

Patuxent Newsletter

RIVERKEEPER®

Top Stories

Our 5th annual river cleanup event was a big success.

The new Stormwater Management Act will affect building practices and help control runoff from future development.

Page 1

Your Riverkeeper

Busy! We've added our own advocacy director and have found a regional coordinator to further our mission.

The boat's in the water and the bus is on the road.

Page 2-3



Advocacy

We're developing a blueprint to restore the river.

Proposed Big-Box developments stopped.

We're part of a task force focused on minorities and the environment.

Page 3

Restoration

The Roughnecks continue to clear river blockages and snags.

We potted up 900 baby trees destined for riverbanks this fall.

Volunteers improve the Little Patuxent.

Page 4

Patuxent Goings-On

The Sojourn was a success again this year.

A memorial is planned for War of 1812 flotilla.

We're developing a new process for handling citizen complaints.

Page 5

Events - Get Involved!

The River Bus is ready and we've got a lot of great stuff on the calendar.

Page 6



Annual Patuxent River Cleanup

On April 14 over 350 people came together at the 5th Annual Cleanup to remove trash and debris from the river and its tributaries.

The volunteers worked at 30 different sites within the watershed, from the headwaters near Mt. Airy to the mouth of the river at Drum Point and the Chesapeake Bay. Our river morphs from a thin, forested trickle of water into a heavily trafficked entity over a mile wide. While the river makes these amazing changes in its 110-mile journey, the trash and debris plaguing its health remains surprisingly constant.

Each site gathered piles of soda and beer bottles and cans, food wrappers, and discarded fishing line. Tires, a



common problem throughout the watershed, were found at most sites and the volunteers at one site collected two dozen.

Dumpsters were filled with 50 cubic yards of debris (not necessarily bagged). In the end, approximately 53,985 pounds of trash and debris were removed from the river. That's nearly 27 TONS! Heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped out.

- Pulled Out of the River**
- 432 Bags of trash
 - 72 Bags of mixed recyclables
 - 79 Tires
 - 5 Appliances
 - 2 Artificial Christmas Trees
 - 1 All Terrain Vehicle
 - 2 Lawnmowers
 - 4 Mattresses
 - 2 Automobile hoods



Cleaning up the way we build

Building practices have a tremendous impact on the health of our rivers. Runoff from development carries pollutants like phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment into the Patuxent, as well as toxic chemicals like metals and oil.

The loss of natural buffers and filters further compounds the problems caused by runoff, because when development and construction destroy the natural vegetation of an area it causes flooding, streambank erosion, and habitat degradation throughout the watershed.

This spring the Patuxent Riverkeeper helped to pass the Stormwater Management Act, which will drastically change how developers plan for and handle polluted runoff from new developments.

See STORMWATER, Page 2

Stormwater From Page 1

The primary change is that developers must allow rainwater to be absorbed on the site through environmental site design, which includes practices such as leaving forested areas intact, using pervious pavement, and installing rain gardens.



The Maryland Department of the Environment is writing new

regulations this summer to implement the requirements of the Stormwater Management Act. It is imperative that the new regulations are as strong as possible to ensure that the Patuxent River and all of Maryland's waterways are protected from this menace.

Patuxent Riverkeeper is working with over 25 watershed organizations across the state to run a campaign to ensure that MDE creates good regulations. We are working with technical experts to draft principles

and model language as well as engaging in outreach to counties, developers, and the public to build support for the new regulations.

The new law does not solve our existing stormwater runoff problem. In our older and existing communities stormwater is a multi-million dollar problem that will need to be fixed. But strong regulations will stop this problem from spreading, protecting the Patuxent from new sources of polluted runoff.

We're your Riverkeeper



Welcome Jennifer, our new advocacy director

In May Jennifer Bevan-Dangel came on staff as the Patuxent Riverkeeper's Director of Advocacy. Her focus is to manage policy, outreach, and litigation efforts on behalf of the river. Jennifer will coordinate the organization's state and local policy initiatives, expand grassroots involvement across the seven-county watershed, and investigate complaints and bring targeted lawsuits against polluters. She will also assist with organizational development and restoration efforts.

Jennifer comes to us from Environment Maryland, where she worked as staff attorney for the last two years. Jennifer ran their land use and clean water campaigns, and was pivotal in the passage of the Stormwater Management Act which became law in April. She has also worked with the Sierra Club, Free the Planet, Greenpeace, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. She studied environmental studies and international studies at Johns Hopkins and, in 2005, she earned from the University of Maryland her law degree, with a concentration in environmental law.

