

Kids Run Better Unleaded
Lead Week June 14-20

MDE Environment

Maryland Department of the Environment

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Maryland Petitions EPA to Reduce Emissions in Other States

By Bob Maddox

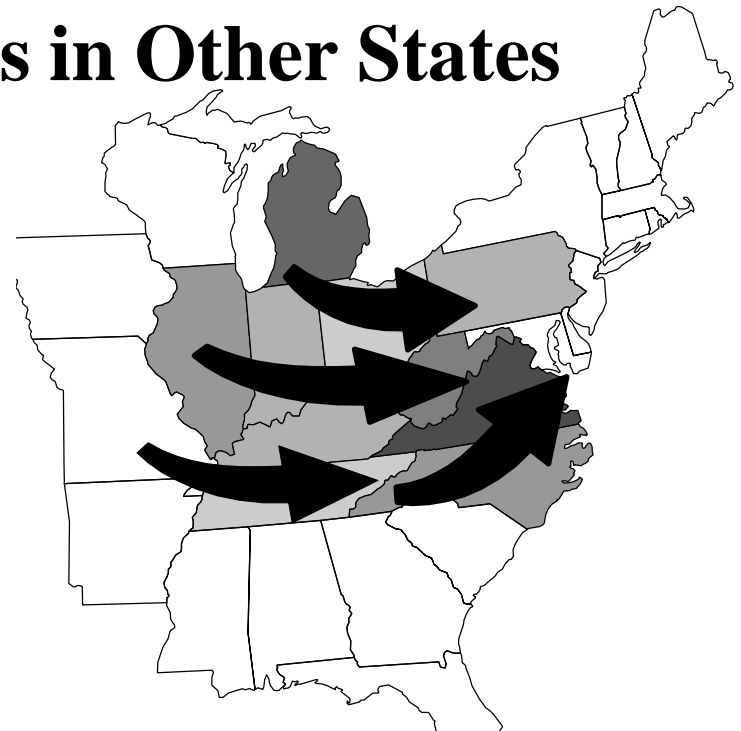
The Maryland Department of the Environment has petitioned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 126 of the federal Clean Air Act to compel facilities in several Mid-Western and Mid-Atlantic states to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx). The Clean Air Act provides a mechanism for a state to petition EPA to take action against sources of pollution in other states that contribute to the petitioning state's air pollution problems. NOx is a precursor to ozone, Maryland's most stubborn air pollutant.

Maryland's petition requests that EPA make a finding that fossil-fueled power plants and other sources of NOx in 11 other upwind states (Mid-West and South) contribute significantly to Maryland's ground-level ozone air pollution problem. The states

named in the petition are Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. The petition requests that sources in those states adhere to certain emissions limits and mandated timeframes for reducing

NOx emissions. These emissions hinder Maryland's progress towards meeting federal health-based standards for clean air.

Approximately 90 percent of Marylanders live in areas that violate the health standard for ozone. *Ozone (continued on page 4)*



Kids Run Better Unleaded

by Barbara Conrad



Lead Poisoning Prevention Week comes and goes each year but the hard work of non-profit, environmental, health, community, government and citizen groups goes on 365 days a year. Their common goal is to give our children a lead-free environment within which to live. By spreading the message that prevention is the best treatment, the lead poisoning prevention community is making great strides.

Within the past year the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), as part of the team, has conducted a multi-faceted

program of prevention efforts including outreach, education, rental property registration, regulatory enforcement, inspector and contractor oversight, enforcement of registration requirements, qualified offer counseling service, blood lead level screening and case management.

Local health departments signed new memoranda of understanding (MOU) this year to do locally based lead poisoning prevention outreach. These MOUs include activities such as integrating efforts with immunization or Woman Infants and Children programs, outreach to local property owners, and office visits to local health care providers to encourage an increase in blood lead testing.

(continued on page 2)

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MDEnvironment Outreach Efforts to Reduce Lead Poisoning

continued from front page...

