

Sediment & Stormwater Threats

Dire threats to the Severn River watershed are seemingly nearly everywhere, but a path to recovery is opening.

On March 10 and May 5 nearly 60 volunteers combed the Severn watershed in search of opportunities to curb pollution that has so degraded our River. What they found was appalling.

On 200 acres of construction-disturbed lands, 59% failed to benefit from full compliance with County and State erosion control requirements. These denuded soils were releasing three- to ten-times more sediment pollution than the Severn can tolerate.

The volunteers also found a 43% failure rate among our most effective measures for keeping pollution washed from streets, parking lots and rooftops, from the Severn and her 150 miles of tributaries.

95% Vegetative Cover is Key To Halting Construction Site Sediment Pollution.

SRA president Duane Wilding and other SRA members met with County officials on April 30 to discuss the problem of excessive construction site sediment pollution. The County claims that the lack of more effective erosion control lies in the way State standards are written.

Standards taking effect in January 2013, clearly require better control, quickly clearing a site and using earth-moving equipment to bring soil levels up to the rough grade for construction to begin. Disturbed soils would be treated with a thick layer of straw mulch and the grass seed. The site would be treated again until all soils reach at least 95% vegetative cover.

Frankly, we see no reason why the two

dozen companies developing sites in our watershed cannot achieve 95% vegetative cover NOW! After all, every dollar they spend keeping their mud on their land saves a hundred dollars in damages to OUR River.

It is for this reason that we are calling upon all Severn River watershed residents to join with us in urging these companies to voluntarily comply with the 95% vegetative cover requirement. Here's how you can help.

First, whenever you see exposed soil on a construction site take a minute to report it at ceds.org/sraesp

Second, consider placing one of SRA's "Exposed Soil = Pollution" signs on your lawn.

Stormwater is the Largest Pollution Source, and Poor Maintenance Causing Pollution To Rise!

Rainwater runoff from streets, buildings, parking lots and other impervious surfaces is the largest source of the nutrients fouling the Severn, making the River and her tidal creeks unfit for many aquatic organisms and occasionally causing fish kills, odors or other nuisances.

Fortunately, about a third of the impervious surfaces in our watershed drain to ponds, infiltration pits, Rain Gardens or other stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs). These BMPs could be keeping thousands of pounds of pollution out of the Severn each year. However, a preliminary survey last Fall indicated that, depending upon BMP type, a third to 100% were failing.

On May 5 a large number of volunteers learned how to assess the health of our most effective BMPs, known

The Severn River Association (SRA) usually meets at 7 PM on the third Tuesday of each month at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville MD 21108, free and open to the public – nice people preserving and restoring the Severn River watershed! Exceptions, like March at Herald Harbor, are noted on the SRA web site severnriver.org

as Rain Gardens or bioretention facilities. These BMPs can remove 60% to 90% of the pollutants washed from impervious surfaces. Volunteers found that 43% of these most effective Severn BMPs were suffering from a lack of maintenance.

BMP failures are due in large part to a decision made in 2001 to cut back the County's stormwater BMP inspection staff by 86%. The County's sole remaining inspector can evaluate about a thousand of the 11,000 Anne Arundel BMPs annually. At a minimum, each BMP should be inspected every three years. Over time the lack of inspections has led to a steady deterioration in our stormwater BMP infrastructure.

If rebuilt today, the 2,000 plus BMPs in the Severn watershed would cost \$103 million. But the reality is the County could never afford to rebuild these BMPs.

SRA has called upon the County Executive & Council to restore storm-
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President's Column

The theme of this year's annual meeting was "Thinking and Acting Locally" and in many ways that sums up SRA's theme for the last 100 plus years.

It reminds me of the health conscious saying that "you are what you eat." The human body needs air, water, and nourishment. So the intake of those ingredients is what our bodies use for metabolism and for making new blood and tissue cells. What we eat or lack thereof of micronutrients, vitamins, etc. directly affects our health and well-being.

In a larger holistic scale, the same holds for the Severn River watershed. The condition of the Severn River is dependent on what we feed it. Too much sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants create problems. So what

do we do? We try to control what goes into the Severn River and its tributaries. How do we do that?

One of the main areas to control is stormwater runoff. Most of the newer developments in the watershed have stormwater management controls. Active construction sites are also required to have erosion and sediment controls in place to prevent sediment discharge from the sites.

Do they work? Yes and no. Yes, if they were installed properly and maintained. No, if they were not installed properly and/or not being maintained properly.

