

Maryland's Potomac Tributary Team Update November 2002

Lower Potomac Tributary Team

During the past year, outreach and education has been the primary focus of the Lower Potomac Tributary Team. Last winter, the team sponsored a public workshop on "Stormwater Management for the Homeowner." The workshop, held in Charlotte Hall and attended by over 75 people, featured speakers on BayScaping, and the use of bioretention. A rain barrel was given away as a door prize. A new Port Tobacco Watershed group is was formed in the basin due to concerns about overflows from a local wastewater treatment facility, and the Team has made contacts with this group to inform them about Team mission and activities. The Team is actively partnering with both county governments in the Lower Potomac area. Charles County suffered a major tornado in April, and the team is planning a tree "grow out" program to provide to homeowners who experienced loss of mature trees on their property. St. Mary's County has is currently working with the Department of Natural Resources to prepare a Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) for the Breton Bay watershed. The County is also undertaking a stormwater retrofit on the County Office Building.

Middle Potomac Tributary Team

The highly urbanized nature of the Middle Potomac Basin is in large part responsible for the team's major focus being on public environmental policy issues as it pertains to local governments and the Chesapeake Bay Agreement initiatives. The Middle Potomac Tributary Teams 2002 primary focus is on the development of the new Tributary Strategies. In 2001 the MPTT is divided into four workgroups: (1) Wastewater; (2) Urban Stormwater; (3) Agriculture; and (4) Outreach & Education. The Teams perspective is that even though load allocations have yet to be developed, there are numerous areas where the Tributary Teams can make policy recommendations and otherwise help frame the issues regarding the format and content of the new Tributary Strategies.

These perspectives are constrained by the information currently available. However, the MPTT expects in 2002 and 2003 to provide similar perspectives in the future, as the Tributary Strategies are being developed and as more information (e.g., on load limits) becomes available. Topics that the MPTT expects to address in the upcoming months include:

- Refinements or additions to the perspectives on the topics addressed here;
- Load allocations, including issues of equity, among the states in the Potomac basin;
- Load allocations, including issues of equity, among sectors;
- Implementation strategies, including funding and grants policies;
- Reconciliation of the nonregulatory Tributary Strategies process and the regulatory TMDL/permitting process; and

- Non-water quality aspects of the Tributary Strategies that Maryland may wish to include, such as forest cover and wetlands goals.

Upper Potomac Tributary Team

The Upper Potomac Tributary Team believes that it can make the most effective contributions to protecting and restoring the state's waters by focusing its efforts on four themes:

1. Stream Restoration and Reforestation Projects: Working with organizations and landowners to accomplish stream restoration and reforestation projects.
2. Environmental Education / Public Awareness / Stakeholder Outreach: Taking actions to promote awareness of the need for and benefits of water quality protection and restoration.
3. Public / Environmental Policy Forum: Bringing together citizens and local government officials, with state and federal government experts to discuss water quality restoration policies, their implications, and the best means to implement them.
4. Agricultural Issues: Working with the agricultural community to promote practices that protect and restore water quality.

The Team is presently working on outreach to the farm community through team member recruitment with the help of the Nature Resource Conservation Service. The group is engaged in the development of small watershed organizations in the Beaver Creek watershed in Washington County, and in the Catoctin Creek Watershed in Frederick County. Team members are actively involved with stream restoration projects in the Antietam Creek in Washington County, Carroll Creek in Frederick County, Georges Creek in Allegany County, and Piney Creek in Carroll County.

At the heart of this years Team efforts is the group's active participation in public environmental policy development efforts such as the Tributary Strategy Development process.