

From the Beach Committee

~Kate Penn, Beach Chair

Shoreline Design has completed the construction phase of their work at the east point of the beach. At the end of July, they will install native plants to recreate the marsh that was removed as part of the construction. *Spartina Alterniflora* will be planted at the low area, which is primarily under water, except during low tide; *Spartina Patens* will be planted on the upper sections of the slope, which is wet during the high tides. The area that was previously lawn will be restored to lawn. Please be careful not to disturb the new grasses, seed, and straw netting that have been placed in the disturbed areas, so that they have a chance to take root. Although extensive sections of the *Phragmites* have been removed, it is likely that new shoots will appear in the improved marsh. Because the roots emit an herbicide that can damage other plants, we will be observing the area and removing new shoots.

While the Beach Committee gathers data on our shoreline conditions to plan any further work, we are also looking at ways to improve the upland areas. Runoff from several recent, harsh rain storms has carved away large sections of the sandy beach as well as the drainage area by the little bridge. We are exploring methods to better control the storm water as it runs to the bay. The improvements will filter the water, slow the flow to reduce erosion, and also reduce standing water in the park areas.

HSIA has contracted The South River Federation to provide weekly reports on the bacteria levels on our beach. In previous years, the SRF took regular samples all along the River and provided the data on their website. This year, they have agreed to sample water specifically targeting the community beaches on the South River, and to provide immediate results so we can notify residents of poor water conditions. The water is tested for enterococci, which are bacteria that come from the intestine of all warm-blooded animals. EPA states that bacteria levels higher than 158 probable colonies per milliliter (pc/ml) of water is unsafe for swimming, and young children and elderly should avoid water contact. In addition, the Health Department recommends staying out of the water for 48 hours after a heavy rain, due to rainwater runoff and increased health risks. In general, it is recommended to wash with soap and water after exposure to any natural body of water. The results from the SRF testing to date have been low, indicating the water has been safe for swimming. We will continue to monitor conditions and post alerts any time the levels rise near or above safe levels.

South River Enterococci Colony Forming Units/100 ml	6/4/08	6/11/08	6/18/08	7/2/08
Hillsmere Shores	5	3	3	4

The Beach Committee needs volunteers to help with several ongoing projects. If you are interested, please contact Kate Penn at beach@hillsmershores.net, or call 410-263-4456.

- The gate to the beach is opened each morning by volunteers. This year's budget includes an automatic opener, like the one at the marina, which will relieve our long-standing volunteers from this task. However, in the meantime, we are looking for people who use or pass by the beach in the morning, who are willing to unlock it. With enough volunteers, we can set up an alternating schedule, so no one person is burdened every day.
- We need new committee members to help with the maintenance of and improvements to playground and park equipment. You would help inspect equipment, make recommendations for repairs and replacements, and help with the completion of those projects.
- We are looking for teams to pick up trash, rake the beaches, wipe down the tables and benches, and sweep the pavilions. This is also a task that can be completed on a rotating schedule. Ideally, each volunteer could work once every couple months.
- Volunteers are needed to help with spotting and removing new *Phragmites* shoots using approved methods for treatment.