From the Bridge

Environmental Education

The topic for this edition of “From the Bridge” has evolved from my personal values and has recently taken on an even more special meaning. As I sit here nine months pregnant with my first child, I understand more than ever the importance of instilling an environmental ethic in the next generation. I feel fortunate to have been raised in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and to have had parents and teachers that shared their love and passion of the environment with me. It influenced not only my education, volunteer experience, and career, but most importantly the values that I will strive to share with my daughter.

Environmental education is critical to protecting the health of our waterways for the future. Adults and youth need to be aware of the importance of natural resources and how they can take action to not only protect these resources in their own lives, but also influence governmental decisions towards environmental protections. At a recent meeting to discuss water quality regulations, facilitators asked participants to share their vision of what a healthy Bay would look like. The one response that resonated with me was the goal of having waters that we can safely swim in, eat fish from, and drink from a clean water supply. The Alliance is just one of many organizations working to provide this right for future generations.

In addition to collaboration, communication, conservation, and scientific integrity, education is one of the core values of the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance. The Alliance educates the community in a variety of ways and these efforts continually expand. In addition to outreach events, community meetings, and more, this past year represented the Alliance’s inaugural student and teacher education program. Teachers from Dorchester and Wicomico counties participated in an interactive three-day training focused on the importance of agriculture and connections with people in the watershed. In addition, the Alliance provided over 20 in-classroom presentations to 400+ students on the importance of the Nanticoke River Watershed, non-point source pollution, and solutions to water quality impacts. The Alliance has planned for student field trips and on-the-ground action projects this spring, including a 2.5 acre tree planting project in Sharptown (see page 2).

Thank you to the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Town Creek Foundation, and Governor O’Malley’s Stream Restoration Challenge program for their financial support. The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance is dedicated to educating the community on environmental stewardship and striving towards the vision of a healthy Bay for the next generation. We would love to hear from you.

I will be out of the office through May on family leave. Contact Lisa Baird at lisabaird@nanticokeriver.org, 410-443-8878 for assistance.
Interested in water quality, learning new things, and meeting new people? Want to join an award-winning team of Nanticoke-friendly (and just plain friendly) citizen scientists? Join the Nanticoke Creekwatchers!

The Seventh Annual Nanticoke Creekwatchers Training and Season Kickoff

Saturday, March 15
10:00 AM-4:00 PM
Vienna United Methodist Church Hall

Participants must register by contacting Beth Wasden at bethwasden@nanticokeriver.org or by calling 443.944.1175.

Toasts to the Nanticoke
Celebrating the Wonders of the Watershed
Call for Sponsors!

Friday, June 13th (6:30 ~ 10:00pm)
Layton’s Chance Winery, Vienna, MD
Join us for food, fun, & fellowship to support the NWA.

Open Wine Bar ❚ Vineyard Tour ❚ Appetizers & Desserts
Live Music ❚ Silent Auction ❚ Local Presenters ❚ & so much more!

Visit NANTICOKERIVER.ORG/EVENTS for tickets ($50 each)
Sponsorship Opportunities ~ please contact bethwasden@nanticokeriver.org

Sharptown Community Tree Planting
CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS & LUNCH SPONSORS!

You will be doing a tree-mendous service to your community, environment and local waterways!

Saturday, March 29th
(April 5th Rain Date)
9:00 AM—1:00PM
(Lunch and snacks will be provided)
Cherry Beach Park
110 Cherry Beach Rd
Sharptown, MD 21861

For more info/to sign-up, contact:
Lisa Baird
lisabaird@nanticokeriver.org
410-443-8878

Students from Mardela Springs Middle/High School will be planting 400 native trees and shrubs at Cherry Beach and Cope Bennett Park the day before this event.

We need the community to help finish the job!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED on Saturday, March 29th (April 5th rain date) to plant trees (if needed) but mostly to cart wheelbarrows, spread mulch and compost, and enjoy a free lunch!

