



## August Newsletter 2022

### Upcoming Volunteer Events (click on each for more details)

- [Volunteer Calendar](#) (one click shopping for events all year)

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## Director's Notes

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### *A Note from the Director*

Did you know that August is National Water Quality Month? I didn't. I should've, but I guess this fact just slipped by me. In any case, I'm glad I was informed since I was planning to write about water quality for this month's newsletter. Funny how these things happen.

I wanted to touch on the subject of water quality because I recently had an experience that really drove home how clean water can sustain life, improve our waterways and generally improve the

quality of our lives. Many of you know that the Coastal Bays program has been involved with work in the upper headwaters of the St. Martin River for many years. 12 years ago, we worked with our partners at DNR and State Highway to install the 20-acre wetland at Lizard Hill which is right next to the Bishopville Cemetery. The wetland project at Lizard Hill treats hundreds of acres of farm, suburban and rural areas which drain into Buntings Branch. Approximately 5 years after that, we worked with our partners again to remove the old sheet-pile dam at the Bishopville Pond to open fish passage and restore a portion of Buntings Branch.

This work took a lot of time and energy to get permitted and in the ground. One of the reasons we undertook these projects was to improve the quality of the water draining into Bishopville Prong and ultimately, the St. Martin River. Many of you may know that Buntings Branch has had a long history of contributing polluted waters into Bishopville Prong and has contributed to the long-standing poor grades that the St. Martin River has received at our annual Report Card release.

But things are improving. In the 12 years that we have been releasing report cards, the St. Martin River typically gets a grade of D. In last years report card, the St. Martin earned a grade of C. It's a bit early to uncork the champagne, but it's a good sign. Clam populations are up and nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are down. Environmental groups like the Protectors of the St. Martin are working to grow oysters and the farm community are planting cover crops and installing other conservation measures to improve the runoff from their operations. All these efforts have certainly helped to improve water quality in the St. Martin River.

Monitoring data and report cards are great but seeing the results of all this work firsthand really hits home. A few weeks ago, I was out at the Bishopville dam removal site and watched as fingerlings and crabs vied for space to feed and take advantage of the clean, oxygenated waters flowing from Buntings Branch. It was a wonderful thing to see. Thousands of mummichogs, killifish and other species rippling through the waters. Kingfishers hunting the shallows and herons and egrets feeding along the stream edges.

This is why we do this work. This is why it's so important to have the support of you, the folks who live, work and play in these waters, helping to get this work done. This is why it's so important to have partnerships with our local, state and federal agencies. This only happens if we all work together. Improving water quality is a long-term effort and we are in it for the long-haul. It can take years to see the fruits of your labor, but these efforts pay off over time. Thanks for hanging in there with us.

## Kevin

Executive Director

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## Happy National Water Quality Month

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This month we celebrate National Water Quality month. It was established to remind us to take a moment to consider how important water sources are, not just to humans, but to the other inhabitants of these ecosystems-whether it be the fish that live in the waters or the plants and animals that rely on these rivers and

streams for water.

Water quality monitoring is a huge part of MCBP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management plan. It not only engages our community through our water quality volunteer program, but also provides data to evaluate the health of the waters of the coastal bays.

In addition, the data we collect is used in conjunction with data collected by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service to assess the effectiveness of the best management practices that are implemented within our watershed.

We are grateful for our volunteer community, and our partners who dedicate their time and efforts to monitor the health of our coastal bays. We couldn't do this without them.

To read more about National Water Quality month click [here](#)



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## 'Tree-mendous' Opportunities!



The state of Maryland has so many great offerings for residents, it's hard to keep up with what is available, but we'll try to keep you informed!

The Department of Natural Resources Forest Services has both urban and stewardship programs available to landowners and local governments to encourage tree plantings for forestation and reforestation. Click [here](#) to learn of the amazing opportunities!

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## Give a Day for the Bay

Looking for a volunteer opportunity to give back to the Coastal Bays this summer?

This Thursday, August 4 from 8:00-10:00 am, join MCBP staff

Pre-registration for this event is encouraged (but not necessary), and can be found [here](#).



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## Farewell Cailyn Joseph



MCBP had to say goodbye to our Environmental Educator and Scientist, Cailyn Joseph, this past month.

Cailyn started at MCBP as our 2021 summer intern. However, her tenacity and passion for the Coastal Bays had MCBP offering her a year-long contractual position. During her time at MCBP, Cailyn lead and assisted various education, outreach, and science programs.

One of her greatest accomplishments was a cultural heritage project called Voices of the Coastal Bays that highlighted the stories and history of the commercial fisheries industry in the OC Fisherman's Marina. In addition to digging deep into our bays' history, Cailyn wanted to recognize the importance of supporting local, small-scale fisheries by providing a platform for fishermen and women to share the stories and struggles they have endured throughout the generations. As a part of this endeavor, she also created an easily accessible, "Smart Seafood Guide" for Ocean City to encourage locals and tourists alike to make better informed decisions about when locally caught seafood is in season. To read the stories of the fishermen and women and learn more about the Voices of the

Although her positive attitude and hard work will be missed greatly, MCBP is excited for Cailyn as she starts her next chapter at the University of Miami at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences to obtain an M.S. in Marine Ecosystem and Society with a concentration in Marine Conservation. Best of luck Cailyn, you will always have a home here in the Coastal Bays!

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## Nesting Platform Update

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We are now up to 155 nests! There are only 23 nests that still have eggs as the others have fledged. Some of the fledglings still use the raft to roost at night.

Once chicks started to fledge, An anchored 'life-raft' and ramp was added to so the fledglings were able to make it safely back onto the platform until they could refine their flying skills

This season we have banded 86 adults and 161 chicks! We don't expect to see the young return for a couple of years as they don't generally breed until they are three years old, but some will start at two years.

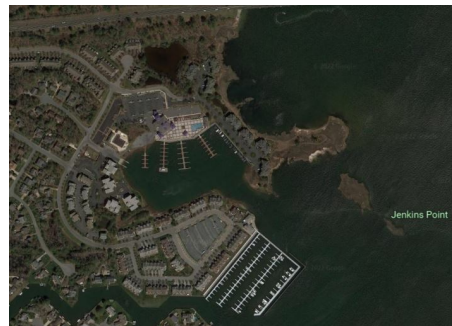
Updates on the platform can be found on our [website](#).



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## Funding Awarded for Climate Resiliency Projects

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The Department of Natural Resources announced last month the award of over \$2 million grant funding for 12 climate resiliency projects which include two MCBP projects.

One of the projects is the restoration of Jenkins Point, a property near Ocean Pines and the other is for at Swans Gut Creek at Big Mill pond near Stockton. To read more about this funding and these projects click [here](#).

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## Fledging Season

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It is officially fledging season! A fledgling is a young bird that is becoming capable of flight, but still has not mastered it. If you see a gull walking around but not flying, it is probably just fine.

In Ocean City, once they take their first leap of faith off of their rooftop nest, fledglings often are not able to make it back up. But, not to fear! The fledglings' adult parents are around nearby making sure they are fed.

And since our summer temperatures have soared, it has created an even better reason for fledglings to leap off of sizzling rooftops for a cooler environment. So if you see a large gull walking around but not flying in Ocean City right now, don't worry - they are right where they are supposed to be until they can take complete flight! If you chance upon one, leave it be. Although it may not seem natural to you, this is how our wildlife has adapted to our environment. So for them, this is perfectly fine.

