The Back River Restoration Committee has made an instrumental impact on my life this past summer and I am proud to say I am a part of this incredible organization. I have always been a caretaker for the Maryland waterways, speaking that grew up on the water, however now I truly know what it means to care for and save the environment. It is a rewarding feeling to see the waterways of Back River cleared at the end of a hard day’s work. I learned to work with a team here at Back River and this is a life lesson I will value and carry throughout my life and future interactions with others. I did not know any of my fellow employees on the first day and now we have grown into friends. We all worked tirelessly to attain a common goal together. I am proud to say that I took part in preserving the health of the Chesapeake Bay. It was a dirty job where spiders crawled into my waders, water flooded my waders, and where I physically laid in the wetlands and murk to grab the bottles of trash from the side banks to prevent them from entering the river. However, at the end of every day I knew it was worth it. At seven in the morning, I would be in the water with my waders on and my teammates by my side and we would physically remove the trash with our hands. It was one of the greatest feelings in the world. I realize that is something peculiar to say, however it is true, and I am glad I was making a difference for the better of the environment surrounding my home. Here, I learned valuable skills such as being licensed to drive a boat. I also drove the Argo Avenger and it was truly thrilling, exhilarating, and beneficial simultaneously. My job at Back River was very dirty and required a lot of physical labor. I was in the mud, the murk, and the marsh cleaning up our rivers, because I care about the health and preservation of the environmental communities that surround my home. I believe that all leaders seek to make a difference in the world. I want to make a difference in our rivers today to have a healthy future for our Maryland waterways. While I think it is important for people to voice their opinions, I believe it is even more important for someone, a leader, to be a part of the solution by going out and doing the physical work to make that difference. It is important to me to be that person who makes the difference. When I talk with others about what I did this summer for my job, they expect me to say “lifeguard” or “waitress.” However, I am proud to say that my job was saving the environment. It is unique because most people are not willing to accept the job to save the ecosystem that lives within their backyard.

Sincerely,  
Tori Ross