesapeake Bay, let alone repairing and restoring them to their former healthy state.

Yes, the Severn River Association (SRA) is active in the public policy arena, but this year it is mounting special efforts to empower individuals to achieve results that have eluded governments for so long.

In this issue you will find descriptions of some of those special efforts, ones that we hope will achieve what this watershed organization has long strived for – but that governments are seemingly unable to accomplish.

From oyster gardening, to rainscaping, to cleanup projects in our watershed, to efforts to reduce nitrogen-bearing effluents from septic tanks, to restoration and repair projects in our communities – SRA is here to encourage and facilitate direct action by individuals working together for our River.

Communities can also act together, as an article here on our Stormwater Action Fund describes. So that we can knit our individual actions together for greatest effect, we're making another appeal to you and your community association either to join SRA for the first time, or to renew your existing membership.

We need you and your neighbors, with your energy and creativity, to restore the health of our Severn River watershed.

Time's a'wastin'!



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– Kurt Riegel

Rainscaping: Slow Your Water

What's a simple way to make a big difference for the Severn River and the Bay? Slow your water! Keep runoff water on your site, through one of the hot, new techniques, which are called rainscaping.

Rainscaping is a "catch all" term for landscaping techniques that hold and filter the water that falls on your home or business, so that it can be purified and cleaned. Runoff water carries lots of nasty stuff: fertilizers, pesticides, automobile wastes, air pollution, etc.

Nobody wants that in our river! Using one or more simple methods, you can capture that water, slow it down, cool it off and make it much healthier before it reaches our waterways.

The easiest way to "slow your water" is to capture it before it can cause problems in a rain barrel, on a green roof,



or with a landscaping feature such as:

- rain garden
- swale or vegetated strip
- permeable pavers/other techniques

Our November SRA speaker, Zora Lathan, brought a wealth of information on her RainScaping campaign. SRA and dozens of others are cosponsors of this outreach effort. Find more on her helpful web site: rainscaping.org

Please attend future SRA monthly meetings for more information and examples of simple, inexpensive ways

to protect the Severn River and its watershed. And resolve to add a rainscaping feature to your yard this year!

– *Thistle A. Cone*

Special Incentives to Rainscape!

Anne Arundel County has a tax credit up to \$10,000 for implementing rainscaping practices. Contact the Office of Planning and Zoning or rainscaping.org for more information.

The tax credit is for 10% of your cost, each year for five years, totaling 50%. You must apply within 45 days of installing your rainscaping feature, and annually thereafter.

Native trees are great for rainscaping, and Maryland residents can get coupons for \$25 off the purchase of a tree costing \$50 or more. Print a coupon and check the eligible tree list at trees.maryland.gov

President's Column

SRA is excited to be a source of ideas and expertise to save your property and the Severn from slow but sure destruction caused by storm water. As the SRA President, I have initiated a whirlwind of activity to empower you and your community. Our monthly program objective was to ignite your interest in SRA's mission and motivate you to protect and preserve the river. I'm delighted to report that many new people are getting involved because our series of highly motivated experts has been presenting ideas each month on our theme "What individuals as property owners and volunteers can do" to help by reducing environmental impact on the Severn.

We began with the Marylanders Grow Oysters Program (MGO) described in the last issue. (Past issues of the SRA Log are available at severnriver.org) A monthly Oyster Care newsletter is e-mailed to 250 volunteers participating in the Program to remind them how to care for the oyster spat in their cages and to alert them to next steps. All winter we've communicated frequently with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to pick a permanent site to plant the spat and form an oyster reef. DNR has officially designated the entire Severn an oyster sanctuary, and we're negotiating with the Corps of Engineers for one of their recently-constructed substrate bars for SRA to use in planting the MGO oysters. We're also working out how to gather 3/4 million oyster spat and plant them precisely.

