

# SHORE RIVERS ADVOCATE

CHESTER | MILES, WYE, & EASTERN BAY

CHOPTANK | SASSAFRAS & BAYSIDE CREEKS



SPRING 2024



## IN THIS ISSUE

A breakdown of what the ***Comprehensive Evaluation of Systems Response (CESR) Report*** means for the future of our Eastern Shore rivers and creeks, a chance to **meet some future leaders of the environmental movement**, and more!



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



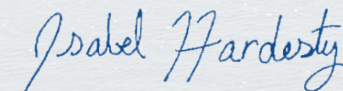
*Thank you for imagining the future  
of our rivers with us.*

In September of last year, we kicked off a multi-month period of gathering feedback and ideas from you; we heard from more than 400 volunteers, activists, partners, donors, staff, and community members through surveys, interviews, listening sessions, and meetings. In just a month we will unveil our 2024–2027 strategic plan: the roadmap that will define our overarching strategies as we work with our communities and partners for healthy rivers on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

We heard from you loud and clear that **ShoreRivers is a proven, effective, and beloved organization that should be a leader in the Eastern Shore’s environmental movement.** You are calling on us to **play a significant role in advocacy** at the state level while maintaining our boots-on-the-ground, grassroots foundation. You want us to have a **stronger presence in land-use and development decisions** as they affect the health of our rivers, especially as we experience increased development pressure from the third Bay bridge span, solar farms, and housing. And you want us to engage more people in these efforts—to **expand and diversify our supporters**, to listen and learn, and to amplify our collective voice and impact.

As you’ll read in this edition of the *Advocate*, we are doing exciting work from envisioning the future of Bay restoration to mentoring the next generation of environmental stewards. We’re finding ways to ensure our work provides water quality benefits long past their initial install and making sure we center people and our communities at the heart of it all. As we follow the bold new direction of our strategic plan, we’ll continue to pursue the work that we are uniquely positioned to do as your Riverkeepers, as educators, and as regional leaders in restoration practices.

We are shaping our core strategies over the next three years around these key priority areas. We’re working collaboratively to craft a strategic plan that will lean into our strengths, rely on our excellent partners, and grow a community of stewards who love these waterways. **We are imagining a future Eastern Shore with vibrant, healthy rivers that are supported by communities who enjoy and take action to protect them.** Thank you for imagining this future of our rivers with us.



Isabel Hardesty  
Executive Director



## 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

**Saturday, June 29, 6–10 pm  
Wilmer Park, Chestertown MD**

You don’t want to miss this signature summer event. For a decade, ShoreRivers has hosted the Summer Solstice Celebration on the banks of the Chester River. Enjoy live music and dancing, refreshing cocktails, delicious food, good company, and an exceptional live auction to benefit healthier local waterways.

**Tickets and sponsorship opportunities now available: [shorerivers.org/events](https://shorerivers.org/events)**



# ENVISIONING BAY RESTORATION IN 2025, AND BEYOND



Annie Richards



Ben Ford



Matt Pluta

By Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper; Ben Ford, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper; and Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper

It's widely acknowledged within the environmental community that Chesapeake Bay won't meet its pollution diet goals by the established 2025 deadline—an effort guided by the Chesapeake Bay Agreement that included nearly every sector, industry, and level of government working together to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus contributions to local waters. As we now know, effort alone doesn't always produce the necessary results, especially as pollution increases from climate change impacts and population growth.

Here on the Eastern Shore, ShoreRivers maintains that the primary source of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution in our rivers comes from within our own watershed. While we're proud of our state and local communities, who've been leading the way in this clean-up effort, our data shows we still have much work to do—work that will require change.

