

# WHOLE WATERSHED PROGRAM

## ANNUAL REPORT AND EXPENDITURE PLAN

FY26

Photo Credit: Calvert Cliffs  
State Park by Anthony Burrows



Wes Moore, Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

# SECRETARY STATEMENT

The Whole Watershed Act is part of a new vision for environmental restoration for the Chesapeake and Atlantic coastal bays. The five selected watersheds represent areas across the state where we hope to make improvements to shallow water habitats, using focused restoration. These shallow water areas are where Maryland residents and visitors have the most interaction with their watersheds, and each watershed selected is a place where we believe our partners can meet restoration goals using collaborative and science-based approaches.

During this inaugural year of the Whole Watershed Program, we are excited to see our partners begin on their initial implementation, monitoring, and planning work for each of the five watersheds. Each partner group brings their own unique vision for comprehensive watershed management. The Department of Natural Resources is looking forward to shepherding these projects as a member of the Whole Watershed Program's State Management Team and collaborating on progress as it unfolds.

From improving urban access to waterfronts in South Baltimore to alleviating flooding concerns in underserved areas on the Eastern Shore, these projects show that restoring waterways and rebuilding habitat comes hand in hand with uplifting our communities. All Marylanders benefit from healthy watersheds, and we look forward to seeing how these Whole Watershed projects work toward and fulfill their goals.

**JOSH KURTZ**

Secretary, Department of Natural Resources



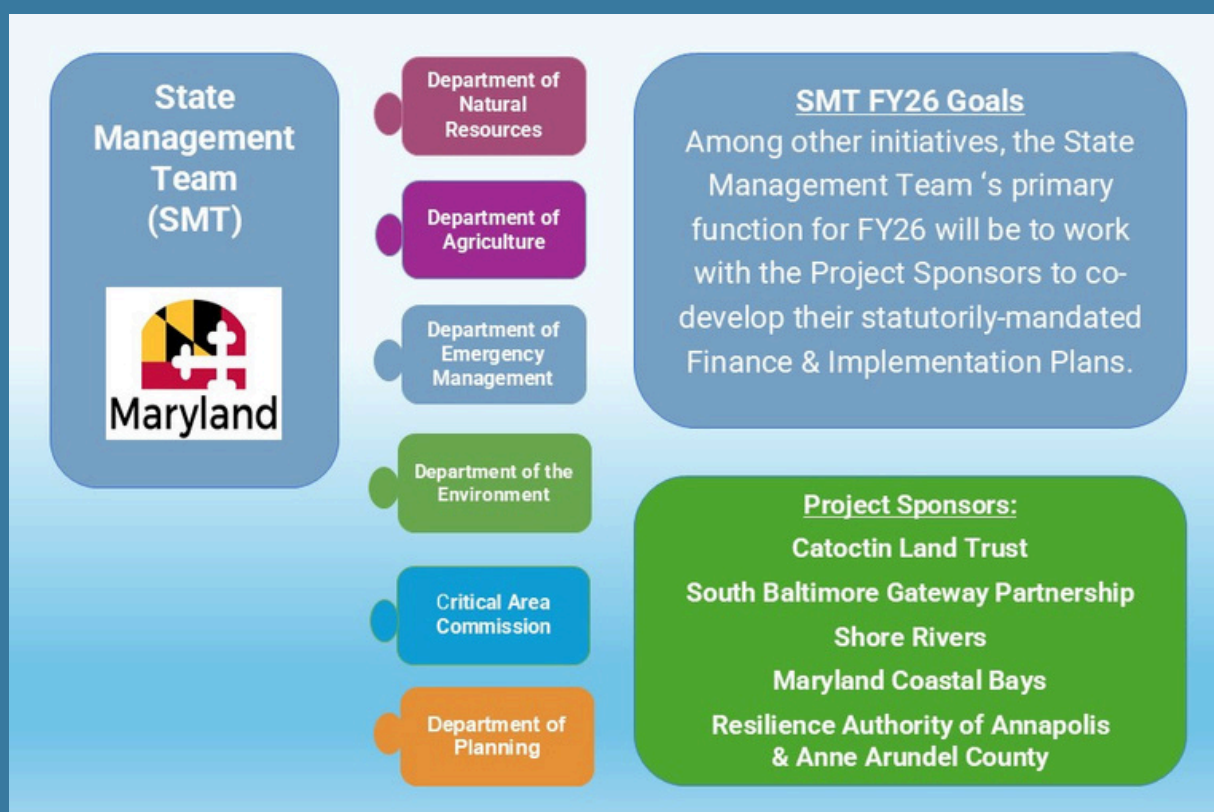
Photo Credit: Orchard Trail by  
Anthony Burrows



# PROGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW

The Whole Watershed Program (WWP) was legislatively established through the Whole Watershed Act (SB 969 / HB 1165) in April 2024. This new program was created to provide a collaborative, science-based approach to watershed restoration. The WWP is a five-year pilot program, targeting five watersheds with the goal of improving watershed health through a diverse selection of environmental actions. In direct response to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR) Report, multi-faceted program goals include: pollution reduction, habitat creation, aquatic resource improvements, equitable public access, carbon sequestration, public health enhancements, outreach to overburdened and underserved communities, and more.

Partnerships are critical to the success of the Whole Watershed Program, which is led by a multi-agency State Management Team (SMT). See below for SMT members and watershed Project Sponsors.





