

RIVER WATCH

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

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OUR LAW & WATER GALA WAS A SMASHING SUCCESS!

What a night! Our 2018 Law & Water Gala was the best ever! Hundreds of clean water supporters joined Potomac Riverkeeper Network at The Hamilton Live on November 1 for a fun night of dinner and dancing. The Gala raises much needed funds and ensures we can continue our important work protecting and defending the river that flows through our nation's Capital. A key to the success was the keynote delivered by none other than Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who in his own unique and dynamic way, applauded the work done by the folks at PRKN and exhorted them and their volunteers and partners to stay dedicated to the cause we all support – swimmable, fishable, and drinkable water across the country and around the world. His appearance was a real honor and the crowd welcomed him enthusiastically. And believe it or not, he spontaneously added to our auction items a day of falconry with him in upstate New York!

The night also featured the presentation of PRKN's Service to Clean Water awards. This year, the winners were Alexandria Renew Enterprises, former PRKN president Jeff Kelble,

and PRKN volunteer pilot Don Sutherland. Alexandria Renew was recognized for its partnership with PRKN in resolving long overdue sewage and stormwater discharges into the Potomac, which will reduce raw sewage discharges by 96

percent. Jeff Kelble was honored for his leadership in growing PRKN over his tenure and for the energy he shared and the results he produced. Don Sutherland, a volunteer pilot in the Shenandoah Valley, donated his plane and time to conduct aerial investigations of potential illegal pollution discharges. The photos documenting devastation, pollution and improper farming and construction practices taken while Don was piloting have been invaluable to PRKN. Without them, much of our work enforcing clean water laws would simply be impossible.

Nancy Stoner, PRKN's new president, said on attending her first Gala, "I am passionate about our work fighting to improve our water-

shed. I grew up on the banks of the Shenandoah and spent my entire career in the struggle, so seeing how our work is supported by so many wonderful and enthusiastic people is incredibly rewarding to me."



Dynamic Bobby Kennedy!



Live Auction was the best ever!



EarthShare/CFC #87828

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A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



HELLO FRIENDS,

I'm happy to have this opportunity to share some thoughts with you all at this time of year when most of us reflect upon the preceding year – our accomplishments and goals achieved, our failures (if we're honest, we probably had some) and our lessons learned.

For me, I'm looking back at some of the best times I've ever had, both professionally and personally. Personally, I truly cherish the support I've received from my family as I embarked on this new endeavor as president of PRKN. And professionally, well, it's just been terrific!

My first RiverPalooza, my first Gala, my first chance to make a real difference in my home watershed. You can read more about the Law & Water Gala in this newsletter. If you were there, you know it was great. If you missed it, believe me, the photos and the descriptions don't begin to do justice to what a fun and



Nancy and the crew working on watershed planning

inspiring event it was. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s speech was the highlight, but just to have the opportunity to talk with so many of PRKN's members and supporters was also fantastic.

I want to say a few words about how proud I am of the work we are doing to protect our Nation's River and its headwaters. You'll read more detail about our accomplishments in these pages, but this fall, to ensure that we are focused on the most impactful opportunities in each watershed, each of the Riverkeepers prepared a two-day "Watershed Planning" meeting. On the first day, we invited scientists, thought leaders, and partners in each watershed to share with us their perspective on these threats to the watershed and the opportunities for making progress. On the second day, we – PRKN staff – met as a team to talk about what we learned from the preceding day, to learn from our in-house expert on the River, the Riverkeeper, and to plan our strategy for the next year and beyond.

Through these sessions, I learned that there is no "one size fits all" approach to our work. Each watershed, and each Riverkeeper, have distinct goals, distinct challenges, and distinct opportunities to achieve our broader mission. I'm so excited about what we'll be doing this year and to share with you our successes as they occur.

Let's do great things together!

Sincerely,

Nancy Stoner, President

YOUR GIFT DOUBLES DURING OUR END OF YEAR APPEAL

At this time of year, when we are generous to our family and friends, we ask that you give to the health of the river. Give the gift of clean water by supporting our Potomac, Upper Potomac, and Shenandoah Riverkeeper work.

