



News Release

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Thirty-two Environmental Projects Receive \$2.8 Million to Protect and Restore Chesapeake Bay and Local Waterways

Annapolis, Md. – Thirty-two environmental projects from across the Chesapeake Bay watershed were today awarded over \$2.8 million in grants from the Chesapeake Bay Program and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to help clean up local streams, creeks and rivers that flow to the Chesapeake Bay.

The funding was awarded through the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program, which provides grants to nonprofit organizations and local governments working to improve the condition of their local watershed.

The 2009 Small Watershed Grant recipients will develop conservation plans, preserve valuable natural lands and implement on-the-ground restoration practices throughout the Chesapeake Bay's six-state watershed. This year's projects will restore 620 acres of wetlands, plant 32 rain gardens and 172 acres of streamside forest buffers, and fence off 23 miles of streams to prevent livestock from entering the water. A sampling of grant recipients includes:

- The Piedmont Environmental Council will use its \$75,000 grant to increase financial incentives for farmers to install livestock-exclusion fencing and forest buffers along Virginia's Upper Hazel River, a tributary of the Rappahannock River.
- GreenTreks Network received a \$75,000 grant to implement the "Reign in the Rain" social marketing campaign in the Cedar Run and Paxton Creek watersheds near Harrisburg, Pa. The campaign will use videos to promote practices that reduce polluted runoff to local waterways and the Susquehanna River.
- Ducks Unlimited received \$20,333 to restore 473 acres of wetlands, including 84 acres of globally rare Atlantic white cedar, in the headwaters of the Nanticoke and Pocomoke river watersheds in Delaware.

"Collectively, these 32 projects will have a significant positive impact on the health of the Chesapeake Bay and waterways throughout the region, which highlights the invaluable role that nonprofit organizations and local governments play as partners in the restoration effort" said Chesapeake Bay Program Director Jeffrey Lape.

The 2009 Small Watershed Grants were awarded at Heritage Baptist Church in Annapolis, Md., where several runoff-reducing practices such as rain gardens and bioswales have been installed to reduce pollution flowing to Spa Creek, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. The Spa Creek Conservancy will use their \$109,240 grant to install similar pollution-reducing practices at St. Martin's Evangelical Church and School in Annapolis.

"These locally driven conservation projects not only will result in on-the-ground improvements to habitat and water quality, but they also are the model of local environmental stewardship that is a crucial ingredient to any strategy to restore the Chesapeake Bay," said Mike Slattery, director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Eastern Partnership Office.

Since 2000, the Small Watershed Grants program has provided \$23.6 million to support 587 projects. These grants have been used to leverage an additional \$68.4 million from other funding sources, resulting in more than \$92 million being invested in Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration efforts.

"Federal funding for projects like these will help protect and restore critical aquatic ecosystems in the Chesapeake Bay," said Senator Benjamin L. Cardin, chairman of the Environment and Public Works Water and Wildlife Subcommittee. "One of my top priorities is to improve the health of streams, creeks and rivers that make up the Bay's watershed and that sustain its natural habitat. I also will be introducing legislation soon that will focus on improving the water quality of the entire watershed, including authorization for more grants to states and local governments to aid in cleanup efforts."

The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and funded primarily by the U.S. EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program Office, the USDA Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Other funding partners include Perdue Farms and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chesapeake Bay Field Office. Additional funding for this year's grants is from community service payments due to a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney General District of Maryland in a case involving the illegal discharge of oil-contaminated bilge.

"NOAA is delighted to fund these efforts to restore ecological functions – water filtration provided by habitats including wetlands and marshes – that existed before human-induced changes. Science has enabled us to create projects that replicate and return some of these lost functions," said Peyton Robertson, director of the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office.

For more information about the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program and a full list of this year's grant recipients, visit www.chesapeakebay.net/smallwatershedgrants.aspx and 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; the U.S. Department of Agriculture; the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; and advisory groups of citizens, scientists and local government officials.