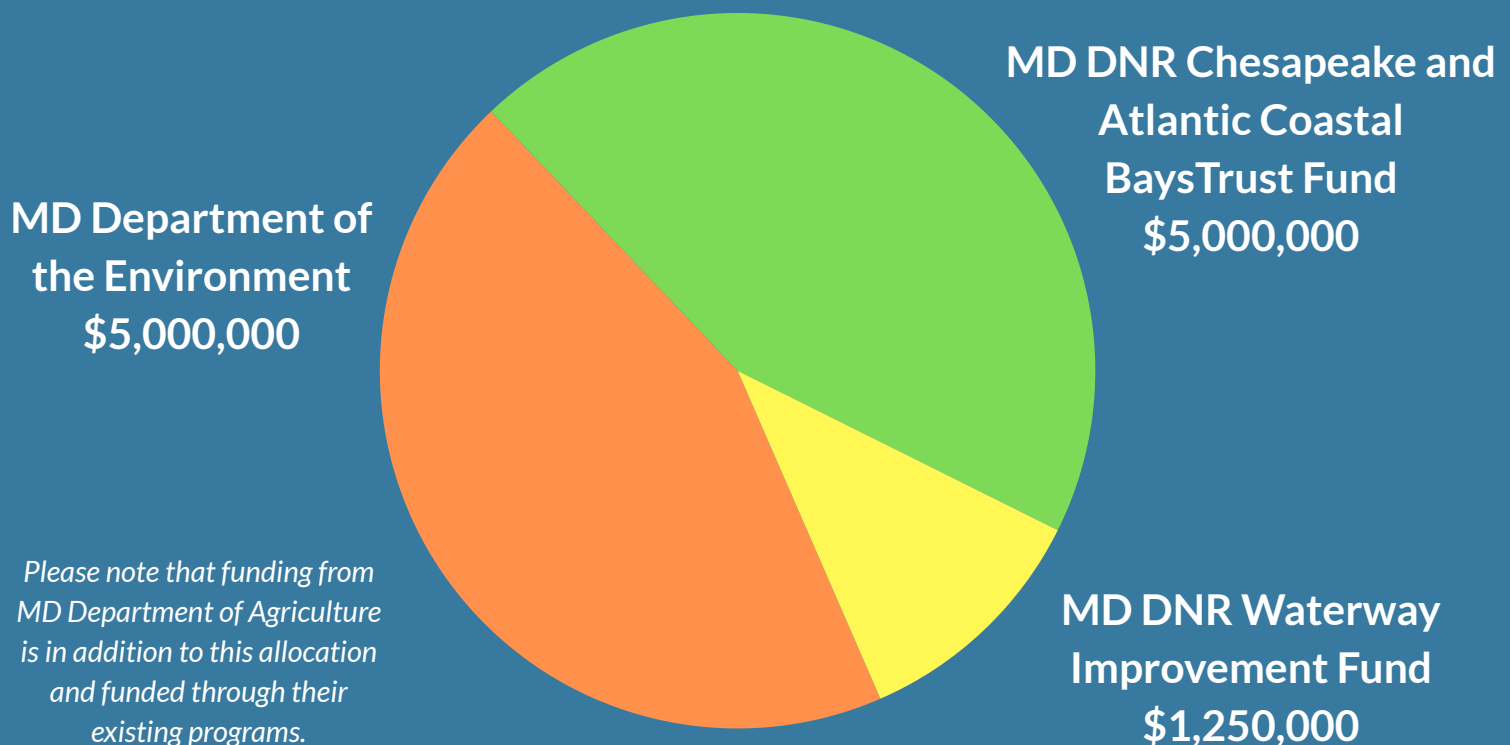
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Whole Watershed Fund is currently comprised of funding from a variety of existing programs within the MD Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and MD Department of the Environment (MDE).

*While the agricultural funding from MD Department of Agriculture (MDA) is not included within the Whole Watershed Fund, the MDA programs listed below support the Whole Watershed Program as well.*

- **MD Department of Natural Resources:**
  - Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund
  - Waterway Improvement Fund
- **MD Department of the Environment:**
  - Bay Restoration Fund
  - Clean Water Commerce Act
- **MD Department of Agriculture:**
  - MD Agricultural Land Preservation
  - MD Agricultural Cost Share Program

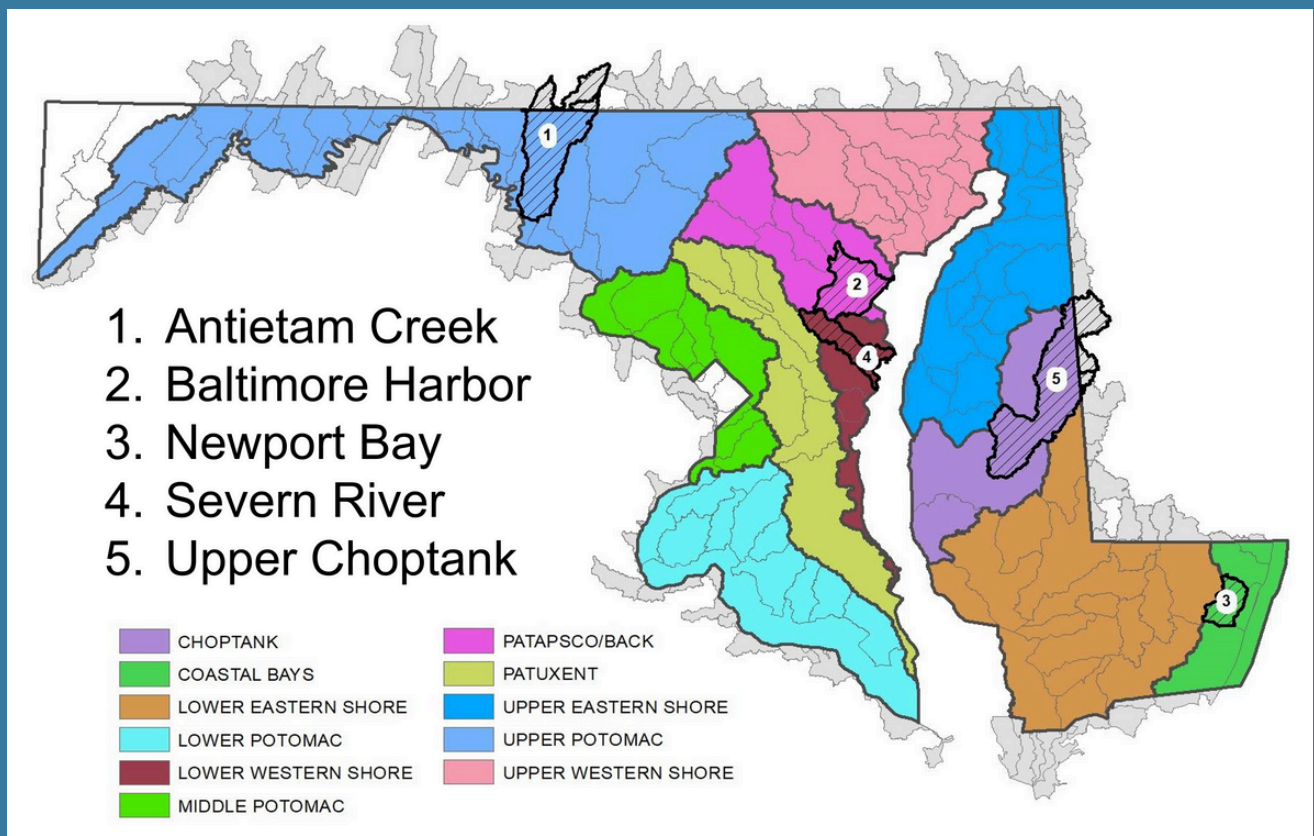
## The Whole Watershed Program Funding for FY2026





