

REPORTER



The Anacostia River in Washington is flanked by RFK Stadium. Restoration of the river in the District and Maryland will remain a focus of ICPRB and many other agencies. ICPRB is working with the District and Maryland to assess conditions and determine solutions for the health of the heavily urbanized watershed.

C. Dalpra

ICPRB Continues Focus on Partnerships in 2001

The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin continues to be a leader in coordinating interstate water resource issues throughout the Potomac basin. In the new year, commission staff look forward to working on projects designed to further interstate cooperation and knowledge sharing. The ICPRB pursues projects that enhance inter-jurisdictional cooperation on living resource, water quality, water supply, and information issues. This article highlights some of the projects the commission is pursuing in 2001.

Strengthening Basin Water Quality Partnerships

The ICPRB continues to work with basin jurisdictions in assessing the quality of their waterways and in implementing measures to correct problems. These projects include working with basin jurisdictions on developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and

helping local organizations create and implement water quality protection projects. All jurisdictions within the Potomac basin are busy crafting TMDLs for waterways that are not able to support designated uses. TMDLs are created to determine the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterway can receive, while supporting designated uses. Each of the water quality projects pursued by the commission, includes many partners throughout the basin.

Many jurisdictions use water quality modeling to create TMDLs. The commission's technical expertise makes ICPRB an important participant along with basin states in creating these models. The models help water quality managers understand how waterways transport a variety of materials such as toxins, sediment, or nutrients and foster better decisions about the water quality needs of their waterways.

In the Anacostia watershed, ICPRB is

Our mission is to enhance, protect and conserve the water and associated land resources of the Potomac River and its tributaries through regional and interstate cooperation.

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C. Dalpra

River and bay research can strengthen fisheries.

working in partnership with the state of Maryland and the District of Columbia on several water quality models for the tidal and non-tidal portions of the river. These models, which Maryland and the District of Columbia water quality managers use in creating TMDLs for the Anacostia, focus on problems such as sediment and toxin transportation, the impact of sediment concentrations in the river, and dissolved oxygen levels.

In Pennsylvania, ICPRB has begun working with state officials to develop TMDLs for several watersheds in the Potomac basin. These models build on the work done through ICPRB's Living Resources Section during field work for Pennsylvania's biological assessment of these waterways. The commission is seeking more opportunities for additional TMDL projects throughout the basin.

The ICPRB continues to facilitate a variety of projects throughout the Anacostia River basin. The commission, working with the Anacostia River Basin Coalition (ARBC) with funding provided by the Chesapeake Bay Program and the District of Columbia Environmental Health Administration, is assisting with the development of several demonstration rain gardens. Rain gardens are designed to help reduce contaminants entering the Anacostia River via storm-water runoff. Also, the ICPRB and ARBC are developing a Watershed Steward program. The program will provide information to business owners throughout the Anacostia basin on techniques they can implement in their business and at industrial and technical sites to prevent pollutants from entering the Anacostia river.

Also in 2001, the ICPRB will continue its work on Chesapeake Bay projects as they relate to the Potomac River basin. As the second largest tributary to the Chesapeake Bay and the home of the largest population concentration in the bay watershed, the Potomac River has a large impact on the health of the Chesapeake. Additionally, the Potomac basin is the only watershed shared by the signatories to the Chesapeake Bay agreements. As a result, ICPRB is ideally situated to provide an inter-jurisdictional

perspective to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) led Chesapeake Bay Program projects.

Several ICPRB staff members work directly with the bay program staff at their Annapolis, Md. headquarters. The ICPRB's involvement with the bay program provides the commission with a unique opportunity to provide for two-way dialogue. The commission's staff involvement provides a Potomac perspective on bay issues. In turn, the commission provides its member jurisdictions with insight into the bay program initiatives. The ICPRB staff facilitate this dialogue through their involvement on many bay program committees including the Water Quality, Implementation, and Budget steering committees; the Living Resources, Toxics, Monitoring, and Modeling sub-committees; and the Monitoring and Modeling Workgroup.

