



**BY THE NUMBERS**

# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT





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CONTENTS PHOTO by Kent Carlson

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## VISION

In a sustainable Maryland, we recognize that the health of our society and our economy are dependent on the health of our environment. Therefore, we choose to act both collectively and individually to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance our environment for this and future generations.

## MISSION

The Department of Natural Resources leads Maryland in securing a sustainable future for our environment, society, and economy by preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing the State's natural resources.

## OBJECTIVES

- Sustainable populations of living resources and aquatic habitat
- Healthy watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers
- Natural resources stewardship opportunities for rural and urban citizens
- Conserved and managed statewide network of ecologically valuable private and public lands
- Diverse outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors
- Diverse workforce and efficient operations

**400,000**  
RECREATIONAL ANGLERS



**1.5 million**  
BIRD WATCHERS



**181,000**  
REGISTERED BOATERS



**400**  
CHARTERED BOAT CAPTAINS



**120,000**  
HUNTERS



**12 million**  
STATE PARK VISITORS



**12** STATE PARKS  
FILLED TO CAPACITY



**5500**  
COMMERCIAL WATERMEN

**GOLDEN AGE PASS** Eliminated fee to use state park boat launches or ramps. The pass entitles Maryland adults ages 62 and older to a lifetime of free day-use entry into all state parks, as well as half-price camping Sunday through Thursday.



**GAME HUSBANDRY LICENSING FEE** Reduced from \$10 to \$5 a year. This license is required for anyone who raises, breeds, protects or sells game birds.



**CERTIFIED TREE EXPERT LICENSING FEE** Reduced from \$25 to \$20. These licenses are required in order to advertise or practice tree care services.



**FOREST CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PROPERTY FEE** Simplified fee for landowners participating in the conservation program.



**FOREST PRODUCT OPERATOR LICENSING FEE** Reduced from \$30 to \$20 a year. This license is required in order to engage in a forest products business, including sawmills, firewood dealers, and pulpwood and logging contractors.



**CHESAPEAKE BAY RESTORATION** Utilized the most cost-effective and efficient technologies to reduce nonpoint source pollution (runoff containing nutrients and sediment) from the bay, while also creating jobs. To date, 24 Maryland companies have developed 26 technologies supporting roughly 100 jobs. The state's \$3.6 million investment has been matched with \$2.7 million from companies participating in the program.



**SUSTAINABLE FORESTS** Efforts to sustainably manage more than 200,000 acres of state forests were validated by another successful certification audit from the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. These forests provide raw material for the forest products industry, habitat for game and non-game wildlife species, and recreational opportunities.



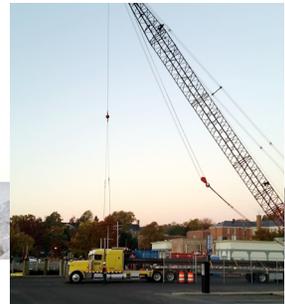
**STREAM RESTORATION** Provided \$750,000 to help fund a research grant for stream restoration projects. Four projects were selected to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of water quality and habitat enhancement practices and efforts.



**WORKING WATERFRONTS** Provided \$143,000 through a federal grant to support the revitalization of working waterfront communities and economies dependent on fishing, boating and various marine trades.



**HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES** The department bid out 55 critical maintenance projects worth more than \$3.5 million, which goes directly to small businesses and contractors throughout the state.





**DURING 2015...**

Provided guidance to landowners in the planting of more than **1,000** acres of **trees** through programs such as Lawn to Woodland, Marylanders Plant Trees and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.



Assisted **17** jurisdictions with strategies and treatments to combat the deadly emerald ash borer—an invasive insect that feeds on and eventually kills ash trees—and drafted a Protected Lands Plan for the state.



Responded to the fire emergency caused by extreme heat and drought on the west coast by mobilizing **three 20-person crews**, **12 specially trained individuals** and **two engines** to various fires in Alaska, California, Montana, Oregon and Washington.



Here in Maryland, crews responded to **158** fires that burned **1,058** acres.

Added nearly

# 11,000

**acres** to the department's portfolio for public recreation and wildlife management, bringing total Wildlife Management Area acreage to approximately 123,000.



With partners, completed efforts to eradicate the **invasive nutria population** to **near zero.**

Removed the **Delmarva Fox Squirrel** from the list of threatened and endangered wildlife after working cooperatively with landowners and the partners for past

# 10

years.



Reduced the invasive mute swan population to fewer than **20 birds** statewide (from a high of 4,000 less than 10 years ago).

# 20

Reduced the estimated statewide **deer population** by

# 100,000



—from a high of 300,000.

# LAND CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION

manages more than 475,000 acres of public lands and protected open space.