Jennifer has lived in Maryland since 1987. She grew up in Annapolis, but spent the last nine years in Baltimore City. She moved to Upper Marlboro last fall, just a mile from the Patuxent River. She lives with her husband Andrew, an Annapolis native who teaches eighth grade history in Anne Arundel County, and their three dogs.

Jennifer can be reached at jennifer@paxriverkeeper.org or 301.249.8200 x9.



New coordinator for Chesapeake Waterkeepers

Michele Merkel joined Waterkeeper Alliance this June as their new Chesapeake Regional Coordinator. She will coordinate and support the activities of the fifteen Waterkeeper programs that protect the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays.

Prior to joining the Alliance, Michele was Senior Counsel and cofounder of the Environmental Integrity Project. At EIP, Michele was responsible for litigation and policy issues under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, focusing on industrial livestock production and municipal sewage issues.

Michele previously served as an attorney for the United States Environmental Protection Agency, where she worked closely with the Department of Justice to bring actions for violations of federal environmental laws. Prior to joining EPA, Michele was General Counsel for Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, and worked for a few years in the criminal defense section of a private law firm.

Michele received her law degree from the Tulane University School of Law and holds a Bachelor of Science biology degree from Lafayette College. Michele lives in Bethesda, Maryland with her husband Christopher and her dog O.D.

Michelle can be reached by email at mmerkel@waterkeeper.org

Riverkeeper Around Town

This summer has seen some exciting and busy times at the Riverkeeper office, and some real improvements for the organization.

We finally got our big red boat out on the water, allowing us to increase our patrols and enforcement actions along the southern part of the river. We also got our tour bus out of the shop just in time for our first overnight kayaking trip.

This May both Fred and Jennifer attended an intensive week-long training to improve their advocacy skills. The training was hosted by the National League of Conservation Voters Education Fund with support from the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment. Two weeks later, the entire staff attended the annual Waterkeeper Alliance conference in New Orleans. It was great to connect with the 156 programs world-wide and amazing to see post-Katrina New Orleans.

Since we came back we've been running from one event to another. Fred spoke at the Fourth Annual Empowerment Conference, hosted by the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations and the Human Services Coalition of Prince George's County. He addressed a crowd of over 300 people as he discussed the connection between sound environmental policy and social equity.

Meanwhile, we're always working on our core programs from restoration efforts on the river, policy improvements in our laws, and building grassroots support for a cleaner river. There's a lot to do, and we hope you'll get involved and do it with us!



Advocacy Blueprint for the Patuxent

Would you try to drive somewhere new without a map or directions? You might not get far before you got lost. This is the current state of Patuxent restoration efforts—a government struggling to save the river without a clear idea of what steps to take.

The Patuxent Riverkeeper is working to change that through our "Patuxent River 2020" report. With the help of our fabulous summer intern, Dana Swarth, we are analyzing existing research and policy recommendations related to the Patuxent. From county growth plans to state water quality reports, this summer we will synthesize hundreds of documents and studies to produce a blueprint for restoring this great river.

We plan to release our main findings at the Second Annual State of the River Summit on October 5. Last year's summit focused on the problems with the river; this year it is time for action. With a clear list of policy solutions and major decision makers all in the same room, we hope to secure commitments towards smarter land use planning, tighter controls on major polluters, and a common road map for protecting the Patuxent.

As part of this process, we have designed a five minute survey to poll residents' views on

the river and existing restoration efforts. Our goal is to get responses from 600 people across the watershed. We need your help to make this survey a success! For more information or to get involved, contact Jennifer, jennifer@paxriverkeeper.org.

Bad developments blocked

Early this summer the Patuxent River won two major victories against poorly planned commercial development.

A proposal in Crofton would have turned over 25 acres of land directly on the Patuxent River into a big box Wal-mart store. Bowing to community opposition and serious environmental concerns, Wal-mart withdrew. The site's commercial zoning, however, still leaves the river at risk of future development.

In the southern part of Anne Arundel County, Target proposed building a new shopping center in Wayson's Corner which is directly upriver from the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary. The stormwater from this development would have significantly impaired water quality in the sanctuary and the Patuxent itself. Fortunately, County Executive John Leopold put in a bid to purchase the property with Program Open Space funding, preserving this 30 acre parcel of land forever. However, the purchase must still be cleared by the Board of Public Works, which should vote on the matter later this summer.

