



RiverScape

The Potomac Conservancy Newsletter WINTER 2005

Growing Native Meets the Need for Seeds

RIVERSIDE FORESTS CRITICAL TO CLEAN WATER

Thanks to the efforts of more than 5,000 volunteers, the 2005 *Growing Native* seed collection season was another huge success. The collected seeds will help to reforest bare and eroding stream banks throughout the Potomac River watershed.

Since 2001, *Growing Native* volunteers have gathered enough seeds to plant 44,000 acres of hardwood forests. This year, more than 20,000 pounds of acorns and other native tree seeds—mostly black walnut—were delivered to state nurseries, where they will be nurtured into healthy seedlings.

“Streamside forests—called riparian buffers—are essential to river health,” says Matthew Logan, president of the Potomac Conservancy. “Water quality is the Potomac Conservancy’s utmost priority, and *Growing Native* is an effective means of directly addressing this issue, while educating people about the connection between land and water resources.”

Riparian buffers capture excess nutrients and other pollutants that run off of the land before they reach waterways, and their roots hold onto soil, preventing erosion and sedimentation. Streamside trees also provide shade that regulates water temperature, as well as food and habitat for a

ED TENNEY



This Scout was one of more than 45 members of Cub Scout Pack 461 who gathered black oak and poplar seeds at Cabin John Regional Park in Bethesda, Maryland.

diversity of critters.

The Potomac Watershed Partnership launched *Growing Native* in 2001 to supply native tree stock for streamside restoration projects. With the Conservancy serving as its lead coordinator, *Growing Native* has since expanded to be one of the leading environmental volunteer programs in the entire mid-Atlantic.

Margaret Kertess, who led Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment in a community seed collection at Potomac Overlook Park in Arlington, Virginia, was thrilled to be involved in this “family-friendly participatory activity” as an opportunity to “learn about and benefit the natural world.” She said, “I was inspired by the delight of the children and the immediate connection to nature.”

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RiverScape® is our quarterly newsletter. We welcome your comments.

THE POTOMAC CONSERVANCY

8601 Georgia Avenue, Suite 612
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301.608.1188 • FAX 301.608.1144
www.potomac.org
info@potomac.org

Shenandoah Field Office

10 South Loudoun Street
Winchester, VA 22601
540.667.3606 • FAX 540.667.7748

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**Countdown to River Health**

For the past year, the Potomac Conservancy has undertaken a major effort to refine its strategic

direction. We solicited input from scientists, farmers, elected officials, state agencies, teachers, funders, and dozens of our members who live, work, and play in the Potomac watershed. Our Board of Directors and staff deliberated carefully, and, in the end, I believe we have a thoughtful and strategic plan to make the Potomac River watershed a healthier, more beautiful, and enjoyable place for all of us.

The Conservancy's new strategy—*Countdown to River Health, 2006-2010*—represents a subtle, but very important, shift in our identity as we move from being first and foremost a land trust to a river conservation

organization. Our primary focus will be protection of water quality—the basis of river health. However, clean water

alone is insufficient. That's why we'll also fight to preserve and restore the Potomac's wild and scenic landscapes, and to expand and enhance the myriad river-based recreational opportunities that make this region so special.

"Our plan is, indeed, ambitious. But, as one of the great rivers in this nation, the Potomac deserves no less."

Protecting Water Quality

The Potomac and its tributaries provide drinking water to millions of residents throughout the watershed. To protect the quality of these waters, over the next five years the Conservancy will direct the majority of its resources to reducing sediment and nutrient pollution. These pollutants are responsible for the oxygen-starved "dead

zones," algae blooms, and fish kills that are increasingly making headlines. Their reduction is also the primary focus of the multi-billion dollar Chesapeake Bay cleanup. Given that the Potomac is the largest contributor of sediment to the Bay and the second largest source of nutrients, the relevance of our plan to cleaning up the Bay couldn't be more apparent. And with a 2010 goal for massive pollution reductions established by the EPA, time is running short.

