

Invasive Phragmites Control Project

This year we continued an invasive phragmites control project on Plum Creek. A new group of "phrag fighters" assembled on a balmy fall day to re-treat areas previously attacked, also expanding on last year's progress.

Everyone got wet in a higher than normal tide and a few even took a dip in water that was remarkably warm.

A short canoe/kayak ride up the creek took us past large stands of cattails and pickerel weed to the site bordered on both sides by a fork of Plum Creek, meandering as it passes through a long stretch of wetland.

What a change! The patch previously treated to control phragmites, taking advantage of new-found sunlight, has recovered nicely to include a variety of native species like irises and cardinal flowers. Removing a "fence" of vegetation more than ten feet wide

created an expansive new view.

This SRA-sponsored event included community volunteers Mike Norman, Mary and Jim Searing, Ken Hatch with the Watershed Stewards Academy, and neighbors and friends like John from Edgewood, Dave and Linda Crump from Herald Harbor, Julie Fortier, Christina Vieglais (a repeat attendee) and my wife Joann. The local Wawa contributed to the lunch.

A special shout-out to the USNA Midshipman Action Group (MAG): Sabrina Reyes '14, Zachary Dannelly '16, Oheneba Duodu '13, Stephen Arceneaux '15 and Grant Genzman '14. High spirit and dedication was evident in their go-for-it attitude. Motivated midshipmen arrived and pitched in as if they were treating their own backyard. Michael Norman, a Research Assistant at Anne Arundel Community College applied the final touches.



Left to right: Mike Norman, Mike Robinson, Mary Searing; Grant Genzman and Sabrina Reyes of MAG.

The Severn River Association (SRA) 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!

severnriver.org

Mike's contributions were many and we couldn't have done it without him.

I really enjoyed the happy faces (see photo). Mucking around in mud can be fun! To all who could participate, thank you very much for your time and energy. You really made a difference and it is greatly appreciated.

A recent Capital article indicated that phragmites uses elevated nutrients to out-compete our own local species (only on the Eastern shore now). Not only has development and stormwater helped to establish phragmites and destroy native flora, we also feed invasive phragmites an unlimited buffet.

We look forward to continuing this and similar projects next year. The phragmites scourge will not go away on its own but with a continued effort like this can control, reduce, and eliminate it.

– Michael Robinson

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President's Column

Hurricane Sandy provided a lot of anxiety, and water, for all of us in the Severn River watershed. Through it all, your all-volunteer Severn River Association has been extremely busy these past months.

Thanks to the hundreds of volunteers who provided homes for the cages of oyster spat on docks all along the river and its tributaries, our distribution operation with 1350 cages was one of the largest in the Chesapeake region. The highly successful effort was coordinated by Bob Whitcomb in a very large undertaking of pickups, deliveries and other logistical challenges.

It was great to see all the people, old and young, coming to pick up the spat. Some came as families and showed the next generation, by example, that caring for our environment is important. You can view our Oyster Newsletter on our website and/or send us an email requesting the newsletter, to sraoysters@comcast.net

Our invasive species Phragmites eradication efforts on beautiful Plum Creek was highly successful (cover story.) Mike Robinson better known as "BioMike" led the group of volunteers and midshipman who worked on this project.

SRA's Stormwater inspections of community stormwater facilities (known as BMP's) have begun. Your SRA knows that many ponds and stormwater collection facilities in our watershed communities are in need of maintenance.

Maintaining existing "BMP's" can be the best thing we can do in the short term to help clean our river. Please contact me if you would like to have your community's BMP's inspected by our trained members.

We are very honored to have been



selected to receive the Sarah Carter 2012 Environment Award given by the Anne Arundel Democratic Central Committee. It is given to those organizations that have made significant contributions to improving the quality of life in our county.

Lastly we are in constant need of volunteers to help with our many projects. We now need several people (Interns) who would like to learn how to apply for grants. This is a great opportunity for someone who is looking for a career in the nonprofit world. Grant writers are always in high demand, so please contact me.

We are also in need of several folks to coordinate our Operation Clean Stream where different groups of volunteers target one of several creeks to remove trash. I REMEMBER THE FIRST OPERATION CLEAN STREAM' EFFORT AT THE HEADWATERS OF SALTWORKS creek, the number of tires was so large that we had to form a human chain up a very steep embankment, passing tires along the chain to an awaiting county dump truck .

– John Wright
president@severnriver.org

SRA Receives Sarah Carter Award

SRA received the Sarah Carter 2012 Environmental Award from the Anne Arundel County Democratic Central Committee. The award is given to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to improving the quality of life in our county.

Mrs. Carter was the first African American elected to the Anne Arundel County Council and was well known for her civic pride and volunteer work.

Horn Point Living Shoreline Completed

Two properties at the most exposed part of Horn Point where the Severn meets the Chesapeake, now have living shorelines thanks to John Flood and Chesapeake Bay Trust grants to SRA.

A failing timber bulkhead was replaced by a tidal marsh, stone breakwater, and clean sand fill planted with native cordgrass, salt hay, and switchgrass .