# WATERSHEDS

In March 2025, five watersheds were selected from nine applications throughout the State to participate in this five-year pilot Whole Watershed Program. The watersheds below illustrate a diverse representation of land uses, communities, partnerships and more. The Whole Watershed Act requires the selection of watersheds meet the following designations: one urban, one suburban, two agricultural, one with an adjoining state, and two with opportunities to engage with overburdened or underserved communities. See the watershed sectors and project sponsors below.



Watershed	Project Sponsor	Sector
Antietam Creek	Catoctin Land Trust	Agriculture, Env. Justice, Delaware
Baltimore Harbor	South Baltimore Gateway	Urban, Env. Justice
Upper Choptank River	Shore Rivers	Agriculture, Env. Justice, Pennsylvania
Newport Bay	Maryland Coastal Bays	Agriculture
Severn River	Resilience Authority	Suburban



# BY THE NUMBERS



BUDGETED  
FY26

+

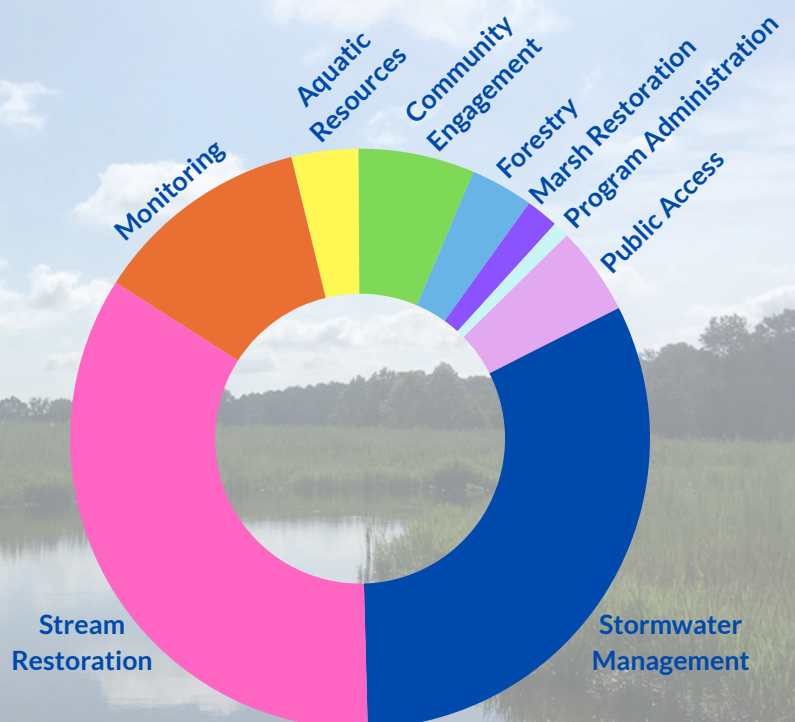
\$11,248,876  
state funds

\$11,007,788  
leveraged funds

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\$22,256,644  
total investment

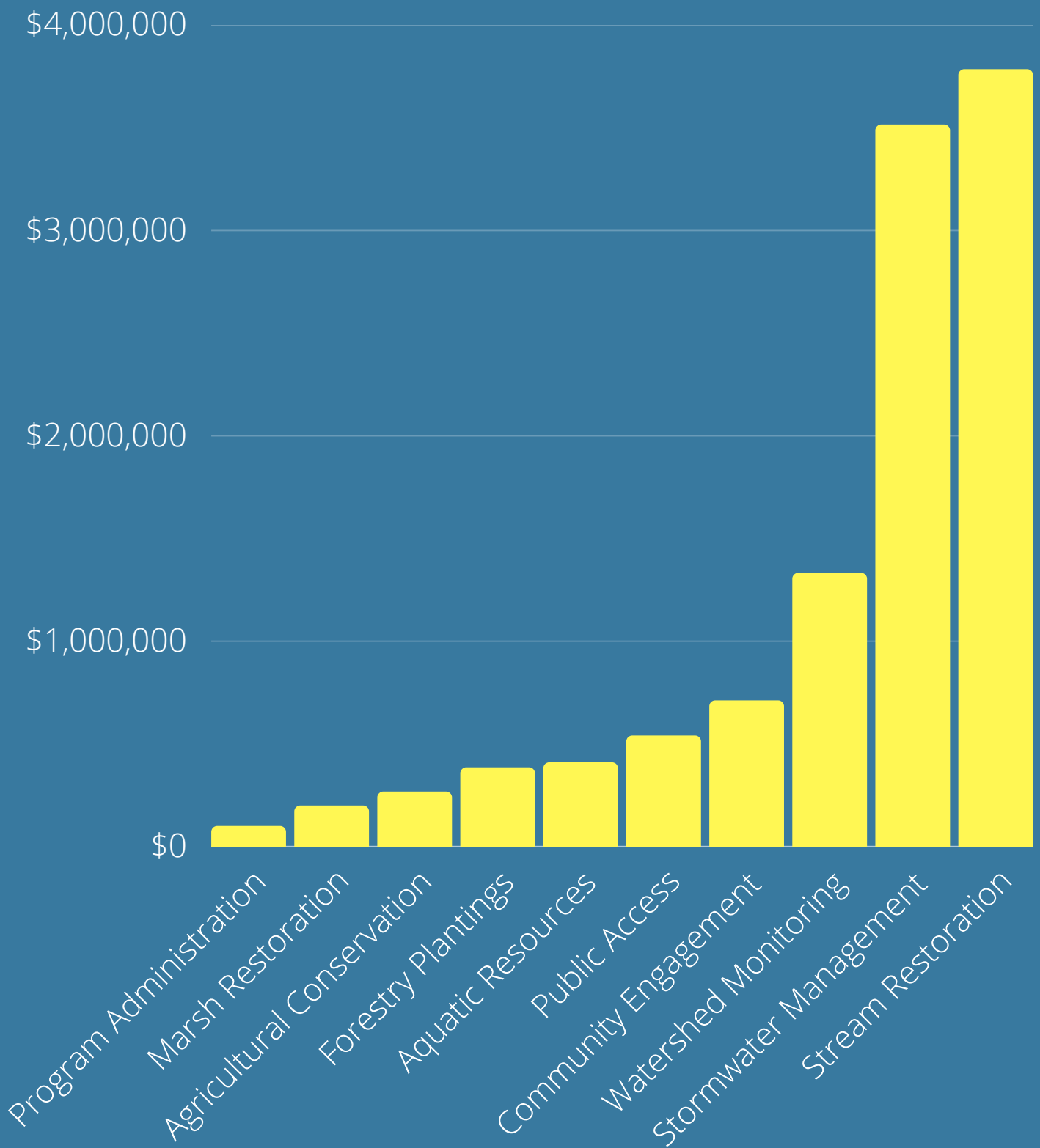
5  
Watersheds  
37  
Projects  
75+  
Partners





