



## October Newsletter

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### A Note from the Director

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## It's Fall and That Means Woolly Bears, Marine Debris and Report Cards

Can we all keep a secret? Although it's not really a secret. October is absolutely the best time of the year here on the Eastern Shore. As September gently folds itself into October, many folks are probably thinking about the autumnal color fest that is about to take place. I am too.

But if I must be honest, three other things come to mind; number one is the Annual Coastal Bays Report Card Release; the second is the 4th Annual Marine Debris Plunder and finally, but maybe most importantly, Woolly Bears.

Let's talk about woolly bears first. These harbingers of fall and prognosticators of winter are so darn cute, who cares if their ability to predict the upcoming winter is no more accurate than that rodent named Punxsutawney Phil. Woolly bears are caterpillars that have one reddish-brown band sandwiched between two black bands. Some say that the width of the reddish-brown band can predict how severe the upcoming winter may be. The thicker the brown band, the easier the winter. Probably best not to place any high-dollar wagers on this old wife's tale. The width of the band is actually more related to the number of times that the little fella has shed than it has to do with how cold the upcoming winter will be. But it's still fun to check out the width of the bands and see if these rascals are any good at predicting the harshness of the upcoming winter.

We usually see woolly bears this time of the year crossing rural roads as they look for a suitable place to overwinter. That could be under a pile of leaves or under some other organic debris that will provide protection from predators, a little moisture and a bit of shelter from the wind and cold. Once they emerge from hibernation in the spring, they eat for a few weeks, spin a cocoon and emerge a few weeks later as Isabella Moths.

The other traditions of our Coastal Bays Program are the Annual Report Card Release and the Annual Marine Debris Plunder. The Plunder will be held this Sunday. See the details below. Marine debris is a serious issue worldwide and it's a serious issue right here too. Let's act locally and do what we can to help keep our waterways clean. Also important to note that the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Summit is in Ocean City on December 6th and 7th. Check out that link at: <https://www.midatlanticocean.org/2023-mid-atlantic-marine-debris-summit/>.

Then, on the following Tuesday (October 24th) we have our Annual Report Card Release. This is an important event we hold each fall to give our year-by-year grade on the environmental health of the Coastal Bays. This grade is based on several water quality parameters, the amount of underwater grasses and hard clam abundance. These are important metrics that give us a pretty clear indication of the health of our Coastal Bays. The public is invited to our Report Card Release event which will be held at the White Marlin Club in West Ocean City. The event starts at 1:00 p.m. and we look forward to seeing you there. Staff from our office and others representing some of our partners will be there to answer questions and discuss the environmental health of our Bays. We hope to see you there. In the meantime, watch out for those woolly bears crossing the road. It's hard to imagine autumn without them.

Kevin Smith  
Executive Director

## Marine Debris Plunder

The poster features a background image of a yellow mesh netting over a rocky shore with seaweed. In the top left corner, there are logos for the Maryland Coastal Bays Program (a sun and bird), Orsted, Ron Jon Surf Shop, and Seagull Disposal. The main text is in white and blue on a dark blue background. At the bottom right, there is a cartoon illustration of a crab.

**Marine Debris Plunder**  
**Sunday, October 22**

A community effort to pickup debris by sea or by land.

You can go out anytime and bring your loot to the WOC Harbor, 12905 Harbor Road between 11 am to 3 pm to meet Captain Jack Sparrow who will trade you some grub and a commemorative T-shirt for your loot.

Register ahead of time and pick up supplies up at Pure Lure located in the harbor at an arranged date.

[www.mdcoastalbays.org](http://www.mdcoastalbays.org) 410-213-2297 ext. 106

[Details and Registration Here](#)

## Report Card Unveiling

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**You're Invited!**

**Join us for the  
Maryland Coastal Bays  
2022 Report Card  
Unveiling**

Tuesday, October 24

Ocean City Marlin Club  
9659 Golf Course Road

1:00 pm

*Light refreshments*



MARYLAND  
COASTAL BAYS  
PROGRAM

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## Wind Energy Public Forums

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There are two opportunities open to the public to learn more about wind energy.

On September 29, 2023, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the proposed Maryland Offshore Wind Project.

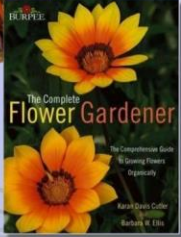

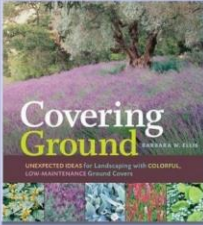
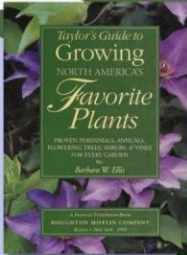
As part of that announcement, BOEM initiated a 45-day public comment period that ends at 11:59 p.m. ET on November 20, 2023. BOEM has scheduled four public meetings during the comment period. The input received during the comment period will inform preparation of the Final EIS. BOEM will be holding public meetings on the Draft Environmental Review for Proposed Maryland Offshore Wind Project. The first meeting will be held Wednesday, October 24th at the Ocean City Elementary School. Click [here](#) for details on where you can go to learn more and comment

On Wednesday, October 25th, 7 p.m., the Sierra Club Lower Eastern Shore Group is hosting a webinar:

Their goal is to offer factual information about this topic. Bring your questions and get answers. (They are combining this with a chapter meeting that will cover more environmental topics as well) Click [here](#) for more information and to join the event.

