



CURRENTS
QUARTERLY

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Upcoming Events

Wednesday, July 14th
“Bass Fishing on the Pocomoke River”

Lecture
Delmarva Discovery Center,
Pocomoke, MD

Wednesday, July 21st
New and Beginning Farmer Interest Meeting

Wicomico Farm Extension Office
Salisbury, MD

Tuesday, August 10th
New and Beginning Farmer Interest Meeting

Wicomico Farm Extension Office
Salisbury, MD

To check out more events, visit the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance's website at www.nanticoke.com

From the Bridge

Welcome to the quarterly combined newsletter for Creekwatchers and friends of the Alliance. Things are busy on the river despite the heat. This weekend will be unveiling of Delaware's John Smith Water Trail Map and Guide at the annual Seaford Riverfest. Spearheaded by Delaware's

Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, the Alliance has helped with the development of this guide and we are extremely excited to see the final copies roll off the press. You can check out the new maps at the Alliance booth at Riverfest and get a copy online from DNREC or at the Alliance office in Vienna.

We had a very interesting partner meeting this month looking at the future dredging project on the Nanticoke near Seaford. This discussion looks like it is just the beginning, and we hope to revisit the topic in future partner meetings.

We try to hold 4-6 partner meetings a year to provide the opportunity for the Partners in Conservation to discuss issues in the watershed. Sometimes these conversations are difficult, but they are always valuable. To find out more about partner meetings visit our webpage or give us a call.



Photo Stan Shedaker, Adrenaline High

Finally, the report card for the Nanticoke is here. This has been quite a labor, and we look forward to sharing the results with you, now you can compare the “grade” of this river to other rivers in the Chesapeake.

C.B. Stay cool

2010 Report Card to be Released Soon!

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance will soon be releasing the very first Nanticoke River Report Card. Partnering with Eco-Check, the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance has developed a report card that will provide a more meaningful interpretation of the information our Creekwatchers collect. It also serves as a great tool for comparison—how well we are doing compared other rivers throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. To calculate our overall “grades, we divided the watershed into two main areas—the mainstem of the Nanticoke and the creeks that feed into it. These two broad regions each got an overall grade, but we also calculated grades for individual sections of the river—Upper Nanticoke, Lower Nanticoke, Headwaters, Broad Creek, Marshyhope Creek, Lower Creeks, and Fishing Bay. Overall, the grades look good, which is an indication the Nanticoke River remains pretty healthy. However, we did identify some potential areas for concern that may guide our future conservation and restoration efforts. Stay tuned for the official report card release—you can check our website at www.nanticoke.com for updates. We can't wait to share the results!

Spotlight on History: The Nanticoke River Fur Trade

By Jess Reeves

Imagine being one of the first of Europeans to sail the Nanticoke , and the first to view the lush marshlands in a land completely virgin and pure. We cannot possibly conceive the amazement experienced by settlers and explorers in the 17th century, but they clearly saw potential in the areas around the river because they soon began to settle along its banks. During the 17th century, vast areas of North America were being explored by Europeans who soon began to look for ways to make a profit off this land. Exporting raw materials became primary economic engine of the New World, and for those living along the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake, beaver pelts were the main source of income during that earliest period of European settlement.

When Europeans first arrived, they found an east coast of North America full of raw materials and fertile land, and from their perspective, all of it was up for the taking. The settlers in the Nanticoke Watershed area quickly discovered beaver pelts were desirable by wealthy individuals throughout Europe, and in response, fur merchants began to emerge throughout the region. Although the fur trade of the Nanticoke does not compare to the mass fortunes acquired through tobacco farming that would follow, for certain adventurous individuals living along the Chesapeake, fur trade provided a way to acquire a personal fortune.

Beaver pelts were responsible for the first trade agreements between the European settlers and the Native Americans of the Nanticoke region. The natives knew the land and were able to track and capture beavers more quickly and efficiently than Europeans who were new to the shores of the Nanticoke. It became much safer and more effective to trade with the natives than to actually go hunting for beavers. The Native Americans were given European goods in return for the pelts they delivered; most commonly textiles, guns, and metal tools. Throughout the 17th century, merchants were generous with the

natives, because the furs were so desired throughout Europe and merchants were making immense amounts of revenue.