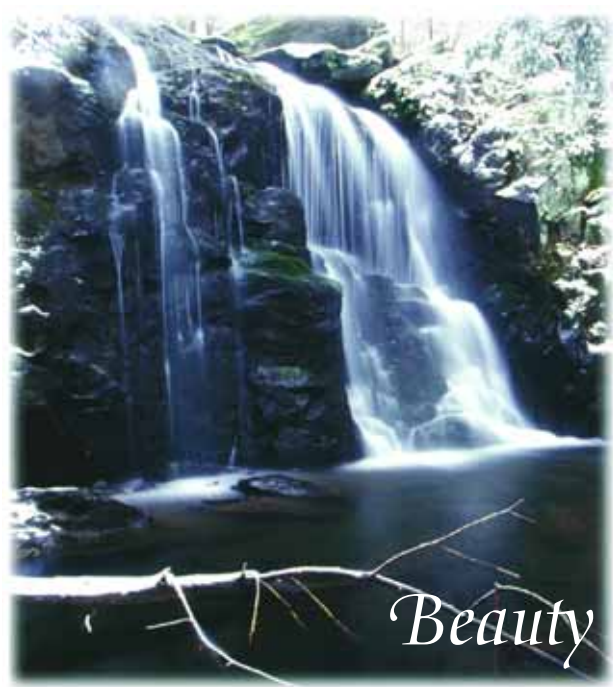
To succeed in improving water quality, the Conservancy—with the assistance of our allies in the Potomac Watershed Partnership—will pinpoint



Health

the most critical areas for reducing pollution. We'll work with landowners and local governments to protect and restore streamside areas through a combination of better stewardship, regulation, and outright purchase. In urban and suburban locations, we'll advocate the adoption and enforcement of sound land use policies and practices.

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Finally, the Conservancy will work to ensure long-term funding for water quality improvements, including land conservation, and will assess and respond to new, urgent threats to river health.

Preserving Scenic Beauty

As the world's "wildest" urban river, the Potomac possesses enormous, albeit insufficiently protected, scenic value. Broad public recognition of the river's world-class status is essential to preventing piecemeal degradation. For that reason, the Conservancy will lead a campaign to identify the highest-valued riverscapes, develop and implement protection plans for these special places, and raise awareness of the river's scenic resources.

Encouraging Responsible Recreation

Recreation is one of the most important ways people come to appreciate the Potomac River. The Conservancy will expand and improve the infrastructure necessary for better river access: boat ramps and access points; hiking, biking, and equestrian trails; and primitive campsites. We'll also serve as a clearinghouse to inform people about opportunities for high-quality outings and low-impact practices, particularly through our recently renovated River Center at Lockhouse 8 in the C&O Canal National Historical Park.

