

Patuxent Newsletter

RIVERKEEPER®

Top Stories

We released a draft of our river restoration plan, *Patuxent 20/20*, at the 2nd Annual State of the River Summit. Our H₂O quality monitoring program should be operational by year's end.

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Your Riverkeeper



Acting locally for global results is key to seeing real progress.

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Advocacy

Our Special Session work addressed the inadequate funding of environmental agencies. We're preparing for the regular legislative session.

Draft stormwater regulations out soon.

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Restoration

Little Patuxent cleanup at Brock Bridge by Alpha Sigma Phi. We've planted most of our baby trees.

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Patuxent Goings-On

A bus tour of improved stormwater solutions was created for Columbia citizens, planners, and policy makers.

Our bus trips have been very popular this year.

The Patuxent Water Trail website is up and running.

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Events - Get Involved!

Rock the Rivers was successful.

Volunteer Interest Day: Learn more about what we do & how you can get involved.

Our Annual Party is Saturday, 11/10! Check out our calendar.

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Patuxent 20/20: blueprint for action

On October 5th the Patuxent Riverkeeper released a draft of its visionary report, *Patuxent 20/20*, at the 2nd Annual State of the River Summit.

The Summit was hosted by the Calvert Marine Museum at Solomon's Island. Over 100 people attended to learn about the river's condition and the actions required to restore it.

Patuxent Riverkeeper staff wrote *Patuxent 20/20* in response to the call to action expressed at the first summit in 2006. *Patuxent 20/20* was developed by integrating existing studies and reports on the river into a single document and was peer reviewed by the members of the Patuxent River Commission.

Pollution in the Patuxent comes from four main sources: development, agriculture, air deposition, and individual polluting facilities. *Patuxent 20/20* finds that there is no single solution that will restore and protect water quality—the solutions are many



and sometimes overwhelming. However, there are specific actions that can be taken immediately to protect the river.

The Patuxent Riverkeeper will finalize the report and release the final draft in December.

In December we will also release the results of our online opinion survey, which we will be running throughout November. The report and the survey are available on our website:

www.PaxRiverkeeper.org.

We encourage you to participate by taking the survey and letting us know what you think.

There are many challenges facing the watershed, especially as the region

absorbs a surge of new population. Elected officials, regulators, and citizens have the tools and solutions that can enable economic growth and development while protecting water quality. What is needed now is the determination to make tough choices and take action.

Water quality monitoring plan

The Patuxent Riverkeeper is in the final stages of developing our water quality monitoring program, which should be operational by the end of the year. The program will include coordinating testing by volunteers, managing a live-time website, and producing a report card on the health of the Patuxent.

The project is being developed in partnership with Chesapeake Bay Trust and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences, in conjunction with the South River Federation and the Chester Riverkeeper.

See H₂O, Page 2

H₂O From Page 1

Patuxent Riverkeeper staff are currently identifying potential monitoring sites and recruiting volunteers to collect samples and water quality data at these sites.

Testing sites will be available on the mainstem of the Patuxent in all seven counties and along some of the major tributaries. Volunteers will be provided with the training and equipment necessary to take part in this initiative.

Due to the expense of the testing kits, monitoring will only be done at specific sites and testing kits will be made available only to Patuxent Riverkeeper members.

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer water quality monitor, contact Lauren@PaxRiverkeeper.org ASAP!

We have nearly finished designing a secure web site that will allow our members to upload local water testing results and contrast those results with those of others in the watershed. Registered volunteers will be able to input water quality data which will be

mapped and graphed to create indicators of the river's health.

The website will also provide the option of uploading photos or videos of observable water quality problems.

The data will also be used to develop an annual Patuxent River Report Card similar to the Chesapeake Bay Report Card that has been used to inform the public of the health of the bay for many years.

The Patuxent River Report Card will be available yearly beginning in 2008 with water quality data available on the website throughout the year.

We're your Riverkeeper

Acting locally for global results

The most passionate and ardent defenders of the environment often tend to be those who are faced with an environmental threat in their immediate community or feel they directly and personally have something to lose unless they take a stand. In fact, I know more than a few career environmentalists who discovered a flair for environmental activism only when their neighborhood was faced with a disagreeable project such as a landfill, dump, power plant, dense housing project, or commercial installation. This is a real life expression of the well known sentiment, "think globally and act locally."

