

The pages in this document were taken from the "Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy: Final Report" published in September 2004. The entire document can be found at http://dnrweb.dnr.state.md.us/download/bays/cr_strategy.pdf.

Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy: Final Report

**Excerpt Showing an Example of an Executive
Summary**

September 2004

Corsica River

Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

The Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy, sponsored by the Town of Centreville and supported by wide and active stakeholder interests, sets forth a blueprint for the sustainable environmental health of the Corsica River. The WRAS is based upon a comprehensive and scientific assessment of the Corsica River Watershed. The Corsica has been designated as impaired under Maryland's Clean Water Action Plan since 1999, and given the highest priority for restoration. The WRAS science draws upon the historic data contributing to that designation, while updating and expanding that knowledge with a host of new data which describes and documents water quality, shoreline characteristics, development and farming impact, and a variety of impairments. These data show that considerable restoration is sorely needed. Moreover, they point to where, what, and how much.

By comprehensively assessing the River's present state and by reaching deeply into its future, this plan and its background studies chart a clear course towards watershed improvements. That course is made up of specific action strategies that include:

- Remedial field projects to repair eroding land,
- Thickening of inadequate buffers,
- Restoring fish migrations, cleaning-up dumping sites,
- Creating habitat corridor connections,
- Restoring submerged aquatic vegetation, and much more.

The WRAS also recommends bold initiatives that will be undertaken by local government to develop and adopt policy and programmatic changes that will:

- Create innovative stormwater management practices for low impact development;
- Put in place tighter enforcement controls on erosion and sedimentation;
- Achieve the maximum feasible reduction of nitrogen and phosphorous in the municipal wastewater stream;
- Create mechanisms to design, fund, construct, and maintain acres of filtering non-tidal wetlands on public lands; and
- Teach our citizens of the environmental danger of poorly maintained septic systems, over-fertilized lawns, eroding shorelines, and unbuffered streams.

With diligent application of the principles of this Action Strategy and implementation of its recommendations, the Corsica River one day will be de-listed as an impaired waterway. Accordingly, the principal stakeholder entities proclaim the following ethic and commitment:

WHEREAS the Corsica River is one of the most visited anchorages and safe harbors along the northeastern United States, with tranquil waters bearing recreational and commercial value, and a Town at its headwaters deriving great historical and cultural benefit from her tides; and,

WHEREAS the Corsica River watershed is stressed by the chemistry of urbanization from land, by tides, and from the air; and

WHEREAS the future of the Corsica River and its environs, including the management of rural growth and development, enhancement of its wildlife habitat and aquatic resources, definition of its urban growth boundaries, preservation and conservation of its commercially vital farmlands, and protection of the quality of life along its shores and tributaries is of foremost concern to the undersigned stakeholders;

THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the undersigned stakeholders agree to work in concert to implement the recommendations of the *Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy*, to take bold strides to change the direction of environmental planning and practice, thinking forward to a balanced watershed and working towards achieving it safely, and to engage every watershed citizen as a steward of the Strategy and the Watershed to achieve the goals set forth therein.

Signed:

The Town Council of Centreville
The Queen Anne's County Commissioners
The Chester River Association
The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service
The Queen Anne Soil Conservation District
The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Upper Eastern Shore Tributary Team

Executive Summary

The Town of Centreville has identified the health of the Corsica River as a key component of its heritage and future. The Town's goal is to ensure that growth does not occur at the expense of the Corsica River. In 2002 the Town of Centreville, through a competitive process, applied for and received support from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to conduct a watershed assessment and develop a watershed plan, or Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS). The WRAS has identified impairments lying in multiple political jurisdictions, and provides guidance for implementation opportunities and the possible means to achieve water quality enhancement, expanded wildlife habitat, more sensitive land use conversions, and conservation. The Corsica WRAS is a strategy that, once implemented, would noticeably improve and protect the water quality and habitat of the watershed.

The support from DNR consisted of technical and financial assistance including: a one hundred mile stream corridor assessment that identified the stream and river corridor conditions and rated observed problems for severity, accessibility, and correctability, (Stream Corridor Assessment); an assessment of the water quality in the streams of the Corsica River watershed (Synoptic Survey); a compilation of available water quality and natural resources information and issues (Characterization); \$40,000 in discretionary funding; and a DNR representative to provide assistance.

Under the leadership of the Town of Centreville, a stakeholders group was formed consisting of representatives from the Queen Anne's Soil Conservation District, the USDA-NRCS, the Chester River Association, the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, the Queen Anne's County Planning Commission, Queen Anne's County Planning and Zoning, and DNR. The University of Maryland, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Queen Anne's County Health Department, and local builder/developers also participated during grant development opportunities. Citizens and farmers were also represented. In the two-year project period, the stakeholders met eleven times to identify concerns, review data, apply for implementation grants, and make management decisions and recommendations that would, when implemented, restore and protect the water quality and habitat of the Corsica River watershed.

The Corsica WRAS Stakeholders developed 13 individual strategies to improve water quality and habitat in the Corsica watershed.

1. Target additional cover crop funding for this area,
2. Agriculture nutrient and sediment reducing buffers including tidal frontage of the Corsica River,
3. Demonstration projects for farmettes which focus on whole farm nutrient management and horse pasture management,
4. Household pollution reduction strategies for lawn fertilization and pet waste,
5. Permanent water quality monitoring in the main stem of the Corsica River,
6. Reestablishment of submerged aquatic vegetation,

7. Ordinances for low impact development,
8. Demonstration projects for native conservation landscaping,
9. An easement incentive program,
10. The creation of non-agricultural wetlands,
11. Septic system retrofits and comparative studies,
12. “EcoTeam” development to build volunteer capacity,
13. Oyster reef ecosystems establishment to historic areas

To perpetuate the conservation and restoration of the watershed, the Town of Centreville has considered programmatic initiatives in the form of policies and codes that will impact land-related issues into the future (a Town Greenbelt together with promotion of nutrient reducing septic systems near tidal waters or perennial streams in remote greenbelt locations, and advance the promotion of living shorelines). Additionally, in exploring conservation opportunities in the watershed, ESLC will consult with the WRAS data custodian to understand property information and work to complement WRAS priorities. The Chester River Association has accepted custodial responsibility for the Corsica WRAS information, and the Centreville Town Manager will be the responsible party for supporting and advancing the initiatives that forward the goals of the WRAS.