



Western Sussex Chamber of Commerce

Nanticoke Watershed Alliance serves as resource since 1992

By **Terry Carson**
Executive Director
Western Sussex Chamber of Commerce

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance is a primary resource for scientific data and conservation along the Nanticoke River. Since 1992, its mission has been to build partnerships and foster a healthy and thriving river community.

According to Lisa Wool, executive director, "The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance actively works to protect and help the river because we believe it's more economical to keep the river clean than to clean it up later. We are a non-advocacy group, so we never work to change laws. Instead, we listen to local farmers, homeowners and business owners to help everyone be good stewards of the river."

The Nanticoke River is one of the cleanest waterways flowing into the Chesapeake Bay. It also is home to the largest bald eagle population in the southeastern United States.

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance has programs for volunteers to promote care and responsibility for this important local waterway. "Creekwatchers" is their volunteer water quality-monitoring program. These volunteers check over 35 locations on the river every other week from March to November. This program collects data which is usable for report cards and policy management decisions.

Their newest program is Nanticoke River Grass Watchers. Volunteers survey aquatic plants by collecting samples and photographs either from kayaks or from the shore.

The Designer Ditches and Rain Gardens programs prevent flooding and erosion and

help homeowners absorb invisible run-off before it gets into the Nanticoke.

Recently, the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance has received funding from DNREC to help "property-owning organizations" upgrade their stormwater management and install conservation landscaping that reduces run-off causing pollution in the Nanticoke. Their present focus is to improve churchyards with gardens and trees to help protect the Nanticoke River.

Evan Deckers, education coordinator, stated, "With well over 60 faith-based organizations in western Sussex County, there is a significant amount of land managed by these organizations. There is also a growing trend referred to as "creation care," which incorporates being responsible for the earth as part of religion."

Evan is presently looking for more churches in western Sussex to discuss, and hopefully become a partner of, this important collaborative opportunity.

Christina Darby, board member of the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance and resident of Seaford's Nanticoke waterfront said, "To look out and see the light of the sun rising in the morning, at night to see the beginning stars twinkle in the sky, to see the ospreys soaring, the mighty eagles hunting, to witness nature in all her beauty, these things are the Nanticoke River. Treat her gently. She runs through us. Remember this."

There are several workshops on river grass and native trees. If anyone is interested in these workshops, river events, or the volunteer opportunities discussed above, visit the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance website at NanticokeRiver.org or follow them on Facebook.



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Western Sussex Chamber of Commerce Updates

- Our phone number is mobile now - 302-629-9690.
- Terry and Suzanne are both available 20 hours a week.
- The chamber email address is admin@westernsussexcoc.com.
- Follow us on Facebook
- Matt Parker, Rosemont Wealth Management, is current president of the chamber
- Chris Benjamin, Community Bank, and Taylor Vanderwende, Vanderwende Farm Creamery, have both joined the Chamber board.

New Chamber Members

Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc. and DSM Commercial.

Send us your news

Readers are invited to send any news that they would like to see featured in the Star. Items can be e-mailed to mmcclure@mpublications.com.

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