**These changes are being driven by a 2023 report, *A Comprehensive Evaluation of Systems Response*, commonly referred to by its acronym: CESR.**

*(continued)*

## Learn more about the health of your river at this year's **STATE OF THE RIVERS** events:

Wednesday, April 17, Betterton Fire Hall | 5:30–7 pm  
State of the Sassafras River & the Bayside Creeks, hosted by Riverkeeper Zack Kelleher

Thursday, April 25, The Packing House in Cambridge | 5:30–7 pm  
State of the Choptank River, hosted by Riverkeeper Matt Pluta

Monday, April 29, Cult Classic Brewing in Stevensville | 5:30–7 pm  
State of the Miles River, Wye River, and Eastern Bay, hosted by Riverkeeper Ben Ford

Wednesday, May 8, Garfield Center for the Arts in Chestertown | 5:30–7 pm  
State of the Chester River, hosted by Riverkeeper Annie Richards

**Each event is free and open to the public; light fare will be served.  
Learn more at [shorerivers.org/events](https://shorerivers.org/events).**



Created by the Chesapeake Bay Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee from the Chesapeake Bay Program (itself a program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), the CESR report is an evaluation rooted in science that lays out the understanding of why pollution reduction efforts in the Chesapeake Bay, in our local rivers, and in our communities are falling short of the envisioned restoration goals. Considering our local Eastern Shore rivers are surrounded by agriculture and facing the impacts of climate change at a rate greater than anywhere else in the state, **your Riverkeepers find the following points from the report to be essential moving forward:**

## NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION IS LARGEST HURDLE TO BAY RESTORATION

Nutrients that wash over the landscape as nonpoint source pollution are identified in the CESR report as the last (and largest) obstacle to meeting restoration goals. Bay wide, point sources—facilities that discharge to a traceable and regulated area—have come the closest to meeting reduction goals thanks to state funding to upgrade wastewater treatment plants with enhanced nutrient removal technology.

From 2007–2022, there have been **15** wastewater treatment plant upgrades in ShoreRivers territory

**325,187 lbs.** nitrogen reduced      **54,352 lbs.** phosphorus reduced

However, our watersheds face more nonpoint source pollution, as less than 10% of the pollution loading comes from these traceable, regulated areas—and our remaining rural landscape consists of farms and residential development using septic systems. The impacts of climate change, particularly sea level rise and the increased intensity of precipitation, make addressing pollution from these sources more urgent than ever.

On the upper Choptank, this is evident when looking at the long-term nutrient data collected in Greensboro at a monitoring station operated by the United States Geological Survey. One of the oldest and longest running monitoring stations in the Bay watershed, it is often referred to as the barometer for understanding how policies to address agricultural nutrient pollution are performing. And according to the 2022 update for nutrient loading, the upper Choptank is the only river in Maryland that continues to show increasing nitrogen and phosphorus loads.

Addressing nonpoint source pollution will require the state to allocate more resources and, in turn, will require a review of past restoration efforts and a plan to make them more effective moving forward.

## TARGETED RESTORATION SITING

Not all restoration opportunities or Best Management Practices (BMPs) are equal in their pollution reduction potential. The Chesapeake Bay ecosystem is complex, with each area seeing distinct challenges, soil types, topography, and land use. Targeted restoration acknowledges this complexity and directs resources toward areas where they can have the most significant impact. For example, nutrient delivery rates in the state's Critical Area are alarmingly high—the Maryland Department of the Environment indicates as high as 80%.

By prioritizing areas with known high delivery rates, we can help state agencies like the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Maryland Department of Agriculture meet important goals, such as restoring 2,000 miles of riparian forest buffers in Maryland by 2025, increasing by 50% (to 3,000 per year) the number of BMPs installed to meet nutrient reduction goals, and reducing soil erosion by 15,000 tons per year. Targeted restoration also allows for more precise monitoring and evaluation of pollution reduction outcomes, particularly in near-shore areas where pollution impacts are most clearly seen.

## WE NEED MORE MONITORING

Despite decades of restoration Bay-wide, there is a response gap between BMPs installed and water quality improvement. By conducting more frequent and comprehensive monitoring, we can bridge this gap, identifying areas where BMPs are effective and where they may need adjustment or additional support. Increased monitoring requires consistent funding, which is often lacking from grant awards. However, state investment in monitoring is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of restoration initiatives and justifying further funding allocation.

