

Patapsco Heritage Greenway
P. O. Box 96
Ellicott City, MD 21041
410-480-0824

April 29, 2015

Councilperson Mary Kay Sigaty
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Road
Ellicott City, MD, 21043

Ref: **FY16 Budget Hearing**

Dear Chairman Sigaty ,

My name is John Slater and I live at 4993 Dalton Drive, in Columbia. I am writing on behalf of the Patapsco Heritage Greenway (PHG). I currently have the honor of serving as the president of the organization.

The Mission of the Friends of the Patapsco Valley & Heritage Greenway is *to protect and preserve the environment, history and heritage of the Patapsco Valley.*

I'm here to request continued financial support for the Patapsco Heritage Greenway in fiscal year 2016. Howard County assisted us with \$75,000 when we started the management plan process. With those funds we were able to match state funds to produce a first class Management Plan. The Howard County Council, Baltimore County Council and the Maryland State Heritage Authority gave us a unanimous vote of approval for our Management Plan. The Plan enables eligibility for future state funding so that we can grow our organization to better protect and enhance the Patapsco Valley.

As a result of this work, on January 15, 2015 our vision of creating a state certified Maryland Heritage Area was realized when we were approved as the 13th Certified Heritage Area in the State.

On March 1, we hired Mary Catherine Cochran, our first full time Executive Director. With our certification in hand and full time staff on board, we are very confident in our ability to implement the Management Plan and advance our mission to better protect and enhance the Valley.

There is no question that State Certification will provide many benefits to numerous environmental, cultural, historical, and heritage tourism assets in Howard and Baltimore Counties. The Patapsco River valley continues to amaze us with its relevancy in the past and its current relevancy as a major regional resource.

We are motivated to ensure that the Patapsco Valley remains a vital resource for our generation and for future generations. In the past 18 months we have accomplished the following:

- Initiated major efforts to obtain recognition as a Maryland Heritage Area, which started with a ULI-TAP study and included numerous outreach meetings to win community and county support.
- We selected a professional consultant who helped us ready our Management Plan for submission. And we're delighted to have secured grant funding for these endeavors. We finished our Management Plan in record time.
- PHG held, and continues to hold, public environmental events, such as outdoor scavenger hunts for school children, tree plantings and maintenance days, and water quality testing. Our many stream cleanups are always a hit and are kicked off in the spring with the big Project Clean Stream Weekend. This year we also started the popular TGIF cleanups on the 3rd Friday of the spring months. ~~X number~~ 1600 of volunteers have assisted us with these initiatives and we've removed ~~X amount~~ 38 tons of trash from the Heritage Area.
- We partnered with the Center for Watershed Protection to receive a grant to manage an evaluation of the Tiber Hudson River in Ellicott City.
- We have a corps of "weed warriors" who maintain the beautiful Ellicott City/Oella Entrance Garden- a gateway to our historic districts.
- A "Video Archive" documenting historical events was added to our website at www.patapscoheritagegreenway.org.
- Interpretive signs were installed at Union Dam.
- We moved into our new one room office in the Carriage House at Belmont thanks to Howard County, especially the Department of Recreation and Parks.

- “History Days” last fall ran for 8 straight days with a different special event each day. 450 people attended these events that showcased our unique heritage.

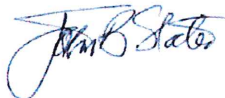
And looking forward to 2015-16:

- We will partner with the Howard County Conservancy on programs to be held at Belmont Manor and Historic Park in Elkridge.
- Our recent State Certification as a Heritage Area enables partner organizations to obtain state funding for programs in support of the Valley and we will work with them to access those funds.
- Our State Certification as a Maryland Heritage Area in January will provide us with more clout to be a stronger voice for preservation of our environment and historic sites.
- We will continue our environmental stewardship programs.
- We will sponsor a second History Days in the Fall of 2015.
- We will work with the Howard County Historical Society to publish a new edition of Hal Sharp’s book on the Patapsco Valley.
- Our new full time executive director will enable us to be more efficient and take concrete steps towards implementing our ambitious and exciting Management Plan.

With Howard County’s financial support we see our organization being able to expand and accomplish more and more each year. Your help is a vital part of our effort to protect and enhance the Patapsco Valley, which in turn helps to insure our high quality of life in this community.

We thank you for your support and urge inclusion of \$100,000 in the Howard County FY16 Operating Budget to be allocated to the Patapsco Heritage Greenway.

Sincerely,



John B. Slater, President
Patapsco Heritage Greenway
c/o Slater Associates, Inc.
5560 Sterrett Place, Suite 302
Columbia, MD 21044
410-992-0001