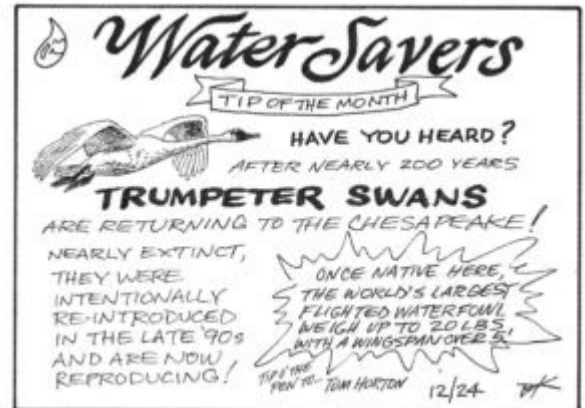


## *Watershed Stewards Academy December 2024 Newsletter*

Happy Holidays Watershed Stewards!

Please remember to enter your projects and volunteer hours into the WSA database and reporting system. Click [here](#) to log in!

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Click here for [WSA's Facebook Page!](#)

To access this private group from the main Facebook page, click on 'More' and then 'Group' to request to join the group.



### *Featured WSA Steward*

Phew! What happens when you combine dozens of strong backs with gloved hands? Why, completion of a capstone project initiated by Washingtonians Elizabeth McGowan and Tim Dowdy in D.C.'s own Rock Creek (National) Park, of course. Elizabeth and Tim, both graduates of the Anacostia Watershed Society's 2024 Watershed Stewards Academy, counted on the willingness and spirit of an intergenerational coterie of volunteers to help restore degraded habitat in a roughly one-acre wooded patch that drains into Rock Creek.

From May through September, teams cleared walls of privet, porcelain berry, barberry and their invasive vegetative brethren to open up space to plant arrays of 200-plus native forbs and shrubs, including spicebush, Joe-Pye weed, red and black chokeberry, arrowwood viburnum, bluestem goldenrod, sensitive fern, bottle gentian and Virginia knotweed, to name a few. Beastly summer heat added another chore—toting buckets of creek water uphill to give the plants a fair shot at survival.

The ambitious undertaking also called for corralling tree-size, downed logs from giant Creekside "dams" and cutting them with two-person saws. Crews lugged the logs up the slope to block off and control erosion along two long unblazed "social" trails created by shortcutting hikers. In tandem, volunteers installed metal "habitat restoration" signs to reinforce the message.

Elizabeth, a journalist, and Tim, an architect, met several years ago as certified volunteer "Weed Warriors" in the 1,750-acre park. Elizabeth selected the site for a joint capstone endeavor because the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) had cited it as a priority due to its potential for ecological connectivity. She has maintained blazed hiking trails in the park with PATC for almost two decades.



The project's location is strategic because it's adjacent to an upcoming enormous National Park Service forest restoration project. As well, a small stream that forms one boundary of the site and feeds into Rock Creek provides habitat for the at-risk Hay's spring amphipod, a tiny freshwater crustacean.

Tim and Elizabeth had no idea they'd both applied to become Master Watershed Stewards earlier this year. "It was just happenstance, not planning, that we ended up as classmates," said Elizabeth, a Pulitzer Prize-winning environmental reporter now taking college classes to transition into a career mixing native plants and stormwater management. "We figured, why not collaborate on a capstone?"

"This is all about getting our hands and boots dirty for a good cause, and healing our land and waters. It was incredibly fulfilling to be part of an Academy that showed me what's possible.

Now I'm itching to find out where I might land professionally."



## *Continuing Education*

### **Impacts of Deicing Salt on Water Quality**

*Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 12 – 12:40 pm*

The negative impacts of deicing salts on the environment, road infrastructure, cars, and home appliances, and drinking water quality can be significant. An overview of these impacts with emphasis on drinking water, and recommendations will be presented.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

### **Pines of Maryland: Evolution, Habitat, Threats and ID**

*Saturday, December 7, 2024, 1 – 4 pm*

*Location: 6908 Belair Rd, Natural History Society of MD*

How many pine tree species do you think grow wild in Maryland? According to the Maryland Biodiversity Program, the answer is 11. (Four are non-native.) These evergreen conifers may be one of the first trees one learns to identify as a child, but can you differentiate between a loblolly and a pitch pine? In this workshop you will take a deep dive into the fascinating natural history of pines. Topics include: The origins of pines, their evolution, and their relationships to other trees; Specific Maryland pine forest habitats; Identification of pines found in Maryland (native, naturalized, or planted); Pine pests and diseases.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).