This is a 2.5-acre planting project that will require physical labor. Please wear long pants and close-toed sturdy shoes or boots. Bring work gloves and shovels if you can.

This project is sponsored by the NWA in partnership with the Town of Sharptown and Wicomico County and funded through the Maryland DNR Governor O’Malley’s Stream Restoration Challenge.
NWA is excited to announce the re-launch of Paddle the Nanticoke at www.paddlethenanticoke.com. Paddle the Nanticoke aims to promote paddling, outdoor recreation, and tourism along the Nanticoke River, on the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, a federally designated water trail commemorating the explorations of Captain John Smith in 1607 and 1608.

The newly revised www.paddlethenanticoke.com has been redesigned with the visitor in mind. The main feature of the website is an interactive map depicting all of the public access sites along the Nanticoke River, its tributaries, and nearby Fishing Bay. Each point on the map corresponds with a more in-depth webpage, which outlines the characteristics of that access point, such as available facilities and information about the depth and current of the river at that location. Each public access point webpage also has pictures of that location, so that visitors will have an idea of what to expect prior to visiting in person.

Paddle the Nanticoke also provides a sampling of the various amenities located within the watershed. Specifically, the website lists places to stay, restaurants, cultural and historical attractions, wineries and breweries, and recreational and hunting opportunities. These amenities are displayed by county to help visitors plan their stay. The amenities listed are a sample of what is available within the watershed. When possible, the website also includes links to additional outside information.

In addition, the website contains background information about this region and about Captain John Smith, for those who might be new to the area or wish to learn more. This “About the Trail” section contains information about the region’s wildlife, local habitats and land use, Captain John Smith, and brief historical overviews of local towns. For new paddlers, the “Safety” section of the website also lists some helpful paddling resources, as well as reminders about what to pack for a paddling adventure.

Paddle the Nanticoke was made possible through a grant from the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network. Nanticoke Watershed Alliance would also like to thank the many partners that helped to make this website possible, including the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control; Dorchester County Department of Tourism; Caroline County Office of Tourism; Wicomico Parks, Recreation, and Tourism; and the Town of Vienna, MD.

Looking to get out on the water, or to simply explore the Nanticoke region? Be sure to visit Paddle the Nanticoke at www.paddlethenanticoke.com! From bird watching at Blackwater Wildlife Refuge to sky-diving in Laurel, there is something here for everyone.
SAVE THE DATE!
Homeowners’ Backyard Conservation Resource Fair

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance invites the public to join the NWA, partners, and vendors in Cambridge for the first Backyard Conservation Resource Fair. The event is free to the public and will be held at the Rommel’s ACE Hardware in Cambridge on Saturday, April 26 from 10:00am – 2:00pm.

The Resource Fair will feature exhibitors and vendors promoting backyard conservation techniques, such as native plants, permeable pavement, rain barrels, and organic lawn-care products. It will also feature free hands-on activities and games for children, food vendors, presentations and demonstrations, and free Nanticoke-friendly giveaways that attendees can use at home!

For more information about the Resource Fair, to inquire about becoming a vendor, or to volunteer for the event, please contact Amanda Anastasia:
Email: amandaanastasia@nanticokeriver.org
Phone: 410-202-9869

2014 Homeowner Workshops

The NWA will host a series of three free workshops in Federalsburg and in Sharptown from April-June. The workshops aim to empower homeowners to improve local water quality by providing knowledge and resources. Free soil tests and rain barrels will be offered to the first 20 participants.

Contact Beth Wasden at bethwasden@nanticokeriver.org or at 443.944.1175 to register or for more information.

Your Water, Your Watershed: April
Learn about water quality, why the Nanticoke is so special and why it needs your help, and how you can take steps to improve local water quality at your home and yard.

Soil Testing: May
(Tests must be submitted a month in advance of the workshop.)
Fertilizer—why buy it if you don’t need to apply it? NWA staff will help you obtain a soil sample and will submit samples to the University of Delaware’s Cooperative Extension Service at no charge to you. Soil scientists from the Extension Service will join NWA staff at the workshop to go over your results and to advise you on how to make your lawn beautiful and Nanticoke-friendly.

