

Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin



2004 Activities and Accomplishments

Our mission is to enhance, protect, and conserve the water and associated land resources of the basin through regional and interstate cooperation.

ICPRB: An Important Asset for the Potomac Basin

A non-regulatory agency of the basin states (Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia), Washington, D.C., and the federal government, ICPRB promotes watershed-wide solutions to the pollution and water resources challenges facing the basin and its more than 5.3-million residents. The ICPRB commissioners, appointed by their respective jurisdictions, provide policy guidance and oversight for a skilled staff of scientists and educators.

The ICPRB's water quality, water resources, aquatic biology, fisheries restoration, and public education/outreach programs collectively focus on comprehensive solutions to the watershed's many challenges. Regional efforts require collaboration, and ICPRB partners with many federal, state, and local agencies and citizens groups throughout the basin. These partnerships build strong coalitions and leverage resources and skills to improve the basin's natural resources.

In a complex watershed regulated by many jurisdictions, and with a rapidly growing population, ICPRB's unique, basin-wide perspective, technical skills, and partnership building are essential to the future health of the Potomac River basin.

From the Executive Director's Desk *by Joseph K. Hoffman*

The Potomac River's resurgence over the last three decades is a story of national success and regional significance, brought about by government and citizens striving for improvements. It is a story created through the determination and cooperative efforts of so many groups. Continued improvements are vital to the quality of life for the region's residents and visitors.

Much of the character of the Potomac basin emanates from the river and its tributary areas. For the residents, the river provides safe drinking water drawn from the surface or from interconnected groundwater sources. For visitors and residents alike, recreation abounds throughout the basin, river habitat supports a variety of living resources in the basin's waters, and the Potomac's impact on the Chesapeake Bay as its second-largest tributary is vastly improved through the efforts of ICPRB and its partners.

However, there are remaining challenges, as the member jurisdictions have demonstrated in developing their tributary strategies. Funding improvements in the Potomac and the Bay will be a major effort in future years. We need to meet targets for reducing nutrients, sediment, and other contaminants while dealing with economic growth and land development in many areas of the basin. We also need to find ways of continuing to work together to meet these and other challenges as we protect and conserve our Potomac basin.

We present this annual report on the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin activities for 2004 as an attempt to provide a limited picture of the state of the Potomac River. We are looking at a few of the key factors that bear upon the health and life of the "Nation's River," but hope that this snapshot contributes to a clearer view of the watershed and its challenges.

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Cover: Some of the Potomac's many faces (top to bottom): A view looking upstream at Harpers Ferry; the Tidal Basin flanked by the Washington Monument; a workboat docked near St. Clement's Island on the tidal Potomac.
Photos: C. Dalpra