

**LAND, RIVER, CULTURE, COMMUNITY:
PEOPLE OF THE NANTICOKE UNITING FOR THE FUTURE**
A Visioning Conference for the Nanticoke Region
March 26 – 27, 2010 – Vienna Elementary School

CONFERENCE REPORT

Prepared by Jennifer Hicks, Positive Force Consulting

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CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The Nanticoke River, a major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay, is a relatively healthy biologically and culturally diverse watershed within southern Delaware and Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland. With potential growth and changes on the horizon, never has there been a better time to think about the future of the Nanticoke region and determine its direction over the next 10 or 20 years. Issues like population shifts, community growth, and economic development are primary focus points for many living and working in the area.

The visioning conference for the Nanticoke region, sponsored by the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, was an opportunity for diverse stakeholders throughout the region to begin an in-depth investigation of a common ground vision for the future. Using the principles of the Future Search conference model, attendees investigated the past, reviewed the present, envisioned an ideal future, discovered common ground values, and identified action steps to move forward with what was desired by the conference attendees.

The visioning event was attended by individuals representing nine different stakeholder clusters from two states (Maryland and Delaware) and three counties (Dorchester, Wicomico, and Sussex). The stakeholder groups included public service, tourism, civic groups, education, agriculture, environmental conservation, business & industry, historic & cultural preservation, and resource users.

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The Nanticoke visioning conference planning committee included:

Bill Collison – Seaford, DE	Newell Quinton - John Quinton Foundation
Erik Fisher – Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Jim Rapp – Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experiences
Sewell Fitzhugh - Nause-Waiwash Tribe of Indians	Scott Thomas – Sussex County Tourism
Joe Glime – Federalsburg Historical Society	Megan Ward – Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
Bob Heim – ReMax Realtors	George Whitehead – Salisbury University, AmeriCorps
Councilmember Pat Jones – Seaford Town Council	Eric Wisner – Dorchester County waterman
Jim Passwaters – Delmarva Poultry Industry	

Thank you to the funders of this conference including Town Creek Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

DAY 1 ATTENDEES

*= did not attend Saturday

Linda Allen - Nanticoke Creekwatchers
Suzanne Baird - Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
*Mayor Russ Brinsfield – Town of Vienna
*Mrs. Sandy Brinsfield – Town of Vienna
John Brinsfield – Dorchester High School parent
Bethany Brinsfield – Dorchester High School student
Christine Conn – MD Department of Natural Resources
Betsy Cottingham - Eastern Shore Sailing Assoc.
Christina Darby – Nanticoke River Arts Council
*Tom Darby – Nanticoke River Arts Council
Amanda Fenstermaker – Dorchester County Tourism
Erik Fisher – Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chief Sewell Winterhawk Fitzhugh - Nause-Waiwash Tribe of Indians
Joe Glime – Federalsburg Historical Society
Bob Heim – ReMax Realtor
Matt Heim – AmeriCorps/Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
Geet Jeswani – Parkside High School student, Wicomico youth group member
Steve Kimpton - Invista
*Vikram Krishnamurthy – Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
John Kotoski – Eastern Shore Builders Association
Shelton Lankford – Lower Eastern Shore Sustainable Organic Network
Lisa Ludwig – Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council
*Steele Phillips – Dorchester County
Newell Quinton – John Quinton Foundation
Jim Rapp – Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experiences
Becky Robinson – Delmarva Water Transport Committee
Rebecca Rothweiler- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

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Stan Shedaker – Adrenaline High
*Rep. Danny Short – Delaware House of Representatives
Fred Sponseller – Cooper Real Estate
*Martin Stewart - Purdue
Judith Stribling – Friends of the Nanticoke River
Sarah Sutton – Big Brothers Big Sisters
*Scott Thomas – Sussex County Tourism
Megan Ward – Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
Eric Wisner – Wicomico/Dorchester Waterman
*Cory Whaley - Sussex County Agriculture Extension Service
George Whitehead – Salisbury University
*Les Wright – Wicomico County
*Franklin Wright –Wicomico County
Spencer Travi - Wicomico County

CONFERENCE KICK OFF



The visioning conference commenced following a traditional Eastern Shore dinner. Facilitator Jennifer Hicks introduced herself and then turned it over to EB James, Executive Director of the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance to welcome the group. He thanked the sponsors and his colleague Megan Ward for her effort in bringing everyone to the conference.

EB then introduced the two public officials in attendance Vienna, MD Mayor Russ Brinsfield and Rep. Danny Short from the Delaware House of Representatives. Both congratulated the group for attending and being as committed as they are to supporting the Nanticoke region.