But putting all of our efforts into only local actions makes it difficult to unite the entire watershed to work toward a bigger goal, such as clean water. This paradox between what people are capable of doing in their immediate surroundings, combined with the need to remain connected to the efforts of a broader cause, is one of the most challenging realities of the environmental movement.

Clearly the road to a cleaner Patuxent will require both big and small picture activism. We look for ways to help local groups mobilize for action that will have an impact on the whole watershed. Our efforts producing the *Patuxent 20/20* action plan are an example of helping watershed residents grasp the bigger problems while supporting the local actions required to improve water quality for all. An environmental movement without these inherent linkages would eventually find itself chasing its own tail—we would cast about for high-minded goals while failing to make meaningful change in the watershed's local problems.

A bird's-eye view of the problem is too far above the issue to really see the effects of our actions on the ground. Yet the watershed is full of well-meaning folks blissfully toiling to save their backyard, hoping that somebody somewhere is dealing with the bigger-level problems. Some people think that taking care of the bigger picture is the correct role of government. Unfortunately, too many officials charged with protecting the environment are caught instead trying to balance the interests of various stakeholders. Sadly, in that balancing act, it is nearly impossible to give the appropriate weight to a person fighting to save the fish living in their creek when contrasted with a business interest hoping to put a 1,600-unit housing development next to a flood plain.

The public need and the public good are often pitted against a powerful pull from special interests. To fight that pull, citizens must be well informed and must make themselves critical stakeholders in the process. We desperately need citizen engagement in order to restore perspective and balance to the process. We must ensure that, while thinking globally and acting locally, we are ensuring that our local actions do have global consequences, as well. It's the only way we'll see progress instead of just platitudes on the river.



Advocacy

Legislative Review

The Special Session, which started in late October, was an opportunity for the state to fix not only the budget deficit but also the environmental deficit. The state's waterways, from the Patuxent to the Chesapeake, are all failing, with dead zones from too many nutrients afflicting our rivers and bays.

Funding for the departments that are charged with protecting our environment, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Natural Resources, has been drastically reduced over the last few years. The state's efforts to preserve land have been curtailed as over \$480 million has been diverted from our dedicated open space preservation funds and park operations have been cut 46% since 2002. Our mass transit is woefully unprepared to accommodate looming growth, with projects like the purple line and MARC expansion on hold as road expansions continue.

In preparation for the Special Session, this summer we joined a coalition of state environmental groups, led by 1000 Friends of Maryland and the Maryland League of Conservation Voters, in developing messaging and policy solutions to fix the budget deficit, while protecting the environment. We agreed that \$1.7 billion was not enough (that would only sustain our current anemic funding levels) and that any proposal to fix the budget had to be fair (polluters needed to pay for the state's cost for monitoring and cleaning up their pollution).

The Green Fund was one way to make the environment part of the solution. This bill would establish a small fee on impervious surface to fund the strategies listed in the Tributary Strategies plan, including stormwater retrofits and conservation practices on farms.



The other key piece of legislation involved closing the loophole that allows certain corporations to avoid paying real estate transfer taxes, which are the source of land conservation funding.

At the time of print, the success of these two bills was still in doubt, though things were moving fast. The ability of the Governor and the legislature to solve our environmental deficit will impact their legacy and the environmental legacy that we leave our children. Stay tuned to learn whether the environment won or lost this session.

Legislative Preview

The 2008 Legislative Session is nearly upon us and Patuxent Riverkeeper staff are ready to jump into action! One of the biggest policy reforms we will be working on will be improving the legislation that protects our critical areas, the land around the bay, and its tidal rivers (which includes parts of the Patuxent). This area is especially sensitive to development because the trees and wetlands along the river are the last chance for protecting water quality.

The Patuxent Riverkeeper has met with the Critical Areas Commission and other environmental groups this summer, developing policies to strengthen the law and protect this valuable buffer. We will be supporting some pivotal legislation this session and will need your help to get it passed! For more information or to get involved, contact Jennifer at Jennifer@PaxRiverkeeper.org.

