

*Dorchester  
Citizens  
For  
Planned  
Growth*



# DCPG NEWSLETTER

## Fall 2017

Fall greetings to members and friends of DCPG. The Board has been meeting regularly all summer and has already started planning for a winter film festival and the annual general membership meeting in January. We will keep you posted with details on these and other upcoming events. In lieu of the usual president's letter this time I am submitting a memoir of the Blackwater Resorts development battle which I was recently asked to write for the 50th anniversary edition of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation magazine. This conflict was of course the spark which led to DCPG's incorporation twelve years ago. We want to personally thank those of you who have been with us ever since that battle, as well as the many of you who have joined us since then and may not be aware of some of the details recounted herein.

### **Memoir of Blackwater Resorts**

As a lifelong resident of Dorchester, I can say with some certainty that my home county has often been vulnerable to the glossy promises and get rich quick schemes of out of town developers. This was in my mind about 12 years ago when I attended an “informational

meeting” in the auditorium of an elementary school located on the road to Blackwater Refuge. In addition to representatives of the real estate developer, the (then) President of our County Council was on hand to tout the economic benefits for Cambridge and Dorchester that would ensue from the creation of a mega-scale golf course resort and housing project to be located at the boundary of the school property and extending 5 miles south along the wild and scenic Little Blackwater River toward the Refuge boundary.

Because progressive “Smart Growth” planning regulations instituted under the administration of former Maryland Governor Paris Glendening required that large scale developments were supposed to be placed within cities rather than on rural lands the project would have to be located within Cambridge to get certain tax advantages and waivers from the Critical Areas Administration which had jurisdiction over the project. In total violation of the principles of smart growth, the developers and their political supporters were proposing that the 1000 acre target property would first be annexed into the Cambridge city limits to get around the restrictions on developing rural land. At the end of the comment period I questioned the wisdom of

extending the city boundary so far into environmentally sensitive areas and pointed out that the proposed annexation would be so gerrymandered that Cambridge would look like it had an Italian boot as its southern boundary. My remarks were met with stony silence. No one else spoke against the project and in following months the outlandish annexation was accomplished according to the developer's wishes.

If completed according to its original plan this mega development with its 3000 plus housing units would have doubled the population of Cambridge, in effect creating a separate town attached only by a false geographical boundary. Most of us here on the Eastern Shore want to "Keep It Rural" (to quote the motto of the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy). Over the next two years a growing number of local people, including watermen and farmers, showed up at numerous public hearings to protest the proposed resort. We had virtually no political support until the Chesapeake Bay Foundation joined with us in calling out the project's violation of sound planning principles. CBF formally aligned with the local citizens at a press conference held outside the school at the point where the resort project was to begin. This formal action was a turning point in our fight to save rural lands on the edge of Blackwater Refuge. CBF's involvement in halting this foolish and greedy development was courageous and monumental.

On the eve of his bid for a second gubernatorial term, Republican Governor Robert Erlich announced that the State of Maryland would buy over 600 acres of the contested property and establish best management practices for agriculture and environmental stewardship on these newly acquired public lands. Our battle to save the Blackwater drainage was largely successful. With CBF's encouragement, the local concerned citizens

formed a non-profit environmental group called Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth (DCPG) which remains active today. DCPG has continued to partner with CBF on initiatives affecting the health of the Bay and its tributaries.

Fred C. Pomeroy, lifelong Chesapeake Bay waterman, DCPG President, and CBF member

### **DCPG Creekwatcher Report**

By Richard Ball

With ten years of data, DCPG volunteer creekwatchers continue to monitor water quality in our local streams throughout the year. In association with Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, which provides training, equipment and finances laboratory costs April through November, DCPG volunteers Richard Ball and Robert Sellers monitor four Fishing Bay headwater sites every other Monday morning. These sites are Little Blackwater headwaters (Cambridge By-pass near Snow's Turn), Little Blackwater tributary (Maple Dam Road near Luthy Road), Transquaking headwaters (west-bound side of Route 50 at Hicksburg Road at Linkwood), and Chicamacomico headwaters (east-bound side of Route 50 below Big Mill Pond near Vienna). At each site, water samples are collected at 0.5 meter depth to be analyzed for salinity, chlorophyll a (at Chicamacomico and Little Blackwater tributary), bacteria (fecal enterococcus), and nutrients (total nitrogen and total phosphorus). A Secchi disc is used to measure turbidity (water clarity) and total water depth. Dissolved oxygen is measured with an electronic meter at specific points in the water column (depending on total water depth) to be

presented as a “dissolved oxygen depth profile”. During the November through February period, the volunteers continue to monitor the four sites every other Monday with lab analysis funded by DCPG and equipment provided by NWA.