Past educational efforts are starting to show an important shift away from "after-the-fact" awareness, toward "prevention" awareness. This is demonstrated by the change in questions received by the Lead Program. Common questions used to be "What does a blood lead of 25 mean?" or "How do I comply with an abatement order?" Now the program also receives many questions on how to find lead safe housing, whether or not a property is registered and the process for registering a rental unit.

Over 50 percent of rental units built before 1950 are now registered with the Lead Rental Property Registry. Registration is the first step in meeting the standard of care required if rental property owners want liability relief. Over 140,000 possible rental property owners have been contacted to inform them of their responsibilities under the law. New registration requests continue to come in every day.

Rental property lead liability insurance is now widely available, and has begun paying out claims under the "Qualified Offer." Lead insurance was unavailable in Maryland for many years, so it was specifically included in the "Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing" law as an important piece for reducing lead poisoning in Maryland.

Availability of MDE-accredited lead inspectors and lead contractors statewide is good. MDE oversight of performance by lead inspectors and lead contractors has led to the revocation of one contractor's certificate due to poor performance. Other investigations are in process.

Enforcement of registration and property treatment requirements is proceeding statewide, under § 6-8 of the Environment Article Annotated Code of Maryland "Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing" ("HB 760"). Failure to register or perform treatments may result in financial penalties and loss of liability limits.

Qualified offers cap a property owner's liability at \$17,000 in reimbursement for eligible relocation and medical expenses, and provide tenants with support to quickly move a lead-poisoned child to a lead-safe environment. Now that a Qualified Offer Counseling service is available, more offers are being made and accepted. Insurance companies have also started to provide coverage and

to pay claims.

A common difficulty encountered by the Qualified Offer Counseling service, provided under contract with MDE by the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, is that rental property owners have not previously registered or performed the risk reduction treatments, and are thus not in compliance. When rental property owners are not in compliance and a child is lead poisoned in one of their rental units, they can still be sued under the old tort system and be subject to full liability with large monetary settlements.

Blood lead testing is important for the early identification of children with blood lead levels of 10 mcg/dL or higher. With early identification, efforts can be made to find and remove or reduce the lead exposure source, so that a child's blood lead level does not continue to increase.

Fifteen percent of Maryland children aged 0-6 years received blood lead tests in 1997. Of those tested, 11.6 percent had blood lead levels above 10 mcg/dL (CDC's "level of concern") and 1.8 percent had blood lead levels of 20 mcg/dL or more, the level at which public health investigation begins. Both levels are well above the national

average. Outreach to parents and health care providers statewide encourages the use of blood lead testing for early identification of children with lead exposure.

Public health case management of children with confirmed lead poisoning has recently been expanded to start family-based education and outreach at a lower blood lead level of 15 mcg/dL. The previous level for any public health intervention was 20 mcg/dL. It is hoped that, by giving notices and educational materials to parents and rental property owners at a lower blood lead level, measures to reduce exposure can start earlier, and thus prevent the poisoning from getting worse.

Lead poisoning affects a child's developing neurological system. On a day-to-day basis, lead exposure makes children tired or irritable, and reduces their attention span. On a longer term, lead poisoning reduces a child's ability to learn, understand and retain what they learn.

If you suspect that a child in your community may be lead poisoned, please call (410) 631-3840 for contact information for many of Maryland's lead services. With your help, we can provide an unleaded environment for our children. We all know that kids run better unleaded.

Small Business Assistance Offers Problem Specific Answers

by Andrew Gosden

Understanding environmental requirements can be especially challenging for small businesses that may lack resources or may not even be aware of what environmental regulations apply to their industry. The Small Business Assistance Program, a program of MDE's Environmental Permits Service Center, offers free information and individualized assistance to small businesses to help fill their environmental permitting and compliance needs.