We followed up in September with a presentation by representatives of the County Department of Health on the state-subsidized program to upgrade septic tanks with nitrogen-reducing technology. Septic tanks may be the source of 30% of the nitrogen entering the Severn, so it's up to us to reduce this by upgrading our tanks. Bay Restoration Funds (from the "flush tax") were supposed to help,

but they're mostly spent or diverted to balance the budget, so we're on our own to do what's right for the River. The Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) administers the program and announced that future grants will be based on household income, so don't expect financial help soon from the State. Also, Julie Winters spoke about pet waste stations and keeping bacteria and nutrients from leaching into the River.

In November Zora Lathan taught us about the art of "rainscaping." This approach to managing storm water captures all rain water for irrigation and infiltration into the soil. Rain barrels, rain gardens, native plants, proper fertilizing techniques, and composting are more environmentally friendly than simply having an entire yard covered in grass. The goal is to minimize storm water leaving properties, reducing erosion and the discharge of pollutants into the river – storm water being the largest source. Again "doubling up on speakers," a Master Gardener explained their resources and germane literature was provided by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) and the MD Department of Agriculture.

We concluded 2009 with seasonal social time at our December meeting, with environmentally inspiring gifts displayed by Susan Hartsfield.

Monthly meetings are officially business meetings of our large Board of Directors. We also fit in programs to educate and motivate us to the many opportunities for action that we have. We hope they have given you ideas to implement in 2010.

Our speakers' theme for the next few months is "What our communities can do to help the River." SRA took the first step by budgeting 2010 funds to seed the development of designs for community-led storm water improvements. January speakers described



how they might help us to identify storm water problems and design solutions in our sub-watersheds. We heard from church leaders about solving storm water issues caused by impervious surfaces like church parking lots, and from a community that has successfully tackled their worst pollution source. Later in the spring, we'll learn about Clean Marinas and Operation Clearwater, and we'll target a sub-watershed with our volunteers during our annual creek cleanup, Project Clean Stream on Saturday, April 10.

WOW! Did anyone expect SRA to be so active in bringing experts each month to present so many subjects to watershed citizens? If you've missed the excitement, there are plenty of upcoming opportunities to help, whether or not you attend our meetings – first Project Clean Stream, and then oyster planting effort in June (we may need a convoy of work boats). Next fall we plan a non-native plant cleanup and maybe a living shoreline planting.

Please let me know if you need contact information for any speaker we've presented thus far so that you can make one significant contribution this year to reducing your impact on the River and the Bay. We'd love to hear from individual property owners or community leaders who want to get involved. Whether it's to organize your community's native planting effort, or to install a new rain garden, or a storm water restoration plan, please think of SRA as your ally and resource.

– Bob Whitcomb

Our Failures and Hopes

The Severn, plagued with enormous amounts of pollution each time it rains, becomes less and less resilient to unrelenting abuse. Why have we failed so miserably at saving the Severn and, for that matter, the Bay? Why is an evolved society with educated people committed to quality-of-life goals, so inept at controlling pollution?

As a nation, we had the wisdom to create the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), but political will to follow through to achieve its goals has never quite materialized. EPA has been ineffective at policing polluters, and we have watched the Bay and its tributaries steadily degrade together with a once vibrant maritime industry.

Our raised voices resulted in Chesapeake 2000 (C2K), an agreement by Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and DC to restore the health of the Bay and its living resources – and we walked away patting ourselves on the back. “Job well done,” we thought, but unfortunately C2K has failed to deliver.

In the wake of the C2K failure, the challenge is even greater with state and federal governments now facing massive deficits. Greater political willpower is now needed for following through on restoration. The headlines trumpeting politicians’ intent give us hope, but the Severn River’s health depends on stringent enforcement of tighter pollution standards.

We know the fundamental needs: larger and more effective public sewage systems, modern stormwater controls, and upgraded private septic systems. Billions of dollars will be required, and we hope to muster the necessary political will, but how do we ensure success this time?

