ShoreRivers Advocate

CHESTER | MILES, WYE, & EASTERN BAY | CHOPTANK | SASSAFRAS & BAYSIDE CREEKS

FALL 2023

AMPLIFYING, ELEVATING, GROWING

ShoreRivers is increasing regionwide impact!

MESSAGE FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

ShoreRivers: The clean water voice for the Eastern Shore.

Being the voice of the rivers is at the core of our identity as an organization. You can see the above tagline printed on our website and staff frequently repeat it when describing what we do. The first staff positions hired were Riverkeepers, tasked with being the eyes, ears, and *voices* for their bodies of water—representing the rivers' best interests. As our organization has grown to include student educators, agricultural specialists, and community engagers, we purposefully keep our work as the voice for the rivers at the center, informing all our decisions. As a result, we are not pro- or anti-development, we are not pro- or anti-agriculture; **we are pro-river** and advocate for what is best for the health of our waterways.

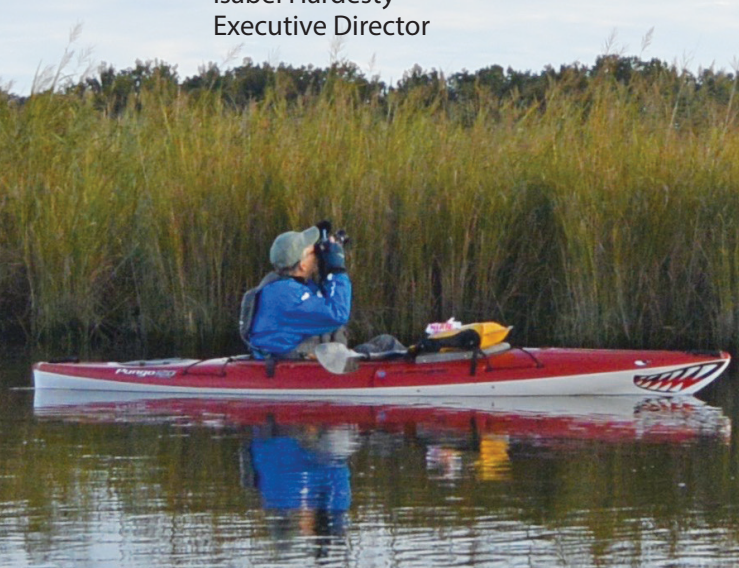
This pro-river voice demands strong environmental laws, motivates students to learn about their rivers, and rallies communities around clean water action. On the following pages, learn how we are amplifying our voice by elevating the voices of others—how we are purposefully and strategically engaging more communities, finding new collaborations, and expanding networks that add more voices to this clean water movement to have a greater impact.

On page 6, learn how ShoreRivers is making an impact at the state and federal level when we partner with others—and elevate *your* voices—on the Conowingo Dam relicensing issue. On page 8, read about how we "teach the teachers," giving public school teachers the environmental knowledge and resources they need, adding more conservation-minded educators to our classrooms. And on page 11, hear directly from one of our partner organizations, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, on finding common ground for conservation in faith communities.

We have a staff of 30, but you amplify our voice by thousands. Thank you for strengthening the clean water voice for the Eastern Shore.

Isabel Hardesty

Isabel Hardesty
Executive Director



On the Cover: Mackenzie Stelyn, one of ShoreRivers' 2023 summer interns, uses a secchi disk to measure water clarity aboard the Chester Riverkeeper boat.

On this Page: Photo by Bill Thompson.

All photos by ShoreRivers staff unless otherwise noted.

Want to see **YOUR PHOTO** in a future issue of the ***ADVOCATE*?**

Our annual photo contest is open through October, so snap a picture and send it our way! We are looking for images that highlight the beauty of the Eastern Shore waterways that we work to protect and restore through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education. We are particularly interested in images of people—show us how you enjoy the places we all love! Shore rivers are your rivers, and we want to see how you engage with the natural resources that we all strive to conserve.

Visit shorerivers.org/photo-contest for contest rules and details.

EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF **ADVOCACY** AND **RESTORATION**

By Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper & Director of Riverkeeper Programs and Bethany Ziegler, Communications Specialist

We often talk about how the things we do on the land impact our rivers. From the way we treat our forests and farm fields down to the plants we choose for our yards and gardens, it's well established that the better we steward our land, **the better we steward our waterways**.

At ShoreRivers, we also know that it's not just these physical conservation practices that make a difference. These same intersections—these cause-and-effect relationships—also exist in our courthouses, our legislative bodies, and anywhere policy is made.

Let's look, for example, at May's Supreme Court ruling in *Sackett v. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)*. The case was brought against EPA after a landowner filled in a federally protected wetland—without a permit—in order to build a new house alongside a lake in Idaho. After being ordered to clear the wetland of any fill, the landowners challenged EPA's authority, arguing that the wetland lacked any connection to navigable waters and couldn't impact the lake downstream from it. The defendant's argument was made despite a scientific understanding that navigable waters are constantly impacted by upstream pollution. More than 10 years of water quality data collected at ShoreRivers shows that the further up a navigable waterway you travel, the worse the water quality is, demonstrating that the nutrient and sediment pollution impacting those waterways must be transported from sources upstream—making it impossible for the wetland area in this case not to impact the nearby lake.

Siding with the defendant, the Supreme Court ruled against the science surrounding these hydrological connections throughout the landscape. In their decision, the court essentially said that wetlands that don't have a surface water connection to other waterways (nor streams that only show visible, above ground connections during heavy rains) cannot impact or influence the quality of navigable waters,

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so they should not have federal protection under the Clean Water Act. The Supreme Court's ruling, and the subsequent precedent set that allows an individual to fill in certain wetlands without a permit, weakens the ability of our landscape to defend itself against human-made pressures like development and deforestation—all of which threaten the waterways of the Eastern Shore.

Like much of the environmental community, we were disappointed by this ruling—a clear step backward against the progress ShoreRivers and our partners have been making within our watersheds to restore wetlands for their ability to protect our rivers and improve water quality. Removing protection of wetlands is particularly troubling on the low-lying, agriculturally dominated Eastern Shore—where we rely heavily on them to capture and slow rain water while treating nutrients before they enter our rivers. The Eastern Shore has faced increased development pressures since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this decision creates a pathway for even more of our land to be converted from wetlands to suburban/urban development. Even more concerning is how the court's ruling will impact the ability of our landscape to naturally defend and create resilience against the increased flooding and increased sea levels expected with climate change.

These once federally protected wetlands provide an invaluable service by storing nutrient-rich flood water draining from farm fields and urban developments.

There is some good news for Maryland's wetlands, though. State laws, such as Maryland's Nontidal Wetlands Protection Act, are already established and provide greater protection and oversight than what the federal law offered. Concerning, however, is Delaware, home to the headwaters of the Choptank, Chester, and Sassafras rivers, and where state regulations only protect saltwater wetlands.

Both our Riverkeeper and Ag & Restoration departments pay close attention to rulings like these, and to state, county, and town-level legislation that can impact both our waterways and the work we do every day to protect them. During this past session of the Maryland General Assembly, our team engaged with 50 environmental bills covering a wide array of topics including forestry education, PFAS monitoring, floodplain ordinance updates, invasive species control, underwater grass surveys, and more.

These bills have the potential to create even more direct and immediate impacts on our work than the recent Supreme Court ruling. During the session, we opposed a bill that would have deprioritized stream restoration and accelerated the loss of wetlands on the Eastern Shore, while supporting one that would have incentivized the implementation of living shorelines as the most beneficial solution to shoreline erosion for the health of the waterways. Neither bill passed, but both could have had major implications for our rivers.

There are myriad local examples of the intersection of advocacy and restoration. From the need for our environmental engineer and restoration staff to also be experts in planning and zoning ordinances—not to mention the permitting process—to our Riverkeepers encouraging responsible development practices over traditional sprawl designed with outdated and insufficient stormwater management practices.

As policies continue to be challenged and updated, we at ShoreRivers find that taking a pro-river approach across all of our work keeps the health of our waterways and our communities at the forefront of our actions. And despite setbacks and changing policies, we'll continue to build support for healthy waterways on the Eastern Shore in a fierce and intentional way so that, regardless of federal protection, our communities can stand on the frontlines with us to demand protection of our environment.

