

Virginia Says “Yes” to Out of State SLUDGE!

We recently urged State officials to oppose a permit that would allow out of state “biosolids” onto 600 acres of Virginia’s farmland in Shenandoah County. Biosolids is an industry-friendly term for sewage sludge, which is jam-packed with dead zone causing pollutants like nitrogen and phosphorus.

The county’s Board of Supervisors joined with local residents and Jeff Kelble, our Shenandoah Riverkeeper, in opposing the permit, but a state board ignored their voices and approved the permit anyway.

Virginia is taking a giant step back from its half-hearted pledge to cut dead zone pollutants

in our water supply. At a time when Virginia is supposed to be finding ways to cut its phosphorus load, we ask: does it make sense to import pollution from out of state and apply to land with porous Karst geology near rivers and streams? We say: the timing could not be worse!

Jeff adds: “You could not have hand-picked a WORSE site to apply sewage sludge. The fields surround a historic bridge, public river access, and a children’s corn maze!”

In the meantime, we are discussing legal options with our attorneys, so stay tuned...

Appalachia Rising



On September 27, hundreds of people gathered around the edges of the White House lawn to protest mountain top removal (MTR). As the name suggests, the practice destroys mountains, but it also destroys nearby rivers and streams and contaminates our water supply. The crowd chanted sayings like “Hey Hey, Ho Ho, MTR has got to GO” and “this is what DEMOCRACY looks like.” Damien and Whit represented Potomac Riverkeeper, and, as the nearby picture illustrates, other Waterkeeper supporters were there as well. If you would like to learn more, go to www.iLoveMountains.org.

What has Jeff Gotten Himself into this Time?

It’s algae, and it stinks! Algae blooms when too much nitrogen and phosphorus gets in our water supply, and when it dies, it uses up the oxygen, causing dead zones. With conditions this bad, it’s no wonder the Environmental Protection Agency wants to put the Bay – and all the rivers and streams that feed it – on a pollution diet.

Bay states have come up with action plans detailing how they will achieve pollution diet goals, and we have weighed in on the plans (known as Water Implementation Plans, or WIPs) in Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia. Our comments differ from state to state, as each state’s plan is unique, but our big issues are transparency, enforcement, and no nutrient trading.

We all know that protecting the source of your tap water is another way of protecting yourself. If we’re going to protect the Potomac River – the source of our tap water – we need to keep track of the pollution going in and out of the water, enforce the laws against those who are polluting illegally, and reject the notion that we can simply move our mess into someone else’s river or stream (trading).

Want to know more, read Robin’s article on the next page!



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It is Time to Get Results

by Robin Broder, Vice President

The Chesapeake Bay's total maximum daily load (TMDL) has been called its "pollution diet." All diets require cutting back on "junk," and a pollution diet is no exception. In the case of the Chesapeake Bay, the junk is nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment, which cause dead zones. The problem is people don't like diets, and either bail on them halfway or don't start them in the first place. Again, the Bay's pollution diet is no exception.

The Bay has gorged itself on nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment, and we're wasting time listening to those who try to convince us there is no problem or, as Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell says, that we can solve the problem by letting those responsible do whatever they want. People may not like diets, but diets can work – and the health of our rivers and streams depend on us sticking to this pollution diet. Cutting dead-zone causing pollutants is going to be hard work; it will involve money and hard choices – but we must do it.

The Bay is beautiful, so are the rivers and streams that feed it, but there is so much more at stake. Crab, oyster, and fish populations are down from their historic levels, taking food and jobs with them. Property values will follow suit (would you want to live next to a rotting, stinking river full of neon-colored algae?).

In a recent poll of Virginia voters, 80% believe that Virginia can protect water quality and have a strong economy with good jobs for Virginians. Nearly an identical percentage of Virginians strongly agree that "ensuring Virginia has clean water is an important role of state government, and the Governor and state leaders need to work together to help meet this basic need of all Virginians."

We need Jillian Michaels, the take-no-prisoners host of *The Biggest Loser*. In her show, Michaels rigorously trains obese men and women, pushing them past "it's too hard" and "I can't do it." Some give up or don't try hard enough, but a few – the ones you end up rooting for – know they have the opportunity to heal themselves, and grab that opportunity with both hands.