The SRA, with its mission to protect



the river, has seen frustration among its members. Are we too tough on each other or not tough enough on the issues? The truth is that we need EVERY voice to be raised for conservation efforts to be effective. We cannot depend upon business as usual since recent history proves that government is unreliable in honoring its environmental pledges and promises to spend money where it is needed.

If the Severn is going to emerge from this era of being a mere depository for pollution, we must depend upon each other to generate fresh and effective approaches to save the Severn. Our hope can become reality if we work together and amplify our voices.

– Betsy Love

Missing: SRA Board Members

Community Associations that are members of SRA have a seat on the Board of Directors, but many have neglected to designate their community's representative or, if they have, such designees are inactive.

If you would like to serve in that role, please check our web site at

severnriver.org

for how to find if your community is represented, and how you might step up to the plate personally.

Call for Nominations

The Nominating Committee of the Severn River Association (SRA) seeks to identify capable individuals who are interesting in serving as an Officer or an Elected Director of SRA starting in June 2010.

Can you help in nominating such persons?

We seek nominations for all Officer slots and at least four Elected Director slots. You may nominate either yourself or another person.

It is hoped and expected that some incumbents will indicate a willingness to be elected to serve next year.

Complete information on SRA, the duties and responsibilities of officers and directors, can be found on the SRA web site, severnriver.org.

Member Community Associations have a seat on the SRA Board of Directors which is filled by the community, so they are not elected.

Please respond with information that will be helpful to the Nominating Committee, such as the nominee’s contact information, experience, interests, and special expertise as they relate to SRA's mission and activities.

E-mail address and telephone numbers are below.

nominating@severnriver.org

SRA's Nominating Committee members are:

- Kurt Riegel 410.507.2999
- Bob vom Saal 410.987.4476
- Charlotte Lubbert 410.991.8855
- Bob Whitcomb 410.849.3072

AA League of Conservation Voters

Anne Arundel County has the first local chapter of the Maryland League of Conservation Voters (MD LCV). It will help make county politicians accountable for their voting record and policies regarding the environment.

The intent is to make county politicians more aware that symbolic political support for the environment will no longer be enough. Their actions will be watched carefully by this new 501(c)(4) nonprofit volunteer organization.

The Anne Arundel County Chapter of MD LCV Steering Committee is composed of Democrats, Republicans and Independents from the county who share a dedication to local environmental progress. The members of this committee are:

- Bob Gallagher, Board Chair of the West/Rhode Riverkeeper
- Kinsey Potter, Board of the South River Federation
- Richard D'Amato, Former member of the Maryland House of Delegates
- Ann Fligsten, Land Use Attorney and Founder of Growth Action Network
- Kent McNew, Founder and Board Chair, Eastern Petroleum
- Eliot Powell, President, Whitehall Development
- Tim Reyburn, President/Owner of Ticoscen, Inc.; President of Russett Community
- Elvia Thompson, President, Stellar Presentations, Inc.; Founder of Annapolis Green.com
- Marcia Verploegen Lewis, Board of Maryland LCV

Just a Reminder

If you or your community are not current members of the Severn River Association, please see Page 7 of this *SRA Log*, or our web site at severnriver.org. We want and need you as a supporting and active member!

More information regarding the new AA Chapter of Maryland LCV is at

mdlcv.org/county-chapters



Volunteers are being recruited to help the AA Chapter of MD LCV research local environmental issues, political candidates and the voting behavior of politicians in office.

– Don Morris-Jones



Restoration

The Severn Riverkeeper Restoration Program started with a bang at the beginning of 2010. The Clements Creek Restoration Project, to stop the heavy flow of sediment and nutrients into Clements Creek and the Severn River, was completed. This is the first of many projects that the Severn Riverkeeper hopes to sponsor to stop the twin killers of the river.

