

SHORELINES

News & Notes From the Eastern Shore Office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation

SPRING/SUMMER 2018



STEVE DROTTER

A Talbot County roadside is flagged for restoration that will slow down water and filter nutrient pollution before it enters a nearby waterway.

Get Excited About...Roadside Ditches?

It could have been the donuts. Or maybe because it was a Friday. Whatever the reason, when representatives from every Eastern Shore county government came together earlier this year, the energy in the room was high.

The topic? Slowing and filtering pollution from the region's headwater streams using roadside ditches.

Okay, maybe it's a subject that doesn't inspire everybody. But simple retrofits of roadside ditches on the Shore can help reduce potential pollution running off streets and farm fields into nearby creeks. Hearing this, local officials wanted to know more.

Ditches convey as much as 20 percent of the runoff from the land area around them, carrying sediments, nutrients, and bacteria that threaten nearby rivers and streams. Scientists and practitioners have found those same ditches can be transformed relatively easily into water pollution filters. Regrade the ditches, and plant native plants, and these channels slow down and filter water as it moves downstream.

Launched by the Talbot County Department of Public Works, the gathering of interested local officials kicked off a collaborative 12-month process during which Shore localities will produce an online manual standardizing new procedures for roadside ditch management. EPA is funding the work on the manual. Meanwhile, EPA is also working to define and verify the technique so local governments can get formal credit for it in the regional Bay clean-up plan, the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint.

The opportunity for transforming ditches into pollution solutions began gaining traction on the Shore some years ago when CBF partnered with The Nature Conservancy to map priority locations in Talbot. Now, with generous funding from the Sheldon and Audrey Katz Foundation, CBF is producing similar maps for the entire Eastern Shore. As the management manual and EPA crediting procedures come online, the Shore should be well-prepared to accelerate efforts to control pollution.

That's something to get excited about.

From the Desk of
Alan Girard
EASTERN SHORE
DIRECTOR



Lack of agreement on everything from health care to immigration reform makes it seem like Congress can't make progress on national priorities.

But when it comes to our national treasure—the Chesapeake Bay—there's good reason to be hopeful.

Indicators show that regardless of party, support for Bay restoration is strong. Saving the Bay is not a red or blue issue.

One of many examples is the overwhelming majority (about 80 percent) of Marylanders—Democrat and Republican—support oyster sanctuaries, according to a February poll. Another example is the bipartisan support among Maryland's Congressional delegation for federal investment in Bay restoration. Eastern Shore Congressman Andy Harris joined that united front, demonstrating that a community's shared commitment can overcome political divides. Take a moment to contact Congressman Harris today at 410-643-5425 and thank him for his support for Bay restoration. CBF is building on this strong community interest with a new campaign that's focused on achieving 10 billion oysters in the Bay by 2025 (see Chesapeake Oyster Alliance article).



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure



ROBERT DILLER

Oysters clumps, like these form the backbone of Chesapeake Bay oyster reefs. These reefs provide habitat, filtration and food to the Bay ecosystem.

Chesapeake Oyster Alliance is Unveiled

Enormous benefits can accrue to the Bay by bringing the health of oysters back," said CBF President Will Baker at a press conference earlier this year. "There's been a good start over the last several years, but we want to set a very ambitious stretch goal, and see if we can all work together to achieve it."

The event marked the launch of the Chesapeake Oyster Alliance, which includes over 30 businesses, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations. The Oyster Alliance is driving a collective effort to put an additional 10 billion oysters into the Chesapeake Bay by 2025.

Oysters have long been known for their ability to filter water. An adult oyster can clean up to 50 gallons of water per day! The reefs they build also provide valuable habitat and break up Bay currents to make nutrients more available to other Bay critters. In short, we cannot save the Bay without saving the oysters.

There are three primary components to the oyster alliance. The first is to focus on continued restoration of oyster populations in sanctuary areas that are off limits to commercial harvest. Sanctuaries in Maryland now comprise nearly 25 percent of the Bay's potential oyster habitat. They provide a network of reefs throughout the Bay. These protected areas serve as a savings account for the Bay's oyster population, ensuring oysters aren't

all harvested. Most of these sanctuaries are growing successfully, according to recent monitoring reports.

The second component of the oyster alliance is to make sure the public oyster fishery is managed using the best science, that adequate enforcement measures are taken to control poaching, and that strategic investment is made in public areas to make the industry self-supporting in the long term.

Lastly, the oyster alliance promotes growth in the oyster aquaculture industry, also known as oyster farming. Farmed oysters provide many of the same environmental benefits as wild oysters because they filter water as they grow to market size in cages or on bottom reefs. This type of management can take harvesting pressure off wild oyster bars as interest in farmed oysters grows. This industry remains up-and-coming in Maryland, so there is potential for it to add jobs and other economic benefits to areas where farms spring up.