Robin Broder, our Vice President

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), for better or worse, is our Jillian Michaels. EPA has set reasonable goals, and is reviewing each bay state's plan to meet the goals (the plans are formally known as Water Implementation Plans, or WIPs). Some states have come up with decent plans while others, like Virginia, are relying on policies that have failed.

The diet analogy is fun to think about, but there is one notable difference: contestants on *The Biggest Loser* don't share a single body, but residents in Virginia do share a single bay with residents of Maryland, DC, West Virginia,

Pennsylvania, and New York. Pollution that washes off of a Shenandoah Valley farm must first travel through the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers and across state lines before it settles in the Chesapeake Bay.

Like it or not, we're all in this together. The rivers and streams that feed the Bay run through our yards and neighborhoods. Our Bay has a problem, and we have the opportunity to heal it. The question is, will we grab this opportunity or let it pass? We have had 25 years of broken promises. It is time to get results.

Ox Paperboard: Did You Think No One Would Notice?

Shenandoah Riverkeeper and Potomac Riverkeeper served a notice of intent to Ox Paperboard, LLC. Our message is clear: stop polluting the Shenandoah River or face a citizen lawsuit in 60 days. Ox Paperboard has repeatedly, and illegally, polluted our water supply for nearly three years. In January and February of 2010, for instance, Ox Paperboard exceeded the legal limits of a pollution limit by over 12,000%...TWICE!

We tried to work with Ox Paperboard for well over a year before we took this legal action with our attorneys at the Widener University Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic. When polluters violate the law and threaten our water supply, they need to stop and pay for their pollution. Under the Clean Water Act, each violation is subject to fines up to \$32,500 per day. We'll keep you posted on our progress.

Don't Frack with Rockingham County...

Citing "local resistance," the Carrizo Oil and Gas Company has dropped its interest in exploring for natural gas in Bergton, VA.

The company is moving on to sites where there is less opposition to fracking, the process that pumps millions of gallons of chemical-laced water deep into the ground (1 mile!) in order to extract natural gas.

Shenandoah Riverkeeper was one of three environmental groups that recently pointed out a few potential problems with Carrizo's plan. One huge problem: Carrizo has no emergency cleanup plan in the event of a drilling accident (sound familiar?). Other problems include the well's proximity to areas that flood and risks posed by regurgitated fracking water.



Technology has far outpaced regulations. We're working with other groups to demand that Virginia develop regulations specific to natural gas drilling in Marcellus Shale so that our water resources are protected.

Maryland will soon be taking public comments on a drilling permit, and West Virginia is gathering input before updates are made to the state's drilling regulations. In the meantime, gas

companies are snatching up mineral and property rights, while groups like Potomac and Shenandoah Riverkeeper work to ensure the drilling processes the gas companies employ are safe and legal.

Riverwatcher Report Sparks Action

River Watch readers know we want pictures of the gross stuff you see when you're out and about, but do you know why do we do it? Is it because we have a gross sense of humor? No way!

It's actually because a HUGE amount of land drains into the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers (14,000+ square miles), and we need YOU to help us see where the problems are! Pictures tell the story, and here is the story of one such picture:

We received the nearby photo from Riverwatcher Lynn Koch, taken just above Chain Bridge. As soon as we saw the neon-green water, we posted the photo to our Facebook and Twitter feeds to let nearby residents know about the potential danger. (If you're not following us on Facebook and Twitter, you should!).



You don't live in black and white, and neither do we. Check out the photo in full color on our Flickr feed!

We suspect the gross color was due to a dye test and probably not harmful. We contacted the Army Corps of Engineers (who oversee the District's water supply) and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, who told us they do not conduct dye testing. We have not yet confirmed our suspicions, but will let you know when we do.

Lynne's picture told us, faster than words could, that something wasn't normal. As a result, we took action to figure out what was up. Thanks to camera phones and social networks, reporting pollution is as easy as point, shoot, and send! So what are you waiting for, send us your reports!

Report Pollution!

Call 301-POTOMAC or email keeper@potomacriverkeeper.org

New Staff and Board Members



Whit Overstreet, our Membership and Administrative Assistant

Whit Overstreet

Whit Overstreet joined our team as the Membership and Administrative Assistant. He replaces Nadia Elguindy, a talented member of the Potomac Riverkeeper staff who has moved on to graduate school. Whit comes to our organization from American Rivers, where he worked as a government relations intern. Whit is also an accomplished paddler and sailor – you'll be seeing him on the river! Welcome, Whit!