# BY THE NUMBERS

## *Funding Portfolio FY26*





# FY2026 BUDGET

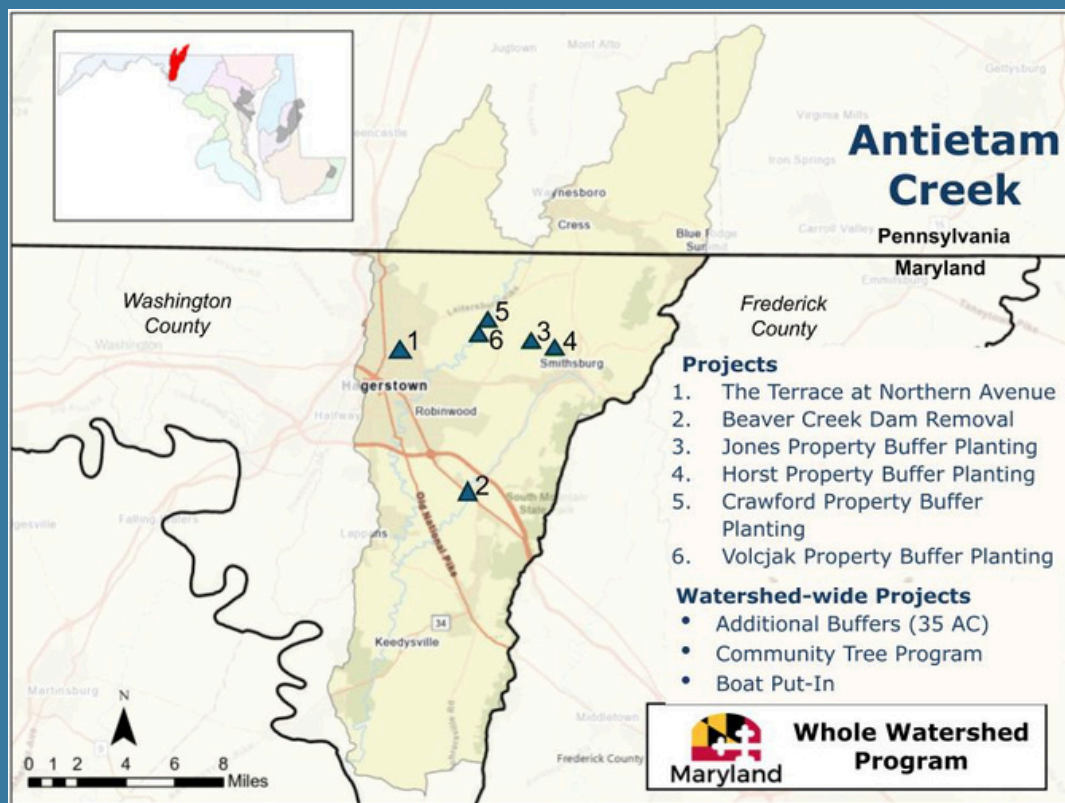
Project Name	Additional Partners	FY26 WW \$
<b>Antietam Creek Watershed: Project Sponsor: Catoctin Land Trust</b>		
The Terrace Stream Restoration	City of Hagerstown, Ecotone, Washington County Soil Conservation District	\$1,051,406
Beaver Creek Dam Removal Design	Ecotone	\$150,000
Buffer Planting - Multiple Locations	Maryland Forestry Service	\$385,650
Liberty Tree Planting Program	Washington County	\$75,000
Antietam Mainstem Boat Put-In	TBD	\$85,000
Biological Monitoring	MD Biological Stream Survey	\$11,000
Outreach & Project Management	Catoctin Land Trust	\$220,820
<b>Baltimore Harbor Watershed: Project Sponsor: South Baltimore Gateway Partnership</b>		
Medstar Hospital Tidal Wetland	GreenVest LLC	\$500,000
Patapsco Delta West Stormwater Wetland Design	GreenVest LLC	\$880,000
Cherry Hill Equitable Waterfront Access Design	Field Operations	\$455,320
Reel Rewards Invasive Fish Bounty Program	Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative	\$94,680
"Witness Trees" Urban Forestry Program	The Nature Conservancy	\$50,000
<b>Upper Choptank Watershed: Project Sponsor: Shore Rivers</b>		
Poor House Run Stream Restoration	Shore Rivers	\$1,033,233
Pealiquor Road Stormwater Wetland	Caroline County	\$500,000
Hannah Henry Way Stormwater Projects	TBD	\$120,000
Fish Passage	US Fish & Wildlife Service	\$140,000
Producer-led Agricultural Projects Outreach	Talbot & Caroline SCDs	\$105,000
Biological Monitoring	MD Biological Stream Survey	\$6,767
Community Engagement	JBO Conservation	\$75,000