Permanently protected an additional

# 3,159

**acres of natural areas** through Program Open Space-Stateside for public recreation as well as watershed and wildlife protection, bringing the program's total acreage to **326,000.**



The Rural Legacy Program added

# 3,043

**acres** to its designated areas, resulting in a total of **84,626 acres** of working farms and significant rural lands preserved.

Provided funding for

# 153

**local recreational projects** through Program Open Space-Local and the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program.



# 11

easements on

# 763

**acres** were donated to the Maryland Environmental Trust, conserving a total of **132,923 acres** of private land across the state since 1967.



implements best management practices to protect Maryland's 7,719 miles of shoreline.



Secured

# \$39.4 million

for local projects that reduce harmful nutrient and sediment runoff into the bay. The Chesapeake & Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund has restored **185,442 linear feet of stream** and **601 acres of wetlands** as well as removed more than **32 acres of impervious surface**.

Trained

# 140

**volunteers** and sampled **238 freshwater streams**.



Issued

# five

**grants** to aid local governments in coastal hazard preparedness, planning and outreach: Baltimore City, Calvert County, Kent County, Queen Anne's County and the Town of Oxford.



Mallovs Bay became well-positioned to be one of the first **National Marine Sanctuaries** in **more than 15 years**. If designated, it will become the

# first

**within Maryland waters** as well as the first **in the Chesapeake Bay region**.

implements best management practices to protect Maryland's 7,719 miles of shoreline.

**Chesapeake Bay Submerged Aquatic Vegetation** continues to show improvement in response to better water quality conditions.

To date, Maryland has attained **35%** of its 2025 acreage goal for the bay.



Collected nearly **6,000** water quality samples during more than **3,500** events to evaluate the quality of Maryland's streams, rivers and estuaries at sites that have been sampled monthly since 1972.



Completed the **second of three years** of water quality monitoring at **34** stations to describe baseline water quality conditions within Maryland's Marcellus shale region.

manages 83 tidal and non-tidal species for conservation, recreation and economic benefits.

Determined the abundance of **spawning-age female blue crabs** was

# 101 million

—a substantial

rise from

2014 when adult females were considered depleted—via the Blue Crab Winter Dredge Survey results.



Approved  
**56**

**new shellfish aquaculture leases,**

bringing the total leases in place to **370**—many of them held by watermen. Aquaculture

activities produced more than **500,000 bushels of oysters.**



Results from the 2014 Fall Oyster Survey revealed an oyster survival rate of

# 89%

—the **5th highest** since measurements began in 1985.



Totaled close to  
**\$80 million**

**in dockside values: \$5.3 million for striped bass, \$58.9 million for blue crabs and \$15.1 million for oysters.**



Counted more than **70,000 fish** of **50 different species** in **22 sites** across the bay as part of the annual survey of juveniles. It included

# 3,194

**striped bass**, noting a healthy level of reproduction—the eighth highest on record.

Certified  
**7**



**new recreational Maryland Fishing**

**Records:** **1** chain pickerel, **2** snakeheads, **1** tautog, **1** triggerfish, **1** white perch and **1** winter flounder.

# BOATING SERVICES

fosters the sustainable development and enjoyment of Maryland waterways for more than 181,000 registered boaters and 600 marinas.

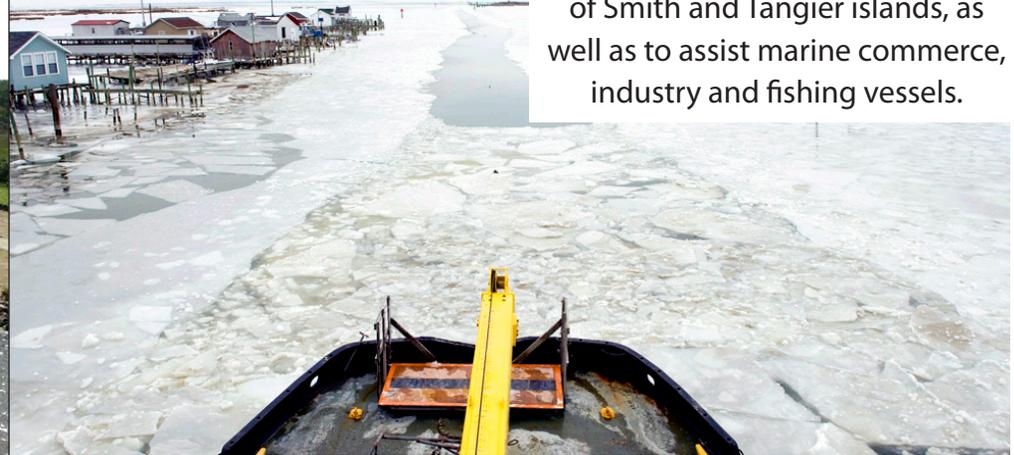


Completed the

# \$2.1 million

Fort Smallwood boat ramp project using a **Boating Access Grant**.