Ultimately, increased water quality monitoring data can feed into improved pollution reduction models. These models can help policymakers make more informed decisions by predicting the outcomes of different restoration strategies, calculating nutrient and sediment reductions, and identifying areas of highest priority. In this way, enhanced monitoring contributes to a better understanding of water quality trends and the development of more effective policies for Chesapeake Bay cleanup and restoration.

## ADDRESSING THE NUTRIENT MASS IMBALANCE

To reduce the impacts of excess nutrients on local rivers and creeks, attention needs to also be put on reducing the nutrient inputs. The CESR report finds



# - THE CESR REPORT -

## AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR EASTERN SHORE WATERWAYS



50-90% OF RUNOFF POLLUTION IN OUR RIVERS COMES FROM 5-20% OF THE LAND.



NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION IS OUR LAST AND LARGEST OBSTACLE TO MEETING RESTORATION GOALS.



WE NEED TO INCREASE OUR MONITORING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICACY OF FUTURE MODELS BEYOND 2025.



RESTORATION PRACTICES CANNOT KEEP PACE WITH THE IMBALANCE OF NUTRIENTS INTRODUCED TO THE WATERSHED.



INCENTIVE AND VOLUNTARY PROGRAMS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO MITIGATE POLLUTION SOURCES.

that current restoration practices cannot keep pace with the amount of nutrients being introduced to the watershed. The state's Nutrient Management Program, including the Phosphorus Management Tool and the Manure Transport Program, is an important tool to help farmers and landowners reduce nutrient inputs, but data shows there's much more work to do to reverse the imbalance in long-term nutrient loading trends on the Eastern Shore.

Look, for example, at the recent discovery that Maryland's relaxed regulations on industrial sludge have turned Eastern Shore farms into a regional dumping ground for the material. According to a University of Maryland report, between 2019 and 2021, an estimated 93.9 million gallons of industrial sludge were imported into Maryland counties, containing 4.78 million lbs. of nitrogen and 1.75 million lbs. of phosphorus. To meet any envisioned restoration goals, the mass imbalance of nutrients must be addressed by better regulating the quantity of nutrients used, while incorporating soil health practices that can lessen the need for those nutrients.

### **VOLUNTARY AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS**

According to CESR, agricultural incentive or voluntary programs—as currently operated—have not yielded sufficient success in controlling runoff from areas that contribute the highest pollution loads. To meet our goals, we must pair targeted incentive programs with policy-driven behavior change. These new policies and programs should aim to increase the number of stakeholders participating in BMP programs, and focus BMP siting to maximize state investment and reduction results.

A foundational change to our current programs, as CESR states, “would replace the current program premise...with a new premise that a producer... is obligated to limit their pollution but has discretion and flexibility in deciding how that limit is met.” (K. Stephenson, et al. 2022).

### **SHIFTING FOCUS FOR 2025 AND BEYOND**

Following the recommendations of the CESR report beyond 2025 will mean a shift in goals and perspectives when engaging in water quality restoration. **What will a restored Chesapeake Bay really look like? Who are we doing it for?** One of the most interesting components of the CESR report is the inclusion of human interaction with this unique resource. For decades, restoration metrics have been largely unrelated to the ways we interact with and enjoy our local waterways. By making changes like shifting our focus from deep channel oxygen levels to shallow water habitat responses, we can prioritize increasing biodiverse ecosystems with grasses, oyster beds, and native marsh lands that sustain fisheries, increase opportunities for recreation, and improve water quality in the parts of the Bay humans interact with most.

**The CESR report recommends that when we look to the future, themes of access, equity, industry, recreation, and quality of life should be central to our restoration efforts.** This aligns perfectly with our work at ShoreRivers, where we believe that access to clean water is an essential right, and where your Riverkeepers are working for swimmable, fishable waterways that our community members hope to preserve for their children and grandchildren.



