

Port Tobacco River Conservancy News

SUMMER 2016

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On Thursday, August 18, the Port Tobacco River Conservancy will hold its ninth annual Night on the River fundraiser. Join us from 7 to 10 pm at the Port Tobacco Restaurant, 7536 Shirley Blvd., Port Tobacco, where you will enjoy delicious food and a cash bar while sharing the company and conversation of your Port Tobacco Watershed neighbors. Landing Mary, a local acoustic trio, will provide music for the evening.

As always, beautiful items will be available to bid on in our silent auction, and you could be the lucky one who wins the Cooler of Cheer or 50/50 Raffles.

Tickets are \$50 per person or include nine friends for a group price of \$475. Tickets are on sale now. Reserve yours today by visiting our website Porttobaccoriver.org. For more information, please contact us at 301.934.2025 or email at PTRC@porttobaccoriver.org.

A New Comp Plan—and a Major Win for the Environment

The Charles County Board of County Commissioners approved a new county comprehensive plan on July 12, and—great news—it includes some major wins for the county's environment and quality of life.

One of the biggest wins protects the headwaters of the Port Tobacco Creek from development. It involves the 1,160 acres near White Plains that had been carved out of the new Watershed Conservation District (WCD), which is designed to protect sensitive natural areas for their long term ecological, aesthetic and scenic values. The Planning Commission had voted to put the land into the WCD, where density will be set at one unit per 20 acres, moving it out of the deferred development district – a decision affirmed by the County Commissioners.

Protecting headwaters is critical to cleaning up a river—if the headwaters are polluted so too will be the river, so this is great news for the Port Tobacco River.

Other big environmental wins in the new comp plan include designating the Indian Head Tech Park property and other land around Maryland Airport as part of the WCD, preventing major housing developments on septic systems in Marshall Hall and Marbury, eliminating the Cross County Connector, and designating Bryans Road as a village rather than an urban growth area for thousands of new homes.

Many thanks to the many individuals and organizations who worked hard to get these environmental victories included in the comp plan.

And especially, a big thank you goes to the Charles County Board of Commissioners for showing visionary leadership and taking bold action to move the county in a better direction.

To read the new comprehensive plan, click [here](#), and to view the new land use map, click [here](#).

PTRC Helps Build Meditation Garden on Grounds of Christ Church in La Plata

Christ Church, Port Tobacco Parish, and the Port Tobacco River Conservancy are working together to build a new Meditation Garden on the grounds of the church in downtown La Plata.

The project will convert an unused courtyard on the church grounds into the garden, which will be open to the public. The garden design includes water permeable surfaces, rain barrels, native plants, and a rain garden. In addition to providing an attractive meditation space, the project will serve to educate the community on the importance of environmental and watershed stewardship.

"As Episcopalians, the church seeks to live out its conviction that creation has been entrusted to our care and well-being," said Rector Timothy Johnson. "The creation of the meditation space using stormwater controls and native plantings will allow the church to put its convictions of good environmental stewardship into practice."

Working with Fr. Tim, Kathleen Litchfield of Petro Design/Build Group developed the design for the Meditation Garden. "The garden will provide a space in central La Plata in which to relax and observe how rain gardens can enhance the environment aesthetically while mitigating stormwater runoff and providing wildlife habitat," Kathleen explained.

"Christ Church is located in the Port Tobacco Watershed, and we are very excited about the opportunities this project creates for educating the public about the importance of the river and watershed as natural ecosystems," said Jerry Forbes of the Port



Before (above) and midproject (below) photos of the Meditation Garden



Tobacco River Conservancy's Board of Directors. "This project offers an opportunity to demonstrate for the public how landscaping choices can benefit the natural environment that surrounds them."

Funding for the garden was provided by a Charles County Chesapeake Bay Trust Outreach and Restoration Grant.



Shoreline Cleanups

This summer PTRC has been holding monthly shoreline cleanups at Chapel Point State Park. At June’s cleanup, we collected 12 bags of recyclables, 16 bags of trash, lots of fishing line, and quite a bit of assorted junk. All this accumulated since we were there for the Potomac River Cleanup in April.