# FY2026 BUDGET

Project Name	Additional Partners	FY26 WW \$
<b>Newport Bay Watershed: Project Sponsor: Maryland Coastal Bays</b>		
Berlin Stormwater Upgrades	Town of Berlin	\$650,000
Hudson Branch Stream Restoration	Town of Berlin	\$870,000
Horner & Bay Creek Marsh Restoration Design	US Fish & Wildlife Service	\$199,650
Community Engagement Plan	Assateague Coastal Trust & Lower Shore Land Trust	\$115,000
Whole Watershed Coordinator	MD Coastal Bays	\$80,350
Biological Monitoring	MD Biological Stream Survey	\$65,000
<b>Severn River Watershed: Project Sponsor: Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County</b>		
Key Point Giant Stormwater Management	Severn River Association & BayLand Consultants	\$254,109
Wardour Stormwater Management	Severn River Association & BayLand Consultants	\$147,000
Merryman Stream Restoration	City of Annapolis & Resilience Authority	\$831,038
Brewer Hill Cemetery Step Pool Conveyance	City of Annapolis & Resilience Authority	\$125,000
Rideout Creek Gully Prevention	Severn RiverKeeper & Underwood & Associates	\$162,500
Build a Reef	Oyster Recovery Partnership	\$25,000
Truxton Cove Submerged Wetland	Spa Creek Conservancy & Biohabitats	\$340,000
Watershed Planning & Design	Full Partnership	\$95,353
<b>Program Wide Support</b>		
Program Administration (\$20K per watershed)	Project Sponsors	\$100,000
Watershed Monitoring (\$250K per watershed)	TBD	\$1,250,000
<b>Year 1 - FY 2026 - Total Allocation</b>		<b>\$11,248,876</b>



# ANTIETAM CREEK WATERSHED



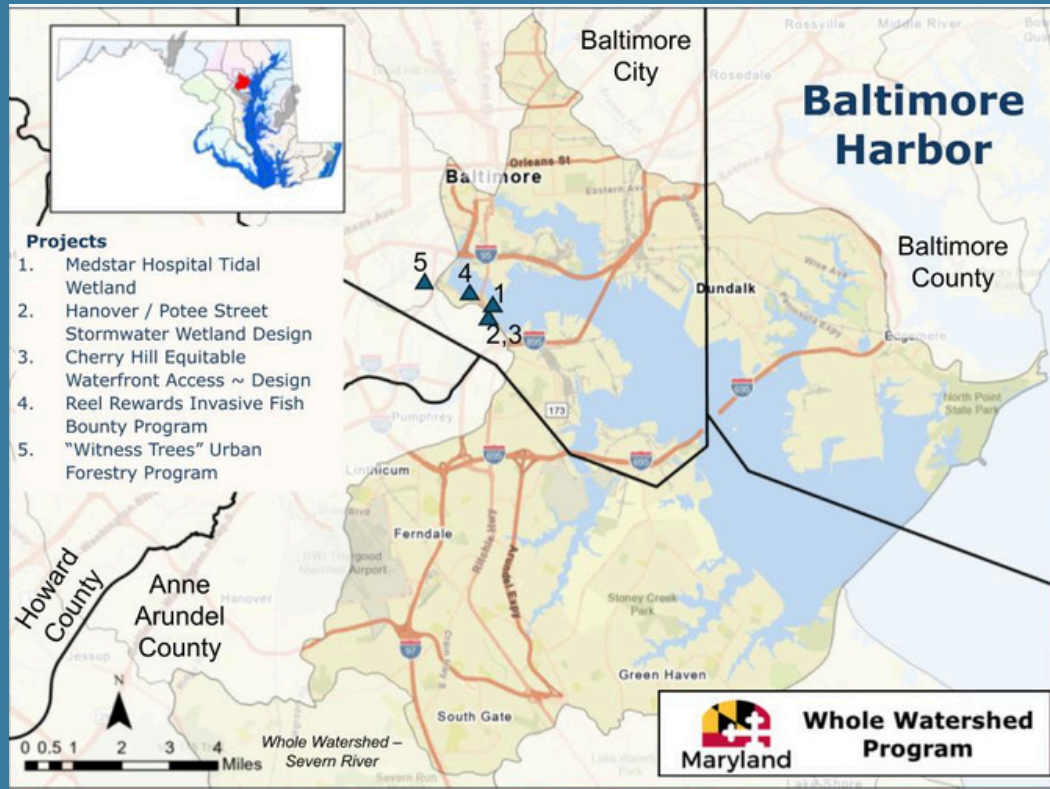
## Project Spotlight: The Terrace at Northern Avenue

This project will address 1,600 feet of severe stream erosion. Whole Watershed Program funding has allowed the City of Hagerstown and Washington County Soil Conservation District to develop a holistic approach, beyond bank stabilization. Goals include stream restoration, flood plain reconnection, and habitat creation. This project will reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment going into the bay. It will also create opportunities to engage the public and promote environmental justice.



Photo Credit:  
Ecotone, Inc.