# THE SUMMER OF SALT: HOW ELEVATED SALINITY IMPACTS OUR ECOSYSTEM

By Autumn Conley, Chesapeake Conservation & Climate Corps, 2023–24, and Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper



Autumn Conley



Zack Kelleher

Last year, Eastern Shore waterways experienced an increase in salinity, or the amount of salt in water, due to rainfall levels below historic averages, which decreased freshwater input to the Bay. While a dry year impacts nearly all aspects of river health—including dead zones and water clarity—salinity is not necessarily a water quality indicator. It is, however, a powerful driver of species distributions and ecosystem dynamics. **As we look to the future, the data and observations collected during these atypical years provide a basis for comparative analysis and could prove to be critical in better understanding our ecosystems.**

Perhaps the most popular species impacted by heightened salinity was the Eastern oyster, which saw record-breaking spatfall numbers. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Fall Oyster Survey found spat in areas not previously established as oyster habitats, including tributaries that were historically too fresh for successful oyster reproduction. However, higher salinity also has the potential to threaten oyster populations. Waterways with salinities above 12–15 parts per thousand (ppt) increase the risk of diseases like Dermo and MSX—transmissible parasites that can result in widespread oyster deaths.

Bay nettles, commonly mistaken for sea nettles but discovered to be a distinct relative in 2017, were another impacted species. The most common jellyfish in the Bay during the summer, these nettles experienced a shift in their geographic distribution (also true for hundreds of dolphins that made their way to the mid and upper Bay). Bay nettles prefer salinity levels between 10–15 ppt, and their populations were pushed north, further into rivers and tributaries that could now meet their salinity needs.

Aquatic plant species were also impacted by the heightened salinity. American lotus, an iconic species most commonly found on the Sassafras, attracts visitors from around the world when it blooms in the summer. Unfortunately, it is primarily a freshwater species, so large swaths of lotus were killed off and



Oysters experienced significant increases in reproductive success as a result of the salty conditions, especially in the Eastern Bay sanctuary.

blooms were delayed. On a positive note for the region, the spread of the invasive water chestnut was also stunted. A detrimental species found on the Sassafras since the 1960s, ShoreRivers has removed more than 12,000 pounds of water chestnut over the past five years. This year, less than 100 pounds was found, though continued vigilance is necessary.

Several species of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) were also impacted. Those that thrive in brackish conditions, such as Redhead Grass and Sago Pondweed, had very healthy years. Freshwater species such as wild celery struggled to survive the high salinity levels, and large beds were killed off. This was the first year that ShoreRivers was unable to perform a wild celery or freshwater SAV harvest, which will impact our restoration goals next year.

**With climate change causing more intense weather patterns, we will likely see an increase in both drought conditions that contribute to higher salinity levels and increased precipitation that could cause historically low salinity like we experienced in 2018.** It remains to be seen what kind of long-term impacts this range of salinity will have on our local biological communities, but by documenting these phenomena we can gain a better understanding of how they're affected and how we can incorporate their resiliency into our work to restore and protect our waterways.



The **Rollins-Luetkemeyer Foundation** has issued a generous and ambitious challenge:

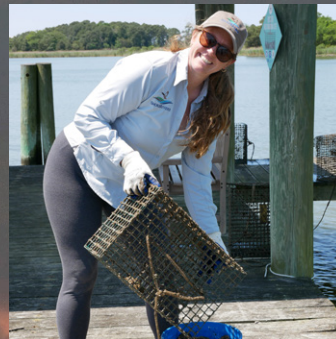
# Raise \$200,000 for THE NINA RODALE HOUGHTON RIVERKEEPER ENDOWMENT by May 31, 2024 and they will donate an additional **\$100,000!**

## We are almost there!

Make your gift today to help us unlock this matching gift and build the endowment that will support our Riverkeepers in perpetuity. **Endowed funds are different than typical annual and event revenue in that they are invested for long-term financial sustainability.** A healthy endowment is like a savings account that will help us weather market fluctuations, relieve reliance on grant cycles and onerous reporting requirements, and signal our enduring commitment to our waterways.

