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The President of the Friends of the Shenandoah River Speaks on the State of the River at a local American Rivers/FOSR Event

Well, I hope you all are enjoying your dinner, and, while I don't want to cause anyone indigestion, I think we need to talk about the State of the Shenandoah River. As you all know American Rivers has given the Shenandoah the dubious honor of being named the fifth most endangered river in the country.

How does that designation for our river make you feel?

Does it make you a little angry? Well, it should.....

A lot of people ask me what's wrong with the river. Why are fish dying? Why the Shenandoah is the fifth most endangered river and, most importantly, whose fault is it?

Well I hate to surprise you..... but it's our fault and nobody else's.

It's partially the construction that never stops, the construction that's fueled by the peculiar American need for more; the insatiable need for bigger and better.

It's partially every town in the watershed; each one with a slightly overburdened sewage treatment system.

It's partially the farmer who has to fertilize more in order to produce more to stay competitive.

It's partially the homeowner who calls the lawn chemical treatment company to come green up their lawn; because television advertisements show him that his neighbor's chemical lawn is more desirable than his own.

It's partially the residue from the 3 billion American prescriptions a year written for everything from high-blood pressure to toenail fungus.....

It's partially the concerned Mom who reasons, again from TV psychology, that using anti-bacterial wipes and sprays all over her house will protect her family from germs...Far be it for advertisers to tell her that she's killing as many beneficial germs as harmful ones.

It's partially the earthmovers who go in and destroy valuable riparian buffer zones without ever thinking of the cumulative impact of their actions.

It's people who strive to fix the myriad problems around us, while using massive amounts of electrical and fossil fuel energy in the process.

Does anybody realize what the end result of this insanity could be? A river without an ecosystem, no eagles, no fish, no wildlife, just filthy polluted water flowing down stream, leaving a nasty stench in its wake.

It's unfortunately our culture that's to blame, and if we are ever to break out of this madness, we need to make meaningful changes at all levels.

Ok, so where do we start?

We need to pay more attention to the river's needs and honestly balance those needs against our own.

The river doesn't need run-off from massive constant construction activity; it needs effective and conscientious mitigation of these impacts.

The river needs healthy, active riparian buffers; farmers need to keep their animals out of the water. Years ago the impact from livestock in the water was minimal, but now with the growth in human sewage impact; the animal impact is just as serious. Sustainability of water quality is the most important factor today.

Trust me, the river hates lawn chemical treatment companies. People need to accept a few weeds; and some brownout in a drought. Besides, if they didn't fertilize it constantly they wouldn't have to mow it as much.

The three billion prescriptions: well surely they aren't all necessary.....I mean high blood pressure is one thing, but toe-nail fungus? And the hormones.....and same sex fish? I'm no scientist but surely there is some connection there.....

Rivers are a bacterial stew, as are we, and all this anti-bacterial stuff.....well our moms in the fifties and sixties certainly made do with soap and water.....Why can't we?

Yes, each of us needs to do what we can on a personal level for this river, but what it really takes is money. I ask you to dig deep when you get a letter from American Rivers, or the Friends of the Shenandoah. Everyone has a different capacity for charity; all I ask is that you go to the limits of your own capacity. The more money we get, the more data we will have to learn from, the better we will understand our own impact on the sustainability of this river.

You know, years ago, all anyone thought about rivers was embodied by that fabulous song from the musical SHOWBOAT, "Old Man River just keeps rollin' along", but if we don't help the Shenandoah soon, Bob Dylan's, Knockin' on Heaven's Door, will, unfortunately be far more appropriate.

Speech delivered by George Ohrstrom, President of the FOSR



Water may shut Frederick's tap for development

Panel explores ways to influence public officials

By Becky Krystal Daily Staff Writer

Middletown- Water, not land, should become the limiting factor for keeping growth in check in Frederick County, according to participants in a roundtable discussion Thursday night.

Conservationists and concerned citizens gathered at Belle Grove Plantation to express concern for the future of the region's water supply and brainstorm ways to enact change in government policy.

"Is there anything out there...that shows this is where we max out?" asked Sid Reyes, a former member of the Frederick County Board of Supervisors.

Bud Nagelvoort, chairman of the Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District, said a rough estimate would be to multiply 100 gallons per day per individual "and see where that leads you."

"You can say this is how much water you need," said Bob Denton, with the American Institute of Professional Geologists. "But the question is how much water do you have."

Heather Richards, of the Piedmont Environmental Council, said the

uncertainty of the water supply is further compounded by the need to tie it to land-use decisions.

"The question is how you link those two," she said. "That's going to be the real challenge."

"We don't have to prove sustainability in this state in our wells," Denton said. "We only have to prove they're clean."

"You have a population center growing in a place where there's no water", Shenandoah River keeper Jeff Kelble said of Winchester and Frederick County.

"It's just been proven that water is not a limiter to growth," he said, citing the examples of Phoenix and Las Vegas.

Roundtable participants and audience members did not hesitate to criticize the policies of Frederick County Sanitation Authority, particularly for its consideration of pulling water from Sempeles Spring off Red Bud Run.

While the owner of the spring sold his rights to the authority, the situation prompted at least one person to wonder what the government may be

able to do in the future with regard to water rights, even through eminent domain.

"I think this is going to become a state issue," Richards said.

What happens in the valley may be a particularly sensitive issue since many Washington residents receive their water from the Potomac River, she said.