By the early 1700's, the beaver population along that Nanticoke and throughout the Chesapeake region began to feel the pinch of overharvesting. In addition, new markets were opening up along the Great Lakes to provide more fur to Europe and lowering prices. With fewer furs left in the Nanticoke region and an excess of furs being exported from other portions of North America, farming began to replace fur trading as the primary. Merchants in the Nanticoke region quickly lost their source of income and their importance throughout Europe because they could not provide large quantities of pelts and the pelts were no longer as expensive. In response to the declining demand, Lord Calvert decided to open the Maryland peninsula to a tobacco settlement, giving birth to a new era in land use along the Nanticoke.

Tobacco farms took up land that was originally reserved for Native Americans and fur trading, a situation which became a problem for both the Europeans and the Natives. The incoming Europeans were less inclined to trade with the natives and viewed them as a threat not a business partner. This led to hostile relations as Natives began to lose their land while gaining nothing in return. Although the Natives had helped the Europeans for years, the new tobacco settlers sought to claim traditional hunting grounds and villages to expand farming operations. Relations quickly soured between the two groups, resulting in numerous conflicts and court cases. The Native Americans of the Nanticoke eventually vanished into the marshes. Some headed north to Pennsylvania and eventually Canada, while others remained on the Eastern Shore, adapting parts of European culture.

Today, the beaver population all along the watershed is slowly

recovering. After years of overhunting and habitat destruction, they have again begun to prosper all along the river, showing the importance of preserving the Nanticoke not only for us, but for the creatures we share it with.



Jess

Reeves is an English major at Salisbury University and will be interning with the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance through the summer.

John Smith Water Trail

In 2006, the National Park Service launched the Captain John Smith Chesapeake Historical Trail. The trail encompasses 3,000 miles of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware with trails that follow routes based on the maps and written accounts left behind by Captain John Smith. In addition to diverse trails, the foundation offers a variety of different experiences from canoeing

and kayaking to educational programs on the Native Americans living along the river as well as information on the health of the Chesapeake and its tributaries. On July 10th, a new trail will be launched in Delaware at 2pm on the Nanticoke River Bridge in Seaford, stretching through 26 miles of Sussex County. This addition to the trail will help to bring Smith's

adventures and experiences to the general public and help improve awareness of the Chesapeake watershed's historical, recreational, and environmental significance. For more information visit the Captain John Smith Trail website at www.smithtrail.net

"If you want one year of prosperity, plant corn.

If you want ten years of prosperity, plant trees.

If you want one hundred years of prosperity, educate people."

— **Chinese proverb.**

Nanticoke River Wade In

The Nanticoke River Wade In, organized by the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance and Lower Shore Tributary Action Team, was the place to be for children and adults alike on Thursday, June 24th.

Youth from the Richard Hazel Youth Center and Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Lower Eastern Shore had a blast at the Nanticoke River Wade In held at Cedar Hill Marina in Tyaskin, MD. The Nanticoke Watershed

Alliance and Lower Shore Tributary Action Team sponsored the event where children from the two programs joined Alliance staff and other participants, including Maryland Delegate Addie Eckhardt and Local Government Liaison for Maryland DNR Scott Hymes, as they waded into the Nanticoke River to measure its clarity.

The children also explored the wildlife of the Nanticoke with Maryland DNR biologists and members of the Maryland Conservation Corps. The day was capped off with a free kayaking demonstration by Adrenaline High, a local kayak and biking tourism business.

If you'd like to join the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance in future events, follow us on Facebook, or fill out a volunteer interest form on our website to receive email updates



Participants at the Nanticoke River Wade In measuring the water clarity.

Creekwatcher Notes

Well this next sampling period will put us at just about the halfway point of the year. Wow it's flying by! Everyone seems to be hitting their groove now, the data sheets are rolling in, and if you check your email (or mailboxes for those of you without internet connections) you'll find a nice little surprise.