Every other Wednesday morning, two Choptank watershed sites are monitored year- round. Cambridge Creek headwaters (DCPG’s newest site started April 2017) at Cedar Street in Cambridge has a focus to compliment Cambridge’s effort to clean up this stream. Also on Monday schedule is Choptank River at the Cambridge Visitor’s Center with a two year data base. DCPG’s focus here is to examine water quality sixty feet off-shore from the beach where children are often seen swimming in the summer. No chlorophyll a analysis is done at the Choptank watershed sites, but data on salinity, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, and fecal coliform is obtained. At all sites, observations on weather conditions and human and animal activity are recorded.

DCPG water quality data at Fishing Bay headwater sites over ten years has shown patterns of poor performance especially in regard to phosphorus, nitrogen, low dissolved oxygen and high levels of fecal enterococcus. The Chicamacomico site continues to deteriorate. A special study on bacteria source tracking was done on the Transquaking site last year to try to determine the source of the consistently high bacteria levels there (see 2016 Nanticoke River Report Card, [www.nanticokeriver.org](http://www.nanticokeriver.org)). Recent data from the two Choptank watershed sites has not been encouraging, especially very high bacteria levels. Hopefully, no patterns of this type will be

developing. In the meantime DCPG will continue watching Dorchester County water quality.

## DCPG Hosts Ironman Athletes

DCPG once again welcomed IRONMAN athletes into our homes. The funds raised are for DCPG’s water testing program.



Susan Haag Ironman 2017 gives thumbs up to her DCPG hosts

Hosting an athlete for the Ironman event is a great way to support this essential DCPG activity. We are looking forward to next year.

### Want to Promote Recycling in Dorchester County?

Do you ever get sick at the condition of the recycling bins in our county? Are you dismayed by the aluminum foil in the aluminum can bins or the plastic bags in the newspaper bins? Worst of all, how do you feel about people dumping their garbage in the recycling bins? If these things bother you, DCPG needs your help to promote and improve recycling in Dorchester County. We want to educate our residents about the art of recycling. In addition, we would like to tweak the recycling sites themselves to make them more likely to be used. If you would be interested in taking action on this issue, please contact Susan Olsen at 410-476-7091 ([susanolsen5887@yahoo.com](mailto:susanolsen5887@yahoo.com)).

## Would You Like to See Al Gore's New Film?

DCPG will have 2 showings of Al Gore's new film, *An Inconvenient Sequel; Truth to Power*, at the Dorchester Public Library on Gay Street on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. The film is a sequel to Gore's first film, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Among other items, it chronicles the predictions Gore made and shows footage of how those predictions played out later. It also contains scenes from the Paris Climate Change Agreement. This is a film you don't want to miss! And it's **FREE!**

### Calendar for 2017 – 2018

**November 28<sup>th</sup>** – Al Gore's Film – *An Inconvenient Sequel; Truth to Power* - Dorchester Public Library on Gay Street, Cambridge. 3pm and 6pm **FREE**

**January 28<sup>th</sup>** - DCPG Annual Meeting – Jan 28<sup>th</sup> 3-5pm at the Dorchester Historical Society

**February 16<sup>th</sup>** - Wild and Scenic Film Festival – Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>. 6:30-7:30pm Doors open at 6pm, 447 Race Street.

*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  
Wolf and Charlotte Hehn  
Catherine McCulley  
David Singlestad & Nancy Chapman  
Maureen Farrell  
Mike & Linda Starling  
Ted Boettger  
Dick Balling  
Karen & Richard Bearman  
Bob & Allison Buczek  
George & Jackie Radcliffe  
Tom Fisher & Kalla Kvalnes  
John & Anna Dillion  
Sue Rickert  
Anne Watts & John Lewis  
Carol & David Lewis  
Carol Smith  
Judith Stribling  
Ken Elliott & Madeline Shinn  
Diane Miller

### Renew Your Membership!

*DCPG is a 501(c)(3) organization.*

Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth  
P.O. Box 576  
Cambridge, MD 21613

### Membership Categories

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