

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM AND WATER RESOURCES UPDATES

March 2024

Chesapeake Bay Program

[Annual report provides updates on 18 Watershed Agreement outcomes](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program

Today, the Chesapeake Bay Program is pleased to release its annual update on the environmental health and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Bay Barometer is a science-based snapshot of the most recent data that is available for the goals and outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

[2023 Bay Barometer Fact Sheets](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program

The 2023 Bay Barometer report provides an update on 18 outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, including those related to blue crabs, oysters, forest buffers and protected lands.

[10 reasons to be hopeful about the Chesapeake Bay in 2024](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program

Protecting the 64,000 square miles of land and water within the Chesapeake Bay watershed is an immense challenge. But if you look across the region, you will find many reasons to be optimistic. Rivers are rebounding, key species are recovering and the resources, partnerships and science needed for impactful restoration are only getting stronger.

[Bay Foundation Puts New Hope In Oysters For Water Restoration](#)

Chesapeake Bay Magazine

The oyster news has been good already this year, as these keystone shellfish appear finally to be on the upswing after decades of dismal news. In January, we reported on “once in a generation” oyster reproduction levels. With oysters thriving, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) believes oysters could play an even more expanded role in improving the health of the Bay ecosystem, while making our Bay more resilient to the changing climate and rising sea level.

[Black watermen share about challenges, changes on the Chesapeake](#)

The Star

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum’s Van Lennep Auditorium was packed on Saturday, Feb. 17, for “Troubled Waters: Black Watermen.” Panelists included Captain Lamont Wright, Reverend Dr. William Wallace, Edzel Turner and James “Captain Buck” Lynch, all of whom have been longtime watermen in varying capacities. The men came together to engage in a dialogue about the successes and challenges of being African American watermen in honor of Black History Month.

Water Quality, Wastewater and Stormwater

[Google, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association Collaborate on Water Quality Project in Virginia](#)

MD & VA Milk Producers Cooperative Association

Today, Google, The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (Alliance) and Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association (MDVA) announce the completion of their innovative collaboration that will improve water quality in the Northern Virginia region. Through this partnership, including a more than \$230,000 contribution from Google, streamside trees, known as riparian

buffers, were installed on five Shenandoah Valley area dairy farms, totaling more than 2,800 native hardwood trees planted.

[Even With Less Snowy Winters, Road Salt Can Pollute Waterways](#)

DCist

Salt is used to keep roads and sidewalks safe, but it comes with a cost. When snow melts, the salt runs off into local streams and rivers, raising salinity levels. Higher salinity harms freshwater creatures, causing water to leave their bodies through osmosis. Too much salt also damages infrastructure. Salt causes billions of dollars in damage to roads and bridges — not to mention cars — and it also corrodes water drinking water pipes, leaching metals including lead into the water supply.

[Tire Dumping Epidemic: D.C. Residents Fight Back Against Illegal and Dangerous Trash](#)

The Washington Informer

DPW Removed 11 Tons of Debris from I-295 Last Month; At Least 2 Tire Dumping Hot Spots Remain Untouched. Tires left in the District's woodlands and green spaces often slip through the cracks, leaving citizens to step in. Volunteers collected almost 250 tires — weighing about 5,000 pounds — during an MLK Day cleanup in Ward 7's Pope Branch Park last month, according to Dolly Davis, president of the Pope Branch Park Restoration Alliance.

[How Are We Doing on the Anacostia?](#)

The Hill Rag

Are we meeting our timelines and goals in the Anacostia watershed? Overall, the situation is looking very positive. This is because of DC Water's \$2.7 billion Clean River Project. The two massive tunnels that comprise the project capture and hold 98 percent of the stormwater and sewage that would otherwise have gone into the river. This runoff now goes to the Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant, a part of DCWater.

Drinking Water, Water Supply and Drought

[Better traction, too salty drinking water: U. of Md. researcher on environmental impact of road de-icers](#)

WTOP News

On snowy road surfaces, road salt does the trick to provide better traction. "Road salt is mostly sodium chloride, just like the table salt you put on your food," said Sujay Kaushal, a professor of geology at University of Maryland. "Ions in the salt — little particles — squeeze themselves in between the water when it's freezing, so that the water has trouble forming a crystal of ice."

[A simple way to get microplastics out of your water](#)

The Washington Post

New research found that boiling drinking water can remove up to nearly 90 percent of microplastics. Tiny plastic particles can seem alarmingly ubiquitous and nearly impossible to get rid of — they've been found in food, breast milk and even clouds. But new research suggests that a simple solution could reduce microplastics in drinking water: boiling it.

PFAS

[Landfills tackle the challenge of PFAS contamination](#)

Environmental Health News

In an innovative approach, SKB Environmental's landfill in Rosemount, Minnesota, is experimenting with filtering harmful PFAS chemicals from waste leachate, aiming to neutralize their environmental impact.

[Contact lenses linked to higher levels of PFAS exposure](#)

Environmental Health News

Young adults who use contact lenses have higher levels of exposure to PFAS - a group of hazardous chemicals - compared to those who don't, according to a new study published in Chemosphere.

