

# RIVER WATCH

The Official Newsletter of POTOMAC **RIVERKEEPER**® NETWORK

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EarthShare/CFC #87828



RIVERPALOOZA, the new name for our annual series of river adventures aimed at building appreciation for our rivers through experiencing them, kicks off with a party June 3rd in Harpers Ferry (see inset). There is no better way to experience the Shenandoah and the Potomac than these 14 trips which accommodate all ages and skill levels. If rafting, canoeing or stand up paddle boarding in areas hand-picked by our Riverkeepers sound good, knowing you'll be supporting our work protecting the Potomac and Shenandoah should make the decision even easier. For those who prefer enjoying the river from terra firma, hikes and bike trips are also on the schedule. RiverPalooza is organized in partnership with the National Park Service and features several sections of the Potomac Heritage Trail and the Captain John Smith Historic Trail. All trips require advance registration at [www.prknetwork.org/riverpalooza-2017](http://www.prknetwork.org/riverpalooza-2017)

### RIVERPALOOZA KICK OFF PARTY JUNE 3rd!

This is the biggest day in our RiverPalooza schedule and we have all kinds of river adventures planned. Join us for rafting or kayaking on the Shenandoah, or tubing on the Potomac, followed by a party at Harper's Ferry Adventure Center! There will be BBQ, beer, and a performance by The Barefoot Movement, named the "future of Tennessee bluegrass" by Rolling Stone. They will be performing on a stage perched high on a bluff overlooking the river. This is one of the most beautiful riverfront locations we have seen, and we've seen a lot. Arrangements can be made to camp on site. We also have reduced hotel rates at the Harpers Ferry Clarion. Check the registration page for more information, but most importantly: register early! You won't want to miss this opportunity. Your participation also directly supports our work protecting the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers all year 'round.

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## VIRGINIA LAWMAKERS BACK POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER IN COAL ASH VICTORY

Neighbors of Dominion's Possum Point power plant had no idea a toxic cocktail of arsenic, cobalt and cancer causing heavy metals were leaking into their drinking wells until Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN) tested their water well. Our fight to hold Dominion accountable influenced their decision to offer a dozen homes connection to clean city water, a tacit acknowledgment that their toxic coal ash had ruined their well water.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) did not know Dominion dumped 27.5 millions of gallons of untreated coal ash water into Quantico Creek — polluting the Potomac River — until we filed a criminal complaint with EPA and unearthed Dominion internal documents, proving that they had.

PRKN also collected water and sediment samples proving Dominion had been illegally discharging hundreds of millions of gallons of untreated ash water from its largest coal ash pit for

decades. As a result, the state issued a strict new permit forcing Dominion to eliminate this toxic discharge and treat any coal ash water drained from the pond in the future.

As a result of our ongoing work to clean up toxic coal ash on the Potomac and across the state of Virginia, State Senator Scott Surovell led lawmakers from the Potomac region to introduce new legislation. Now, Dominion is required to prepare a cost and alternatives analysis that looks beyond its preferred "cap-in-place" plan for disposing of millions of tons of coal ash at Dominion sites across the state. Alternatives include excavating and removing the ash, recycling it, or a hybrid approach that combines both disposal and recycling.

Last year's coal ash bill died quietly in committee and Dominion seemed poised to get the permits it needed to cap-in-place millions of tons of toxic coal ash around the state. But we

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# A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



## DEAR FRIENDS,

For months I've been anxious for the opportunity to write you, but not for the reasons you may think. I'm NOT going to wallow in doom and gloom over the proposed 37% slashing of the EPA budget. And I'm not going to dwell on the fact that the budget would have eliminated the Chesapeake Bay Program or looming threats to our environmental laws. Instead, I'd like to talk about how we've risen to these challenges, and a few landmark victories you made possible with your support. In the past three months we:

- Co-authored and helped pass Virginia Senate Bill 898 that requires Alexandria, within 7 years, to end a history of raw sewage discharges spanning back nearly 200 years
- Contributed language to Virginia Senate Bill 1398, then worked with citizens and elected officials to pass the bill which stops Dominion from permanently burying coal ash at Possum Point (or anywhere else in Virginia) without studying alternatives and potential impacts on groundwater.
- United with other environmental organizations on Capitol Hill to demand that Chesapeake Bay funding be protected.
- Passed the halfway mark toward our goal of getting all 75 herds of cattle out of the Shenandoah River — herds that harm water quality and contributed to unsafe swimming conditions in some areas for generations.
- Provided testimony in Maryland's House and Senate, and helped build overwhelming citizen support that resulted in a complete ban on fracking in Maryland, the first of its kind.