The completed shoreline is a demonstration site for the Chesapeake Bay Trust and conservation partners, and was used last August to announce an expansion of CBT's support for living shorelines (with public credit to SRA for this work).

These projects show how to convert old hardened shorelines to environmentally friendly shorelines that also offer better protection from wave action. We were delighted to work with John Flood on these two projects.

– Bob Whitcomb

Jonas Green Park

SRA's project to place seven interpretive signs at the park (see SRA Log, March 2012) is supported by Chesapeake Bay Trust, with partner organizations: Anne Arundel Department of Recreation and Parks, MD Dept. of Natural Resources, Friends of AA County Trails, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Anne Arundel Community College.

There will be signs to interpret the features and functions of the park's Rain Garden, Living Shoreline, Living Shoreline Habitat, Stormwater Pond Benefits, Stormwater Pond Habitat, Oyster Reef, and Nitrogen-Reducing Septic.

The Project Team is: Bob Whitcomb, project manager; Terry Peterson, graphic artist; Travis Jackson, text drafting; Drs. Sally Horner & Susan Lamont, editing and content; Scott Cooper, Spanish translations.

We plan to complete designs and manufacture signs this winter and install them some time thereafter.

– Bob Whitcomb

News Bits

SRA enters its 102th year working for the Severn River watershed.

The Reserve at Quiet Waters was voted down by the Annapolis Board of Appeals but may resurface later. The Village at Crystal Spring is unsettled over compliance with the Forest Conservation Act and other matters.

Al Johnston, known widely in Anne Arundel county for his expertise and work in planning, zoning and watershed protection, died at age 88.

SRA and AA county are exploring how they might work together to improve oversight and enforcement of stormwater management infrastructure, public and private.

Board of Public Works approved a permanent conservation easement against development of a sports complex in sensitive land near the Jabez Branch.

Most of us got through the hurricane season unscathed. It will take awhile to learn how well the Bay fared.

– Kurt Riegel

SRA Volunteer Opportunities

Grant Writing: SRA seeks volunteers to help us and member associations to seek grants. No experience is required, training will be provided by successful grant writers. We need only a commitment to the Severn River watershed and an ability to write clearly and concisely. Volunteers will spend approximately 2-4 hours per month.

Clean Stream Coordinators: SRA seeks two volunteer coordinators for its annual stream cleaning projects. The coordinator will work with the our Clean Stream leader and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's coordinator, about 2-4 hours a week from Jan-Apr, extra in March for the April cleanups.

Contact Lee Meadows, 410.849.3466
lee.meadows@comcast.net

Choose Clean Water

In fall 2012 SRA joined *Choose Clean Water Coalition*, an umbrella organization of the largest active groups restoring the Chesapeake Bay. It:

1. Recommended guidelines for the MD Nutrient trading credit program, to insure that the program will reduce pollution fairly and effectively.
2. Is opposing efforts to get Maryland counties to fund a lawsuit stopping EPA from implementing rules that would reduce pollution in the Bay.
3. Is setting its 2013 priorities in December. SRA proposed that priority should be government monitoring of existing BMP's and construction sites to insure proper maintenance. Our motion was supported by the Anacostia Riverkeeper, Audubon Naturalist Society, Maryland Conservation Council, and Mattawan Watershed Society.

– Lee Meadows



Living Shoreline in place at the conclusion of the Horn Point project.

Preserving Family Lands on the Severn

Preserving forests and other open spaces is critical to the health of the Severn River and our quality of life in Anne Arundel County (AAC).

Few people want to see their properties further developed, but financial challenges may force their hand. Some have a general inclination toward land preservation, but they also may want a strong financial incentive to give up their development rights.

Scenic Rivers Land Trust (SRLT) has been preserving land in AAC since 1988. It was originally founded as the Severn River Land Trust, and many past Severn River Association leaders influenced its development. SRLT works closely with willing landowners who want to voluntarily restrict further development of their properties through agreements known as easements.

An easement is a binding agreement that forever limits the development of a property according to very specific guidelines. It can remove all development rights, or allow room for limited expansion of an existing house or possibly the addition of a new structure. An easement is permanent; it forever conveys with the property deed.

Along with the personal goal of protecting in perpetuity a property they value, landowners can realize several financial incentives for placing an easement on their property. Easements can reduce estate taxes significantly, making it easier to keep land in the family. AAC waives a portion of annual property taxes on eased properties.

Easements that meet IRS requirements may result in income tax deductions. In rare cases, funding is available to purchase easements.

SRLT holds and manages easements

on 52 properties in AAC, protecting over 2,500 acres. The organization has just released a draft expansion and fundraising plan that would double the number of acres protected by 2015.

To learn more, contact SRLT Executive Director Rick Leader at 410-310-6541 and visit the SRLT web site at srlt.org

- Rick Leader
Rick@SRLT.org

Contributed Articles Wanted

We publish this SRA Log four times a year to inform and motivate our individual and organization members to keep working for our watershed.

Good articles, photographs, cartoons and other art are welcomed to its pages, especially from our members. Let us be a creative outlet for your insights into our watershed issues!

