



January 2009

Update from the Corsica River Conservancy (CRC) Board

Dear Members and Friends of the Corsica,

This is your semi-annual update on CRC's actions to help restore and conserve the Corsica River Watershed, in concert with our restoration partners at the municipal, county, state and federal levels. The Restoration Project is entering its fourth year and we continue to see real changes in the watershed that will lead to improved water quality and habitat. However, there is still much to be done and your help is needed more than ever. For an example, see the last item in this update.

The Community's interest and response continues to grow as does our CRC membership, now 425 strong! To those of you who responded to our various outreach efforts, we thank you for your support. For those of you just finding out about us, we ask that you visit us at www.corsicariverconservancy.org and join us in our mission to restore and preserve our watershed. Do you live in the watershed? There is a picture of the watershed on our website.

Highlights from the Past Six Months

Rain Gardens

Since Spring of 2007 through December 2008, Corsica River Conservancy has been working with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, currently with support through the Eastern Shore Resource Conservation and Development Council to install rain gardens at private residences in the Corsica River Watershed. To date, we have installed over 124 rain gardens and 20 rain barrels in the watershed and will be continuing to install more in 2009.

Every homeowner in the Watershed is eligible to receive a free rain garden, subject to availability of funding. For more information on rain gardens, go to our website's 'What We Do' page www.corsicariverconservancy.org. If you are interested in this program, please e-mail corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net, or call 410-758-8756. There is also an extensive video that can be viewed currently at www.qactv.org.

Awareness Day

The third annual Corsica River Awareness Day, sponsored by CRC, QAC Parks and Recreation and the town of Centreville, was held at Bloomfield Farm on Saturday, Sept. 20. The event attracted over 650 people this year including about 50 volunteers and 45 exhibitors. Once again, we had many of the exhibitors video taped talking about their work. Those segments were shown repeatedly on our community cable TV station QACTV.

This year, we also incorporated a "Passport to Restoration" for the kids who attended Awareness Day. There was a key question for them at each exhibit where they could get their passport punched if they answered correctly. This helped draw them into the exhibits and made the exhibits more meaningful to them. We heard so many positive comments from the adults also, they were clearly engaged. This remarkable turnout and the enthusiasm displayed go to further indicate the commitment of this community to restoring the Corsica.

Water Quality

CRC has tested water quality of the Corsica weekly during the May to October period for the past four years. The data shows little change over the four year period. Bacteria levels continue to be generally safe (except after heavy rain). Water clarity and dissolved oxygen levels remain low and we experienced our first fish kill since October 2006. About 9,000 fish in the Corsica River were killed on September 12, 2008. Most were small menhaden, a 3-4 inch bait type fish. The suspected cause of the kill was toxin from *Karlodinium veneficum*, a toxic algae, which is also believed to be responsible for the last significant fish kill in the Corsica in 2006. If you are interested in participating in the water quality testing program please contact us. We are always interested in additional participants.

Town of Centreville

Some highlights toward progress here in town are the hiring of the new watershed manager (David A. Dammeyer) that took place November 3, 2008.

Two new ordinances were approved by the town council that will help in the overall efforts: a pet waste ordinance and a tree ordinance

There are currently three storm water retrofit projects scheduled for construction in the spring of 2009: 1) A project on the Coastal Plain Outfall off Banjo Lane will intercept storm water runoff from approximately 7.5 acres and provide for significant water quality improvement. 2) A bio-retention cell will be constructed adjacent to the Centreville police station and Gravel Run. Untreated storm water runoff will be intercepted and directed to the newly constructed cell prior to being discharged to Gravel Run. This project will treat just over an acre of impervious surface area. 3) Finally, a wooded wetland will be located on the north end of town adjacent to the entrance to the town's wastewater treatment facility. This project is designed to capture storm water runoff and direct the water to newly

created wooded wetland area. This project will provide water quality enhancement on the north end of town.

The town is in the process of requesting proposals for design of a storm water retrofit project located at the Symphony Village Community, the existing storm water ponds would be enhanced to provide better water quality treatment when completed.

The Towns education and outreach campaign is in full swing. A contract extension was granted to Ms. Regina Rochez to continue her outreach efforts through the end of 2009. This includes maintenance of the website www.corsicariver.org. We encourage residents of the watershed to visit the website for information about the projects listed above as well as tips on what watershed residents can do to make a difference in the overall efforts to clean up the watershed.

Award

CRC received an award from the Urban Land Institute (ULI) at its fall meeting. CRC was cited for its efforts in building community commitment to watershed restoration and conservation.

What's New

Corsica River Watershed Highway Signs



Because of the efforts of the CRC, these signs will soon be appearing where state and county roads enter the Corsica River Watershed. The purpose of the signs is to raise public awareness of the size of the watershed and the need for public participation in the ongoing program to restore and preserve the watershed and the river.

Public Meeting

On Thursday, April 16th, 2009, the Corsica River Conservancy, in conjunction with the Queen Anne's County Historic Society, will present a program centering

on the Corsica River watershed, then and now. Featured will be photos and narration by Hunter H. Harris, an Easton, MD. aerial photographer with thousands of hours of flying time. Much of that time has been over the Eastern Shore area, and Mr. Harris has accumulated many photos which provide a fascinating view of changes which have taken place over the past 50 years. All are invited to this program, which will be held at 7 p.m. in the Board of Education Building, Chesterfield Avenue, Centreville, Maryland. Put it on your calendar and plan to attend.

CRC Board Expanded

The CRC board will be expanding and diversifying by adding three new members at its February 2009 meeting. The new members are Bill Price, Cass Smith and Mark Freestate.

Request for E-mail Addresses

While we will continue to provide our members with semi-annual reports by regular mail, we would like to have e-mail addresses for each of our members so that we can get timely information to you on important news and upcoming events. If you haven't already given us your e-mail address, please send it to CRC's e-mail at corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net. We share our members' e-mail addresses with no one.

A Plea for Action

Save Money, Save Effort, Save our River

Each year area residents routinely over fertilize their lawns. Excess amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizer flowing into the river are one of the principal causes of the Corsica River's poor health. Most lawns need no spring fertilization. Why spend your money for fertilizer you don't need and then waste your time spreading this fertilizer on your lawn so that it can run off and pollute our rivers and streams. Take the CRC challenge. Try an experiment. Don't fertilize your lawn this spring and see if you can tell the difference. Studies show that most lawns need only a small fraction of the fertilizer actually applied and that lawns should be fertilized once a year in the fall. Also, if you apply crabgrass and weed inhibitor in the spring, be careful to buy products that contain only those ingredients. Many products sold as inhibitors actually have fertilizer (nitrogen and phosphorus) as their main ingredients!

Remember, the watershed belongs to you, your children and your grandchildren and it takes a community to save a watershed.

Sincerely,

Jim Malaro, President
Corsica River Conservancy