



MARYLAND

1998 BAY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The annual [Executive Council meeting](#) is an excellent time to review and highlight the accomplishments of the state of Maryland as it strives to meet the goals and commitments of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. As a partner in the [Chesapeake Bay Program](#) since the signing of the historic [1983 Chesapeake Bay Agreement](#), Maryland has worked hard in many areas including nutrient and toxic reduction, habitat restoration, growth management, education, land preservation and public outreach and participation. The hard work of the citizens of Maryland is paying off. The Bay and its tributaries are cleaner and healthier than they were just 15 years ago when the first Bay agreement was signed. Today, we would like to take a few minutes to give you an overview of how we have been working to insure a cleaner, healthier more resilient Chesapeake Bay system.

OVERVIEW

1998 was a mixed year for the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. In some areas of our Bay restoration effort we continued to make steady progress. Water quality improved especially in those areas where point source pollution dominates. In other areas however, especially where nonpoint source pollution is most prevalent, not only did water quality not improve, but living resources, especially [Bay grasses](#), declined in both range and vitality. Both crabs and menhaden numbers were down this year. However, whether this is an anomaly or the beginning of a trend, it is too early to tell.

In areas of resource protection, outreach, education and citizen participation, Maryland continued to set a strong pace. The introduction of the state's new [Rural Legacy Program](#) put thousands of acres of the state's most ecologically valuable land under new protection, the more than 350 members of the state's Tributary Teams continued to demonstrate their value in developing new ideas and implementing current plans, Governor Glendening hosted a first-in-the-watershed Youth Environmental Summit, and a new way to learn about the Bay and the land/water connection, [BayLink](#), was debuted. Other important milestones in 1998 included [Bay Game](#) II and its companion the Mountain Game, the commitment of more than \$ 170 million in aid to landowners, through the [US Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#), a new goal of 60,000 acres of wetlands to be restored by the state, and the passage of comprehensive nutrient management legislation to help prevent future outbreaks of the microorganism, [Pfiesteria](#).

MARYLAND PROGRAM SPECIFICS

- **Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation** – Maryland initiated an unprecedented series of actions to control sprawl and change the patterns of development which have destroyed habitat, degraded water quality, and adversely affected the state's communities. These actions resulted in the enactment of Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation legislation that establishes:
Priority Funding Areas -- This program focuses State investment in "smart growth" areas in local jurisdictions. State funds for roads and highways, business development financing and economic development, water and sewer improvements, and most housing programs are targeted to areas that meet select density and growth criteria. The Priority Funding Area program discourages new development in open spaces and aims to prevent problems associated with sprawl such as water pollution from stormwater and construction runoff, additional air pollution from increased commuting miles, and loss of wildlife habitat. Priority Funding Areas include all municipalities, all areas inside the Baltimore and Washington beltways, and designated revitalization areas, enterprise zones and empowerment zones. Counties have until October 1, 1998, to designate other areas they wish to be considered as Priority Funding Areas, but those areas must meet minimum State criteria for water, sewer and minimum residential density.
- **"Brownfields" Redevelopment** -- This program will spur redevelopment of properties that are contaminated, or even perceived to be contaminated, while ensuring that the environment and public health will continue to be protected. Since the program began, the Maryland Department of the Environment has received 30 applications for the voluntary cleanup program, covering 27 different sites and more than 585 acres. Fourteen of the cleanup applications (for 12 sites) have been approved and four of the applications were deemed by MDE to "require no further action."
- **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** -- provided new momentum to the Bay cleanup momentum as Governor Glendening was joined by Vice President Al Gore, U.S. Department of Agriculture Dan Glickman, Senators Sarbanes and Mikulski, and Representative Wayne Gilchrist, to introduce a major new initiative to protect Maryland waterways from nonpoint source pollution runoff -- at least \$170 million, and perhaps as much as \$300 million in federal grants was earmarked to assist farmers in their efforts to plant stream- side forest buffers on agricultural lands throughout the state.
- **Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998** – establishes several programs to improve water quality and help fight toxic Pfiesteria. As a direct result of this bill, Maryland becomes the first state in the nation with a comprehensive nutrient management planning policy.. Preserving Maryland's environment, improving the quality of its waters, and protecting the Chesapeake Bay from disease are the goals that this legislation will help to achieve. The proposal, as approved by the General Assembly, included:
 - Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrades
 - Reducing Nutrients from Non-Point, Non-Agricultural Sources
 - Septic systems
 - Agricultural Source Reductions
 - Assistance to farmers
 - Budget Increases
 - Transitional tax credit
 - Manure disposal assistance
 - Use of the phytase enzyme
 - Penalty provisions
 - Funding research projects

