



Corsica

2010 Annual Report from the Corsica River Conservancy

Letter from the President

2010 has been a good year for the Conservancy and the Watershed. A number of important restoration projects have been completed and others are underway. The Town of Centreville, in particular, has made substantial progress (See article beginning on page 3). This is important because the town contains a large percentage of the impervious surface in the watershed and is thus a large potential source of stormwater runoff. Significant progress has also been made in Rain Garden Installation (pg 5), Oyster Restoration (pg 6) and Shoreline Restoration (pg 7). CRC has recently obtained grants totaling \$250,000 for watershed restoration projects in 2011 and its membership has grown to 723. CRC membership has increased 20% in the past year.

We are beginning to see tangible signs of the effects of our efforts on the health of the river. The health of the creeks which feed the Corsica River has improved substantially. In fact, the Three Bridges Branch was the most improved tributary in the entire Chester River complex. We must be doing something right. One of the things you will notice as you read this report is that restoration involves a number of small projects and activities that depend on citizen cooperation and volunteer effort. It has been said that the Chesapeake Bay is dying from a thousand small cuts. Perhaps we are beginning to see the Corsica River and the Bay recovering because of a thousand small sutures.

There is now a Federal program underway to restore the Chesapeake Bay. The Corsica River should benefit from this program and we will keep you up to date as the program progresses. However, restoration of the Corsica River and its watershed is, and must continue to be, a community effort. Now more than ever we need to work together so that we do not lose the momentum we have gained during the past five years. Thank you for your continued support. With your help we will continue to make a difference.

Jim Malaro
President, Corsica River Conservancy

Coming Attractions

March 7-18 *Free Soil Testing*

Living within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Marylanders play a vital role in the health of our streams and tributaries. Routine soil testing of lawns and garden beds can help reduce excessive nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus from entering our waterways. As these nutrients enter our waterways "dead zones" can be created, where aquatic life (fish, crabs, sub aquatic vegetation and oysters) cannot survive. Not only do these practices harm our streams, but cultural abuses such as excessive fertilization may damage our lawns by stressing the roots and increasing susceptibility to disease.

As part of a program to encourage Bay-Wise friendly landscape practices, CRC is offering to provide FREE soil testing to the first 100 watershed residents that apply between March 7-18. To take advantage of this offer, go to the University of Maryland Extension Office, 505 Railroad Ave, Centreville, MD. Talk to Rachel Melvin (Horticulture Educator) and tell her you would like to participate in the CRC Soil Testing Program. In late March, CRC will sponsor a workshop where Master Gardeners will discuss how to use the soil test results in setting up your lawn care program. Members will be provided with workshop details by e-mail.

April 2 Stream Cleanup Day Last year over 50 volunteers participated at 4 sites (Millstream Park, North Brook, Symphony Village, and the Wharf) and collected 2500 pounds of trash. Let's see if we can top that this year.

April 27 The Town of Centreville will sponsor a Rain Barrel Workshop from 5:30 to 7:00 pm at the Goodwill Fire Company hall. The meeting is free and open to the public.

May The Corsica River Conservancy Annual Meeting will be held in May. Members will be notified by e-mail when date, time and program details have been set.

The Town of Centreville - Getting the Job Done

The Town of Centreville has been a key player in efforts to restore the Corsica River Watershed. Under the direction of Eva Kerchner, Zoning Administrator and Watershed Manager, substantial progress has been made over the past year to complete projects designed to prevent runoff of pollutants into the river. In addition the town has been in the forefront of an effort to raise community awareness about the plight of the river and what can be done to restore it.

Wooded Wetland and Coastal Plain Outfall for Gravel Run South

A Wooded Wetland adjacent to Gravel Run was completed in 2010. This wetland treats runoff from about 17 acres (including 2 acres of impervious surface directly related to Route 213) by retaining and filtering water before it reaches the river. Water meanders through a series of deep pools and shallow water areas where pollutants and sediments are removed by wetland vegetation. The project provides for the direct disconnection of impervious surface from two main drainage pipes that lead from the curb and gutter system adjacent to the northern sections of Commerce and Liberty Streets.



