

*Dorchester
Citizens
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Growth*



DCPG NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018

President's Letter

Spring greetings to all members and friends of DCPG! Our group continues to chug along with a variety of social, fundraising, and policy events in 2018. Since I wrote to you last we have hosted a successful general membership meeting in which we honored Midge Ingersoll of the Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance with our annual stewardship award and received an update on our continuing water monitoring program. (More on this later in the letter.) The general membership meeting at the end of January was followed by two film events in downtown Cambridge at the new performance space at 447 Race Street. The first was the well-attended Wild and Scenic film festival which we hosted in collaboration with the Shore Rivers organization. The second was the premier showing of the Dave Harp, Tom Horton, Sandy Cannon-Brown film "High Tide in Dorchester." This cinematic consciousness raising documentary about sea level rise has since been featured on Maryland Public television. The film debut was co-hosted with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies at Horn Point. The cocktail menu included fresh half-shell oysters from the Little Choptank River which were enjoyed by nearly 200 people.

Two more spring events occurred in April. On the 15th, DCPG volunteers joined with volunteer employees from The Hyatt Regency Resort and the John Tieder Electric company on Woods Road for

"Project Clean Stream" trash pickup. In two hours 16 volunteers, ages ranging from 5 to 70 years, picked up 55 bags of assorted garbage (primarily recyclable plastic and glass) from a 1/2 mile stretch of Woods Road North which drains into the Choptank River. Junior DCPG volunteer Fionna Boetgger (age 5) was an inspiration to all the other participants! One week later on April 22nd, DCPG sponsored our 6th annual Earth Day Horseshoe Tournament at the Spocott Windmill property. The cold spring weather chose to relent that morning and the pitchers enjoyed themselves while listening to old folk rock tunes volunteered by The John E. Wa 2Z band. This fun event was a collaboration with The Spocott Historic Village Foundation.

Turning now to the less fun, more serious, aspects of our current endeavors I want to update everyone on DCPG's ongoing efforts to shed light on the continuing degradation of a formerly beautiful Dorchester waterway, the

Transquaking River. You may recall that since 2014 we have been tracking the expansion of the chicken rendering plant called Valley Protein which discharges wastewater into the Transquaking headwaters. This company's Dorchester location is the only facility in Maryland for the processing of tons of chicken offal. It serves as a regional dumping ground and, with the current supersizing of the chicken raising and processing industries here on the shore, Valley Protein is seeking to gain augmented permits for withdrawal of groundwater from the underlying aquifers and for discharge of wastewater.

Our inquiry into the environmental and public health consequences of this company's expansion has been confusing and frustrating. We know that the Transquaking, like all bay tributaries, is supposedly mandated for protection by the EPA under the 2012 law upgrading the Program for the Chesapeake Bay which established pollution limits for all streams flowing into the Bay. These limits are classified under the nomenclature "Total Maximum Daily Loads" (or TMDL). We also know from our water testing that the Transquaking continues to be severely degraded in terms of dissolved oxygen, and the presence of excessive nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus. What we have been unable to determine is if either the Federal (EPA), State (MDE), or local governments (Dorchester County Health Department and County Commissioners) are willing to take action to protect the river and the people in its watershed as they are required to do under the law.

DCPG has been joined by the League of Women Voters as we struggle to raise awareness of the plight of the Transquaking. We have been waiting since 2014 for a promised public hearing on Valley Protein's application for an expanded discharge permit. In the meantime, new construction is taking place at the facility

and incoming trucks discharge chicken guts, feathers, and blood on a 24/7 basis.

From our experience at the informational hearings we have attended it seems that Maryland's Dept. of Environment acts more like a facilitator to industry than a watchful protector of the public interest. While we agree that the waste should be dealt with in an efficient manner, we do not see why all the burden of disposal should fall on one small waterway, which is already imperiled by non-point source pollution all along its headwaters. Although there are anecdotes of dogs dying from strange bacterial infections after swimming in the water downstream from the rendering plant, and signs have been posted forbidding swimming in these waters, the Transquaking remains largely a river without a constituency of public concern. DCPG will continue to keep our members informed as we work to decide the best course of action to protect this river.

Fred C. Pomeroy, DCPG President



Blackwater Wildlife Refuge, Spring 2018



Volunteer planting at the Cannery Park stream restoration, May 2018

Cannery Park Stream Restoration

If you have driven on Cedar St recently you should have noticed the new construction project next to the Super Soda gas station. That construction is the stream restoration of upper Cambridge Creek. It is the first part in the multi-part Cannery Park project. The stream restoration starts at Washington St and restores almost 1,400 feet of the head waters to Cambridge Creek.

The stream restoration is an integral part of Cambridge's soon to be newest public space. Cannery Park is the result of planning and funds-seeking process that has been in the works for seven years by the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Cross Street Partners, the City of Cambridge, and Dorchester County. The concept is to repurpose a large portion of the old industrial section of Cambridge that had been unused for many years. The site will consist of the Phillips Packing House, Cannery Park, and the stream restoration.

The building, Phillips Packing Company, Factory F, is a 60,000 square foot vacant warehouse that has been vacant for decades, but still retains many features of its 19th century design. Historic masonry, large warehouse style windows, and industrial doors are some of the details that remain for reuse.