The program helps small businesses by offering general environmental compliance information and problem-specific assistance. No question is too big or too small. The program can provide forms needed for required permits and assistance in properly completing them. Assis-

tance is available to help businesses understand which regulations apply to the specific industry. Plain-English documents are available for many regulated activities. Workshops will be developed for specific industry sectors.

Some of the small business types that have received help from this program in the past include dry cleaners, electroplaters, printers and auto body shops, but any small business is welcome to call and get advice and information.

If you are a member of an industry group or trade association and would like MDE to present information to your group, please contact the Maryland Department of the Environment's Small Business Assistance Program coordinator Andrew Gosden at (410) 631-4158.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week June 14-20

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week highlights what we can do about the number one preventable environmental disease for Maryland's children. This year's theme, "Runs Better Unleaded," emphasizes that children are healthier if we protect them from lead exposure. Protecting children from lead exposure ranges from screening a child with a blood lead test to properly maintaining

painted surfaces in older housing. To help focus attention on this year's lead week events Governor Parris N. Glendening will issue a Proclamation designating June 14-20 Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in Maryland. Paid advertisements will be run in major and local papers during the week of June 7-13 to remind rental property owners of the need to comply

with requirements under Environment Article 6-8 "Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing." And in partnership with the United States Post Office, posters announcing lead week will be placed in 400 statewide post offices. On June 14, look for Channel 11 to feature lead information on its noon talk show and Channel 13's Marty Bass to speak with lead experts during

their popular "Coffee With" segment. For more information about statewide and county events, please contact Cindy Thompson (410) 631-3859 at MDE's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. For more information about Baltimore Metropolitan events contact Keisha Peten at the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning at (410) 534-6447.

Calendar of Events

Monday, June 7

The Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning will sponsor Lead Day at Camden Yards/Oriole Baseball Park. Contact: Keisha Peten at the Coalition (410) 534-6447.

Saturday, June 12

Sandtown-Winchester Community Center Spring Festival, 114 N. Mount Street. The Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning will set up an information booth. This event will be held from noon to 6 p.m. Contact: Keisha Peten at (410) 534-6447.

Tuesday, June 15

Kick-off Event with Secretary of Environment Jane Nishida to be hosted by Channel 11's Rod Daniels at Park and Recreation's Virginia Baker Center, 2601 E. Baltimore Street in Patterson Park, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Displays by state and local governments, and community organizations will be available. Invitations have been sent to Police Athletic League (PAL) participants. Invited guests include Dr. Peter Beilenson, Commissioner of the Baltimore City Health Department. A street banner will be displayed over Hanover Street at Lombard. Contact: Keisha Peten at the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning at (410) 534-6447 or Cindy Thompson at MDE, (410) 631-3840 or (800) 633-6101. Activities include PAL to PAL (Police Athletic League and Parents Against Lead) lead skits, face painting, Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) lead blood testing, "Wash Your Hands" drawing, display of PAL projects

Wednesday, June 16

Baltimore Urban League will hold a Q & A Session at their Resource Center at 512 Orchard Street, Baltimore from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Contact: Keisha Peten at the Coalition (410) 534-6447.

Thursday, June 17

Harford County The Maryland

Department of Housing and Community Development will recognize the innovative lead hazard reduction and education efforts at **Tranquility Place Apartments**, 237 Wilson Street, Havre de Grace, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. The Coalition Against Childhood Lead Poisoning also will hold a tenant's lead awareness table at this event. Contact: Eileen Hagan, Department of Housing and Community Development, (410) 514-7565.

Pimlico Library Lead Resource Center Q & A Session - 5001 Park Heights Avenue from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Contact: Keisha Peten at the Coalition (410) 534-6447.

Saturday, June 19

Walk for Wellness at Druid Hill Park in conjunction with the National Black Women's Health Project and the American Heart Association. Sign-up begins at 7:30 a.m. for the 9 a.m. walk which continues until 11:30 a.m. MDE will provide lead information. Contact: Paris Lee at (410) 727-7774 at the National Association of Black Women.