SHORERIVERS REMAINS COMMITTED TO WETLANDS

This month, ShoreRivers is wrapping up a collaborative effort with Washington College's Natural Lands Project to design, create, and restore wetlands in the Chester, Choptank, and Wye watersheds. This partnership has led to the creation or restoration of 21.4 acres of wetland through seven different projects, all designed to optimize habitat and often done in tandem with upland habitat creation like wildflower meadows and grass buffers.

What's next for our wetland work? In June 2023, ShoreRivers was awarded a grant from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund (which also funded the previous collaboration) to keep restoring wetlands and to increase forest habitat through tree plantings. Our goal is to implement 25 acres of wetlands and plant 25 acres of trees—both important components of our Eastern Shore ecosystem—stay tuned!

Laura Wood, Ag & Outreach Coordinator; Katie Drummond, Landscape Architect; and William Ryall, Environmental Engineer—three members of ShoreRivers' Ag & Restoration Team—conduct a site visit at a wetland in Bozman, MD.

This wetland in Bozman, MD, was restored through our work with Washington College's Natural Lands Project and the Envision the Choptank Partnership. ShoreRivers has a new goal thanks to funding from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund to implement 25 acres of wetlands and plant 25 acres of trees on the Eastern Shore.

You are invited…

SHORERIVERS

Riverside Rendezvous at The Oaks

Sunday, November 5, 2023
1–4 pm
25876 Royal Oak Road
Easton, MD 21601

The recipe for this year's *Rendezvous* will blend a stunning setting with a tantalizing taste of the rivers. Add a dash of incredible company (that's you!) to a healthy helping of ShoreRivers' most powerful programs, and you're in for an enticing, autumn afternoon on the banks of Oak Creek!

Tasty tickets and scrumptious sponsorships available at shorerivers.org/events.

CONOWINGO AND THE POWER OF GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

By Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

In December of 2022, we achieved a major win for clean water and Eastern Shore waterways when the District of Columbia Circuit Court tossed out the operating license for the Conowingo Dam.

Along with our partners Waterkeepers Chesapeake, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, we argued this 50-year license (granted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) did not include a Water Quality Certification that Maryland issued in 2018 nor much needed Clean Water Act protections.

This ruling was hard won and took almost two years, but was absolutely the right fight for us to take on—this is one of the most critical issues facing the health of the Chesapeake Bay. The court agreed and mandated that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Maryland Department of the Environment go back to the drawing board and come up with a new license that adequately protects water quality and the communities that depend on it. It also requires Constellation Energy (formerly Exelon) to contribute their fair share toward clean-up efforts. **This court win set a national precedent for clean water rights and shows the continued power of the Clean Water Act, more than 50 years after it was first written into law.**

It also shows the power of grassroots organizing and community input in making meaningful change. ShoreRivers and its legacy organizations have worked on this issue for close to a decade and are fortunate to have communities that are so vocal and passionate about it. Because of tides and prevailing winds, the Eastern Shore usually bears the brunt of the debris, sediment, and nutrients that spill out of the Susquehanna River through Conowingo, and have been negatively impacted on a regular basis for far too long.

That's why we started hosting town hall meetings, circulating petitions for signatures, and asking people to call their state and federal representatives—and we received an outpouring of support. **Hundreds of our members and local residents attended meetings, thousands submitted comments and petition signatures, and hundreds of thousands engaged with our outreach campaigns.** From social media campaigns to billboards, to legislation at the state and federal levels, we were able to take this community consensus and amplify it in the halls of Annapolis and DC to create real change. This legal victory would not have been possible without the support and hard work of all of you.

This year, we have been in close contact with Maryland Governor Wes Moore's new administration, ensuring that they are informed about the process and the issue, and positioning ourselves as allies in this fight for clean water. This summer, the Maryland Department of the Environment began its reconsideration process for issuing an updated license that will hopefully include much stronger protections in place for water quality. While there isn't an opportunity for public comment during this process, **ShoreRivers has a seat at the table for these negotiations and will continue amplifying your voice until the fight is over and a license is in place that adequately protects our rivers and the Bay.**

Photos by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program with aerial support by LightHawk.

