



# down to earth

Environmental Restoration Quarterly • Spring 2021

**1** Best Wishes for Your Retirement!

**2** Piney Run Watershed Study Update

**3** Coordination Efforts Lead to Successful Build of Langdon Stormwater Facility

**4** Environmental Action Awards Winners



## Best Wishes for Your Retirement!

By: Brenda Dinne, Special Projects Coordinator

After 33 years of service with Carroll County Government, Tom Devilbiss retired on March 31, 2021.

Tom came to the County in 1988 with a background and education in hydrogeology. In his position as Hydrogeologist, Tom was instrumental in the completion of the R.E. Wright water study, which set the stage for much of the groundwater work and public water supply wells achieved over the next couple decades.

In 2003, he became Bureau Chief of what is now the Bureau of Resource Management. In that role, Tom created the initial organizational structure and responsibilities of the Resource Management Bureau, firmly establishing the value and significance of the role of the Bureau and its work.

Tom's knowledge of environmental issues and regulations, dedication, comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to decisions regarding environmental requirements, and direct manner of addressing issues quickly landed him a role as Deputy Director in 2007. In 2015, the Department of Land & Resource Management was created, and Tom was appointed Director. He led this department until his retirement.

Tom cared deeply for his work, his staff, and the county overall. He believed strongly in being a good steward of taxpayer money and ensuring that long-term decisions took this into account. He was very fair in his approach to



*Tom and his daughter and grandson*

implementing the County Code chapters that the Land & Resource Management Department implements.

Tom is responsible for or had a direct hand in a lot of impressive initiatives over his 33 years, especially from a water resources perspective (source protection/identification/development projects). He was the creator of the Water Resource Management Manual and Code. He was involved in the effort with the State to secure regulatory authority for the County (we're the only county in the state with this ability) to regulate water resources and be able to adopt/enact land use ordinances pertaining to their protection. Without his work, water supply in the county would look a lot different today.

(continued on Page 2)

# Piney Run Watershed Study Update

By: Christopher Heyn, P.E., Acting Director, Land & Resource Management

The Piney Run Reservoir is the focal point of Piney Run Park in Sykesville. The 290-acre reservoir is held back by a 73-foot-tall dam, the largest in Carroll County. In 2018, the Maryland Department of the Environment, Dam Safety Division (MDE) while praising the work that Carroll County does in maintaining the dam, did express some concern that the dam spillway may not meet current design standards. Their concerns were that the spillway may not be adequate to pass the design storm and that if the spillway were engaged during a large storm event, that it may be susceptible to erosion. MDE required Carroll County to perform an analysis of the dam to determine if these concerns are valid and if so, perform any necessary mitigation work by August 2027.

Carroll County contracted AECOM consultants to analyze the dam with funding from a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) grant. The results of the analysis indicate that modifications are necessary to widen the auxiliary spillway, raise the dam, and armor the downstream end of the spillway with concrete. These modifications have been determined to be the most cost-effective options to address the MDE concerns and bring the dam into compliance.

As part of the analysis of the dam and reservoir, AECOM determined that there has been a significant sediment load into

the reservoir since it was constructed in 1974. Due to the sediment, the future capacity of the reservoir for water supply has been reduced. Removal of the sediment is cost prohibitive, so AECOM proposed another option for the County to consider. Modifications to the dam could be made as part of this project to raise the permanent pool of the reservoir by approximately 2.5 feet, thereby offsetting the loss of water volume due to sedimentation. While considerably more expensive than just addressing compliance, there is a good chance that the County could receive financial support from NRCS.

However, one of the key considerations of raising the normal pool is that modifications would be required to the concrete riser structure at the dam, potentially necessitating a temporary draining of the reservoir.

County staff presented two alternatives to the County Commissioners for consideration. Alternative 1 to address only compliance and Alternative 2 to perform the additional work that would raise the normal pool. While the Commissioners considered the Alternatives, County staff held two public meetings and provided information through press releases and social media. Overwhelmingly, citizens expressed support to address the compliance issues, but were very concerned with the prospect of temporarily draining the reservoir.

The Commissioners reached a decision on March 18 and directed staff to proceed with Alternative 1. In selecting this path forward, the Commissioners have chosen to focus efforts and funding on addressing the key compliance issues that necessitated the watershed study. This decision does not preclude the County from pursuing the utilization of Piney Run Reservoir for water supply in the future.

The next step in the watershed study is the production of final documentation for review and approval by NRCS. This process is anticipated to take until October of this year. The County will then apply for additional grant funding from NRCS for the design of the Alternative 1 modifications to the dam. The County anticipates grant funding notification from NRCS in April, 2022, which will allow the County to then proceed with the engineering design and environmental permitting of the proposed modifications. Engineering design and permitting is anticipated to take approximately 2 years. The County will then be able to apply for further grant funding from NRCS to cover 65% of the construction costs, which are currently estimated to be \$7.5M.



## Best Wishes for Your Retirement! —continued from Page 1

One of what Tom might consider his crowning achievements was developing the Water Summit that resulted in the creation of the Water Resource Coordination Council in 2007. This group of municipal representatives, County staff, and Health Department representatives has become a model across the state for coordination and cooperation between a county and its municipalities on drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and other water quality issues. This group continues to foster the valuable working relationship between the County and its municipalities.