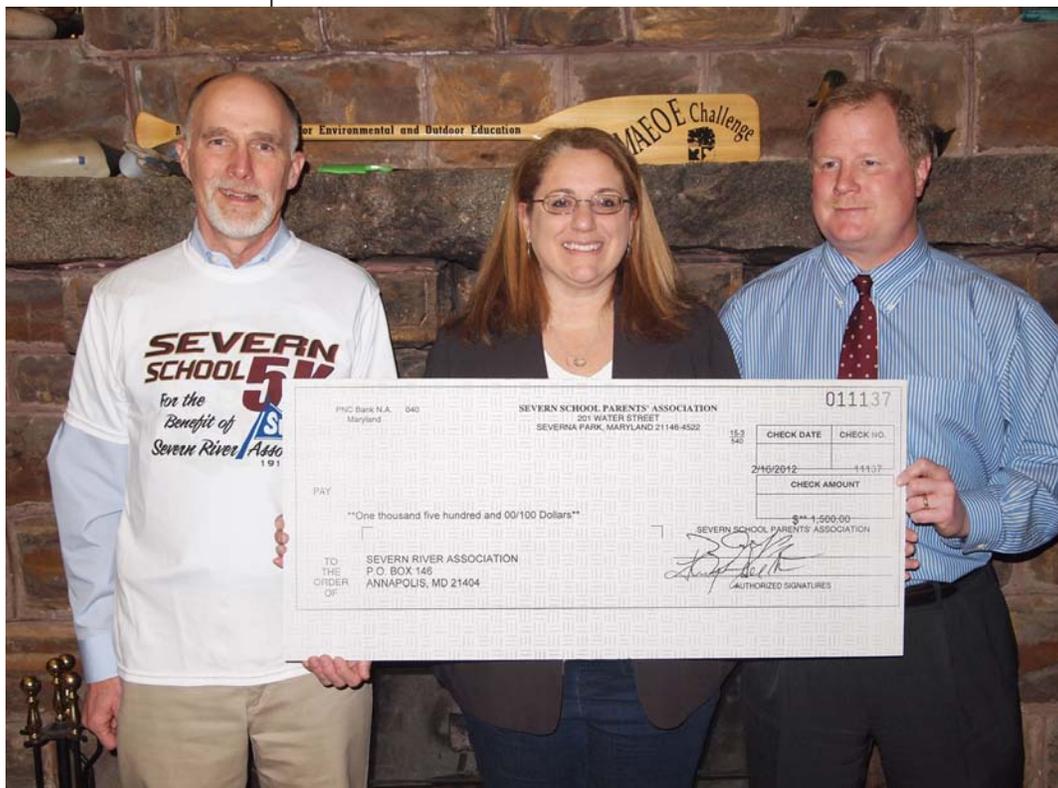
The watershed audit done by CEDS in the fall of 2011 showed that many construction sites have excessive bare soil and that existing stormwater man-

agement systems, referred to as Best Management Systems (BMPs) are not being maintained. So given those startling findings, the SRA worked with CEDS to initiate a program this spring to use volunteers to inspect BMPs and educate and work with the owners to restore the systems so they can function as designed to remove pollutants. Richard Klein from CEDS presented the results of this program at our annual meeting.

We encourage all SRA members and watershed residents to join us in this program to help make "what goes into the River" the best it can be.

This year we also conducted a Strategic Goal Setting workshop which got feedback from members on SRA's priorities and will serve to direct and guide our future programs and initiatives. By the time you read this, I will no longer be President so please give support and assistance to the new officers and directors.

— Duane Wilding



Duane Wilding accepts a \$1500 donation from the Severn School for SRA's participation in its 5K run event.

(Continued from "Sediment", P.1)

water inspection funding. We would appreciate your urging the below to increase stormwater inspection funding:

- County Executive John R. Leopold
exleop00@aacounty.org
- Councilman John J. Grasso
john.grasso@aacounty.org
- Councilman James Benoit
james.benoit@aacounty.org
- Councilman Dick Ladd
dladd@aacounty.org
- Councilman Chris Trumbauer
ctrumbauer@aacounty.org

Thanks to our Volunteers

We thank these volunteers for making our March 10 and May 5 surveys a success:

