Greetings to all community association members and residents interested in the public health aspects of water quality,

As you may know, Operation Clearwater was started by the Severn River Association 35 years ago to monitor the bacteriological status of our waterways and to be certain that our water is safe for swimming and boating. I have been the scientific director of Op. Clearwater for over 20 years and I have often had the opportunity to chat with residents about their perceptions of the safety of swimming in our creeks and river. I have heard numerous anecdotes about kids and adults getting sick after swimming and about infections of cuts or ear infections. This year I’d like to try to gather more complete information about swimming- or boating-related illnesses. The program is being done in cooperation with the SRA and they will be participating in the reporting and use of our findings.

To make this reporting as easy as possible, I turned to my daughter who has a Masters in Public Health. She and I have worked together to come up with the illness tracking sheet that is attached to this letter. What I am asking is for you to record any potentially water-related illnesses encountered by any member of your family this summer. This would include illness or infections following swimming or water contact from boating or even just wading in the river. The types of illnesses that are normally associated with water contact are:

- gastrointestinal symptoms such as cramping, diarrhea and vomiting,
- infection of a cut or
- ear infections.

We would also like to know where water contact occurred, whether or not you saw a doctor and age and gender of person who became ill. If several members of your family got sick, you should indicate that on the form and give all ages and genders. There is a copy of the tracking sheet attached to this letter and I have posted this letter and the tracking sheet on my website (https://ola4.aacc.edu/sghornor) and on the SRA website so that you can print out copies if you would like. This is a Word doc so if you prefer to fill it out on-line and email it to me, that would be fine also. At the end of the summer, I’ll compile a report for the SRA Log. Please feel free to share this survey with anyone you know who might be interested. The more data we get, the better will be our understanding of the extent of water-related illnesses in our watershed.

Thanks in advance for your time and effort in sending in results. I’d be happy to chat with anyone about this project. My office phone is 410-777-2842 and my email is sghornor@aacc.edu.

Sincerely,

Sally Hornor, Ph.D.
Prof. of Microbiology

cc: SRA Officers & Directors