The long list of successful projects and initiatives for which credit goes to Tom are far too many to mention. Tom's continued contribution to Carroll County Government and its citizens will truly be missed.



# Construction Efforts Lead to Successful Build of Langdon Stormwater Facility

By: Elizabeth Spencer, Watershed Restoration Engineer

After initial discussions dating back to 2014, the Bureau of Resource Management has recently completed a **\$3.3 million-dollar** stormwater management project within the City of Westminster. The project stems from a County-City Memorandum of Agreement formed to comply with the terms of the NPDES permit which requires treatment of 20% of impervious area within the County as well as the municipalities.

High density development areas, such as those within the City can make treating stormwater runoff a daunting task. Finding the right space within the urban landscape to support the complexities of a stormwater management facility is difficult. Although the site for the Langdon project is excellent in terms of placement for collecting urban stormwater runoff, construction access is difficult.

This project was designed by Carroll Land Services, Inc. After years of planning and design, construction of the Langdon stormwater management facility began in mid-April last year on the 5-acre parcel acquired from the Langdon Oil Company. This low area off Westminster Avenue drains about 200 acres of the City, 92 acres of which were previously untreated impervious.

This project was partially funded through grants from the Federal Highway Administration and from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Significant coordination of efforts was required for multiple contractors, engineers, and government entities to meet the project goals and deadlines. During construction, **70,000 cubic yards** of dirt were hauled off site to two different fill sites in New Windsor; an abandoned wastewater lagoon and a private farm.

Given the tight physical constraints of this site, typical haul-off of dirt using dump trucks was not feasible. Instead, the adjacent railroad tracks were utilized to export dirt from the Langdon site. Coordination was done with Maryland Midland Railway to shuttle 9 train cars per day back and forth from Langdon to the New Windsor fill sites.

HTI Contractors were responsible for the construction of the Langdon facility. When material was being hauled off site, HTI would load material onto the train cars in Westminster, which would then be transported to the fill sites where Stambaugh's Inc. would be on the other end to grade the material.

Construction oversight and geotechnical testing were performed by A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc. and Hillis-Carnes, respectively. Construction, transportation, and engineering contractors worked together to complete the Langdon facility in March.



# Environmental Action Awards Winners

By: Brenda Dinne, Special Projects Coordinator

The Carroll County Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) announced the winners of the 2021 Environmental Action Awards. Awards are presented biennially to individuals and groups chosen from nominees submitted for consideration by their peers, although self-nominations are accepted. Awards are granted for endeavors and projects that result in a positive benefit to the environment and have the potential for long-term community environmental benefit.

The **Student Engagement Award** goes to **Elsa Schoberg!** Her initiative led to the creation of the Environmental Action Club at her high school. Under her leadership, the Club completed a biological survey of Copps Branch in Westminster, which was used to develop a three-step recovery plan to help restore the stream. The plan was approved by the Westminster City Council, and implementation is underway. Elsa will

be awarded a \$500 scholarship by Atlantic Blue Water Services of Westminster. She will also receive a \$25 gift card donated by Olive Garden. **Honorable Mentions** go to **Caring for Our Climate** for its youth-led climate initiative and **Zach Wetzel** for his stream clean-up efforts.

This year's winner of the **Positive Practices Award** is **JeannieBird Baking Company**. JeannieBird takes a comprehensive approach to environmental stewardship that permeates all aspects of the bakery's operations and decisions. Their practices include use of locally sourced ingredients to reduce the bakery's carbon footprint, minimal and alternative packaging, recycling and reduction of the bakery's solid waste stream, composting of food waste, and energy efficient and "smart" devices to maximize energy savings. JeannieBird Baking Company will receive \$75 in gift cards to and donated by Salerno's Restaurant & Catering in Eldersburg.

**Kris Phillips**, and her husband, **JP Miller** receive the **Educational Outreach Award**. Kris and JP led an effort to address noxious weeds while protecting bird habitat on a four-acre field at Krimgold Park. Together with a group of other volunteers, and in coordination with Carroll County Bureau of Facilities, they regularly monitor the field to remove noxious and invasive species. Ms. Phillips and Mr. Miller will also receive \$75 in gift cards to Salerno's Restaurant & Catering in Eldersburg.

For more information about past winners or the awards process, please visit the Environmental Advisory Council's Awards webpage at <https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/government/boards-commissions/environmental-advisory-council/environmental-action-awards/>.



## Find Us on the Web

Use these URLs to find information about the Bureau of Resource Management and our programs on the web.

Resource Management:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/resourcemanagement>

Environmental Inspections Program:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/environmentalinspections>

Floodplain Management Program:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/floodplain>

Forest Conservation Program:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/forestconservation>

Landscape Program:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/landscape>

Stormwater Management Program:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/stormwater>

Water Resource Management Program:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/waterresource>

Watersheds:

<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/watersheds>

Piney Run Watershed Study:

<https://carrollcountymd.gov/pineyrunwatershedstudy>



## Meet the Staff

**Heather Bowie**  
Office Technician

*Heather's primary role is to provide technical support to the Bureau of Resource Management staff. She recently graduated with her B.S. in Environmental Science from Stevenson University. After interning with the Water Resources Division in 2020, she is eager to learn the Bureau's systems and procedures as she begins her career in resource management with the County. She lives in Carroll County with her son; together they enjoy adventures, great food and music, time spent with family and friends, and all things outdoors.*

