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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHOTOS ATTACHED

GET THE DIRT OUT PROGRAM HAS SUCCESSFUL SUMMER \$11,500 MDE FINE ASSESSED AGAINST POLLUTER FALL GTDO TRAINING WORKSHOP PLANNED

Berlin, MD – [Assateague Coastal Trust](http://www.AssateagueCoastalTrust.org), an environmental advocacy non-profit located in Worcester County, MD and sponsor of the Assateague COASTKEEPER® Program, announced today that it's GET THE DIRT OUT (GTDO) citizen monitoring program has resulted in several enforcement actions as a result of construction activities that were contributing to sediment pollution of our coastal watershed.

“The most exciting result to date,” commented GTDO Program Coordinator Steve Farr of Assateague Coastal Trust, “was an \$11,500 fine levied as a result of a sediment pollution violation. Our Assateague Coastkeeper responded to a citizen monitor’s report of a well drilling project that was discharging sediment laden slurry onto a nearby creek bank in Bishopville last March and immediately notified Worcester County officials and Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Both agencies inspected the job site and quickly shut down the polluting discharge.”

MDE inspectors filed reports that resulted in MDE issuing the substantial fine against Somerset Well Drilling Co. of Princess Anne, MD. At this time, MDE and the polluter are still resolving the final settlement of the violations and the fine.

Kathy Phillips, Assateague COASTKEEPER, commented, "Well drilling activities, by law, must contain all sediment and water in such a way as to prevent sediment laden run off from the drilling site. Discharging to a nearby creek which drains to a body of water that is listed on the State 'Impaired Waters' list is especially egregious."

"This company clearly tried to take a short cut," Phillips said, "a short cut that not only would pollute a nearby creek, but was illegal."

Farr noted that another GTDO report resulted in a stop work order for a job site on Rt. 611 in West Ocean City. The contractor was moving dirt around without the proper County permits and the loose sediment was running into the roadside ditches and onto Rt. 611 with each rainfall. The contractor was ordered by the County to clean up the site, secure the ditches from any further sediment discharge, and cease operations until the proper permits were obtained.

Farr also noted that in August, a citizen monitoring report was uploaded to the GTDO website with photos of a residential construction site discharging muddy water to a nearby street. This was also reported to the County, and a prompt inspection by county officials determined the contractor was in violation of their Sediment and Erosion Control permit.

No fine was levied by the County, but the owner of the property was required to install the necessary sediment controls and remove all sediment that had left the construction site within 72 hours or face a penalty action.

Citizen monitoring and reporting to the COASTKEEPER does result in pollution being stopped and enforcement of our laws.

Anyone who is interested can be a member of the GTDO Assateague Team. Citizens are encouraged to visit the Get The Dirt Out website – www.assateaguecoastkeeper.org/GTDO - and learn more about the program. Resources are also available on the website for homeowners and contractors regarding Worcester County and Maryland's stormwater laws.

Assateague Coastal Trust will hold a training workshop for the Get The Dirt Out program on Wednesday, October 21 at 6:00 pm in the Paul Sarbanes Coastal Ecology Center located on Rt. 611 just behind the Assateague National Seashore Visitor Center. Anyone may register for

the workshop by visiting the GTDO website – www.assateaguecoastkeeper.org/GTDO or by calling Steve Farr at 410-629-1538.

One concerned citizen saved his waterway from harmful pollution and habitat damage, and we are very grateful for his activism. Assateague Coastal Trust continues to lead the way in citizen advocacy for swim-able, fishable, clean water in the coastal watershed. Visit Assateague Coastal Trust at – www.ACTForBays.org –

PHOTO CAPTIONS/CREDITS

DSCN0084 : Photo-Assateague Coastal Trust Caption: *Dirty water runs off a construction site near Ayers Creek.*

GTDO Bishopville: Photo: Assateague Coastal Trust Caption: *Sediment laden well drilling slurry being discharged to a creek bank in Bishopville, MD.*

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[The Assateague COASTKEEPER](http://www.assateaguecoastkeeper.org) is a licensed WATERKEEPER Alliance program, sponsored by [Assateague Coastal Trust](http://www.assateaguecoastaltrust.org) of Berlin, MD. Assateague Coastal Trust works to protect and enhance the natural resources of the Atlantic Coastal Bays watershed through advocacy, conservation, and education. The Assateague COASTKEEPER is an on-the-water advocate who patrols and protects the Maryland and northern Virginia eastern shore coastal bays, standing up to polluters and guaranteeing everyone's right to clean water. www.actforbays.org

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