



January Newsletter

A Note from the Director



A New Year and a New Resolve

Folks, there aren't many things in this world that we know with absolute certainty. And, when we do have the luxury of knowing things for certain, we need to take advantage of that knowledge. Here are some things we know about the environmental health of the Coastal Bays. And with that knowledge, we need to act.

We are losing marshes in the Coastal Bays at an alarming rate. Not just shoreline marsh - which we're used to losing because it is subject to the wind and wave energy along the coast - but the interior marsh which has historically been protected. Unfortunately, sea level rise and other human-induced perturbations have created a situation where our interior marshes are sinking as the water around them keeps rising. Not a good situation for one of our most effective lines of defense for tropical storms, hurricanes and nor'easters. Losing tidal marsh is not good for the all the fish, bugs and other critters that call these places home. It's not good for us humans either.

Our Coastal Bay Islands are disappearing. And with that follows the precipitous decline of some of our iconic colonial bird species and loss of nesting habitat for horseshoe crabs and terrapins. I don't need to go over the numbers, but many of you know that some of our iconic species like black skimmers, royal terns and certain heron species are at an all-time low when it comes to successfully nesting here.

We haven't had significant seagrass beds in the northern Coastal Bays for over 10 years. Seagrasses are the foundation for healthy and productive estuaries. Poor water quality, turbidity, and the increase in algal blooms keep seagrasses from becoming established. We still have nutrient issues in the Coastal Bays. It's gotten better over the years, but not to the point where we can lose sight of this important issue.

I tell you all this not to bring you down as we roll into the new year. I tell you this because it's important to understand what issues we need to focus on in the coming years. Knowing these facts instills a responsibility to do something about it if we are going to maintain a healthy, vibrant and ecologically viable Coastal Bay system. We'll keep you updated over the year as to what we (along with our partners) are doing to improve the situation. We need to have the resolve to address these facts in a clear and direct way. A new year and new resolve. That's our message going into the new year. We hope that you'll continue to support us in that effort.

Kevin Smith
Executive Director

Jenkins Point Community Meeting

Maryland Coastal Bays Program and Ocean Pines Association will be hosting a public meeting on Monday January 29th to present and seek community feedback on the draft design for the Jenkins Point Restoration for Resilience project. The meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. at the Ocean Pines Golf Club located at 100 Clubhouse Drive in Ocean Pines.

The primary goal of this project is to restore and reconnect the eroding and fragmented islands once part of the Jenkins Point peninsula to provide a nature-based buffer for the Ocean Pines Yacht Club and Marina and the Osprey Point condominium community, while also enhancing wildlife habitat. The proposed Dynamic Living Shoreline design features breakwaters created from materials conducive to tidal marsh growth that will anchor the vegetated dune and beach. This project is being designed to account for projected sea-level rise through 2050, and it will serve as a demonstration site for nature-based climate resilience.

The meeting will be open to the public and will also be live streamed via Microsoft Teams for those unable to attend in person. [Click here to join the meeting](#).

Ghost Pot Initiative



Thanks to grant funding, MCBP is able to once again compensate local watermen to pull marine debris out of our waterways during the winter.

MCBP conducted an abandoned crab pot program/turtle outreach on a small scale in 2013 -2014 which engaged and mobilized many stakeholders including commercial watermen, volunteers, retailers, local media and school groups. The bulk of the funding covered nine days of pulling abandoned crab pots by watermen and volunteers throughout the five Maryland Coastal Bays.

Nine days yielded the removal of derelict crab pots and other items totaling to 1,230 pounds of marine debris. The

pots and debris were located by primitive methods of sightings and dragging poles in areas where pots were suspected. Results imply with proper technology the yield could be significantly greater.

Data collected in the project included by-catch tallies that were promoted through social media and press releases to engage the community on the impact of marine debris in our bays. Several of the derelict pots contained the remains of diamondback terrapin, one pot actually had two live terrapin. Other by-catch included sea bass, sheepshead, blenny and of course crabs, both dead and alive.

This small project demonstrated that there is potential to remove significant measureable amounts of marine debris, pinpoint and identify 'hotspots' in the coastal bays to monitor, and clear debris with a focus on abandoned crab pots in the future to protect the diamondback terrapin as well as other species that habitat in the 248 miles of shoreline of the coastal bays.

