



June 2009

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. Although we continue to see real changes in the watershed that will lead to improved water quality and habitat, there is still much to be done.

Over the past three years substantial progress has been made in reducing the amount of pollution entering the river. Much of this progress has come from reducing or eliminating pollution from readily identifiable point sources like the Centreville Waste Water treatment Plant. However, most of the remaining pollution is coming from widely dispersed non-point sources like lawns and farmlands. Reducing these sources of pollution will require the voluntary cooperation of all of the watershed residents. In a way I am preaching to the choir. If you were not aware of the problem and did not have a sincere desire to do something about it, you would not be a member of CRC. However, there are others who are either not aware of the problem, have no idea how they contribute to it or don't know what they can do to help. Therefore I am asking each of you to become an **Advocate for the Watershed**. Talk to your friends and neighbors about the watershed and what they can do to help restore and preserve it.

There are a number of simple things that each resident of the watershed can do to help save the river. Many of these are described on the website [www.corsicariver.org](http://www.corsicariver.org) and in a booklet entitled "From your backyard to the Bay" which can be obtained free of charge from CRC. In addition CRC has established a Speakers Bureau to provide information to interested groups. If you and some of your neighbors would like to meet as a group or if you belong to a business, community, civic or social group that would like to find out more about the Corsica River and what can be done to restore and preserve it, you can request a speaker by calling 410-758-6563 or leaving a message at [corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net](mailto:corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net).

Thank you for your continued support of the Corsica River Conservancy. With your help we can really make a difference!

Sincerely,

*Jim Malara*

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*Membership contributions are tax-deductible under the Foundation for Community Partnerships, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, of which Corsica River Conservancy is a member.*

# **Update from the CRC Board**

**June 2009**

## **Highlights from the Past Six Months**

### **Rain Gardens**

Our Rain Garden program continues to be extremely successful. So far CRC has been involved in the installation of over 130 rain gardens at private residences in the Corsica River Watershed. We were also instrumental in the installation of large rain gardens at the Centreville Library, Wrights Chance, Kennard Elementary School and an extensive bioswale at Symphony Village. We are working with Gunston Day School to help improve storm water control on their campus.

Remember 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 Newsroom page. [www.corsicariverconservancy.org](http://www.corsicariverconservancy.org). If you are interested in having a free rain garden installed, please e-mail [corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net](mailto:corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net), or call 410-758-8756.

### **Water Quality**

We are entering our fifth year of the monitoring program. Interest continues to run high among the members and we added two new members to our crew this year. We have 21 people involved with 17 of those actively participating in the monitoring efforts this year. Unfortunately we are not yet able to report significant improvements in the parameters we are monitoring. The most disturbing are the continuing poor water clarity and the frequently low levels of dissolved oxygen. This is directly related to the frequent algae blooms produced by high levels of Nitrogen and Phosphorus continuing to enter the river. This is due in large part to continuing over fertilization of lawns and farmland and subsequent runoff of the excess fertilizer into the river.

### **Algae bloom**

In early May the potentially fish killing dinoflagellate, *Karlodinium micrum* and *Prorocentrum minimum* were found blooming in the Corsica River. Both species can cause the water to turn a deep reddish-brown color sometimes referred to as Mahogany Tide. While *Karlodinium* has been associated with fish kills in Chesapeake Bay in the past, no evidence of fish kills were present during this bloom. Subsequently the bloom was discovered in other areas throughout the Bay. No specific cause was identified.

### **Oyster Poaching**

On Feb. 9, MD Natural Resource Police charged three local men with illegally harvesting oysters from an oyster sanctuary in the Corsica River. The men were subsequently given fines of about \$100. This illustrates the need for more effective deterrents for this type of activity.

### **Stream Cleanup**

Area residents and businesses had an opportunity to help clean up streams in the Corsica Watershed on Saturday morning, April 4. Over 40 people participated including several Gunston students who went out in canoes to get items which could not be reached from shore. The event was sponsored by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Corsica River Conservancy, and the Town of Centreville. Principal cleanup sites were Millstream Park, the Centreville Wharf at Watson Road, and the South End of Northbrook. Two large truckloads of trash and debris were collected.



### **Earth Day**

Centreville's Earth Day celebration was held on Sunday, April 26th, at Millstream Park. Sponsored by Corsica River Conservancy and the Town of Centreville, volunteers from 4-H, Timberland Outlet Store, and two Boy Scouts from Severna Park helped children with various activities. One activity was coating pinecones with a birdseed mixture and hanging them on a pine tree next to Millstream. The event was entertained with live music from The Bay Country Gentlemen, courtesy of McCrone, Inc.