EB then provided an overview of the Alliance and the genesis of the conference:

- Founded in 1992, Alliance is trying to bring together a common vision for the river.
- The Alliance is working to increase the circle of voices to provide a more robust conversation of what the Nanticoke is through its work with its 50 partners.
- This conference is a major step in the organization’s efforts with Green Infrastructure. Green Infrastructure is a plan that identifies the landscape of a region that insures its health and vitality, which includes things like working waterfront, agriculture, connection with the fabric of life, culture and heritage



Jennifer introduces Megan Ward who welcomes everyone to the conference and explains that this is just the start of many more exciting things. Megan introduces and thanks the conference planning committee, who were integral in the success in bringing the group together. Jennifer Hicks then explains the conference process:

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investigating the past, reviewing the present, and discovering a desired future for the Nanticoke region. The object of this event is to build a common ground vision and a set of actions. Jennifer describes the conference design – a modified Future Search. She presents the following:

Desired outcomes for the conference

- Build social bonds and strengthening relationships among diverse stakeholders of the Nanticoke River basin
- Discover common ground values and collective wisdom from which to act
- Commit to action that is agreed to by all

Principles from which we will work

Think globally, act locally – look at the “same elephant”!

The focus is on the future and common ground

Participants are self-managed and are responsible for their own planning and follow-up

Ground Rules

All ideas are valid. No talking over others. Don’t hold anything back. Listen to understand. No cell phones on ringer. Unfinished business should be revisited.

Small Group Leadership Roles

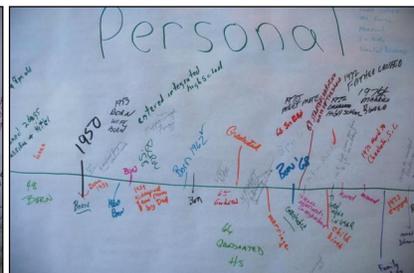
Each small group manages its own discussion data, time and reports through assignment of roles including: Discussion Leader, Timekeeper, Recorder, and Reporter

FOCUS ON THE PAST

The group started the conference in small groups each containing people representing the different stakeholder groups (mixed groups). The small groups were tasked to create a community picture of our world, values, and histories.



Participants did this by first making notes individually on memorable *personal, global, and local* events that represent to them notable milestones and/or turning points. Once their notes were complete, they transferred them to each of the three time lines on the walls.



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Timeline Observations

Participants spent a few minutes discussing their observations of the timelines within their small groups. Then the whole group discussed their observations. Below are the notes from that discussion:

- The Global and Nanticoke (Local) timelines were very similar.....the Personal timeline was much more diverse.
- For the Personal timeline there's a lot of "married and had kids" – common milestones.
- I can remember all of my bad experiences, but it is difficult trying to remember what was good. We had no time to get in trouble. We were in either in the bean field, church, or in school. We never got a chance to go to the movies until I was in high school.
- WWII changed things.
- The last 50 years shows more complications. A lot more technology.
- German prisoners (during WWII) came to help us pick beans because there weren't workers.
- Vietnam affected our culture.
- Each world conflict affects us on the shore.
- The value system pre and post depression is totally different. Back then everyone saved everything.
- Connection with the landscape in this modern world is harder because of the shift in value system. Too many things now a days to distract you. Life is more complicated.
- History is cultural – native history is much longer than most and shared through oral history. We have long oral histories. The disconnection with the land is very recent. Grandmother said you better know where you come from to know where you are going. Connection to history is important to understand who we are.
- Over 95% of the oil that has been burned in history was burned during most people's life time.
- We think of land as a place to build a house and to recreate. We go to the food market. We have a real challenge ahead of us, before we can get back to feeding ourselves in a local fashion. Food does not come from the food store; it comes from the land.
- Starting in the 1960's we began thriving off of suburban/urban sprawl.
- Various trends come and go (trash, etc.)
- Good land used for development, we see extreme competition for land use.
- We see a lot of houses that are vacant down in the country land.
- Economics dictates what/how we live. Local food and resources compete with artificially discounted goods.
- Late 30's DuPont changed the landscape economically, socially, environmentally when they arrived. They just reduced 140 jobs so they are again impacting our region.

The group ended the discussion and moved to focus on the present conditions found in the region.

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FOCUS ON THE PRESENT

The group worked to create a shared picture of the world we live in and experience the whole together. Together the group created a “mind map” of present trends in society – social, economic, technological, political, environmental, etc. – that people believe are shaping the future of the Nanticoke region. Then they voted to determine what they saw as the top trends.



Identified Trends

Top Trends

1. Increase in populations changes/shifts
2. Increase in government/local control
3. Increase in land conversion
4. Increase in traffic: roads, rivers, etc.

Other identified trends

Decreased small town vitality	Increased eco tourism
Increased obesity	Increased climate change
Decreased experiential education for kids	Increased renewable energy sources
Increased environmental/pollution awareness	

Stakeholder Perspective on External Trends



Participants then gathered in their stakeholder groups to discuss how the identified trends specifically impact their stakeholder group. Their task was to determine what the members of each group was doing now about the top 4 trends identified along with what they wanted to do. If time permitted they then were to discuss the things that members in the group were doing in the region in connection to these trends that they were proud about and things they were sorry about. After about 30 minutes each group provided a 2-5 minute report to the whole group.

