

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Savage River Watershed Association (SRWA): Leadership on the Move

Frostburg, Maryland – January 15, 2014

To help protect the pristine local water quality and address increasing threats to the Savage River watershed, the Board of Directors is pleased to announce the addition of several new community leaders and scientists to its board of directors and advisory board.

Over the past few months, three new members have joined the Savage River Watershed Association (SRWA) board of directors including: Frank Fotia, Dr. Keith Eshleman, and Hana Yoder.

Prior to moving to Western Maryland, Frank Fotia was a Principal at the executive search firm of JDG Associates, Ltd. for over 20 years—concentrating in the information technology marketplace. In 2001, Frank launched his own search firm before retiring in 2009. In recent years, Frank served as the Events Committee Chairman for the non-profit Queen City Performing Arts Development, Inc (QCPAD), the live entertainment arm of Windsor Hall in downtown Cumberland. Mr. Fotia has also been a volunteer member of the SRWA Marcellus shale stream monitoring team since 2011, is an avid fly-fisherman, and photographer.

Dr. Eshleman is a professor at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science - Appalachian Laboratory. Eshleman completed his Ph.D. in Water Resources at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is a recognized expert in the field of watershed and wetlands hydrology. Some of Dr. Eshleman's recent research projects have focused on the hydrological impacts of acid deposition, forest disturbances, and surface mining activities in the Appalachian Mountain region. Dr. Eshleman has also been recognized for his leadership in preparing a landmark [report on best management practices for unconventional natural gas extraction](#) (also referred to as fracking) as part of the [Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Initiative](#) established by Governor Martin O'Malley.

Hana Yoder runs Savage River Farms, a small-scale diversified farm and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in the Savage River watershed with her husband Ben, a native of Accident, MD. Ms. Yoder and her husband are committed to natural, chemical-free farming practices that improve the soil and maintain the integrity of the wider ecosystem. Before moving to Garrett County and starting Savage River Farm in the fall of 2012, Ms. Yoder received her B.S. in Community Development and Agro-ecology and worked for four years on organic vegetable farms in central North Carolina. In addition to her work with Savage River Farm, Ms. Yoder also works part-time at the Evergreen Heritage Center and in 2013 worked with Garrett County Economic Development to organize the first annual *Serve It Up Local: Celebrating Farms and Food* event.

Two individuals have also recently joined SRWA's newly created advisory board. These include Dr. Robert Hilderbrand and Jerri Dell.

Dr. Hilderbrand is an Associate Professor at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. A local graduate of Frostburg's Beall High School, Hilderbrand has a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Management from Frostburg State University, a M.S. from Virginia Tech in Fisheries Science, and his Ph.D. from Utah State University in Ecology. In 2000, Hilderbrand returned to his hometown of Frostburg and began working once again at the Appalachian Lab. In addition to his extensive research on brook trout habitat and his thorough knowledge of the Savage River Watershed, Dr. Hilderbrand's research interests and areas of expertise include: ecology and conservation biology of running waters; linking landscapes and populations; and watershed and stream habitat restoration.

After a thirty year career in international development at the World Bank, Jerri Dell relocated to Western Maryland where she opened and operated the Arteco Gallery in Downtown Cumberland and served on the "Sustainable Development Committee" of Cumberland's Economic Development Commission, the Community Legacy Committee, Allegany County Citizens for Smart Growth, and the Community Wellness Coalition Board of Directors. Currently, Ms. Dell is on the Board of Advisors for the Frostburg Center for Creative Writing and on the Board of CRECER, a Cumberland-based non-profit organization providing occupational therapy to underserved communities in Ecuador. Ms. Dell is also Director of the Savage River Arts summer camp, SRWA's new and innovative environmental education and outreach program for children aged 8-12 years old.

Other important leadership developments include:

SRWA Board Member, Dr. J. Edward Gates, has been appointed to Garrett County's Mountain Maryland Energy Advisory Committee. Dr. Gates is a Professor at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. He received his Ph.D. in wildlife ecology from Michigan State University. Dr. Gates has authored or coauthored over 60 articles and is a recognized expert on the seasonal movements, status, habitat use, and mortality of migratory birds and bats. Over his extensive career, Dr. Gates' research has focused on wildlife, habitat, and landscape ecology; habitat fragmentation and alteration, connectivity (corridors), edge effects, and boundary dynamics; habitat suitability for vertebrate species; and human dimensions of wildlife ecology.

Board Treasurer, Dr. Ann Bristow, has also been appointed to the Governor's Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Advisory Commission. A retired professor, Dr. Bristow taught in undergraduate and graduate programs at Texas Christian University, Kansas State University, and Frostburg State University from 1976 to 2007. Her graduate degrees are in psychology, with a research emphasis in behavioral medicine. Dr. Bristow has been a board member of the Savage River Watershed Association since 2007 and a member of the SRWA Marcellus Shale monitoring team since 2011. In 2013 Dr. Bristow, along with Board Advisor Jerri Dell, worked to launch Savage River Arts. The program was developed to promote environmental literacy and encourage the youngest members of our community, our children, to connect with their natural surroundings and become informed and capable stewards of their environment.

Dr. Brent Kice has also committed to serve as a communication consultant to help SRWA improve its communication strategies and outreach. Dr. Kice is an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Frostburg State University. His research explores popular media (such as television commercials, websites, and gaming). In addition, he teaches courses on the First Amendment, ethics and social responsibility, argumentation, rhetorical criticism, and small group communication.

According to John Fritts, president of SRWA, "The board of directors of SRWA is both excited and grateful to these new leaders for their commitment to help our volunteers and members protect the Savage River. Their efforts and wisdom will augment the ongoing efforts of more than 30 dedicated volunteers who perform weekly water-quality monitoring throughout the watershed."

The Savage River Watershed Association (SRWA) is a group of individuals, families, and land owners dedicated to protecting, restoring, and enhancing the natural resources of the Savage River watershed through stewardship, assistance to interested landowners and public land managers, water quality monitoring, and educational outreach.

Located in the mountains of western Maryland, The Savage River is a headwater tributary for the Potomac River, "our nation's river". The watershed features exceptionally high water quality throughout virtually the entire basin, extremely low population density, and large tracts of contiguous forest. One of Western Maryland's most pristine and valuable natural resources, the Savage River Watershed also contains one of the few remaining healthy, reproducing brook trout populations and some of the last vestiges of wilderness in Maryland. For more information on project and programs in the Savage River watershed please visit www.savageriverwatershed.org.

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