**Support your Riverkeeper today with a gift to the ShoreRivers endowment in their honor.**

Use the enclosed envelope or visit [shorerivers.org/donate](https://shorerivers.org/donate) to be part of this milestone effort. Contact Rebekah Hock at [rhock@shorerivers.org](mailto:rhock@shorerivers.org) for information about other ways to give.



**Please visit [shorerivers.org/give/endowment-funds](https://shorerivers.org/give/endowment-funds) to read more about Nina Rodale Houghton and her legacy.**



# THE STUDENTS BEHIND THE SUMMIT ARE NOT WAITING TILL TOMORROW TO TAKE ACTION

By Paige Dempsey, Education Programs Manager



Let me introduce you to the phenomenal group of student leaders who helped plan this year's **Upper Shore Youth Environmental Action Summit**—a conference-style event for high school students to learn about environmental advocacy and network with professionals. I'm always impressed by young people, and, as you'll see, this group holds quite the breadth and depth of experience, knowledge, and skills. In just a few years, these students will be young professionals. **They will be conducting research, practicing law, teaching, making art, and continuing to move through the world with an ethos of environmental advocacy and sustainability.** It's likely that they will be doing all of this in a time when water quality continues to face threats and on a planet several years further into the climate crisis.

As Will O'Donnell, one of this year's Summit Student Leaders, will remind you, Gen Z is acutely aware of the urgency of the climate crisis and knows that the burden of responding to it will fall to them in the future. I could follow that statement with something simple and nice like, "I know that the future of environmental advocacy will be in capable hands." Which is true. I know young people will rise and have already risen to the task of responding to the climate crisis and environmental injustices. At the same time, adults and those in power today cannot wash our hands of the responsibility to act now. We owe it to today's youth to ease that future burden as much as possible. **ShoreRivers takes that responsibility seriously.** Today's students are our collaborators and future leaders. If you need any more convincing, read on to learn more about this year's student leaders!



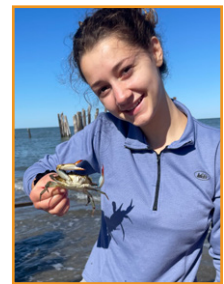
**Ella Foote** is a high school junior from Queen Anne's County, whose first memories of falling in love with the environment are from attending camp at Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center as a kid. Seeing the way the center's grounds have changed over the years motivated Ella to learn more about the environment and take

action. At school, she's involved in the Eco Club and Gardening Club, and hopes to bring composting to her campus. At this year's Summit, Ella co-led a workshop on upcycling with fellow student leader Carissa.



**Linda Gayle** is a high school senior from Southern Anne Arundel County, and has always felt connected

to the environment. She got started in environmental advocacy after learning about the Maryland Campaign for Environmental Human Rights in 2021. Since then, she has worked with Maryland Sierra Club Youth Leadership Council and on several political campaigns. A student of several languages, Linda plans to combine her interest in languages and political advocacy to study international relations. Her favorite place to spend time outside is Franklin Point State Park and she is grateful to the community that fought to protect it.



**Jessica Hammond** is a high school senior from Talbot County. She recently completed her Girl Scout Gold Award project, for which she installed environmental awareness signs at a park in Easton. When asked what advice she'd offer a student who wants to get more involved in environmental advocacy, Jessica said "Find people who are



also interested in the environment so you can really build your ideas off of other people. It's more exciting and easier to get something going when you're working with a team." Jessica's favorite places to spend time outdoors are the Adirondacks and Maine, with a special shout out to Acadia National Park. She plans to study environmental studies in college and pursue a career connected to sustainability.