"I think it's the next drought away," Kelble said of the water rights discussion. "We tend to look at these concerns when there's an emergency."

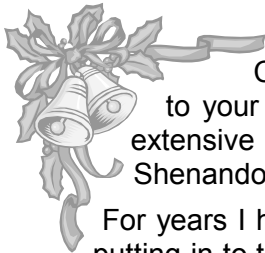
Richards said the best way to gain footing with other residents and the government may not be to focus solely on water, but to tackle development with hot button issues such as transportation.

For example, while the controversial Dulles South proposal in Loudoun County motivated individuals on issues from land conservation to historic resources, it was transportation that doomed it, Richards said.

With fish kills, bacterial impairments and looming development setting the scene, panelists said there is little time to waste for conservation efforts.

"We have our last best chance here. Our aquifer is not yet trashed," Denton said. "We have to act now."

Article from the Northern Virginia Daily



Congratulations Water Monitors on another successful year. Thanks to your efforts we have added invaluable water quality data to the all ready extensive long-term water quality database that reflects the health of the Shenandoah River.

For years I have been saying thank you very much for all the time and devotion you have been putting in to the volunteer water quality monitoring program. Now, I and the Friends of the Shenandoah River would like to thank you for all of the effort you have put in this year. Special thanks to Bruce, Lisa, Molly, Tom and Andrea for devoting their Saturday's to volunteering in the FOSR lab.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

2007 Shenandoah River Watershed Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Schedule

January	6 & 20	May	19	September	8 & 22
February	10 & 24	June	9 & 23	October	6 & 20
March	10 & 24	July	14 & 28	November	3 & 17
April	14 & 28	August	11 & 25	December	8



President of the Friends of the Shenandoah River Shares His View on Dominion Virginia Power's Proposed Power-line



The recent editorial in the Winchester Star about Dominion Va. Power's intention to build a 500 kilovolt transmission line through our region raised some interesting issues.

The author agreed with the Piedmont Environmental Council's (PEC) position on several key points, but felt obliged to talk about the national security issue, and how the need for "transmission security" perhaps trumped everything else.

I'm not sure I agree. While I understand the need for "transmission security," I don't believe that Dominion Va. Power has anything but their shareholders interest in mind with this transmission line proposal. This company has only paid ludicrous "lip service" to energy conservation measures which are known within the industry as "demand-side management." California has instituted demand side management efforts which are estimated to reduce the state's demand for electricity by 20% in the next five years. Dominion Va. Power's claim that "rolling blackouts" will become frequent events by 2011 is based on the statistic that on the six most severe temperature days of the year both in winter and summer the company will be behind the demand curve by approximately six percent. Well, 2011 is five years away, and if California can achieve a 20% saving in five years, surely we can achieve a 15% savings in our part of the world. Again, using the company's figures, an aggressive "demand side" management would obviate the need for this egregious transmission line.

One must understand the profit motive behind this proposal before one can really comprehend it. If Dominion is allowed to build this line, their ratepayers will provide a guaranteed 12.5% return on Dominion's investment, plus the company will be able to charge other electrical companies a serious premium for "ferrying" the juice on their lines. Believe me, it's a unbelievable "gold mine" for Dominion Va. Power and their shareholders.

There is also, to me, the bigger national security issue of our nation's ongoing air quality. If this line and the other "National Interest Electricity Transmission Corridors" are approved by the Federal Government it will only perpetuate the use of the dirtiest coal fired power plants extant in the country today. It's only our present Federal Administration's total disregard for "air quality" that has kept these plants functional. Isn't it time we ask our government to invest in cleaner, more efficient power plants instead of following the same old path of ruining our regions' air quality through "corporate welfare." One has only to extrapolate out the disastrous effects of our region's worsening air quality over the next fifty years to get a true idea of a serious national security issue.

While I applaud the editor's agreement with the PEC's concern over the sanctity of conservation easements, I do feel that his concern for "transmission security" is somewhat ill-founded, because I feel that the long term air quality of our region is even more important to the future security of our nation, our people, and our productivity.

an editorial by George Ohrstrom

Christopher Anthony Masi

Chris, a friend of the river, passed away November 06, 2006. He is survived by two daughters Kristen and Leanne, his mother Margaret and three brothers. Chris spent the majority of his adult life living at his riverfront property in Clarke County.

Because of his fondness of the river, his family has requested that in lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Friends of the Shenandoah River, 1460 University Drive, Winchester, VA 22601.

The River has lost a good friend.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

***Friends of the Shenandoah River
Annual Membership and Awards Banquet***

April 07, 2007

**The evening will begin with
Social Hour & Silent Auction @ 6:00 PM**

Guest Speaker— Stay Tuned

Location:

**North Warren Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company #10
Celebration Hall
Front Royal, VA**

Friends of the Shenandoah River
PO Box 410
Front Royal, VA 22630

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JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE SHENANDOAH RIVER IN THEIR MISSION

“To protect and restore the aquatic environment of the Shenandoah River and its tributaries”

Yes, I would like to be a member of The Friends of the Shenandoah River (FOSR)

___ \$10 Student

*NAME _____

___ \$20 Individual

ADDRESS _____

___ \$30 Family

___ \$50 Sustaining

Telephone _____

___ \$100 Corporate

E-mail: _____

___ Other/Donation

Please make checks payable to: ***Friends of the Shenandoah River***
and mail to:

**1460 University Drive
Winchester, VA 22601**

*If you do not wish for the FOSR to exchange your info with other environmental groups, please check box