ELEVATING STUDENT RESEARCH, COMMUNITY SCIENTISTS TO **RESTORE UNDERWATER GRASSES**

By Ben Ford, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper

It's a hot, humid day on Tilghman Creek off Eastern Bay.

Still, it feels just fine for the ShoreRivers staff, interns, and volunteers wading waist-deep in the water. We're selectively harvesting the seed-rich tops of *Zannichellia palustris*, or horned pondweed, to extract and propagate the seeds next spring.

Horned pondweed is one of the approximate 15 species of submerged aquatic vegetation, or SAV, found commonly in the Chesapeake Bay. **SAV forms an essential component of the watershed's ecosystem and provides myriad benefits**, acting as a primary producer (of critical habitat for aquatic species, including fish, crabs, and waterfowl) and as an ecological powerhouse (playing a crucial role in water quality.)

ShoreRivers has long advocated for the protection and restoration of these ecological underwater meadows. We partner with Anne Arundel Community College and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to harvest seed from preferential species and process it for spring plantings, we advocate at the local and state level for protections for growing and thriving SAV beds, and we engage with the community to build knowledge and passion for the protection of SAV.

Recently, ShoreRivers worked with three dedicated Washington College students to support their undergraduate research into SAV. Rachel Beall, Halina Saydam, and Marcelina Lewis worked closely with Chester Riverkeeper Annie Richards to obtain funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to grow their own *Potamogeton perfoliatus*, or redhead grass. Using seeds turbulated by ShoreRivers in 2022, the students grew SAV in a Washington College greenhouse and, this summer, were able to harvest seeds from the mature plants. The next phase of the students' research is to transplant the mature SAV into healthy beds in the Chester River and monitor their success rate. This research could influence the strategy behind SAV restoration across the state; stay tuned as we continue to learn from our partners!

Marcelina Lewis, Rachel Beall, and Halina Saydam—three Washington College students aided by ShoreRivers in a research study on submerged aquatic vegetation—collect various growing substrates from the Chester River as part of their study. Said Saydam of the project, "Being able to talk with so many people who want to do this and are excited about what we are doing is amazing, and ***if we can all get together and say, 'let's do this,' we can make things happen."***

"We really truly couldn't have done it at all without those seeds and [Annie Richards'] help," Beall said. Lewis added, "We learned that it's super important to have a supportive staff and faculty team behind you. And we had so much support from ShoreRivers."

If you are interested in playing your own role in supporting SAV protection and restoration, consider joining ShoreRivers as an SAV Watcher. Visit shorerivers.org/programs/sav-monitoring to learn more.

In Maryland, many SAV Protection Zones are slated to shrink based on the Department of Natural Resources' analysis of aerial surveys conducted by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. These protection zones, redrawn every three years, prohibit the disturbance of healthy or growing beds of submerged aquatic vegetation.

ShoreRivers supports legislative efforts to change the way these SAV Protection Zones are developed by requiring that they are updated every year based on a more comprehensive data set.

Other proven methods of mapping and detection—including the data collected by groups like our irreplaceable SAV watchers—show a Bay-wide increase in SAV beds not reflected in the three-year survey. But that data is currently overlooked as aerial photography is exclusively used to map SAV under Maryland regulations despite often being conducted after some species have deteriorated.

Morgan Buchanan, ShoreRivers' 2022–2023 Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member, plants sago and horned pondweed seeds on the upper Miles River in April as part of our efforts to restore underwater grass beds.

TEACHING THE TEACHERS:
Using Professional Development to More Deeply Embed Environmental Education in the Classroom

By Paige Dempsey, Education Programs Coordinator

When I try to describe what it is that I do for work, it is easy to say, "I lead field trips where students are introduced to their local watershed."

But simplifying my job to just "I lead field trips" overlooks many of the ways in which the Education Department at ShoreRivers collaborates with schools to incorporate environmental education into their classroom—such as the days throughout the year when we turn our attention to teachers and to providing them with professional development opportunities.