I hope you agree that these accomplishments demonstrate how Potomac Riverkeeper Network has evolved into an organization able to solve our river's most serious

problems... just when our government seems unwilling to. We've grown our staff and expanded our tactics. For example, for the first time we used advanced voter and data technology to identify and activate those most likely to engage with key decision makers. Through aggressive media outreach we've gained an unprecedented amount of press coverage of our priority issues and are becoming a leading voice on water quality issues. But you don't have to take my word for it. Just Google Potomac Riverkeeper Network — and I think you'll see how we've been in the Washington Post, the Richmond Times, Bay Journal, WAMU, and many, many more.

Your ferocious support of our growth made this possible. Some of these campaigns took years to succeed — and required the bandwidth to sustain long, protracted efforts to activate thousands of friends and members. You have our deepest gratitude, not only for showing up in person, writing letters, and aggressively funding our growth, but for helping us keep our head up during this period of unprecedented anti-EPA and anti-environment sentiments at the federal level.

I can't sign off without also thanking my staff for their late nights, creativity and tireless effort to protect our waterways. If you haven't met our crew, I encourage you to drop by our new office in Georgetown (3070 M Street). These campaigns could not have been won without the talent we have in house in our Legal and Programs Department, Communications, External Relations, and of course our Riverkeepers. If you stop by, among the things we'll show you, is our new fridge fully stocked with beer!

See you on the river,

Jeff Kelble, President

## PRKN MOURNS LOSS OF ANGUS MACBETH, BOARD MEMBER AND LEGENDARY ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE



Our staff is mourning the loss, and celebrating the life of Board Member Angus Macbeth, who passed away on January 22. Before joining our Board in 2013, Angus had firmly established himself as one of the great environmental lawyers of our time, having been intimately involved in several of the seminal environmental cases of the late 20th century. As one of the first attorneys working for the Natural Resources Defense Council in the 1970s, Angus brought the case that prevented ConEdison from building a power plant on top of Storm King Mountain overlooking the Hudson River. He also represented the precursor to Hudson Riverkeeper, the Hudson River Fishermen's Association, in fighting the construction of the Indian Point nuclear power plant on the Hudson. Angus served as chief of environmental enforcement at the Department of Justice under President Carter, then as a partner and head of the environmental practice group at Sidley Austin in Washington. Not content to rest on his environmental laurels, Angus served as special counsel to a government commission investigating the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. His report served as the basis for a 1988 law that required financial reparations and an official apology from the U.S. Government to Japanese Americans.

While serving on our Board, Angus was a key member of the Litigation Committee, which provides counsel and approves litigation efforts undertaken by PRKN. Angus was a true gentleman who served our Board and our mission with grace, humility, humor and genuine civility. His wisdom and keen legal advice will be missed. All of us at PRKN feel fortunate to have had Angus share his legal knowledge and passion for the environment with us over the years.



# UPPER POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER®

## MARYLAND BANS FRACKING! A VICTORY FOR THE PEOPLE!



*On March 2nd, over a thousand people came to Annapolis for the Don't Frack Maryland March*

Maryland took a historic step this spring and voted to ban fracking statewide. While Maryland is the third state to ban fracking, they are the first state with gas reserves to pass a ban. This is a huge win for the people-powered Don't Frack Maryland campaign that involved thousands of Marylanders in rallies, marches, petition deliveries, and phone calls to legislators. Both the House and Senate passed the ban bill with veto-proof majorities. Governor Hogan signed the bill on Tuesday, April 4.

This grassroots movement had been forming over the past five years in Western Maryland. Residents demanded that their representatives protect their families, livelihoods, clean water, and air from the irreversible damage caused by fracking. For years, the industry has maintained its reputation of noncompliance, environmental regulation violations, permit violations, and threats to local drinking water. Communities across Maryland also came together to pass local bans, and resolutions supporting their state and con-

stituents. Together, they took action to protect their water, air and land resources for generations to come. The statewide ban symbolizes Maryland's commitment to the health of the people and the environment.