Week-Long Events

Allegany County Health Department will supply lead information and support services at their WIC clinic located at the Health Department at 12500 Willowbrook Road, S.E., Cumberland. Further displays will be provided at Thursday's downtown Farmer's Market. Also, at the Farmer's Market, in the downtown area of Cumberland, a lead poisoning prevention banner will be displayed. The Allegany County Council will issue a "Lead Week" proclamation. Contact: Paulette Kelly at (301) 777-5697.

Baltimore City Health Department will provide FREE Lead Screening and lead poisoning prevention information and video at their WIC clinic at 1211 Wall Street as well as participating in the Patterson Park Kick-Off on June 15th. Call Bobbi Schapiro at the Baltimore City Health Department at (410) 396-5242.

Baltimore County Health Department will offer Public Service announcements to the local newspapers and radio stations. Contact: Susan Keller at (410) 887-2705.

Calvert County Health Department will set up a lead poisoning prevention display at their clinic during June. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) will be run on local television and radio stations. Calvert County will read a lead week proclamation on June 8 at 10 a.m. Contact: Barbara Buchheister at (410) 535-5400.

Carroll County Health Department will offer FREE lead screening at the Health Department located at 290 S. Center Street, Westminster. In addition, the Cranberry Mall and the five local libraries will host week-long displays. Daycare centers and physicians' offices will receive educational packets. Special children's events will be held on Saturday and Sunday at the Cranberry Mall. Additional publicity will be provided to local community newsletters and the local newspaper. Contact: Barbara Rodgers at (410) 876-4965.

Cecil County will design and place free lead poisoning prevention bulletin boards in doctor's offices throughout the county as well as donating pamphlets to schools and Wal-Mart. The Cecil County Council will issue a "Lead Week" proclamation. Contact: Andrea Hedden at (410) 996-5130. **Frederick County Health Department** will distribute posters and literature in the community as well as offering PSAs to the local media. Contact: Lynn Shuff, (301) 631-3327. **Harford County Health Department** will set up poster displays at their nine sites and offer PSAs to the local media. Call Carol Baker, at (410) 638-8463.

Kent County Council will issue a "Lead Week" Proclamation during their county council meeting. Date and time to be announced.

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, 1708 West Rogers Avenue, will host a lead-week awareness table and display.

Contact Janice Dansicker (410) 578-8600.

St. Mary's County Health Department will offer diverse activities throughout the community. Among the outreach activities are involvement in public relations events on the local cable television health programs, letters to health care providers and a commissioner's proclamation. Contact: Ibrahim Kamera at (301) 475-4330.

Talbot County Council will issue a proclamation for Lead Week June 8, at 1:30pm.

Wicomico County will set up information tables at the Wicomico Free Library and the Wicomico Health Department June 14-18. Included will be assessment questionnaires for parents and a consult with a pediatrician if there is a "yes" answer. A wooden dollhouse also will be on display. A mobile health van will be in Hebron (21830) June 16 from 8 a.m. to noon and on Church Street, Salisbury, June 16, from 1p.m. to 5 p.m. Two banners (one provided by Pepsi) also will be hung over major roads. And a presentation will be made to "Coalition for Healthy Youth" on June 18 at 10 a.m. Also a Wicomico County Council proclamation will be issued. Contact Rose Johnson at (410) 543-6958.

Worcester County will participate in the "Pocomoke Cypress Festival" June 17-19, as well as host a display at seven clinics. PSAs about lead are scheduled to run on local television and radio stations. Also, the Worcester County Council will issue a lead week proclamation. Call Jenny Leaf at (410) 957-2005.

Month-Long Events

Baltimore City Health Department will schedule various activities during the entire month of June to include free lead testing and information tables at various sites. Call Bobbi Schapiro at the Baltimore City Health Department at (410) 396-5242.