Fred Kelly, the Severn Riverkeeper, obtained a \$450,000 grant from the federal Stimulus Package for the Clements Creek Project. Sara Caldes, a member of the Riverkeeper team, spent countless hours overcoming bureaucratic hurdles to secure funding from MD Department of the Environment.

Anne Pearson, Richard Falk, and Bob Whitcomb had laid the groundwork by convincing Carriage Hills residents, whose property we needed to pass through to get to the work site, that the project was beneficial to both them and the river.

The project is another of Keith Underwood's masterful Regenerative Stormwater Conveyance Systems. He supervised the project, spending many hours atop the heavy equipment. Ted Gattino and Keith worked closely with the property owners to ensure their continuing cooperation.

The Clements Creek Restoration Project has the bonus of saving Saefern residents the cost of dredging their harbor basin every few years. Recent dredgings cost Saefern close to \$100,000.

“The Severn Riverkeeper Restoration Program is the best hope for stopping the heavy sediment and nutrient loads that are killing the river. We will sponsor as many restoration projects as it takes to make the Severn safe for swimming for our children,” said Fred Kelly.

– Sara Caldes

SRA Centennial



The Severn River Association, founded April 29, 1911, is nearly 100 years old!

In preparation for the 100th anniversary of the Severn River Association, we are collecting old photos, documents, logs and other historic information.

We plan to use the material in a documentary film that will tell the story of the nation's oldest river association.

If you have such material and you are willing to share, please contact me at 410-293-6872 or

chesbayblues@gmail.com

– Howard Ernst

Published by The Severn River Association. We welcome contributed articles, letters, op-ed pieces and photos for publication to:

Newsletter Editor: Kurt Riegel
editor@severnriver.org

Membership Letter

March 2010

Dear Fellow Watershed Resident:

The Severn River continues to suffer mightily from too many impacts that we have created. I say we, because there is too much stormwater runoff from our homes and neighborhoods, carrying sediment, pollutants, and bacteria into the river and Chesapeake Bay. Individual and community actions are needed to stop sediment and other pollutants flowing into the River. Please renew your membership today and learn about opportunities for communities to help improve the River.

The Severn River Association is leading the way to help residents reduce their environmental impact on our watershed. SRA has organized major spring cleanups for the last four years to remove tires, old junk, and trash from creeks feeding the Severn. Most recently, we have recruited over 250 volunteers to grow oyster spat at their piers, as part of a major effort to restore oyster reefs on the River.

We continue to use our monthly meetings to feature speakers demonstrating techniques for reducing bacteria, nitrogen, sediment and other harmful substances that are carried by stormwater runoff into the River.

This is a call for communities to join our effort. We are asking all communities in the Severn River Watershed to join the SRA in 2010. And we welcome individual memberships and donations to our non-profit organization.

Won't you support us by sending in your dues? We need your participation, so we can make progress towards restoring our river to its official designation as a Scenic River. The newly simplified dues schedule means that you may join either as an Individual or as an Organization, and select whether you want to be a Regular, Patron, or Benefactor Member:

	Person	Organization
Regular	\$ 25	\$ 55
Patron	\$ 50	\$ 125
Benefactor	\$ 125	\$ 200

Again, please join the SRA in 2010 and support the restoration of our wonderful Severn River. And I look forward to hearing how you can help your river.

Bob Whitcomb
President

Comprehensive Rezoning in AA County

Following adoption of the 2009 General Development Plan (GDP) last fall, the Office of Planning and Zoning began the Comprehensive Re-Zoning process. (CRZ)

Comprehensive re-zoning occurs generally every 10-12 years. Any re-zoning should support the GDP and its principles. The GDP made a number of land use changes that are not rezoning, but can pave the way for rezoning.

For example in the GDP a certain parcel was changed from “residential” to “commercial.” This is not a change in zoning but during the CRZ process the owner of this parcel may apply for commercial zoning of various types.