Al Todd, Alyce Ortuzar, Ann Jackson, Barbara Evans, Bess Trout, Bob Murphy, Bob vom Saal, Bonnie Persinger, Brad Knopf, Burnell Vincent, Catherine Langston, Charlotte Lubbert, Christina Vieglais, Claire Muerdter, David Alan Tibbetts, Dick Spencer, Dinny White, Dory Tate, Duane Wilding, Erica Hahn, Gene Montgomery, Gil Dissen, Janice Wiles, Jen Wijetunga, Jennifer Haughton, Jenny Reed, Joanna Conti, John Dawson, John Wright, Josh Mah, Julie Rob-

erts, Kelly Fieldhouse, Kit Gage, Lara Mulvaney, Laura Mehiel, Lorraine von Saal, Lynne Rockenbauch, Michael Robinson, Mridula Gupta, Nora Terres, Pam Wood, Patricia Russell, Phelps Kelley, Rich Maranto, Richard Klein, Rick Kissel, Rusty Gowland, Sharon Schroer, Siobhan Percey, Stacy Meyers, Suzanne Etgen, Thistle Cone, Tom Zolper

Would You Care To Spend An Hour or So Accelerating Severn River Restoration? If so send an e-mail to Help@ceds.org with "Severn Volunteer" in the subject line. These are examples of restoration actions we hope to pursue in the future.

- Checking construction sites for mud pollution control;
- Educating community associations about restoration opportunities;
- Evaluate stormwater BMPs for maintenance needs;
- Keeping Rain Gardens working by replacing mulch;
- Find other illegal discharges;
- Maintaining vegetation in Rain Gardens and other BMPs;
- Manage a social networking effort;
- Clean up trash and other debris;
- Participating in rallies and other public protests;
- Research and write articles about River enhancement opportunities;
- Review proposed development plan for water protection measures;
- Surveying stream channels and shorelines for pollution sources;
- Walk sewer lines to find sewage releases;
- Web site maintenance;
- Write to elected officials and other decision-makers; and
- Write to developers on opportunities to enhance environmental protection measures.

Register for this event with Rklein@ceds.org, telephone 410-654-3021.

– Richard Klein

Oyster News

This year's young oysters have been growing on the nutrients in the upper 18" of the water column.

Thanks to Valeria Culotta, Sally Hornor, and Don Cebulski for conducting our first spring survey of Severn caged spat. The good news is that viable spat were found at all locations, with survival rates 60% and higher except at Olde Severna Park. Salinity levels are generally high enough to grow oysters except in the upper reaches of creeks near their fresh-water sources. Most spat sizes ranged from 0.4 to 1.0 cm. We had been fearful that our spat would not survive last fall's tropical storms.

This year's planting will be Saturday June 2 on the same reef we've planted our spat the last two years. Those with access to small boats, with less than 3' draft, should bring their oysters and join us from 2 to 3:30 pm. Please plant your oysters in a row about 20' wide along the channel side of the 3 markers. We'll be taking pictures and welcoming oyster growers who have nursed oyster spat to add to the SRA oyster sanctuary.

DNR's Chris Judy marked the SRA oyster sanctuary reef, just south of the Route 50 bridge near the entrance of Crouchs Pond (aka Winchester Pond) with three orange-flagged stick markers along the east edge of the reef.

If you can't make it on June 2, just plant your oysters anytime in June. Work with your Oyster Coordinator (email me your street address, and I'll put you in touch with him) to arrange for pickup of your oysters. Your cages will be left on your dock. You should clean and store them out of the water until new spat arrive next September.

– Bob Whitcomb, Chair
SRA Oyster Committee

Officers Elected

At the May SRA board meeting the following officers were elected for the 2012-13 administrative year.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| President | John Wright |
| 1st Vice President | Dinny White |
| 2nd Vice President | Bob Whitcomb |
| Treasurer | Lynne Rockenbauch |
| Communications Secretary | Tom Guay |

Nominations for at-large board members were also ratified for election at the annual meeting.

THE SEVERN RIVER ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 146
ANNAPOLIS, MD 21404



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Join the Severn River Association, memberships/donations tax deductible. SRA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

(circle membership category right)	Person	Organization
Regular	\$ 25	\$ 55
Patron	\$ 50	\$ 125
Benefactor	\$ 125	\$ 200

Use the Click and Join Checkout button on the SRA website at severnriver.org or send this form & check to:

The Severn River Association, P.O. Box 146, Annapolis, MD 21404-0146

Name:

Mailing address:

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

E-mail address(es):

Your Community or Organization if any:

For Community Association members, please provide the name of your Representative who will sit on the SRA Board of Directors, with their phone, address, and email):