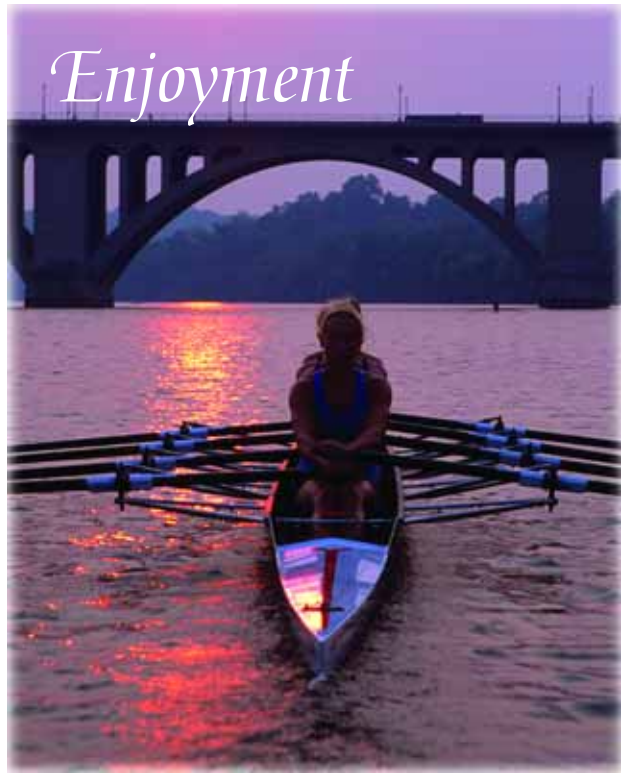
Marshalling Public Support

Building a powerful and diverse constituency that shares our vision and values is essential to creating and sustaining a legacy of conservation. The Conservancy is gearing up to educate and engage people by providing the most reliable, up-to-date information about the Potomac River and the challenges it faces. And, through projects that actively involve individuals of all ages in our work—including the nationally acclaimed *Growing Native* seed collection, action-oriented "Second Saturdays," and our culturally inspired "Voices of the River" series—we'll continue to offer ways for people to build deeper and longer-lasting relationships with the river.

Our plan is, indeed, ambitious. But, as one of the great rivers in this nation, the Potomac deserves no less. The Potomac Conservancy believes that we have an obligation to pass on to the next generation a legacy of careful and wise stewardship. To do so will require a tremendous commitment on the part of everyone associated with our work.

I hope you'll become involved in protecting the health, beauty, and enjoyment of the Potomac by donating your time, skills, or resources. I welcome your comments regarding our plan, and look forward to working with you toward our goals as we count down to success! ■

Matthew Logan



ROY SEWALL



Continued from page 1

PAMELA FIELDS



Fifth graders at Rock Creek Forest Elementary in Chevy Chase, Maryland, which served as a public Growing Native drop-off site, monitored the school's seed box.

This autumn, more than 6,000 volunteers from Pennsylvania to West Virginia gathered seeds from their yards, school grounds, and community parks. Volunteers included groups as diverse as Girl and Boy Scouts, schools, and Master Gardeners.

Schoolteachers once again took advantage of *Growing Native* to inspire a conservation ethic in their

students. Some schools, including Westbrook Elementary in Rockville, Maryland, are launching grow-out stations from collected seeds. These on-campus nurseries will expand students' understanding of such processes as germination, and will instill in them responsibility through caring for trees that they will eventually plant along community streams.

Growing Native would not be possible without the generous support of its sponsors: the USDA Forest Service, Ford Motor Company, and Aveda. The Conservancy thanks each and every *Growing Native* volunteer and its partners—Virginia Department of Forestry, Maryland DNR Forest Service, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and Pennsylvania Conservation District—for helping to protect water quality for generations to come.



To learn more about how you can become involved in *Growing Native*, visit www.growingnative.org or contact Colleen Langan, *Growing Native* Coordinator, at langan@potomac.org or 301.608.1188 x211. ■

Thousands Learn at River Center

On October 23, members of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington helped celebrate the official end of the first season of the Potomac Conservancy's River Center at Lockhouse 8 with an evening of river songs. Since its grand opening in May, more than 1,800 people—greeted by volunteer docents who donated upward of 500 hours of service—visited the River Center on weekends.

Housed in a historic lockhouse along the C&O Canal towpath near Cabin John, Maryland, the River Center offers information about the Canal and the Potomac River and responsible ways to enjoy them. Enriching programs—from river music and historical storytelling to *Second Saturday* bug walks and bird hikes—are also hosted at the River Center, with a goal of increasing the public's appreciation and understanding of the Potomac River.

The River Center will open again next May, and over the summer, electricity will return to the lockhouse. With additional funding, the Conservancy will fully restore the lockhouse with the re-creation of the enclosed back porch, and will install permanent "Backyard to the Bay" educational exhibitry that will highlight the connection between the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay.

Interested volunteers can sign up now to lead *Second Saturday* educational programs through the winter and to be docents next spring. Contact Judy Welles, Director of the River Center at Lockhouse 8 at welles@potomac.org or 301.608.1188 x212. ■



Dozens of people joined members of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington to celebrate the close of the River Center's first season.