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How identified trends impact Tourism in the Nanticoke region: presented by Jim Rapp

Population:

Nanticoke is 2- 4 hours away from millions of travelers (25% of the US population)
Shift to retirement – more disposable income
Experience has value
Nature and heritage experience rate high
Nature and culture and stories and food are unique we are authentic
3 byways – Chesapeake, Blue Crab, Tubman → Sussex coming
NWR, wildlife management areas, small towns, water trails, cycling, birding, paddling, food
Young families make decisions to travel for great kid experiences
Tapping into talents and energy of resettled retirees vs. local jobs?
Entrepreneurial opportunities exist and are increasing

Gov't/ local control:

Federal and state gov't may influence local story (Tubman)
State and local need to view tourism as economic engine and not as a “tax the visitor”
Huge rate of increase for tourism, eco and heritage
Some gov't programs may be opposite to tourism program goal
County gov'ts that don't see benefits of regional tourism make it difficult to partner!

Land conversion:

Low-impact tourism (native & heritage) help keep viewshed, clean water, wildlife populations

Traffic:

Byways help more visitors through experiences
Building a road? Add bike lane!
Water trails help put paddlers where we want them

How identified trends impact Education in the Nanticoke region: presented by Bethany Brinsfield

- Youth learning more about environment in school
- How to educate people to make good informed decision about trends
- People who have moved here don't have good understanding of environment...don't know what land was before they were there
- Population has an impact on schools - we need bigger schools.
- Increase in awareness of being “green”
- Previous generation kids could walk home and walk to school. But kids who live on the same street, kids have to be picked up by the bus. It's not safe anymore. There are less bike trails.

How identified trends impact Business & Industry in the Nanticoke region: presented by John Kotoski

- Population is getting older not getting younger. People are coming, but they want the convenience of the cities from where they just came from.
- Lost balance on rules, how things are done, regulations drive business out, don't improve area standardized process. Standardized process between towns would make the process easier.

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- Economics of the land drives everything. People not willing to pay more. How come a gallon of milk is cheaper than a gallon of gas?
- Increase public transportation will be need, older population on the road. What are we going to do about driving in the future?

How identified trends impact Civic Groups in the Nanticoke region: presented by Christina Darby

Population shift: Increased cluster development. High density. Decrease in urban sprawl.
Decrease in young people due to lack of opportunity and pride and cultural experiences

Government control:

- Government needs to enforce laws that are already on the books: No back room politics, no special interests.
- Lack of responsibility and accountability for waste produced.
- Government state local etc. and boards of directors etc. listen more to populace and act on the needs of the people and not special interest
- Huge increased traffic on river, no regulation of common sense, environmental impact, and personal safety
- Lack of responsibility/accountability for waste produced

How identified trends impact Resources Users: presented by Betsy Cottingham

- *Population:* Too much population. Too much pollution. Cars, trucks, sewage, garbage
- *Government:* Need more regulation private or political.
- *Land conservation:* more land needs to be preserved decrease urban sprawl
- *Traffic:* Increases pollution and we need more mass transits, too many cars per family. Maybe a train to go up the Shore. Railways all the way.

How Identified Trends impact Environmental Group: presented by Erik Fisher

- Land conversion: increased pollution, increased resource users
- Sea level rise-transportation, shoreline change (erosion), decreases access to recreation areas.
- Negative effect was the loss of connection between people and the land they stand on. We don't have that ethos that we need to preserve this. We are losing the unique character of the land...becoming like anywhere USA
- Decreased connection between people and land
- Decreased health of Bay
- Fragmented landscapes
- Losing the unique character of area

Won on principle but lost on purpose. When it comes to the land that is being managed that is being preserved, agriculture is not doing best practices. Not seeing change of behavior on the ground.

Proud of the environment that we have built. Sorry for the people that we have not included.

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Doing/Not doing/Proud/ Sorry

- Preserving land (limits develop and sprawl) but not enough impact on ag practices
- Water monitoring
- Educating
- Providing access
- Changing policy
- Increased political polarization on issues – can't get people to buy in to individual responsibility
- Don't historically talk well with other outside "low hanging fruit" BUT we are starting to realize the importance of different perspectives
- Nanticoke Creekwatchers project plan/data accepted by EPA
- Executive Order for the Chesapeake Bay

How identified trends impact Public Service in the Nanticoke region: presented by Russ Brinsfield
We (public officials) have to make decisions. That is the difference between us and everyone else.

Population shift:

- How do we manage growth at the local and state levels to minimize sprawl development? Public official role in Vienna is to say no. We don't want to grow anymore. People need to think about what the community should look like.
- Shift in demographics toward over 55 means a different set of amenities. The shift helps on the tourism side and fills in lots.
- There's a lack of infrastructure to manage growth - where is the growth in towns? Where is the money coming from? We need to make decisions at the local level. Local decisions have to meet larger issues. Sprawl hurts towns. Need infill. We need a good economy

Government control:

- Total Maximum Daily Load's (TMDL's) will help fix other problems if federal government gets its act together. Locals cannot do it but TMDL's will cause major problems for local government. Funding for implementation of TMDL's is critical.
- Loss of local government control is a problem. Locals know better how to solve local problems.