Maryland's Ozone Forecasting and Modeling

by **Bob Maddox**

"Good afternoon. This is Sandra Wainwright of the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Air Quality Hotline. At 11:00 A.M. today the Maryland Department of the Environment issued a code red ozone alert for a pollutant standard index of 107, indicating that the air quality has reached an unhealthful level..."

This pre-recorded message greets thousands of callers to the MDE's Air Quality Hotline every ozone season, which officially begins in Maryland each May. MDE's air quality forecasts predict concentrations of ozone near the earth's surface, May through September, when ground-level ozone reaches its highest concentrations. Tips on reducing exposure and the amount of pollution produced from daily activities also are provided in the recorded message that airs daily at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. The next-day air quality prediction is released at 3:30 p.m. each day.

MDE, the American Lung Association of Maryland, and ENDZONE Partners (ENDZONE), a consortium of businesses and public organizations formed to educate the public about the health and environmental effects of ground-level ozone, began issuing ozone forecasts in 1995 as the cornerstone of voluntary action programs. The forecasts enable television and radio stations, and private industry to provide information to the public on the next day's ozone levels. Providing air quality information to the public allows sensitive individuals to protect their health and encourages individuals and businesses to take voluntary actions to reduce ozone pollution.

Meteorologists forecast air quality by using simple statistical methods and computer models that include meteorological factors combined with information from air monitors about air chemistry. The technique commonly used for forecasting is known as a regression model. Forecast skill using statistical methods is based on the strong dependence of ozone formation on warm temperatures. However, many other meteorological factors affect ozone formation and concentration, and a wider set of weather predictors are required.

Ozone formation requires ultraviolet radiation as well as the precursors of NOx and volatile organic chemicals or VOCs. Ozone formation is highest during the summer months

when the sun is at a higher angle in the sky and there are more hours of sunlight. Accurate forecasting is often dependent on predicting cloud cover and thunderstorms. Dense cloud cover reduces the formation of ozone. Thunderstorms tend to occur in the afternoons when ozone levels maximize. The cloud cover, precipitation, and high winds that occur with thunderstorms reduce the maximum levels of ozone concentration.

Other meteorological factors that influence ozone concentration are wind speed and direction, and weather conditions in other regions. For example, "a high pressure system to the west may result in high ozone in the mid-Atlantic region," said Bill Ryan, the meteorologist with University of Maryland who heads the forecasting program.

"Most of the multiple-day ozone episodes in the Baltimore area occur when there is a high pressure front west of Maryland," said Ryan. "The high pressure causes winds to be westerly, bringing in more precursors into our region."

Skillful forecasting also is reliant on the data that comes from air monitors that measure ozone levels. To accurately predict ozone levels in Baltimore, data is needed from monitors regionally.

"There are 17 ozone monitors in Maryland that provide air chemistry data for forecasting," said Randy Mosier, an air quality planner for MDE. "The ozone forecasts for Baltimore also use data from monitors in Washington, D.C. and northern Virginia to make an accurate forecast. Information about ozone aloft is also gathered by aircraft during expected ozone events. The ozone levels that were measured yesterday and today are used to forecast tomorrow's ozone levels."

The regression model does have certain shortcomings. This model cannot resolve some key processes such as local and regional movement of ozone and its precursors along air currents, air mass characteristics and the movement of heat in the atmosphere.

How accurate are the ozone forecasts?

"On average, we forecasted nine of every ten of the most severe ozone days from '95 through '98," says Ryan. "And we've only forecasted two false alarms for Code Red during that time. I think we're doing a pretty good job."

"Since ozone forecasting has such a high degree of accuracy, it is a good tool to use to determine when it is good or bad to be outdoors," according to Stephen Peregoy, executive director of the American Lung Association of Maryland.