As we reported last fall, Potomac Riverkeeper Network joined the Don't Frack Maryland coalition, comprised of over 160 members, to demand the statewide ban on fracking. We are overjoyed that the Maryland legislature prioritized the mounting evidence demonstrating the long and sorry history of the fracking industry. We give a special thanks to the steering committee members of the Don't Frack Maryland coalition: Citizen Shale, Don't Frack Western Maryland, Waterkeepers Chesapeake, Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility, Howard County Climate Action, Food & Water Watch, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Maryland Sierra Club and Maryland League of Conservation Voters.

## STANDING UP FOR THE EPA

Since the Environmental Protection Agency was founded, we have relied on their rules and regulatory actions to help protect the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers from pollution. The Trump administration's proposal to eliminate a quarter of the agency's 15,000 jobs, and to shrink the EPA budget by nearly a third is deeply troubling, and will have severe consequences. These plans go beyond any sensible waste reduction and belt tightening – they directly undermine the ability of the EPA to execute the agency's mission statement of "protecting human health and the environment."

Potomac Riverkeeper Network has participated in national organizing calls led by the Waterkeeper Alliance to coordinate a response. This includes participating in the EPA public comment process, ostensibly designed to seek feedback on "reducing regulatory burden." We feel "reducing regulatory protection" is a more honest description of what is taking place.

In March, Potomac Riverkeeper Dean Naujoks was asked to speak at a rally supporting the EPA in front of their DC headquarters. Here is an excerpt from his speech: "Because of the Clean Water Act, because of the EPA, we've slowly, steadily cleaned up our nation's rivers. And now we're talking about

eviscerating 45 years of progress and dismantling the EPA. My kids and your kids deserve better." Watching from the sideline as our basic water protections get stripped away is not an option. We must be on the front line. Thank you for your continued support to protect our right to clean water.



*Dean, Phillip, Mark and Elise at People's Climate March April 29th, 2017*

# POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER®

## CHALK ONE UP FOR THE POTOMAC

On April 21st, Governor McAuliffe signed into law a historic, bi-partisan bill requiring the City of Alexandria to stop dumping raw sewage into our nation's river by 2025. The timeline was based on an independent engineering analysis contracted by PRKN that challenged Alexandria's claim that they needed more time to complete the essential infrastructure upgrades. We (mostly) resisted the temptation to remind them they'd already had 200 years to rectify the problem.

Before Potomac Riverkeeper Dean Naujoks began working with the media to get this dirty little secret out, Alexandria's plan was to start studying the problem in 2030. No promises were made about when it would be fixed, and meetings behind closed doors with Alexandria officials yielded no results. However, after a Washington Post story alerted the public to the problem last October, and someone projected "SEWAGE CITY USA" in 50 foot high letters on City Hall a few weeks later, Alexandria officials scrambled to announce a slightly expedited time frame for upgrading their sewage infrastructure. Unfortunately, it was years longer than our independent engineering consultant said was necessary.

While Senator Ebbin (D- Alexandria) repeatedly advocated for delays that would have put hundreds of millions of gallons of raw sewage into the Potomac, Senator Surovell (D- Alexandria) had a different take:

"American built the Hoover Dam in six years, put a man on the moon in eight years and we built the Chesapeake Bay-Bridge Tunnel in 43 months. I'm sure Alexandria can build a storage room the size of a high school gym, along with a pipe to connect the storage chamber with a sewage line in eight years."

Generations of political leadership in Alexandria knew dumping raw sewage in the Potomac River, our Nation's River, was wrong. But they did it anyway- 70 million gallons every year. Research by our VP of Programs and Litigation, Phillip Musegaas, revealed that water quality data collected by Alexandria showed that the water in Oronoco Bay was unsafe for human contact over

50% of the time- the same water used by local high school rowing teams. These students, and anyone else on or close to the river, have been risking exposure to unsafe levels of e-coli. Yet despite the data, budget year after budget year came and went with no funds committed to addressing the largest sewage discharge point, just on the edge of Old Town, a few feet from a future development.

The reason for inaction was obvious: addressing the problem would add \$60-\$100 million to the cost of Alexandria's sewer upgrades. So they simply excluded it from their long-term plan, hoping no-one would notice. Alexandria creatively interpreted the law to justify this exception, claiming

the waters of Oronoco Bay belonged to DC and were subject to lower water quality standards. They also presented outdated rainfall data that artificially lowered the anticipated number of sewage discharges.