Other issues, including growth, water quality, energy, and global warming will definitely be up for discussion and debate this session. Stay tuned for our winter newsletter for details on other legislative initiatives and what you can do to help!

Stormwater Update

Implementation of the Stormwater Management Act of 2007 has remained one of our biggest campaigns this summer. Polluted runoff from development causes 34% of the nitrogen and 38% of the phosphorous in the Patuxent each year, as well as 28% of the sediment. The Act passed this year will prevent those numbers from continuing to grow as the watershed's population increases by 22% in the next thirteen years.

Patuxent Riverkeeper spearheaded the formation of a Stormwater Consortium which now includes over 40 partners, including green building groups and other business interests. Technical experts in the consortium created a list of eleven core principles that would ensure meaningful implementation of the new stormwater law. The recurring theme among the principles is to create accountability at the site, local, and state levels to ensure that green development practices are applied at all new development sites.

See Stormwater, Page 4

Restoration

Fraternity cleans up Brock Bridge

The Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity at University of Maryland College Park removed trash and debris from the Little Patuxent and its floodplain on October 13. The group worked in the section of river adjacent to Brock Bridge Road in Anne Arundel County and removed over 20 bags of trash.

They are planning a second cleanup soon to remove some of the larger and more interesting items, including a bathtub, a big screen television and a couch.

Patuxent Riverkeeper would like to express deep thanks to the volunteers from Alpha Sigma Phi and the AACo Department of Waste Management for waiving the dumping fees to dispose of the collected trash.



Tree planting update

Patuxent Riverkeeper works with the Patuxent River Commission to plant trees along the banks of the Patuxent River and its tributaries.

In May, volunteers helped to pot about 500 trees of varying species destined to find a home along the river.

Since then, school children have worked with staff at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum to plant nearly 200 trees on the park grounds. An additional 200 trees will be planted by Boy Scout Troop 1203 at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station in mid-November.

The final 100 trees will be planted early next summer during the Patuxent River Sojourn. Each paddler will have the chance to give back to the river that they will be calling home for a week by planting a tree to stabilize its heavily eroding shoreline.

Patuxent Goings-On

Bus tour: Columbia stormwater issues

Columbia is almost forty years old and, nearing the maturation of many of its stormwater facilities, the community is looking at ways to upgrade, maintain, and retrofit them. For example, several of their "lakes" that drain stormwater into the Patuxent have become filled with sediment and, in some cases, have developed erosion problems and other issues that threaten their future viability.

Environmentally concerned citizens in Howard County have been looking at ways to address these problems with an eye toward protecting their quality of life and a sense of stewardship for their downstream neighbors.

Several groups in Howard County partnered with Patuxent Riverkeeper in October to host a bus tour to address local stormwater issues and concerns. The purpose of the tour was to encourage community planners and policy makers to look at environmentally less invasive methods of growth and to make citizens more discerning of stormwater methods and practices.

Various members of the Columbia area's civic community and Delegate Elizabeth Bobo (District 12B) participated in the event. The group looked at drainage issues from parking lots, sinkholes where

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Stormwater From Page 3

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has spent the summer drafting regulations to implement these new requirements. There are three critical areas that must be contained in those regulations. They must include numeric pollution criteria to ensure that the new law is enforceable; a clear, mandatory requirement to use green development

techniques; and increased limits on pollution from construction-side activities.

MDE anticipates having draft regulations finished early next year. We will be sure to update you on the process and will let you know how to comment on that draft to ensure a strong finished product. With these new regulations the State has an opportunity to be a national leader in managing stormwater runoff—an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

Columbia

From Page 4

massive flows of water from hillside development has resulted in deep ravines, and newly installed stormwater facilities that gather water from nearby impervious surfaces and channel the water into massive drainable swales and spouts.

