

Duckworth is appointed as CRA watershed coordinator

By Jack Shaum
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CHESTERTOWN — A former field biologist with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has been appointed as the Chester River Association's new watershed coordinator.

Allison Duckworth, 26, who grew up near Crumpton, succeeds Brent Walls, who is now the Upper Potomac Watershed Manager on the western shore.

"She'll be developing our (annual Chester River) report card, will be overseeing the Chester Testers program, and will assist in main stem monitoring" of the Chester River, said Chester Riverkeeper Tom Leigh.

"She has lots of local ties and I have been more than impressed with her work," Leigh continued.

The Chester Tester program currently has about 50 volunteers who conduct water quality tests at 25 stations, primarily in the creeks and other tributaries of the

Chester River.

Duckworth called the Chester Tester program "essential" to keeping tabs on the quality of water in the Chester and its tributaries, which are currently rated as impaired waters.

"It's a monitoring program and we'll be looking at such things as 'are these techniques working' and analyzing things to see where you need to focus your attention," she said.

During her time as a field biologist with DNR, she traveled all over the state taking water samples and testing for such things as dissolved oxygen, temperature, and salinity. She said she "got an appreciation of Maryland that I never saw" before.

"It has been great," Duckworth said of her new

position. "I'm able to use all the skills I acquired previously."

Duckworth earned a bachelor's degree in geology at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. She worked for Florida's Department of Environmental Protection after college, taking water samples in the Florida Keys. She and her husband Chris Duckworth returned to Maryland when he was hired as a water quality field biologist by DNR.

Her position as watershed coordinator is currently part-time, but Leigh hopes it can eventually become full-time.

The Chester River Association, founded in 1986, is an advocate for the health of the Chester River and its living resources.