

# MAGOTHY RIVER ASSOCIATION WINTER 2019 NEWSLETTER

Edited by Andrea Germain

## **MARSH LANDING HEARING – Board of Appeals**

First day of hearings: Many issues came out during the first hearing, including questions from our attorney about a tree listed on their site plan as being “an 18-inch multi-branched sycamore tree.” In reality, this tree is 7 feet wide, with a circumference of 19 ft. 4 in! See the pictures on the next page. What other environmental factors, such as tree cover, steep slopes, erodible soils, wetlands, and yellow perch habitat, have been overlooked or minimized to maximize the buildable space at the project site?

Our main concern is about stormwater runoff, which could go directly into the new Berrywood stream restoration site. Per the developer, responsibility for maintaining the slot drain and the 7 rain gardens will rest with the 4 homeowners. The reality: the cover for the slot drain is too heavy for one individual to lift. In discussions we have had with Tim Astrom, Operations Manager for B&P Environmental, the costs for a single clean-out of the slot drain and rain gardens, including disposal of the waste, would cost approximately \$1500! The surrounding area has many trees, and keeping the slot drain clean would require significant effort. Do we really believe that the 4 homeowners will be able to maintain the drain and rain gardens? If not maintained, the storm water will flow down the steep driveway onto Asbury Rd., where it will then flow directly into Cattail Creek.

When questioned about the storm water controls, the Marsh Landing project engineer testified that the controls are sufficient and meet the county codes. But sufficient under what conditions? Would rain gardens absorb water when the ground is frozen solid? What about the significant rainfall that we have experienced in the last few years? The road is known for its flooding.

We had a good crowd of people at the hearing and appreciate everyone who attended. Day 2 of hearings began on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, at 5:30.



## DAY 2

The second day of hearings was primarily MRA witnesses, with lots of objections from the developer's lawyer as well as the county lawyer, ironically. The main take away from Day 2 is that it will be quite difficult for the 4 proposed homeowners to maintain the slot drain and 7 rain gardens. We brought in a storm water drain maintenance expert, Tim Astrom of B&P Environmental, who testified that the slot drain alone would cost about \$2,000 per clean-out, which would necessitate closing Asbury Rd. for the big truck! This cost does not include the 7 rain gardens, which will also fill with leaves and mud, and need to be cleaned out. This maintenance will be the financial responsibility of the proposed 4-member Homeowner Association. It is not clear how often the slot drain and rain gardens will require clean-out, but considering the number of trees in the area, it would appear to be often. In addition, Mr. Astrom testified that the cast iron cover of the slot drain weighs at least 40 pounds and would be unwieldy for the homeowners to handle themselves, besides the fact that the toxic waste from the drain needs to be disposed of properly.

Why is the MRA concerned about this 4-home development? We must consider the location. This development directly borders 2 key areas: the Cattail Creek wetlands, which are already endangered; and the Cattail Creek Stream Restoration site, a \$1 million project, which has been funded through County and Berrywood community funds.

We think it is outrageous that the County has approved construction of these homes. This project will have enormous negative effects on Cattail Creek, which already has the worst water quality of all the Magothy creeks. Why fund the Restoration project, and then allow this project to contaminate the waters, which are benefitting from the restoration?

A third day of hearings will be held in early January.

For more details see the MRA video "Marsh Landing: A Call to Action"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICw65o-XFyc&t=10s>

## **END OF YEAR GIVING**

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the MRA. Our all-volunteer organization is committed to maintaining and improving the water quality of the Magothy River and its watershed. Your dues, generous donations, and volunteer time have helped improve the Magothy by

- Water monitoring
- Preserving the habitat for yellow perch
- Locating and identifying submerged aquatic vegetation
- Maintaining and cleaning up Beachwood Park and other sites
- Creating videos about wildlife living in the watershed
- Recording the history of life on the Magothy
- Sending emails and letters to the County Council to voice our concerns about over-development and to show support for preserving the environment.



## **NEW YEAR'S DAY WALK**

Start the New Year right! Join the MRA for a walk at 10 am at the Magothy Greenway Natural Area parking lot behind Loopers Field on North Shore Rd. The walk is hosted by AA County Parks and Rec and sponsored by the MRA. The walk is about 3 miles in the woods. It is a flat trail, but wear boots if there is snow. We will post a message on Facebook if bad weather forces a cancellation. The county will provide a park ranger to talk about bogs and the natural features along the trail. MRA will provide hot chocolate and hand out paper placemats. Please join us.

## **MRA IS AWARDED NEW MINI-GRANT**

The MRA has been awarded the FY2020 Heritage Spring Mini Grant of \$2,500 for drone surveys and living history videos. The mini grant has been funded by the AA County Department of Planning and Zoning's Cultural Resources Division in partnership with the Arts Council of AA County. We are quite pleased to receive this grant, which will allow the MRA to continue creating more Living History videos and learn more drone skills. Charles Germain, who has produced great videos for the Living History project, will work with students from Severna Park High School to get them involved in their history and the well-being of the Magothy. Stay tuned! See this MRA video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odMUul2k8f0>

## **MRA SCHOLARSHIP REPORT**

MRA continues to offer 2 scholarships, the E. Gordon Riley Fund and the Jim Gutman Fund, at the Anne Arundel County Community College. We encourage qualified AA county students to apply.

## **25<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MARYLAND WATERSHED QUALITY MONITORING CONFERENCE**

MRA members Sally Hornor and Bob Royer gave a presentation at this conference, held on December 6 at the Maritime Conference Center. The subject of their presentation was the Cattail Creek Stream Restoration and Living Shoreline installation, including water quality monitoring results taken before and after the restoration. The presentation was given to an audience of over 100 people and was well received.

## **FOREST CONSERVATION BILL**

The MRA leadership was invited to attend the signing of the AA County Forest Conservation Ordinance Bill. This bill will help to protect the critically important forest areas in AA County from destruction resulting from over-development. To help with passage, the MRA created a YouTube video and encouraged all members and residents to contact their County Council members to ask for support of the bill. Your emails and phone calls were heard, and the bill was passed. See MRA video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeOdk04bOQ&t=5s>