



Chesapeake Bay Program
A Watershed Partnership

Press Release

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Local Organizations Receive Nearly \$3 Million to Help Restore Local Rivers and Chesapeake Bay

Ninety-three grants aim to improve local waters throughout the Bay watershed

Annapolis, Md. (September 9, 2004) – Community-based organizations and local governments throughout the Bay watershed will launch 93 Bay and river restoration projects thanks to nearly \$3 million in grants provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Chesapeake Bay Program.

The grants, provided through the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program, aim to accelerate the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers by providing funds to help local communities restore their part of the Bay watershed.

Projects funded through the program include creating rain gardens that reduce polluted runoff to planting streamside forest buffers that prevent erosion to restoring underwater grasses that provide critical habitat for the Bay's fish and animals. Programs will take place across the Bay's 64,000 square-mile watershed in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

In addition to building the capacity of local organizations, this year's grants will manage or protect approximately 4,000 acres of critical fish and wildlife habitat including wetlands, oyster reefs and underwater grasses. Grant recipients will plant more than 35 miles of forest buffers and improve an additional 60 miles of streams that drain into the Bay. More than 8,000 community volunteers will actively participate in the projects, while some 85,000 citizens will be educated through the dissemination of outreach materials.

In the past five years, the Small Watershed Grants Program has provided \$11.3 million to support 350 projects throughout the Bay watershed. These grants have been used by recipients to leverage an additional \$27 million from other funding sources, resulting in \$38 million in support of local community watershed restoration efforts since 1999.

Proposed projects are reviewed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and selected based on set criteria paralleling commitments set forth in the *Chesapeake*

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2000 Bay restoration agreement. The agreement calls on Bay states and the District of Columbia to combine efforts with watershed organizations to restore local water quality and the living resources of the Bay watershed. Projects funded through the Small Watershed Grants Program assist local groups in gaining experience and technical expertise needed to improve watershed protection in their communities.

Primary funding for the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program Office. Additional funding partners include the USDA Forest Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of the Interior's Office of Surface Mining, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Funding support is also provided by Altria and the Rauch Foundation.

Award decisions were coordinated with the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the Western Pennsylvania Watershed Program who are anticipated to leverage this year's awards with additional funds.

For a complete listing and map of the 2004 Small Watershed Grants recipients in your area or state, please visit the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation homepage at <http://www.nfwf.org> or the Chesapeake Bay Program at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/press.htm>.

Statements from Regional Leaders on the Announcement of the 2004 Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants

Statement from Senator Paul S. Sarbanes

"These small grants are making a big difference in promoting citizen-based stewardship and helping to repair degraded watersheds throughout the Chesapeake Bay basin. And who better to do this work than local community groups – the river organizations, schools, scouts, homeowner associations, land trusts – who have the local knowledge, energy and passion to care for their streams and natural resources – or the local governments which are responsible for local land use and other important decisions."

Statement from Senator Barbara A. Mikulski

"Maryland communities want to stand up for the health of the Chesapeake Bay, but they can't do it on their own. The Small Watershed Grants are a federal investment in helping communities protect and preserve the Bay."

Statement from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Executive Director John Berry

"By partnering with the communities in the watershed, the Program is investing in and engaging those people who are most concerned about the health and future of the Chesapeake Bay. These projects have a direct impact at the local level on improving water quality in our streams and rivers and conserving critical habitat for our region's diverse fish and wildlife species."

Statement from Environmental Protection Agency Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Donald S. Welsh

“The Small Watershed Grants Program fosters the type of partnerships and collaboration necessary in improving the Chesapeake Bay. The federal government is pleased to provide these critical dollars to assist local watershed initiatives. It is one of the important ways we are working together to help restore this national treasure.”

Statement from US Forest Service Northeastern Director of State and Private Forestry Kathryn Maloney

“The Forest Service is proud to be a partner in the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program. This year, we are pleased to support nineteen local projects that integrate trees and forests into watershed restoration and conservation and contribute to improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay.”

Statement from National Marine Fisheries Service Assistant Administrator Dr. Bill Hogarth

“NOAA is committed to restoring coastal habitats that benefit marine fisheries. Locally-conceived projects like those announced today produce on-the-ground results and help foster an appreciation for the Chesapeake Bay watershed.”

Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Bruce I. Knight

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently contributed \$5 million to Maryland, Delaware and Virginia toward an ongoing commitment to improve natural resources in the Delmarva Peninsula. The Natural Resources Conservation Services' commitment to renew resources in the Delmarva Peninsula, and ultimately to protect the health of the Chesapeake Bay, is well-known. Toward this on-going commitment to the Chesapeake Bay watershed, this funding enhances NRCS' continuing role as an active sponsor of the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program.”

Statement from Office of Surface Mining Director Jeff Jarrett

“The partnership of the Department of the Interior's Office of Surface Mining with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is invaluable to the future of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Drainage from abandoned coal mines contaminates many headwater streams in Pennsylvania, Maryland and West Virginia. Through OSM's partnership with the Foundation, we are providing financial assistance to seven local non-profit organizations to support their efforts to clean up these streams.”

Statement from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region Five Director Marvin Moriarty

“These projects demonstrate strong partnerships between local non-profit groups, state, local and federal agencies, and private citizens, to accomplish on-the-ground habitat restoration and water quality improvement throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.”

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