JUDY WELLES

Stronger Forest Protection Sought

In August, in response to a tree cutting incident adjacent to the C&O Canal National Historical Park, Maryland Congressman Christopher Van Hollen created the C&O Canal Stewardship Task Force. He named the Potomac Conservancy to this task force, which is working to strengthen regulations protecting the Canal.

At a Montgomery County Council meeting in October, the Conservancy testified in favor of stronger penalties, including criminal ones, for violations of Maryland's Forest Conservation Law (FCL). This law, enacted in 1991, is designed to limit destruction of forested areas such as the Potomac riverfront.

In November, the task force recommended that the

Council amend its County code for the FCL to significantly increase the monetary penalties, including raising the maximum penalty from \$1 to \$9 per square foot of the area in noncompliance. It also recommended adding criminal penalties that include fines and up to six months in jail for willful violators.

To keep up to date on the status of the FCL and on other C&O Canal issues, visit www.potomac.org to sign up for the Conservancy's monthly *RiverUpdate* e-newsletter. For more information about the Conservancy's role in the task force, contact Meredith Lathbury, Vice President of Conservation, at lathbury@potomac.org or 301.608.1188 x205. ■

Historic Opportunity for Virginia Rivers

In October, the Potomac Conservancy banded with three other major Virginia river groups to launch the *Healthy Rivers Initiative*. Friends of the Rivers of Virginia, Friends of the Rappahannock, and the James River Association joined in this new effort to ensure that Virginia's General Assembly provides adequate, long-term, and dedicated funding for the state's water quality needs.

"This is the single most important opportunity, perhaps ever, to protect and restore the waterways of the Commonwealth," says Matthew Logan, president of the Conservancy.

Nearly 7,000 miles of rivers and streams in Virginia—more than half of those monitored by the state—are polluted and listed on the Clean Water Act's "dirty waters" list. In 2005, the General Assembly

appropriated a one-time allocation of \$50 million for water quality obligations and committed to finding a long-term source of state funds. But still, Virginia invests a meager—and woefully inadequate—one percent of its budget on natural resource programs, the least of any state in the nation.

The Conservancy and its partners have hired a lobbyist, and on November 14, Logan traveled to Richmond to testify—on behalf of every citizen who relies on the rivers of Virginia—for the need for dedicated water quality funding.

"I am very pleased that river conservation groups across the Commonwealth have joined forces to launch this significant initiative," said Tayloe Murphy, Virginia's Secretary of Natural Resources. "Clean water funding is critical to all

of Virginia's waters, from local creeks and streams to our major rivers and the Chesapeake Bay."

To be a success, the *Healthy Rivers Initiative* requires the support of the community, especially fishing and hunting groups, canoeing clubs, watershed organizations, and other water-based recreation organizations. The commitment of such groups to make timely phone calls and send emails to key legislators is critical to a victory for Virginia's waterways.

To become a part of this initiative, contact Jen Schill, Director of Communications, at schill@potomac.org or 301.608.1188 x208. To keep up to date on the progress of the *Healthy Rivers Initiative*, sign up online for the Conservancy's *RiverUpdate* monthly e-newsletter at www.potomac.org. ■

We Need Your Help!

Add your voice to the *Healthy Rivers Initiative* by joining the Potomac Conservancy in Richmond on January 16 from 10 am until 1 pm for "Virginia Voters for Clean Water Day." This is an excellent opportunity to meet your delegate and senator face-to-face or write them letters to show your support for increased funding for Virginia's water quality needs.

"Clean Water Day" is coordinated by the Conservancy's friends at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Last year, 500 Virginians participated; help us reach this year's goal of 1,000!

Register online at http://www.cbf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=vaga2006_VVFCWsignup. Questions? Contact Jen Schill, Director of Communications & Membership, at schill@potomac.org or 301.608.1188 x208.

Potomac Reflections Celebration a Grand Success

On October 6, more than 125 friends joined the Potomac Conservancy for *Potomac Reflections: A Celebration of Our Nation's River*. Conservancy board member Shelley Slade Betts and her husband, Mark, opened their riverside home for this special evening.

