

# Continuing Efforts



## Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy

Land trusts are springing up all over the country to help save exceptional land from development. The Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy (NRWC), formed in 1992, is a local land trust based in Seaford, Delaware offering a variety of ways for landowners to protect their land. The mission of the Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy is to identify, promote, and actively seek the acquisition of lands with natural, aesthetic and historic significance in the watershed and to promote the protection and balanced use of these lands.

Landowners typically choose to protect their land with a conservation easement. A conservation easement is a written agreement between a landowner and a conservation agency, such as the NRWC, ensuring that a property will not be developed beyond an agreed upon limit, or perhaps not at all. The land remains in private ownership while the NRWC assures that the terms of the agreement are forever followed. Conservation easements are tailored to the needs and desires of a property owner enabling him or her to control the future appearance and character and even the function of the land. Landowners continue to farm, harvest timber, and hunt as well as reserve building rights for future use. The NRWC offers landowners individual planning assistance as they consider the use of a conservation easement or other land conservation techniques.

## Nanticoke Watershed Preservation Group

The Nanticoke Watershed Preservation Group, formed in 1990, is a citizen's group of friends and neighbors, landowners and business people, farmers and watermen committed to promoting the preservation of the environmental and scenic quality of the Nanticoke River watershed. They provide and promote discussion, presentations, and activities that include educational opportunities, water quality monitoring, planning and zoning, establishing water trails, American shad restoration, and bayscaping.

Their biggest project recently involved bay-scaping - conservation landscaping with native plants for a healthy watershed. They also maintain and monitor an Adopt-A-Wetland water trail and sponsor lectures and workshop series, including a fall lecture series on various topics that range from cultural, historic, and environmental subjects. A River Watcher program is in the works.

## Chesapeake Bay Foundation

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is the largest conservation organization dedicated solely to saving the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Their motto, Save the Bay, defines the organization's mission and commitment. With headquarters in Annapolis, Md., state offices in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania, and a varied group of educational centers and programs, CBF works throughout the Chesapeake's 64,000-square-mile watershed.



The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, founded in 1967, is a not-for-profit organization. CBF is supported by more than 110,000 active members, has a staff of approximately 175 fulltime employees, and an annual budget of \$20 million.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Heart of the Chesapeake project aims to protect and enhance water quality and natural resources in the drainage basins of Tangier and Pocomoke Sounds. The project works to preserve the rural character and quality of life in the region by integrating sensible land-use strategies with well-managed economic development. The Heart of the Chesapeake includes a large portion of Maryland's Eastern Shore and smaller sections of southwestern Delaware and Virginia's Eastern Shore. Pressure from development is forcing communities to create new strategies for managing growth and preserving the character of their region. Residents are working to ensure that their livable communities avoid rapid suburban sprawl and increased population and traffic in the countryside, a trend that debilitates town centers and diminishes established farming, timbering, and fishing industries. The Heart of the Chesapeake Project aims to help citizens take a balanced approach to addressing needs for economic development, environmental preservation, and levels of growth consistent with a high quality of life. The Heart of the Chesapeake project is addressing growth management issues by providing a forum for residents to envision what they want for the future of their community. Work to date in the Heart of the Chesapeake project area indicates that residents value:

- ◆ thriving farming, fishing, forestry, and tourism industries;
- ◆ well-managed growth;
- ◆ preserved land for environmental and economic advantages;
- ◆ reduced threats to water quality and wildlife habitat; and
- ◆ the sense of community and quality of life that has been enjoyed by residents in the Heart of the Chesapeake for centuries.

During the initial stages of the project, CBF Salisbury staff members have been meeting with citizens, government officials, industry representatives, educators, and advocacy groups to learn more about their vision for their communities. CBF intends to continue working with these groups

to develop and implement strategies for achieving that vision. The effort will set in motion a process for balancing priorities for land use, economic development, and conservation.

As the community's vision unfolds under the Heart of the Chesapeake project, residents will look critically at how things such as agricultural infrastructure and prosperous downtown shops contribute to a sense of community and its quality of life. The effort will help establish regional priorities and principles for use in refining growth management tools, including county land-use plans and development regulations.

## Tributary Teams

Tributary Action Teams were formed in watersheds where a Pollution Control Strategy needed to be developed to help the watersheds meet the **Total Maximum Daily Loads** (TMDLs) of certain nutrients. Under the leadership of a team facilitator, tributary teams include environmentalists, farmers, government officials, students, industrial professionals as well as residents like you. They learn about the issues affecting their watersheds and develop ways to reduce the pollution. The reduction will help the waterways meet the TMDLs set by DNREC and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for every waterway in the state. The Watershed Assessment Section of DNREC's Division of Water Resources has a newsletter called the Tributary Times - a newsletter developed to update Delawareans on the activities of the state's Tributary Action Teams. Each bi-monthly issue features a statewide news section, a short feature on a team member, informational articles on different issues and Tributary Team news. Learn more about the Tributary Action Team in the Nanticoke watershed and how you can make a difference.