Field trips offer students an essential opportunity to get outside and to connect with their local waterways. At the same time, field trips are often isolated experiences. We might see a specific class in the field only once or twice a year. **But through professional development workshops, ShoreRivers amplifies teachers' ability to incorporate place-based learning throughout the school year, to take their classrooms outside, and to foster a sense of environmental stewardship within their students.**

A workshop might equip teachers with new skills and knowledge, like a recent one funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust to introduce teachers to Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences, a framework for place-based environmental inquiry. ShoreRivers and Sultana Education Foundation co-led this three-day experience for Kent County teachers in June. We walked around Chestertown, discussed environmental challenges facing the Eastern Shore, and explored the Radcliffe Creek watershed. All the while, ShoreRivers and Sultana staff introduced cross-disciplinary lesson plans, concepts, and tools to support teachers as they take students outside to learn.

The teachers attending these workshops can be as passionate about emerging environmental science developments as we are. This spring, ShoreRivers partnered with Stroud Water Research Center to provide a unique workshop funded by the National Science Foundation. This workshop featured current research by the Stroud Center's Assistant Director, Vice President, and Research Scientist Scott Ensign, Ph.D. Scott is actively sampling the Choptank and Pocomoke rivers to understand how fast and how far sediment travels from watersheds into the Chesapeake Bay and how that sediment could build-up to save sinking wetlands. Often, when we share research with teachers, the project is complete, its findings summed up neatly. But connecting teachers with emerging science helps them in turn show students that science itself is ongoing and requires constant questioning and curiosity.

For years, we've supported schools' efforts to take learning outside, transform school grounds, and obtain school sustainability certifications. In a new partnership with Pickering Creek Audubon Center, we are facilitating a network for school leadership including superintendents, principals, and even facilities managers in our partner school districts. Funded by Chesapeake Bay Trust, this Environmental Literacy Leadership Learning Community will present school leaders with the opportunity to share successes and challenges as well as resources and training to advance environmental literacy efforts in their school districts.

Teachers from Kent County take part in a professional development workshop co-led by ShoreRivers and the Sultana Education Foundation in June. With funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, this three-day workshop introduced teachers to Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences.

These workshops strengthen schools' abilities to get students outside by connecting them to local partners and sharing resources and lesson ideas. **It is our teachers who can take a single, memorable field trip and transform it into an ongoing experience with their local environment.**

Every chance I have to take a group of high schoolers canoeing on the Choptank or to introduce a third-grader to a real-life sturgeon is certainly one I'll take. And so is every chance I have to work with teachers to support them as they embed environmental education into their classrooms.

TREE STEWARDS **ADD HUNDREDS OF NATIVE TREES** TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

By Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper

ShoreRivers prides itself on community involvement, and we strive to create initiatives that have multifaceted benefits for those across our watersheds—

and who can deny the incredible benefits provided to our communities by trees? Planting native trees improves water quality and reduces nutrient and stormwater runoff, shades impervious surface to better regulate water temperatures, and sequesters carbon in our atmosphere—and their benefits don't stop there. These trees, especially when planted in urban and developed areas, create habitat for birds and insects, keep our neighborhoods cooler, increase home values, filter our air quality, and lower our energy bills!

We're committed to planting as many native trees in our watershed as we can, and much of this work is through our Tree Stewards program. This volunteer program began in 2021 as a training opportunity offered by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, for which ShoreRivers was the only host organization on the Eastern Shore. The training covered topics including tree biology, proper tree planting techniques, and site assessments.

ShoreRivers' Landscape Architect Katie Drummond shows some love to trees before they were planted at the Presbyterian Church of Chestertown this May.

With funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Chesapeake Bay Trust, and an outstanding showing from our dedicated volunteer base, ShoreRivers has worked alongside our Tree Stewards to plant 300 native trees across our watershed. And we're just getting started.

ShoreRivers has committed to planting another 1,000 native trees in towns and cities across our region by harnessing once-in-a-generation funding made available for urban trees from the Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021 (legislation supported by your Riverkeepers that year!) The relationships we have built with volunteers, community members, equity partners, and local government officials made our first 300 trees both a success and a joy to plant. And while there were lessons to learn, and challenges to overcome, those plantings also helped us prove that we have the network and capacity to meet this ambitious new goal. These trees will enhance our communities, cool impervious surfaces in our neighborhoods, and reduce erosion, stormwater runoff, and more—both today and for decades to come.

