

*Dorchester
Citizens
For
Planned
Growth*



DCPG NEWSLETTER

Fall 2015

Letter from the President

Brisk fall greetings to all our members and friends! DCPG has been busy this summer with several important water quality hearings and participation in the ongoing discussion about the future of Sailwinds Park. In addition to staying abreast of these issues, we are planning to implement phase one of our Stormwater Demonstration Station educational project at the Dorchester County Visitor Center by the foot of the Choptank River Bridge.

This project will initially consist of a small pavilion to model “green building” techniques, including a living roof and a small rain garden to filter storm water run-off before it enters the Choptank. You may recall that both the city and county governments have committed start up funds for this endeavor, which we envision as a pilot project to start Dorchester down the path of making water quality improvements in accordance with the Bay Cleanup Program. When finished, the project will include two additional full scale rain gardens to filter run off from the parking lots at the visitor center. This stormwater now flows directly into the river in the immediate vicinity of the public beach which is used by many county residents. DCPG

members and professional builders Ted and Ben Boettger will act as volunteer general contractors for construction of the pavilion, which will be modeled after a similar building in Centreville. Restoration specialists from the group Environmental Concern are lending their expertise to the design and location. Our executive director Beth Ann Lynch is also coordinating this activity with Dorchester County Tourism and the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance. We hope to have phase one completed this fall and will be calling on members for both additional financial contributions and hands on help.

Regarding the Sailwinds Park issue, DCPG has lent its support to the concept of keeping this maritime resource, with its deep water landing, in the public domain for the present time. The Governor’s Hall building is serving an important purpose as a community hall and the public is reluctant to sacrifice this prime waterfront location to a private developer. We have presented oral and written testimony to this effect at a public hearing before the Cambridge City Council this summer. The written portion of our testimony appeared in a recent edition of the Dorchester Banner dated September 11, 2015

and can be accessed as a link on our website www.dcpgonline.org.

DCPG is also following the developments around the current “supersizing” of the Delmarva poultry industry. You may be aware that Asian companies have bought out at least one of the chicken processing companies on the shore and are moving forward with proposals to construct up to 300 new giant sized chicken houses in Somerset County alone. This massive enlargement of an industry which contributes greatly to air and water pollution on the shore is troubling, particularly since the economic benefits of this enlargement may go to foreign interests. Already, a company called Valley Protein has acquired the rendering plant at Higgins Mill Pond in Dorchester and has applied for a permit to triple the discharge outflow from the plant in anticipation of processing massive amounts of offal from the millions of slaughtered birds. DCPG has been monitoring water quality on the Transquaking River below the rendering plant for eight years and has data to show that this river is severely polluted already. We will be joining other interested parties to voice our concerns when the next public hearing on the Valley Protein proposal is scheduled.

Keeping up with just the activities summarized above constitutes some heavy lifting for a small local group like ours. As always, we thank our members for their interest and their support of our work.

Sincerely yours,

Fred C. Pomeroy, DCPG President



DCPG Monitors Discharge Permitting

During the past year, DCPG has been involved in three local permit applications to discharge water into groundwaters or directly into the waters of Dorchester County. Two of these permits can affect the Transquaking River, a body of water that DCPG Creekwatchers have been testing for several years, and where the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has posted warnings about water quality.

On September 23, 2014, DCPG was one of several groups that participated in the public meeting on the Valley Proteins, Inc. application to renew its permit (NPDES #MD00003247) under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and a modification to the original permit that would raise the maximum discharge to the Transquaking River from 150,000 to 575,000 gallons a day in order to expand its poultry rendering plant in Linkwood. There has been no further public notice concerning this application. (See DCPG Newsletter Fall 2014 and Susan Bautz’s article in the Dorchester Banner on October 2, 2014.)