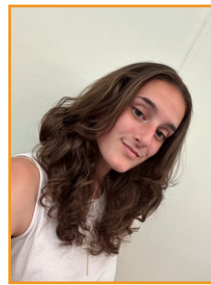


**Finn Merrick**, a junior from Talbot County, can trace his interest in the environment to his father, who is an environmental educator. Finn believes in the power of community—both as a force for enacting change and as a way to get and stay involved in environmental advocacy—and he led an activity at the Summit that asked students to imagine what communities would look like in an environmentally just future. Finn plans to be a teacher and to continue his family's legacy of instilling a care for the environment in his students. When asked to describe a future with healthy waterways, Finn

said, "It's not just the waterways being clean and being healthy. It's more to me, personally, about the communities being centered around these waterways and acknowledging these waterways' importance to them and to the natural world around them."



**Will O'Donnell**, a high school senior in Talbot County, is the vice chair of Maryland's Youth Advisory Council and the Eastern Shore liaison for the Maryland Association of Student Councils. For anyone looking to get involved in environmental action, Will recommends staying in tune with the news and looking into local nonprofits that have volunteer opportunities. Will says, "Whatever I do in my future career... I want to ensure that the world is a healthy place for future generations and help others know what they're fighting for. [That] awareness and sense of urgency is the first step towards making a difference."

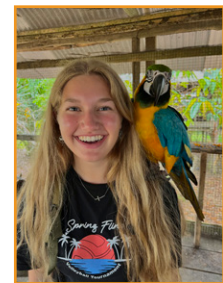


**Sophia Principe**, a high school senior in Talbot County, designed three out of four of this year's screen prints for the Summit and runs her school's Art Club and National Art Honor Society. To Sophia, a future with healthy waterways looks like: "When the Bay is no longer a murky brown color and the oysters are abundant. Where animals don't get caught up in fishing wire and I don't see a single piece of plastic." Her favorite place to spend time outside is a back road dog-walking route "between the ever-changing farmer's fields and the never-changing woods."



**Carissa Shue**, a junior from Queen Anne's County, spoke at the Summit's opening kickoff, contributed to this year's screen-printing station, and co-lead a workshop. Though she'd been interested in the environment before

moving to the Eastern Shore, living near the Chesapeake Bay sparked a deeper passion. She credits her biology teacher, Mr. Hazy, with being the first person to teach her about the Bay and its ecology. Carissa is also involved in the swim team, marching band, and a local scout troop, and wants to pursue a career in science.



**Faith Walstrum**, a senior from Talbot County, is the artist behind the 2024 Summit sticker. It was while taking an aquatic science class that Faith realized she wanted to study the environment. A member of the Ecology Club at school, she is currently helping her school renew its Green School certification. Her favorite place to spend time outside is the Oxford Strand. For students who want to learn more, Faith suggests taking classes, reading, and seeking out other educational materials like documentaries.



# EMPOWERING STEWARDS TO MAINTAIN BEST PRACTICES FOR YEARS TO COME

By Laura Wood, Ag & Outreach Coordinator



Since 2015, ShoreRivers has implemented 287 urban and agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Of those projects, 198 were done on agricultural land, representing hundreds of acres of wetlands and native grass and forested buffers, among other

practices. Each provides a benefit to our waterways and ecosystems through wildlife habitat, water filtration and storage, and nutrient and sediment removal. **When we install these projects, we intend for the life of the practice to be long, and for their benefits to be felt for many years to come. However, in order to maximize these benefits, they must be properly maintained.**

This year, with funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Outreach and Restoration program, ShoreRivers is able to provide follow-up maintenance support for existing agricultural BMPs to ensure they are functioning as intended, now and into the future. The goal of this project is to engage property owners and managers

who have BMPs on their properties in knowledge building surrounding maintenance of their practices, ensuring they have the tools they need to become educated and empowered stewards of their land.

**Proper maintenance is critical to a BMP's ability to achieve its intended environmental benefits, and it's crucial that the individual landowners responsible for stewarding these practices are supported and well educated.** While landowners agree to, and have a plan for, maintenance when BMPs are installed, execution of these plans can be daunting. But by providing more user-friendly maintenance guidance materials, one-on-one assistance, and interactive workshops, we hope to empower practice owners to feel confident in maintaining their current and any future BMPs.