When our bi-partisan bill landed on the Governor's desk, it faced fierce resistance from Alexandria's leadership. When they took their "no way or delay" message to the media — making it clear they wanted the Governor to veto to the bill — we provided a counter narrative backed by the facts. When **Alexandria's Director of Transportation and Environmental**

**Services, Yon Lambert** was a guest on a popular radio show, we called in to challenge his spin. The hypocrisy of being an "eco-city" that dumps millions of gallons of sewage into the river was not lost on the citizens of Alexandria. They agreed with the communities downstream that no city in America, especially one of the wealthiest, should be handling its waste so irresponsibly.

Because members like you flooded the Governor's office with calls and emails, the message was loud and clear: the days of Alexandria using the Potomac River as a toilet were over. The bill signed by Governor McAuliffe ends a shameful legacy and **keeps hundreds of millions of gallons of sewage out of our waterways**. It's a tremendous victory for Potomac Riverkeeper Network and an even bigger one for the river we fight for.



## RIVERPALOOZA (CONT'D)

Remember, the more people who attend RiverPaloosa, the more our work is supported. So, please help us spread the word about this event to your local schools, your workplace and your social circles.

See you on the river!

### EVENT SCHEDULE

- **Saturday, June 3 – Kick Off "Make a SPLASH for Clean Water" in Harpers Ferry: two launch sites, tubing, duckie floats and a raft trip. Post-float celebration music, food and camping options.**
- Sunday, June 4 – Antietam Creek Float—a tour through history
- Monday, June 5 – Shenandoah River Birdwatching Paddle
- Saturday, June 17 – American Indian Cultural Interpretation Paddle with the Piscataway Conoy Tribe on Piscataway Creek
- Wednesday, June 21 – Summer Solstice Paddle with Washington Canoe Club
- Saturday, June 24 – Ghost Fleet Paddle Mallows Bay with Chesapeake Conservancy and REI
- Saturday to Sunday, July 15-16 – Paw Paw Bends Float & Camping

- Friday, July 21 – Shenandoah River Fishing Trip
- Friday, August 25 – Shenandoah River Snorkeling — South Fork
- Sunday, August 27 – North Branch Potomac Dam Release
- Friday, Sept. 8 – Dyke Marsh Sunset Paddle — Stand Up Paddle Option
- Saturday, Sept. 9 – Women on the Water — Potomac Heritage Trail
- Sunday, Sept. 10 – Pedal to Paddle on the Upper Potomac — Potomac Heritage Trail
- Sunday, Sept. 24 – Stand Up for Clean Water Celebration on World Rivers Day

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA AT #RIVERPALOOZA2017



*RiverPaloosa is a Waterkeeper Alliance SPLASH Series event, presented nationally by Toyota and locally by the National Park Service, MOM's Organic Market, along with all our amazing outfitters and partners: Atlantic Kayak, Blue Ridge Outdoors, Calleva, Downriver Canoe Company, Front Royal Canoe, Harpers Ferry Adventure Center, River & Trail Outfitters, River Riders and Shenandoah River Outfitters.*



# SHENANDOAH RIVERKEEPER<sup>®</sup>

## SRK HALTS POLLUTION TRADING AT THE MASSANUTTEN SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT FACILITY

The Shenandoah Riverkeeper scored a major victory in protecting the Shenandoah watershed by compelling the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to dramatically improve the Massanutten Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) permit and halt nutrient pollution trading at the facility. The previous permit allowed the STP to exceed its permit limits for nutrients and purchase credits to "offset" the excess nitrogen and phosphorus being discharged into Quail Run. In response to our appeal of the permit in state court, the STP also voluntarily agreed to accelerate its implementation schedule – from four years to just one year.

The end of nutrient pollution trading and stricter limits on nutrients from Massanutten will help us better protect Quail Run, Boone Run, and ultimately, the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. This facility discharges treated wastewater from the ski resort area, including the lodge, restaurants, condominiums, and private homes. Unfortunately, it is undersized and incapable of handling the waste load demands. Instead of upgrading the facility, the owners simply purchased nitrogen and phosphorous credits as permitted under the Chesapeake Bay nutrient pollution trading program, allowing the excess discharges to fuel heavy algal growth at the top of the Shenandoah watershed.

