

PRESS RELEASE

From the CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION, EASTERN SHORE LAND CONSERVANCY, HARRY R. HUGHES CENTER FOR AGRO-ECOLOGY, INC., and UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SEA GRANT EXTENSION

Dec. 10, 2015

For Immediate Release

For Information Contact:

Tom Zolper, CBF Maryland Communications Coordinator
(443)-482-2066, tzolper@cbf.org



Maryland Eastern Shore counties and municipalities unite to propose collaborative actions to clean local waters

PRACTICAL, COST-EFFECTIVE STEPS RECOMMENDED

Representatives from all nine Eastern Shore counties in Maryland, as well as from Berlin, Cambridge, Chestertown, Easton, Oxford, and Salisbury, have agreed to an action plan to expedite restoration of Shore creeks and rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. The group of more than 30 local government representatives, known as the Healthy Waters Round Table, recommended five preliminary steps to pursue in 2016.

With help from five supporting non-profit, academic and research organizations, the group narrowed down a list of 120 ideas into a handful of initial actions that could be accomplished with existing resources. They also identified longer-range actions that could be achieved with added resources.

“Many local leaders on Maryland’s Eastern Shore care deeply about the value that clean water brings to local economies and the region’s quality of life,” said Dirck Bartlett, a round table participant who serves on the Talbot County Council. “But we have a long way to go to meet goals for cleaner water on the Shore. This plan allows for the counties and municipalities here to work together on the most practical, cost-effective clean-up strategies.”

The five preliminary steps recommended for 2016 are: provide grant writing training; create and distribute model documents for soliciting grants and consulting services; secure staff training for the Maryland Assessment Scenario Tool (MAST), a web-based nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment load estimator tool to streamline environmental planning; provide staff training in social marketing and public education; and obtain clarity and guidance on state stormwater management expectations and priorities for Eastern Shore communities.

(MORE)

Longer-term priorities of the group include:

- Identify and prioritize means to fill gaps in funding water quality control projects;
- Streamline the process for tracking and reporting of Best Management Practices;
- Develop policies and procedures for expanding sewer service to appropriate areas currently utilizing septic systems;
- Create a circuit rider system to assist jurisdictions with specific contractor help;
- Establish a sharable clearinghouse of methods, approaches and resources for reducing pollution; and
- Improve the maintenance of existing devices and practices used to control polluted runoff.

To complete the priority actions, six work groups comprised of interested jurisdictions' representatives are being formed with each one tasked with developing a detailed work plan to implement each priority. All Eastern Shore local government representatives are invited to attend the upcoming work group meetings.

Government representatives met four times as a round table from August to December 2015 to prioritize steps for action, based on several guiding questions, such as, "What cost effective solutions exist and which are the highest priority?"

The Eastern Shore leaders who participated in the program said they value the opportunity to work cooperatively on the best methods for achieving clean water.

"With the Healthy Waters Round Table, we're working across county and town lines to share knowledge and experience, maximize limited resources, and procure new funding and assistance," said Queen Anne's County Board of Commissioners president Jim Moran.

Maryland and 5 other states in the Chesapeake Bay region, along with the District of Columbia, have until 2025 to establish practices that reduce pollution to specific levels under a regional plan to restore the Bay called the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint. The plan also requires each state to submit progress reports every two years. If achieved, the pollution reductions will significantly boost the populations of fish, oysters, and crabs in the Bay, heal damaged aquatic habitats, and boost economic development, experts say.

In Maryland, counties and municipalities also are being asked to contribute their own efforts to meet the mandated state pollution reduction goals. Eastern Shore counties have made some progress, but many are seeking new ways to accelerate their efforts.

Eastern Shore local officials involved in the Healthy Waters Round Table include:

Upper Eastern Shore

Cecil County	Alan McCarthy, Council Vice President
Cecil County	Alfred Wein, County Administrator
Cecil County	Kordell Wilen, Chief, DPW Development Services Division
Kent County	William Pickrum, Commission President
Kent County	Amy Moredock, Director, Planning, Housing and Zoning

(MORE)

Queen Anne's County	Jim Moran, Commission President
Queen Anne's County	Rob Gunter, Community and Environmental Planner
Town of Chestertown	Chris Cerino, Mayor
Town of Chestertown	Liz Gross, Council Member
Town of Chestertown	Kees DeMooy, Zoning Administrator

Middle Eastern Shore

Caroline County	Wilbur Levensgood, Commissioner
Caroline County	Katheleen Freeman, Director, Department of Planning, Codes & Engineering
Caroline County	Leslie Grunden, Planner III
City of Cambridge	Donald Sydnor, Commission President
City of Cambridge	Odie Wheeler, Director, Department of Public Works
Dorchester County	Ricky Travers, Council President
Dorchester County	Don Satterfield, Council Member
Talbot County	Dirck Bartlett, Council Member
Talbot County	Ray Clarke, County Engineer
Talbot County	Bill Wolinski, Environmental Engineer
Town of Easton	Robert Willey, Mayor
Town of Easton	Rick Van Emburgh, Town Engineer
Town of Oxford	Carole Abruzzese, Commission President
Town of Oxford	Gordon Graves, Town Commissioner
Town of Oxford	Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator

Lower Eastern Shore

City of Salisbury	Jake Day, Mayor
City of Salisbury	Jim Ireton, City Council Member
City of Salisbury	Amanda Pollack, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works
Somerset County	Kymerly Kudla, Planner
Town of Berlin	Gee Williams, Mayor
Town of Berlin	Jane Kreiter, Director, Departments of Water Resources and Public Works
Wicomico County	John Cannon, Council President
Wicomico County	Keith Hall, Transportation & Long Range Planner
Wicomico County	Weston Young, Director, Department of Public Works
Worcester County	Jim Bunting, Commission President
Worcester County	Robert Mitchell, Director, Department of Environmental Programs

The supporting partners that helped create the Healthy Water Roundtable are: the Chesapeake Bay Foundation; Eastern Shore Land Conservancy; Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology; and University of Maryland Sea Grant Extension. Earth Data Incorporated provides the round table with consultant services. To access the Healthy Waters Round Table action plan, visit the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology website. The direct address is to the report is:
<https://agresearch.umd.edu/agroecol/educationoutreach/healthy-waters-round-table>.