- **Watershed Pollution Limits** -- The Administration recently committed to establish pollution limits for Priority State watersheds, a commitment matched by few States in the country. These limits, called Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), effectively build upon the 40 percent nutrient reduction commitments made in 1986 by establishing numeric commitments for other pollutants. During the past two years, Maryland assessed the status of water quality throughout the State, and identified those waters that are currently not meeting designated uses. The State will establish a TMDL for the substances causing the impairment of the waterways and the source of the substance (both point and nonpoint). Priority water bodies include the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy watersheds, the Maryland Coastal Bays watershed, the Baltimore Harbor watershed, and water bodies impaired by toxic chemicals. The Administration included new funding in the Department of Environment's FY1998 budget to accomplish this task.
- **Rural Legacy** -- This program redirects existing State funds into a focused and dedicated land preservation program specifically designed to limit the adverse impacts of sprawl on our agricultural lands and natural resources. The program creates "Greenbelts" - green spaces that generally define where a community or developed area ends and where the countryside begins. The program reallocates State funds to purchase conservation easements for large contiguous tracts of agricultural, forest and natural areas subject to development pressure, and fee interests in open space where public access and use is needed. Over the next five years, the program will commit approximately \$163 million to preserve nearly 90,000 acres of farms, forests and open spaces.
- **Tributary Teams** -- Maryland's innovative Tributary Teams continued to play an increasingly important role in environmental management, more thoroughly involving people and local governments in cleanup activities, testifying before special commissions, and helping achieve the 40 percent nutrient reductions we have been working towards since 1987. Their second annual meeting brought together team members from across the state to meet with the Governor and other state officials to help chart the course for the coming year. In a new activity, many teams organized "Wade-In's" ala Senator Bernie Fowler's famous Patuxent Wade-In to help dramatize the need for personal responsibility in restoring the Bay.
- **Bay Link: A natural connection to the Chesapeake** -- endows citizens with a new way to enjoy the beauty and wonder of our natural world and provides them with a new way to better understand the interrelationship between the land and water. Bay Link, the first-of- its-kind park system in the US, connects 29 Maryland parks, forests and natural areas with each other and the Bay and is, what the Annapolis Evening Capital newspaper calls the Chesapeake's "String of Pearls."
- **Pfiesteria Summit**– brought together the governors of Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Delaware to sign an agreement that pledged cooperation in the fight against the dinoflagellate Pfiesteria.
- **Whitbread "Round the World" Race** – more than 425,000 yacht-racing enthusiasts came to

Maryland looking for a once-in-a-lifetime experience as the state played host to the Whitbread 'Round the World Yacht Race. Another 100 million arm-chair sailors looked over our shoulders via tv and satellite as Maryland coordinated the nine-boat, on-the-water start of the globe's premier sailboat race and managed over 5,000 small craft all crowding into a very small stretch of the Bay at the same time. The state turned this opportunity into a way to educate tens of thousands of people about their responsibility to "save the Chesapeake Bay," while at the same time fed, watered, kept comfortable and entertained thirty thousand guests at Sandy Point State Park, as well as play host to the ESPN tv anchors as they called the start of Leg 8 of the Whitbread.

- **Maryland Bay Game II** – Created for children 3 years and up Maryland's Bay Game helps parents avoid the eternal question, "Are we there yet? The Maryland Bay Game II is an interactive educational activity designed for children, played during car/bus trips between the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the Ocean City coast, and designed to help young people identify Bay-related objects, features and items (e.g., osprey nests, wetlands, farm fields, watermen's boats) as they travel to Ocean City.
- **Maryland's Youth Environmental Summit** -- Maryland's first Environmental Youth Summit was designed to be a beginning, a genesis of environmental understanding and action that would help more than 900 students leaders and their teachers, from across the state, take a closer look at the environment and their role in its preservation. The discovered not only why growth needs to be smart, how to maintain the delicate balance between the economy and the environment, and why the price of chicken, soy beans and Silver Queen corn affects crabs, oysters and rockfish; but what they could do to insure that Maryland doesn't grow dumb, and that the state keeps its eco-equilibrium, and preserve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay without putting half of Maryland's farmers out to pasture.
- **Bay Grasses in the Classes** – teaches students about submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and its importance as habitat. Through a partnership between the Department of Natural Resources and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, students study SAV, obtain various SAV seeds, grow them in the classroom and then assist DNR biologists planting them.

As we head into 1999, Maryland's place in the natural world is a vital one. The state embraces the largest and most productive estuary in North America, the Chesapeake Bay, and much work and effort has been dedicated to its restoration. Every Marylander should continue to give unyielding support to the cleanliness of our state's waters, the vitality of its living resources, the purity of Maryland's air and the protection for future generations of a quality of life unmatched anywhere in the United States.

Up to: [[Top](#)] [[News Room](#)] [[Home](#)]

For more information, contact the Chesapeake Bay Program Office, 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109, Annapolis, MD 21403, Tel: (800) YOUR-BAY, Fax: (410) 267-5777.

Last modified 12/15/98.