July’s cleanup crew, pictured at left, included Gilbert Bowling Jr, Yusuf Abubakar (representing Thomas Stone National Historic Site), Nick Fugate, Heather Zdobysz, Tina Wilson, Elsie Picyk, Desi Brown, Joyce Dean, Malcolm Simpson, and Steve Bunker (top picture), and Charlie Olmsted, Cody McNair, Will Hunter, Thomas Curry, and Robert Ader (bottom picture) who have been active in the McDonough High School Environmental Club. Thanks to Target of Waldorf for providing snacks for our volunteers.

Our next cleanups will be August 20, September 17, and October 15 from 9am to 11am. We will provide gloves, trash/recycle bags, drinking water and snacks. The park is located at 8160 Pisces Rd, Port Tobacco MD 20677. For more information contact us at ptrc@porttobaccoriver.org or 301 934 2025.

PUBLIC MEETING ON CHAPEL POINT STATE PARK

The Maryland Park Service and the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism will hold a public meeting August 4 to discuss a management partnership plan for Chapel Point State Park. The meeting will be from 6 pm to 8 pm in the County Commissioners' Meeting Room at the Charles County Government Building (200 Baltimore Street, La Plata).

The state/local partnership is being proposed to improve services and amenities for increasing numbers of visitors to the park. Interested citizens and those wishing to suggest specific improvements are urged to attend the meeting.

Following the meeting, a plan will be developed to facilitate the proposed partnership using public input.

For additional information, contact Mary Owens, Maryland Park Service at 410-260-8161 or Mary.Owens@maryland.gov or Greg Kernan, Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism at 301- 932-3472 KernanG@charlescountymd.gov.

Green Drinks

Green Drinks events are a great way for those interested in preserving the environment to make friends, discuss important issues, and expand one’s network. With the warmer weather, PTRC Green Drinks has resumed our monthly get-togethers at the Port Tobacco Restaurant (7536 Shirley Blvd, Port Tobacco).

Come join us at our next Green Drinks on Thursday, July 28, at 6:30pm—it’s fun and the restaurant donates part of its proceeds from the evening to PTRC. And this month, PTRC’s popular beer glasses will be available for purchase for \$10—and you can drink your beer from your new glass!

Seining Update

PTRC's fish seining team sampled three sites at Chapel Point State Park on July 2. The team used a 100-foot net to collect juvenile fish at the boat launch area and just below Fourth Point and Chapel Point. Species that we identified included croaker, banded killifish, striped killifish, menhaden, spottail shiner, grass shrimp, Atlantic silversides, spot, white perch, bluefish, blue crab, mummichug, pumpkinseed sunfish, bay anchovy, and comb jelly.

PTRC follows a protocol similar to that of the Maryland DNR juvenile striped bass survey, which documents annual year-class success for young-of-the-year striped bass (and relative abundance of many other fish species) at 22 stations within Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay. Although there is no DNR site in the Port Tobacco watershed, PTRC has a DNR collections permit. One of the conditions of the permit is that we send a report to the DNR Fisheries Service at the end of the collection year, which we did for 2015 and will again this year. DNR has collected over 100 fish species since 1954. Annual indices of relative abundance provide an early indicator of future adult stock numbers, and document annual variation and long-term trends in abundance and distribution.

For more information, visit <http://porttobaccoriver.org/fish-seining/>. We plan to seine monthly through mid-September. If you would like to volunteer, contact us at ptrc@porttobaccoriver.org or (301) 934-2025.



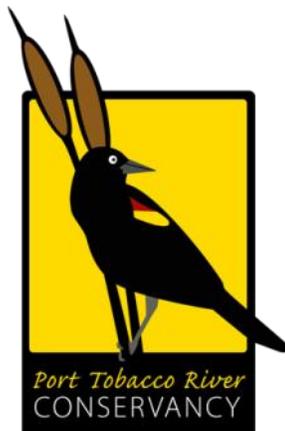
PTRC fish seining volunteers: Above Sandy Hastings, Nick Fugate, Paige, Melanie, and Don Upright, Tina Wilson (in foreground), Malcolm Simpson, and Ken Hastings



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