During CRZ, any property owner may ask for a re-zoning from one category to another – often the application will be for an “up-zoning” that will make the permitted use of the property more intense.

Examples of up zoning in residential land would be from R-1 (one house

per acre) to R-5 (5 houses/acre) or to R-15 (15 dwellings/acre) Outside of the CRZ process, any zoning changes are called “piecemeal rezoning” and are discouraged by law. Over 200 applications are pending, received from Dec 2009 - Feb 2010.

Applications will be evaluated first by the Office of Planning and Zoning against the criteria set in the GDP. The Planning Advisory Board will then hold hearings on re-zoning requests.

Applicants will be notified of the property's recommendation before a re-zoning bill is introduced to the County Council for hearings and a Council vote. Members of Council supporting additional zoning changes may amend the final bill.

Comprehensive Zoning information is in the 2009 GDP (Final Draft, April 2009), “Relationship of the Land Use Plan and Comprehensive Zoning” (Chap.7, P.114) with the criteria used by the Office of Planning and Zoning in evaluating CRZ Applications.



For additional information, please contact Lynn Miller or Cindy Carrier in the Long Range Planning Division, Office of Planning and Zoning, at (410) 222-7432; or Growth Action Network of AA County, growthaction.net

– Ann Fligsten

Operation Clearwater

Operation Clearwater is in our 36th year! Now that spring is here, can the swimming season be far away? It’s time to plan for this summer’s water quality monitoring program.

We will supply swimmers and other recreational water users again this year with valuable information on the bacteriological quality of their water. We will again be monitoring the group of bacteria known as enterococci, indicator organisms shown to be the best predictor of the likelihood of contracting gastrointestinal illness from swimming.

We sample community beaches and

marinas throughout the Severn River watershed, collecting water samples on Wednesday mornings, and providing data on counts of enterococci by Thursday afternoons.

Samples are collected by people at Anne Arundel Community College and are processed at its Environmental Center and data will be posted at severnriver.org.

One week’s sample costs \$27, and communities may sign up for the full 14 week program (May 20–August 18) for \$378, or they may elect sampling every other week for \$189. Applications will not be sent by mail, but are available



from SRA's website, severnriver.org.

Please contact me with questions, email clearwater@severnriver.org or work 410.777.2842 or home 410.647.6254.

– Sally Hornor

Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy

The Watershed Stewards Academy (WSA) is an initiative of Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works and Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center.

It trains community leaders, called “Master Watershed Stewards” (MWS), to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater runoff from private property in Anne Arundel County.

WSA engages local communities by identifying, training and supporting volunteer MWS. The MWS role is to engage and educate citizens, businesses and organizations within their sub-watersheds or neighborhoods on relevant environmental issues.

They facilitate the reduction of private pollution sources (pet waste, lawn fertilizer, etc.) and coordinate small-scale restoration on private property such as installation of rain gardens, green roofs, rain barrels and septic retrofits, as well as large-scale restoration efforts such as bio-retention areas or shoreline



Watershed Stewards Juliet Page and Pat Murphy install a rain barrel



Steve Barry, director of Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, discusses rain gardens with the entire Master Watershed Stewards class

restorations on community property.

During the first class in Spring 2009, the MWS participated in two community restoration projects a large community stormwater pond retrofit and a community rain garden.

At the Severna Park Community Center, the stewards participated in planting a community rain garden and installing 2 rain barrels.

In 2009, Anne Arundel County WSA trained 32 Master Watershed Stewards, who collectively have engaged 485 volunteers, planted 19,325 sq ft of forest, created 25,650 sq ft of bioretention, planted 3875 native plants, distributed 315 rain barrels, removed 6950 sq ft of invasive species, installed 6 pet waste stations and one BAT septic system, and stenciled 25 storm drains.

We are currently training 21 more AA MWS and three from other counties who hope to bring WSA to their county.