Land Conversion

- Sprawl development hurts local governments
- Ag/forest land conversion hurts local economy

Traffic

- There's a lack of long range planning for road infrastructure
- Build the roads and they will come but increase in roads increases funds needed to maintain
- Increases in river traffic hurts the environment but helps the economy

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How Identified Trends Impact Cultural and Historic Preservation? Presented by Matt Heim

Population shifts

- Changes affect local heritage
- Would like to see effort to preserve old customs – “Living treasures”
- The population is changing and people don’t know the local history. The people who are leaving are carrying that heritage away. We need living treasures. Preserve things that are happening now like oystering.

Land Conversions. The history of the Eastern Shore is tied to the land. Development is taking parts of our heritage and the land is a big part of our history. We do have good connectivity and linkage and can tell the story of the entire watershed. It is important that we connect the history.

Increased traffic is a problem but we did not get into that.

How Identified Trends impact Agriculture in the Nanticoke region: presented by Cory Whaley

Population Shifts

- Land value up but the price is for development, not for farmland.
- Increase in tax base
- Increase demand for services
- As shift comes in people don’t respect and understand crop production.

Things that are being done:

- Land preservation
- More backyard gardening, composting
- Master Gardener program

Prouds and Sorries

- Sorry people don’t understand need for preservation
- Growth of suburbs and people who live here pay for requirements of new needed services

Traffic

- Equipment movement - moving a product is name of the game.
- We use different routes to adapt

Government/ local control

- Confusion of who controls what
- Less control by states and more federal control

Things that are being done:

- Wicomico Neighborhood Congress is doing a lot of good things for local communities
- Increased conservation practices

Prouds and Sorries

- Proud of Delaware because they are increasing awareness of agriculture practices
- Sorry about MD’s down your throat method

The conference closes for the evening.

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DAY 2 ATTENDEES

* = did not attend Friday

Linda Allen – Nanticoke Creekwatchers
Suzanne Baird - Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
*Sylvia Bradley – Westside Historical Society
John Brinsfield – Dorchester High School parent
Bethany Brinsfield – Dorchester High School student
Christine Conn – MD Department of Natural Resources
Betsy Cottingham - Eastern Shore Sailing Assoc.
Christina Darby – Nanticoke River Arts Council
*Karin D’Armi-Hunt – HAPPEN Seaford
*John Hunt – HAPPEN Seaford
Amanda Fenstermaker – Dorchester County Tourism
Erik Fisher – Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chief Sewell Winterhawk Fitzhugh - Nause-Waiwash Tribe of Indians
Joe Glime – Federalsburg Historical Society
Bob Heim – ReMax Realtor
Matt Heim – AmeriCorps/Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
Geet Jeswani – Parkside High School student, Wicomico youth group member
Steve Kimpton - Invista
John Kotoski – Eastern Shore Builders Association
Shelton Lankford – Lower Eastern Shore Sustainable Organic Network
Lisa Ludwig – Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council
*Linda Prochaska – Senator Mikulski’s Office
Jim Rapp – Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experiences
Rebecca Rothweiler- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Stan Shedaker – Adrenaline High
*Rodney Smith – Sussex County Planning/Zoning
Fred Sponseller – Cooper Real Estate
Judith Stribling – Salisbury University, Friends of the Nanticoke
Sarah Sutton – Big Brothers Big Sisters
Megan Ward – Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
Eric Wisner – Dorchester Waterman
*Bob Wheatley – Sussex County Planning/Zoning
George Whitehead – Salisbury University
Spencer Travi - Wicomico County

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REVIEW OF DAY 1

The whole group discussed their thoughts about the work accomplished on Friday night. This was also a time for those who were not in attendance Friday night to get caught up. The discussion transcription is as follows:

- Retirement of Baby Boomers wasn't brought up (yesterday) – this has a big impact in our region
- Retirement of Baby Boomers is a good thing for tourism
- It's a bad thing for land, because Baby Boomers all want to move to water and retire. The definition of retirement has changed. There is no more retirement. Older generation is staying active longer
- Trend toward school field trips → need to try to link the growth of eco tourism to the environmental education of our kids.
- Eastern shore kids don't get out as much
- Lack of environmental education in early years impact students later years...got to get them out
- The environment of this river really started to change with Native people and much more once European arrived after a few 100 years. The European have been much more damaging then compared to Native people. → a cultural impact that Native tribes are struggling with.
- There's a rebirth of awareness of understanding in the non-Indian community of what we have lost → need to decide how we will proceed. Do we continue to rape the land for the sake of a dollar bill? Do we continue to nurture and heal it? Ourselves, our children and grand children, we all are in this together.
- The issues that we raised transcend the issues of the Nanticoke. It is important that we address it here, but it is a larger issue in the world.
- Carrying capacity was a main theme (towns, etc.). The question of the sustainability of the status quo and how we do business (ie: why does a gallon of milk cost more than a gallon of oil) impacts us all.
- Education of the Baby Boomer population is a critical point
- I see the lack of balance in my job. How do we create the balance? Are the people at the table invested in this area. Do we have the right people at the table?
- I think they are (invested), we're all challenged by what to do to clean the Bay but I think the wrong people are being singled out.
- Education around environment through agriculture and canoeing is a real benefit to learning
- I am seeing lots more wildlife...eagles, raptors,
- We have this throw away culture. It seems the buildings are being abandoned. We are not reusing. We need to think about different ways to use waste. We need to shift....we need to look at the materials that earth has given us.
- Have you seen the "Story of Stuff" by Annie Leonard. There's a clash between different generations on how we should be thinking about consumption. We've got to change our thinking about fixing things instead of throwing away
- We have to factor in the real cost of things. We have to determine the real cost of things.
- This is a classic case of "Tragedy of the Commons". You can't just work with a small group, we need to work with the bigger part of the population and get them to feel individual accountability before it will change. They need to be impacted personally – like when gas reaches \$4 gallon...change has to be tied to personal economics.