Button Text

## Greener Gardens Presentation






**SPEAKER SERIES:**  
**"GREENER GARDENS: ONE STEP AT A TIME"**  
**W/AUTHOR BARBARA ELLIS**

Thursday, October 26, 6-8 PM  
@ Ocean Pines Public Library  
11107 Cathell Road, Ocean Pines, MD

- **Book signing and sale**
- **Stay tuned for her upcoming book, "Container and Small-Space Gardening for the South: How to Grow Flowers and Food No Matter Where You Live" available Spring 2024!**

**TO REGISTER: USE THIS QR CODE or visit [www.lowershorelandtrust.org](http://www.lowershorelandtrust.org)**



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## Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day at Central Landfill in Newark October 28

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The Worcester County Public Works Recycling Division will host Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Day on Saturday, October 28, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Central Landfill in Newark, Maryland.

HHW, computer towers, and laptops may be dropped off for safe disposal. No keyboards, mouses, or other electronics will be accepted.

HHW Collection Day provides an opportunity for Worcester County residents to safely dispose of products containing harmful chemicals, such as bleach, pesticides, pool chemicals, oil mixtures, gas and other fuels, acids, automotive fluids, thinners, and other everyday hazardous wastes accumulating in and around the home, like CFL light bulbs, batteries, and oil-based paints. Note that water-based paints are not hazardous materials and should not be brought to any hazardous waste event. Instead, solidify water-based paints by drying or adding absorbent materials, like sand, kitty litter, or mulch. Then place the dried paint in the trash.

HHW Collection Day is open at no charge to county residents only. This event is hosted in conjunction with Maryland Environmental Services and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MXI Environmental Services Company will be responsible for the safe disposal of all hazardous waste collected.

Collecting HHW for safe disposal saves valuable landfill space and helps protect the environment, as many of these items do not degrade and contain poisonous materials that could seep out of the landfill and contaminate surrounding soil and groundwater. For more information, contact Worcester County Recycling Manager Bob Keenan at (410) 632-3177.

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# Coastal Bays Map Release

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We are so pleased to announce the official release of our new Coastal Bays watershed map! These new maps will go in classrooms around the County, in addition to being available to community centers, libraries, and other organizations.

We hope by seeing our map, its boundaries and attributes, and learning bits and pieces about our local ecosystems, our watershed will become a bit more familiar, and help develop a deeper sense of place to where we live.

Massive thanks to University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science for the design, and to Worcester County Public Schools, their teachers, and our staff for their input and edits on this map.

We look forward to seeing them, and their impact, around the watershed. If you are interested in a copy, please email [Lwist@mdcoastalbays.org](mailto:Lwist@mdcoastalbays.org)

[Digital Copy of the Map](#)

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# MCBP says Farewell to Greg Atkin

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With great sadness, MCBP said goodbye to Greg Atkin this week as they moved on to a full-time position with the National Aquarium!

Greg was hired on this past February as MCBP's first ever Community Engagement Specialist. An invaluable asset to all staff, he was frequently seen circulating through the office, working with both education and science on digital communication and social media projects. Greg was also essential in the revitalization of our Citizens Advisory Committee, and became the staff liaison on the committee.

Most notably, Greg very quickly became a key member of Coastal Bays and we will miss his infectious charisma and undeniable presence.

Greg's word about their time at MCBP:

"When I left grad school, the first thought I had was "How will I make my way in this conservation world?" On January 10th, Liz and Chandler let me talk about one thing in conservation that I thought was important. I chose "A Sense of Place", ironic as I was worried about my own sense of place. Their immediate warmth and openness gave me the confidence to go out on a limb and that theme of a sense of place has permeated my time here at MCBP. In taking risks with the proper support, I've done things I never thought I would or have the courage to go forward. Whether it be the public engagement, the education opportunities, or just relationship I've been able to enjoy. This first step in my conservation career has started me on my way. I'm honored to have been one small piece of this grand tapestry and can't wait to see what you all will do next. Please keep in touch. I will miss you all. - G "

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# MCBP says Farewell to Erin Keely

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MCBP is sad to say goodbye to our seasonal Environmental Scientist, Erin Keeley, who is heading off to Italy to visit family while she interviews for other opportunities!

During her time with MCBP, Erin helped the science team with wetland assessments, seining, water quality and HABs sampling, the tern raft, SAV surveys, and many other projects. She became a regular at the summer seining programs that educated the public on Coastal Bays



critters and assisted in boat tours and school programs with the education and outreach team. She loved being in the field and especially loved being surrounded by our gorgeous watershed.

Erin has been an absolute joy to work with over the past six months and will be greatly missed by our staff. Her dedication, flexible mindset, and sense of humor made working with her a breeze. The science team is grateful to have someone who came into work every day with an eagerness to learn and readiness to dive into our everyday madness. Wherever you go in your future travels, know you have a home in the Coastal Bays that you can always come back and visit! We can't wait to see what great things you accomplish!

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## MCBP says **Farewell to** **Conner O'Hea**



We said thank you and farewell to Connor O'Hea, our tern raft technician.

Connor helped us with monitoring the raft as well as banding this year. He brought a great work ethic and deep appreciation of birds. He currently is banding migratory songbirds at Powdermill Nature Reserve in PA as an avian technician. We wish him all the best and know he'll do great things. “

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