

PTRC Annual Report 2018



Port Tobacco River
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Message from the President

It has been quite a successful year for the Port Tobacco River Conservancy. Our success story has been made possible by the commitment and dedicated support of our members and volunteers.

Fresh ideas and renewed commitment are essential to our Conservancy's future. This brings me to two important points. First, mark your calendars for PTRC's Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday, January 17, at the Port Tobacco Courthouse. We will elect new officers and directors who will continue to guide our Conservancy with its mission of protecting and restoring the Port Tobacco River and its watershed.

Secondly, we need your support for our upcoming ChocolateFest scheduled for February 1, 2019. Proceeds from the event will go towards building our outdoor classroom project at Dr. James Craik Elementary School. It's exciting to be a part of the Conservancy as we move forward on projects that enhance our watershed. We have many great ideas but need your continued support. Please join us! Until we meet again, let me share with you some of this year's highlights.

Outdoor Classroom at Craik Elementary





Construction is complete on the stormwater control portion of an outdoor classroom at Craik Elementary in Pomfret that will support environmental education instruction. PTRC received a Chesapeake Bay Trust Outreach and Restoration Grant to construct a stabilized swale with over 1000 native plants to address stormwater runoff into the Port Tobacco Creek from the school's buildings and parking lots.

We are in the process of raising funds for a pavilion and ADA-accessible sidewalk to complete the classroom. Proceeds of this year's ChocolateFest will be dedicated to this project, and we need your support!

ChocolateFest 2019

Mark your calendars for ChocolateFest 2019, February 1 at the Greater Waldorf Jaycees. Join us from 7 to 11 pm for a night filled with fun, romance, and chocolate.

Bid on beautiful items in our silent auction, try your luck gambling with real money, and enjoy the company and conversation of fellow PTRC supporters as we dance the night away to wonderful music by local musicians GrooveSpan.

Buy your tickets using PayPal at porttobaccoriver.org.



Port Tobacco Jail Interpretive Sign

Thanks to a Charles County Tourism Grant, PTRC worked with several local partner organizations to clear vegetation from the site of the 1860 Port Tobacco Jail and install an interpretive sign.

Thanks to our many partners on the project — the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco, Charles County Parks, the Southern Maryland Chapter of the Maryland Native Plant Society, the Historical Society of Charles County, and the Charles County Archaeological Society of Maryland. This project was paid for in part by the Charles County Commissioners.



LaPlata Comprehensive Plan Update

The Town of La Plata has invited PTRC to be represented on the steering committee working on updating the Town's comprehensive plan. The effort began with a kick-off meeting in June. Follow-up listening sessions have covered municipal growth, the downtown area, transportation, and economic development. More information is available at bit.ly/ToLPCompUpdate La Plata west of the railroad tracks is in the Port Tobacco River watershed.





The Bay is Getting Cleaner

The Southern Maryland Phase III WIP Workshop held on June 18 featured the good news that the Chesapeake Bay is the cleanest it has been in 33 years. The Bay's dead zone is shrinking; Bay grasses, blue crabs, and oysters are recovering; nitrogen loads are down from 84.2 million pounds per year in 1985 to 54.8 pounds per year in 2017; and phosphorus loads are down from 7.46 million pounds per year to 3.64 million pounds per year.

Cleanup efforts will continue to focus on pollution from stormwater, wastewater, septic systems, and agriculture. Speakers from Maryland Department of the Environment and Maryland Department of Agriculture presented new management approaches and funding sources for projects that will allow us to reach the cleanup targets for 2025.

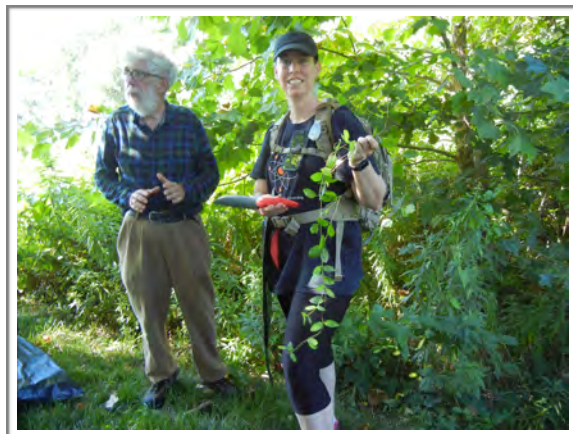
The Workshop was held at the new headquarters of the Charles Soil Conservation District on Gardiner Road in Waldorf. The CSCD has just completed an extensive landscaping project around the building using native plants that was funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust.



Your Chance to Become a Weed Warrior

This summer Marc Imlay of the Maryland Native Plant Society led PTRC volunteers on a walk in Port Tobacco River Park to identify invasive plants and discuss strategies for their control. Species we identified included ailanthus, Japanese stiltgrass, Oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, perilla, mile-a-minute weed, Bradford pear, and English ivy.

PTRC Board member Rebecca Turner, an experienced weed warrior, advises that winter is the time to remove evergreen invasive such as honeysuckle and ivy, and will be leading our efforts to remove these plants in Port Tobacco River Park and Chapel Point State Park.



Are You Watching the Eagle Cam?

One of the main attractions at Port Tobacco River Park is the active eagles' nest, where two chicks hatched last spring. We should have a much closer view of our eagle family this breeding season thanks to an eagle cam installed by Terrain360, Inc., of Richmond VA and funded by the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism.

Watch the eagles at wildstreaming.com or on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8TI-EYaWp8>



We Had a Great Time at Night on the River

We enjoyed seeing many of you at this year's Night on the River Fundraiser at the Port Tobacco Marina Restaurant. Music from the Solid Sender Trio helped everyone to relax and enjoy the great food and drink, and many of us overindulged in delicious Terri's Desserts.

We hope everyone went home with a design-your-own T-shirt or a unique item from our raffles and silent auction.

Another Year of Shoreline Cleanups

Many thanks to all the hard-working volunteers who came out for our monthly shoreline cleanups at Chapel Point. We have frankly lost count of the number of bags of trash we removed this year, but it is worth the effort to protect this beautiful area and its wildlife.

Speaking of improvements at the park, if you look closely in the photo at right you will see that the County has already installed trash cans!



Great News at Chapel Point State Park

The lease agreement between the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism has been signed. We can look forward to improvements to the existing boat launch and fishing beach, a redesigned waterfront picnic area, a new "soft" kayak launch, an enhanced paddle-in campsite, and more secure and sustainable beach access. In addition to these amenities, other projects include work on access roads, parking, trails and wayfinding. Much of the park's undeveloped shoreline will remain intact and natural. Other recreation uses, including hunting, will continue.

Phasing Out Plastic Straws

PTRC appreciates our County Commissioners' efforts to address aquatic debris by passing legislation to prevent restaurants from distributing drinking straws that are not compostable beginning in 2021. We hope this legislation will bring public awareness to the harm litter can cause.

