

IMPACT REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2023



CHESAPEAKE BAY
FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

Learn Outside

Learn Outside

Milestones and Momentum

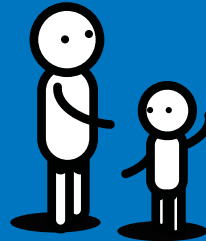
Promise and Progress on the Road to Clean Water

**THIS YEAR, YOUR
SUPPORT SPURRED
TREMENDOUS
SUCCESS ON LAND,
IN THE WATER,
AND IN OUR
COMMUNITIES.**



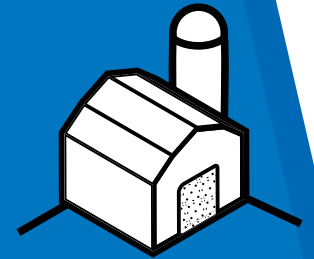
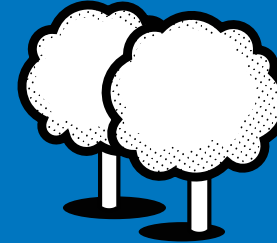
Reached a **LANDMARK SETTLEMENT** agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to increase enforcement of clean-water requirements outlined in the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint.

Educated **21,000 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS** on the water.



Inspired **22,004 ADVOCACY ACTIONS** that demanded clean water and a healthy environment for us all.

Successfully **CHALLENGED A PERMIT** that violated the 1991 Forest Conservation Act, preserving 220 acres of forest in Harford County, Maryland.



Converted almost **500 ACRES** of farmland to rotationally grazed pastures (over 2,000 acres in three years).

MAKING
HISTORY
CAMPAIGN



The Chesapeake Oyster Alliance expanded from 83 to 100 partners and has added **OVER 4.5 BILLION OYSTERS.**



The Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership grew from 221 to 264 members and has planted **OVER 5.7 MILLION TREES.**



DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION | JUSTICE

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE

CBF is dedicated to saving the Chesapeake Bay. Success depends on people from widely diverse backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, identities, and races taking collective action. Clean water, clean air, and a safe environment are rights we all share. Equitable solutions to these issues require the voices and input

from the communities most impacted. But for too long, the environmental movement, CBF included, has not provided adequate space for these voices. We need to do better.

This past year, we continued our efforts to advance environmental justice around the watershed, create new and diverse partnerships in the communities we serve, and promote environmental education to inspire students from diverse backgrounds.

FOREVER FOR THE BAY

As you'll read in this impact report, the last fiscal year has been eventful. We reached a historic milestone for our education programs, secured a landmark legal settlement to strengthen enforcement of the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint (the Bay's cleanup plan), and literally changed the landscape of environmental restoration in the watershed with billions of oysters and millions of trees.

But at the same time, we have seen sobering reminders that much needs to be done before we claim victory. Blue crab and rockfish numbers are cause for concern, and the depletion of menhaden in the lower Bay has been linked to alarming trends in the population of the iconic osprey. In the Bay watershed region and beyond, as climate change causes the planet to warm, sea levels are rising and dangerous weather events are becoming more frequent.

As we acknowledge these challenges, we are also optimistic that our grandest goals are achievable. The work ahead is clearer than it ever has been before. We must accelerate efforts to reduce pollution. We must urgently meet the climate crisis and build resiliency through partnership, innovation, and science. And we must continue to grow our movement so our combined voices will be heard.

You are here because you know the Bay is worth fighting for. With you by our side, we will inspire more people to join our movement to Save the Bay as we maximize the impact of our restoration efforts on land and in the water, hold polluters accountable, educate the next generation of environmental stewards, and do whatever it takes to meet this moment.

We all deserve clean water and a healthy environment. Together, we will make that a reality. For our neighbors, for our communities, for our economy. For the Bay.

ALAN GRUBB

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There is no higher priority...than the Chesapeake Bay. Recognized by presidents as a national treasure, it is the iconic representation of the state of Maryland—quality of life, economy, culture, and more. We have reason to be optimistic about the state of the Bay, but there is much more work ahead of us.”

—U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (Maryland)



FORGING A PATHWAY TO A HEALTHY BAY

Saving the Chesapeake Bay requires work on multiple fronts. With your support, we go wherever the Bay needs us most. Using science, we work to maximize the impact of our restoration efforts. Every tree we plant, every oyster we add, every acre of healthy soil we help farmers create—they all play a critical role in achieving clean water to the benefit of our health, our economy, and the environment on which we all rely.

