



CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM AND WATER RESOURCES UPDATES March 2022

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

[EPA Declares 'No Confidence' in Cleanup Plan for Conowingo Dam](#) *The Bay Journal*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said this week that it has “no confidence” that a pollution reduction plan written to offset the impact of the Conowingo Dam will be implemented because of a lack of funding.

[Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week](#)

Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week will be June 4-12, 2022. CBPC members are invited to prepare proclamations and to work with your department of environment to plan events to commemorate the week. You will be receiving prepared social media materials by mid-May.

[EPA Selects VIMS to Develop New Bay Model](#)

EPA’s Chesapeake Bay Program has signed a \$1.65 million cooperative agreement with the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS) to develop the next generation model of tidal waters in the Bay. The new model, which will use an existing modeling framework known as SCHISM -- for Semi-implicit Cross-scale Hydroscience Integrated System Model – will replace a tidal water model in use for decades that was developed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The new model will be part of a series of upgrades to the Bay Program’s suite of models that support the Bay TMDL. It hopes to have all of the updates in place by 2027 to provide new estimates of progress toward achieving water quality standards in tidal waters and the continuing impact of climate change. See [EPA selects VIMS model as bellwether for Bay health | Virginia Institute of Marine Science](#) for more information.

[Marine Heat Waves Could Become More Common in the Chesapeake](#) *The Bay Journal*

Marine heatwaves could lay siege to the Chesapeake Bay for more than half of a typical year by 2100, pushing its ecosystem “past a dangerous tipping point,” warns a new study by researchers at the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences.

[Are there sharks in the Chesapeake Bay?](#)

There are at least 12 species of sharks found in the Bay. Some are quite abundant, while others are very rare.

WATER QUALITY, WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER

[COG’s Stream Restoration Guidance Document has Companion Question and Answer Document](#)

This reference document contains frequently asked questions and answers about stream restoration projects and serves as a companion piece to COG’s Restoration Guidance document that was issued in December 2021.

[MDE Issues Draft Stormwater Permit to COG Members](#)

The Maryland Department of the Environment issued tentative determination drafts of new MS4 permits to five Phase I counties in Maryland, including Frederick and Charles counties, on March 11. Among other aspects, the permits require the jurisdictions to further address the extent of untreated impervious surface remaining after several rounds of these retrofit requirements in previous permits. The official draft permit for Prince George’s County was issued Nov. 5, 2021, and a similar final

permit was issued to Montgomery County and three other Phase I jurisdictions also on Nov. 5, 2021. See https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/StormwaterManagementProgram/Pages/storm_gen_permit.aspx for more information.

[CBPC Paper Competition](#)

The Paper Competition has received two expressions of interest, both from Virginia Tech students enrolled in a water quality engineering course who plan to focus on the benefits of green infrastructure.

[DOEE Director Wells on Anacostia River Recovery](#)

[Dominion Plans Coal Ash Landfill Near Potomac River](#)

Dominion Energy wants to create a permanent solution for a decades-long pileup of coal ash by building a new, lined landfill on its Possum Point property by the Potomac River. The Virginia utility company presented its plans to a small group of stakeholders during an [online meeting](#) in January.

[Sewer Treasure](#)

One person's wastewater is another person's treasure. A new Stanford University [study](#) paves the way to mining sewage for valuable materials used in fertilizers and batteries that could someday power smartphones and airplanes. The analysis, published recently in *ACS ES&T Engineering*, reveals how to optimize electrical processes for transforming sulfur pollution, and could help lead to affordable, renewable energy-powered wastewater treatment that creates drinkable water.

[Neighbors Fighting Sewer Rehab of Polluted Rock Creek Tributary](#)

Soapstone Valley, home to one of the most polluted tributaries in Rock Creek Park, is about to get a major sewer upgrade to keep the 100-year-old pipes from leaking into the stream. The upgrade has been in the works for years and is the first of several major projects to shore up antiquated sewers on National Parklands in the District. But as the project is about to get started, neighbors are fighting it — concerned about the environmental and health impacts, including loss of trees and the toxic chemicals that will be used to repair pipes.

[COG's Community Engagement Campaign Produces Suite of 30-second Water Videos](#)

The 4-part series of videos on the themes of work for water, safety of tap water, and infrastructure investments will be ready for COG members to promote starting in early April. Once the videos are closed captioned, they will be available on COG's CEC Outreach and Education webpage.

