

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM AND WATER RESOURCES UPDATES

November 2023

Chesapeake Bay Program

[Virginia lawmakers come through with increased cleanup money for Chesapeake Bay](#)

Bay Journal

Virginia has pledged to spend hundreds of millions of dollars this year to reduce pollution affecting the Chesapeake Bay under a long-delayed budget deal approved recently.

[A Maryland river turns orange, Bay grasses disappear](#)

Bay Journal

Until recently, underwater grasses grew so densely near the mouth of Maryland's Gunpowder River that boaters say they had to skirt the sprawling vegetation to keep it from tangling their props.

[Maryland lawmakers push to designate the Chesapeake Bay as a national recreation area](#)

Southern Maryland News

Sponsored by Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Rep. John Sarbanes (D-Md., 3rd), the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act would allow the National Park Service to bring into its network sites in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which covers over 60,000 square miles across six states and Washington, D.C. Sites would be included either through donations or purchases, but the new designation would not affect the rights of other property owners along the watershed.

[Maryland sets record for oyster planting](#)

Bay Journal

Maryland planted an annual record of almost 1.8 billion juvenile oysters this year in its portion of the Chesapeake Bay, Democratic Gov. Wes Moore announced in October. He said it demonstrated the success of the state's partnership with watermen, nonprofits, academic institutions and federal agencies in rebuilding the state's oyster population.

Water Quality, Wastewater and Stormwater

[Recent data show a slight dip in the Chesapeake Bay's water quality](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program

During 2019-2021, Chesapeake Bay Program experts from the U.S Geological Survey (USGS), University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determined that the Bay and its tidal tributaries experienced a slight decline in water quality, only meeting 28.1% attainment.

[DC WATER'S NEWEST TUNNEL PROJECT CUTS ANACOSTIA RIVER CSOS BY 98%](#)

WEF Stormwater Report

During an October 21 ceremony, DC Water (Washington, D.C.) representatives officially cut the ribbon on the Northeast Boundary Tunnel (NEBT) project. The tunnel, boasting a 340 million-L (90 million-gal) capacity for wastewater and stormwater, promises to reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs) dramatically in parts of Washington, D.C., that are served by 19th century conveyance systems.

[2023 State of the Anacostia River Full Report](#)

Anacostia Watershed Society

While long-term trends are positive, the Anacostia River receives a failing grade for the 2023 State of the River Report Card again due in large part to the continuation of low acreage of the river's underwater grasses (Submerged Aquatic Vegetation or SAV). Other indicators show sluggish but steady improvement towards a clean and healthy river.

[Pepco To Pay D.C. \\$57 Million Over Anacostia River Pollution](#)

DCist

For decades, Pepco knowingly discharged toxic chemicals into the Anacostia River, using the river and other District waterways as a “cost-free dumping ground,” according to lawsuits filed by D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb. Today Schwalb announced a \$57 million settlement of the suits — the largest environmental settlement in D.C. history.

[Seeking solutions for the Anacostia's toxic hot spots](#)

Bay Journal

A group of people standing knee-deep in the marshy muck of the Anacostia River might have been mistaken for mussel foragers on an early August morning, except for their hazmat-like clothing. And the footlong mud-covered spikes they pulled out of a highly contaminated stretch of the river that day were not for consumption.

[When Can We Swim in the Anacostia River?](#)

Anacostia Watershed Society

Ah, summertime! When life in the DC region slows down just a bit and thoughts turn to family cookouts, vacation escapes, what to do with the kids all day and, on the Anacostia River...swimming?

[DC Water completes tunnel project designed to relieve flooding](#)

NBC Washington

Construction is complete on the Northeast Boundary Tunnel, a project that aims to address flooding in the District, DC Water announced Friday. The agency shared pictures of the completed tunnel on social media. It was designed to reduce recurring flooding on Mt. Olivet Road NE and Rhode Island Avenue and improve water quality in the Anacostia River, DC Water said.