Originally built in 1920 for the Cambridge Furniture Company, The Packing House stands as the last remaining factory from the Phillips Packing Company's empire of vegetable and food packing businesses. The Phillips Packing Company employed thousands of people in Cambridge and was responsible for supplying K and C rations to US troops during World War II. The company closed in the 1960's, and the building has been deteriorating since. Redeveloping this historically significant building in a manner that celebrates its distinctive heritage seeks to honor and preserve the legacy of the Phillips Packing Company in Cambridge. For more information on the Cannery Park project please visit

<https://www.thepackinghousecambridge.com>.

The stream restoration, the first part of the project to be completed is a collaboration of two firms that are on the forefront of environmental restoration Biohabitats, Baltimore, and Underwood and Associates, Annapolis. Funding for the project was from a grant from the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust. This was funded largely from the "rain tax", or Bay Restoration Funds that we contribute to.

As you can imagine a stream running through an industrial area for many decades would have its

share of problems. Invasive vegetation had virtually covered the stream, and many parts of the stream had been flowing through concrete pipes for decades. The area was a place to dispose material that was no longer needed and would be out of sight. In addition, a concrete crushing plant was on the property and the stream was a good place to dispose of unwanted refuse.

Surveying and permitting for the restoration took about two years and the design was to daylight or expose the stream to the surface by removing the concrete pipes. Sewer and power lines run underneath the stream so care had to be taken to not damage those. The stream drainage area is mostly impervious surfaces including portions of the old Phillips property south of Washington St over to McDonald's on Rt 50. The stream sees daylight just north of Washington St and flows into Cambridge Creek at Cedar St. in a culvert next to the Super Soda.

The stream channel was cleaned then raised about 5-10 ft by filling with sand, cobble and woody debris so that the water would move through that material and give bacteria and plants a chance to take up nutrients, bind pollutants and thereby clean the water. This would also cap or bury older, more polluted sediments in the stream and keep them from being washed downstream. The channel was constructed to consist of a series of pools and riffles that would slow stormwater to give it a chance to infiltrate into the sand and cobble and allow the bacteria in the soil to work their magic. As the stream moves down toward Cambridge Creek it opens up to tidal water then continues through the culvert at Cedar St. There is a tributary off of the Packing House that will be incorporated into the Cannery Park which will then flow into the tidal portion of the creek.

This method of treating stormwater by slowing it and allowing it to infiltrate into the ground has been developed by Underwood and Biohabitats and has been used in a variety of locations on the western and eastern shores for over 15 years. An important aspect of this project is the use of native vegetation to increase stability of the project and provide an additional way to uptake excess nutrients from the

stormwater. Students from the Agriculture Science class from the South Dorchester Votech Center became interested in the project and raised many of the plants that were recently installed along the stream shorelines.

Our Creekwatchers will be monitoring the site to document potential reductions in coliform bacteria and nutrients as the water moves through the project.



Stream Planting, May 2018.

Recycling Update

The new recycling center is up & running. You will find it on Leonards Lane across from the Department of Public Works. DCPG has offered to work with the County to create educational signs for the center. The site is nice and neat and easy to use. Bins fill up quickly, proving this site was needed. If you would be interested in helping with this effort, please contact Susan Olsen at 410-476-7091 (susanolsen5887@yahoo.com).



How much of this is recyclable??

Calendar for 2018



April 14th – Project Clean Stream

16 volunteers picked up 55 bags of trash on Woods Road.

April 21 – Earth Day & Horseshoe Tournament

Co-sponsored by DCPG and Spocott Windmill Foundation.

May 17th – Faithful Stewards Action Social

4:30 to 7:30 PM – Local environmental groups will hold an information sharing event at Waugh Chapel.

May 19th - Choptank River Wade-In

1:00 PM at Sailwinds Park Visitors Center.

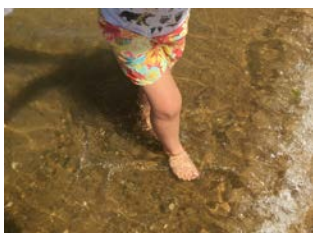
June & July – Clean Water Concert Series

Sponsored by Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Avalon Theater. June 16th, June 23, July 7th on Harrison Street, Easton.

September 23 – Dorchester Showcase

October 13th – Nanticoke River Jamboree

Wild & Scenic Film Festival – TBD



2nd Annual Wade-In



First Wade-In, Spring 2017.

Join DCPG as we hold our second Wade-In to the Choptank River. This is a fun way to measure water clarity. DCPG members and friends will walk into the river from the beach at the Visitors Center until they can no longer see their toes.

We will meet at the Stormwater Station, near the parking lot at the Sailwinds Park Visitors Center, Cambridge at 1:00 PM. Gabbin's Ice cream truck will help us celebrate!

For the past 25 years, Wade-In events have been held throughout the state of Maryland. The following link leads to a story about Bernie Fowler, the Maryland Senator who started the tradition.

<http://planning.maryland.gov/Pages/OurWork/fowlerwadein.aspx>

Donate to DCPG!

DCPG is a 501©3 organization.

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Membership Categories

___ Student, \$5 w/ID
___ Individual, \$15.00
___ Family, \$25.00
___ Supporting, \$50.00
___ Sustaining, \$100.00