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of an anonymous donor, all gifts up to \$25,000 will be matched! Please take advantage of this great opportunity to double the impact of your year-end donation.

Your generous tax-deductible contribution will be a lasting gift that matters not just for us, but for future generations as well. With your help, we can ensure that your children and grandchildren can continue to enjoy the beauty of this precious natural resource that means so much to us all. Even a small gift can be the difference that helps us create a better, safer future for us all.

Won't you please lend your support? With your help, we can continue to fight for you and ensure an even better, more successful and productive year. On behalf of us all, happy holidays and thank you for your generosity.



Potomac Riverkeeper Network is a proud member of both EarthShare Mid-Atlantic and Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Employees can choose to designate a portion of their paycheck to Potomac Riverkeeper Network. Our EarthShare and our CFC number is the same — #87828.

POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER®

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A RIVERKEEPER

EVERY DAY AT WORK IS DIFFERENT FOR A RIVERKEEPER, WHICH IS ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT THE JOB. BUT SOME DAYS...

Last winter I was supposed to meet a reporter to show him the Lower Potomac River and discuss why we were challenging NRG's Morgantown Coal Plant discharge permit. Only it was 17 degrees, the boat was 10 miles downriver, and there was a thin coat of ice on Nomimi Creek. But once I saw watermen heading out to the river, I figured it was safe. I was certain that the wind, waves and salt water would prevent most of the big water from freezing.

I followed the broken ice trail the watermen had left when I headed into Nomini Bay. Unfortunately the ice trail shifted, the tide was low and I got stuck on a small sandbar. I would be stuck for hours if I didn't get off the sandbar right away. I quickly jumped into the frozen water, which flooded into my muck boots and swelled up to my thighs as I unsuccessfully pushed the 21-foot Parker with everything I had.

I jumped back in the boat and called the reporter telling him I would be delayed. Twenty minutes to low tide! My heart was racing. Suddenly the watermen I had seen were coming back up the creek. I flagged them down. They threw me a rope but their cleat broke trying to pull me off the bar. Ten minutes until low tide! They hooked up to the only other cleat, but my boat would not budge. I jumped off to lighten the load. Icy water again painfully filled my boots. I pushed with everything I had. The boat began to slide over the sand. I hopped back on just as they pulled me off the sandbar. I was embarrassed but thanked them profusely for saving my bacon. "We're going back in. You should too!" I should have listened.

I drained the water from my boots and proceeded upriver. More ice appeared, and the eerie sound of it cracking was painful, but I was too far away to return and the reporter was waiting for me. The river was 50-feet deep and frozen five miles across. No watermen were going to rescue me this time, so I was extra cautious in the frozen water knowing I was completely on my own.

The reporter was miffed I was late, but I was just relieved I had made it! He hopped on the boat as the sun and incoming tide began breaking up the ice. Men were fishing in front of the Morgantown plant's canal discharge, which pumps 1.8 billion gallons a day of heated cooling water and toxic coal wastewater back into the river, which is why we were asking the state to set strict limits on the coal waste discharge in the permit.

We pulled up alongside the fishermen to interview them as massive sheets of ice flowed past and broke up all around us while I struggled to hold the boat steady. We finished the interview and thankfully headed back down river. The sun was shining but my joy was short lived. Giant ice sheets had stacked on top of each other making them twice as thick. I zigzagged my way downriver through a maze of ice and open water.

I finally returned to Nomini Creek and remembered my reward for the day: fresh oysters that Paul, the owner of Nomini Bay Oyster Ranch, had left me. I quickly tied off the boat and picked up the bag of oysters hanging from the dock, but the cord broke and it fell to the bottom of the murky icy water. My battle with icy water seemed to never end. With a rake I found in Paul's shed, I got on my stomach, lowered the rake and my hands back into the cold water and searched for the lost oysters. Finally I hooked the bag and headed home. Small consolation that my hands matched my wet feet and pants.