[In A Segregated D.C., He Learned To Swim In The Anacostia River](#)

DCist

This Saturday, for the first time in more than 50 years, D.C. residents will have a chance to take a dip in the Anacostia River. For just about everyone, it will be their first-time swimming in the river — after all, there has been a swim ban in place since the early 1970s. But it won't be Dennis Chestnut's first time in the river.

[Drinking Water, Water Supply and Drought](#)

[COG's Water Supply and Drought Report for November](#)

Potomac streamflow and groundwater levels continue to decline due to the lack of precipitation in our region. The most recent U.S. Drought monitor released on October 31 indicates that a range of abnormal, moderate, and severe drought exists in the Potomac Watershed.

[ICPRB's Water Supply Outlook for November](#)

With only 1.4 inches of precipitation in October, there is a 1.6-inch deficit from the typical average for the past month. Consequently, both streamflow and groundwater levels have decreased. These inadequate precipitation and depleted groundwater levels can lead to low flow conditions requiring releases from backup water supply reservoirs.

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces Availability of \\$20 Million in Grants to Create Career Opportunities in the Water Workforce](#)

EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing the availability of over \$20 million in grant funding to support training for workers who protect and treat our nation's drinking water and provide critical wastewater services. Through the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant program, EPA will support training and career opportunities in the water sector. With the Biden-Harris Administration's historic investment in water infrastructure, growing and sustaining the water sector workforce is more important than ever for ensuring clean and safe water for generations to come.

PFAS

[Pennsylvania to crack down on 'forever chemicals' in streams and rivers](#)

Bay Journal

After a statewide survey showed that 76% of 161 tested rivers and streams were contaminated to some extent with PFAS, or "forever chemicals," the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection said it will set safety thresholds for the chemicals in surface waters.

[TSCA PFAS Final Reporting Rule Is Here](#)

The National Law Review

We have previously written regarding EPA's efforts to create new PFAS rulemaking under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). On September 28, 2023, EPA released its TSCA PFAS final rule, which significantly expanded reporting and recordkeeping practices related to PFAS. A common misconception is that TSCA's PFAS rules only apply to PFAS manufacturers or companies importing PFAS for various uses; however, this is only part of the picture.

[PFAS chemicals detected in many rivers and streams across Pennsylvania](#)

USGS

Water samples from 161 Pennsylvania rivers and streams were tested for 33 different per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and 76% of the studied streams contained at least one of these chemicals, also known as PFAS.

[Pennsylvania to increase PFAS monitoring in rivers and streams](#)

WHYY PBS NPR

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection will increase monitoring for the toxic class of chemicals known as PFAS. The announcement comes about a month after the U.S. Geological Survey found 76% of at least 161 rivers and streams in the state contained one or more of the so-called "forever chemicals."

[Update on U.S. EPA's Proposed Rule to Designate PFOA and PFOS as Hazardous Substances Under CERCLA](#)

JDSUPRA

We have been closely monitoring the progress of the United States Environmental Protection Agency

("EPA") proposed rule to designate perfluorooctanoic acid ("PFOA") and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid ("PFOS"), two per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS"), as hazardous substances under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act ("CERCLA"). If finalized, the rule would have far-reaching consequences on closed and in-progress Superfund sites, state cleanup program requirements, and commercial real estate transactions.

Climate and Energy

[\\$1.2M in NSF Funding Supports Research to Develop New Water and Ice Sensors](#)

Maryland Today

A University of Maryland researcher is leading a pair of new National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded projects to deploy advanced sensors to better understand how climate change is affecting ice—and the water quality beneath—near the poles and elsewhere.

[Mid-Atlantic Regional Climate Impacts Summary and Outlook: Spring 2023](#)

MARISA

This summary focuses on weather and climate events in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and provides highlights from the greater Mid-Atlantic region for the spring 2023 season.