Rain Barrels: June
When it rains, it pours! Hang onto that excess rainwater for use when you need it. Stored rainwater can be used to water gardens and lawns in those hot summer months, saving you money while improving local water quality. You’ll also learn about rain gardens and other upgrades you can make to your property that will improve water quality and reduce flooding. The NWA will provide participants with a 45-gallon rain barrel and all hardware needed to install. Staff will also provide technical assistance after the workshop and follow up to see how your new rain barrel is working.
NANTICOKE RIVER WATERSHED TOWN PROFILE: FEDERALSBURG, MARYLAND

By Caroline Ailanthus

Federalsburg, Maryland, is a town of ambition. Like many other communities in the Nanticoke watershed, it got its start as a crossroads and shipping hub back when most “roads” in the area were rivers, and both shipbuilding and agriculture feature heavily in its economic past. Unlike many other towns, which are proud of their modern status as sleepy bedroom communities or tourist destinations, Federalsburg is actively marketing itself as an industrial hub.

Federalsburg sits on both banks of the Marshyhope Creek, a tributary of the Nanticoke River. The town began in the late 1700’s with a bridge and a small store nearby that served travelers. The community that grew up around that store was actually called The Bridge until 1812, when the town was renamed after, of all things, a political party. The Delmarva Peninsula was strongly Federalist at the time, and politicians and political speakers would come over the bridge and through town on speaking tours. The town was a pleasant place to stop, and so it received rather more than its fair share of partisan oration, as well as the nickname, Federalist Place. A rally held by the party in 1812 clinched the matter, and the town by the bridge has been Federalsburg ever since.

Federalsburg also had easy access to large white oak forests, a species excellent for shipbuilding. Unlike many other towns, Federalsburg did not have a deepwater port. Did that stop Federalsburg? Of course not. Ships were built using local wood right in town, but as the hull and decking were completed, the workers would pause. This was the stage when the young ship could float, but was not yet heavy enough to sit down in the water. The builders then had the incomplete ships towed four miles downstream to Brown’s Wharf where the water was deeper before completing and properly launching the vessels. Of course this scheme was inefficient and didn’t last, but the town wins points for pluck.

Other forms of local industry were more enduring and set the stage for the town’s identity today. Although the Marshyhope is too shallow for schooners upstream of Brown’s Wharf, goods moved along the creek in scows poled along by small crews. The Marshyhope is tidal, so traffic could follow the current in both directions. Logs traveled upstream on the floodtide to the sawmills above town, returning, cut into boards, on the ebb. In time, the milldam also produced electricity and operated until the early 1900’s. From logs, local industry branched out into textiles and grain. Several canneries opened, and with the coming of the railroad, Federalsburg supplied both canned and perishable goods to major urban markets like New York and Philadelphia. Today, the tradition of transport continues with an active trucking industry as well as the railroad, and the town boasts three major industrial parks. Among the town’s many major businesses is Stove Top Stuffing, which was invented, and is still produced, in Federalsburg.

There is room available in one of the industrial parks, and the town website makes it very clear that this is an ideal location. Federalsburg is attempting something of a rebirth, building on and expanding the traits that have worked well for it in the past: culture, transportation, and business. Major town infrastructure elements, such as the water tower and the wastewater treatment plant, have been replaced and upgraded within the past decade, and the town is proud of its waterfront, its greenway river walk, and the Federalsburg Heritage Museum. The Marshyhope is part of that rebirth, largely as a focus for recreational facilities and, of course, frequent fishing tournaments.

If you visit but do not care to fish and want something to do after seeing the museum, better schedule your trip for late spring. That’s when Federalsburg holds the only soapbox derby in the area, one that has produced national champions. The hill on Central Avenue is perfect for racing!

