



# Watershed moment

## Crofton resident discusses health of Beaver Creek

By JAKE LINGER

jlinger@capgaznews.com

Dick Lahn spoke in a soft voice, but he easily captivated the 15 or so people who stood in his driveway.

"Close your eyes," he said. "Imagine — right where you're standing — what this was like in the 1300s. What was this spot like?"

Lahn, a 45-year Crofton resident, was making an attempt to place his visitors in a time and place where land in present-day Crofton was still heavily forested and devoid of harmful chemicals such as pesticides and carcinogens.

He was guiding his second tour of the day earlier this month, escorting nature lovers from his single-family house on Harwell Avenue through his backyard and along a highly eroded portion of Beaver Creek separating Harwell homes from the 7th green at Crofton Country Club.

Lahn and the creek, which is part of the Little Patuxent River watershed, were deemed a good partnership by the community's 50th anniversary planning committee to illustrate the before-and-after effects of the county's stormwater management.

"Everything in my whole career has been in environmental stuff," said Lahn, who worked in the Environmental Division at the U.S.



**ABOVE:** Dick Lahn of Crofton discusses the environmental impact of stormwater during a tour of the Beaver Creek watershed. **LEFT:** On the other side of Crofton Parkway, this section of Beaver Creek underwent over \$600,000 in rehabilitation with a series of weirs and buffers designed to slow down water, increasing absorption into the ground.

Photos by Matthew Cola, Staff

Department of Justice and as a lobbyist for the Sierra Club. "I've kind of been embedded in Anne Arundel County and Crofton doing projects."

The first part of the April 5 tour was designed to show what still needs to be done to fully restore

Beaver Creek to the clean and flowing stream it was when Crofton was still in its infancy.

Formerly buried drainage pipes and tubes that funnel water from

(See CREEK, Page A6)



# CREEK

(Continued from Page A5)

the golf course to the creek have been exposed and eroded.

Rocks beneath the tubes that serve as a landing zone for the drainage are rust-colored from water containing iron.

Lahn pointed out a county-funded \$200,000 gabion — an elaborate bunch of rocks and cement bound with heavy wire — that replaced a sinkhole in his backyard following a major thunderstorm two years ago.

He showed the group several trees with exposed roots caused by years of forceful rushing water from the street.

"They're all coming down," Lahn said. "It's just a matter of time. That's the power of water — amazing."

A second phase of restoration efforts for Beaver Creek have not been planned, Lahn said.

He said the overall cost to restore the county's watershed — "based on the county knowing what the condition is everywhere in the county and what can be restored" — totals approximately \$1 billion.

The second part of the tour picked up farther downstream on Crofton Parkway across from Urby Drive, where a 10-year, \$650,000 watershed restoration project is mostly complete.

Sen. Ed Reilly, R-Crofton, helped procure the restoration funding when he was a member of the County Council.

In 2012, Anne Arundel County began imposing stormwater fees, labeled by opponents as a "rain tax," that cost property owners between \$34 and \$170 annually.

According to Lahn, the



By Matthew Cole, Staff  
A section of drain tile deposits stormwater into Beaver Creek from Crofton Country Club.

significance of the county's investment in Beaver Creek is the protection of the Little Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay.

Restoration efforts included various "pools" throughout Beaver Creek, man-made dams and coastal plains outfalls carved and installed by Annapolis-based Underwood Associates.

"The more pools you create here and the more water you capture to infiltrate, the less chemicals and pollutants go downstream," Lahn said. "It's in everybody's interest."

Lahn said the result of Underwood's restoration is that the creek and its wildlife will once again thrive and be kept safe from stormwater damage.

He said the creek has been

## RAINSCAPING

To learn more about Anne Arundel County's efforts to reduce water pollution, visit [www.rainscaping.org](http://www.rainscaping.org).

restored to its natural state.

Nancy Percivall, chairwoman of the Crofton Village Garden Club's horticulture committee, said Lahn's tour of Beaver Creek was insightful.

"It was very eye-opening. I'm still learning."

Lahn said it was loosely decided about 25 years ago that all the water in Crofton should be referred to as Beaver Creek. The name stuck and people in the area went with the flow.

There are beavers in Crofton, but a constantly disappearing habitat has Lahn worried.

He said he believes more people should know not only where their water comes from, but also where it's going.

A recent stormwater study funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation helped determine ways in which the community could help mitigate damage to Beaver Creek.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Parish installed a rain garden and the fifth-grade students at Crofton Woods Elementary participated in a curb cutting, which redirects stormwater from the school's parking lot into the woods.

But living in close proximity to a body of water is no prerequisite for showing concern for the environment, Lahn said.

"Everybody lives in a watershed," he said. "It's everywhere."

[www.twitter.com/JLinger\\_CWCG](http://www.twitter.com/JLinger_CWCG)