Climate and Energy

[Will climate change add more nutrient pollution to the Chesapeake Bay?](#)

Bay Journal

A recent analysis...found that nutrient increases triggered by climate change in the next three decades would be significantly greater than the nutrient impacts of development, population growth and economic activity combined.

[The State of Clean Energy 2023](#)

Clean Energy Business Network

Clean energy industries have represented the growth sectors of the U.S. energy economy over the past decade, providing good-paying jobs while supporting a cleaner, healthier future for communities across the nation. The recent passage of major pieces of legislation—the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021—have contributed to a massive influx of both public and private investment and capital into the clean energy economy.

[Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program Now Open!](#)

EPA

EPA's new Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants program (Community Change Grants) has announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for approximately \$2 billion dollars in Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds in environmental and climate justice activities to benefit disadvantaged communities through projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to address environmental and climate justice challenges.

[A new satellite will track climate-warming pollution. Here's why that's a big deal](#)

NPR

MethaneSAT – led by the Environmental Defense Fund – will have a targeted focus: to spot methane from the oil and gas industry, which leaks at various parts of the fossil fuel production process. Sometimes oil companies deliberately burn methane gas if they can't pipe it somewhere.

Food, Forestry and Agriculture

[Understanding the Intersection of Climate Risk, Food System Resilience, and Racial Equity: A County-Level Data Tool](#)

Urban Institute

While food system resilience is crucial to ensuring that communities have the local resources needed to meet their food needs in a world that is increasingly vulnerable to shocks, few tools exist to help localities understand food system resilience to climate hazards, especially among communities of color.

[USDA releases 2022 Census of Agriculture data](#)

USDA

Feb. 13, 2024 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) today announced the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, spanning more than 6 million data points about America’s farms and ranches and the people who operate them down to the county level.

[It’s Been 30 Years Since Food Ate Up This Much of Your Income](#)

The Wall Street Journal

The last time Americans spent this much of their money on food, George H.W. Bush was in office. Eating continues to cost more, even as overall inflation has eased from the blistering pace consumers endured throughout much of 2022 and 2023. Prices at restaurants and other eateries were up 5.1% last month compared with January 2023, while grocery costs increased 1.2% during the same period, Labor Department data show.

[Biden administration announces \\$207 million for fertilizer, rural clean-energy projects](#)

Reuters

The Biden administration is spending \$207 million on domestic fertilizer and renewable energy projects, as part of an effort to boost supplier competition for U.S. farmers and ranchers and help lower energy costs for agricultural producers, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said on Monday.

[What the Latest Farm Census Says About the Changing Ag Landscape](#)

Civil Eats

In this week’s Field Report, we take a look at the USDA’s 2022 Farm Census, the new Climate Corps, the costs of methane digesters, and more. Texas has more farms than any other state, but California generates the most money from farming. Young farmers under 35 are more prevalent in northern states. In 2022, nearly 18,000 farms grew blueberries compared to 16,000 farms in 2017.

[As the Number of American Farms and Farmers Declines, Agriculture Secretary Urges Climate Action to Reverse the Trend](#)

Inside Climate News

The new Census of Agriculture shows carbon-intensive farms and large, factory-scale animal operations are only getting bigger. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack heled unveil his agency’s Census of Agriculture, a huge quinquennial report that covers 6 million data points and gives the current state-of-the-state of American farms and farmers.

[Can Taller Cover Crops Help Clean the Water in Farm Country?](#)

Civil Eats

Under pewter-colored skies, Alan Bedtka tramps through the snow and past a stand of sorghum-sudangrass, its chest-high stems rattling in the harsh wind. The tall forage stands out in southeastern Minnesota’s corn and soybean fields. The sorghum-sudangrass works as both a cover crop and forage for the cattle, and it’s helping Bedtka build up organic matter in his soil.

[ICPRB Holds Webinar on Agriculture and Water Quality](#)

ICPRB

On January 19, 2024, ICPRP hosted speakers from Devereux Consulting and the National Association of Conservation Districts to cover the impacts that agricultural land use has on water quality in the Potomac basin and funding opportunities available to mitigate these effects. Check out the webinar recording at the link.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Bike to Work Day

Event

Bike to Work Day is Friday, May 17, 2024. Join us at more than 100 pit stops in DC, MD, and VA for this FREE event for a fun and healthy way to start your day. The first 16,000 who register and attend at a pit stop receive a FREE T-shirt. Free giveaways, food, and beverages at participating locations, while supplies last.

NatCap PRISM

The National Capital Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (NatCap PRISM) is a newly formed committee under COG. The first steering committee took place on February 28th. The NatCap PRISM was created to address the effects of invasive species on native plants, wildlife, and habitats throughout the National Capital Area. Core partners include DC DOEE, Fairfax County DPWES, Montgomery County, Fairfax County Park Authority, COG, Rock Creek Conservancy, Casey Trees, Nature Forward, and Ward 8 Woods.

FARM: April 12, 2024

CBPC: May 17, 2024

WRTC: September 13, 2024

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