The proceeds from this event support the Conservancy's programs. The Conservancy extends its thanks to all of the attendees and volunteers, and especially the members of the Host Committee, for making the evening a grand success.

JOANNE MILLER



In recognition of his dedication and leadership in protecting the Potomac River, Conservancy president Matthew Logan (right) presented former Maryland congressman Gilbert Gude with a Distinguished Service Award.

Joel Achenbach (left), author and Washington Post columnist, shared humorous insights on George Washington's Potomac with attendees. Here, he enjoys a moment with James Kimsey, founding CEO of America Online, Inc.



JOANNE MILLER

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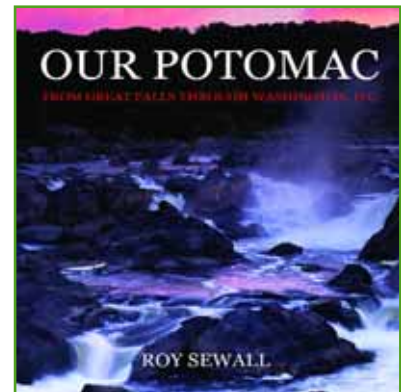
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Lynda & Charles Robb
Deborah Schumann
Paul Shiffman
Joan & Gene Smith
Felice Stadler & Matthew Logan

Give a Gift that Celebrates the Potomac

Still searching for the perfect holiday gift for the river lover in your life? Look no more! This year, give a gift that celebrates the Potomac. The large-format coffee table book *Our Potomac: From Great Falls through Washington, DC* will take your friend on a 17-mile journey of the river while supporting the Potomac Conservancy's work to protect it.

Featuring 216 full-color photos, *Our Potomac* captures the river's transformation from raging falls to an idyllic setting for many of Washington's greatest monuments.

Purchase autographed copies—available exclusively for a discounted price of \$34 plus tax, shipping, and handling—online at www.potomac.org. All sales support the Conservancy's programs. Order today, while supplies last!



This December, the Conservancy and *Our Potomac* author and photographer Roy Sewall invite you to celebrate the river by attending a book signing—complete with refreshments—at **3 pm Sunday, December 11** in Herndon, Virginia. **For more information or to RSVP, contact Angela Preston at preston@potomac.org or 301.608.1188 x201. ■**

Valley News

Why the Fish Kills?: An Update

Earlier this summer, unexplained fish kills took place along the Shenandoah River's South Fork and mainstem, decimating 80% of its smallmouth bass population. The Potomac Conservancy is working with other Valley groups—led by Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Game & Inland Fisheries—in the Shenandoah River Fish Kill Task Force to find answers.

Analyzed fish kill specimens exhibited a bacterium that can cause lesions, but which only proves fatal when fish are already stressed by other environmental factors, such as degraded water quality. To better identify the cause of these fish kills, which have occurred several places throughout the Potomac River watershed in recent years, the task force aims to raise \$550,000 by early next year. This money will be used to install four continuous, real-time water quality monitoring stations that will enable scientists to track various nutrient levels, and to analyze 80 live smallmouth bass to assess stress indicators.

To learn more about the fish kills, contact Heather Richards, Director of Headwaters Conservation, at richards@potomac.org or 540.667.3606.

"Healthy Farms & Streams"

On November 11 and 12, the Potomac Conservancy hosted the "Healthy Farms & Streams" farm tour and educational workshop to demonstrate that conservation and a resilient rural economy can go hand-in-hand. More than 50 farmers, landowners, and concerned citizens participated.

The tour visited two Valley farms, introducing participants to a variety of best management practices—including installing alternative watering systems and planting streamside forests—and innovative marketing techniques. Hill High Farm's Wendy Wright and Evergreen Farm's Pam Dors shared insights into their conservation practices and marketing approaches, providing ideas for farming profitably while also safeguarding water quality.