<http://www.dorchesterbanner.com/business/vp-permit-meeting-answers-questions/>

On May 28, 2015, the application of the Beaver Run Mobile Home Park in Linkwood to fix its failed septic system was the subject of a public meeting where DCPG and others asked MDE several questions about its proposed determination to issue a permit to discharge an average of 6,750 gallons of water per day to ground waters via a sandlined trench/drip dispersal system. According to MDE's Groundwater Discharge Permit's Summary Report and Fact Sheet, the Park's groundwater "moves toward Higgins Millpond which is a eutrophic surface water body." MDE regulators assured DCPG that its Compliance staff would closely monitor monthly test results of four wells and results would be publicly available on the Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) website at <http://echo.epa.gov>. MDE's formal response to questions raised included assumptions, calculations, and references and concluded that the proposed system would result in a 94% nitrogen load reduction and minimize the cumulative impact to water quality. So, on July 8, 2015, MDE issued permit # MD3811J14. Since March 22, 2012 the Park, which is located close to Higgins Millpond and the Transquaking River, has been under an order of the Dorchester County Department of Health to "pump and haul" wastewater generated by the mobile homes connected to failing drain fields.

Most recently, on October 9, 2015, DCPG participated in the public meeting on the proposed renewal of the Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant's permit (MD0021636) to discharge an average of 8.1 million gallons of treated domestic and industrial wastewater. Some of the compliance data posted on the ECHO website raised questions. MDE officials

and the Plant's operator, Maryland Environmental Service, explained conditions that affected certain test results, such as the dissolved oxygen test result in 2012 caused by Hurricane Sandy. DCPG reps tour the Plant on October 21.

Public participation in the NPDES permitting is important so the protections of the federal and state laws are effective. DCPG has been working hard to make sure that threats to our local water quality do not go unchallenged. Information on the above three permits and others in Dorchester County is available at the ECHO website <http://echo.epa.gov>. Michigan's 2005 "A Citizen's Guide to Water Quality Permitting" https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-oea-NPDESCitizensGuide_446248_7.pdf provides general information applicable to NPDES permits nationwide. Thanks to Matt Pluta, Mid-Shore Riverkeepers, for recommending this handy tool.

By Margaret Anzalone

Local Rising Seas on YouTube

For those who may have missed attending the February 21, 2015 program on "The Future is Now: Dealing with Rising Seas on Maryland's Shores," it is available now on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdZWpVkJOw0fqK1YdmfWqDTGVFV6k5v3rt>

Keynote speaker, Donald Boesch, Ph.D., Drew Koslow, Wayne Gilchrest and others line up to explain and guide in this program put together by the Maryland League of Women Voters and Chesapeake College with DCPG member, Pat Comella. Richard Ball reported on this educational program in the spring DCPG newsletter at

http://dcpgonline.org/uploads/spring_2015.pdf

The following DCPG members joined or renewed their membership at or above the \$50 level:

Thank You!

Miriam and Willem Zijp
Peter C Paul
Dr. and Mrs. Buczek
Richard Balling
Patti and Porter Hopkins
Mr. and Mrs. William Giese
Kathy Gordon and Bill Farver
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bright
Kathy and Brian Manicke
Margaret and George Anzalone
Judd Vickers and Greg Barto
Mr. and Mrs. Jon E. Ingersoll
Lexine Lowe and Fred Pomeroy
Beth Ann and Jim Lynch
Diane Stoecker
Margaret and Douglas Worrall
Richard Ball
Kalla Kvalnes and Tom Fisher
Donna Stotts
Mr. and Mrs. W. Marshall Rickert
George and Jackie Radcliffe
Matt and Michele Whitbeck
Judith Stribling
Donna and Wayne Towers
Catherine McCulley
Barbara Hale
Libby Handley Nagel
Bruce Robson
Erica and Charles Kropp

Coaches Make a Difference

Habitat for Humanity, Choptank is looking for Dorchester volunteer coaches.

Do you have experience in home ownership, contracts and budgeting? Would you like to work directly with Habitat partner families? If so, coaching may be in your future.

For more information about what is involved, please contact Pat Ingram at program@habitatchoptank.org

Join DCPG at local events

October 24th & 25th

Schooner Rendezvous

and

November 13th

Wild and Scenic Film Festival

Cambridge Center for the Arts

Info at Cambridge Main Street

<http://bit.ly/WildAndScenicInfo>

Buy tickets at

<http://bit.ly/WildAndScenic>