

# New Earthworm Species Found

The Patuxent River recently earned a new distinction by having a new species of earthworm named after it. The earthworm *Diplocardia patuxentis* was discovered at Jug Bay by Dr. Csaba Csuzdi, an earthworm taxonomist of the Hungarian Natural History Museum, and Dr. Kathy Szlavecz, an ecologist at the Johns Hopkins University and a member of the Jug Bay Scientific Advisory Committee. The scientists dug specimens from the bank of Two Run Creek last April, when Csaba visited the United States. The Sanctuary's openness to scientists who are conducting biological research has culminated in such new discoveries and in valuable information about natural systems as well.

Of the eleven species of earthworms identified at Jug Bay, six species are native. This ratio of native species is unusually high compared to other sites. The high proportion of native earthworms may occur at the Sanctuary because the land bordering the creek is relatively undisturbed, and because many native earthworm species prefer wet habitats.

The genus *Diplocardia* is native to North America and contains over fifty known species. Another species in this genus, *D. texensis* was also found at the junction of Otter Point trail and Railroad Bed trail. *Diplocardia* species are generally small (less than 10 cm), thin, whitish worms.

Apparently, Jug Bay is a sanctuary for many animal groups besides vertebrates!