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- More traffic on the river???? There is less traffic on the river compared to 80 or 100 years ago. That is how these communities were formed. It seems like there is less traffic. Back then sewage went straight into the river. Why are the rivers and the Bay so much more polluted, if we are not dumping our sewage directly in it?
- The increase of the population of this region really affects the water quality because there is more sewage and impervious surfaces
- Ironically, it might be better to have more traffic on the water. Transporting on the river is a less polluting method with less impervious surface
- 1 barge is worth 60 tractor trailers, and its low carbon impact.
- Also back then, we had more wetlands to filter the water.
- We have very inefficient transportation. The least expensive is water, then trains, trucks, planes
- Wicomico and Nanticoke rivers are how we get gasoline in this area. But perishables need to move fast and trucks can do that.
- But we ought to have lettuce grown locally. That is exactly the point.
- Green (money) is what people are most focused on and we need to acknowledge that as we pursue solutions. Real cost have to be part of the discussion.
- We need to remind ourselves with the question “Why do we get to consume as much as we do?” and creating just enough guilt to change behavior.
- Guilt is not a good mechanism from which to operate. We all have a right to live life as we would like.
- I don’t want to feel guilty for being an American. We have a president who does that. I don’t like people jamming it down my throat. I can drive the truck I want. I don’t think people should feel guilty
- I didn’t hear guilt. We need to have an appreciation for what we have: the natural resources and the future.
- It is not guilt, it is about finding that medium where we can pass it on to the future.
- Younger generation needs to redefine success. Baby Boomers grew up in a growing economy but current generation is not in the same situation. They are now telling us that we will not be able to surpass our parents financially like the Baby Boomers did. We’ve got to stop saying anything is available. I realize that I don’t need a fancy luxury vehicle. A choice can be made to not have certain things. There is a difference between want and need. That is what my generation is facing right now.
- Experience shows accountability is a better motivator than guilt if you are talking about diet (consumption) Oil is a good example. American’s can be so short-sighted – we have lost the long term focus. We have to ask: “Where do we want to be as a people in 40 years?” Rather than “What will be in my bank account next week”.
- Or asking “What makes you happy?” Measuring real value of family or money
- The American Dream is doing better than your parents.
- But the American Dream is changing.
- How do you convey all of these important points to all parts of our culture? “John and Kate plus 8” vs. a documentary about the Eastern Shore: how do we bring people closer in touch with important issues?
- Native people are an oral people. In our prayers we say make me more responsible for the 7 generations before and make me responsible for the next 7. Left alone, man will stoop to the

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lowest denominator which is greed. Man is part of the creator. We are supposed to rise above that. The first lesson that I was taught by my grandmother it is not “I” it is “We”. What is best for the survival of the people? What is the best of the people? If you are a true human being than you are willing to sacrifice for the next generation.

- The fur trade was very big for my people. That is why they stayed. Government regulated it. I remember the trappers that did not follow those rules. They said they followed the seasons of mother earth. They stop trapping early which defies the time frame of the government but they did it to keep furs coming for next year. Now we look for the government to tell you what is right or wrong. We have to look forward as “we” not “I”.
- People should lead the government.
- Enough is enough. Enough is good enough.

Discussion ends so the group can move on to the rest of the conference.

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

The group is asked to imagine that today was March 27, 2030...20 years into the future. They visualize the Nanticoke region that they really want as if it exists now. What is life like? What role are they and their community playing in this ideal scenario? They imagine that the dream has come true.

In small mixed groups participants list key accomplishments since March 2010 and describe the notable program, policies, structure that now exist. They think about the major barriers that they had to overcome then to get going. They describe how they did it.

