

REPORT ON EXPENDITURES FROM THE CHESAPEAKE BAY RESTORATION FUND

Prepared Pursuant to § 58.1-344.3.C(2)(c) of the Code of Virginia

Presented by the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources

Annual Report on the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund
By the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources
November 1, 2021

Pursuant to § 58.1-344.3.C(2)(a), the purpose of voluntary contributions of tax refunds to the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (Fund) is to fulfill “the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan submitted by the Commonwealth of Virginia to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on November 29, 2010, and any subsequent revisions thereof.”

This report fulfills the requirements of § 58.1-344.3.C(2)(c) that “the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources shall submit a report to the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources; the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources; the House Committee on Appropriations; the Senate Committee on Finance; and the Virginia delegation to the Chesapeake Bay Commission, describing the grants awarded from moneys deposited in the fund. The report shall include a list of grant recipients, a description of the purpose of each grant, the amount received by each grant recipient, and an assessment of activities or initiatives supported by each grant.”

The balance of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund as of October 21, 2021 is \$ 276,572.21.

On August 23, 2019, Virginia issued the final Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) that revises prior restoration plans for reducing nutrient and sediment pollution based upon updated science, enhanced modeling tools, higher resolution land use/cover data, as well as local area water quality goals. The Phase III WIP succeeds the Phase I and Phase II WIPs, prepared in 2010 and 2012 respectively, and serves as the guide for implementation efforts moving forward.

Chesapeake Bay Restoration Funds will be used to implement the following key strategies in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its living resources:

Riparian Forest Buffer Implementation Strategy - \$20,000

Funding is provided for the Virginia Department of Forestry to employ a contractor to develop a strategic plan for establishing state-level coordination of all efforts related to getting landowners to participate in voluntary riparian forest buffer establishment in support of the Phase III WIP. Elements of this plan would include: identifying eligible lands and ownership; categorizing lands based on which incentive programs are most appropriate; assigning landowner outreach to the agency or organization deemed most appropriate; database or reporting mechanism to track where properties are in the process from identification to contact to response to plan design and implementation; and a feedback mechanism to follow up on individual properties to evaluate effectiveness, identify gaps in programs or program delivery that contribute to missed opportunities, improve processes, and increase success rate. This project will not only lead to increased riparian forest buffer implementation, it will also enable the Commonwealth to determine the number of new landowner contacts that will be necessary to achieve our WIP commitments. Most importantly, it will provide a framework for all agencies and partner organizations to maximize collaboration.

Fund Clean Water and Resilience Planning on State Lands - \$140,000

The Commonwealth has prepared a comprehensive digital map of all state lands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and determined nitrogen and phosphorus reductions by basin necessary to offset pollution loads from state lands. The State Lands WIP outlines a series of goals and policies necessary to achieve, and exceed, these reductions through the implementation of specific agriculture, urban, natural, and wastewater best management practices (bmps). This project provides the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) with technical support to evaluate a subset of state lands, their associated land use and LiDAR based flow-path data to identify specific opportunities for cost effective, high co-benefit (resilience), bmp implementation. The results will identify specific areas on state lands for implementation of clean water/resilience bmps with the intention of using existing implementation funds for pursuit of the bmps. DEQ will work with the Department of General Services and Education, and other departments as appropriate, to conduct planning for those state lands not currently regulated pursuant to a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit.

Managing Chesapeake Bay Striped Bass and Other Sportfish - \$57,490

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) has funding through the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO) to deploy and maintain an acoustic telemetry array adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. The receivers in this telemetry array will detect any acoustically tagged fish moving into or out of the Chesapeake Bay. Additionally, information from acoustic tags can provide detailed movements of fishes as they are detected from a number of receiver arrays maintained by state, federal and academic agencies located along the Atlantic Coast. NCBO funding does not include acoustic tags. One time funding from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is available to tag a limited number of trophy-sized striped bass (> 28 inches). This project will increase the number of acoustic tags placed in striped bass. Information from this acoustic telemetry system will provide information on emigration of spawning aged striped bass to the coastal waters. The information will also contribute to the development of Chesapeake Bay specific estimates of fishing mortality that are vital in managing fish species and determining if overfishing is occurring. In addition, cobia is a highly prized sportfish with recreational participation exploding in recent years. This project will also purchase acoustic tags and provide rewards for returned tags from harvested fish.

For further information contact:

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