



PressRelease



Chesapeake Bay Program Announces Small Watershed Grant Recipients

59 New Projects to Help Restore the Bay

Annapolis, MD (August 7, 2001) – At a Bayside ceremony today, EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman, US Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD) and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Executive Director John Berry announced over \$ 1.5 million in Chesapeake Bay Program Small Watershed Grants to 59 community-led organizations and local governments from across the Bay watershed.

The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program supports communities in developing and implementing watershed management plans and encourages innovative, local programs that improve water quality and restore important habitats within the Chesapeake Bay basin. By promoting community-based stewardship of local lands, the program provides citizens a greater understanding of the relationship between the condition of their local watersheds and the health of the Bay.

“The Small Watershed Grants Program puts funds in the hands of those who know their part of the Bay watershed best,” said Administrator Whitman. “By providing funds directly to local groups, these grants have the ability to rally a community around the restoration of their part of the Bay watershed.”

Proposed projects are reviewed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and are selected based on set criteria paralleling commitments set forth in *Chesapeake 2000*, signed by Bay Program partners last June. The agreement calls on Bay states and the District of Columbia to combine efforts with watershed organizations to restore local water quality. Small Watershed projects assist local groups in gaining experience and technical expertise needed to improve watershed protection in their communities.

Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD), who was instrumental in the creation of the Small Watersheds Grant Program in 1998, stated that, "Local education and outreach programs are essential in our on-going efforts to maintain and improve the vitality of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. I am very pleased that we continue to see an increase in the number of grant awardees, which shows that our local communities are becoming more and more involved in individual waterway clean-up efforts."

Representatives from several community organizations, including the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Anacostia Watershed Society, Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage and the Elizabeth River Project participated in the ceremony.

"The grants we're announcing today encourage communities and organizations not to necessarily think big, but to think NOW," said Senator Mikulski. "What small-scale efforts can Marylanders undertake NOW to make a

difference? These grants enable our community groups to turn their ideas into action. It's a big return for a small investment."

Projects selected range from citizen water quality monitoring to riparian buffer restoration to oyster gardening and will take place in Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

"The Chesapeake Bay Program is a great example of an EPA success story and I'm pleased the Administrator is taking the time to their progress first hand," said Congressman Wayne T. Gilchrest (R-MD).

"Only together can we restore our nation's largest estuary. The Foundation is proud to support locally based efforts like these that create workable solutions for restoring the Chesapeake Bay," said John Berry, Executive Director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. "These combined efforts of groups throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed will have a significant effect on improving the health of the Bay and the diversity of life it supports."

"NOAA's Fisheries is pleased to be part of the Small Watershed Grants Program, and to be able to fund fisheries habitat restoration in the Chesapeake Bay," said Bill Hogarth, Acting Administrator for NOAA Fisheries. "We look forward to future involvement in the Program, and to helping Chesapeake communities revitalize the health of one of our nation's most vital estuaries."

Funding for the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program is provided by the US Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the USDA Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Dover Corporation.

For a complete listing and map of the 2001 Small Watershed Grants recipients, please visit the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation homepage at <http://www.nfwf.org> or the Chesapeake Bay Program at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/press.htm>.

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