The groups are also asked to choose a creative way to present their vision to the large group as if it is happening now. The scenario should be feasible, desirable, and motivating. The groups were to not consider cost or difficulty as this is an exercise in describing what the groups really want. Below are the reports from the five small groups:

Group 1: *Spencer Travi, Bethany Brinsfield, Judith Stribling, Bob Heim, Linda Prochaska, Lisa Ludwig*

There was a “Psychological Earthquake” - Peak oil was reached. There had to be something massive to affect everyone



- Monorail system was built creating less impervious surfaces
- Local foods are more available
- Aquaculture is thriving.
- Local clusters of housing centered around community gardens
- Working more as a community
- More walk-able communities – live, work, shop
- Keeping existing structures and keeping them green. Taking existing buildings and greening them– incentives for rebuilding on already impervious surfaces
- Established a carrying capacity for our communities
- Mature forests

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- Oyster growth from seeding and aquaculture = clean water.
- Young people are sticking around
- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) are extremely low



Group 2 *Christine Conn, Joe Glime, Sewell Fitzhugh, Betsy Cottingham, Christina Darby, John Hunt*

One family is from Vienna that is close to the earth and in harmony. Lead by a wise grandfather. Granddaughter wants to go to the river and catch some fish. The grandfather teaches grandchildren about bugs and flowers. Another family is from Baltimore who has moved to Vienna and is disconnected from each other and the natural beauty of the area. Mother runs off to Target and get her nails done. Daughter asks her dad for money and the father explains that he doesn't make that much money.

The family from Vienna meets the new family and finds the new family disconnected from their surroundings (squashes bugs, doesn't want to go to the river, all things should be dead, etc.) Wise grandfather says that the new family needs to be given time and the patience. He advises to lead a good life and people will learn from that.

Family from Vienna invites new family to go for a boat ride. The new family starts quarrelling with each other but then decides to go since there's "nothing else to do" (cell phone ran out of batteries).

Themes of the presentation: The region in the future focuses on investing in the community through re-use of buildings and creating more opportunity to walk to where you want to go, spending time outside and appreciating the natural beauty of the area. There's emphasis on supporting intergenerational connections and preserving family history. The new definition of wealth is "less is more". The region values giving to the future.



Group 3: *Shelton Lankford, Sarah Sutton, Bob Wheatley, John Kotoski, Linda Allen, Suzanne Baird*

A family is walking through a downtown of a local community in the Nanticoke region and comments that a lot has been added to the market. They go to a restaurant and sit down and talk with restaurant owner. Owner gives seeds of the tomato grown in the garden that is in the food served. Shelton wants to come back and have some local oysters because the oyster has come back completely. Walking and bike trails have been put in downtown Bike trails.

The daughter talks about her experience performing in a play in the local theater. The restaurant owner encourages the family to take a walk around the river because it is so beautiful. The family points out that since there's nothing on TV they come into town for their enjoyment.

The group then presents John the builder who has built a low impact development with a rain water system, clothes lines allowed, community garden, daily transportation.

Everyone who wants to work does work.

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Themes of the presentation: There is community revitalization with community gardens, activities found in towns. There is a return to conserving, decision making more thoughtful, pollution is controlled. New construction and development aims for low impact practices.

Group 4: *Matt Heim, Rebecca Rothweiler, Fred Sponseller, Stan Shedaker, Eric Wisner*

The group presents the development of the Nanticoke region website (www.nanticokeregion.com):



It boasts the successes of the region. It offers information about

- Obtaining local produce.
- Carbon Tax
- Small town revitalization that addresses all issues (crime, economic, social, etc.)
- Recognition of the heritage of the community
- Working to keep young people in the region.
- How industry in the region uses alternative energy and includes tourism, aquaculture, and internet.
- Putting rails back on the shore for more options in transportation
- Walk-able community.
- How the region has become a model community for the rest of the nation

Themes of the presentation: The region became aware of its carrying capacity (residential, industry, forestland, open space) – it considered redevelopment over new development. Buying and supporting local is a critical piece to the region’s success. Walk-able communities, the state has controlled pollution –especially pesticides.

Group 5: *Geet Jeswani, Erik Fisher, Rodney Smith, George Whitehead, Steve Kimpton*

A presentation of headlines about the Nanticoke region 2030:



“Youngest Mayor Elected on Smart Growth Platform”

- We don’t want people to leave
- We have young people

“Volunteerism at an All-Time High”

- New bike path opens
- Living shorelines built

Farmer’s Market Opens Downtown:

- Selling local foods.
- Other businesses re-locate

Young Architects Revitalize Vintage Homes

- Uses Green Technology.

Barriers that were overcome: apathy, personal stake/incentives, selfishness

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Themes of the presentation: True sense of values, self reliance, learn from the past; viable economy and opportunity to make a living in a way that enhances the region. Effective control of growth, viable small towns and rural villages. Younger generation fills leadership roles and have incentives to stay in the area. Rural life and agriculture still a part of culture. Overall a new definition of success.

COMMON GROUND ON THE FUTURE

The groups re-assembled into small groups to begin thinking about all that has been said and common themes heard throughout these two days. Participants are asked to write common ground values and principles heard from this conference on individual sticky notes, as well as projects and big ideas related to these values. The notes are placed on an easel pad that's been divided into two lists entitled "What" and "How". The small group clustered the "What" notes into themes and determined what themes and their contents were agreed to by all.



Once the themes that were agreed to by all were identified groups merged their lists with another group, re-clustered the themes and again, determined which themes are agreed to by all. Then those themes were listed on easel paper and cut up into individual slips and taped up onto a "Common Ground Wall". The whole group then clustered the slips of paper into themes and discussed the results.