Minorities & the environment

Mainstream environmental organizations lack meaningful involvement from people of color and far fewer ethnic minorities seek careers in environmental fields. To address this trend, the Maryland General Assembly has created a task force on minorities and the environment. The task force, sponsored by Senator Lisa Gladden, is examining ways to garner greater involvement from this segment of the population.

Environmental justice rises from the fact that, while clean air, clean water, and other environmental values impact everyone, minority groups are disproportionately harmed by environmental hazards. Yet it seems that mainstream environmental groups do not always approach the environmental justice aspects of these concerns and often fail to work on issues with a direct nexus to the minority community.

The task force convened this spring and has representation from a variety of groups, including the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, various state agencies, historically black colleges, the Patuxent Riverkeeper, and various members of the General Assembly.

The task force will meet through the summer to develop legislative policies to address this problem. The final report and recommendations will be made available in several places online, including our website.

Restoration

Roughnecks

The Patuxent Roughnecks, a volunteer crew that removes blockages for fish and navigation on the Patuxent River and its tributaries, have begun working in the central sections of the river. Despite the weather-related cancellation of a pre-season survey trip and postponement of a work trip, the crew has made significant improvements to the navigability of the Patuxent River between Governor's Bridge and Queen Anne Canoe Launch.



The crew began the season on March 31, working downstream from the new canoe launch at Governor's Bridge Natural Area. The river is an ever-changing body and the Roughnecks have become all too familiar with this. Following the first two work trips of the season the crew was confident the stretch of river between Governor's Bridge and Queen Anne would be clear for the Patuxent River Sojourn in June. However, a significant rain event and a dam release upstream left the crew with several new snags to tackle.

The Roughnecks have been using kayaks and canoes to reach the many snags and blockages as well as to haul the needed tools and safety gear. They have been using mainly hand tools, with the occasional help of a chain saw and an electric winch connected to a marine battery, to create a navigable path. The crew has been successful in again clearing the section of the Patuxent River between Governor's Bridge and Queen Anne Bridge. During the last two Roughneck work trips the crew was able to remove ten downed trees and debris fields blocking the channel.

As the season progresses the Roughnecks will begin to work in areas further upstream to remove fish blockages and open the Patuxent River and its tributaries to spawning fish. If you would like to join the Roughneck Crew or have come across a blockage in the Patuxent Watershed please contact Patuxent Riverkeeper at 301.249.8200x6 or lauren@paxriverkeeper.org.

Tree Potting Party

On May 4 and May 11 volunteers from the Patuxent River Commission, Patuxent Riverkeeper, and the Lower Western Shore Tributary Team potted 900 seedlings. The young trees arrived as bare rootstock from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Tree Nursery. The volunteers lovingly placed each tree into a pot of soil, tagged the tree with its species name, and applied a deer repellent to give them a fighting chance in the future.

The trees will remain at the Patuxent River Commission Grow-out Station for the remainder of the summer, until they find permanent homes this fall along the Patuxent, West, Rhode, and South Rivers. In an effort to reduce sediment and nutrient pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries the trees will be planted in riparian zones to reduce runoff and stabilize riverbanks. While the trees are not yet ready to be planted, if you know of a riparian site within the Patuxent River watershed that is in need stabilization please contact Lauren at 301.249.8200x6 or lauren@paxriverkeeper.org.

Little Patuxent River Cleanup with RSM McGladrey summer interns



On July 9, Patuxent Riverkeeper joined forces with RSM McGladrey to clean trash and debris from the Little Patuxent River just downstream of Lake Kittamaqundi in Columbia, Maryland. RSM McGladrey is an accounting, tax, and business consulting firm with locations throughout the United States. Patuxent Riverkeeper teamed with interns and staff from the Baltimore-Washington and Richmond, Virginia area firms to clean this stretch of the Little Patuxent River.

The 34 eager volunteers were divided into two teams to tackle separate issues, trash removal and blockage removal. The trash removal crew removed 15 bags of trash, about a dozen shopping carts, and six bicycles buried in the sediment at the bottom of the river. Using shovels and a pry bar they were able to dig up and remove the unsightly refuse. The blockage removal crew worked with handsaws, pruning tools, and ropes to remove debris dams preventing fish passage.

Both RSM McGladrey teams of staff and interns went above and beyond to create a healthier, more free-flowing stretch of river.