This spring, ShoreRivers will reach out to all the landowners we've worked with to install agricultural BMPs over the past five years to learn more about their maintenance needs and common concerns and questions about their projects. We'll also be conducting site visits to walk through BMPs with landowners, answer questions, monitor how BMPs are doing, and make suggestions for maintenance. Additionally, we will develop larger group workshops to discuss BMP maintenance, share knowledge, introduce landowners to some of the local resources available to them, and allow participants to share successes and challenges and learn from one another's experiences.

If ShoreRivers has installed a BMP on your property and you would like to provide maintenance challenge feedback or receive support and/or education, please reach out to Laura Wood (lwood@shorerivers.org) or Whitley Gray (wgray@shorerivers.org).

## How should you maintain your:

### Grass Buffer

**MOWING GRASSES** to a height of 6–8 inches, and **managing invasive species** (e.g., Johnson grass, Canada thistle)

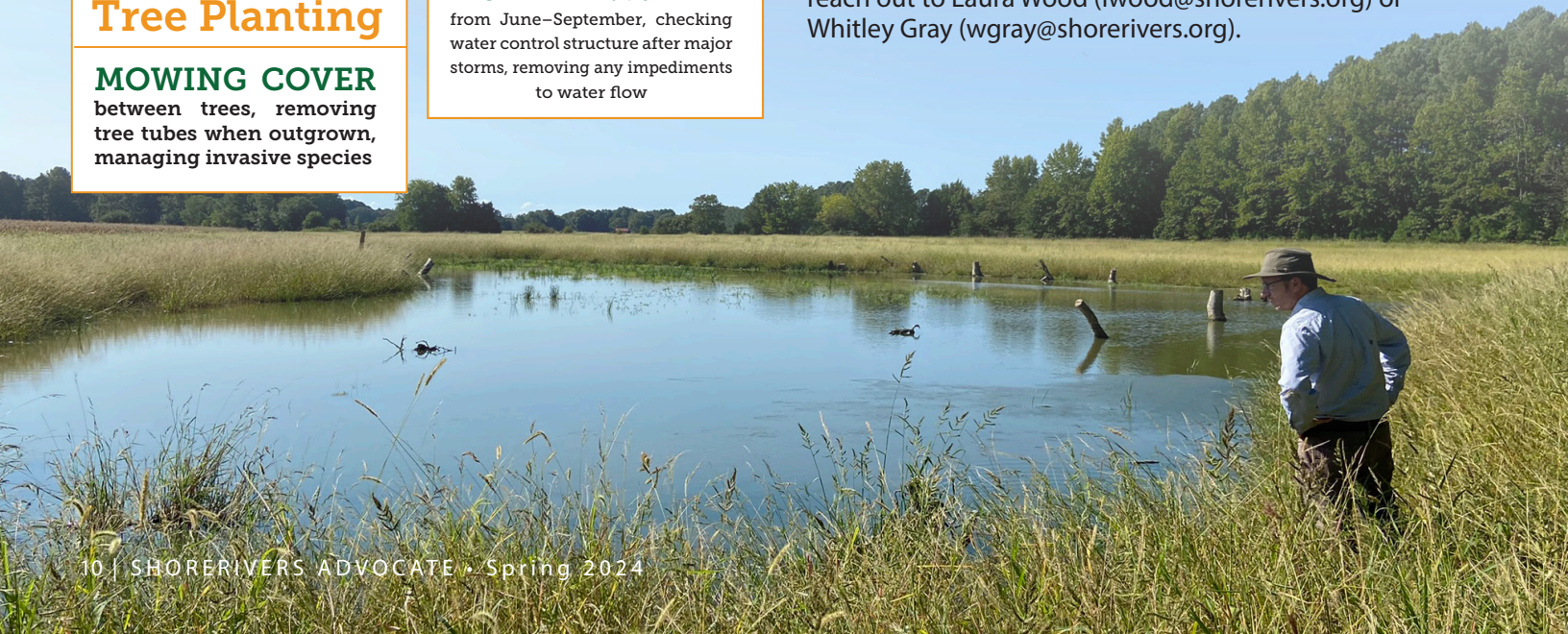
### Wetland

**BERM: MOWING MONTHLY** ensuring **no tree growth**

**BUFFER: MOWING MONTHLY** at 6–12 in. from June–September, checking water control structure after major storms, removing any impediments to water flow