Planting trees in urban spaces has allowed ShoreRivers to forge new friendships and partnerships with residents across our watersheds. It shows that our communities have an appetite for stewardship and for community greening in local gathering spaces and neighborhoods. Space for a tree means space for other beneficial native plants thanks to our River-Friendly Yards program, and many of our past Tree Stewards projects have opened the door for other types of community-based restoration work. **Next time you notice a newly planted tree, whether it's in a park, a street, a playground, or a churchyard, think of it as a gift: for the communities that enjoy them, and for our rivers.** At ShoreRivers, we continue working to protect and restore our waterways, and these trees—and their dedicated stewards—will amplify those efforts for generations.

Groups work to plant native trees at Meadow Park in Cambridge. Photo by Jameson Harrington.

BUILDING CLEAN WATER CAPACITY FOR UNDER-ENGAGED ORGANIZATIONS

By Darran White Tilghman, Director of Community Engagement

ShoreRivers is an absolute powerhouse when it comes to winning and successfully managing grants.

This superpower allows us to get scores of projects in the ground that prevent pollution and restore our irreplaceable waterways.

What could be better than one great organization winning state, federal, and regional funding to protect and restore our rivers? *Multiple* great organizations across the Shore winning funding to put in even more restoration projects that help our rivers!

ShoreRivers is thrilled to announce that we have been named as both a Connector and a Technical Assistance Provider by the Chesapeake Bay Trust through their Community-Based Organization Capacity-Building Initiative. Through this, we're able to mentor under-engaged, community-based organizations (or those who work with historically disadvantaged communities), to help them submit successful resiliency and restoration grants. And with ShoreRivers' technical assistance, these organizations will build their knowledge and capacity to submit grants and lead future restoration efforts. We're well versed in helping others with the design and implementation of their projects, but with those projects, ShoreRivers has typically held the grant funding. Through this initiative, we're helping these organizations win grants of their own, which helps them fund projects and empowers them to feel confident taking on more, and larger, projects on their own in the future.

These projects might look like community plantings, rain gardens, bioswales, or other ambitious efforts to help clean our rivers and connect more community members to river stewardship. ShoreRivers intends to build upon previous collaborations with organizations like Kent Attainable Housing, Minary's Dream Alliance, and the Town of Rock Hall by providing technical assistance to **enable those organizations to submit, win, and manage funding for their own restoration projects, on their own properties, serving their own communities.** And we're also working with groups like Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake *(look to your right to learn more)*, another Connector in our Eastern Shore region, who are helping us to identify new organizations to whom we can provide this support.

Beyond winning grants, ShoreRivers also excels at lifting up our shared values to build the healthy, resilient, and joyful Eastern Shore community we all deserve. It's important work that we're proud to do. **The more we help other organizations connect to stewardship opportunities, the more we help them build their capacity and resilience, the better off we'll all be.** Instead of one restoration project going in the ground to help water quality, we could support many projects per grant cycle—helping more nonprofits thrive means a more sustainable future for all of our communities. **We cannot have clean water without healthy communities, and we cannot have healthy communities without clean water.**

Participants in our Social and Environmental Justice Convenings, including Kent Attainable Housing, Minary's Dream Alliance, and Men for Change are among the first organizations to partner with ShoreRivers to explore technical grant assistance. Here, a group gathers at the third convening held at Minary's Dream in Chestertown earlier this year. Photo by Doncella Wilson.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:
INTERFAITH PARTNERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Article submitted by the Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake's Outreach Team

Collaborative work is the core philosophy behind our work at Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake. **We couldn't be more excited, or prouder, to be working with a partner like ShoreRivers in a joint effort (the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Community-Based Organization Capacity-Building Initiative) to expand a movement of faithful stewards working together to restore creation across the Chesapeake Bay watershed.**