Since then, MCBP has been able to secure funds annually to pay watermen to retrieve debris during the offseason. Commercial crabbing season starts in March and ends in October. It is illegal to tamper with crab pots during crabbing season. Thank you to our dedicated watermen for removing marine debris from our bays!

JOIN THE MARYLAND
COASTAL BAYS PROGRAM
AT SEACRETS FOR

TRIVIA NIGHT

Thursday,
February 29

Location: Morley Hall
Doors open at 5:30pm
Trivia starts at 6:00pm

Participate in our raffle
for the chance to win
local goodie baskets!

For further information
please scan the QR code, or
visit mdcoastalbays.org

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Discover Your Watershed



Mark your calendars for the first 2024 DYW!

Join MCBP on Tuesday, March 12th from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm for the first Discover Your Watershed of the 2024 season! Come take advantage of the extra daylight hours as we develop and define an existing trail that meanders through mature mixed forest at our 90 acre Showell Property.

We'll also spend the afternoon working to remove an area of wisteria on the south part of the property. Registration is required. Please bring sturdy shoes, weather appropriate clothing, and gloves if you prefer to use your own. We will have additional gloves, and all necessary trail equipment and wisteria removal tools. Directions to the Showell Property will be provided at registration.

[Register Here](#)

Employment Opportunities



MCBP has two employment opportunities:

[Seasonal Environmental Education Internship](#)

and

[Environmental Literacy Specialist Position](#)

Assateague Outfitters, our partners, have several summer [opportunities](#)

Funding Opportunities

Maryland Coastal Bays has Two Upcoming Funding Opportunities:

This February, MCBP will be accepting grant proposals for the 2024 Research Grant Program and the 2024 Mini Grant Program. More information will be available on the website once the application opens.

Research Grant Program:

The Research Grant Program is offered to MCBP's partners to assist in responding to research needs identified in the Maryland Coastal Bays Program Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). The CCMP represents a consensus of the best means needed to preserve the economic and ecological prosperity of the Coastal Bays for the future. The strategies in this the plan include reachable scientific goals and the most effective means for implementing them. Applicants with any questions or those requiring technical assistance, please contact Science Coordinator Roman Jesien at rjesien@mdcoastalbays.org.

Mini Grant Program:

The MCBP Mini Grant Program seeks to support watershed-based community, science, and educational initiatives that align with the CCMP action items. Through this funding, MCBP is seeking to engage new applicants and organizations from diverse communities in small scale projects that enhance communities, engage residents, and ultimately, improve natural resources. This grant program encourages, but does not require, applications for projects that support disadvantaged communities facing environmental justice issues. Applicants with any questions or those requiring technical assistance, please contact Education Program Manager Ellen Turnbaugh at eturnbaugh@mdcoastalbays.org.

MCBP Research and Mini Grant Program funds are provided by the Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding. With BIL funding, the EPA will be making significant investments in the health, equity, and resilience of American communities and taking significant strides to tackle the climate crisis.

Marshes for Tomorrow









We'd love to meet!

Let's talk tidal marshes ...



Marshes for Tomorrow (MfT) is an ambitious project aiming to identify, protect, and restore at least 25,000 acres of the most important tidal salt marsh habitat in Maryland for Saltmarsh Sparrows. We recognize **community input** is exceptionally important for the success of this project in identifying the best locations to concentrate our conservation and restoration efforts for **birds and people**. The first round of **community meetings** is being held in January 2024 with a second round to follow in the spring. As part of our effort, we invite you to participate in a **marsh-use survey** found at www.delmarvarcn.org/marshesfortomorrow or via the QR code provided. For more information about MfT, please contact us directly via marshes4tomorrow@gmail.com.



Date	Time	Location (refreshments provided!)
January 19th 2024	4:30-6pm	Delmarva Discovery Center, Worcester County
January 20th 2024	2-3:30pm	Princess Anne library, Somerset County
January 25th 2024	5:30-7pm	Berlin library, Worcester County
January 27th 2024	2-3:30pm	Harriet Tubman Underground RR Visitor Center, Dorchester County

MfT is a coalition of partners led by Audubon Mid-Atlantic and funded through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's National Coastal Resilience Fund grant and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Photo credit (l. to R): Saltmarsh Sparrow by Frank Lehman, Drone footage of saltmarsh by Larisa Preziaso, and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge by Leonard Dagny.

[Survey](#)

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