# BALTIMORE HARBOR WATERSHED



## Project Spotlight: Reel Rewards Invasive Species Fish Bounty Program

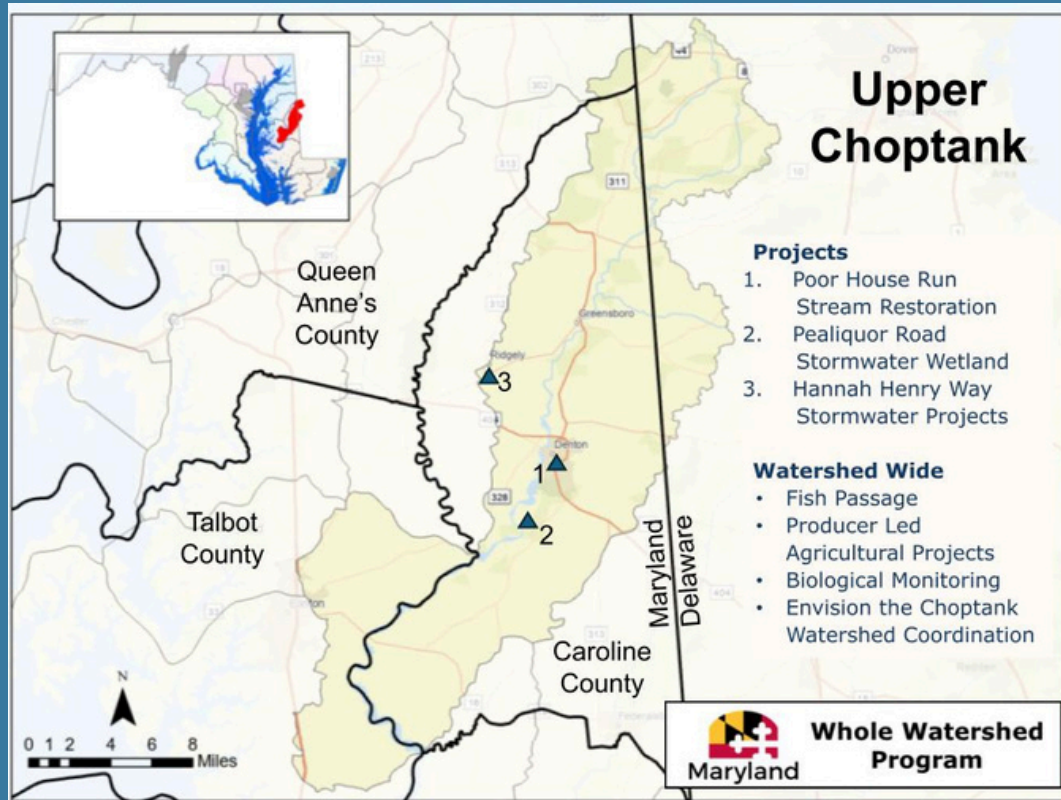
This program from the Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative educates the public about invasive species and rewards anglers for their capture. The Reel Rewards project provides anglers in Baltimore Harbor and the Middle Branch with \$30 per head of invasive fish species (ex: Blue catfish, Chesapeake channa). Outreach materials will be developed to encourage and empower community members, with a goal of removing 300 invasive fish from the watershed.



Photo Credit: Blue Catfish by  
Eric Packard



# UPPER CHOPTANK WATERSHED



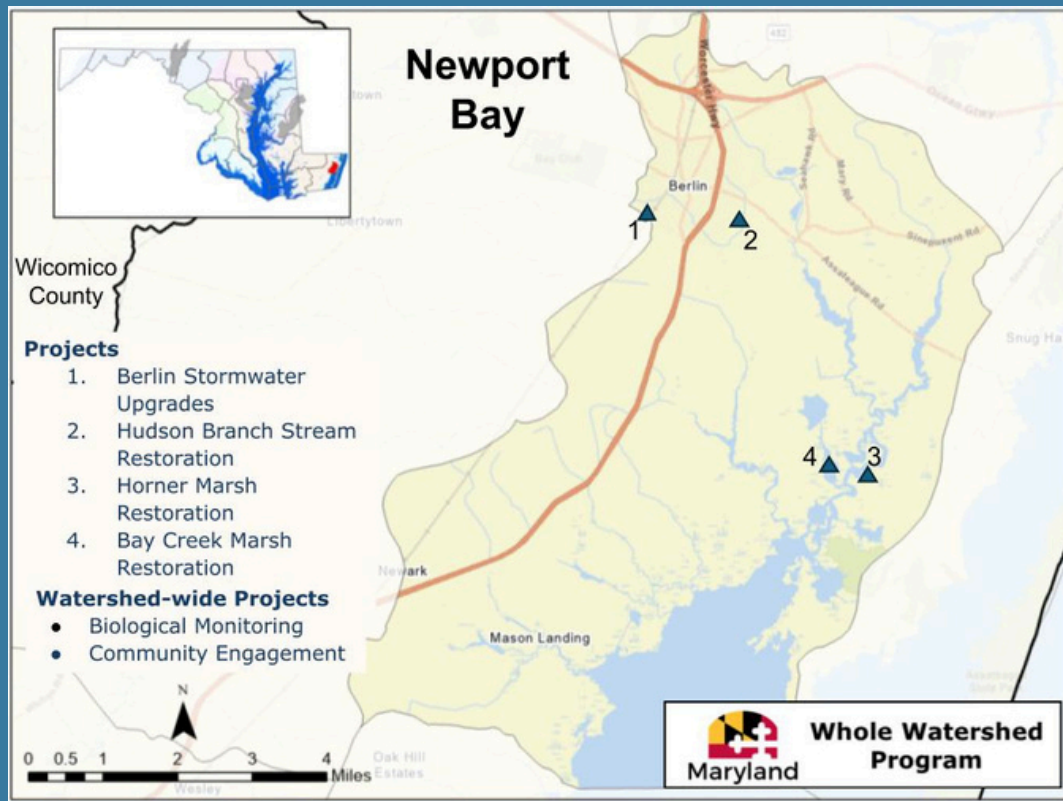
## Project Spotlight: Pealiquor Road Neighborhood Stormwater Wetland

A stormwater constructed wetland project is currently under design for implementation in Caroline County. The finalized project will include 1.88 acres of treatment wetlands, 1,312 square feet of bioretention, and 7,379 square feet of wetland shelf plantings. This project will be installed on adjacent agricultural lands to remediate flooding in the nearby residential neighborhood, improve water quality and create habitat.



