

# To The Point

Summer 2003

Newsletter of the Friends of Myrtle Point Park, Inc.

Frank Fox, Editor



## **FRIENDS OF POINT PARK, INC. (FOMPP) First Annual Meeting**

Our first Annual Meeting was held April 26, 2003 at Myrtle Point Park. Acting president Bob Boxwell presided. In attendance were Bob Boxwell, Mary Piotrowski, Sandy Mriscin, John Ludwig, Claudia Gondolf, Jay Hanks, Bill Burruss, Bob Lewis, Nancy Rogers, Coleman Hillman, Peg Lang, Frank Fox, and Dudley Lindsley.

Bob Boxwell, made the opening remarks. Frank, Jay, and Bob provided us with the history of the acquisition of the park. Frank emphasized that there are still major issues pending concerning the development of the park. He suggested that we need to utilize the park for walks, clean-ups and other activities in harmony with a natural area. We need to crystallize a vision for the park.

Sandy reported that we are officially incorporated in the State of Maryland. The following people were nominated and approved to serve on the Board of Directors: Bob Boxwell, Mary Piotrowski, Sandy Mriscin, Jay Hanks, Bill Burruss, Nancy Rogers, Peg Lang, Frank Fox, Chip Dudderar, Ed Dowgiallo, David Triantos, Jack Witten, Oran Wilkerson and Dudley Lindsley. The Board will meet usually on the third Monday of the month at the Leonardtown Library meeting room.

## FOMPP Board of Directors

(elected at 26 April 2003 Annual Mtg)

President: Burruss, Bill 310-373-8305  
(billymilkweed@starpower.net)

V-P: Mriscin, Sandra 301-863-5728  
(moonbeam@tqci.net)

Secretary: Lindsley, Dudley 301-373-2551  
(dlindsley@erols.com)

Treasurer: Rogers, Nancy 301-862-3284

Boxwell, Bob 410-394-6153  
(bobboxwell@hotmail.com)

Dowgiallo, Ed 301-994-0529  
(eddown@erols.com)

Dudderar, Chip 301-863-5520  
(chip.dudderar@jhuapl.edu)

Fox, Frank 301-884-8027  
(ff725@yahoo.com)

Hanks, Jay

Lang, Peg 301-863-6530  
(plang@ameritel.net)

Piotrowski, Mary 301-472-4091  
(blbear@erols.com)

Triantos, David 301-863-7940  
(mtriantos@erols.com)

Witten, Jack 301-373-5445  
(jfxw@erols.com)

Wilkerson, Oran 301-863-8069

(Meetings: 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays, 7:00 PM)

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## FOMPP Action Teams

Education/Recreation: Peg Lang, Bob Boxwell,  
Mary Piotrowski

Membership: Suzie Meteyer, Dudley Lindsley

Publicity/Newsletter: Frank Fox, Ed Dowgiallo,  
David Triantos, Molly Jones-Quinn

Park Support and Vision: Bill Burruss, Sandy  
Mriscin, Jay Hanks, Nancy Rogers

501(c)3: Chip Dudderer, Sandy Mriscin

## Comment Corner

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Dear Fellow Friends of Myrtle Point:

I look forward to helping Friends of Myrtle Point Park become an effective voice in support of this very special place. I see one of our first task as a new organization the formulation of our vision for the Park. What do we hope to see at Myrtle Point? I envision Myrtle Point as a nature park where people can enjoy the outdoors; walking the trails, strolling the beaches, or picnicking in wooded groves. I see children learning about nature by exploring and playing in the wilds. If you haven't yet formulated your vision for the Park, I encourage you to do so. Take your friends and family and walk the trails (there are maps and signs to make finding your way easier).

If you would like to do some hard physical work outdoors, our program to remove non-native, invasive plants will be starting up again in the fall. As you walk along Berry Lane, notice the English Ivy choking the cedar trees or the multiflora rose pushing out other plants. A lot of work will be required; but through careful stewardship, I believe Myrtle Point can nourish native plants and animals, while still being a place for people to enjoy the outdoors.