I got home at 7:45 p.m. after 12 hours battling an icy Potomac and cold, wet feet. At least I had some delicious oysters! Just another day protecting and defending the Potomac. A day in the life of a Riverkeeper when not even the watermen would go on the river.



It's cold just thinking about it!



Dean and the reporter on the water



The Potomac is always beautiful -- in whatever weather!

SHENANDOAH RIVERKEEPER[®]

SHENANDOAH VALLEY CLEAN WATER COLLABORATION

CREATING A SMART, GREEN, AND ECONOMICALLY PROSPEROUS WATERSHED

Potomac Riverkeeper Network was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to develop a Shenandoah Valley "Green Vision" through the use of expanded collaborative forums in the Valley that will be focused on increasing wildlife habitat and biodiversity; promoting economic prosperity by supporting agriculture and local businesses, reducing stormwater and agricultural runoff in critical high-impact areas of the Shenandoah Valley, ensuring healthier communities, enhancing public recreation areas, and improving the health of fisheries and the Shenandoah's drinking water supply through the protection of source water.

The Shenandoah Valley is an area of rich cultural history and natural beauty with mountain streams, forests, and rolling, pastoral landscapes among the most significant. Our region is famous for its abundant recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts and tourists to enjoy, such as fishing, hiking, birding, hunting, and paddling. As the economic forces in the Valley have shifted, so too have the stressors on water resources. Both urban and rural areas generate pollutant loads that compromise local waters as well as downstream water bodies like the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay.

Examples of pollutant impacts to the Shenandoah River and downstream waters include:

- Discharges from feedlots, manure storage, and runoff (manure, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, hormones, and antibiotics) that contribute to algae outbreaks, fish kills and disease, and unsafe water quality locally and in the Chesapeake Bay;
- Mercury contamination in the sediment as a result of discharges from textile manufacturing from a local Waynesboro plant almost 50 years ago; and
- A Front Royal Superfund site contaminated with PCBs that still serves as the reason for a fish consumption advisory on the South Fork and Main Stem of the Shenandoah River system.

Yet, mitigation strategies are at hand. For example, the DuPont Corporation has provided \$42 million to remediate the South River and the South Fork of the Shenandoah River to address the long-term effects of the mercury that DuPont used in the manufacturing of fabric decades ago. Federal and state officials conducted a Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) that assessed injuries to natural resources resulting from the release of mercury into the environment, determined the amount of the damages, and will use the \$42 million in restoration funding for the injuries to the environment throughout the entire Shenandoah watershed.

To reduce the algal outbreaks in the Shenandoah and the oxygen-deprived Dead Zones in the Chesapeake Bay, we are advocating for the Shenandoah in the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) process that will identify and provide funding for new and expanded pollutant reduction strategies. It will also include a more focused and sustained local engagement effort and local strategies. Governor Northam's administration is on record stating that Virginia's WIP III recommendations will be properly funded in order to help Virginia achieve its 2025 water quality goals.

Given the long history of stewardship in the Valley and its tremendous value as a tourist destination due to its beauty, abundant wildlife, and historical significance, we believe that the time is ripe to redouble our efforts to protect these valuable resources.

We will first reach out to individuals and organizations who are leaders in the Valley in environmental and watershed stewardship, such as local governments, conservation groups, sportsmen's groups, university officials, tourism businesses, regulators, utilities, industry and agricultural leaders. The Friends of the Shenandoah River, the Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, Trout Unlimited, the Izaak Walton League, and the Downstream Project

have all expressed great interest in participating in this effort. So too have academic leaders from James Madison University and Shenandoah University as well as many Soil and Water Conservation District officials throughout the Shenandoah Valley.

We will then bring these leaders together in one or more forums to discuss the past, current and projected stressors on water quality in the Valley, and for Valley communities, their vision for the future. Participants will be asked to help identify leading issues related to water resources and water quality impacts/trends, potential solutions to address water quality issues through new/innovative water technologies, strategies that local/regional individuals and groups can support to drive "win-win" solutions in terms of water quality, and future investments and steps that should be considered.