Photo Credit: Maryland Forest Service

# NEWPORT BAY WATERSHED



## Project Spotlight: Horner and Bay Creek Marsh Restoration Design

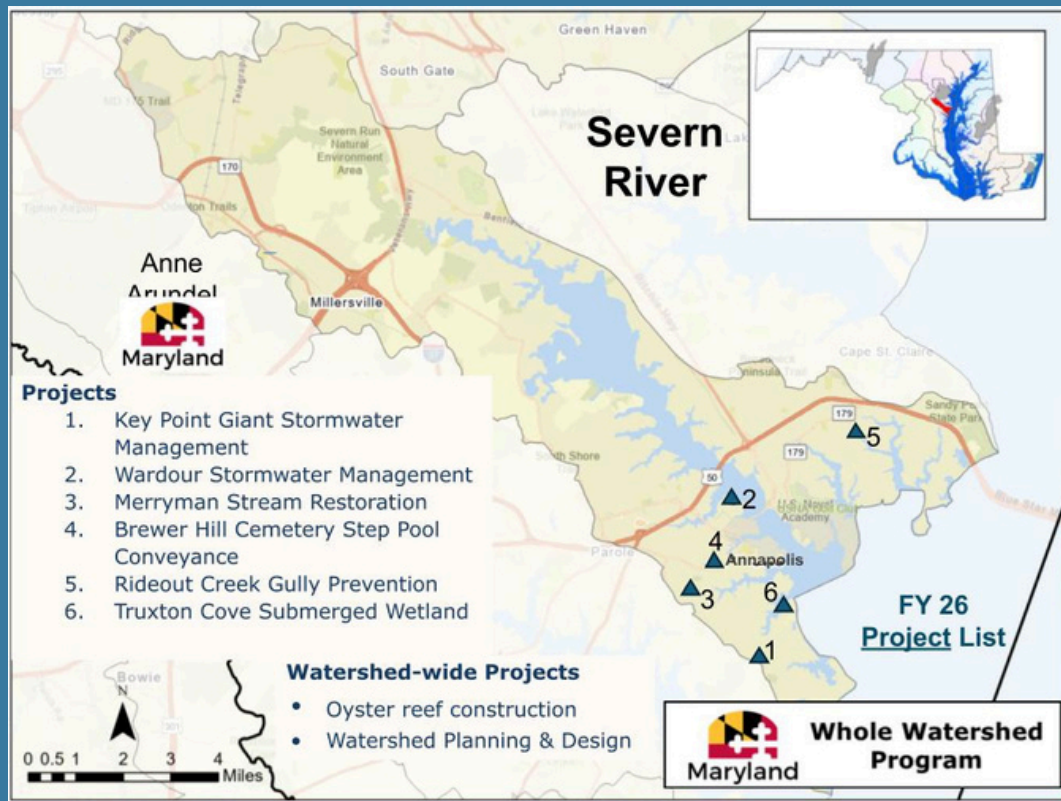
In coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, this project will complete the design phase for two marsh restorations. The 225-acre Horner parcel and 473-acre Bay Creek salt marsh, both of which are located in the headwaters of Newport Bay, have been impacted by sea level rise, snow goose predation, and extensive ditching. Marshes will be restored by building elevation to provide vital habitat for several species.



Photo Credit:  
Kent Carlson



# SEVERN RIVER WATERSHED



## Project Spotlight: Watershed Planning and Design

Initiatives in the Severn River watershed to:

- Support the Watershed Steward's Tree Ambassador Program, focused on planting trees in urban low-income areas
- Develop and advocate for the establishment of the Jabez Branch Conservation Overlay Zone
- Design the Mulberry Hills trail and bridge to increase equitable public access
- Provide additional watershed design support for the full SEVERN partnership



Photo Credit: Maryland DNR  
Flickr

## FY26 Project List

### **Antietam Creek Watershed Catoctin Land Trust**

Washington County  
(District 02A/02B)

#### **Hamilton Run; The Terrace at Northern Avenue**

\$1,051,406 to implement over 1,500 feet of stream restoration. The project will also include flood plain reconnection.

#### **Beaver Creek Dam Removal & Stream Restoration Design**

\$150,000 to design the removal of obstructions from high quality wild brown trout stream, and creation of additional habitat.

#### **Little Antietam Creek North Riparian Buffer Plantings**

A total of \$85,000 to plant 13 acres (3 acres at Jones property and 10 acres at Horst property) of riparian buffers. This project is in coordination with the DNR Forest Service's Woodland Stewardship Network.

#### **Upper Antietam Creek Mainstem Riparian Buffer Plantings**

\$30,000 to plant 4.1 acres of riparian buffers (Crawford property). \$20,000 to plant 2.2 acres of riparian buffers (Volcjak property). These projects are in coordination with the DNR Forest Service's Woodland Stewardship Network.

### **Antietam Watershed Wide Tree Plantings**

\$250,650 to plant an additional 37 acres of riparian buffers, in coordination with Western MD RC&D Council and MD Forest Service. Areas and acreage are to be determined.

#### **Liberty Tree Planting Program**

\$75,000 to provide free trees for Washington County students and residents. The long term project goal is to plant 50 acres by 2030, in coordination with 150 property owners.

#### **Antietam Boat Put-In**

\$85,000 to provide a boat put-in and increase recreational and equitable public access opportunities for the community.

#### **Biological Monitoring**

\$11,000 for monitoring at one Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS) site (to be determined).

#### **Whole Watershed Coordinator**

\$220,820 to provide community outreach and program management. Engagement efforts will be focused on underserved and overburdened communities in the Antietam watershed. Additional efforts will be made to increase agricultural conservation opportunities and collaboration with Pennsylvania.

### **Baltimore Harbor Watershed South Baltimore Gateway Partnership**

Baltimore County  
(District 46)

#### **Medstar Hospital Tidal Wetland**

\$500,000 to improve flood resiliency by re-establishing an offshore tidal wetland; approximately 2,055 linear feet of living shoreline and up to 7.5 acres of aquatic habitat,

#### **Patapsco Delta West Stormwater Wetland Design**

\$880,000 to design a stormwater wetland that will flow to the tidal wetland (see above). This comprehensive system will be designed to treat up to 28 impervious acres and replace up to 1.7 acres of asphalt parking.