Eva Kerchner talks with John McCoy, former Director of Ecosystem Restoration, MD Dept. of Natural Resources at the Wooded Wetland construction site

Also completed was a Coastal Plain Outfall which captures storm water runoff from rooftops, roadways and parking lots along Banjo and Turpins Lanes, and the town's public works yard. It drains approximately 10 acres. The existing open channel was modified to improve water quality by installing a series of pools and weirs to convey water slowly down the slope. The outfall is a series of step pools bedded in sand, armored with sandstone and cobble, and planted with natural vegetation. This system dissipates high energy and removes suspended sediments and excess nutrients.



Completed Wooded Wetland

Wharf Area

A substantial portion of wharf area has been opened to provide much needed public access to the river. This will help to raise citizen awareness of the river and serve as a reminder of our responsibility to restore and preserve it.

Two pocket parks have been constructed at the wharf. This included replacement of the existing bulkhead and construction of gazebos, pavilions and asphalt parking. Pervious pavers were used and careful attention was given to stormwater management, and critical area mitigation and landscaping.

Construction of five finger piers with ten boat slips, two observation platforms with access for

transient boaters, and a boardwalk was also initiated. Construction will feature living shoreline, wetland restoration, critical area mitigation and landscaping and will continue in 2011.

Symphony Village

Two existing storm water management ponds were redesigned to allow for better stormwater control. This included installing gravel bars in fore-bays, excavating a portion from pond bottom to construct planting shelves around pond edges and planting trees, plants and grasses to allow for better stormwater filtration. As water enters the fore-bays the gravel bars (made up of clay and river cobble) lengthen the flow path, allowing sediment and debris to settle out. Flows will then crest the existing riprap weir and enter the main cell of the pond. Creation of wetland plantings along the entire perimeter of the fore-bay and pond slopes in pond 2 will allow nutrient uptake, establish a riparian buffer, a passive recreation area and additional aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat. The project partners were Town of Centreville, MD Department of Natural Resources (DNR), MD Department of the Environment (MDE), Caruso Homes and the Homeowners Association of Symphony Village.

Outreach, Education, and Social Marketing Campaign

The Town also conducts a comprehensive outreach, education, and social marketing campaign to raise community awareness, promote environmental stewardship and demonstrate ways the community can easily be involved in restoring the Corsica River and its Watershed. This includes a social marketing campaign which provides a consistent message through multiple channels including local radio, television, newspapers and a website

www.corsicariver.org maintained by the town. The town even produced its own 30 second television commercial about watershed pollution. The commercial aired 845 times on 8 major networks and continues to be aired on QACTV, You Tube, and on the project website. The town also encourages local businesses to become environmental stewards by creating a Green Business Certification Program. To date, there are 10 certified green businesses that display a green business logo in their storefront window. In the spring of 2011 the town will distribute 200 rain barrels to homeowners within the Corsica River Watershed. This is part of the Town's continued campaign to encourage a change in homeowner behavioral patterns to prevent watershed pollution by reducing nutrients and sediments entering the Corsica River.



Fore-bay before redesign



During construction



Redesign complete

Rain Gardens

The rain garden program continues to be a key component of our efforts. To date CRC has sponsored the installation of over 250 residential rain gardens. Over seventy of these have been installed in Symphony Village and thirty in Northbrook.

Rain gardens are key to our efforts to restore the watershed for two reasons. First, rain gardens capture runoff and reduce pollution flowing into the Corsica River. And perhaps equally important rain gardens are a key part of our education and outreach program in that they involve watershed residents in restoration efforts and develop a sense of stewardship.

