



Thoughts on the Accotink Creek TMDL Kerfuffle – January, 2013

It is misleading to characterize EPA's position as defense of "worms". Aquatic worms are but one of many species of aquatic invertebrates employed as a simple and effective measuring stick of overall stream health. High populations of worms, in fact, are an indicator of poor stream conditions.

We may disdain aquatic worms, but what of the most noble of our stream invertebrates, the uncomplaining [freshwater mussels](#), with lifespans up to 80 years spent patiently filtering and cleansing the water, and perhaps once in a great while, producing a pearl or two? Which of the other small creatures of the bottom will we blithely condemn to oblivion – mayflies, stoneflies, caddisflies? How many links can we remove from the food chain that supports creatures more of us may care about – the fish, frogs, and turtles – the otters, herons, and kingfishers?

The EPA's approach in this case may indeed present its problems and challenges. Yet problems are made to be solved, and challenges are made to be met with innovation and teamwork, not excuses.

Accotink Creek may not be worth saving but the Chesapeake Bay surely is. We cannot hope to save the Bay without curing what ails it – the sediment and contaminants running down our waterways.

Dominion over nature is a gift which has been given us yoked to the trust for its preservation.

All who care to learn more and judge first-hand what is or is not worth preserving are invited to join the Friends of Accotink Creek at our next [stream monitoring session](#) to collect data on stream health based on invertebrate counts.

"For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another might be lost, until the whole of things will vanish piecemeal." – Jefferson

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