Dan Russell

Please help us in welcoming Dan Russell to our Board of Directors. Dan lives on the Potomac River and is an avid fisherman. He is also a graduate of Widener University and a certified public accountant. He worked as a managing director for Allied Capital Corporation for over 10 years. Dan has previously served on the board for the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts. Welcome, Dan!

Ready to Launch!

We're making vast improvements to the Potomac Riverkeeper website (www.potomacriverkeeper.org), and we're almost ready to launch! Before we do, we wanted to give you – our loyal *River Watch* readers – a preview.

The new potomacriverkeeper.org will feature

- a regularly updated blog full of the latest news and resources you've come to expect from us, plus live updates from the field!
- smart technology for contacting movers and shakers like politicians, public figures, and clean water activists!
- mapping tools that will allow you to see (and contribute to) pollution reports in your community!

We'll be giving sneak-peaks closer to the launch over Facebook and Twitter. If you're not following us on these social networks, you should!

facebook.com/potomacriverkeeper
twitter.com/potomacriver



GREATER WASHINGTON

We're in the Catalogue for Philanthropy

Potomac Riverkeeper is featured in the 2010-2011 Catalogue for Philanthropy, a guide to the DC area's best non-profits. After a rigorous review process, we are one of the finalists chosen to be in this year's catalogue.

We are thrilled to be featured again. To learn more, visit www.cfp-dc.org.

A Conversation with the Riverkeeper

We would like to thank Ellen and Peter Boer, and Carole Cavanaugh-Fettig and Ron Fettig, who recently hosted gatherings to benefit Potomac Riverkeeper. The "Riverkeeper House Parties," as we call them, are a great way to let your family and friends know you support our work and want to spread the word about our work.

Guests can meet Potomac Riverkeeper staff and board members before hearing a short program from Potomac Riverkeeper Ed Merrifield, Shenandoah Riverkeeper Jeff Kelble, or Upper Potomac River Manager Brent Walls (depending on location). After the program, guests can ask questions and get answers about local water conditions, water quality threats, and ways to clean up our Nation's River.

If you would like to host a Riverkeeper House Party, please send an email to keeper@potomacriverkeeper.org or call 202-222-0707.

Do you Want a Pure Potomac?

PURE POTOMAC

PurePotomac.org

If you're reading *River Watch*, chances are you do! That's exactly why we want you, our readers, to be the first to hear about an exciting new project that will build support for our cause and improve water quality in your neck of the woods and areas downstream – all the way to the Chesapeake Bay. We're calling it our Pure Potomac Program.

The Pure Potomac Program stems from a simple idea: protecting our local water source is a good way of protecting ourselves... and that's exactly what we've been doing for the last decade!

We'll be rolling out our program over the next couple of months, but for now we thought we'd ask you a question to help us get started. What is on YOUR roadmap to a Pure Potomac? How do we get there? Let us know by posting your ideas on Facebook and Twitter (don't forget the #purepotomac tag!), or you can email us your ideas at keeper@potomacriverkeeper.org!

Jeff Made the Honor Roll!

Shenandoah Riverkeeper Jeff Kelble was named to the Izaak Walton League's National Honor Roll in July. Every year, the league recognizes individuals and organizations who made a difference in conserving outdoor America in their local communities and states, as well as on a national level. The Izaak Walton League was formed in 1922 to save outdoor America for future generations. Way to go, Jeff!



Jeff Kelble, our Shenandoah Riverkeeper



Since May, 2010, Earth Korps has pulled 23,984 lbs of trash out of the Shenandoah River

Introducing Earth Korps

Say hello to Earth Korps: a new group on the Shenandoah River! Twenty-two year-old river enthusiast Beau Morgan founded Earth Korps last year, with the goal of "cleaning the masses of physical pollution that are desecrating the Shenandoah's natural beauty." Since May, 2010, Earth Korps has pulled 23,984 lbs of trash out of the Shenandoah River, including 276 tires, 3,300 lbs of recyclables, 13,120 lbs of scrap metal, 20 55-gallon drums, and 7,770 pounds of trash! Take some time to visit the Earth Korps website (<http://earthkorps.webs.org/>) and see how you can help this great organization.

Thank You to our 2010 Foundations & Business Partners

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LIVE UNITED. 