DRINKING WATER, WATER SUPPLY AND DROUGHT

[UMD-led Study Develops a Five-point Measure of Salts in Local Streams.](#)

Dr. Kaushal, University of Maryland, who is involved in COG's salts research, recently published a paper describing a five-tiered measure of freshwater salinization syndrome (the level of salinity) in rivers. His assessment includes the Potomac, Anacostia and Rock Creek watersheds.

[Road Salts Linked to Drinking Water's Higher Sodium Levels](#)

[Road Salt is Hurting Freshwater Ecosystems, and Our Drinking Water](#)

EPA Announces Availability of \$20 Million to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced \$20 million in available grant funding to assist communities and schools with removing sources of lead in drinking water. This grant funding, and additional funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will help make rapid progress on the goal of addressing lead and removing lead pipes across the country.

Maryland Senate Passes Ban of PFAS in Firefighting, Food Containers, and Rugs

PFAS Pollution Led to Contamination of US Drinking Water Well, Study Finds

Pollution by toxic PFAS “forever chemicals” in America’s aquifer system has led to widespread contamination of private and public drinking water wells, data from a new study by the US Geological Survey finds.

PFAS Update: State-by-State Regulation of PFAS Substances in Drinking Water

EPA Releases Memo Regarding Strategy for Delivering Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Funding

EPA is providing clarification guidance for states about the delivery and uses of the IIJA Funding, to streamline disbursement of the historic investment in water infrastructure.

https://www.waterworld.com/drinking-water/infrastructure-funding/article/14234543/2203wwft1?mc_cid=e5fa72e965&mc_eid=518c35391f

Some Irrigation Organizations Rely on Formal Drought Plans

Many irrigation organizations develop drought plans that provide guidance to farmers and other water users on how the organizations plan to respond in the event of a drought. USDA’s Economic Research Service and National Agricultural Statistics Service jointly produced the [Survey of Irrigation Organizations \(SIO\)](#) in 2019. The 2019 survey provided the first updated dataset of local water-supply management entities since the 1978 Census of Irrigation Organizations. The SIO provides details on how irrigation organizations plan for and respond to drought.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

2022 Federal Food System Grant Opportunities are Open

RFAs (Request for Applications) are being accepted for programs which support local and regional food system development, such as the [Local Food Promotion Program](#), [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#), and [the Regional Food Systems Partnership Program](#). There is also a new program to support [Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion](#).

These are very competitive opportunities that continue to provide critical support to our region’s food system. Please let the FARM Committee know if we can provide you or your partners with brainstorming assistance, background information, etc. for a proposal.

Virginia and Maryland Specialty Crop Block Grant Applications Open

Virginia will distribute \$600,000 in SCBG dollars to “agricultural associations, industry and producer groups, community-based organizations and academia that seek to improve the competitiveness of specialty crops in Virginia.” Applications are due March 21, 2022. Link: <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/sales-specialty-crop-competitive-grant-program.shtml>

Maryland will administer \$416,000 in SCBG funds. Food safety, Market Enhancement, and Research are priorities. Applications are due April 6, 2022. Link: https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Pages/Specialty-Crop-Block-Grant-Program.aspx

Food Solutions New England (FSNE) 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge starts April 4th
FSNE will host its 8th version of the Challenge from April 4th to April 24. The Challenge “goes beyond individual or interpersonal racism by helping to demystify structural and institutional racism and white supremacist patterns that are sometimes invisible to people.” Link: <https://foodsolutionsne.org/21-day-racial-equity-habit-building-challenge/>

USDA FY22 National Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program

The Forest Service is seeking to create a national innovative messaging for the Urban and Community Forestry Program that raises awareness of the critical and urgent need to plan, grow, and manage our urban forests to benefit all. Urban and community forestry has the potential to meet community needs arising from extreme heat, high energy costs, flooding, clean air, natural disaster relief, and green jobs. The next step is to build on this momentum and engage and empower our communities to care for their urban and community forests. *The application deadline is April 8th, 2022.*

USDA Invests \$1 Billion in Climate-Smart Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced a \$1 Billion investment in pilot projects that support farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners implementing climate-smart conservation practices.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

March 31 – Metro DC Food Security Coordination Call: Food Policy Directors’ Roundtable

April 8 – Farm and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee

May 20 – Chesapeake Bay & Water Resources Policy Committee

COG STAFF CONTACTS

Karl Berber, kberger@mwccog.org,
Heidi Bonnaffon, hbonnaffon@mwccog.org
Christine Howard, cdhoward@mwccog.org
Lindsay Smith (Food and Agriculture), lsmith@mwccog.org