But whatever you choose to do, spend time in the Park; and as you do so, think about your vision for Myrtle Point. And encourage others to do the same. Once our common vision emerges, we will be prepared to promote that vision to those in decision-making positions in the County. And I believe Myrtle Point Park will be a place of which St. Mary's County will be very proud.

---Bill Burruss, President

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**FOMPP Website:** <http://www.myrtlepoint.org>

## FOMPP Action Teams You Can Join

### Education and Recreation Action Team

Since our team currently is composed of educators and naturalists, we of course have been extremely busy with wrapping up the school year and trying to decompress after a couple of very hectic months. So this first pass at defining our mission is a solo flight.

My hope is that Myrtle Point Park will be a venue for environmental education in Southern Maryland. All the video, television specials, reading, and class work cannot begin to compare to what nature itself can actually teach us. Myrtle Point is a special environment and properly managed should help to foster a sense of place. It is a destination that leads us to an awareness of what nature has to offer, instills a sense of responsibility, and provides an understanding of our role in the greater scheme of things.

We hope the park will be a location for those who wish to learn about the natural world, a place to teach, a place to feel a part of the world around us, a place to get away from the stress of modern day living, and, above all else, a place to enjoy the great outdoors.

Interested in helping us work towards that goal? Then by all means contact us. Currently our team members include Mary Piotrowski, Peg Lang, and Bob Boxwell. Please call, e-mail, or write. We would love to hear from you. --- Bob Boxwell  
< bobboxwell@hotmail.com >

### Publicity Action Team

FOMPP aims to support a natural park by increasing awareness of its beauty and value through various media: creating and disseminating membership brochures, developing and maintaining a website, publishing a quarterly newsletter, shooting and editing video for presentations and cable TV, designing flyers as needed, and preparing articles, calendar items, and press releases for local education and publicity.

The Team, which now consists of Ed Dowgiallo, David Triantos, Molly Jones-Quinn, and Frank Fox wants to add new volunteers who have media skills or who wish to develop them. Contact us if you are interested. ---Frank Fox < ff725@yahoo.com >

### Park Support and Vision Action Team

The objectives of this action team include working closely with the County Recreation and Parks Department to support the improvement of Myrtle Point Park and developing a vision for this unique natural park in the county park system. Through joint efforts with many interested citizens, FOMPP members, consultants, and the Parks Board, we hope to maintain and gradually improve the existing park and to envision in detail its best use.

As our membership brochure states: "We wish to influence the future by increasing awareness of this magnificent resource, providing thoughtful proposals for uses of the park, raising money to improve the park in an environmentally sensitive manner, and providing physical help to accomplish and maintain the changes." If you are interested in helping with this process, please contact us.  
---Bill Burruss

< billymilkweed@starpower.net >



### Membership Action Team

The Membership Action Team will maintain our FOMPP members list electronically, and provide it to appropriate FOMPP committees only. We will distribute FOMPP information to solicit new members at community events. Timely notes will welcome new members, and all members reminded at year's end of annual dues. When members indicate interest in specific FOMPP activities, we will forward their contact info to the appropriate action team. If you'd like to join us in this important organizational work, please contact Suzie Meteyer < suziem@erols.com > or 301-866-9123.