Citizens clean a Little Patuxent tributary in Laurel



Local citizens and Boy Scout Troop 1820 worked to remove over 100 tires and assorted items from an unnamed tributary of the Little Patuxent River in Laurel, Maryland. Howard County graciously provided two dumpsters, one for the more than 100 tires, the other for the various other pieces of trash recovered from the stream valley. In addition to the tires, volunteers removed a 55-gallon drum, several propane and helium tanks, bikes, a computer, and a lawn tractor.



Richard and Linda Henderson, residents of Linville Avenue which parallels the stream, coordinated with Howard County to have the dumpsters delivered and provided lunch and refreshments for the volunteers. Despite the hard work, the stream valley still needs help. Several more tires, a car frame, bikes, and assorted trash still remain. The volunteers will head back this fall after the vegetation dies back to remove the rest. Stay tuned for more details.

Patuxent Goings-On

Patuxent River Sojourn

Each year in mid-June, enthusiastic canoe and kayakers paddle a stretch of the Patuxent River during the Patuxent River Sojourn. This year the Sojourn kicked off on June 14 at Patuxent 4H Canoe Launch and ended five days later at King's Landing Park. Sojourn participants enjoyed paddling under the Patuxent River's forested canopies, within its tidal marshes, and past sites of historic and ecologic significance. This event aims to elevate citizen awareness of the importance of the Patuxent River and encourage local citizens to take an active role in its restoration and preservation.

On the final day of the trip, an individual and/or group who have dedicated significant time to the protection and restoration of the Patuxent River and its resources is recognized with the Spirit of the Sojourn Award. This year, Dave Kelsey, a long time volunteer on the Patuxent River, safety boat operator for the Sojourn, and volunteer at Greenwell State Park was honored for his hard work and dedication to the river.

For more information about the Patuxent River Sojourn contact Kate Dowling with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, 410.377.6270 or kdowling@acb-online.org



Photo by Dave Kelsey

Patuxent Flotilla Memorial planned

Historians agree that the United States has been invaded by foreign attackers three times in its history, the British assaults on America during the War of 1812, the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor, and the hijacked plane crashes of September 11th.

The Patuxent River corridor played a significant role in that earliest struggle. A stalwart band of naval defenders, commanded by Commodore Joshua Barney, greatly outgunned and outnumbered, engaged the British along the river as the battle to save the States hung in the balance. There are no memorials to the brave who held their ground in this almost forgotten war that altered the course of history.

A small group of volunteers have begun planning for a monument overlooking the Patuxent River to pay tribute to this diverse group of American defenders. Chaired by local historians, archeologists, and others with support from Ralph Eshelman, Dale Shomette,

William Clark, and others, the group is working to find an appropriate site, review proposed designs, raise funds, and plan for the long overdue observance. The memorial is due for completion around the anniversary of the battle, in 2011. For more information, please contact Donald Shomette, 10525 Ward Road, Dunkirk, MD 20754.

Active Investigations

Part of our mission is to help citizens deal with water quality violations in their backyard. We are currently involved in ten active cases, ranging from sewage overflows at the Western Branch wastewater treatment plant to illegal dumping in Queen Anne to stormwater and erosion problems in St. Mary's. And we get more calls about pollution every day! Because of the high volume of complaints and the difficult nature of these problems, we are often unable to get to every issue as soon as it arises.

To help speed up our efforts, we are creating a new system for processing and handling complaints. Citizens will start by filling out an intake form listing the type of problem and other relevant information. Our first response will be to send out an "activist toolkit," a guide for dealing with problems and the relevant people to contact. We will then follow up with the complainant and provide a consultation on their specific problem. That way the groundwork will already be done, and when we are able to actively work on the problem we can jump right in.

Are you a problem-solver? Do you enjoy helping others? We are looking for County Captains to help us handle citizen complaints. Contact Jennifer, 301.241.8200x9 or jennifer@paxriverkeeper.org, if you have the time and the interest to help local residents stop local pollution.

