MARYLAND’S PLAN TO RESTORE THE BAY

For the first time in history, the Chesapeake Bay is poised to make a true recovery. In 2009, President Obama released an Executive Order which called for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and States in the Chesapeake watershed to clean up the Bay by 2025. The resulting effort has culminated into what is known as the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), which is a science based plan to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution in the Bay. The WIP is based on the Bay’s Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), or Bay pollution diet. The TMDL specifies the maximum amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment the Bay can absorb while remaining healthy. The WIP details the set of tools, or Best Management Practices (BMPs), that each State, County, and watershed will use to reduce pollution and improve the health of the Bay.

Progress towards restoring the Bay will be closely followed through the establishment of short term goals, or milestones. Accountability is the backbone for these efforts, and unlike previous efforts to clean up the Bay, this WIP is backed by real consequences for those states, counties, and agencies that do not achieve their goals and 2 year milestones. It will be up to the local County governments, watershed organizations, and Soil Conservation Districts to ensure that local WIPs include all the actions necessary to restore the Bay, and that those actions are fully implemented on the ground.

For more information, visit www.chesapeakebay.net/Datasources: Chesapeake Bay Program

For more information, visit www.chesapeakebay.net/termsofuse.htm

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Volunteer

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Become a Member

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CLEAN WATER ACT 101

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Concerns or Questions?

Contact the RIVERKEEPER® for help with environmental problems you may witness on the River including algae blooms or fish kills, or for information on volunteering with SRA:
 • (410) 708-3303
 • riverkeeper@sassafrasriver.org
 • www.sassafrasriver.org/reportpollution/

Data used for the 2011 Report Card were collected in 2010 by the Sassafras Samplers, Sassafras RIVERKEEPER®, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. SRA especially would like to thank the Sassafras Samplers who volunteer their time throughout the year monitoring creeks to help produce this publication.

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Sassafras River Association
P.O. Box 333 Georgetown, MD 20930 (410) 275-1400 www.sassafrasriver.org

Sassafras River Water Quality Alliance
P.O. Box 112 Poolesville, MD 20837 (301) 863-3366 www.wateequalityalliance.org

Sassafras River Watershed Alliance
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Watershed Alliance Member
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- Two new restoration projects focus on preventing animal waste runoff from reaching the River through installation of treatment wetlands, which capture and slowly reduce the concentration of contaminants.
- Numerous new acres of cropland have received important winter cover-crops to prevent erosion and absorb excess nutrients, through SRA’s provision of cost-share funding to farmers.
- In neighborhoods, 175 soil test kits were distributed to provide home-owners with information on lawn and soil management, and tips to prevent over-use of nutrients.
- After considerable door-to-door contact explaining ways to detect a failing septic system, information at three workshops provided listeners news on the availability of State grants for an upgrade at their house, and the options for upgrading to a nutrient removal septic system.
- Over 80 rain-barrels were constructed with SRA technical assistance at training events to capture stormwater that may erode lawns, and also to redirect water for re-use, an especially valuable tool during times of drought.

Restoring the Sassafras River requires the use of environmental practices by all types of land-users and watershed citizens. It is only through cooperation and partnerships that best management practices become implemented and a clean and healthy Sassafras River is achieved. SWAP contains many more challenges and SRA looks forward to working with more watershed residents and installing more innovative restoration projects.

### What do grades mean?

All water quality and biological health indicators meet desired levels (80-100%). Quality of water in the locations tends to be very good, most often leading to very good habitat conditions for fish and shellfish.

Most water quality and biological health indicators meet desired levels (60-79%). Quality of water in these locations tends to be good, often leading to good habitat conditions for fish and shellfish.

There is a mix of good and poor levels of water quality and biological health indicators (40-59%). Quality of water in these locations tends to be fair, leading to fair habitat conditions for fish and shellfish.

Some or few water quality and biological health indicators meet desired levels (20-39%). Quality of water in these locations tends to be poor, often leading to poor habitat conditions for fish and shellfish.

Very few or no water quality and biological health indicators meet desired levels (0-19%). Quality of water in these locations tends to be very poor, most often leading to very poor habitat conditions for fish and shellfish.

### WORK REMAINS TO ACHIEVE WATER QUALITY GOALS

In 2010, the Sassafras River had a mix of indicators showing good water quality (dissolved oxygen, aquatic vegetation), and indicators showing very poor water quality (nutrients, water clarity, creek bed organisms). Water quality grades were poorest at creek sites and at the upper portions of the estuary. Scores were slightly better in the lower estuary, where the Sassafras is more heavily influenced by the Chesapeake Bay. Problems of most concern included beach advisories, due to high bacteria levels, and toxic blue-green algae blooms which result from an abundance of nutrients draining into the River from sources such as stormwater, agriculture, and septic systems.

Visit www.sassafrasriver.org/whatwedo/ for additional information on grading methods.
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riverekeeper@sassafrasriver.org

www.sassafrasriver.org/reportcard/