*Every homeowner in the Watershed is eligible to apply for a **free** rain garden valued at up to \$2000. If you are interested in having a rain garden installed on your property, contact CRC at corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net. If you have questions about the program, please contact Debbie Pusey at debbiepusey@verizon.net or Steve Sharkey at stevesharkey@verizon.net.*



Water Quality Monitoring – An Assessment of Progress

CRC has completed 5 years of water quality monitoring in the Corsica River and now have more than 20 active participants in this program. Data from the CRC monitoring program along with data collected by several other organizations is now being used to assess the Corsica River Watershed Restoration Program and evaluate progress made and lessons learned during the past 5 years. When a final report is published in June, CRC will prepare and distribute a synopsis of the report to our members.

Education & Outreach

Voluntary cooperation and active participation of watershed residents is critical to the continued success of our efforts to restore the Corsica River and its watershed. Therefore, CRC continues to reach out to the community and solicit citizen involvement. One way to encourage participation and instill a sense of stewardship is through education. Presently we conduct several programs aimed at students from 4th grade through high school. However, in 2011 we will be expanding our education and public information activities. If you think you might be interested in working with young people, please contact CRC at corsicariverconservancy@verizon.net or call 410-758-6563.

Oyster Restoration

CRC completed its first round of oyster growing in connection with the Maryland Grows Oysters (MGO) program. Oysters are presently grown in 140 cages hung from participant's piers and then deposited on oyster sanctuaries in the river. We plan to continue and expand the program. *If you have a pier or dock along the river and think you might like to participate in the program, please contact Frank DiGialleonardo (franardo@gmail.com) or Steve Sharkey (stevesharkey@verizon.net) for details.*

The state of Maryland recently expanded its sanctuary network for oysters from 9% to 25% of the viable oyster habitat. As part of this program the entire Corsica River has been designated as an oyster sanctuary. This will allow oysters to grow and multiply unimpeded in the river. Oysters are important to the health of the river. They provide a natural mechanism for filtering pollutants from the water. A single oyster can filter 50 gallons of water per day. In addition, they form reef structures which serve as an extremely important habitat for fish, crabs and other aquatic life.



Frank DiGialleonardo and Steve Sharkey (CRC) are photographed by reporter Mary Neuberger as they prepare to deliver oyster cages



Delivering Oyster Cages

Awareness Day

Corsica River Awareness Day has become a local tradition. This year the event, held at Bloomfield Farm on Sept. 18, attracted over 1200 people. This is 30% larger than the attendance last year and is six times the 200 hundred that attended the first Awareness Day just five years ago. The weather cooperated and provided us with another beautiful Saturday afternoon where attendees enjoyed a number of recreational activities and visited over 30 interesting and educational environmental exhibits related to the Corsica River and its watershed. Awareness Day in 2011 will be on Saturday, September 17.

Demonstrating the effectiveness of pervious concrete to prevent runoff at Awareness Day



Shoreline Restoration

Natural shoreline restoration (living shoreline) was a major effort during 2010. One of the principal advantages of a living shoreline over other restoration methods (e.g., bulkheads or riprap) is that in addition to preventing erosion it also provides habitat for aquatic animals.

Timboros at Windy Hill Farm



In June a group of volunteers led by the MD Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) and the CRC planted three varieties of marsh grass to establish a 650 ft. living shoreline on the property of Loring Hawes at the mouth of the Corsica River. Among the volunteers were 15 scouts from Boy Scout Troop 190 in Easton.

In July 695 ft. of living shoreline was established at Windy Hill Farm in Centreville. Windy Hill Farm is the home of Matt Miller, who is now a member of the CRC board of directors. This complex project was accomplished by volunteers supported by funding and expertise from several Federal and State agencies

including the natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, DNR and local soil conservation districts. In place of the original bulkhead three *timboros*, or circular sandbars, were erected to form small lagoons, grasses (*spartina alterniflora*, *spartina patens* and *pacinum virgatum*) were planted along the shore, and submerged aquatic vegetation (redhead grass) was planted under water.

In 2011 Gunston Day School which has 1300 feet of shoreline on the Corsica River plans to install 550 ft. of living shoreline.



Planting Grasses at Windy hill Farm



Corsica River Conservancy

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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.

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We don't inherit the environment from our parents, we borrow it from our children.