### Tree Planting

**MOWING COVER** between trees, removing **tree tubes** when outgrown, **managing invasive species**





# STEWARDS OF CREATION

By Reverend Joel L. Tolbert  
 In memory of Tom Eager



When ShoreRivers' Darran White Tilghman made a presentation to the Chester Valley Ministers Association in late 2021, I felt it. In my first two years as the new pastor at The Presbyterian Church of Chestertown, I had wondered what we could do with the three empty lots behind the church. I sketched

out a prayer path with native trees and shrubs and showed it to Darran. She volunteered to come see the space.

*She walked Tom Eager, our Elder of Property, and me over the empty, short-mowed turf grass and had us listen to the silence. Then she walked us across into a nearby space where the grasses were taller, and wildflowers, bushes, and trees were welcomed. That space was so loud with life.*

Tom and I knew this congregation would want to give this space back to the community, to God, to life itself.

We gathered a few members and leaders in our church onto a new Green Stewards team, invited the local neighborhood association and representatives of the Unitarian Universalist Church, whose property

adjoins our future community space, and began brainstorming. ShoreRivers' Landscape Architect, Katie Drummond, listened and created this wonderful diverse design. Tom became one of the project's great architects and champions.

Tom died on July 9, 2023. **In the coming years, I hope not to fill Tom's shoes, but to honor his absence.** Every time I hear about Canada wildfires, Arizona temperatures, or Eastern Shore water quality, I take a deep breath and remember this not-so-little project and trust it will do something to show this community how to give back and share and support creation. I think that's what God meant in Genesis 1:28, not dominion over, but good stewards of creation.

Our congregation has donated more than \$8,000 to the project so far. ShoreRivers has secured funding through the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Urban Trees program and its Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns program for a native wildflower meadow, in addition to a generous grant from the Robert F. Schumann Foundation. This year, we'll create a larger no-mow upland meadow with mown walking paths, add more native trees, and plant an entryway in gorgeous native shrubs and flowers. This project will be our gift to the future.



*This concept plan shows the design that will turn three empty lots into a space filled with native meadows, gardens, walking paths, and other river-friendly spaces.*

***From a tiny little imagination, to a conversation, to a dream, to a plan. I love to see good things happen!***





# SHORE RIVERS

Eastern Shore Conservation Center  
114 S. Washington St., Suite 301  
Easton, MD 21601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## RIDE *for* 20<sup>th</sup> Annual CLEAN RIVERS

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2024**  
**Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, MD**  
**REGISTER NOW!** [shorerivers.org/events](https://shorerivers.org/events)

Scenic 20, 35, or 62 mile courses available!

### ShoreRivers Expeditions

Small group experiences offering learning, fun, and a wonderful way to support our work for clean water. From paddles to tours of restoration sites, to hands-on adventures, there's something for everyone to enjoy!



**Ferry Cove Oyster Hatchery Tour**, Thursday, April 11

**Tuckahoe Creek (at Hillsboro) Paddle with Choptank Riverkeeper**, Thursday, May 2

**CBEC Family Exploration Day**, Saturday, June 8

**Paddle with the Chester Riverkeeper**, Wednesday, June 12

**Oksana's Farm to Table Tour**, Thursday, June 20

**Tuckahoe Lake Family Paddle**, Saturday, July 20

**Wildly Native Farm Tour with Edible Flowers**,  
Wednesday, July 24

**Lotus Bloom Paddle with Sassafras Riverkeeper**,  
Thursday, July 25

**Pizza and Permaculture with the Eastern Shore Permaculture Institute**, Tuesday, August 20

Register and more into, visit [shorerivers.org/events](https://shorerivers.org/events).