The water quality staff also are involved with several other inter-jurisdictional working groups including the Maryland Upper, Middle, and Lower Tributary Teams, the Virginia Nutrient Strategy and Potomac Roundtables, and the West Virginia Watershed Framework. To all of these projects, ICPRB lends its expertise in watershed modeling, water quality and database analysis, and regional coordination.

Rebuilding Living Resources

The ICPRB is continuing efforts in 2001 to understand the status of living resources in the Potomac basin and to restore its resources. The ICPRB will focus on several projects throughout the year including shad and herring restoration projects, biological monitoring in Pennsylvania, and working to integrate biological data from throughout the basin into a format that is easily accessible by researchers and resource managers in the basin.

The shad project, in its seventh year, aims to introduce about 1 million shad fry into the Potomac in efforts to reestablish the native fish species in the Potomac River to historic population levels. Last year, more than 3.2-million shad fry were introduced into the Potomac and ICPRB staff hope to exceed the 1-million target again this year. The shad project involves several partners throughout the region including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Potomac Conservancy, and the many schools that assist in raising the shad fry in their classrooms. By encouraging basin school students to raise shad in tanks in their classrooms, the project provides a hands on biology lesson as students observe the fish developing from eggs to fry.

The ICPRB is also working to restore herring to the Anacostia River. As a mitigation provision for building the new span of the Woodrow Wilson bridge, the Potomac Crossing Consultants have awarded ICPRB a contract to continue work

on herring restoration. The ICPRB is working closely with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments on the project and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is supplying space at their fish hatchery. This year, ICPRB and its partners will be experimenting with raising herring in tanks. Eventually, the project aims to allow school children to raise herring in their classrooms similar to the shad project. Raising herring in the classroom would also present additional opportunities for students to explore their local watersheds. Herring spawn in small streams, as opposed to within the larger tributaries of the Potomac as do shad. As a result, many more students could be involved in herring stocking because they would be able to release herring into their



C. Dalpra

Student volunteers release shad fry in the Potomac.

own back-schoolyard streams. Other organizations that are working in partnerships on the project include the Potomac Conservancy, the Anacostia Watershed Society, Earth Conservation Corps, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

The ICPRB continues working with the state of Pennsylvania to assess the biological integrity of its streams within the Potomac basin. This year several western Potomac tributary streams, including Licking Creek and Little Cove Creek, will be studied by ICPRB staff as part of the project.

The commission also is continuing work on integrating data collected from throughout the non-tidal portions of the Potomac basin. Research on the Potomac ecosystem is hampered by data that exists in varied forms and can't easily be compared. Recently, a multi-year ICPRB project was completed that interpreted disparate data collected from many sources in the tidal portions of the Potomac basin. As a result of that project, data for the tidal portions of the basin is now in a form that can be used more-easily by researchers. The ICPRB is



Arakawa Sakura Club members tour Hard Bargain Environmental Farm by hay wagon.

C. Dalpra

building on the work completed for the tidal portions of the basin and use that as a basis for bringing together data for the non-tidal portions of the basin.

Coordinating Water Supply in the Potomac Basin

The ICPRB plays several important roles in providing for the region's current and future water supply needs while helping to safeguard its quality. A primary role for the commission's Water Resources Section is the coordination of ICPRB's Section for Cooperative Water Supply Operations (CO-OP). The CO-OP Section facilitates agreements among the three major metropolitan water suppliers that require water suppliers to share resources during times of low flow. The Water Resources Section also provides technical water resources management assistance to the jurisdictions throughout the basin.

Preparing for the possibility of low-flow conditions is a major annual activity of ICPRB's CO-OP section. The CO-OP section works with the region's water suppliers to enhance low-flow operating procedures so that when low-flows occur in the Potomac, operations run smoothly. Additionally, the CO-OP section works closely with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to assist in the coordination of regional response to low-flow conditions. In efforts to coordinate regional responses to low-flow conditions in the Potomac River, a regional drought response plan was recently developed by a task force coordinated by COG. The CO-OP section works with COG and the Drought Coordination Committee to assist in providing accurate and timely information to basin residents during low-flow conditions in the Potomac.

In years when water supplies are sufficient and low-flow operating procedures are not used, CO-OP staff organize a Drought Exercise to practice low-flow operations. The exercise provides an opportunity to test new procedures and insures that staff members from organizations involved in low-flow operations are familiar with operating procedures.