Sponsorship for the Howard County Bus Tour was provided by the Howard County Citizens Association, the James and Anne Robinson Nature Center Foundation, Howard County Public Schools, Committee for Lake Elkhorn's Environmental Restoration, Friends of Wilde Lake, the Patuxent River Tributary Strategies Team (Patuxent River Commission), and the Maryland State Department of Natural Resources.



the C&O Canal and tubed and kayaked on the Potomac River. In August, a group of our members headed to Southern Maryland's Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum for a paddle across the Patuxent to a picnic at Sotterly Plantation. Later in August, the Patuxent Riverkeeper and the Susquehanna Riverkeeper, Mike Helfrich, toured Conowingo Hydroelectric Dam on the lower Susquehanna River.

In September, Patuxent Riverkeeper teamed with Dick Tettelbaum, the Choptank Riverkeeper, for a paddle on Tuckahoe Creek in Tuckahoe State Park.

We also hosted a paddle for both state and county legislators and their aides, bringing a dozen legislative officials to visit the Triadelphia Reservoir and the Jug Bay area of the Patuxent.

Bus trips big success!

This summer we began offering tours on the River Bus. The concept behind these tours is to provide trips in and out of our home watershed that offer good exercise, interesting destinations, interaction with like-minded people, great food, and fun!

Each itinerary is structured so participants get to sample some of what makes the destination unique and worth visiting. These trips are a fusion of preservation science, natural attractions, sightseeing, birding, and sustainability tourism.

In July, a group traveled to Little Orleans (Western, MD) where they camped along



Lastly, in October we offered a guided tour of Poplar Island, a habitat restoration project in the Chesapeake Bay.

Each trip was very well received with particularly high marks for the food.

Several trips were catered by "green" businesses in the watershed, such as Great Sage Organic Restaurant in Ashton, Good Earth Natural Foods in Leonardtown and Whole Foods Market in Annapolis.

Join us for exciting adventures next year.

Paddle trail website

The Patuxent River Commission, Patuxent Riverkeeper, and agencies from each of the seven counties bordering the Patuxent River have convened to create a

new Patuxent Water Trail website. The Patuxent Water Trail offers visitors the information needed to paddle the river, camp along its banks, and visit its parks, historic sites, sanctuaries, and wildlife areas.

The Patuxent River is known for its treasured resources and natural beauty. Dense woodlands buffer the upper reaches while farmlands dominate the southern part, creating scenic vistas and a serene rural environment. Archaeological and cultural resources tell the story of 10,000 years of human habitation. The marshlands provide an abundance of food and shelter for wild-life while the river offers opportunities for fishing, crabbing, and other recreational activities.

In 1968, the State recognized its valuable resources and designated the Patuxent River as one of Maryland's Scenic Rivers. Since then, federal, state and local agencies, along with conservation organizations have partnered together to preserve, enhance, and restore the natural and cultural resources of the river and to be good stewards for the protection of its watershed. Some of those partners have contributed information, financial support, and assistance to make this website possible.

The Patuxent Water Trail website is a work in progress. At this time, a full list of launching sites can be found on the site. In the future, visitors will be able to find launching and camping sites, as well as maps and photographs of each site. Additional resources, such a contact information and weather will also be available. If you see information that is incorrect, incomplete, or wish to add information to assist other paddlers, please contact the webmaster: Paddle@PaxRiverkeeper.org



Events/ Get Involved

Rock the Rivers update

On October 20, Anne Arundel County's five Waterkeepers joined forces to raise awareness and funds to support the fight for our waterways. Baltimore Harborkeeper, Patuxent Riverkeeper, Severn Riverkeeper, South Riverkeeper, and West/Rhode Riverkeeper held the event at Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Merrill Center in Annapolis.

The event featured performances by Straight Steel & Wire and Riverside Drive Rhythm & Blues. Whole Foods donated delicious food and Buck Distributing provided beer.

We hope to see you next year at the 2nd Annual Rock the Rivers.

Volunteer Interest Day

Huge apologies to the folks who contacted me interested in volunteering or becoming county captains—life here at the Riverkeeper has been crazy, and my inbox overfloweth.

Now that we are done with the trips and paddles and planting for the year, we are going to hold a Volunteer Interest Day for anyone who is... well... interested!

Please join us on December 8 from 10a - 12p at the Riverkeeper office. We will discuss what we do, the ways folks can get involved, and even throw in a quick preview of the coming legislative session.