Overview of this year's Sojourn

- Day 1** Sojourn Welcome and River Overview and Discussion
- Day 2** Paddle Queen Anne 4-H Canoe Launch to Mt. Calvert, Ecology talk by Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Rockfish (band)
- Day 3** Creek Paddles at Mt. Calvert, Archeology talk by Mt. Calvert staff, Birds of Prey, World Environmental Practices Discussion with LEAP (Language through Environmentally Active Programs), Contra Band and Dancing, Patuxent Riverkeeper Discussion, Astronomy Session with Peter Perry
- Day 4** Paddle from Mt. Calvert to Merkle on Mattaponi Creek, tour of Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Mattaponi Creek night paddle Owl Prowl with Melissa Boyle
- Day 5** Paddle from Merkle on Mattaponi Creek to Perry Tract, Invasive Species Discussion with Kerrie Kyde of MD DNR, Campfire
- Day 6** Paddle from Perry Tract to King's Landing, Spirit of the Sojourn Award

Events/Get Involved

Great Kayak Trips Planned

One of the best ways to impart an environmental ethic on someone is to take him or her out into the environment. Recognizing the importance of experiential learning, Patuxent Riverkeeper is offering a series of overnight kayak trips and sustainability tours. They are more than



a good learning experience, they're downright fun! Check out our calendar to if any of the appeal to you give us a call at 301.249.8200. We'd love to have you along.

Rock the Rivers Benefit Concert

The five Waterkeeper organizations located around Anne Arundel County, Patuxent, West/Rhodes, Severn, and South Rivers, as well as Baltimore Harbor, have joined forces to plan a concert event and fundraiser called "Rock the Rivers." The concert will be held on October 20 at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Philip Merrill Environmental Center in the Bay Ridge section of Annapolis.

Tickets will go on sale late this summer. The event has limited attendance, so keep your eyes peeled for more information!



Help us celebrate our 3rd birthday!

This October the Patuxent Riverkeeper will turn THREE-YEARS-OLD.

We'll celebrate on November 10 and we hope you will join us. Look for more information in our next newsletter!

Right now, we need your help to make this event a success. If you enjoy parties, and especially if you enjoy planning them, help us make this evening great. To get involved contact Jennifer, jennifer@paxriverkeeper.org, or 301.249.8200x9.

PATUXENT RIVERKEEPER CALENDAR

NOTE: These dates are subject to change (for various reasons, like bad weather). Please call us at 301.249.8200 for more details and to check availability.

For info on Bus Trips, contact Fred, 301.249.8200x7.

For info on Roughneck Trips, call Lauren, 301.249.8200x3.

september

- 1-2 Selby's Landing Overnight Bus Trip
- 8 Shenandoah Bus rip
- 9 Roughneck Work Trip
- 22 Roughneck Work Trip
- 29-30 Choptank Overnight Bus Trip

october

- 5 State of the River Summit
- 6-7 Patuxent River Appreciations Days, Calvert Marine Museum
- 13 Roughneck Work Trip
- 19 Poplar Island Bus Trip
- 20 Rock the Rivers Benefit Concert
- 27 Patuxent Moonlight Kayak Trip

november

- 3-4 Assateague Overnight Bus Trip
- 10 Patuxent Riverkeeper Annual Party

New Tshirt Design

Local Patuxent artist Erin Lau has created for us a new Tshirt design—suitable for everyday or every night wear or for getting wet in the river.

The new design features a river vista dotted by fleecy clouds, clean water, green fields, cattails, and wildlife. It depicts the river that we hope to restore, maintain and preserve. The new Tshirts come in blue, green, and yellow, and cost \$15 plus shipping.

To help liquidate our older stock of Tshirts, featuring the venerable heron mascot, we have marked them down to half-price. They are \$8 and will soon become a collector's item. (Mattie got hers!)

The remaining old style shirts are XL and come in yellow, rose, sage, tan, and greens.

Show your support with one of our Tshirts. Contact us for details.



Check it out, dog:
I support Patuxent Riverkeeper!

Looking for a few good volunteers!

Willing hands are needed for river restoration projects, fundraising, case work, advocacy, and general office support. There's something for everyone!

Any time commitment accepted (even a few hours a month), but must be willing to commit to a dedicated schedule. To get involved with restoration work, contact Lauren, lauren@paxriverkeeper.org.

For more information on other volunteer opportunities, contact Jennifer, jennifer@paxriverkeeper.org or, call our office at 301.249.8200.

Patuxent Riverkeeper is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance

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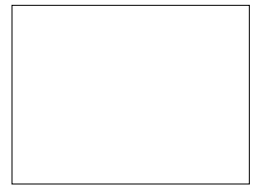
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Thank you!



18600 QUEEN ANNE ROAD
UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20774
301.249.8200
WWW.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.

Get to know your river. Join us on a kayak trip!

See our calendar inside. We have lots of different trips planned—on the Patuxent and around the watershed.