[Spill of plastic pellets in Maryland reveals the polluting potential of 'nurdles'](#)

Maryland Matters

A train that derailed in the Anacostia River watershed on Sept. 23 introduced local officials to a source of pollution no one was quite prepared to handle: nurdles. These tiny plastic pellets, each about the size of a lentil, are transported around the world as the raw materials of plastic production. At 1 a.m. on Sept. 23, during a tropical storm, a CSX train derailed, spilling an unknown quantity of the pellets from some of its 16 railcars.

Food, Forestry and Agriculture

[Chesapeake Bay Program fights tree loss with land conservation](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program

As populations and industry increase across the Chesapeake Bay watershed, there is more development pressure on forests, farms and wetlands. This change often comes with a negative impact to the region's waters and wildlife. With recent data showing that tree loss is outpacing tree plantings in the watershed's urban areas, this issue is at a critical moment.

[D.C. Area Gets Tens Of Millions In Funding For 'Tree Equity'](#)

DCist

Local nonprofits will plant tens of thousands of trees across the D.C. area in Black and brown neighborhoods that currently lack tree canopy. It's an effort to promote 'tree equity' — making sure the many benefits of trees reach everyone.

[The farm bill has expired. Congress is months away from a new version](#)

Maryland Matters

As the deadline for Congress to enact a new farm bill passed this weekend, staff members of the House and Senate Agriculture committees say it will be months — if not longer — until they reach agreement on a new bill.

[Can Agroforestry Breathe New Life Into Carbon Markets?](#)

Civil Eats

Most carbon offset programs aimed at farmers have focused on large monocrop corn and soy operations. But in Southern Appalachia, Carbon Harvest is developing an alternative market for small farms that integrates trees.

[State of Chesapeake Forests 2.0](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program Story Map

In September 2006, the State of Chesapeake Forests report provided a comprehensive watershed-wide snapshot on forests in the 206 counties that feed into the Chesapeake Bay. The report provides a history of forests in the watershed, describes their importance, and presents comprehensive data on forest extent, composition, health, products, trends, and more.

[Region on track for 2-million-acre land protection goal](#)

Bay Journal

The Chesapeake Bay region has permanently protected about 1.64 million acres of land since 2010, putting it roughly on pace to meet its goal of preserving 2 million acres by 2025, according to figures from the Chesapeake Bay Program.

[Capital Area Food Bank Hunger Report 2023](#)

The Capital Area Food Bank released their [Hunger Report 2023](#), which contains surprising new data about food insecurity and inequity across our region. The report uses research collected from nearly 5,300 Greater Washington area residents to highlight multiple factors that continue to make putting food on the table difficult for many across the region.

[Montgomery County Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger](#)

The recently released [Montgomery County Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger](#), was spearheaded by Councilmember Alborno along with a partnership between the County government, schools, local organizations, members of the General Assembly, and the Montgomery County Food Council. The Montgomery County Food Council managed this extensive project to produce 14 strategies to address this crisis in the County.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:

The following CBP groups are calling for nominations for the workgroup positions listed below. The deadlines for the newest calls are in January, while previously announced opportunities have earlier deadlines (noted below). Where applicable, incumbent at-large members are eligible to be re-nominated at the incumbent's choice.

[Agriculture WG](#): deadline **Thursday, Jan 18th, 2024**

- Vice Chair (1 position), 2 year term
- At-Large Members (6 positions), 2 year term

[Land Use WG](#): deadline **Thursday, Jan 18th, 2024**

- Vice Chair or Co-Chair (1 position), 2-4 year term
- At-Large Members (3 positions), 2 year term

[Water Quality GIT](#): deadline **Monday, Nov 13th, 2023** for Chair nominees and **Friday, January 12th** for At-Large nominees

- Vice Chair or Co-Chair (1 position), 2 year term

- At-Large Members (3 positions), 2 year term

Wastewater Treatment WG: deadline **Tuesday, Dec 5th, 2023**

- At-Large Members (6 positions), 2 year and 1 year terms

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out (pickford.jacqueline@epa.gov).

Upcoming Meetings and Events

FARM: December 8

CBPC: November 17

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