Common Ground Wall Clusters

#1

Smart Growth – Up not out

Use resources wisely, smart growth, redevelopment, restoration with economic incentives

Sidewalks

Smart Growth – community living, preservation of open space and in-fill, balance, interdependence

Directing growth to appropriate and sustainable locations

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#2

Livable, sustainable communities – protecting, buying, and supporting locally
Sustainability – local economic focus
Live local – produce, products, services
Sustainable local economy
Chain of local goods and stores
Space donated by local towns
Community schools

#3

Youth retention and involvement and support

- Education
- Next generation of leaders
- True citizenry
- Opportunities

Jobs for youth

#4

Pollution: protect habitat, flooding marshes

#5

Municipal plans
Innovative and creative zoning
Transferring Development Rights

#6

Utilize natural resources and cultural heritage for jobs and education
Local identity and pride: history, land, culture
Local education: heritage, natural resources, sustainable living
Umbrella organization of Heritage groups to aid in creating unified story of area, improve collaboration and secure funding

#7

Multi-generational education to promote understanding, sustainability, environmental awareness, and community values

Final Common Ground Value Statements with Proposed Projects

The group engaged in an open discussion about the clusters on the Common Ground Wall. After about 30 minutes of open-ended conversation about the clusters it was clear that there were three major concepts that were emerging as the foundation of the conference's common ground values: growth, economy, and natural/cultural preservation.

The group agreed to build statements around these areas of focus. From there two comprehensive statements developed:

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Statement #1: *The Nanticoke region will mindfully and intentionally conserve its natural and cultural resources in a way that enhances the unique social, economic, and environmental make up of the area with a particular focus on the passing on natural and cultural legacies and preserving continuity of land use in connection with cultural significance.*

Here are the “how” ideas that coordinate with this statement:

Education:

- Education: talk, experience (hands-on), understanding
- Environmental education with field experience
- Education & outreach via activities
- Authentic historic, cultural, ecology-based visitor experience
- Organized activities for youth to experience the Nanticoke (and learn)
- Individuals taking responsibility

Regulations, enforcement, government involvement:

- Lower, enforced TMDLs
- Pass the Chesapeake Bay bill
- Rural land conservation
- Government & local support
- Local governments and counties to establish green zones and saying no – saying no to new development
- Streamline government
- Wise use of resources → Grow in the right places & conserve in the right places
- Local community identify the what and how enabled by higher levels of government
- Protect habitat: incentivize voluntary protection better planning, less sprawl, Green Infrastructure directs growth into designated growth zones

Collaboration:

- Networking grant resources
- Getting everybody on board and supportive including farmers, government orgs, tax payers, realtors, land developers, city fathers etc.

Economic development:

- Support ecotourism in sustainable ways → more campgrounds
- Market Driven
- Foster economy: recognize economic value of natural resources and cost of replacing the services they provide ie: flood protection provides cleaning water, reducing carbon. Man made fixes would be too expensive

Science & Technology:

- Scientifically determined carrying capacity of all facets required for human and habitat survival
- Man made floating marshes, reduce nitrogen, make (build) habitat

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Statement #2: *The Nanticoke region will draw and retain youth and young families by providing quality jobs and job training within an economy that celebrates and preserves local identity, encourages innovation, reflects the true costs of doing business, and grows within the carrying capacity of both human and natural communities.*

Here are the “how” ideas that coordinate with this statement:

Science & Technology:

- Expand access to broadband
- Use web and social media to tell stories
- Stronger Nanticoke presence on the internet
- Scientifically determined carrying capacity of all facets required for human and habitat survival

Economic development:

Reuse resources -

- Redevelop, restore and “green” existing structures
- In-fill development
- Sell houses very cheap. Buyers signs agreement to live in home for a period of time and renovate.

Support local agriculture -

- Local farmers market
- Community-supported agriculture enterprises

Create innovative, green jobs and industries

- Wind Farms great for economy, doesn't use land (minimum), generates electric
- Develop new industries that are low impact, reuse waste
- Create new ideas/approaches for traditional careers – farming, aqua culture, ecotourism
- Mr. fix it: appliance refurbishing & recycling
- Local currency: Salisbury Bucks that can be spent locally and purchase at a discount
- River as transport of goods
- Develop activities to correspond to heritage ie: river cruises, walking trails, local crafts, farmers markets
- Revitalize Nanticoke Seafood Plant as a aquaculture industry, education center, heritage museum, tourism destination
- Low impact Tourism: Harriet Tubman, Capt. John Smith, ghost tours, cycling, paddling, boating, fishing, hunting, eating, heritage tours

Community revitalization/local focus -

- Programs to revitalize downtowns “Build it & they will come”
- Start chain of local ES community stores which sell products and produce produced locally
- Stores could be in downtown areas and it would be great if towns “sponsored” them by providing low or no rent for space
- Market and promote local businesses and provide information on money flow and why this is important ie: How many cents on the dollars does Walmart keep in the community?
- Reinvest in towns/Smart Growth
- Live local movement
- Charge/pay true cost for product and services