For additional information about the Watershed Stewards Academy, please contact me at Coordinator. 410.222.3822, setgen@aacps.org

arlingtonecho.org

– Suzanne Kilby Etgen



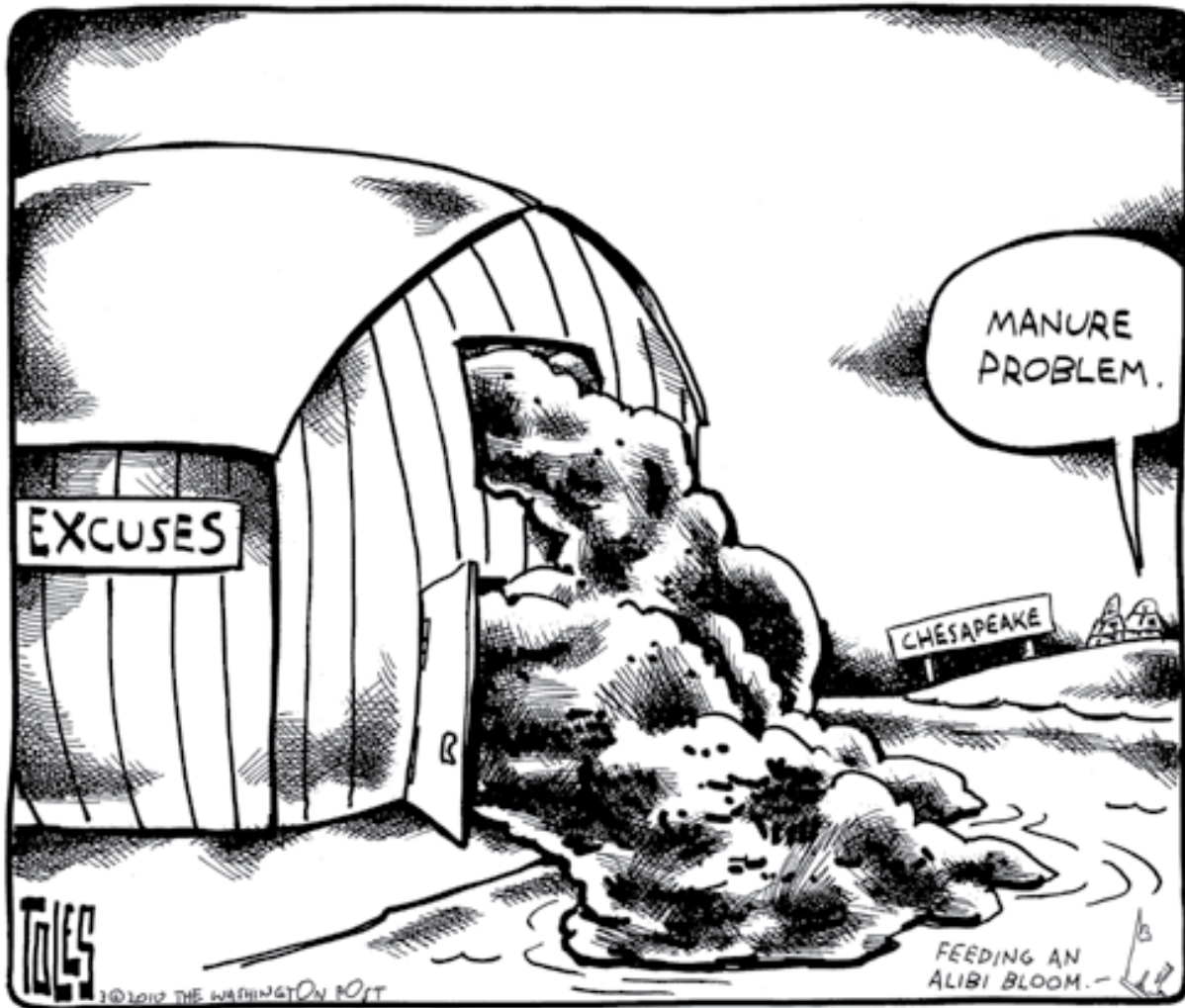
Treasurer's Report

Ending Dec 31	2009	2008	Change
ASSETS = LIABILITIES	\$72,645	\$62,521	\$10,125
Ordinary Income	\$13,618	\$50,550	-\$36,932
Ordinary Expense	\$11,176	\$39,294	-\$28,119
Net Ordinary Income	\$ 2,442	\$11,255	-\$ 8,813
Other Income	\$ 7,683	-\$10,094	\$17,777
NET INCOME	\$10,125	\$ 1,161	\$ 8,964



This is a condensed version of the full report, which is available to members from treasurer@severnriver.org

– Bob vom Saal



SRA Stormwater Action Fund

Empowering Member Communities

SRA's Board of Directors approved its new Stormwater Action Fund (SAF) program, together with a selection process and criteria.

This program will assist member communities wanting to develop improved stormwater management in their community – by helping them to develop plans on which to base proposals to funding agencies.



- Slow stormwater runoff to reduce erosion and increase infiltration
- Plant native species
- Select species with an ability to absorb nitrogen and sequester phosphorus and other pollutants
- Repair eroded streambeds or shorelines
- Restore natural shorelines where stormwater reaches the river
- Remove non-native invasive plant species.

Communities can retain professional services to design a qualifying project and prepare formal plans that might be required by funding and permitting agencies.

We hope that our member communities will take advantage of the Stormwater Action Fund, and significantly restore marine life in our beloved river.

Requests for matching funds should meet the criteria in the right hand column.

Please go to severnriver.org for details and a full description of the SAF.

SRA's point of contact for this program is Betsy Love, (917) 939-9409, betsyl@truenorthintl.com

Evaluation Criteria

- The clarity of the description of the problem that the community intends to address.
- A watershed assessment plan showing geographic location, slope, drainage, soil type, etc.
- The expected impact the proposed project on addressing the stormwater source.
