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Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the waterways that comprise the Choptank River watershed, Eastern Bay, and the Miles and Wye Rivers. The organization serves as an advocate for the health of these tributaries and the living resources they support.

Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy strives to provide education, outreach, and restoration programs that promote environmental awareness of the essential role these rivers and streams play in the community, of the issues that threaten their health and vitality, and of the solutions that must be implemented to preserve them.

The conservancy's Choptank RIVERKEEPER and Miles-Wye RIVERKEEPER provide on-the-water vigilance and, as members of the WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE, work to fight pollution and strengthen and enforce environmental regulations and policies.

Dear Friend:

The Baltimore Sun recently described the Choptank as the second most polluted river in Maryland. All of our rivers are in decline. The need to reverse this trend is self-evident.

Volunteer organizations have done important work on behalf of our rivers but lack coordination and resources. Our community needs committed full-time advocates dedicated solely to protecting our rivers.

Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy has an on-line website at www.midshoreriverkeeper.org, which we encourage you to visit. We have attracted noted scientists to our Board of Directors, such as Dr. Thomas Fisher of Horn Point Laboratory, who has developed significant expertise on the Choptank River. Our RIVERKEEPERS will be patrolling our watersheds by water and air seeking to identify and curtail pollution, and will be working full time to restore and protect our rivers.

We will only be successful, however, if we can earn the support of our community, of concerned individuals like yourselves. We need to build a broad and committed membership, attract financial support, and develop volunteers. Please join our effort. A membership form is attached.

Thank you.

FACTS:

- The Choptank River is 68 miles long and the watershed includes important tributaries such as the Tred Avon, Harris Creek, the Tuckahoe, and Island Creek.
- The watershed consists of 509,000 acres which drain into portions of Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, and Talbot County, Maryland, and Kent County, Delaware.
- Agriculture and poultry production comprise roughly 60% of the land use in the watershed. 40,320 acres are urbanized, the remainder being forest or wetland.
- The Miles and Wye Rivers have similar demographics and land use patterns.

All of these tributaries are struggling with agricultural nutrient, animal waste, and septic and waste water pollution, and the other problems of increasing development and encroaching urbanization.

RIVERS IN CRISIS

Water testing over decades by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), by Talbot Creekwatchers and others reveals a dramatic, frightening, and steady decline in water quality:

WATER CLARITY: VERY POOR AND CONTINUES TO DECLINE

Turbidity testing measures the ability of light to pass through water. Over 90% of recent measurements show poor water clarity.

NITROGEN POLLUTION: OVER 4 TIMES ACCEPTABLE LEVELS

Excess nitrogen promotes excessive algae growth, which turns water cloudy and dark. Algae decomposes when it dies, sucking oxygen out of the water and creating dead zones. Certain forms of algae are toxic to fish and humans. The amount of nitrogen flowing into the Choptank was twice as high in 2005 as it was in 1985.

PHOSPHORUS POLLUTION: OVER TWO TIMES ACCEPTABLE LEVELS

Phosphorus binds to sediment and leads to excess nutrient enrichment of our rivers. As with nitrogen, this causes unhealthy algae growth, poor water clarity, and oxygen-dead zones, a process called eutrophication.

OXYGEN LEVELS: INADEQUATE OXYGEN LEVELS COMMON

Dissolved oxygen is essential to all aquatic life. As a result of the above-described problems, over the past decades there has been a consistent decline in oxygen content in our tributaries. We are nearing a crisis threshold where the rivers we cherish may no longer support aquatic life. In 1985 the Choptank River supported 3,561 acres of underwater grasses—key habitat for crabs, small fish, and worms. In 2006 the river had just 1,092 acres, about a 70% loss. In 1974 148,000 bushels of oysters came from the Miles River. In 2004 the harvest was 56 bushels.

RIVERKEEPER PROGRAM

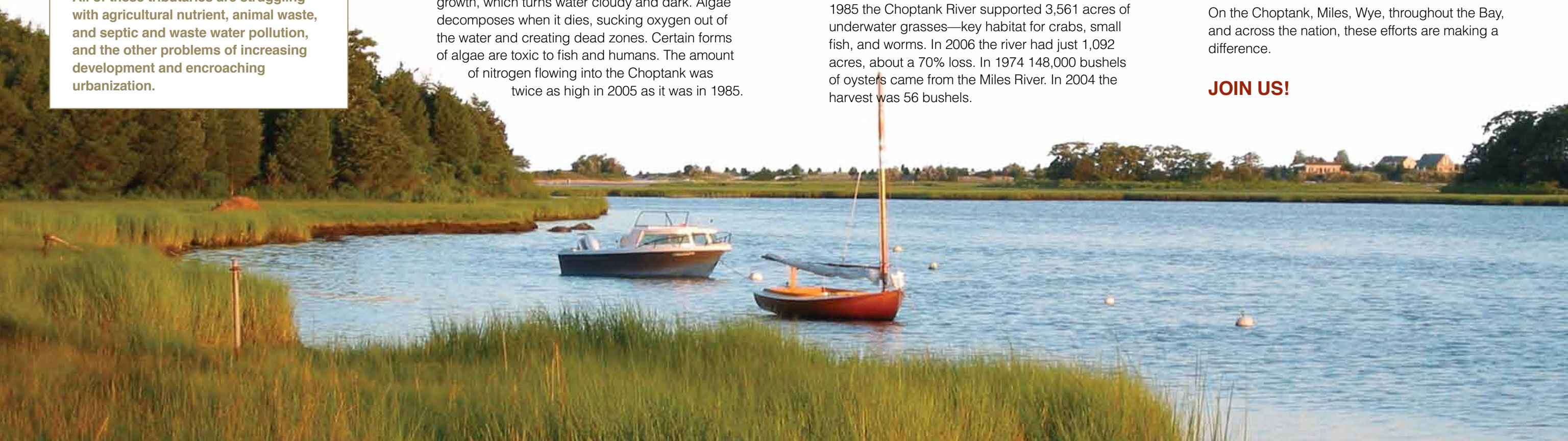
Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy employs full time a Choptank RIVERKEEPER and a Miles-Wye RIVERKEEPER who regularly patrol their rivers, are ready to combat illegal pollution, and serve as guardians for their living resources. Our RIVERKEEPERS are expert scientist advocates dedicated to working at every level to restore and protect our waterways.

As a member of WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE, the Conservancy is part of a growing network of over 200 river, bay, and lake “keeper” programs around the nation whose active presence on waterways is becoming a force for change.

Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy is also a member of WATERKEEPERS Chesapeake, a group of eighteen Chesapeake Bay advocacy programs which are pooling resources, coordinating efforts, and building leverage to impact environmental legislation and policy across the watershed.

On the Choptank, Miles, Wye, throughout the Bay, and across the nation, these efforts are making a difference.

JOIN US!



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please join us and support our efforts—fill out below and mail to us.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

If interested in volunteering, let us know in what capacity:

☐ Please check if you would like to be added as a member.

☐ Amount of donation included _____
(A minimum \$30 donation is requested for members).

☐ Become a River Guardian: Donate \$100 or more

☐ Become a River Steward: Donate \$1,000 or more

☐ Become a River Angel: Donate \$5,000 or more

Donations to Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy are tax deductible as we are a 501(c)(3) organization.

THANK YOU!

Mail to:
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