KENNY FLETCHER/CBF STAFF

- With the help of dozens of volunteers and our partners at the Elizabeth River Project, CBF began construction on a massive **718-foot living shoreline** in Portsmouth, Virginia.

The shoreline installation, scheduled to be complete in October 2023, kicked off in June with CBF staff and volunteers hauling 100 bags of sand to the property to build the foundation of the shoreline.

By utilizing natural features such as oyster reefs and native wetland plants, living shorelines like this one stabilize the shore, prevent erosion, and strengthen coastal resiliency.

- Through our iconic Oyster Gardening Program, more than **1,000 volunteers** helped raise more than **1.2 million oysters for planting** in sanctuary reefs in Maryland and Virginia.
- This past year, CBF's Clagett Farm donated more than **23,000 pounds of organic produce**, surpassing the 17,000 pounds donated a year ago.

Through our partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank in Washington, D.C., this food was distributed to families throughout the region at local food banks, shelters, and other community-based institutions.

- CBF staff and volunteers worked with several different farmers and organizations to plant **6,400 trees** at four sites along headwater streams in Maryland. Almost all the trees were grown from seedlings at CBF's Clagett Farm.
- Through our work with the Mountains-to-Bay Grazing Alliance, we are partnering with farmers across Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania to reimagine agriculture to benefit our local waterways.

To date, the alliance has installed 140 acres of forested buffers, converted 2,076 acres of pastureland to rotational grazing, and constructed 32,736 feet of stream fencing to reduce livestock waste from entering the water.

This work has prevented **13 million pounds of sediment**, **72,000 pounds of nitrogen**, and **14,000 pounds of phosphorus** from reaching the Bay.

MAKING HISTORY

When CBF kicked off the Making History campaign in 2017, we set out to do something that had never been done before. With your support, and despite unprecedented challenges, in the last six years...

CBF's Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership has been built from the ground up. Now with 264 partners, it has planted more than 5 million trees in Pennsylvania.

CBF's Chesapeake Oyster Alliance has grown to 100 partners, and we have added more than 4.5 billion oysters to the Bay.

Through targeted outreach and community engagement, we have raised more than 676,000 voices to take advocacy actions that achieve clean water now and for generations to come.

These numbers are already a success unlike anything we've seen before, and we're not finished. With this robust infrastructure in place, our most ambitious goals are well within reach and will have multiplier benefits for generations to come.

Celebrating a Milestone Year for Learning Outside

For 50 years, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has been a national leader in environmental education, and our award-winning outdoor education programs have served as a model across the country for how to inspire learning through nature.

Your support has helped us reach this incredible milestone anniversary. Over the past 50 years, we have set students on the path to environmental careers, empowered teachers to bring the outdoors to their classrooms, and educated over 1.5 million participants. Nearly every day, someone connects with the wonders of their local waterways for the very first time. That is what you make possible.

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

- **21,000+ students, teachers, and adults in Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania** accessed one-of-a-kind immersive outdoor learning experiences with curriculum tailored to their interests and local waterways.
- **Over 65 students** from across the watershed participated in our Student Leadership Program, building teamwork and problem-solving skills as they studied their local environment, developed advocacy plans, and tackled pressing environmental concerns in their communities.
- **Nearly 200 teachers** participated in Chesapeake Classrooms, a professional development program for educators that focuses on methods for incorporating environmental education into core subject areas.
- **Launched a Climate Curriculum pilot** to establish a new standard for environmental education in the era of climate change.

“

I was fortunate as a student myself to participate in quite a few single-day and multiple-day/week excursions with CBF years ago, which helped solidify my career as a science educator!”

—Katherine K. Clatterbuck, Teacher, Governor's School of Southside Virginia, Charlotte County, Virginia

Lifting Our Voices

Whether at the local, state, or national level, your voice matters, and there are thousands of people alongside you, working toward our shared mission. At the same time, CBF's legal team remains vigilant, standing up to polluters, holding government agencies accountable, and protecting the environmental laws that make our mission possible. We can create new systems that lift up our environment rather than break it down. We will make that a reality. And we will do it together.