We will bring forward the vision and the recommendations of these leaders so that we can work together to make them a reality. We believe now is the right time to engage in a meaningful collaboration to attain a healthy Shenandoah River and a vibrant and sustainable economy and region. While agricultural interests and environmental concerns are often portrayed as being at odds, in reality, their goals and objectives are often compatible and include healthy families, healthy communities, a strong economy, and safe, clean water and air to sustain us. The challenge is to find the right balance and strategy for the shared vision, along with the roadmap, to bring that vision into existence.



This algae bloom is what we're trying to fix

UPPER POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER[®]

EFFORT TO URGE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO DENY RIGHT-OF-WAY PERMIT RAMPS UP

Upper Potomac Riverkeeper Brent Walls organized a grassroots effort to urge the National Park Service to deny TransCanada a necessary right-of-way permit across the C&O Canal – and what an effort it was! The pipeline presents risks of explosion, the contamination of our drinking water, and the destruction of historical features and landmarks.

It began with a campaign to write letters to the C&O Canal Superintendent. Our supporters submitted scores of letters by email and countless others by old fashioned snail mail.

Brent continued with an online petition which garnered nearly 4000 signatures. His partners at Chesapeake Climate Action Network and Eastern Panhandle Protectors gathered more than 4000 more. A total of almost 8900 for all three!

The petitions were presented to Kevin Brandt, C&O Canal Superintendent for the National Park Service at a rally and press conference on November 21. The event was attended by almost 80 supporters and received major media coverage – stories about the event appeared in publications including the Washington Post and all across the country – even as far away as California!

And the best news of all – as a result of the action, Superintendent Brandt agreed to a meeting with Brent and others from his coalition – a meeting Brent had been trying to arrange for months and months! At this

meeting the coalition will ask Superintendent Brandt to deny the permit and explain our view of the risks of its construction and operation. They will present facts to counter the pipeline proponent and note the thousands of people who have opposed the pipeline, including our supporters, elected leaders, and citizens who submitted thousands of letters and comments.



Brent at Rally for National Park Service petition presentation

COMMUNITY REQUESTED ACTION – HOW DOES IT WORK?

Recently I conducted a self-assessment of what I spend my time doing as a Riverkeeper and a common theme emerged. Aside from finding pollution threats myself while patrolling the river, many of my actions originate from a community requesting my assistance on a pollution issue. This theme has occurred quite often and so I have coined the term – “Community-Requested Action”. The uniqueness of these actions is that a body of people, not just one person, has come together and expressed concern over an issue and is seeking assistance to tackle the problem. Many times it is just a matter of helping the community grow its voice and developing a plan of action to tackle the issue, but sometimes it can lead to an all-out campaign that has a much broader agenda in protecting water quality.

For the past year, I have been working with a small community in Capon Bridge, WV, located on the Cacapon River, to express its concern over the town's sewer plant violations. The goal has been to collect monthly water samples of the sewer plant's effluent and check for bacteria violations. It is important to the community since the Cacapon River is a beloved treasure where families routinely recreate and lovers of the outdoors come from miles around to fish the high-quality waters. Using the results of the water samples, I have helped the community keep the pressure on the plant to complete the necessary upgrades to the sewer plant to protect the Cacapon River. In this instance, a legal challenge would only complicate the small town's finances that could be better spent on the sewer plant upgrades and making sure the Cacapon River is a clean and safe retreat for the community.

In another part of the Upper Potomac watershed, Specialty Granules Inc., is a basalt mining operation in the hills near Fairfield, Pennsylvania, between two streams tributary to the Monocacy River. One stream to the north of the mine is a high-quality trout stream that anglers love.

To the south is a degraded stream, Miney Branch, into which all the stormwater from the mine discharges. For two years, I have been working with the community to explore ideas on protecting Tom's Creek to the north and more recently, developing a water monitoring program that focuses on the discharges from the mine.