Also throughout 2001, ICPRB's water resources staff will continue work on the District of Columbia's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) (see related article). The SWAP project includes several phases. The initial phases of the project, which included determining the watershed serving the District's water supply system, have been completed and staff will complete an inventory of possible contamination sources early this year. The project focus for 2001 will include pulling together the data collected to analyze the susceptibility of the District's water supply to contamination. The SWAP project's anticipated completion date is by mid-2002.

Providing Access to Potomac Basin Information

The ICPRB continues to be an important source of information about the Potomac River basin for citizens, researchers, and agencies from all levels of government. Production of the *Potomac Basin Reporter*, ICPRB's bi-monthly newsletter highlighting issues of current interest in the Potomac basin, will continue throughout the year. The *Reporter* is distributed to over 15,000 individuals, organizations, and libraries in and out of the Potomac River basin. Throughout the new year, ICPRB staff will be improving and updating ICPRB's website to include even more information on issues within the basin and more interactive tools that will provide easier access to Potomac basin information. Additionally, ICPRB continues to respond to an increasing number of information requests. These requests, many of which are received by e-mail through ICPRB's website, come from throughout the basin and the world.

Efforts to foster international conversations about water resource issues continue this spring with another visit from the Potomac's sister river organization, the Arakawa Sakura club. The group, visiting from the Ara River basin in Japan will spend a week exploring the Potomac basin, learning about basin issues, and sharing information about their experiences in the Ara basin in Japan. The visit will also include a student

and teacher exchange. Several Japanese students and their teacher will be joining the Arakawa Sakura club members on their visit to form relationships with some Potomac basin schools.

Through the newly created Watershed Coordinator position, ICPRB is striving to increase the agency's outreach to watershed organizations. The Watershed Coordinator will develop an awareness of local watershed organization needs as well

as assist in facilitating a dialogue among groups across jurisdictional boundaries. A first step is creating an updated directory of Potomac Basin organizations. The directory, created initially for the Potomac Visions Project, is being updated to include contact information, missions, and other information on organizations in the watershed. The directory will be available on-line with maps showing locations of the many organizations throughout the Potomac basin.

Chairman's Report

by Philip W. Ogilvie, ICPRB Chairman and District of Columbia Commissioner

When I retired as the Public Records Administrator of the District of Columbia in January of 1998, Mayor Barry asked me if there were any boards or commissions on which I wished to serve. I immediately responded that my longtime interest had been in the Potomac River and that I would love to be appointed to the ICPRB. The mayor honored my request and I have enjoyed my three years on the commission as much as I anticipated. My dual interests in history and the environment come together in this body's work, past, present, and future.

From 1938 to 1945, the political entities that occupy the Potomac Basin (Virginia, the District of Columbia, Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania) and the federal government came together to form the ICPRB. In the subsequent 60 years the river has recovered, or is recovering, much of its biological potential, as pollution has been reduced and land practices have improved. In evaluating the work of the commission in the 60 years of recovery, it is important that the results be compared to the ecology of this area in the past. Attention must also be given to the commission's role in diminishing present threats to the river, such as continued acid drainage from coal mines, non-point pollution, and urban sprawl.

I believe that the commission's greatest challenge is to make itself and its work known to its natural constituency. Our executive director has taken a long step in this direction by creating a new outreach position on staff. For 60 years we have served the entire basin, and it is now most important that we educate the citizens of the basin to that service. As all of my recent predecessors, I consider it important that we secure greater federal participation in the work of the commission; with the changes in government philosophy it seems most likely that this can be achieved by our combining basin-wide support with specific tasks appropriate for federal funding.



In the past, we have concentrated first on water quality and more recently on quantity and availability. Without minimizing either of these vital roles we must add the recreational utilization of the river. When Congress amended the National Trails System Act in 1986 to designate a corridor for a "Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail," they selected a corridor rich in every aspect of human interaction with the environment. The geomorphology of the corridor resulted in the science of geomorphology. The corridor is bracketed by the two oldest investigated sites of human habitation in North America, Meadowcroft in Pennsylvania and Cactus Hill in Virginia. The stories of human contacts between ethnic groups, both positive and negative, are just below the surface. It has been the scene of environmental tragedies and triumphs and the resulting ecological assemblage is rich in diversity.

