

HEADWATERS

News & Notes From the Virginia Office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation

JULY 2018

Assessing the Blueprint's Progress

Earlier this spring, CBF released its midpoint assessment of the Bay states' progress on meeting the Clean Water Blueprint's goal of a restored Bay by 2025. The assessment documents success but also finds troubling trends. While Maryland and Virginia are largely on track to meet pollution-reduction goals, Pennsylvania continues to fall far short of the mark.

The Blueprint, implemented in 2010, is unlike past plans that sought to clean up the Bay. It includes pollution limits, state-specific plans to achieve those limits, two-year milestones to evaluate progress, and consequences for failure. In it, the states also committed to implementation of 60 percent of the practices necessary for Bay restoration by 2017 and to finishing the job by 2025. CBF's midpoint assessment examines whether the states achieved the 60 percent goal.

Virginia has achieved its overall 2017 goals for nitrogen and phosphorus reductions, but not for sediment. Nitrogen and phosphorus pollution from urban and suburban areas, and nitrogen pollution from septic systems continue to increase. Nitrogen reductions from agriculture are also off track. This is

why it is so important that state legislators recently passed a two-year budget that includes funding for the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program and Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (see Rebecca Tomazin's column for more details on this achievement).

On the positive side, Virginia has exceeded its pollution-reduction goals for wastewater and remains on track for its phosphorus pollution goal for agriculture.

This year, local governments will also have an important opportunity to weigh in on local clean-water plans being developed to reduce pollution in waterways in our own backyards. Communities are encouraged to be part of the effort to develop these Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans.

The Bay's water quality is improving. Scientists have documented record Bay grass acreage again this year and the Bay's oyster population is increasing. But the recovery is fragile. The midpoint assessment was designed so that course corrections can be made. CBF will continue to work to ensure the commitments are met.

From the Desk of

Rebecca Tomazin

VIRGINIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



At the very end of May, the Virginia General Assembly finally passed a budget for the next two fiscal years. What was in it for water-quality improvements? It turns out, quite a bit.

Approximately \$40 million was included for Virginia's agricultural cost-share program, which helps farmers use conservation practices, such as fencing cattle out of streams, streamside buffers, and better pasture management.

Legislators also included \$20 million for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund, which provides matching grants to localities to help better manage polluted runoff. In addition to helping restore water quality, projects supported by the fund provide other values such as flood prevention, economic benefits, and human health improvements.

Lastly, the budget allocated \$5.75 million for oyster replenishment and restoration efforts to ensure that Virginia's oysters and its oyster industry continue to thrive.

CBF commends Virginia's legislators for their strong investment in programs that restore our rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. We also thank our members and other clean-water supporters for their advocacy efforts during this prolonged legislative session.

Rebecca Tomazin

Gardening Workshops Offered in Hopewell

In June, CBF partnered with Virginia State University's College of Agriculture and Virginia Cooperative Extension to offer a series of workshops in Hopewell on urban gardening techniques. Topics included unlocking the secrets of soil, gardening in small spaces, and creating backyard orchards. The workshops' goals were to teach urban residents how they could create healthy soils and productive yards and gardens.

These workshops are part of CBF's ongoing work in the city of Hopewell, which is being funded through a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



Dr. Leonard Githinji from Virginia State University teaches an urban gardening workshop in Hopewell.



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

Farmers and Clean Water

CBF and our partners hosted a series of events in the Shenandoah Valley this June to discuss how agricultural practices can be beneficial to local water quality and the Bay.

On June 4, during Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week, CBF held an event at Lucky Charm Farms on the banks of the Middle River in Augusta County. Senator Emmett Hanger and farmer Bud Shaver provided remarks on the benefits of installing conservation practices on agricultural lands. Senator Hanger discussed the important role the state has in providing cost-share for these practices (see Rebecca Tomazin's column on the front page for more about the state's recent allocation to this program). Mr. Shafer highlighted the many benefits he has seen on his farm after fencing his cows from the river and planting a streamside buffer.

Later in June, CBF hosted two farmer breakfasts in Fishersville and Waynesboro to inform farmers about new funding and



Senator Emmett Hanger (at podium) addresses a crowd at an Augusta County farm during Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week.

conservation programs available to the agricultural community in for conservation practices.

CBF is collaborating with Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Augusta County, Friends of the Middle River, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Virginia Department of Forestry to help improve farm productivity and stream health in the South River and Christians Creek watersheds.

Clean the Bay Day

On June 2, volunteers across Virginia took part in the 30th annual Clean the Bay Day. In just three hours, approximately 6,000 volunteers at more than 250 sites across the state removed a reported 128,817 pounds of debris from an estimated 312 miles of shoreline.

As usual, the most common items found during the cleanup were plastic and glass bottles, aluminum cans, plastic bags, and cigarette butts. But participants also recovered many strange items, including an ultrasound picture, shopping carts, washing machines, and a headless mannequin.

Among the thousands of volunteers were elected officials and leaders, including Governor Ralph Northam, Virginia First Lady Pam Northam, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Matt Strickler, Representative Rob Wittman, Senator Lynwood Lewis, and Delegates Kelly Convors-Fowler, Cliff Hayes,



This family at Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield County was excited to participate in their first Clean the Bay Day.

Rip Sullivan, and Cheryl Turpin. Major corporate sponsors for Clean the Bay Day include REI, Northrop Grumman, Port of Virginia, River Network/Anheuser-Busch, and CSX.

Since 1989, Clean the Bay Day has engaged approximately 158,000 volunteers who have removed more than 6.6 million pounds of debris from more than 7,600 miles of shoreline.

CBF in the Community

RESTORATION

Summer Pasture Walk

Thursday, July 19, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Lund Angus Farm
1107 Narrow Passage Road
Sprout Spring

Join Virginia Forage and Grassland Council to learn how Lund Angus Farm successfully developed a forage-based beef production system to provide grass-fed and finished Black Angus beef to their clients. Visit www.vaforges.org to register; costs \$10.

COMMUNITY

James River Parade of Lights

Saturday, July 21, 6:00 p.m.

Various sites along the James River near Richmond

Gather along the shoreline at several sites along the James River in Richmond to see the James River Advisory Council's parade of lit boats traverse the waterway. The parade will follow a 14-mile route from the city to the Varina-Enon Bridge. Boaters can still register! Decorate your boat to win some of the \$500 in prizes. For more information, visit <https://jrvc-va.org>.

Hoopla

Friday, September 28 through

Sunday, September 30

Devils Backbone Basecamp
200 Mosbys Run, Roseland

Join Devils Backbone Brewing for their annual music festival featuring activities and workshops. Stop by CBF's table to learn how Devils Backbone and CBF partner to restore oysters and improve water quality. Volunteer to help staff CBF's table by contacting Robert Jennings at rjennings@cbf.org. For more information about the festival, including how to purchase tickets, visit www.dbbrewingcompany.com.

Volunteers as Chesapeake Stewards (VoiCeS) Adult Education Class

Thursday evenings

October 11 through November 15
6:00-8:30 p.m.

Augusta County Government Center
18 Government Center Lane, Verona
Become more informed about local water-quality issues. Participants study the health of local waterways, learning what they can do to improve them. After the classroom instruction, participants commit to performing 40 hours of volunteer service on a clean-water project to earn the designation of Chesapeake Steward. To register for the class, please email Robert Jennings at rjennings@cbf.org.



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Saving a National Treasure

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