These are the kinds of efforts at building local coalitions and responding to community requests for action which make our work so productive and successful. I think and I hope that I speak for my fellow Riverkeepers, both in this watershed and around the world, when I say that we're proud of the work we do. Our unique skills match the fervor and dedication of our supporters without whom none of our achievements would be possible.



Brent presenting in response to community requested action

MEET OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBERS!



CAROL ACKERMAN

The protection, preservation, and improvement of water systems have been lifelong passions for Carol Ackerman. The granddaughter of Art Flick, an internationally renowned fly-fisherman and New York state conservation policy advisor, and daughter of William Flick, a leading ichthyologist at Cornell University, her dedication to water conservation began as a child. Growing up in the Adirondacks, she had the privilege of working alongside her father in the fisheries laboratory, hatchery, lakes and ponds, studying the impact of acid rain on the water system. The important lessons she learned about global water systems at a young age continue to serve as her guiding principles. This love for science translated into a Bachelor of Science degree in Medical Technology and a career in nuclear medicine at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda and Sibley Hospital in Washington, DC. As an avid environmentalist, Carol spent many years on Flathead Lake in Montana, making sure that her three children grew up with the same love for water. As a member of the Flathead Lakers, she was active in water quality management and volunteering at the Yellow Bay Research Station. Locally, she was a board member for the Earth Conservation Corps, working to educate and empower youth to reclaim the Anacostia River. She also served as a board member for the Anacostia Riverkeeper from 2013 to 2016. In her free time, Carol enjoys boating on our

region's beautiful waterways, cultivating her organic flower garden, and taking trail rides with her Morgan horse at the Bureau of Land Management's idyllic 800-acre property in Mason Neck, Virginia. She also takes every opportunity to continue to learn from her father, regularly visiting him on the Yellowstone River in Montana. Carol, her husband, Steve, and their three adult children are proud residents of the greater Washington region.



LINDA HOWARD

Linda Howard is currently the principal of The TBC Fund at the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region. In 1991 Linda Howard was hired as Administrative Director of newly founded Summit Foundation, and, after nearly 25 years, she retired as the Executive Director of the Summit Fund of Washington, a supporting organization of the Community Foundation of the National Capital Region. The Summit Fund's mission was to bring about tangible and measurable improvements in the quality of life within the Washington metropolitan region, including preventing teen pregnancy and restoring the Anacostia River. During her tenure, there was a 75% reduction in teen pregnancy in DC, and water quality in the Anacostia significantly improved through the establishment of a coordinated inter-jurisdictional regulatory environment.

Ms. Howard has served on the boards of many organizations locally, including the Support Center of Washington and the Washington Grantmakers where she was Co-Chair of the Diversity Committee. She served on the Steering Committee for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Anacostia Targets and Indicators Project and was a founding member of the Board of the Anacostia Riverkeeper. She also served on

the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership, was a member of the Advisory Council of the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Trash Free Potomac Watershed Initiative and served on the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network Steering Committee.

Prior to moving to Washington in 1991, Ms. Howard was a senior executive with The Global Hunger Project based in San Francisco, New York, and Tokyo. She holds a Master's Degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology.

Ms. Howard is an avid hiker having most recently completed the pilgrimage around the sacred Mt. Kailash in Tibet. She loves to spend time at her cabin in the Sierras with friends and family.



R. STUYVESANT PIERREPONT IV

Born and raised in Long Island, NY, Stuyve has developed a true passion for the environment over the years through hunting and fishing trips with his father. In high school, his love for the environment expanded during his time spent running the Trevor Zoo at the Millbrook School. He spent his summers through high school and college on hiking exhibitions through parts of Alaska and Wyoming and as a fly-fishing guide in Colorado and Northern Wyoming.

Stuyve currently works for RMB Capital helping nonprofits and families with financial planning and investment management. When not with clients, you can find Stuyve partaking in any number of activities, from fly-fishing for trout in the Shenandoah, day hikes on the Appalachian Trail, sitting in a duck blind on a cold rainy morning, or trying to figure out how to improve his worm composting system on his apartment balcony.