As part of my responsibility at George Washington University, I am working with graduate students on a most exciting project, an electronic guidebook that the user can design to reflect his or her interests and thus give entree to the tapestry of knowledge collected on the basin. Whether the access-point is a computer, the worldwide web, or a hand-held geo-positioning device, this database will give the user the power to intellectually as well as physically explore this exciting fragment of the globe. As a tool, this manual will bring empowerment to the communities of the corridor and, in the future, this model

may be replicated both domestically and abroad.

This term, my graduate class in Tourism Planning is working with the citizens of Indian Head on a long-range tourism strategy for that southern Maryland community. I have never been so impressed with the importance of the river to the life of a community. On March 7, 1642, Captain Thomas Cornwaleys received a 4,000-acre grant from the Lord Proprietor for the headland first named Cornwaleys Neck, but later Indian Head. As early as 1840 and for a period extending to the turn of the century, the resort Glymont at Indian Head was one of Washington's favorite places of recreation. Its success was dependent on

both the river steamers and river access. Originally a port city, the navy established a testing ground there in 1890. As the navy holdings grew the town was gradually isolated from the Potomac. I believe that today the only hope for reviving the economy of this river town is by again giving it access to the river.

The states of Virginia and Maryland have cooperatively produced a water trail map of the Potomac River, to be available for this year's season. The potential for river recreation is great and the projects exciting. It is time that the commission took a leadership role in this exciting area of development made possible by the commission's past efforts at river cleanup.

Town Creek Watershed Groups Meet, Plans Shared

The Town Creek Ecosystem Management Summit, held February 7, aimed to bring together organizations working within the Town Creek watershed and to facilitate stronger relationships among them. The Summit, sponsored by the Town Creek Steering Committee, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) Forest Service, and Friends of the Potomac, also served as an opportunity for organizations to voice environmental concerns and comment on a draft watershed management plan created by the Town Creek Steering Committee.

The Summit was planned as part of the ongoing Town Creek project, led by MD DNR Forest Service. The Town Creek project and the Town Creek Steering Committee were created to assist in the management of the watershed, which covers 152 square miles of Bedford County, Pa., and Allegany County, Md., and flows into the Potomac River at Old Town, Md. Because coordinating management plans across state boundaries can prove to be difficult, the Town Creek Steering Committee, which includes landowners and county and state government representatives, was created to exchange ideas and concerns about the management of the watershed. The Committee has been working since 1996 to create a management plan for the watershed to guide and coordinate future activities and projects across jurisdictional boundaries.

As Jim Cummins, ICPRB Associate Director of Living Resources, commented, "The Town Creek watershed represents only about one percent of the entire Potomac watershed...but what they are doing could serve as an example for the other 99% [of the watershed]." The Town Creek Summit provided an opportunity for groups to network and share resources as



Watching the River Flow

An unusually dry autumn led to lower than normal flows in the Potomac River and into the Chesapeake Bay in December 2000 and January 2001, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The flow of the Potomac River measured near Washington, D.C., averaged about 5.9 billion gallons per day (bgd), in December, or about 95 percent of normal. Daily flows ranged from a high of 14.9 bgd on December 17 to a low of 2.9 bgd on December 10. Diversions of water for municipal use averaged about 356 million gallons per day (mgd), about 9 percent more than December of last year. Freshwater inflow to the Chesapeake Bay averaged about 33.7 bgd in December, about 65% of the long-term average for the month. The Potomac contributed about 16 percent of the total.

In January, Potomac River flow averaged about 3.8 bgd, about 42 percent of normal. Daily flows ranged from a high of about 8.1 bgd on January 31 to a low of about 2.2 bgd on January 16. Municipal diversions averaged about 377 mgd, about 6 percent more than January 2000. Freshwater inflow to the Chesapeake Bay averaged about 23.9 bgd, or 41 percent of average. The Potomac contributed about 22 percent.

