



## CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Saving a National Treasure*

## FACT SHEET

January 2014

### POLLUTED RUNOFF PROJECTS IN BALTIMORE CITY IN FY2014

Due to Baltimore City's ultra-urban land use, dense development, aging infrastructure, and highly compacted soils, Baltimore City has some of the most expensive and difficult restoration work in the state. The funds collected from the stormwater utility fee will allow Baltimore City to undertake projects badly needed to reduce localized flooding, improve public infrastructure, restore streams, and improve water quality. Baltimore's unique set of problems will require innovative solutions to achieve water quality standards, but it will also require adequate dedicated funding. Many projects have already been identified and some even entered the design phase but have stalled, often due to lack of funding. However, with the stormwater utility fund in place, Baltimore is poised to provide **twice the funding** to deal with polluted runoff in FY2014 compared to FY2013, without diverting any funding from other important public and social services. Some of the planned projects are detailed below.

### IMPLEMENTING PRACTICAL AND PROVEN SOLUTIONS



Photo Credit: Kimberly Burgess, Baltimore Department of Public Works

Some of the practices being implemented by Baltimore include increased street sweeping, stream restoration, wetland creation, and conversion of impervious surfaces. Considering the high percentage of impervious surface and limited design space, Baltimore City must also incorporate many smaller projects such as rain gardens, curb extensions (pictured above) and bio-swales.

Street Sweeping removes pollutants near their source, improving the quality of polluted runoff by preventing the pollution and trash from entering storm drains and streams. Removing these pollutants at their source is much more effective than trying to remove them after they have entered the stormwater system.

Stream restoration can provide a large number of benefits, including flood control, habitat for fish, amphibians, insects and other aquatic organisms, stabilized stream banks, better protection of wetlands, higher quality stream valley trail systems for recreation such as walking, birding, and biking, and reducing pollution flowing downstream to the Chesapeake Bay.

Curb extensions with curb openings and appropriate vegetation capture and filter polluted runoff by infiltration. Curb extensions can also greatly enhance communities by providing traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and beautiful greenways.

Rain gardens can be large or relatively small, and have flexibility to fit into a number of locations. Rain gardens are designed to catch rainwater to slow down, decrease, and improve the quality of polluted runoff. They also beautify the area and provide wildlife habitat for a number of small critters such as butterflies and toads.

### **Gwynns Falls**

Gwynns Falls is a free flowing stream that originates in Baltimore County and flows 25 miles to the tidal Patapsco River, and is home to the Gwynns Falls Trail, an outstanding natural resource for the City and its residents. However, Gwynns Falls is also polluted by sediments, phosphorus and bacteria. Polluted runoff is a major source of that pollution, particularly for sediments. The City began designing a project to restore 3,900 linear feet of Powder Mill Run in the Gwynns Falls watershed back in 2009, which stalled due to uncertain federal funding. The City is now able to pursue continuing design and construction through its own funding.

### **Jones Falls**

The Jones Falls watershed discharges into the Inner Harbor of Baltimore City, and is polluted by metals, nutrients, sediments, bacteria, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). A major source for many of these pollutants is polluted runoff. The City has been planning two major projects in the Jones Falls watershed that have encountered funding problems. Approximately 800 feet of stream restoration in East Stony Run was designed in 2010, but the bids to do the work exceeded available budgets. Likewise, approximately 1,400 feet of stream restoration in Lower Stony Run was planned in 2010, but additional funding was required to complete design and construction. With an adequate dedicated funding source, these are projects that may be able to be completed in the near future.

### **Back River**

The Back River watershed drains into the Chesapeake Bay, and is polluted by nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, bacteria, toxics, and metals. Many of these pollutants come from polluted runoff. In 2010, Baltimore City began designing a stream restoration project to restore approximately 6,900 linear feet of the Biddison Run stream in the Back River watershed. This stream was experiencing significant slope failure, leading to erosion and additional sediment pollution. While the construction was anticipated to be completed in 2012, the entire project was postponed due to limited funding.



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Founded in 1967, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) conservation organization dedicated to saving a national treasure—the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers and streams. Its motto, Save the Bay, defines the organization's mission and commitment. With headquarters in Annapolis, MD, offices in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia, and 17 field centers, CBF works throughout the Chesapeake Bay's 64,000-square-mile watershed to build an informed citizenry, advocate pollution-reduction strategy, and enforce the law. CBF is supported by more than 200,000 active members and has a staff of 170 full-time employees. Approximately 80 percent of CBF's \$23.6 million annual budget is privately raised.

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