#### **Cherry Hill Equitable Waterfront Access Design**

\$455,320 to design a trail to reconnect Cherry Hill residents to their waterfront for recreational and transit purposes.

#### **Reel Rewards Invasive Fish Bounty Program**

\$94,680 to educate the public about invasive species and reward anglers for their capture. The project will develop outreach materials and propose to remove 300 invasive fish from the watershed.



**“Witness Trees” Urban Forestry Program**

\$50,000 to provide community outreach and planting of 50 trees within the Cherry Hill South Shoreline Restoration project area. There will be at least one art installation, which will be funded by outside funding.

**Upper Choptank Watershed Shore Rivers**

Caroline and Talbot Counties (Districts 36 & 37B)

**Poor House Run Stream Restoration**

\$1,033,233 to implement stream restoration and culvert replacement. The project will install riffle and cascade weirs to improve water quality and habitat. Goals include: 544 linear feet of restored stream area, 404 new trees, and 4.44 acres of invasive species managed.

**Pealiquor Road Stormwater Wetland**

\$500,000 for the installation of 1.88 acres of constructed stormwater wetlands. Results include 1312 square feet of bioretention, and 7379 square feet of wetland shelf planting.

**Hannah Henry Way Stormwater Projects**

\$120,000 for design work, engineering, and hydraulic and hydrologic analysis of various stormwater measures. Projects will likely include: swales, conservation landscaping, rain gardens, and roadside drainage improvements.

**Fish Passage**

\$140,000 to design and implement culvert and bridge enhancements, and barrier removal projects in order to enhance fish passage.

**Producer-led Agricultural Projects**

\$105,000 to engage with the farming community and work towards selecting appropriate agricultural practices to reduce nutrients and sediment and improve habitat. Goals include working with at least 20 farmers. Potential future projects include: drainage water management, erosion control, grassed waterways and more.

**Biological Monitoring**

\$6,767 to monitor stream health and collect macroinvertebrate data at an existing Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS) site. Exact location is to be determined, but will likely be in the Kings Creek subwatershed.

**Project Coordination**

\$75,000 to facilitate program efforts in the Upper Choptank, provide community outreach, and coordinate partnership efforts. Deliverables include advancement of existing projects and development of new projects through steering committees, workgroups, partner meetings, etc. Specific efforts include supporting 4-8 Community Ambassadors and working with Hannah Henry Way landowners.

**Newport Bay Watershed Maryland Coastal Bays Program**

Worcester County (District 38C)

**Town of Berlin Stormwater Management Upgrades at Westminster Drive, Abbey Lane, and Upshur Lane**

\$650,000 to replace antiquated stormwater management infrastructure with submerged gravel wetland facilities to improve water quality and reduce chronic flooding. This flood mitigation and stormwater management project is proposed to treat a total of 0.5 acres.

**Hudson Branch Stream Restoration**

\$870,000 to restore approximately 1,900 linear feet of an incised stream to improve water quality, reconnect to the floodplain, provide upstream flood relief, and enhance natural habitat.

**Horner & Bay Creek Marsh Restoration and Resilience**

\$199,650 to develop concept designs and final project submittals for marsh restoration in Horner (225 acres) and Bay Creek (473 acres) marshes. Both are impacted by sea level rise, snow goose predation, and extensive mosquito ditching. Future implementation will treat impacted ditches and create beneficial habitat.

**Community Engagement Plan**  
\$115,000 to develop and implement year one of this plan, to include listening sessions with underserved and overburdened community members, education at Title 1 schools, lecture series, and volunteer outreach. Other deliverables may include Public Drainage Associations, and establishment of Community Ambassadors.

**Whole Watershed Coordinator**  
\$80,350 to increase capacity. Employee responsibilities will include: partner coordination, project management, community engagement, development of a Finance and Implementation Plan, and more.

**Biological Monitoring**  
\$65,000 to monitor 5-6 stations for fish, benthos, and habitat. Indices of biotic integrity (IBI) will be developed to identify areas in need of habitat improvement and to track near field restoration.

**Severn River Watershed Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County**  
Anne Arundel County (District 33B)

**Key Point Giant Stormwater Management**  
\$254,109 to install two urban micro-bioretenement facilities with native vegetation to treat 1.04 acres, of which 70% is impervious.

**Wardour Stormwater Management**  
\$147,000 to provide stormwater management through a series of infiltration cells planted with native vegetation. This project will treat 11.98 acres, of which 27.2% is impervious.

**Merryman Stream Restoration**  
\$831,038 to implement approximately 800 linear feet of stream restoration and native plantings. Goals include re-establishment of a stream-wetland-floodplain complex to enhance nutrient cycling, restore habitat, and improve ecosystem health.

**Brewer Hill Cemetery Step Pool Conveyance**  
\$125,000 to complete approximately 240 linear feet of regenerative stormwater conveyance. This project also includes Environmental Justice outreach opportunities.

**Rideout Creek Gully Prevention**  
\$162,500 to complete 238 linear feet of regenerative stormwater conveyance, 0.48 acres of wetland creation, and 157 trees planted.

**Build-a-Reef ~ Oyster Reef Construction**  
\$25,000 to conduct pre-restoration surveys for reef construction in years 2 & 3 of the Whole Watershed Program. Deliverables include data on existing oyster habitat quality.

**Truxton Cove Submerged Wetland**  
\$340,000 in stormwater management efforts to complete a submerged gravel wetland and one bioretention area.

**Watershed Planning and Design**  
\$95,353 for a variety of community outreach and design efforts with the full SEVERN partnership. Components include supporting the Tree Ambassador Program, developing a protective Conservation Overlay Zone for the Jabez Branch, designing a trail and bridge for Mulberry Hills equitable access, and supporting watershed design efforts.



To learn more about the Whole Watershed Program,  
please visit:

[dnr.maryland.gov](http://dnr.maryland.gov)

Sarah Lane | Chair, Whole Watershed Program State Management Team  
Shelly Baird | Whole Watershed Coordinator  
Watershed and Climate Services

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Wes Moore - Governor | Aruna Miller - Lieutenant Governor  
Josh Kurtz - Secretary



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