Our efforts forced a major rewrite of the permit. DEQ removed trading from this facility, assigned numeric limits to their nitrogen and phosphorous loads and set forth a timeline for the owners to upgrade their plant and operations.

The Chesapeake Bay nutrient pollution trading program is a market-based approach that involves the exchange of pollution allocations between sources. Say Facility X is exceeding its nitrogen and phosphorus limits while Facility Y is staying under its limits. Facility Y sells their unused pollution load to the nutrient pollution trading exchange and Facility X buys these credits to get them under their permit limits. So far so good. The Chesapeake Bay nutrient pollution trading program allows exchanges to take place as long as the facilities are on the same tributary. Only in this case, "tributary" means the entirety of the Potomac watershed. So credits may be generated all the way down at Coles Point, VA, where the Potomac meets the Chesapeake Bay, and purchased at the top of the Shenandoah watershed. Users of the Shenandoah have suffered due to degraded water conditions caused by this system.

To further complicate matters, credits are co-mingled in a common account. There is no way to track exactly where the credits are being generated to assess the overall impact on the Shenandoah River system.

Shenandoah Riverkeeper Mark Frondorf and David Sligh, SRK consultant, signed the 13-page comment letter to DEQ, with significant assistance from Phillip Musegaas, PRKN's VP of Programs and Litigation. We opposed the original draft permit, arguing that:

- Without protective effluent limits for nitrogen and phosphorous in the individual permit, the discharges will continue to directly and adversely affect the economic and recreational interests of many of our members;
- DEQ failed to perform the required analyses that this discharge will meet Virginia water quality standards;
- Virginia water quality standards include designated uses, criteria (both numeric and narrative), anti-degradation provisions, and the permit only applies numeric criteria;
- There is ample evidence of impairment in Quail Run; and finally,
- The documented nutrient pollution trading at this facility allows local waters to be further degraded.



*Above: Massanutten Sewage Treatment Plant aerial by Alan Lehman*

The importance of halting trading at this facility cannot be overstated. For the past five years, the Shenandoah Riverkeeper has been working relentlessly to get all three reaches of the Shenandoah River placed on Virginia's Impaired Water List, due to nutrient pollution and algae blooms – with little support from DEQ. It has been particularly frustrating to see this facility annually exceed their permit limits for nitrogen and phosphorous and exacerbate an already challenging and persistent algae problem.

With help from Deborah Murray, our legal counsel from the Southern Environmental Law Center, the Shenandoah Riverkeeper is exploring all options regarding our pending permit appeal. Despite our victory on nutrient pollution trading, we remain concerned that DEQ failed to properly analyze the impact of the STP's discharge on Quail Run, and more stringent limits may be needed in the future. Either way, our work to restore Quail Run and the South Fork of the Shenandoah will continue, but we have taken a major step forward with this victory.



Starting Friday, April 7th, join Shenandoah Riverkeeper Mark Frondorf on WZRV 95.3 The River, every Monday and Friday at 8:40 AM as he discusses all matters concerning the Shenandoah River. Tune in for paddling opportunities, pollution concerns, fishing, water quality, and other relevant news. Mark will remain on air through October. Our good friends at Front Royal Outdoors sponsor his show.

For those of you outside the listening range of 95.3, you can stream the show live online, and find his past shows by going to WZRV 95.3 The River — [www.theriver953.com](http://www.theriver953.com)

## WELCOME TO NATHAN, ELISE & ALISHA



We're excited to have **Nathan Ackerman** join us as our new **Vice President, Communication & Creative**. Nathan has worked in strategic communication and media for 25 years, primarily for progressive organizations, candidates and campaigns. His passion for the outdoors was formed through childhood adventures on the Clearfork and Shenandoah Rivers.

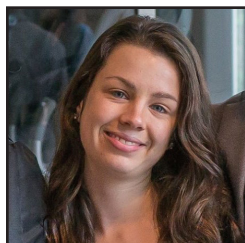
*Nathan Ackerman*

While pursuing his undergraduate degree in Environmental Science he contributed to one of the first long term climate change studies of its kind in the country. Ackerman began his professional career as a campaign organizer for the League of Conservation Voters, before joining ABC NEWS where he contributed to breaking national news stories and co-produced a weekly series. He moved to Washington, DC to help create a state of the art communication shop for the US Senate Democratic Leadership under Senator Tom Daschle. Ackerman's advocacy and advertising campaigns have been recognized by Pollie, Telly and American Marketing Association awards, and HBO's Media That Matters film festival. He has lectured on communication at George Washington University and American University.