Refreshments will be served so please RSVP if you can attend. For more info or to sign up contact Jennifer@PaxRiverkeeper.org.

Other easy ways to support Patuxent Riverkeeper

Support the Patuxent Riverkeeper by shopping at your favorite store. Register for the Escrip Program and when you shop with participating merchants, a percentage of your purchase will be donated to us. Register either at the store or online: www.escrip.com and be sure to designate Patuxent Riverkeeper to receive the donation.

Note that you can also raise money for us when you search online with GoodSearch, www.goodsearch.com. Again, be sure to designate Patuxent

Riverkeeper to receive the donation—those pennies really add up!

MWMC 13th Annual Conference

The Maryland Water Monitoring Council will hold its 13th Annual Conference at the Maritime Institute, North Linthicum, on Thursday, December 6.

The one day conference, "Closing the Knowledge Gap - Connecting Maryland's Streams to the Bay," will focus on monitoring and modeling in tidal and non-tidal waters and will emphasize linkages between the two.

A morning plenary session will include a keynote address by Maryland Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler and a plenary talk by Dr. Michael Mallin from the University of South Carolina Wilmington.

The registration fee is \$65. Additional conference information, including a registration form and draft agenda, can be found online at:

<http://mddnr.chesapeakebay.net/MWMC/conf/2007/2007conference.html>

Volunteering for Patuxent Riverkeeper

I like volunteering with the Patuxent Riverkeeper Roughnecks because it gives me a chance to give back to the Patuxent in an immediate and much needed way. I have met many great, like-minded people who are as interested as myself, and they keep me coming back to be a Roughneck. Plus any time I can spend figuring out how to saw tree limbs from a kayak is time well spent!

~ Kate Fritz

Helping clear snags blocking paddling passages is a great way to kayak with other Roughnecks and improve enjoyment of the Patuxent River. Teamwork brings results!

~ Mike Davie

There is a sense of ownership that comes with volunteering with the Riverkeeper. That vested interest is what keeps me coming back. The river is real and it flows through my back yard. It's nice to know that someone is looking out for it.


~ Sue Mangan

Though I work on the newsletters from home and am RARELY in the office, or the river for that matter, I still feel like part of an awesome team. Volunteering with Patuxent Riverkeeper has allowed me to do work I enjoy, to hone my skills, to meet new people, and to support a group that actually affects change.

~ Kelly Myers

PATUXENT RIVERKEEPER CALENDAR


november

10  Third Annual Party
6p - 9p @ Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary in Anne Arundel County

Suggested donation:
\$25 members
\$50 non-members

22  Thanksgiving

december

4 Hanukkah begins  at sundown

6 13th Annual Maryland Water Monitoring Council Conference

8 Volunteer Interest Day
10a - 12p @ PaxRiverkeeper office

22 Winter Solstice

25  Christmas

january

1 Happy New Year!

9 First day of 2008 Legislative Session

21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Patuxent Riverkeeper is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance.



Support Patuxent RIVERKEEPER® - Become a Member

Name _____ Membership Level (check)

Street Address _____ Red-winged Blackbird..\$35

City/State/Zip _____ Green-winged Teal..... \$75

Phone _____ eMail _____ Osprey..... \$125

Great Blue Heron..... \$250

Bald Eagle..... \$500

Whooping Crane..... \$1000

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Thank you!



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The Patuxent River is your river.

Find out how you can
help us restore &
protect it.

Volunteer Information Day

Saturday, December 8
10AM - 12PM

Patuxent Riverkeeper Office

We'll discuss what we do, different ways you
can get involved, & throw in a quick preview of the coming legislative session.
Refreshments will be served so please let us know if can attend. For more info
or to sign up, contact Jennifer@PaxRiverkeeper.org.

Seeping from a spring at its headwaters near Mount Airy in Howard County, the Patuxent River gathers force as it winds through seven counties. The river flows through two dams, over Savage Falls, through the vast Patuxent Refuge and the untamed lowlands of Jug Bay, into a deep water culture of oysters and crabs along the rolling fields in Southern Maryland, and finally joins the Chesapeake Bay in St. Mary's and Calvert Counties.