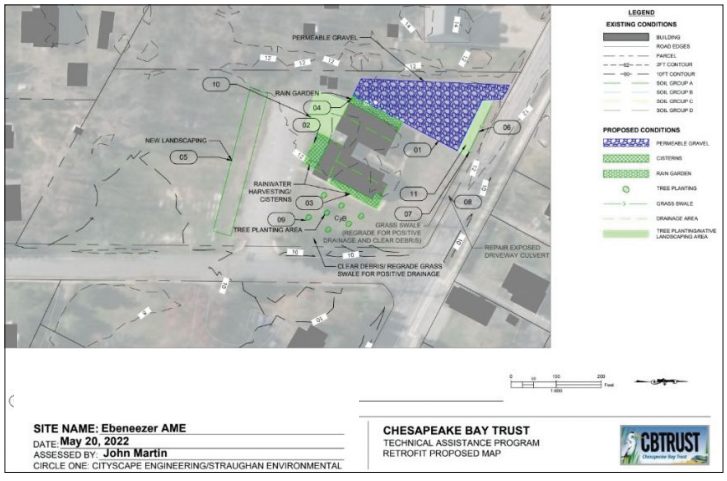
Our strategy is simple: we have seen firsthand the impact a team can have on what a congregation can accomplish. The truth is, everything is easier with a friend! That's why our Faithful Green Leaders Training program offers a free course designed to help you form your own Green Team. These information sessions show you how to recruit new allies, how to become accredited by your faith leadership, and how to identify and undertake environmental actions. Our next session starts in October.

Our partners, like ShoreRivers, are standing by to help our Green Teams learn more about the kinds of actions they might be able to take on their own property. Site assessments aim to help Green Teams understand and catalog the breadth of actions they might be able to take at their own congregation, inside and out. These assessments will also include the creation of a written report detailing various actions and initiatives available to that group. Every congregation is different!

To date, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake has helped 170+ congregations form a Green Team in an effort to improve the health of communities throughout the Chesapeake watershed. These congregations have come together and have collectively undertaken more than 600 actions on behalf of the Chesapeake Bay. These have included a huge multitude of projects and events—tree and native species plantings, rain gardens, bioswales, cisterns & rain barrels, solar and energy conservation initiatives, advocacy campaigns, and more. Likewise, we've brought onboard more than 130 partner congregations from across the watershed through our Partner Congregation Pledge, demonstrating their commitment to faithful stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay. Learn more about our work at interfaithchesapeake.org.

Meet Ebenezer AME Church in Galesville, MD: the pilot for our Community-Based Organization Capacity-Building Initiative!

After forming a Green Team and conducting a site assessment with regional partners in Anne Arundel County, Ebenezer AME Church was able to identify a variety of ways they might be able to improve ecosystem health across their property, and how they might be able to address flooding concerns surrounding their building and adjacent cemetery. With support, Ebenezer AME has received more than $75,000 from the Chesapeake Bay Trust toward their efforts to design green infrastructure, mitigating flooding and improving habitat across their property. As design work continues to unfold, Ebenezer AME Church focuses on educating congregation members and preparing for the work ahead in maintaining their conservation practices (tree plantings, native plantings, bioswales, and cisterns).



This concept diagram of Ebenezer AME Church highlights different possible areas for installation of environmentally focused practices. There are more than 19,000 congregations across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Imagine the potential if we all came together.

SHORE RIVERS

Eastern Shore Conservation Center
114 S. Washington St., Suite 301
Easton, MD 21601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE MEMBER

WATERKEEPERS CHESAPEAKE

Photo by Dan Hayes

Save these dates and join us for an upcoming event!

Ride for Clean Rivers
Sunday, September 17

Choptank River Sunset Paddle Expedition with Choptank Riverkeeper Matt Pluta
Thursday, September 21

Chester River Sunset Paddle Expedition with Chester Riverkeeper Annie Richards
Wednesday, September 27

Edible Plants Foraging Expedition with Permaculture Educator Shane Brill
Thursday, October 5

Wildflowers & Weeds Expedition at Wildly Native Flower Farm
Tuesday, October 10

Riverside Rendezvous at The Oaks
Sunday, November 5

To register, and for full event details, visit shorerivers.org/events.