- The community holds a reserve equal to the funds being requested from SRA.
- The extent of community action to engage its citizens in the project.
- Demonstrated in-kind support.
- Project visibility and the extent it will educate and inform community residents of best practices for stormwater management.
- Must be an SRA Member Community and recognize SRA's sponsorship.

Stormwater is a notorious source of water pollutants, including excess nutrients, sedimentation, and toxins.

The SAF program can help member communities by providing up to \$1000 in matching funds.

Stormwater management designs so developed will support the community's grant proposal for reducing the generation of stormwater, and managing that which is generated.

For example, a community might want to design a project having one or more of the following approaches:



Join the Severn River Association

All membership donations are fully tax deductible since SRA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization:

	Person	Organization
Regular	\$ 25	\$ 55
Patron	\$ 50	\$ 125
Benefactor	\$ 125	\$ 200

For convenience, you may use the Checkout button on the SRA web site at severnriver.org
 Voluntary contributions in larger amounts are gratefully accepted.

Alternatively, you may handle this by mail, sending in this form with your check to:

The Severn River Association (Telephone 443 569 3556 to leave voicemail)
P.O. Box 146, Annapolis, MD 21404-0146

Name:

Mailing address:

Telephone number(s):
 (specify home/work/cell)

E-mail address(es):

Type of membership selected:

For Community Associations (Please provide the Community Association's Representative's name who will be on the SRA Board of Directors, and their phone, address, and email):

Can you volunteer on SRA programs, projects, outreach or governance? YES NO (circle below)

Zoning & Variances	Legislation & Regulation
Membership	Volunteer Coordination
Restoration & Other Projects	Oyster Grower
Officer or Board Member	Outings and/or Social
Land/Water Issues	Publications
Enforcement/legal action	Public Access to Water
Education	Other:

What programs & actions do you think are needed to better protect and restore the Severn River, and other comments?