

News

'Green Book' provides answers to critical area residents

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By CHRIS KNAUSS Staff Writer

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ST. MICHAELS Residents in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area now have a one-source guide to answer many compliance and best-practice questions about their property.

Adkins Arboretum's first book, "The Green Book for the Bay," was officially launched Thursday evening at the a Bay Maritime Museum. With funding assistance from the Town Creek Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Trust, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 10,000 copies of the guidebook are being distributed through Mid-Shore county planning departments and the arboretum.

"The Green Book for the Bay" was created for people who live, own and work on Critical Area residential property in the Mid-Shore counties of Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot.

Subtitled "An Illustrated Guidebook for Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Property Owners Living on Maryland's Eastern Shore," the book provides detailed guidance on best landscaping practices for the Chesapeake Bay's Critical Area, the 1,000-foot wide area of land around the Bay and its tributaries.

Landscaping practices described in "The Green Book for the Bay" are aimed at protecting the water quality and wildlife in the Chesapeake Bay watershed with Bay-friendly natural management. The 72-page book offers tips ranging from reducing lawn area to properly planting and pruning trees and shrubs. The book's four chapters include an overview of regulations and guidance for Critical Area projects, 13 frequently asked questions, and top 10 practices for Critical Area properties, followed by important terms and a list of resources.

The book grew out of a collaboration of professional and local citizens who realized that property owners in the Critical Area are often confused about both the rules and the process they must follow to be good stewards of the land they own. It was produced by Tawna Mertz and Adkins Arboretum with guidance from the Shore Land Stewardship Council.

"We are celebrating the culmination of a three-year effort," said Ellie Altman, Executive Director of Adkins Arboretum, "a partnership of private nonprofits, for-profit businesses, as well as state and local government representatives. -We really think of it as a pilot project. As I look to the Critical Area officials that are here tonight, we would love to replicate what we've been able to do here throughout the Bay's Critical Area."

Since Critical Area laws, best practice standards, Web sites, and contact information are subject to change, the book will be updated on-line at www.firststopforthebay.org.

The "First Stop for the Bay" concept was developed during the process of producing the book.

"In our monthly discussions we learned a very simple thing, and that is that some of the problems that occur with compliance with Critical Area law are simply because people do not know," said Altman. "If they were to 'First Stop' before they made any changes on their property, and call their planning office. I compare this to Miss Utility. You know well that you don't dig until you call Miss Utility to mark your utility lines. You don't want to suffer a loss of electricity, power, and telephone service. It's the same concept with 'First Stop.' You don't make any changes to your property until you 'First Stop' and call your planning office."

A "First Stop for the Bay" symposium is scheduled for Saturday, June 13, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Maritime Museum. The registration fee of \$25 includes lunch and a copy of "The Green Book for the Bay."

For further information, visit www.firststopforthebay.org or contact Adkins Arboretum at 410-634-2847 or info@adkinsarboretum.org.



PHOTO BY CHRIS KNAUSS

From left, Ren Serey and Mary Owens of the Critical Area Commission, Ellie Altman of Adkins Arboretum, Stuart Parnes of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, and Suzanne Pittenger-Slear of Environmental Concern, pose for a photo at the launch of "The Green Book for the Bay" Thursday evening at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.