

Monthly News & Information for Volunteers

December 2005 www.paxriverkeeper.org 301-249-8200



HAPPY HOLIDAYS: FROM PATUXENT RIVERKEEPER

The Patuxent Riverkeeper is a grassroots organization that cannot exist without the involvement, support, donations, well wishes and involvement of YOU... in the work that we do. Thanks to one and all for making the first year of this organization a success in so many ways. The group remains viable and is growing into a unique and important resource to the people who care about the Patuxent. This holiday season, consider that the spirit of protecting a river is very much like the spirit needed to bring peace to this very troubled world. It is the spirit of community and civic service, the desire to do what we can to work on the problems that face us, and it is the love of nature and the hope that we can make something better of this world...and this watershed we all depend on.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



PATUXENT RIVER COMMISSION MEETING NOTICE

Pot Luck Dinner
5:00 PM -6:00 PM
December 14, 2005

Maryland Department of Agriculture
Truman Parkway, Room 112
Annapolis, MD
4:00-6:00



MLCV Director Susan Brown and Riverkeeper, Fred Tutman

Local Area Waterkeeper Receives One of Maryland's Highest Awards for Outstanding Environmental Stewardship

The Maryland League of Conservation Voters (Maryland LCV) honored the state's 10 Chesapeake Waterkeepers at its 5th Annual John V. Kabler Award event on Tuesday, November 29, at the Annapolis Marriott Waterfront Hotel. The award, one of Maryland's highest honors in the environmental community, recognizes outstanding leadership and commitment. Patuxent Riverkeeper Fred Tutman was on hand to receive his award before a crowded room of nearly 300 state and national conservation leaders, elected officials, political candidates, and citizens. "We are especially happy this year to honor Maryland's Chesapeake Waterkeepers," Ms. Brown said. "The Waterkeepers work across our state — from the Coastal Bays to the mountains — to clean up our waterways through their own brand of on-the-water citizen-based advocacy. Recent efforts to safeguard Maryland's Critical Areas law is just another example of how the Waterkeepers look out for Maryland's waterways, communities, and people." Nearly 300 state and national conservation leaders, elected officials, political candidates, and citizens attended the event. Guests included Speaker of the House Michael Busch, former Governors Parris Glendening and Harry Hughes, former Congressman Kweisi Mfume, County Executive Doug Duncan, and Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley.

ANNOUNCING RIVERKEEPER 2006 ESOL CLASSES

How do we get people involved in stewardship for this river who have not been previously engaged? Many members of our immigrant community use our waterways for fishing and recreation but far too few have been engaged in the movement to clean it, protect it and care for it...The Patuxent Riverkeeper is offering a fun way to practice English while doing activities on the Patuxent River. Participants will get to improve their English in a fun way and will get instruction on how to use a canoe and kayak...

Where: Prince George's Community College

When: Mondays from 4:00-5:45 starting
Jan. 30th

Cost: It's FREE! (The Patuxent Riverkeeper will cover all costs including kayak and canoe rentals and training) If you are interested in being part of this program or if you would just like to get more information about it, please contact Lori Edmonds at (301) 249-8200 extension 9 or, by email, at lori@paxriverkeeper.org.

KAYAKS ORDERED FOR 2006

The Patuxent Riverkeeper recently obtained funding support to acquire 12 new touring kayaks which will be available for rental beginning in the Spring of 2006 for use on the Patuxent and the growing "Paddle Path" on the river. The Paddle Path is a joint effort of Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, the State Department of Natural Resources, The Patuxent River Commission and others. The Paddle path features historical sites, wildlife, sightseeing and other attractions to be seen on the Patuxent, which is one of our State's more placid, scenic and paddle-friendly waterways. The Riverkeeper will provide custom interpretive tours by kayak launching from Queen Anne and vicinity down to Jug Bay. Self-guided kayak tours will also be available. The Patuxent Riverkeeper also plans to sell used kayak stock at the end of each season and order new boat models each year. Stay in touch with us or watch the Riverkeeper web site for details about tours, rentals and sales.

JUG BAY BUFFER MAY GET 140 ACRES

The county plans to save another farm from potential development and protect the eastern flank of Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary in Lothian. The Agricultural Preservation Board gave preliminary approval last week to an application from the owners of 140 acres of woods and pasture. Now county officials can begin a series of steps: soil testing, a site visit, and appraising the two parcels before making an offer to the Virginia Tucker family trust. The County Council will have to approve the deal, a vote that probably will not occur until spring. "It's another property around Jug Bay. Though it won't be a part of it, it is good to know it will be protected, it is heartening for the program," said Betty Dixon, county environmental and land use coordinator. If approved, the property will be preserved under the county's Installment Purchase Agreement (IPA), a program that offers a steady, tax-free income and deferral of capital gains tax for the owner for its term, usually 25 years. Since 1999, 17 landowners have taken advantage of it. "It is the right property, in the right place, at the right time," said preservation board member Sonny Tucker of the current application. Budget cuts to the State Rural Legacy fund, landowner distrust, and misunderstanding of the program have lead to minimal usage of the IPA. However, Program Administrator Barbara Polito is more optimistic after a preservation open house held Sept. 28 at London Town House and Gardens in Edgewater. "We had a really good turnout," she said. She's hoping some will turn into applicants by the next deadline, April 1.



Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

TIME TO REGISTER 2006 PATUXENT CLEANUP SITES!

It's time to start planning for the April 2006 Annual Patuxent Cleanup. The date is set for April 8, 2006. Updates are being loaded to the official web site (www.cleanpatuxent.org). Site applications are being accepted and supplies are being ordered. Site leaders are also needed. A site leader becomes the primary point of contact for a specific cleanup location on the river. Leaders are needed in all seven counties of the Patuxent and will become the point of contact for cleanup supplies and local information. Leaders will also help tally the results of the cleanup. If you were a site leader before, and would like to do so again, we want to hear from you...NOW. If you have a site location in mind and you want to be added to the list of registered sites then please get in touch. If you know of a prospective site that needs to be added and want to become a part of a crew that is forming up then please get in touch with us. To acknowledge the early birds, the first sites that submit registration in each the north, middle, and south of the river will get 10 free litter gitter sticks, and gloves to match. Site registrations are on the cleanup web sites. Questions or information Contact Lauren@paxriverkeeper.org (301-249-8200 ext 6)

PATUXENT SOJOURN 2006 PLANNING UNDERWAY

The planning committee for the Annual Patuxent Sojourn has already began making plans for the next Patuxent Sojourn to be held June 15-19th 2006. This year the Sojourners will launch from King's Landing State Park in the southern end of the river and float to various points on the way the Jefferson Patterson Park. The full track of the paddle excursion will cover approximately 27 miles. Participants can come for a day or for as long as they like to sleep under the stars, enjoy day trips, restoration activities, lectures and workshop from the surrounding river community. There will also be award given to an individual who represents the "Spirit of the Sojourn". Last year's Sojourn event was the largest one ever with over 50 boats in the water at various times. The Sojourn is a wonderful way to make (or renew) your knowledge and connection to this beautiful stretch of water in a premier tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. This year the Sojourn is against co-hosted by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Patuxent Riverkeeper along with several other private and public partners. Registration and sign up information will be available after the New Year. Visit: www.Paxsojourn.org

RIVER GUIDES WANTED TRAINING AVAILABLE

The Riverkeeper is looking for people willing to serve as volunteer guides or "guide helpers" during the Patuxent Sojourn and other future paddling events. Interested parties will need to undergo first aid, safety and kayak training during the winter and spring months of 2006. Interested parties should make themselves known to the Riverkeeper so you can be kept informed of details, training dates and other pertinent information. This is a great chance to learn more about the river, garner knowledge to help introduce others to the river, get in shape and improve your river safety skills. We hope to hear from you.



More Volunteer Opportunities

WATER QUALITY MONITORS NEEDED FOR 2006

While we are running but behind our projections for having the volunteer monitoring program in place, we are making progress in obtaining funding, equipment and in the design of the on line web interface needed for volunteers to upload their results. During 2006 plans are underway to activate a citizen operated water quality testing network that will permit volunteers to collect data and compare results for the waters near them to those of others elsewhere and throughout the Patuxent. Will empower citizens with data that can be used to help improve the quality and accuracy of regional planning, identify places and sources of water quality local problems and to provide an up to the minute blueprint of the health of the river from the people who use it (the citizens). Please be patient, as this new project gets up to speed. We are in need of people willing to become testers. The Riverkeeper will provide training, equipment and other resources. Contact the Riverkeeper for more information.

2006 TREE PLANTING SITES NEEDED

The Patuxent Riverkeeper is currently seeking tree-planting sites for 2006. We have a variety of trees including Virginia Pine, Black Pine, River Birch, Indigo Bush, Swamp White Oak, and Locust. The sites can be located anywhere within the Patuxent watershed. We would love to have the trees help protect damaged areas of the Patuxent River shoreline. The trees are being winterized to be protected from the cold and will come out of "hibernation" in the early spring ready to find a new permanent home. If you have an idea of where some of our trees should find new homes or for more information contact Riverkeeper.



LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD... ROUGHNECKS?

The Patuxent Riverkeeper would like to create standing crew to work in various section of the river periodically to clean trash, fish blockages and help reduce the snarls and blockages in the river that impede the process of recreational hikers on the banks and/or paddlers in the water channel. The crew will work primarily in the middle and northern sections of the river between Upper Marlboro and Laurel, on publicly owned lands. The work group (tentatively called the Patuxent Roughnecks) once fully formed will begin working in the spring to restore the capacity of people to navigate the river as is the past. Downed trees, large dumps, fish dams and beavers have all contributed to making what was once a water highway into a series of small localized river sections. The Patuxent Roughnecks is looking for people who like challenges, want to hike and paddle the river, and to occasionally celebrate their achievements at BBQ's next to the river. Patuxent Roughnecks will get free tee shirts, tools, and in some cases training to operate chain saws. Roughnecks will become experts in conditions affecting the navigability of the Patuxent and part of what we hope will become a close community of people who work for a few hours a month to help sustain long term navigability of the Patuxent.

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