Groundwater levels in the basin increased slightly in December but decreased throughout January.

well as foster relationships for stronger watershed protection efforts. Cummins also noted the importance of MD DNR Forest Service staff members as facilitators of the Town Creek project, "Because the [Town Creek] watershed is so heavily forested, it's very appropriate to have the Forest Service leading the project." Because each watershed is unique, individual watershed protection efforts will need to include unique facilitators and partners.

The Town Creek meeting provided an opportunity for ICPRB staff members to exchange information and ideas with others at the summit on ways organizations can

work together in the Town Creek watershed. Commission staff members Jim Cummins and Karen Fligger, ICPRB's Watershed Coordinator, contributed comments on the draft watershed management plans and offered to explore partnerships on watershed protection projects once the management plan is completed. (For more information on the Watershed Coordinator position, see the preview of ICPRB's activities in 2001.)

For more information on the Town Creek project or to obtain a copy of the management plan, contact Dan Hedderick, Forester and Town Creek Project Coordinator, MD DNR Forest Service at (301) 777-2137.

Citizens and Government Officials Meet to Discuss DC SWAP Status



Sources of drinking water for the District of Columbia extend through the upper Potomac basin.

C. Dalpra

Community members and agency and government officials gathered on January 24th to learn about the progress of the District of Columbia's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP). The meeting, coordinated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), provided attendees with an opportunity to learn about the SWAP process, the current status of the assessment, and future directions for the project. Meeting attendees had the opportunity to talk directly with representatives from ICPRB's Water Resources section, the District's Department of Health (DCDoH), COG, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Those present at the meeting learned that, under the terms of the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, the District of Columbia is conducting an assessment of the raw water quality of the city's drinking water supply. The District of Columbia draws its drinking water from the Potomac River. It faces a unique situation in that its water supply and drinking water intakes are entirely outside of the city's borders. As a result, it must work with several upstream states, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, when addressing water supply issues.

In light of this unique situation, the D.C. Department of Health, the agency tasked by EPA with overseeing the city's source water assessment, contracted ICPRB's Water Resources Section to conduct the assessment.

The ICPRB, which also worked to create the plan guiding the assessment, is carrying out the assessment in three phases. The first was a delineation of the watershed that supplies water to the District of Columbia water intakes located at Great Falls and Little Falls in the Potomac River. Once the watershed serving DC's intakes was established, the second phase of the project included pinpointing and mapping all potential sources of contamination to the water within the watershed. The final step includes conducting a susceptibility analysis of potential contamination to DC's water supply. This step also includes creating an interactive tool for use by DCDoH to analyze the susceptibility of contamination to DC's water supply.

As a complementary function to the technical work by ICPRB on the SWAP project, COG has been contracted by ICPRB to insure that the public remains informed throughout the project. As a result, COG is conducting a series of public meetings to explain the SWAP program and current status of the project to members of the community and other interested parties. The meeting held January 24th was the first in a series of meetings.

COG will host future meetings as further progress is made on the project. The SWAP project is expected to be completed in mid- to late-2002. For more information on the SWAP project, contact ICPRB.

Give the River Half a Day

Join thousands of Potomac watershed residents on **Saturday, April 7, from 9 a.m. to noon** in cleaning up streams! The 13th Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup, will, like earlier efforts, give the basin a good spring cleaning while uniting thousands of basin residents in stewardship to the environment.



C. Dalpra

New Commissioner Appointed

In October, the President appointed Ms. Yeni Wong to serve as a federal commissioner for ICPRB. A resident of Washington, D.C., Wong is actively involved in business and in community affairs.

A member of several community and business organization boards, she has twice received the Business Award from the District's Chamber of Commerce. Prior to establishing her own business, Wong was a research chemist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a consultant to the U.S. Brewer's Association. She serves on the JFK Center Advisory Committee on the Arts and is a board member of the Directors of the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Finding a site near you is easy. Call the event coordinator, the Alice Ferguson Foundation, at (301) 292-6665, or visit the cleanup website at www.potomaccleanup.org. More than 100 sites spread throughout all the basin states need help in ridding streams and rivers of bottles, plastic containers, foam cups, and other debris.

Again this year, the Potomac's sister river in Japan, will hold a concurrent cleanup, increasing the scope of both efforts.

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