We've decided to forgo the online data entry for this season, but we have been using it in the office to test the capabilities and put together the first of our Sampling Spotlights. We're planning to put three of these out throughout the season so that you can get a

quick glimpse at the data you've been collecting. We'll be sending these out to our Creekwatcher Volunteers along with this Currents Quarterly. Just so you are aware, the information in these Sampling Spotlights are unprocessed, so it does not meet our EPA quality assurance protocol, but it still provides a raw look at the river through the season thus far.

Keep up the good work crew!

-Matt



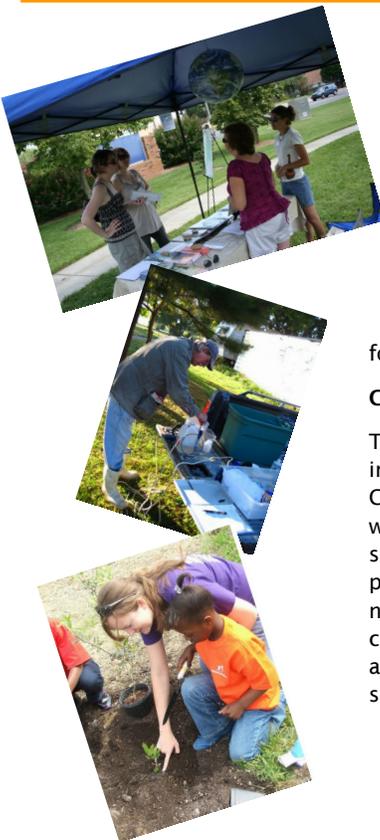
Youth from Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Lower Eastern Shore and the Salvation Army Richard Hazel Youth Center getting ready to paddle the Nanticoke with Stan Shedaker of Adrenaline High.

Alliance Partners

Allen's Hatchery, Inc.
Audubon MD-DC
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chicone Ruritan
D-LITE
**DE Dept. of Natural Resources &
Environmental Control**
Delaware BASS Federation
Delmarva Discovery Center
Delmarva Poultry Industry
Delmarva Power
Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth
Dorchester Farm Bureau
Dorchester Soil Conservation District
Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
Envirocorp Labs
Friends of Blackwater
Friends of the Nanticoke River
Galestown Millpond Association
Lower Shore Land Trust

Maryland Environmental Trust
Maryland Forests Association
MD Department of Agriculture
MD Dept. of Planning
MD Dept. of the Environment
MD Department of Natural Resources
Mountaire Farms
Nanticoke Concrete Works
Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy, Inc
Nanticoke Watershed Preservation Group, Inc.
NaturaLawn of America
NRG Energy
Perdue Farms, Inc.
River Farm
Salisbury University
Salisbury Zoological Park
Survival Products
Seaford Flotilla, USCG Auxiliary
The Conservation Fund (MD Office)
The Forestland Group
The Nature Conservancy
**University of Maryland Center
for Environmental Science**
U.S. National Park Service
Vision Forestry, LLC
Wicomico Environmental Trust

**Visit us online at
www.nanticoke.com!**



Volunteer Corner

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance is always looking for individuals interested in joining our dedicated team of volunteers. We currently are seeking volunteers for the following programs:

Creekwatchers:

The Alliance is seeking individuals to as "on-call" Creekwatchers to help fill in when needed throughout the season. The Alliance will provide all the training necessary and the time commitment will be flexible around the volunteers schedule.

Nanticoke Ambassador:

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance is looking to build a team of motivated individuals looking to learn more about the watershed and help educate the general public about the treasure we have flowing through our backyards. Duties would include: manning the Alliance outreach table at local festivals, Speaking with the general public about the natural and cultural heritage of the Nanticoke River, engaging youth in educational programs. The Alliance will provide training and educational material to Volunteers as well as support at outreach events.

General Office Volunteer:

The Alliance is in need of a volunteer to help enter data and provide general office assistance. Hours are flexible Monday-Friday between the hours of 9am-4pm. Duties would include: clerical office work and data entry.

If you would like to offer some of your time and talent to the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, please contact Matt Heim at 443-944-1175 or by email at matthewheim@nanticoke.com