Support Potomac Riverkeeper at Your Workplace!

It's fall, the time of year when many people give through the Combined Federal and United Way Campaigns. If you are one of those people, please remember Potomac Riverkeeper in your workplace giving. Thank you!

CFC: #87828 • United Way: #9335

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GREATER WASHINGTON



Named "one of the best small nonprofits"
by the Catalogue for Philanthropy

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Shenandoah Riverkeeper and USGS release report

Jeff Kelble, our Shenandoah Riverkeeper, teamed up with US Geological Survey (USGS) scientist Vicki Blazer and other researchers to release a report on regional fish health. The report details how signs of declining fish health – lesions, the intersex condition, and others – indicate that our water supply is in danger. The study concludes that an integrated, regional approach is needed to research, and then remove, threats to our local water quality. You can find the full text of the study on our website (www.potomacriverkeeper.org).



An example of the lesions that plague some of our regional favorites

Potomac Improves, but Still Needs (River)keepers!

In September, the USGS released a report that indicates the tidal portion of the Potomac River is the healthiest it's been in 50 years. An 18-year field study showed that there has been a ten-fold increase in native submerged vegetation, a reflection of improved water quality. This is great news!

Potomac Riverkeeper spoke to several news outlets, including: The Washington Post, The Washington Examiner, and Fox 5 News about the implications of this study. The improvements show what happens because the Clean Water Act requires large polluters (like the Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant) to use the best pollution-cutting technology at their facilities. This is a good example of one of Potomac Riverkeeper's main goals – enforcement of the Clean Water Act – in action.

Safe Disposal for Prescription Meds!

In October, President Obama signed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act (S. 3397), clearing the way for more programs to collect and dispose of prescription drugs. Previously, it was illegal to turn over controlled substances to anyone but law enforcement. Many people flush old medicine down the toilet, which contaminates our water supply. A recent nationwide take-back day collected more than 121 tons of medicine, proving people will safely dispose of medicine if they have the opportunity.

Think chicken is healthier than beef?

Not so fast, says Food & Water Watch, who reported arsenic levels in young chickens are three times stronger than in average levels of other livestock. In addition, arsenic in poultry litter can leach into our waterways, which is a big problem in areas that have legacy arsenic issues such as old apple orchards in Virginia. Human exposure to arsenic can lead to a host of problems including cancer, heart problems, and diabetes. Lawmakers in Maryland are considering a ban on arsenic in chicken feed. It sounds like a no-brainer, let's keep the poisons out of our food and water! Check out Food & Water Watch's report, *Poison-Free Poultry: Why Arsenic Doesn't Belong in Chicken Feed* (www.foodandwaterwatch.org).

YES! I want to protect and restore the Potomac River! Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership gift to help
Potomac RIVERKEEPER keep our Nation's river clean!

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- ☐ I would like to designate Shenandoah Riverkeeper!
- ☐ I can't contribute, but please put me on your mailing list!

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Fall 2010



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Rodeo guests line dance to the sounds of Uncle Henry's Favorites



A few guests enjoying the pre-rodeo flotilla

Tubing, Dancing, Camping... What a Rodeo!

Our Shenandoah River Rodeo was a great success this year, bringing in 250 guests and raising funds for the Shenandoah Riverkeeper. Uncle Henry's Favorites played, and taught us a few dances, while Ara Moomjian grilled up a monster BBQ. Our pre-rodeo fishing competition and flotilla were also a big hit. Thank you to the fishing guides and Downriver Canoe Company. We could not have asked for better weather, and being able to camp was a huge treat. Thank you to everyone who celebrated with us! We look forward to seeing you again next year!

Guides

Britt Stoudenmire–*New River Outdoor Company*
L.E. Rhodes–*Hatchmatcher Guide Service*
Jeff Murray, John Coleman–*Murray's Fly Shop*
Colby Trow, Brian Trow–*Mossy Creek Fly Fishing Shop*
John Hayes, Mark Kovach, Butch Murphy–*Mark Kovach Fishing Services*
Bryan Kelly–*White Fly Shoppe & Anglers Inn*
William Heresniak–*Eastern Trophies Fly Fishing*
Tim Freese –*Smallmouth Specialist*
Duncan McGrath–*Riverfish Angling*
Chuck Kraft
Bob Cramer