Editor: kurt.riegel@gmail.com

My Rivers

*My rivers, Lord, are not
clear gurgling brooks
tumbling down mountainsides ...
to dwell in shady nooks*

*Nor are they mighty torrents
swelled to overflow
plunging over concrete dams
to seek new depths below*

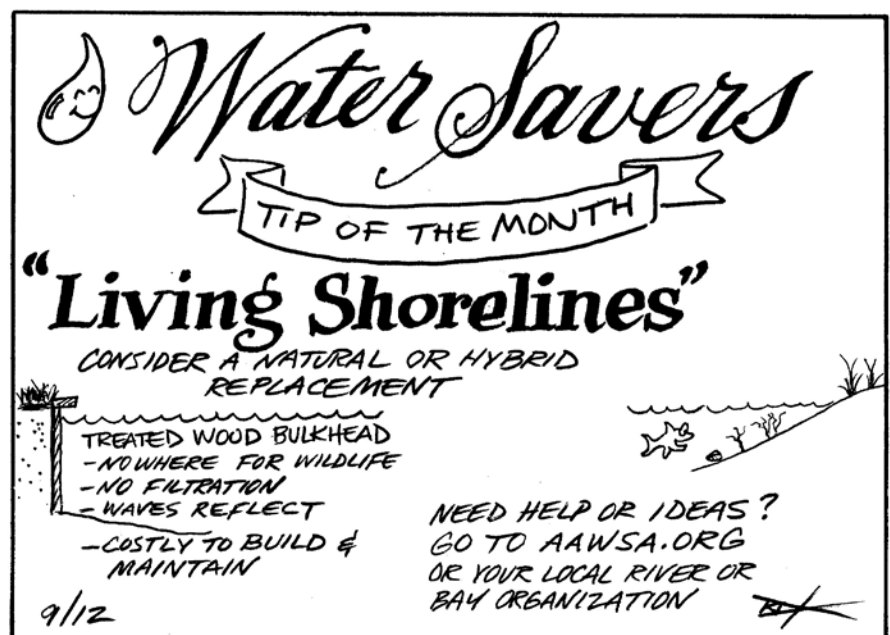
*My rivers reach like gentle hands
spreading fingers through level lands
nourished by endless ebb and flow of
tide feeding famished salt marsh by
their side*

*Their scent and sound and face
transport me to a sacred place
a place where time moves slow
a cherished place of long ago*

*To a sun-tanned child who knows
squish of creek mud 'tween bare toes
putt-putt of waterman's skiff in early
morn and the distant moan of a fog
horn*

*My rivers smell of life and death
of fish and crabs and brackish breath
My rivers are a part of me
They link me to eternity*

- by Ann Hennessy (1929-2008), lived near Rock Hall and the Chester River.



Oyster Growing Program Expands

The Severn River Association (SRA) sponsors the largest number of volunteer oyster growers participating in the State's Marylanders Grow Oysters Program.

This year's distribution of approximately 450 bags of spat filled 1,350 cages with baby oysters to grow and help clean the River.

We had seven key coordinators helping MD's DNR and the Oyster Recovery Partnership distribute all these bags of spat to volunteers.

ORP delivered the requested number of bags to:

Don Carren at Whitehall Marina, Kurt Karsten at Bay Ridge Marina, Thomas Lingle at Smith's Marina for Long Point, David Crump for Herald Harbor South, Charlotte Lubbert for Herald Harbor North, Billy Moulden at Sherwood Forest, and Lee Meadows at Saefern Marina.

Over 400 volunteers went to their assigned distribution point and picked

up the bags they requested (along with any new cages needed) and took them home to be placed safely in cages below their docks.

We thank Billy Moulden and Sherwood's kids for building and providing new cages for all of us who needed them. The young oysters will remain in these cages until next June when SRA and its growers plant them on a sanctuary oyster reef near the east end of the Route 50 Bridge.

Volunteer growers are the most important part of this program. They care for their "oyster babies" during their vulnerable first year, enabling them to form hardened shells and grow in an environment protected from predators.

By regularly cleaning the cages of sediment and vegetative growth, volunteer growers provide the best opportunity for the young oysters to get a healthy start to lives of cleaning the waters of the Severn and the Chesapeake Bay.

— Bob Whitcomb



Volunteers on the Severn preparing cages for the SRA oyster growing program.



Letters

The Severn River Association (SRA) is structured to be a mutually beneficial association, which truly listens to the needs of the communities along our Severn River.

The SRA directs its activities towards returning the Severn River to a sustainable level for safe swimming, fishing and boating activities.

I attended the October 16th meeting to hear a very interesting talk by Andrew Muller, oceanographer, of the U.S. Naval Academy.

It occurred to me, during his very informative presentation, that the communities around the Severn River receive a great deal of value from the very productive projects conducted by dedicated individuals, agencies and companies.

Just think what the Severn River Association could do for all of us if more communities participated and spread the word that the Severn River Association is the best investment they could make to increase the value and living standard of our communities.

Let's spread that word!

— Rob Muir
President, Saefern Community