

# Social Media News Release

## Seventeen public access sites open along Chesapeake rivers and streams

### Boat ramps, fishing piers and walking trails foster stewardship, connecting people and water.

Annapolis, MD – Last year, Chesapeake Bay Program partners opened 17 boat ramps, fishing piers and other sites that allow the public to access rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Virginia opened 14 sites, while Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York each opened one. There are now 1,225 public places that allow people across the watershed to walk, play, swim, fish and launch their paddleboats, sailboats and powerboats into the water.

Through the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), our partners have [committed](#) to bringing the number of public access sites in the region to 1,439 by 2025. We track [public access](#) as an indicator of our progress toward fostering environmental stewardship. Since tracking began in 2010, partners have opened 86 new sites, meeting 29 percent of our goal.

Partnerships between local, state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations have been essential in developing these sites: a soft launch for paddlecraft opened on the Chickahominy River with support from the James River Association. Walking trails, wildlife viewing platforms and interpretive signs were built on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service land along Mount Landing Creek with support from the Virginia State Park Youth Conservation Corps. And a boat dock, wildlife viewing platform and public pavilion, as well as fishing access, were established at the Zimmerman Center for Heritage on the Susquehanna River with support from Pennsylvania’s Fish and Boat Commission, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Department of Transportation, as well as the National Park Service and local donors.

While the number of access sites opened in 2014 is lower than the 36 sites opened in 2013, experts do not expect this decline to continue. Significant grant funding from federal and state agencies was distributed toward public access in 2013; a number of the sites that were funded at this time are still under development and should open in the coming years.

## Facts

In 2014, 17 new access sites were opened to the public. Virginia opened 14 sites, while Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York each opened one. This brings the total number of access sites in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to 1,225.

### Maryland

Site	Water Body	County	Description
Shady Side Park	West River	Anne Arundel	Soft launch for non-motorized vessels and river access from a natural shoreline.

### New York

Site	Water Body	County	Description
Parslow Road Conservation Area	Oaks Creek	Otsego	Paddlecraft launch, fishing access and walking trail.

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## Pennsylvania



Site	Water Body	County	Description
Zimmerman Center for Heritage	Susquehanna River	York	Boat dock and fishing access, wildlife viewing platform, public pavilion and interpretive signage.

## Virginia

Site	Water Body	County	Description
Grapevine Bridge	Chickahominy	Henrico	Soft launch for non-motorized vessels.
Grey's Creek Boat Ramp	Grey's Creek	Surry	Soft launch for non-motorized vessels and rebuilt pier.
Clifton Forge	Jackson River	Alleghany	Soft launch for non-motorized vessels, fishing access and walking trail.
Covington	Jackson River	Alleghany	Soft launch for non-motorized vessels, fishing access and walking trail.
Glasgow	James River	Rockbridge	Soft launch for non-motorized vessels, fishing access and walking trail.
Wellford Tract	Little Carter Creek	Richmond	Walking trail.
Williams Wharf Landing	East River (Mobjack Bay)	Mathews	Boat access.
Morris Creek	Morris Creek	Charles City	Soft launch for non-motorized vessels and fishing access.
Hutchinson Tract	Mount Landing Creek	Essex	Boat access, walking trail and interpretive signage.
Hutchinson Tract Viewing Platforms	Mount Landing Creek	Essex	Wildlife viewing platforms and walking trail.
Pitts Creek Landing	Pocomoke River	Accomack	Boat ramp, soft launch for non-motorized vessels and fishing access.
City Dock	Rappahannock River	City of Fredericksburg	Renovated boat landing, shoreline and platform fishing access, and walking trail.
Port Royal	Rappahannock River	Caroline	Soft launch for non-motorized vessels.
Simpson's Landing	Shenandoah River	Warren	Non-powerboat and fishing access.

## Issues

As [development](#) continues across the Chesapeake Bay watershed, demand for places that allow the public to reach the water remains high. State, federal and local governments are often the guardians of these places, providing opportunities for everyone to enjoy the region's natural and cultural bounty. Because physical access to the Bay and its tributaries remains limited—with real consequences for quality of life, the economy and long-term conservation—Chesapeake Bay Program partners set a [goal](#) to bring the total number of access sites in the watershed to 1,439 by 2025.

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## Importance

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Public access to open space and waterways can improve public health and quality of life. People rely on outdoor places to exercise, relax and revive their spirits. Time outdoors can strengthen family bonds and nurture fit, creative children. And access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries can build personal connections with the places that have shaped life in the region for centuries. This has a distinct economic and environmental value, as it boosts tourism and creates citizen stewards who care for local resources and engage in the conservation of the Bay and its many resources.

## Quotes

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“Connecting people to the Chesapeake by providing access is one of the best investments we can make to ensure current and future generations love and care for the Chesapeake.”

--- Chuck Hunt, Superintendent, National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office

“As an avid kayaker, I know the importance of having access to rivers, creeks and streams throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. As we come to know the resource through access to it, we will understand its value. Once we know its value, we will be more inclined to take actions to protect it. Public access is critical to restoring this vital ecosystem.”

--- Nick DiPasquale, Director, Chesapeake Bay Program

## Related News

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- [Seventeen public access sites open along Chesapeake rivers and streams](#)

### Media Contact:

Margaret Enloe, Director of Communications, (410) 267-5740

### We Recommend:

- Track the Progress: [Public Access](#)
- Map: [Public Access](#)
- Visit the Chesapeake: [Existing Public Access Sites](#)
- [Chesapeake Explorer](#)
- [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan](#)

### Photos:

- See our [Flickr photo gallery](#).