## Partial history of the Myrtle Point saga

- 1967 Gordon Lindner and Oran Wilkerson sound alarm on development of Myrtle Point and pollution of Patuxent River.
- 1968 The Potomac River Association (PRA) in partnership with David Sayre and local watermen file suit to block improper dredging and learn power of legal work.
- 1974 Citizens coalition defeats Piney Point refinery at ballot box and notes importance of catching bad projects early.
- 1990s Up-scale residential and golf complex proposed for Myrtle Point.  
Owner got in trouble with savings and loans scandal and property transferred to federal Resolution Trust Corp for sale.
- 1995 Sierra Club Southern Maryland Group (SC) starts leading hikes and clean-ups on Myrtle Point to acquaint public with the beauty of the land.  
July: Jack Witten, Erik Jansson and Roy Dyson hold town meeting to raise issue of county purchase of Myrtle Point as nature park. BOCC holds hearing in August with 250 people present – vast majority favor nature park.  
Sept: SC and PRA encourage formation of Citizen’s Coalition to Preserve Myrtle Point as focal point for conservation effort--Anne Woodley and Lee Soderberg, Co-chairs.
- 1996 PRA attorney Lee Rogers discovers provision of Coastal Waters Act that gives government entities first right of refusal on sale of certain tidal lands.  
Hikes and hearings and meetings and petitions and letters to the editor continue to urge BOCC to arrange purchase of MP for public use. County agrees and enters into year-long negotiations led by Debbie Osbourne of the Trust for Public Land (and Sierra Club) which result in successful purchase with state Open Space funds.
- 1997 After MP Task Force recommends low-impact park development, Gang of Three on BOCC initiates list for massive development of the park.
- 1998 CCPMP, PRA, and SC conduct clever campaign to defeat this plan and ultimately those commissioners at ballot box in November 1998.
- 1999 County “maintenance” of park creates problems, and citizens watchdog group formed to work with Rec and Parks’ Bill Ball to assure natural setting supported.
- 2000-present  
Regular attention to park by invasive species removal and trail creation by citizens groups now affiliated with Friends of Myrtle Point Park.
- 2001-present  
In response to various rumored threats to the natural character of the Park, Friends of Myrtle Point Park formed and incorporated as non-profit corporation in Maryland.

-- information provided by Jack Witten and Frank Fox

## Annual Myrtle Point Wade-In

Hollywood Elementary School enjoyed a beautiful May 30th Wade-In --one in a series of almost a decade of annual gatherings with former State Senator Bernie Fowler. Two 5th grade classes along with their teachers, Sara Strothers and Karin Paz, were joined by a variety of local guests to celebrate the Patuxent River, to participate in various science, art, and poetry activities, and to picnic at the Park.

Retired Hollywood teacher, Peg Lang, and local naturalist, Mary Piotrowski, who helped plan the event, were joined by other guests such as Recreation and Parks Board member Coleman Hillman, St. Mary's Board of Education members Mary Washington and Sal Raspa, and Hollywood principal Jen Gilman. But the star of the Wade-In was our own Bernie Fowler who not only delighted the students with stories of wading in the Patuxent as a young man but actually took them right on in clothes and all to see how far they could go before losing sight of their toes. Trust me, the water was cold--lots of good kid shrieks. But due to the rains there was quite a bit of turbidity and we lost sight of our toes relatively soon... about at our knees. So, following custom, we walked back to shore to turn and wave a salute of respect to the river.

The students and the parents just loved this day. Bernie spent hours visiting with everyone and he was by far the best promotion Myrtle Point and the care of our waterways could ever receive. He took great care in explaining to folks the problem with the sewage plants upriver dumping their waste into the Patuxent and the accumulating affect it has on us downstream.

The students also enjoyed a variety of activities after lunch including, a few basic chemical tests of the water with Robin Holcomb, poetry waterside with Tina Watts, watercolor painting with Karin Paz, Coleman Hillman's famous origami, and seine netting with Mary Piotrowski.

It is the seine netting that caused quite the stir that day. In all the years Mary P has been netting there, about eight or nine by her records, she usually brings up a handful of predictable creatures. Not much. But with the first pass of the 20-foot net held by two students and Mary, they brought up the most



unbelievable sight. It took all six of the other kids to haul the net ashore! There were hundreds of fish -- at least 3 species. Pipefish were there by the dozen and were so long (one was 12 inches) we double-checked the books on ID. The big crabs were there including a "buster" and one in the edible range. There were little mud crabs and grass shrimp. The students could hardly get them to the tanks.