This year, with your support, CBF encouraged 22,004 actions at the local, state, and federal levels, including targeted local actions to give advocates an opportunity to impact their own communities:

- Inspired **3,696 letters**—including 468 from first-time CBF advocates—in support of the first major update to the 1991 Forest Conservation Act in Maryland.
The new law will preserve more forest by increasing replanting requirements for developers that clear trees.
- Enabled more than **1,200 CBF members to speak up in support of draft legislation**—introduced by Senator Chris Van Hollen (Maryland) and Representative John Sarbanes (Maryland)—that would create the Chesapeake National Recreation Area as a unit of the National Park Service.
- Motivated advocates throughout Pennsylvania to send **1,758 letters to legislators** urging them to pass the Clean Streams Fund. In July 2022, we applauded the Pennsylvania legislature's passage of the fund, which includes a historic investment of millions of dollars to reduce pollution in the state's rivers and streams.

A MAJOR VICTORY FOR LOCAL WATERWAYS

After nearly three years of litigation and discussion, CBF and our partners reached a proposed settlement in our lawsuit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for its failures to enforce the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint (the Bay's cleanup plan) in Pennsylvania. The settlement requires EPA to, among other things, look for ways to reduce pollution from agriculture—the state's biggest polluting source—and stormwater runoff from urban and suburban land. As part of the settlement, EPA also commits to increase compliance and enforcement efforts.

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“Fortunately for our side, CBF has tremendous credibility as a watchdog for the Bay.”

—Ralph K. “Dirk” Durstein,
Deputy Attorney General,
State of Delaware

ACHIEVING HISTORIC INVESTMENTS IN THE BAY



- Supported efforts in Virginia and Maryland to address the boom in the Bay's **blue catfish population**. This invasive species has plagued the watershed since being introduced in the 1970s, and its voracious appetite for menhaden, shad, blue crabs, and many other important species has become a major issue for the fragile Bay ecosystem.



- Advocated for a new program in Virginia that will provide public grants to businesses and individuals who **recycle oyster shells**, as well as organizations that maintain shell recycling bins. Recycled shells are highly valuable material for oyster restoration projects.

ALL PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE BY
KENNY FLETCHER/CBF STAFF



FORCING ACCOUNTABILITY FROM GOVERNMENT AND POLLUTERS

- **Reached a settlement** with Henrico County in Virginia over numerous violations at the county's Water Reclamation Facility that caused raw sewage to enter the James River, threatening the health of local residents.

The settlement agreement requires Henrico County to invest in projects that will reduce pollution from the facility and do more to protect the health of Henrico residents, including substantially improving notification of sewage overflows near where people live, work, and play.

- Concluded several years of litigation that resulted in the **U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit** ruling in our favor to vacate the 50-year license granted to the Conowingo Dam's operator by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Studies have found that the Conowingo Dam, located on the Susquehanna River, is responsible for as much as 20 percent of the sediment that enters the Bay during storms. With our partners, we are working to ensure adequate environmental and clean water protections will be included in any future license.

- **Won a case against a development permit** that would allow the removal of hundreds of trees in Abingdon Woods in Harford County, Maryland. We challenged the permit, which violated the 1991 Forest Conservation Act.

In two rulings in 2022 and 2023, judges agreed that our challenge was valid, and that a permitting agency must provide clear evidence for waiving conservation requirements.

Your Support is Invaluable

The Chesapeake Bay gives us so much, and because of your support of CBF, the Bay will always have a strong champion. With you by our side, CBF is working hard for a healthy, productive, and resilient Chesapeake Bay—a place where parents can let their children play in the water without worrying about pollution. A place where birds, fish, and other animals thrive in a healthy and sustainable ecosystem. A place that will remain a treasured resource for generations to come. **Thank you for being a critical partner in our mission to Save the Bay—and keep it saved.**

“

Until joining the [Clean the Bay Day], I felt kind of helpless, like there was nothing I can do to help. And now I can see that ... going to do a beach cleanup is making an impact. We picked up 33 pounds of trash. Without us doing that, that trash would still be there and end up in the waterways.”

—Molly Jones, Junior, First Colonial High School, and participant in the Virginia Beach Public Schools’ Environmental Studies Program held at CBF’s Macon and Joan Brock Classroom

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CBF’s work is grounded in transparency and accountability. We hold high ratings with the top charity rating organizations in the United States, including:



Candid Platinum
Transparency 2023 Level



America's Best Charities
Seal of Excellence

CBF also meets all the BBB Wise Giving Alliance's Standards for Charity Accountability.



**CHESAPEAKE BAY
FOUNDATION**

Saving a National Treasure

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