Outside of Stuyve's excitement and passion for protecting our local waterways, Stuyve has engrossed himself in helping to improve the health of our coastal fisheries and marine life through the protection of a specific baitfish. In addition to helping PRKN, Stuyve is involved with The Menhaden Conservation Project, to spread awareness

and education on the importance of this small but vital forage fish.

Stuyve comes to PRKN with a clear understanding of the importance of clean waterways. He is excited to help the team tell our story and strengthen relationships with those who are charitably inclined and want to have a positive impact on their local community. Stuyve currently resides in Arlington, VA with his fiancée, Dana.

THANK YOU TO OUR PRO BONO LEGAL PARTNERS

Potomac Riverkeeper Network has been very fortunate since our founding in 2003 to have incredible pro bono legal support from a diverse group of very experienced and passionate attorneys who have represented us in state and federal court on dozens of successful legal actions over the years. We quite simply could not do the work we do without their able assistance and commitment to our mission. As a Network of Riverkeepers, our core mission is to bring enforcement actions against polluters and challenge state and federal agencies on weak regulations and permits that don't protect our rivers. In our case, that means building legal cases across a 14,000 square mile watershed in four states and the District of Columbia, with a small staff and one in-house lawyer (Phillip Musegaas, our VP of Programs and Litigation). Without our pro bono attorneys' support, there is no way we would have been able to bring the number or scope of great cases that we have across our huge watershed.

In 2017 alone, we harnessed over \$1.6 million in pro bono support from DC law firms, national environmental organizations like Earthjustice, Southern Environmental Law Center, and Environmental Integrity Project, world-class law school clinics at Georgetown, University of Maryland and Columbia, and dedicated volunteer attorneys placed with us through the Chesapeake Legal Alliance.

With their invaluable assistance, we have brought successful Clean Water Act citizen suits throughout our watershed – here are just a few examples:

- Sidley Austin represented us in a suit that stopped pollution from a Maryland trailer park that was discharging untreated sewage from leaking septic tanks into Conococheague Creek, a tributary of the Upper Potomac

- Environmental Integrity Project helped us address permit violations from the City of Frederick's sewage treatment plant related to nutrient pollution, the main cause of the Monocacy River and Chesapeake Bay's degraded health. In response to our suit, the City completed upgrades to its facility after years of delay and is now meeting permit limits that will protect the river and Bay.
- With Southern Environmental Law Center's legal clout behind us, we forced Dominion Energy to stop illegal discharges of coal ash-laden stormwater into Quantico Creek and the Potomac River. We are working on the legislative front to secure a permanent solution to the disposal of toxic coal ash in the 2019 Virginia legislative session.

In addition, our law school clinic partners engage in legal research to help us keep abreast of the latest case law on key issues, from the Clean Water Rule to endangered species protections. In exchange, we offer their law students a unique opportunity to work with clients doing real world clean water advocacy at the local level.

To top it off, once in a while our legal victories lead to funding environmental restoration in addition to stopping pollution. We are proud to be responsible for securing a \$500,000 fund for oyster restoration in the Lower Potomac as part of a federal consent decree with a power plant company over nutrient discharges that were fouling the river and Bay.

This holiday season is the perfect time to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation of our pro bono counsel, true environmental champions who enable us to keep fighting, and winning for our Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers.



Point source pollution in our watershed



These coal ash pits are the problem



Coal Ash Pits — this is where the problem starts



This photo shows the danger



POTOMAC
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NETWORK

3070 M Street NW
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Help Us Reach Our 2018 Goal

WON'T YOU PLEASE LEND YOUR SUPPORT?

With your help we can continue to protect this precious natural resource and ensure a safer future for your children and grandchildren.

And thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, all gifts up to \$25,000 will be matched!

**On behalf of us all, happy holidays
and thank you for your generosity.**

www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/donate