

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM AND WATER RESOURCES UPDATES

September 2024

Chesapeake Bay Program

[Far from the shores of the Chesapeake, organizations are recognized for their efforts to keep the Bay healthy](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program

EPA and NFWF award 56 grants totaling over \$23.8 million. In early September, the stunning natural phenomenon of Seneca Rocks served as the backdrop to announce the most recent round of [Small Watershed Grant](#) (SWG) recipients. The SWG program supports projects throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed that promote voluntary, community-based efforts to protect and restore the diverse and vital habitats of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Grants totaling \$23.8 million were awarded across each of the seven jurisdictions of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

[Bay grasses continued to rise in 2023, much to the delight of fans like me](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay Program [announced](#) today that the abundance of underwater grasses has continued to increase for the third straight year in a row. Scientists from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) believe the Chesapeake Bay could have supported as many as 82,937 acres of underwater grasses in 2023. We say “could have” because while 79,234 acres were observed through an aerial survey and satellite imagery, portions of the Potomac River were not able to be mapped due to security restrictions. Using the acreage of grasses noted in that portion of the Potomac from the previous year gets us to the estimate of 82,937 acres.

Water Quality, Wastewater and Stormwater

[Protect Local Waterways](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program

The Bay Program has a new website dedicated to the *Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay*, developed in consult with the Local Leadership Work Group and LGAC. *Protect Local Waterways* has factsheets, presentations, and case studies on issues that matter to local governments such as *Capitalizing on the Benefits of Trees*, *Stormwater Resilience*, *Building the Workforce*, *Keys to Community Buy-in for the Environment* and *Understanding and Supporting Your Agricultural Allies*. Modules on these topics and more are on www.protectlocalwaterways.org/

[Protecting the Chesapeake Bay, One Stream at a Time](#)

Maryland DNR

Cattail Creek is the site of a stream restoration project, now complete for five years. Maryland Department of Natural Resources officials point to the project as an example of the benefits of stream restorations, both locally and to the Chesapeake Bay watershed as a whole. As impermeable surfaces increase across the state, stormwater is often channeled into streams at a heavier quantity, causing erosion as well as the buildup of pollutants that aren't absorbed in the streambed. In the past few decades, Cattail Creek had become degraded by excessive stormwater runoff from developments and the nearby Route 2. After storms, the stream would run thick and muddy. Now,

since the 2019 completion of the restoration, the stream is clear and controlled, even the day after a big rainstorm.

[After \\$615 Million and 16 Months of Tunneling, Alexandria, Virginia, Is Close to Fixing Its Sewage Overflow Problem](#)

Inside Climate News

For centuries, the Potomac River has helped fuel the nation. Winding 405 miles from West Virginia to the Chesapeake Bay, the river beloved by George Washington has been a source of everything from fish and drinking water for the nation's capital to a channel for commerce, a defense against the Confederate Army and a backdrop for a thousand tourist photos of Washington, D.C. But this March, something new emerged from its waters—or, perhaps more accurately, from the earth beneath them. Her name was Hazel. She had been working for 16 months to dig a 2.2-mile-long tunnel beneath the Potomac and the oldest part of the Virginia city of Alexandria to hold sewage.

[Anacostia River cleanup: \\$1M grant to fund removal of trash, sunken boats](#)

FOX 5

A new million-dollar project aims to clean up the Anacostia River. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) announced Monday that, in partnership with Anacostia Riverkeeper, they're receiving a grant of nearly \$1 million from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program. The money will be used to remove an estimated 60,000 pounds of trash and debris from the Anacostia Watershed, along with 33 abandoned or derelict vessels from Marinas along the Anacostia.

[ICPRB Wins \\$419,300 Grant to Increase Eel Habitat in the Potomac River](#)

ICPRB

The American eel has historically been found throughout the Potomac River. In recent centuries, dams and other hindrances have decreased access to available habitat resulting in significantly reduced population numbers. The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) recently was awarded a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) grant to help restore the eels to their native range and make existing populations more resilient.

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

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

As part of the Metropolitan Washington Water Supply and Drought Awareness Response Plan, COG issues monthly drought reports from May- October. Precipitation, groundwater, and streamflow levels are reviewed as well as recent forecasts for the region.

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

The probability of releases from backup water supply reservoirs in the Washington metropolitan area during the summer and fall seasons of 2024 is currently near normal. The use of Jennings Randolph and Little Seneca reservoirs is generally triggered by low flows brought about by a combination of low summer precipitation and low groundwater levels. The Potomac basin upstream of Washington, D.C., received 6.7 inches of rain in August, which is 3.3 inches above normal.

[Council of Governments declares regional Drought Watch](#)

MWCOG

As the region experiences unusually dry conditions that are expected to persist despite recent rainfall, a Drought Watch was put into effect today by the Drought Coordination Committee of the

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). Residents and businesses in the metropolitan Washington region are being asked to take voluntary measures to conserve water and help reduce demand on the region's water supply systems. The regional drought watch applies to nearly six million residents across metropolitan Washington.

[There's officially a drought across the DC area, but will it affect the local drinking water supply?](#)

WTOP

It's dry out there. Abnormally dry. So dry that the federal U.S. Drought Monitor has declared that western parts of the D.C. region are in a "moderate drought." But will the trace amounts of rain in September affect the local drinking water supply? Unlikely, says the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB). According to a Thursday report from the U.S. Drought Monitor, portions of Fairfax, Loudoun and Montgomery counties are in "moderate drought," while most areas in Virginia and much of Maryland's Eastern Shore are considered "abnormally dry," but not in a drought.

PFAS

[How a California county got PFAS out of its drinking water](#)

NPR

Across the country the Environmental Protection Agency estimates there are thousands of water systems, serving around 100 million people, that have harmful levels of PFAS in their drinking water. Under an EPA rule [finalized in April](#), affected water districts will have to take action to clean their water supplies. In Orange County, Calif., the Yorba Linda treatment plant and others around it provide examples of how it can be done.

Food, Forestry and Agriculture

[These states tried, and failed, to cut food waste. One succeeded.](#)

Washington Post

Nearly every state-led effort to ban food waste analyzed by researchers appears to be failing — except one, according to a new study. The study, published Thursday in the journal *Science*, singled out Massachusetts for reducing the amount of food that gets tossed in the trash. But its more troubling findings in other states reveal how one of the most seemingly straightforward ways to tackle climate change is, in practice, a tough problem to solve.

[Weather forces continue to hamper Va. Agriculture](#)

Delmarva Farmer

Hurricane weather and drought are joining forces this summer to add uncertainty to Virginia farmers' outlook. As some parts of the state continue dealing with Hurricane Debby's brief visit, the ag community is taking predictions of increasing drought seriously.

Following a cool spell last week, the likes of which has not occurred in August since 1918, predictions are for hot dry weather in a state with drought conditions ranging from severe through moderate to abnormally dry.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

9th Annual Festival del Rio Anacostia

Saturday, September 21st 10am – 4pm.

Bladensburg Waterfront Park 4601 Annapolis Rd, Bladensburg, MD

Bring your family to celebrate the outdoors and the [Anacostia](#) River. Enjoy hands-on activities, crafts, entertainment, delicious food, free boat rides, fishing demos, live animals, and free giveaways. Learn about the Chesapeake Bay and drinking water health.

CBPC: November 15th

FARM: December 13th

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