### **Education & Outreach**

CRC continues to focus on educating young people and instilling in them an awareness of the need to restore and preserve the river and the watershed. We are doing this through a series of programs aimed at students from 4<sup>th</sup> grade through high school. In June CRC members conducted a series of lectures, demonstrations and hands-on activities for students at Kennard elementary as part of the annual Bay Days program.

### **Public Meeting**

On Thursday, April 16th, 2009, the Corsica River Conservancy, in conjunction with the Queen Anne's County Historic Society, sponsored a free lecture and display of aerial photographs by Hunter Harris, an aerial photographer and 6<sup>th</sup> generation native of the Eastern Shore. The program, held in the Board of Education Building in Centreville, was attended by about 100 residents. The program focused on changes in the Corsica River watershed over the past 50 years due to population changes and local activities. The photographic record clearly demonstrated some of the adverse effects of poorly controlled development and lax storm water management in the watershed.

### **Town of Centreville**

The proposed Wooded Wetland Project on the north end of town has been awarded to Baltimore Pile Driving; this project is under review at the State Highway Administration (SHA) and construction is expected to begin within the next few weeks. The Town has awarded the design portion of the proposed Stormwater Retrofits for two ponds in Symphony Village. The project has been awarded to Pace Design of Centerville. Work has commenced on the project. The Town's Coastal Plain Outfall project is waiting on final funding; this project has been tentatively awarded to Site Maintenance Inc. The campaign to Green Certify businesses in the town is off to a good start. So far eight businesses have been certified.

### **In Memoriam**

On May 6 Jeff Woodworth, Headmaster of Gunston Day School and a long time member of the CRC Board of Directors died suddenly. Jeff was an avid environmentalist and friend of the river. He will be missed. A tree will be planted at Millstream Park in recognition of Jeff's contribution to the river and the environment.

## **What's New**

### **Awareness Day**

The fourth annual Corsica River Awareness Day, sponsored by CRC, QAC Parks and Recreation and the town of Centreville, will be held at Bloomfield Farm on Saturday, Sept. 19. Last year's event attracted over 650 people. Last year we 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 activity was so popular we are repeating it again this year. . This year's raffle prize will be a one hour flight over the Corsica River. We will also be giving away 100 free trees. There will be children's craft activities and tours of the farm house. There will also be several food vendors and live music by "The Chester River Runoff", a local bluegrass group. So come on out and enjoy an afternoon "on the farm".



### **Oyster Aquaculture**

Oysters provide a natural mechanism for filtering pollutants from the water and thus help to clean up the river. The more oysters and the other critters they attract, the better for our water quality and clarity. Now that introduction of Asian oysters into the Chesapeake has been rejected, programs have been designed to grow young local oysters in cages where there they are not subject to many of the problems (e.g., sedimentation, disease, predators) they face at the bottom of the river. Mature oysters that are harvested at the end of the growing period will

be put on oyster reefs in the Corsica. If you are interested in taking part in one of these programs by hosting an oyster cage under your pier this season, there are a couple of opportunities.

(1) Oyster King (oysterking1.com), will provide a first rate cage and oyster spat for a yearly fee of \$500 which is fully refundable as a tax credit on your MD return. Oyster King takes care of everything including delivery, setup and maintaining the cage and oysters (3 or 4 visits per season). .

(2) The MD Department of Natural Resources will provide persons with piers on the waterfront with oyster cages free of charge. Cages built by MD prisons are provided to residents along with oysters. Residents maintain the oyster cages through the growing season. Maintenance according to the state consists of periodically pulling up these smaller cages and shaking them in the water.

If you are interested in either (or both) of these programs, please e-mail [corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net](mailto:corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net), or call 410-758-8756 for additional information.

### **Flyover Program**

CRC is making arrangements with aerial photographer Hunter Harris to take aerial photographs of the watershed following a heavy rain in order to identify sources of runoff into the river. This information will be used to help improve Stormwater management practices in the watershed.

### **Green book**

Adkins Arboretum has recently published “The Green Book for the Bay.” This 72 page illustrated guidebook describes how Chesapeake Bay Critical Area property owners living on the Eastern Shore can maintain and enhance their property in accordance with existing regulations. You can obtain a free copy of this booklet by visiting Adkins Arboretum or you can have a copy mailed to you by calling 410-634-2847. The mailing cost is \$5.00. CRC will also have free copies available at Awareness Day.

### **CRC Board**

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