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Regulations, enforcement, government involvement:

- Smart growth mandates
- Government & local support
- Get DelDot on board
- Streamline government
- State/federal dollars to support starting local businesses or creative use of tax structure
- Working with local county property tax assessment to have a reduced property tax for 10 years to incentivize revitalization of old, dilapidated houses into enviro-green house
- Municipal visioning plans
- Tax incentives for rehab of residential and commercial building
- Local community identify the what and how enabled by higher levels of government
- Make recycling easier – curbside in all communities
- Pesticide regulations laws, control
- Reduce pollution: BMP implementation, reduce stormwater, keep wetlands
- Economic incentives to recycle

Civic engagement, leadership development:

- Mentoring program for leadership development
- Being involved in local activities and having a say
- Encourage community volunteerism
- Live by example
- Be a model, provide an example
- Make it cool to be sustainable instead of competing for who has the best house/car/boar TV start competition for who can be the greenest “Best solar panel system” “Lowest energy bill”
- Buy a vacant lot, make it garden-able, invite community to care for it, hand over control to community

Education:

- Educating promoting to residents and visitors through festivals, workshops, media, etc.
- Individuals taking responsibility
- Promote local regional sustainability
- Help to re-educate the I responsibility not we
- Mentoring and teaching for local knowledge
- Teaching/mentoring for next generation of trades
- Educate children
- Family values, mentoring
- Communication tools to build awareness of issues and programs that affect the Nanticoke
- Young people need to have environmental school projects

Collaboration:

- Networking grant resources
- Getting everybody on board and supportive (on conference major themes) including farmers, government orgs, tax payers, realtors, land developers, city fathers etc.

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- Visioning exercises on growth and future population scenarios
- Create umbrella organization of local heritage groups which would provide means of communicating, organizing efforts, create unified story, and help apply for funding

ACTION PLANNING

The group spent 30 minutes thinking about long term and short term action steps in connection to the developed value statements. It was determined that it would be useful to have the members of the group announce what it is going on in the region, as well as, actions that group members would like to take.

What is already happening?

- Joe Glime has been networking with other participants at the conference, especially with those representing heritage tourism. There will be a “Heritage Hike” with the Federalsburg Historical Society April 3
- Sylvia Bradley is working with the Westside Historical Society’s Heritage Day on May 8th
- There is a Lower Shore Heritage Area management plan available
- Heart of the Chesapeake Heritage Area has a management plan and has developed Byways (ie: Michener, Harriet Tubman, etc.)
- DNREC has several resources and would like to get them out to more people (Rebecca)
 - Eco System Services report
 - Wetland Loss Status and Trends
 - Restoration guide book
 - Wetland Condition Data for Watershed
 - Grant to find out way to reduce TMDL’s
 - Watershed restoration plans
- DLITE will be leading a Paddling Day on the Nanticoke and is hoping to conduct an economic study on eco-tourism in the future
- Aiming to coordinate Nanticoke activity by linking more and help other watersheds to link up. (ie: Choptank)
- John Smith Trail will connect the dots through out the Delmarva Peninsula
- Nanticoke Creekwatchers are keeping tabs on pollution reduction and the Alliance promotes Nanticoke at festivals
- How do we coordinate the resources available for the Nanticoke region?
- Wicomico County has established a Green Infrastructure planning committee. This group advises on land development and land purchasing

What can we do?

Action: EB and Megan from Nanticoke Watershed Alliance will distribute the conference final report, and contact participants about working on the Nanticoke regional Green Infrastructure management plan.

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Action: Stan Shedaker wants to tap into Harriet Tubman heritage efforts with Heart of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Director Amanda Fenstermaker

Action: Stan Shedaker wants to tap into resources to mentor others to promote heritage/eco tourism

Action: CBF will lead a forum to discuss river TMDL numbers for Bay restoration

Action: Design the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance website as a Nanticoke region information clearinghouse

Action: Suzanne Baird → Blackwater NWR is still developing the Chesapeake marshland protection and conservation plan and needs help to get the information out and work with partners. Time to stop planning and start doing. Christine Conn would like to help with this.

Action: Eric Wisner wants help to purchase a 30 acre property on Nanticoke Harbor and turn it into a self-sustaining, economically viable mixed use program. Possibility of establishing an aqua culture operation and there are many education operations in Wicomico County.

Action: Work on establishing a network of partners to share resources in the region

CONFERENCE CLOSURE

The group is asked to start thinking about their experience at the conference. Some are further along on the “rollercoaster” than others and so the common ground vision and action steps discussed are still too much to absorb. Jennifer thanks the group for their participation and offers a few final thought. As a final activity the participants are asked to offer two words to describe how they feel now that the conference is complete. They include:

Rewarding and educational
Encouraging and helpful
Likeminded and
informative
Stimulating and challenging

More connection
Expand Connections
Learning Opportunity
Creating connectivity
Enlightening and uniting
Dialogue and warming

Millies Roadhouse
Group hug
Charts and markers
Learning and sharing
Listening and learning.
Thank you

The conference adjourns.