At the full day conference, participants learned about topics as diverse as farm management, alternative crops,



JEN SCHILL

Healthy Farms & Streams farm tour participants learned from Pam Dors about best management practices she employs on her horse farm, including a tree planting along a stream, to protect the Shenandoah's water quality.

and innovative marketing, and farm sustainability. During a lunchtime plenary, Robert Farr—"The Chile Man"—discussed approaches to increasing profits by promoting and developing value-added products. The conference also connected landowners and farmers with agency professionals who can help them employ best management practices on their properties.

Cedar Creek Revealed

On December 13, the Potomac Conservancy will unveil its newest report, *Cedar Creek Revealed: A Study of the Ecological and Historic Context of Cedar Creek*. This report—produced in partnership with Shenandoah University—provides residents and decision makers of this northern Shenandoah Valley watershed a detailed snapshot of the area's natural and cultural diversity, the threats it faces, and how they can become personally involved in protecting it. The Cedar Creek watershed contributes to the drinking water supply for the town of Strasburg and a portion of the City of Winchester.

To join the Conservancy for a special unveiling event on December 13, to be held at historic Belle Grove Plantation, contact Kelly McDaniel, Conservation Program Assistant, at mcdaniel@potomac.org or 540.667.3606. *Cedar Creek Revealed* will also be available soon for free download at www.potomac.org. ■

CALENDAR OF WINTER EVENTS

SECOND SATURDAY Winter break; visit www.potomac.org for future events	Saturdays throughout year	Angela Preston preston@potomac.org
OUR POTOMAC BOOK SIGNING* Herndon, Virginia	Sunday, December 11 3 'til 4:30 pm	Angela Preston preston@potomac.org
CEDAR CREEK REVEALED UNVEILING* Belle Grove Plantation, Middletown, Virginia	Tuesday, December 13 7 'til 8:30 pm	Kelly McDaniel mcdaniel@potomac.org
VIRGINIA VOTERS FOR CLEAN WATER* Richmond, Virginia Register online at http://www.cbf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=vaga2006_VVFCWsignup	Monday, January 16 10 am 'til 1 pm	Jen Schill schill@potomac.org

* RSVP requested

To stay current on Conservancy volunteer events, sign up for *RiverUpdate*, the Conservancy's free monthly e-newsletter, by emailing riverupdate@potomac.org. Visit www.potomac.org for an up-to-date list of activities.

Picture the Potomac

"Picture the Potomac" recognizes the unique contributions of the Potomac Conservancy's volunteer artists. We thank them for bringing the Potomac to life for our readers and for helping to instill an appreciation of the river and its tributaries in people throughout the watershed.

Artist: Syl Mathis

Title: "rivers"

Date: 2004

Notes: The parabolic shape of the armature, the subtle fish shape in the glass, the Potomac River rock base, and the way the boat-shaped glass is pinned in the frame allowing it to rock back and forth reflect the feelings I have when I spend time on the beautiful Potomac.

To contact Syl: Visit his WOODSTONEGLASS design website at

<http://www.voyageurprogram.org/SylBoatSeries.htm>, call 703.641.9428, or email smathis@cathedral.org.

Syl offers all Potomac Conservancy members a 10% discount on art sales. ■



Make a Difference with a Year-End Gift

The Conservancy is pleased to announce that it is one of only 75 non-profits honored in the 2005

Catalogue for Philanthropy. Fifty philanthropic and community leaders selected the region's best charities, evaluating them on distinction, merit, accomplishment, and cost-effectiveness.

Knowing that your contribution will be well spent, what better time to support the Conservancy than during this season of giving? If you're already a member of the Conservancy, please renew your membership or make a

special gift today. If you're not yet a member, join the growing family!

All donations are tax-deductible and may be made

securely online at www.potomac.org or by mailing a check. Christine Iffrig, Director of Development, welcomes questions about gifts of stock and bequests or other planned gifts, and may be reached at iffrig@potomac.org or 301.608.1188 x206.

The Conservancy's work would not be possible without the support of people like you. Thank you! ■

CATALOGUE FOR
PHILANTHROPY



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SPECIAL FEATURE

Read about
the Conservancy's
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