



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **\$3 Million will Reduce Pollution, Improve Water Quality in Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

**Largo, MD** – The Chesapeake Bay Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) have announced the recipients of \$3 million in grants for restoration, conservation and environmental outreach initiatives across the Maryland and the District of Columbia. The 13 projects will leverage more than \$3.8 million in matching funds to lower pollution and improve the health of rivers, streams and the Bay.

The funding for these projects was awarded through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, which is financed by the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program and the Small Watershed Grants Program. Officials and guests announced the awards at the Prince George’s County Department of the Environment in Largo, MD, where a 2014 grant will support innovative green infrastructure practices.

“Through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, NFWF and our partners, especially the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, continue to invest in efforts in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and across the Bay watershed to accelerate ambitious state and local water quality improvement efforts. A focus of the Fund’s investments is in stormwater management, which is an essential strategy to improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay by reducing polluted runoff,” said David O’Neill, Vice President for Conservation Programs at NFWF. “The Stewardship Fund is an innovative public-private partnership, supported by the Environmental Protection Agency, other federal agencies including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and private companies including Altria, CSX, Alcoa, and FedEx. The Fund provides a critical local funding source for innovative and community-based approaches to conservation.”

The Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) Grants Program awarded \$2.1 million to six projects that will reduce the flow of pollution into rivers and streams. Whether it is through green infrastructure in urban areas or conservation practices that benefit soil, wildlife and water on farmland, this cutting-edge work will lower nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment loads and help communities meet water quality goals.

“EPA is committed to supporting local governments and other organizations in their efforts to use innovative and sustainable approaches for managing storm water and improving the health of their local waters,” said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. “These projects are an investment that will return lasting benefits to communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, helping them become healthier, stronger and more resilient, especially to the impacts of a changing climate.”

The Small Watershed Grants (SWG) Program awarded \$1.7 million to seven projects that will use on-the-ground restoration, habitat conservation and community engagement to improve local watersheds. A number of grant recipients, which include nonprofit organizations and local governments, plan to remove invasive

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plants; restore stream banks, wetlands, oyster reefs and open spaces; and put rain gardens, shoreline buffers and other stormwater management methods in place.

“The Chesapeake Bay is and will always be an intangible cultural symbol for Maryland and the region as a whole,” said Sen. Ben Cardin, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife. “I want to stress the importance of broad involvement of all stakeholders in the effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay. Pollution does not stop at a state borderline. The populations living and working in the Bay watershed are all in this together. No one source or single sector bears all the blame for degraded water quality in the Bay. But if we all work together and do our part, we will see progress and leave our children a Chesapeake Bay that is healthier than it is today.”

Examples of this year’s Chesapeake Stewardship Fund grant recipients in Maryland include:

- Prince George’s County, Md (\$375,000) will retrofit a 7.8 acre office complex with bioretention facilities using innovative design configurations and cutting edge materials to enhance pollutant removal.
- Civic Works, Inc. (\$200,000) will work with community organizations, nonprofits and small businesses in Baltimore City to design and install rain gardens that feature micro bioretention areas. This will reduce Baltimore City’s stormwater runoff and allow Civic Works to develop a training and certification model for urban stormwater management.
- Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy (\$300,000) will work to develop the next generation of agricultural best management practices uniquely suited to the production practices and landscapes of Delmarva farmers.

This year, NFWF will partner with the University of Maryland’s Environmental Finance Center (EFC) and Low Impact Development Center to launch a web-based resource and training center that will provide consistent and proven strategies for collaboration, innovation and sustainable stormwater management funding in smaller municipalities throughout the watershed. This new resource center will draw on case studies and lessons learned by existing stormwater grantees to offer municipalities a range of tools, including education modules, financing resources and opportunities to develop partnerships and shared resources for municipalities with limited capacity to design and implement their own standalone stormwater management programs.

“This year, we are especially excited to invest in new dedicated Municipal Stormwater Training and Outreach Center developed in partnership with the University of Maryland and the Low Impact Design Center to provide local governments with tools and resources necessary to build sustainable, effective stormwater management programs and advance water quality goals,” O’Neill added.

“The Low Impact Development Center and the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center have a long history of working with Chesapeake Bay municipalities to improve the way stormwater is managed,” said Joanne Throwe, Director of EFC. “Online training is both timely and necessary. It’s the direction most programs are moving toward since it has shown to be the fastest and best way to reach the largest number of people. The new Municipal Stormwater Training and Outreach Center is anticipated to be well used by all of the Bay states and will go a long way in helping to change the way we manage stormwater at the local level.”



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For more information about the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, including a full list of this year's awardees visit [www.nfwf.org/chesapeake](http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake)

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*The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that has coordinated and conducted the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. Partners include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and advisory groups of citizens, scientists and government officials. To learn more, visit [www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net).*