Schools and sports enthusiasts can use the forecasts when planning outdoor activities. Health care providers can use the forecasts to advise their patients with respiratory problems when patients should limit outdoor exposure. Employers can use the forecasts to arrange carpooling and plan maintenance schedules for lawn mowing and painting.

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EPA Petition

is not emitted directly, but is a secondary pollutant that is formed in the atmosphere by the chemical reactions of NOx and volatile organic compounds in the presence of strong sunlight. Ground-level ozone can cause health problems, especially for young children, the elderly and individuals with respiratory illnesses.

In 1994, Maryland and several other states asked the EPA to address the overwhelming transport of ozone across state boundaries. The process of ozone and ozone precursors traveling on air currents to downwind areas is referred to as ozone transport. In response, the EPA, the National Governors Association and the Environmental Council of the States created the 37-state Ozone Transport Assessment Group (OTAG). An OTAG study concluded that emissions of NOx from upwind states to the south and west are a major cause of ozone air pollution in the Northeast. In July 1997, OTAG recommended that EPA implement specific air pollution control measures to reduce the transport of ozone. In October 1998, EPA finalized regulations establishing NOx emission limits for 23 eastern states, including Maryland, effective 2003.

The EPA is taking final action on petitions filed by nine other northeastern states seeking to reduce ozone transport across state boundaries. The nine states that filed petitions are Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New Jersey and Vermont.

Bike Blackwater To Benefit Environmental Conference

Enjoy the natural beauty, bountiful wildlife, and untouched scenic marshlands of South Dorchester County in an exciting Bike Tour of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, June 26, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Tidewater Environmental Health Association (TEHA), an Eastern Shore based professional environmental association, is sponsoring this Bike Tour to benefit an MDE/TEHA 1999 Multimedia Environmental Issues Conference, which will be held October 15 at Chesapeake College. TEHA is hoping to raise enough funds to pay the conference fees of all attendees.

The cost of the bike tour will be \$15 per person, or \$25 per family. There will be free admission through the Refuge Wildlife Drive area, free water bottles, free refreshments at rest stations, free t-shirts to the first 50 participants who arrive, a 50-50 drawing, and more!

Join in the fun, excitement and challenge of this bike tour. Four bike tour loops are available: a five-mile loop through the Wildlife Drive at the Refuge; a 20-mile loop north of the Refuge; a 25-mile loop south of the Refuge through the beautiful scenic marshlands of South Dorchester County; and for the really advanced bikers, a challenging 45-mile loop which completely encircles the Refuge.

To register for this event, contact **Mary Phipps-Dickerson of the Wicomico County Environmental Health Department at (410) 546-4446**; or Bill Schmidt in Baltimore at (410) 631-3016; or Pam Sultenfuss at the MDE Centreville Regional Office (410) 758-5020.

Help TEHA sponsor and support environmental education. Your participation and support will be greatly appreciated. Hope to see you there!!

Keeping Maryland's Beaches Swimmable

by Phil Heard, M.D. and Richard Eskin, Ph.D.

This summer the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and five Maryland county health departments will evaluate new, alternative, water quality tests for public swimming beaches.

The standard bacterial test in Maryland, and in most states, is the test for fecal coliforms, a bacterial group normally present in the intestines of warm-blooded animals. These bacteria are not disease-causing in themselves, but indicate that other disease causing organisms, often associated with sewage, may be present. Research now suggests that another bacterial group, the enterococci, provides a test that is more predictive of the illnesses that can occur in contaminated waters and also

is faster and cheaper. Although the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends the use of enterococci, there is still sufficient uncertainty over the benefits of the test that most states have not made the switch.

Maryland will compare the results of simultaneous fecal coliform and enterococci tests at five beaches: estuarine beaches in Anne Arundel and St. Mary's counties, and freshwater beaches in Baltimore, Frederick and Allegany counties. Local sanitarians will collect the samples and deliver them to the

state public health labs in Baltimore and Cumberland. The information will help state regulators decide whether a

change of indicator would provide a net improvement in the protection of recreational bathers.

