

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 Information
Related to Public Participation and
Stakeholder Involvement**

September 2004

Public Involvement

The Town of Centreville, with cooperation from the Chester River Association and Queen Anne's County developed a strategy to garner public participation in the Corsica River WRAS development process. As the majority of the watershed's geo-mass lies in agricultural use and rural landscape, great care was exercised to ensure that the agricultural community was well represented. The Town had several goals for public involvement:

- To reach the broadest range of vested stakeholders, regardless of sophistication;
- To propose a meeting and venue schedule;
- To link the stakeholders to web-based data for their review and comment; and
- To develop a database from the WRAS stakeholders for potential participation in implementation strategies on WRAS identified work items.

The strategy included:

- 1) Identification of Stakeholder groups and/or individuals, and property owners
- 2) Compilation of a spreadsheet of Stakeholders
- 3) Formation of a Steering Committee
- 4) Sponsoring the kick-off meeting
- 5) Setup the e-mail information network
- 6) Develop the outreach strategy

Stakeholders Identification

A list of preliminary stakeholders was developed for the WRAS which included those most likely to be directly affected by the WRAS such as planning staff and politicians (Town and County), local land conservancy, private landowners in riparian and tidal interfaces, environmental activists, government agencies at the State level, representatives from agriculture, and the Tributary Teams. MdPropertyView 7 tax map property lines were overlaid on the new orthophotography (dated November 2003). A database search was run and a new database was established for the names, addresses, type of land use, etc., and mailings were sent to all landowners in the watershed whose property bordered an intermittent or perennial stream, and tidal waters of the Corsica River. This list is regarded as the property owner notification list for rights-of-entry, for future notifications of possible restoration projects, and for updates on the WRAS findings. Many of the individuals that signed onto the Strategy sent comments and encouragement with their responses, and these were recorded by the Town as well (see Appendix I for Property Owner Notification Letter).

The Stakeholder database was referenced to the DNR and MDP Technology Toolbox so that updates of property transfers within the watershed could be made and new owners notified of the WRAS initiatives. The databases thus prepared, with all layers highlighted, now serves multiple functions as will be later seen, such as quantifying buffer needs, initiating septic systems replacements, farm restoration projects, etc.

The Corsica River WRAS Steering Committee was established comprising members from each major constituency identified earlier. The Steering Committee kick-off meeting was held on March 4, 2003 at which meeting information was distributed about the WRAS process and a solicitation of input was made. The Steering Committee membership included: A voting member of the Town Council of The Town of Centreville, a voting member of the Queen Anne's County Planning Commission, staff from Queen Anne's County Department of Planning and Zoning, the Town Clerk, for administrative function, the local Nutrient Management Advisor from the University of MD Cooperative Extension Service, the Outreach and Education Coordinator from the Queen Anne's Soil Conservation District, a senior planner from the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, the Chester River Association's Riverkeeper and several CRA Board members, a private citizen landowner with river frontage, two local independent farmer/operators, a commercial developer in the watershed, the Upper Eastern Shore Tributary Team, and QA CO. Farm Bureau. Advisors to the WRAS Steering Committee included the State of Maryland WRAS Program Manager, Assistant Secretary of the MD Department of Agriculture, with advisory contacts, DNR for Synoptic Survey and monitoring, DNR for Stream Corridor Assessment, McCrone, Inc. for GPS control and GIS specialist/databases, and Spectrum Mapping, LLC (formerly 3Di) orthophotography/remote sensing/SAV mapping.

Upon completion of the synoptic survey and Stream Corridor Assessment (SCA), the Steering Committee meeting was held on July 18, 2003 to discuss methods, identify impairments and future projects. November 21, 2003 brought the group together again for a stream walk and a visit to the Centreville Wastewater Treatment Plants (old and new under construction). A list of stakeholder comments, goals, and interests is found as Appendix 4 of this report. A meeting was called for February 18, 2004 to review the final results and priorities for the final report.

During the spring of 2004 members of the Corsica River WRAS Steering Committee met in support of the development of two strong watershed initiatives: an EPA Watershed Initiatives Grant sponsored by the Corsica River Watershed Partnership, and a National Sea Grant Office Proposal. Each of these opportunities helped the Steering Committee solidify the specific Corsica River WRAS implementation needs, priorities, and funding sources.

The Town of Centreville, working through the DNR WRAS Program Manager, set up a very effective e-mail and hard copy mail network and information is readily and instantly available to the WRAS Stakeholder groups. The Town also revived its local weekly newspaper bully pulpit, and has agreed to sponsor the Corsica Corner with space available to post ongoing calls for volunteers, progress of specific restoration projects, and to celebrate accomplishments of our strategies. The Town further agreed to sponsor outreach on Urban Nutrient Management (UNM) in the form of tri-fold information pieces and to adopt the UNM ethic and code.