

SEVERN RIVER COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2025 – 4:00 P.M.
Finance Room, 2662 Riva Road, 4th Floor

		Attendance Record
Members Present:	Jim Burdick, Chair	2/4
	Kurt Riegel, Vice Chair	3/4
	Lee Meadows	4/4
	Lynne Rockenbauch	4/4
	Lisa Rodvien, County Council (Ex Officio)	4/4
	Ald. Rob Savidge, City Council (Ex Officio)	3/4
	John Zarkowsky	3/4
Guests and Staff:	Meghan Spencer, AACo. DPW/BWPR	
	Jesse Iliff, SRA	
Members Absent:	Claudia Donegan, MD DNR (Ex Officio)	2/4
	Matt Liptak	2/4
	William Ozkaptan	2/4

CALL TO ORDER

(Vice) Chair Riegel called the regular monthly meeting of the Severn River Commission (SRC) to order at 4:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC INPUT / AGENDA ITEMS

Public Input

There was no public input.

MINUTES

The Minutes for the February 6, 2025, regular monthly meeting were presented for approval.

MOTION: A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 6, 2025 MINUTES, WAS MADE BY BURDICK AND SECONDED BY RIEGEL. THE MOTION WAS PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE AND THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS WRITTEN.

Guest Speaker – Jesse Iliff, Severn River Association (SRA)

Jesse Iliff presented to the commission about the Whole Watershed Act.

The Severn River was selected as one of five statewide tributaries and eight watersheds to receive funding. The SRA began working on a proposal during the summer of 2024 with a number of different partners. Among the partners are: the Severn Riverkeeper Program, the Severn River Association, the Spa Creek Conservancy, the Scenic Rivers Land Trust, the Oyster Recovery Partnership, the City of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, and the Resilience Authority. The Resilience Authority is also the lead applicant on the proposal. During bill deliberation in the 24th Legislative Session, the rough estimate would be 4-5 million dollars per watershed per year. Funding constraints limited the scope of the actual funding level to 2 million dollars per watershed per year.

There may be some increased funding due to projects on agricultural land that will receive alternate funding. The six funding streams are drawing from the Bay Restoration Fund, the Clean Water Commerce Act, the Waterway Improvement Fund, the Maryland Agricultural Cost Share Program, and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Fund. Funding from the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Fund can't be used for anything but agricultural land, leading to extended funding from the yearly budget for non-agricultural projects.

Iliff defined some terms to explain the scope of work in proposed restoration projects. If a project is in a community, the project will likely be a stormwater management BMP, or best management practice, designed to improve water quality.

The Resilience Authority for the city and county are working with the state management team to define which specific project actions will occur in year one. Currently, there is a list of 7-8 projects that are candidates for the available budget. The final projects haven't been confirmed, but the decision will be made at the beginning of the next fiscal year, in July 2025. A portion of the budget (\$100,000) has been reserved for outreach and education. The Resilience Authority will also receive a \$20,000 budget to administer the overall Severn River Project.

The Whole Watershed Act provides for a 5-year program, and the funding may not be capped at 2 million every year. There are also potential funding increases depending on additional funds availability at the state and federal levels in the future.

Following the presentation, Iliff answered questions from the SRC members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE

Announcements

There were no new announcements.

Correspondence

There was no new correspondence.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

OLD BUSINESS

Election of SRC Vice-Chair

Burdick nominated Ozkaptan. Meadows will step in if needed as Vice-Chair. Riegel will contact Ozkaptan regarding the nomination.

SRC Membership and Appointments

Bob vom Saal is pending appointment. Burdick nominated Nita Settina, Rodvien nominated Dr. Randolph Rowel. Riegel will follow up on nominations.

Anne Arundel County Update

Rodvien is currently working with Nita Settina to draft legislation to protect the Jabez in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The general development plan calls for a protective overlay for the job, and they have been working to create a draft built on what the county has done in terms of bog protection. Rodvien noted that she and Settina are also working with Councilwoman Amanda Fiedler, as the Jabez is in her district. They visited the Jabez Restoration project prior to the April SRC meeting. Rodvien doesn't have an introduction date for the legislation, but will continue to move forward.

Rodvien addressed a bill regarding the I-97 widening project. County Executive Pittman pulled the bill due to lack of support. However, the County Transportation Commission sent a letter indicating that widening I-97 was a top priority, and expects funds for the project to be in the FY26 Budget. Rodvien asked the SRC for their opinion regarding support in opposition of widening I-97, ultimately requesting the SRC to send a letter of support to the county executive opposing the project. There are also concerns regarding the Jabez 3 Restoration being affected by any widening of I-97.

Annapolis City Update

Savidge confirmed that the gas-powered leaf blower ban in the City of Annapolis has taken full effect, and noted that landscape companies can be reported for violations. The City of Annapolis has partnered with the Resilience Authority to manage a rebate program for residents and landscaping businesses to upgrade their equipment. The goal is to work with landscaping companies regarding corded equipment on smaller properties, as well as battery-powered leaf blowers on larger commercial properties.

The City of Annapolis Environmental Matters Committee will meet with the department of public works and their stormwater management group to discuss the Watershed Restoration Fund. The City of Annapolis is considering adopting Anne Arundel County's model of basing the stormwater fee on actual impervious surface to reduce the number of tiers based on the equivalent residential unit. Savidge noted that the forest program has been tied into the Watershed Restoration Fund, leading to a fully funded program that is paid through the stormwater fee in order to meet the 50% canopy goal by 2050.

Savidge is personally working on legislation to deal with forest maintenance requirements, specifically addressing trees and forests that are becoming taken over by ivy. The legislation will feature a maintenance requirement for homeowners and associations to address invasive species. In addition to invasive species management, Savidge is also working on legislation to address forest loss due to backyard tree removal. The Planning and Zoning department is working to rezone a number of properties to add community amenities such as stormwater management, trees, more green space, and walkable areas.

Weems Creek

Burdick mentioned work on Bristol Road outfall, and trees with ivy issues in Admiral Heights.

Greenbury Point Conservation Area

Burdick said that the Naval Support Activity Annapolis (NSAA) proposed to improve the area inside the barrier wall by removing the wooden sea wall and replacing it with concrete, change the profile by 18 inches max, and installing floating docks.

Riegel said the Installation Natural Resources Management Plan has been completed and signed by the Navy and participating agencies. Burdick noted that the current Athletic Director and Director of the Naval Academy Athletic Association would be retiring, meaning that there would be new challenges and changing in attitude regarding the Greenbury Point Conservation Area.

NEW BUSINESS

Future Presentations

Chris Eberly, Ornithologist
BWPR Watershed Assessment Group
Matt Johnston (Arundel Rivers Federation)
AACo. DPW, Annapolis sewage treatment plant upgrades
AACo. Fire Chief (PFAS)
Underwood & Associates, Jabez 3
Captain Schwartz (NSAA), Greenbury Point Conservation Area
Chairs of City of Annapolis Environmental Commission & AACo
Vernal pool legislation, Mark Southerland

Shipley's Choice
State Highway Association (SHA)

Meeting Schedule

Riegel asked the SRC members if they preferred to meet bimonthly with an option to alternate between in person and virtual meetings. The SRC agreed upon a continued hiatus in August and December, and to preserve the monthly meeting structure with both in person and virtual options available.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. The next SRC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Meghan Spencer
AACounty DPW,
Bureau of Watershed Protection & Restoration