Bathers at Maryland's public

beaches are protected from the hazards of fecal pollution through a three-part strategy. The most important part is the inspection of the local environment for possible sources of contamination such as failed septic systems, broken sewage lines, sewage treatment plants,

or other sites from which large amounts of fecal material could be released. Experience has shown that these inspections are the most effective tool because they offer a means to prevent contamination or stop it in a timely manner through corrective actions.

The second part of the protection strategy is to monitor for the presence of fecal material by testing the swimming areas for the presence of bacteria. This summer's trial test results will help MDE determine which testing method to use in the future.

A third protection used in some locations is to close a beach following a heavy rain. Large rains may sometimes bring additional animal and human wastes into the waterways.

For information about this summer's water quality study testing contact Dr. Phil Heard at (410) 631-3601.

Research now suggests that another bacterial group, the enterococci, provides a test that is more predictive of the illnesses that can occur in contaminated waters and also is faster and cheaper.

TMDL Briefings for Maryland's Lower Delmarva Peninsula

Total Maximum Daily Loads, or TMDLs are an important emerging issue of both national and local importance. TMDLs are required by the Federal Clean Water Act to help ensure that impaired water bodies eventually meet water quality standards. Please plan to attend your regional briefing to learn more about Maryland's TMDL program. For more information call Paryse Turgeon at (410) 631-3906.

Coastal Bays Region June 30, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Ocean City Convention Center
4001 Coastal Highway (40th Street)
Ocean City Maryland 21842
(410) 289-8311

Lower Eastern Shore Region July 15, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Wicomico County Youth & Civic Center
500 Glen Ave
Salisbury MD 21804
(410) 548-4900

Choptank River Region July 27, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Avalon Theatre
40 East Dover St, Easton MD 21601
(410) 822-0345

Corner of Harrison and Dover Streets in the heart of historic downtown Easton, Md. Md Rt 50 to Easton. At the intersection of Dover Road and Rt 50, if north bound turn left on Dover Road, if south bound turn right on Dover Road. The second stop light is the intersection of Dover and Harrison Streets. The Avalon Theatre is on the left.

Join-In for the Dip-In

by Fran Stierstorfer

For many years, Senator Bernie Fowler has led a group of white sneakered participants into the Patuxent River to test water clarity. Waders venture into the water until their sneakers are no longer visible. Although not an accurate test, the water quality awareness and education created by the Bernie Fowler Wade-In is beyond measure.

Following in Senator Fowler's sneakers, on Sunday, June 13, the Maryland Department of the Environment will join the Patapsco-Back River Tributary Team, Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Baltimore Metropolitan Council and environmentally-concerned organizations for the first Baltimore Harbor SECCHI DIP-IN which coincides with the annual Bernie Fowler Wade-In.

During the Baltimore Harbor SECCHI

DIP-IN, a 8 inch black and white circular disk will be lowered into the water until it can no longer be seen. This depth of disappearance is a measure of the transparency of the water. Teams of volunteers will use a secchi disk at numerous locations around the harbor to test water clarity. Results of the tests will be recorded in the interpretation area. The interpretation area also will offer exhibits, educational materials and activities suitable for all ages. This event is free and open to the public.

The Baltimore Harbor SECCHI DIP-IN is part of the national "Great American Secchi Dip-In." 1999 marks the 6th anniversary of this international effort.

For more information, contact Jack Anderson, Baltimore Metropolitan Council, 410-333-1750 or Bill Stack, Baltimore City Department of Public Works, 410-396-0732.

Hagerstown Ozone Station Now Operating

By Bob Maddox and Ed Carter

A new, automated ozone monitoring station went on line in April in Hagerstown to help Washington County maintain healthy air quality and to report ozone attainment data to the Maryland Department of the Environment and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Hagerstown is on

the edge of attainment/nonattainment areas for the federal health-based one-hour ozone standard. The new station replaces an existing station in Allegany County that was no longer needed for daily ozone reports.