*Elise Wirkus*

We welcome **Elise Wirkus** as our **Development & Membership Associate**. Prior to working in DC for a consulting group, she worked in her home state of Wisconsin with the League of Conservation Voters on both local and national environmental issues. She enjoys biking, cooking, hiking and tennis, and is eager to get out on the water this year while growing PRKN's membership and fundraising efforts. She holds her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is passionate about connecting more stakeholders and communities to conservation.



*Alisha Camacho*

We also welcome **Alisha Camacho** as our new **Communications & Outreach Associate**. Alisha joins PRKN from Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy, where she built and managed their successful environmental education program for DMV youth in Dumbarton Oaks Park. Over the past few years, Alisha has also worked with community members and partners along the Anacostia River (including Anacostia Riverkeeper) to help tell environmental social justice stories through film. She earned her B.A. in environmental studies and geography from the George Washington University. Alisha will be joining the communications team and assisting with campaign work.



## WE MOVED!

In a remarkable display of generosity, **Sally Davidson**, our Board member and former Chair, donated the use of her commercial building at 3070 M Street, NW in the heart of Georgetown. We also extend a special thank you to all of our Office Capital Campaign donors for their kind donations - we could not have made this our permanent home without your help! Altogether, we raised over \$30,000 for our renovations and capital investment. Stay tuned for details about our open house!

The following donors will have naming rights to rooms in our new space.

### **\$10,000+**

John Holmes

### **\$5,000**

Robin & Laurel Kent

### **\$2,500**

Peter Bross  
Todd D. Ellis  
Jack & Rachel Kelble  
Catherine & George Ledec  
George Ohrstrom II

### **\$1,000**

Thomas & Elizabeth Goslin  
Nick Kuttner & Mysia Pallas  
Stanley C. Oaks

The following donors will be recognized on our donor wall in the new office.

### **\$100-\$999**

Riverfish Angling  
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Paul D. & Barbara Bernstein  
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Andrew Riccobono  
Kenneth & Teresa Troxell  
Peter & Amy White  
Mark & Ellen Zimmerman

## LAW & WATER

A GALA EVENT TO BENEFIT  
POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER NETWORK

## SAVE THE DATE!

### This year we are moving our annual Gala to the Fall!

Law & Water Gala will take place at the Old Ebbitt Grill Atrium on Friday, November 3rd. Law & Water celebrates the 45th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act and the work that Potomac Riverkeeper Network does year-round to enforce clean water laws throughout the Potomac watershed. Funds raised will expand and strengthen our programs and outreach. The work of PRKN has never been more timely, relevant or critical - and we rely on your generous contributions to support our important work on behalf of the Nation's River.

Law & Water is made possible by generous financial contributions from our sponsors. Together we can work to protect the right of 6 million residents to clean water.

### SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR HOST COMMITTEE

Sally Davidson, Honorary Chair  
Geoff & Meg Dawson, Co-Chair  
William & Anita Kerr, Co-Chair  
David Buente  
Peter Bross  
Nick Kuttner & Mysia Pallas

John Holmes & Diane Zipursky Quale  
Pat Munoz & Dorcas Adkins  
Phyllis & Ken Patterson  
Christine Nichols & Dianne Russell  
Cabell & Kathy Williams

If you are interested joining the Host Committee to help us secure sponsors, please contact Maria Barry at 202.888.3991 or [maria@prknetwork.org](mailto:maria@prknetwork.org).





## RIVER CLEAN UP

On Sat., April 8th, over two hundred volunteers at Jones Point Lighthouse, Seneca Creek and Fletcher's Cove gathered to help clean up the Potomac! PRKN partnered with Potomac Conservancy, and together we collected over 400 pounds of trash with the help of local student organizations, families and alumni groups. The clean up was a wonderful opportunity to connect with new faces and tell them about our work to defend clean water!



## COAL ASH VICTORY (CONT'D)

refused to quit! When the state of Maryland opted to settle with Dominion, we kept fighting for the Potomac River and communities impacted by coal ash. Years of hard work have finally paid off. **Governor McAuliffe signed into law safeguards to protect public health and the environment!** He is putting the brakes on issuing coal ash solid waste permits for all Dominion ash ponds for at least one year until the threats posed can be assessed, and proper disposal solutions be explored.

