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SOUTH COUNTY

New West/Rhode riverkeeper named

South River Federation leader tapped

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Biologist Chris Trumbauer, known for his conservation efforts with the South River Federation, is moving farther south to take the wheel as the West/Rhode Riverkeeper.

Officials with the West/Rhode organization announced Tuesday they have hired Mr. Trumbauer, a nine-year veteran of the Department of Natural Resources, to start working the rivers in July.

"Chris will be a welcome addition to the West/Rhode Riverkeeper team," said Terence Smith, chairman of the West/Rhode Riverkeeper Inc. Board of Directors. "As our riverkeeper, he will build on our successful work, patrolling the rivers, seeking better enforcement of environmental laws, and lead our restoration and education efforts."

Bob Gallagher, founder of the West/Rhode Riverkeeper program, has been serving as both riverkeeper and executive director of the organization.

When Mr. Trumbauer comes on board, Mr. Gallagher will concentrate on the executive job, overseeing the mission, organizational development and advocacy efforts of the West/Rhode organization.

"We are so pleased to be able to do this," Mr. Gallagher said. "With his science background and my law background we should be able to cover all the bases."

Mr. Gallagher said the move is not semi-retirement for him, by any means.

"Nothing could be farther from the truth," he said. "With Chris on board we should be able to substantially increase the resources available to the program."

The move represents a greater commitment to the rivers, by the organization and area residents.

"We are grateful for the growth of community support that has enabled (us) to expand our capability by adding a new full-time position," Mr. Smith said. "We consider this a major step forward in the protection of our watershed."



*Courtesy photo
West/Rhode Riverkeeper's Board of Directors
recently selected Chris Trumbauer, a
professional biologist, to serve as the new
West/Rhode Riverkeeper.*

Mr. Trumbauer, who has been coordinating Maryland's Shallow Water Monitoring Program at DNR, formerly worked for the agency as a field biologist.

"I'm really looking forward to getting out on the rivers and engaging the community in south county," Mr. Trumbauer said. "This is a great watershed. The West and Rhode rivers are being threatened, and there are signs that they are in trouble, but there is still time to save them."

He is anxious to get going on the work ahead.

"I am going to spend time talking to people around the rivers and watershed and learning about local issues," Mr. Trumbauer said. "Obviously with my background in water quality I will be working to engage the citizens in testing and building on the good program they have already started. And I can't wait to get people involved in a shoreline restoration or bio-retention project, getting volunteers on the ground putting a project in." While Mr. Trumbauer will be a new face out on the rivers, he is not new to the job, Mr. Gallagher said.

"He shares our passion for restoring our rivers," he said. "His experience and training in water-quality monitoring and restoration will prove especially valuable to all the residents and users of the West and Rhode rivers watershed."

Mr. Trumbauer is a member of the board of directors of the South River Federation, where he has served as vice president, as well as chairman of the River Committee. He will continue to serve on the board, but resign as vice president, federation President Kinsey Potter said.

"It is just great for Chris," she said. "But we will have to make up for all the great work he has done. He will be hard to replace."

Mr. Trumbauer has been the leader in the federation's water-monitoring program and a driving force for the organization's annual "Snapshot" and "Scorecard" programs that report water-quality conditions in the watershed.

In 2005, Mayor Ellen O. Moyer appointed him to the Annapolis Environmental Commission. There, and in the South River watershed, he has led teams of volunteers in projects to monitor water quality, organized a rain-barrel giveaway for Annapolis residents, and has worked on projects to restore streams, wetlands, and shorelines.

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