We made 22 passes along quite a bit of the beach that day. Every single one of them produced such prolific catch and of course the secret finally surfaced. Mary was in chest waders and couldn't see or feel the grasses but there they were for the first time in probably a generation! Pieces of SAV, submerged aquatic vegetation, or animal habitat were at Myrtle Point for the first time in a long time. This in part is due to the prolonged droughts of the last few years and the fact that little or no sedimentation an/or pollution has washed in to deter plant growth. With that in mind we can only wonder how well established these beds are in the river in order to survive this springs' rains. In any event it was a thrill to see this much life at MPP.

As always the Annual Wade-In was a success and a wonderful memory and learning experience for our young people to take away. To all who participate, a generous thank you---especially parents. We missed you Betty and Tom. And again to our favorite friend of the River, "Thanks, Bernie!"  
---Mary Piotrowski



## Membership in Friends of Myrtle Point Park

Please Join Us and Invite your friends and neighbors to join.

In order to maintain this unique refuge, the **Friends of Myrtle Point Park, Inc.** have organized to preserve and restore the wilderness areas, the waterfront and the surrounding waters. As a group, we support providing low impact, recreational opportunities such as trail walking, biking, bird watching, picnicking, primitive camping, fishing, swimming, boat anchorage, and possibly a ramp for launching canoes and kayaks.

By joining together, we wish to influence the future by increasing awareness of this magnificent resource, providing thoughtful proposals for uses of the park, raising money to improve the park in an environmentally sensitive manner, and providing physical help to accomplish and maintain the changes. Currently, with permission from the County, volunteers are clearing trails, leading walking tours, removing invasive vegetation, and studying and cataloguing the flora.

**We hope you will join the Friends of Myrtle Point Park, Inc.** We welcome your support to protect this magnificent and rare resource for present and future generations.

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### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

**Return to: Friends of Myrtle Point Park, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1433 California, Maryland 20619-1433**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership:** \_\_\_\_\_ Individual(s) - \$10.00 ea.

with Donation: \_\_\_\_\_ (check to Friends of Myrtle Point Park)

#### **Interests:**

\_\_\_ Historical/Archeological \_\_\_ Invasive Plant Removal \_\_\_ Education/Recreation

\_\_\_ Trail Maintenance \_\_\_ Public Relations/Newsletter \_\_\_ Park Support/Visioning

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Schedule of Events:**

Sunday 29 June: 10 AM – Noon. Myrtle Point Park. Join participants on the Patuxent Sojourn for a hike on the last day of their canoe/kayak expedition. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, binoculars, and a hand lens. FOMPP member and naturalist Bob Boxwell will be one of the leaders. More info from Bob: 410-394-6153

Monday 21 July: 7:00 to 8:30 PM Leonardtown Library Meeting Room. Open FOMPP Board Meeting. All members welcome. Some Action Teams may meet also. Contact: Bill Burruss at 301-373-8305

Sunday 17 August 1:00 PM Myrtle Point Park. Afternoon outing. Get out and enjoy nature with Sierra Club leader Bob Boxwell in exploring new trails in the Park. Meet Bob in the grass parking lot on the left as you enter the Park. Contact Bob at 410-394-6153

Monday 18 August 7:00 – 8:30 PM Leonardtown Library Meeting Room. Open FOMPP Board Meeting. All members welcome. Some Action Teams may meet also. Contact: Bill Burruss at 301-373-8305

Monday 15 Sept 7:00 – 8:30 PM Leonardtown Library Meeting Room. Open FOMPP Board Meeting. All members welcome. Some Action Teams may meet also. Contact: Bill Burruss at 301-373-8305

**Friends of Myrtle Point Park**  
P.O. Box 1433  
California, MD 20619