Why did he do this? Because, in his words, "there has been tremendous public concern and outreach on this topic." He's talking about you! You lined up at public meetings to say no to Dominion's plan to cover up the problem. You demanded alternatives, like recycling or moving the coal ash to a location where it will not poison families or water resources. You were one of the 600 people writing letters to elected officials. You called them until they heard your message loud and clear: **The Potomac River and the Commonwealth of Virginia is not Dominion's coal ash dumping ground!** So we thank YOU! But this fight is far from over.

While this bill keeps the door open and gets us one step closer to fully cleaning up toxic coal ash ponds as Georgia and South Carolina have required, we must continue our campaign to fight for full cleanup of leaking ash ponds so they can no longer threaten our rivers and people's drinking water! We hope you will continue to fight with us. Thank YOU again!

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### SHENANDOAH RIVERKEEPER

**DUPONT AGREES TO \$42 MILLION RESTORATION PLAN FOR MERCURY CONTAMINATION IN SOUTH AND SHENANDOAH RIVERS**

For decades, mercury has been released from DuPont's Waynesboro factory, poisoning birds, fish and other aquatic life. Today 125 miles of the rivers are left polluted with mercury. After assessing the damages to wildlife and the loss of recreational fishing due to the contamination, FWS and Virginia released a draft Restoration Plan in late 2016 for public comment. While DuPont had already drafted an approved plan to remediate the contaminated river sediment, the new assessment also holds DuPont responsible for establishing a \$42 million fund to pay for habitat and river restoration projects to benefit affected birds, fish, freshwater mussels, and rehabilitating an outdated Virginia smallmouth bass hatchery in Front Royal. Riverkeeper Mark Frondorf filed comments supporting the agreement, but also acknowledged the need for DuPont to allocate funding to projects in Waynesboro, the community hit hardest by DuPont's operations. A federal court judge is currently reviewing public comments and the draft plan, with a final decision expected before summer. We will continue to work with Waynesboro and other communities affected by this industrial pollution to make sure the funds are invested wisely.

### POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER

**PRK SETTLEMENT ON POWER PLANT POLLUTION LEADS TO \$.5 MILLION OYSTER RESTORATION PROJECT**

PRK has been working on a settlement with NRG Energy and Maryland regarding NRG's pollution of excess nutrients into the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers. As a result, NRG was required to fund a \$.5 million environmental project on the Potomac River that would help reduce the nutrient pollution. Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) and PRK worked together to create a five-year plan to restore oyster beds throughout the lower tidal Potomac. After decades of decline and overharvesting, native oyster populations are slowly making a comeback to the Chesapeake Bay. Healthy populations of oysters help filter water, capture nitrogen, and reduce the nutrient

loading that ultimately depletes oxygen and impairs fish habitat and reproduction. We were pleased to see funds go to local restoration projects, rather than the state Treasury, and are committed to working with PRFC and Maryland to ensure the success of this project.

### UPPER POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER

**FRACKED GAS PIPELINE SLATED TO CROSS UNDER POTOMAC IGNITES OPPOSITION**

Upper Potomac Riverkeeper Brent Walls is rallying Western Maryland residents to question the need for a proposed natural gas pipeline that would carry fracked gas from Pennsylvania, south across the panhandle of Maryland into West Virginia, crossing under the Potomac near Hancock. TransCanada's "Eastern Panhandle Expansion" would connect with a proposed pipeline in West Virginia. Local communities will not benefit from the pipeline, and the risks to water quality and public safety are high. The TransCanada pipeline needs approval from the National Park Service to drill under the C&O Canal Historic Park. If they are not granted access to the property, the company has threatened to pursue eminent domain. We are rallying opposition to this pipeline, and working with Maryland to put pressure on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the agency that licenses interstate pipelines, to ignite opposition.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Governor Hogan has the authority to stop this pipeline. He can direct the Department of the Environment to deny a special water quality certification under the Clean Water Act. Go to our website at [www.prknetwork.org/take-action](http://www.prknetwork.org/take-action) and send an email to Governor Hogan asking him to reject the Eastern Panhandle Expansion pipeline project.



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