Broke up iced waterways with Hydrographic Operations vessels over a **6-week period** to ensure fuel, food and people could reach the communities of Smith and Tangier islands, as well as to assist marine commerce, industry and fishing vessels.



Provided funding and manpower to remove

**20** **abandoned vessels** obstructing Maryland's waterways, including the 70-foot New Hope deserted in the West Ocean City commercial harbor. Its steel remains have been donated to an artificial reef program.

Awarded

# \$6 million

in **Waterway Improvement funds** to **59 public boating projects** in **20 counties**. These funds had an economic impact of **\$11.2 million**.

Received above average or excellent ratings from

**85%**

of visitors surveyed.

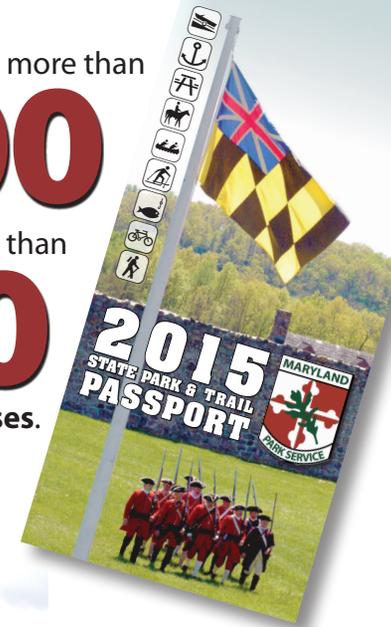


Initiated a

**\$643,400**

construction project on the department's first solar photovoltaic project at Sandy Point State Park.

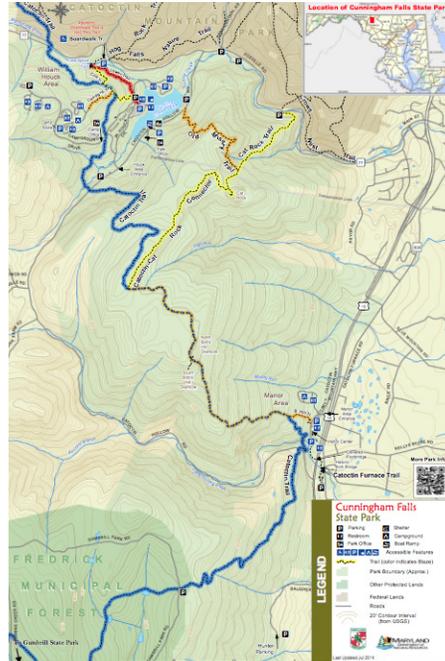
Sold more than  
**7,000**  
park passports and more than  
**6,600**  
Golden Age passes.



Completed major park improvements—including a walking trail and interpretive wayside exhibits that tell the story of Maryland's militia during the War of 1812—at North Point State Battlefield, which sees approximately

**250** visitors per week.

Provided  
**35**  
trail maps online  
utilizing a brand  
new geospatial  
format compatible  
with mobile  
devices.



Broke **five** miles of new, natural surface  
ground on trails in Garrett County.



Renovated **10 shower,  
bathhouse and comfort stations,**  
which totaled approximately

**12,000**  
square feet of updated facilities.



Experienced a  
**9%**  
increase in  
camping, cabins  
and picnic shelter  
reservations.

# NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE

more than 260 officers enforce conservation law, educate the public and provide emergency assistance.

Conducted nearly

# 7,000

homeland security checks of power plants, bridges, the Port of Baltimore and other vital waterfront areas.



Graduated  
**22**  
officers from  
the academy  
in October  
after **seven**  
**months** of  
instruction.



Talked to more than

# 260,000

residents and visitors this year as they kept watch over public lands and waterways.



Inspected  
**42,200**

vessels in the bay,  
on lakes and rivers  
and the Atlantic  
Ocean.



# 248,061

citizens and school children experienced

# 5,934

interpretive and environmental education programs and events at state parks.



The department provided more than

# 50

professional development workshops

for 2,000 educators, gave nearly 200 classroom presentations and supported more than 500 field experiences—which will ultimately reach an estimated 64,000 students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.



Boating education and hunter safety staff taught nearly

# 9,000

people in

# 273

classroom and online settings.



The department completed design of

# 10

new nature-based playgrounds and initiated construction valued at \$1.7 million.



# 260

youth—including 161 from Baltimore City—graduated from the Conservation Jobs Corps, learning job skills and connecting with nature during a 5-week summer job in state parks.