Photographer: George “Happy” Mayer, Main St. Administrator, Federalsburg
The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance held its annual Holiday Dinner on December 12. Guests enjoyed an evening of conversation, information, and fun at the Nanticoke River Yacht Club in Blades, DE. Special guest speaker, Jennifer Volk, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, discussed agricultural nutrient management efforts in Delaware that led to an in-depth discussion among attendees. Executive Director, Shelly Baird, presented the NWA’s 2014 annual report, which included some of the initiatives and programs listed below.

Last December, NWA hosted a Strategic Planning meeting where board, staff, and partners defined the organization’s five core values, which are: 1) Collaboration, 2) Communication, 3) Conservation, 4) Scientific Integrity, and 5) Education. This year our values were put into action, and we were able to see how our programs and initiatives align.

1) NWA has a diverse list of partner and was able to focus our efforts this year to collaborate and re-engage them as well as increase our frequency and quality of partner meetings. Meetings this year included: “Conowingo Dam: Clean Water Impacts” and “WIP Status and Project Highlights”.

2) NWA has many tools of communication, including the Nanticoke River Atlas, that were used to make connections with watershed Towns, including Bethel, DE, and Hebron, Sharptown, and Federalsburg, MD.

3) NWA believes that the health of the watershed is paramount and our conservation efforts included: river clean-ups, the Vienna Greenbelt Tree Planting, the Flexible Agricultural Buffers Program, Tom Tyler Nature Trail project, and Homeowner Workshops where homeowners learned conservation practices and installed rain barrels at their homes.

4) Scientific integrity is fundamental to the Creekwatchers program. EPA-approval of methodology and quality assurance are key components. This year, we released the Five Year Nanticoke River Report Card, and the program received a MD Governor’s Service Award.

5) This year, NWA established its very first Environmental Education program. We hosted a 3-day teacher workshop, a week-long Land and Water Connections Summer Camp, and provided in-classroom presentations on watersheds, water quality, sources of pollution, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to seventh grade students.

**LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO? GRAB YOUR CALENDARS AND CHECK OUT THESE LOCAL EVENTS:**

- **March 8, 10 AM-4 PM:** “Everything Oyster” at the Dorchester Heritage Museums and Gardens
- **March 15:** Eagle Fest at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
- **March 15, 9 AM-5 PM:** Boating Delaware - a Basic Safe Boating Class at the Nanticoke River Yacht Club
- **April 19, 9 AM-5 PM:** Boating Delaware - a Basic Safe Boating Class at the Nanticoke River Yacht Club
- **April 25, 6-9 PM:** Handsell Longhouse Fundraiser and Auction at Layton’s Chance
- **April 26, 10 AM-2 PM:** NWA Backyard Conservation Resource Fair at Cambridge Rommel’s ACE/Rommel Outdoors (see page 4)
- **April 27, 12-4 PM:** Earth Mother Day at Handsell House
- **May 4:** 2nd Annual Nanticoke River Marine Park Festival
- **June 7:** Broad Creek Byway “Bike and Brew” Tour, starting in Laurel at 8 AM and Wicomico Geocache Dash (all-day) and Wicomico Geocache Bash (2-8 PM)
- **June 8, 6:30 AM:** Ironman 70.3 Eagleman Triathlon
- **June 13, 6-10 PM:** Toast to the Nanticoke at Layton’s Chance Winery (see page 2)
- **July 11-12:** Seaford Riverfest
- **July (Date and Location TBD):** Annual Nanticoke River Wade In
- **August 2-4:** Eastern Shore Thresherman’s 53rd Annual Steam and Gas Show near Federalsburg
- **August 8-9:** Eastern Shore AFRAM
- **August 16, 10 AM-5 PM:** Great Eastern Shore Tomato Festival in Vienna

**FARMERS’ MARKETS:**


**Federalsburg:** Saturdays from 8 AM-1 PM

**Cambridge:** Thursdays from 3-6 PM and Saturdays in summer

**Salisbury:** Tuesdays from 2:30-5:30 PM