The Oyster Alliance is coming together to coordinate, monitor, and invest additional resources in restoring the

Chesapeake oyster population. The end result will not only be 10 billion additional oysters in the Bay, but all of the clean water and economic benefits that come with them.

Additional information on the Chesapeake Oyster Alliance can be found at TenBillionOysters.org.

The Oyster Alliance is coming together to coordinate, monitor, and invest additional resources in restoring the Chesapeake oyster population.

Volunteers Needed in Cambridge

What better way to celebrate the arrival of spring than to get outside and do some planting?

Roll up your sleeves with CBF's Eastern Shore team as we work to reduce pollution at ten privately owned homes in Cambridge. Rain gardens, rain barrels, and native conservation plantings are specially designed to slow and filter polluted runoff before emptying into local waters, including Cambridge Creek, the Choptank River, and the Little Blackwater River which drains to the Nanticoke River.



Two volunteers plant trees on a waterfront farm. Sign up to volunteer in Cambridge this spring!"

No prior training is necessary, but volunteers should be prepared to do mild physical activity. Children accompanied by an adult are welcome to come and learn about the importance of doing your part to keep the Bay clean!

This project is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and is a collaboration between CBF, Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, and ShoreRivers. Projects are located throughout Cambridge proper and vary in size and volunteer needs. Contact Hilary Gibson at hgibson@cbf.org or 410-543-1999 to register and for specific information on how to help.

Save the Date! Clean Water Concert Dates Announced



CBF and the Avalon Foundation announce the 2018 Clean Water Concert Series.

CBF is teaming up with the Avalon Foundation to bring the Clean Water Concert Series to the streets of Easton again this year. Festivities will take place on June 16, June 23, and July 7 from 6:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. on North Harrison Street in front of the Tidewater Inn.

The street will be lined with community and environmental organizations offering information and activities for kids to get them moving, learning, and thinking about the Chesapeake Bay.

CBF and the Avalon Foundation are excited to welcome Dogfish Head Craft Brewery's Beer & Benevolence Program as an additional sponsor of the series, now in its sixth year. Learn more about Beer and Benevolence at dogfish.com/beer-and-benevolence.

Special thanks to our Eastern Shore Chesapeake Oyster Alliance partners:

Friends of the Wicomico River
Harris Creek Oyster Company
Hoopers Island Oyster Co.
Mudgies Oyster Farm
Orchard Point Oysters
ShoreRivers
UMCES
UMD Extension
Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
Washington College



CBF in the Community

PROJECT CLEAN STREAM

April 21, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Bill Burton Fishing Pier State Park
(Talbot Side) 6 Choptank River Bridge, Trappe

Want clean water? Act! Help CBF and Maryland Park Service make the Choptank River cleaner and safer for the whole community during this river clean-up event. All supplies will be provided. Families and groups are welcome to attend.

Registration is required at cbf.org/BillBurton. Contact Hilary Gibson at hgibson@cbf.org with questions.

DISCOVERY PADDLE TRIP

May 12, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Harris Creek, Talbot County

Come explore the water in and around Harris Creek, the site of the largest oyster restoration project in the country! Instruction

and equipment provided. Bring a lunch and be ready for a peaceful day on the water! \$10 for CBF members; \$15 for non-members. Space is limited. Register at cbf.org/md-canoetrips.

FILM SCREENING: *HIGH TIDE IN DORCHESTER*

May 31, 5:30–8:30 p.m.

Avalon Theatre, 40 East Dover Street, Easton

Join CBF, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, ShoreRivers, and Waterfowl Chesapeake for a screening of *High Tide in Dorchester*. Produced and directed by local artists Sandy Cannon-Brown, Dave Harp, and Tom Horton, this film explores the impacts of climate change on our coastal communities. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with a cash bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres, followed by the screening at 6:30 p.m., including interpretation from the filmmakers themselves! Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased online at tickets.avalontheatre.com or at the Avalon Theatre Box Office, pending availability.

SPAT RETURNS

June 3, 10:00 a.m.–Noon

Eastern Shore Conservation Center
114 South Washington Street, Easton

CBF oyster gardeners, it's time to return your oysters to be planted on sanctuary reefs. Visit cbf.org/oysters or contact Pat Beall at pbeall@cbf.org to register.

CHESAPEAKE BOOK CLUB: KATE LIVIE'S *CHESAPEAKE OYSTERS*

June 7, 6:30–8:00 p.m.

Eastern Shore Conservation Center
114 South Washington Street, Easton

Curl up this spring with Chesapeake Oysters: The Bay's Foundation and Future by local author Kate Livie, and join our new Bay Book Club! You don't need to be an expert on the Bay or environmental issues; you just need a desire to read, learn, and enjoy snacks over a lively discussion. Registration is required at cbf.org/chesbookclub or contact Hilary Gibson at hgibson@cbf.org.

CLEAN WATER CONCERT SERIES

June 16, June 23, July 7, 6:00–8:30 p.m.

Harrison Street, Downtown Easton

Save the dates! More information to come at cbf.org.