

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ShoreRivers is pleased to release this eighth annual River Report Card regarding the Choptank, Miles and Wye Rivers, Eastern Bay, and their tributaries. This is produced from data collected by our scientists, Riverkeepers, and approximately 50 volunteer Midshore Creekwatchers who together sampled at over 100 sites from May to October 2017.

I am pleased to report that the results are in line with those from the past two years, reflecting improved water clarity, expanding grass beds, and reduced or stable pollution concentrations for many sampling locations. The year 2017 had wet and dry months and the data correlated to these weather trends. Months with increased rainfall washed from the land pollutants such as sediments and fertilizers into our rivers, an important indicator that river pollution comes from the surrounding land. As in years past, our organization has been heavily involved in installing pollution-reducing practices across our watersheds that are contributing to improved river health.

As many of you know, Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy merged January 1, 2018 with the Chester River Association and the Sassafras River Association to become ShoreRivers, employing four Riverkeepers and a staff of twenty river advocates. We are in the process of developing a uniform program including a quality assurance project plan (QAPP) that will meet the standards set forth by the state and federal government for Tier III status so that our data will be acceptable to state and federal agencies for consideration in policy decision-making. And we are moving to issuing one ShoreRivers Report Card in future years. As a preview of this, on page nine we provide a 2017 comparison of all the grades from the tributaries that ShoreRivers now monitors.

We hope you find this Report Card informative and helpful. Please know that our staff and volunteers are working at every level to ensure that our rivers improve over time, and our new larger, stronger, and united ShoreRivers will provide the innovation and leadership to protect these resources.

Thank you for your support!

**Jeffrey Horstman**, Executive Director

Cover still photo from *High Tide in Dorchester*, a Bay Journal documentary produced and directed by local artists Sandy Cannon-Brown, Dave Harp, and Tom Horton, exploring the impacts of climate change on our coastal communities.

