

We don't do it alone: volunteers are our heroes!

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation would like to thank our volunteers for donating more than 21,702 hours of their time in 2017. This year we expanded our oyster gardening and shell recycling programs, both incorporating hundreds of volunteers.

A special thanks to Dahlgren Yacht Club located on Dahlgren Naval Base for adopting 50 oyster gardening cages this year. We welcome them to our oyster gardening family and look forward to an official event there in June 2018.

Get Involved

CBF depends on volunteer assistance to make our oyster restoration programs succeed and we are always looking for new volunteers. The Virginia Oyster Restoration Center is busiest from May through October. Please contact Jackie Shannon at jshannon@cbf.org, Heather North at hnorth@cbf.org, or call our Hampton Roads office at 757-644-4125 for information on becoming a volunteer.



Graham Mitchell (6) plants his one-year-old oyster-gardened oysters that were seeded on shell collected by Walter Zadan (90) through our shell recycling program. Both programs are suitable for all ages and we are always looking for more volunteers!



New oyster gardeners place their babies off the docks at the Dahlgren Naval Base located on the Machodoc Creek near the Potomac River.

Special thanks to our 2017 interns for their valuable assistance!



Jenna Mercier
University of Virginia
Summer Field Intern



Lauren Cook
University of South Carolina
Summer Field Intern



Catherine Galway
Virginia Wesleyan University
Shell Recycling Intern

And thanks to these donors and partners:

American Environment Foundation; City of Norfolk; Devils Backbone Brewing Company; Douglas and Marianne Dickerson; Elizabeth River Project; Lynnhaven River Now; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; The Nature Conservancy; Northrop-Grumman Corporation; The Ohrstrom Foundation; The Orvis Company, Inc.; Oyster Seed Holdings; Restore America's Estuaries; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; The G. Unger Vetlesen Foundation; Virginia Institute of Marine Science; Virginia Marine Resources Commission; and Ward's Oyster Company



In Fall 2017, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Elizabeth River Project were awarded a grant by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to construct the final five acres of oyster reef habitat in the Lafayette River (Norfolk, VA). This will make it the first tributary in Virginia to meet restoration goals set by the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program.



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

CBF.ORG/OYSTERS

PHOTOS BY CBF STAFF



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Oyster Restoration in Virginia



Save the Bay
CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
CELEBRATING
50 YEARS

CBF's Virginia Oyster Restoration Center 2017 Highlights

- Planted 5.2 million baby oysters, or spat, attached to oyster shells. The spat-on-shell, as they're called, were planted on protected reefs in the Lafayette River in Norfolk. Many thanks to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the City of Norfolk for providing grant support for these efforts.
- Deployed 500 reef balls in the Lafayette River with the help of CBF's Maryland oyster team.
- Collected over 2,000 bushels of oyster shells through our shell recycling program, Save Oyster Shells, thanks to our volunteers and support from local restaurants and oyster roasts!
- Built new public shell collection bins at James City County Convenience Center locations in Toano and Williamsburg, Captain Chuck-a-Mucks in Carrolton, and Old Donation School in Virginia Beach.
- Added 14 new restaurants and 20 new oyster roast locations to our expanding shell-recycling program.
- Grew 65,620 new oysters in Virginia's waters with help from 322 volunteer oyster gardeners.
- Engaged Hampton University students in a second year of oyster surveys in the Hampton River to collect preliminary data for restoration in this tributary. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funded this survey work.
- Mentored eight Boy Scouts during their projects to achieve their Eagle Scout rank.



Bringing Together Citizens and Oyster Restoration

Oysters are a keystone species, meaning their existence is crucial to the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. Many species depend on oyster reefs for habitat. In addition, oysters remove pollutants from water as they filter for their food. Each adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water per day. Chesapeake Bay oysters both contribute to and depend on clean water.

Spat-on-Shell

Baby oysters, called spat, prefer to grow on hard surfaces like oyster shells. Using tanks filled with shells, seawater, and oyster larvae, CBF can produce and transplant millions of spat-on-shell annually. Spat-on-shell allows oysters to grow naturally in reef-like clumps that help protect them from predators. Volunteers helped transplant 828.5 bushels of spat-on-shell in 2017.



Save Oyster Shells

Oyster shells are the perfect habitat for oyster larvae, but they are scarce.

Through the Save Oyster Shells program, shells that would end up in landfills are recycled and returned to the Bay. CBF staff and volunteers work with local restaurants and municipalities to reclaim shells for restoration projects. We currently collect shells from 16 public bins and 53 partner restaurants.



Reef Balls

Volunteers help build concrete structures that provide habitat for oysters and other Bay species. Reef balls can be placed in our setting tanks and coated with spat before being transplanted.



Oyster Gardening

CBF's Oyster Gardening Program gives citizens the opportunity to help restore this vital species by growing oysters alongside their docks. After a year, adult oysters are returned to CBF and placed on protected, sanctuary reefs.



City of Hampton Restoration Projects

Partnering with Langley Air Force Base, CBF helped build an intertidal oyster reef on Back River where Hampton students can place oysters grown through Oyster Reef Keepers of Virginia. We also partnered with Hampton University for the second year of our oyster survey. Students Jonathan Rogers and Alexandra Salcedo collected data to interpret where and when oysters are spawning in the river. CBF thanks our survey locations: Hampton University, Blue Water Marina, Hampton Yacht Club, and Mill Point Park. We also thank former Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward and the Ketterman, Freudenberg, and Neubert families who let us use their docks for the study. Results collected from May to October will be compared to last year's data to determine how the oyster population is doing and where future work should be considered.