The new ozone station, located on the grounds of a state correctional facility, is equipped with a continuous monitor that is dialed by computer

three times daily to collect ozone data. The data is used to develop the ozone forecast and also is transmitted to the EPA to generate the Ozone Pollution Map which appears on EPA's AIRNOW web site.

The ozone forecast is a system to alert Maryland residents when ozone is at unhealthy levels and to inform which steps should be taken to protect health

and reduce pollution.

Ground level ozone forms readily in the atmosphere in hot weather when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds "bake" together in the sun. High concentrations of ozone can form over large regions and, when inhaled, can damage lungs or worsen bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.



Maryland Department of the Environment
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Pile of Old Tires Become Heap of Fun

by Abigail Pascual

The Maryland Department of the Environment's Scrap Tire Program has been hard at work turning old tires into a terrific new playground for kids. Seneca Creek State Park in Montgomery County is the site of Maryland's newest recycled tire playground. This unique playground was constructed in three days by volunteers from MDE, Maryland Environmental Service (MES), the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the local community. Secretary Jane Nishida joined an entire troop of Boy Scouts and many other individuals who gave up their Saturday for a good cause.

Tire chips from approximately 2,500 shredded scrap tires were placed under playground apparatus as a safety



Boy Scout volunteers testing the newly built playground equipment.

surface material to protect children during falls. Approximately 200 whole tires were used in various play structures such as tire swings, a tire monster and a boat-shaped sandbox. The playground has several areas accessible to persons with disabilities including a special swing and a wheelchair-accessible sandbox table.

Money from the used tire cleanup and recycling fund was used to pay for this project. This fund was established by the 1991 Scrap Tire Recycling Act and is maintained by a \$1 fee collected on the sale of each new tire in Maryland. This project could not have been completed without the support of the local business community. Donations included heavy equipment from a local Rental Mart and the City of Gaithersburg, a donation for the park from Colonial Pipeline, a generator from Cummins and a delicious barbecue lunch from Smokey Glen Farms for all 150 volunteers who showed up on Saturday.

This is Maryland's seventh scrap tire playground and is expected to be a great asset to the community bringing visitors back to the park. MDE has plans to build another one of these extremely popular scrap tire playgrounds at Elk Neck State Park in Fiscal Year 2000.



A local Boy Scout Troop Leader puts the finishing touches on the tire monster.

Scrap Tire Amnesty

by Peggie Bieman

On April 24, the Maryland Department of the Environment's Scrap Tire Program sponsored its second annual statewide Scrap Tire Amnesty Day. Seventeen counties and Baltimore City participated in the event designed to help local residents properly dispose of unwanted tires. Residents were allowed to bring up to 10 tires to designated collection points for free, and for the second year in a row this proved to be a highly popular program. Preliminary reports indicate that 2,330 tons of tires were col-

lected statewide. This project was paid for by the Used Tire Cleanup and Recycling Fund.

Scrap tires present an unique environmental challenge. If ignited, the pile is a formidable problem for firefighters. The heat from such a blaze is intense, long lasting, and generates thick black smoke with a noxious odor. The resulting fire can produce oil from melted tires, which pollutes soil, ground and surface waters. The scrap tire pile also is a breeding ground for mosquitoes that lay their eggs in pools of water that collect inside the tires after rainfall.

For more information contact the author at (410) 631-3314

Biomedical Waste Conference

A Conference on Biomedical Research and the Environment will be held November 1-2 at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda. Committees are now forming on the minimization and management of biomedical research wastes, the development of a pollution prevention and energy efficiency clearinghouse for biomedical facilities, environmental economics in biomedical research and product development, and other topics.

To participate in these committees or to submit a proposal for participation in a poster session that will be held at the conference, contact Ed Rau at NIH at (301) 496-7990. For additional information or to register online, visit www.napenet.org.