

Potomac Tributary Stakeholder Meeting

September 2004

Citizens in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle have another opportunity to be part of plans to reduce the state's impact on the Chesapeake Bay.

Attendees of several stakeholder group meetings held in the region over the past 18 months contributed to West Virginia's Potomac Tributary Strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program.

The Department of Environmental Protection will host public meetings at 6 p.m. on Sept. 20 at the Moorefield Agricultural Center, and at 7 p.m. on Sept. 21 at the USDA Service Center in Martinsburg. Those attending the meetings will discuss which watersheds within the Potomac Basin should receive highest priority in the implementation of West Virginia's Potomac Tributary Strategy. They will help rank watersheds using concepts like degree of impairment, public interest, saturation of practices, and others. No further meetings for this purpose are planned at this time.

West Virginia became a Potomac River headwaters partner in the Chesapeake Bay Program in 2002. State water quality regulators agreed to help reduce nutrients and sediment that flow into the Potomac River, and ultimately, into the Chesapeake Bay. The effort to help develop cleanup strategies has been coordinated by the DEP, West Virginia Conservation Agency, state Department of Agriculture, Cacapon Institute, and the Conservation Fund's Freshwater Institute, but local citizen involvement in the process is critical to the program's success.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed covers 64,000 square miles including parts of West Virginia, New York, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. More than 3,500 square miles, or about 15 percent, of West Virginia drains into the Bay through the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers.

West Virginia's Potomac Tributary Strategy, a timeline, and minutes from past public meetings may be viewed at the website: www.wvnet.org. For more information on the meetings, contact Alana Hartman at (304) 822-7266 or via e-mail at ahartman@wvdep.org.