## *Upcoming Events*

### **The Chesapeake Watershed: History, Birds & Insights for Conservation**

*Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 7 – 8pm*

Join Southern Maryland Audubon for our December Zoom lecture. The Chesapeake watershed is a constantly changing tapestry of ecological succession that impacts regional bird populations as well as the local economy. Dr. Wayne Bell, senior associate and former director of the Washington College Center for Environment and Society, will take us on a journey showing how land use practices have impacted the Chesapeake from pre-colonial times to the present and how habitat restoration and conservation are now addressing the 30% decline in Northern American bird populations for the future.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

### **Hissssstory and Current Knowledge of Snake Fungal Disease (Zoom)**

*Thursday, December 5, 2024, 3:30 pm*

Snake fungal disease (SFD) is a threat to snake health worldwide, affecting wild and captive snakes in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. This disease is caused by fungi such as *Ophidiomyces ophidiicola*, with other fungi such as *Paranannizzipsis* spp. also emerging. SFD appears to impact all snake species, regardless of life history or taxonomy, and it typically presents as skin abnormalities. In this webinar, we will present the history and epidemiology of SFD and related fungal diseases in snakes, as well as recent research advances and ongoing knowledge gaps regarding these diseases.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

### **Patuxent Research Refuge Speaker and Film series opening film**

*Friday, December 6, 2024, 5 – 7 pm*

*Location: 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel*

You are invited to Patuxent Research Refuge for their inaugural Winter Film series event screening “Waters way: Thinking Like a Watershed” produced by the Bay Journal. The event will be held at the National Wildlife Visitor Center in Laurel, MD and will include two guest panelists to answer questions about their work and themes in the film. This event is free and lasts about two hours which includes the screening of the forty-five minute film, meeting our guest speakers, and exploring of the visitor center’s exhibits.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

### **Volunteer Sign Up Form Holly Hills Fall Cleanup (Columbia, Maryland)**

*Saturday, December 7, 2024, 10am – 12 pm*

*Location: 14270 Burntwoods Rd, Glenwood, MD*

Recently, Howard EcoWorks acquired a new property in Glenwood, MD – Holly Hills ([Learn More Here](#)).

We’re asking for volunteers to help us with sprucing up the property. Activities involved:

- Clean up the driveway of weeds and clear leaves/twigs/branches
- Pruning
- Invasive plant removal
- Clear patio area of weeds and grasses
- Mow / weed whack some areas around the house

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

## **Studying Maryland's Ice Age Peoples in Baltimore County and Beyond**

*Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 7 - 8:30 pm*

*Location: Oregon Ridge Nature Center Auditorium 1355 Beaver Dam Rd, Cockeysville*

This presentation will provide an overview of the Paleoindian Period (13,000-10,000 years before present) in Maryland based on data from the statewide Maryland Fluted Point Survey and recent excavations organized by the Maryland Historical Trust.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

## **Seed Swap Festival**

*Saturday, January 25, 2025, 11 am – 3 pm*

*Location: Mount Rainier Nature Center, 4701 31<sup>st</sup> Pl. Mount Rainier, MD*

Join Prince George's Parks and Recreation and Anacostia Watershed Society to celebrate National Seed Swap Day! Exchange seeds with your neighbors and meet local organizations as you prepare for spring and diversify your garden.

For more information, click [here](#).

## **PAXCON 2025**

*Thursday, February 6, 2025, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm*

*Location: 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel, MD*

The Patuxent River Conference (PAXCON) is the premier forum uniting scientists, environmental educators, natural resource managers, and anyone passionate about the health and future of the Patuxent River. To know and understand the Patuxent River is to take one more step towards its protection. The 2025 Patuxent River Conference's theme: Our River, Our Livelihood, is centered in exploring the status, stressors, and use of the many River resources, as well as their protection for future generations. Join us as experts, thought leaders, and passionate individuals converge to share their insights, ideas, and stories. This event promises a dynamic lineup of presenters. Attendees can interact with presenters, exchange ideas, and connect with participants who share a common goal: a healthier Patuxent Watershed.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

## **CBLP Level 1 Registration is now open!**

The CBLP Level 1 credential focuses on the design, installation, and management of sustainable landscapes and green infrastructure, taught by regional experts through classroom learning and field-based practicums. We offer both hybrid and in-person learning options.

Hybrid Option – One online session comprised of two half-day interactive online classes via Zoom plus one full day, in person, field practicum. Online classes – January 28 & 30

Field practicum options:

Feb. 12 | Chevy Chase, MD

Feb. 21 | Lower Allen Township, PA

Feb. 28 | Norfolk, VA

Feb. 27 | Seaford, DE

March 7 | Centerville, VA

In Person Option – 2 full days – 1 classroom and 1 in the field:

Feb. 11-12 | Chevy Chase, MD

February 20-21 | Lower Allen Township, PA

February 27-28 | Norfolk, VA

March 6-7 | Centerville, VA

Snow dates listed online

For more information or to register, click [here](#).



## **Turtles of Maryland Workshop (Baltimore, MD)**

*Saturday, February 15, 2025, 1 – 3 pm*

*Location: 6908 Belair Rd, Natural History Society of MD*

Maryland is home to 17 types of turtles. Of those, 12 species are threatened by habitat loss, and 9 are experiencing population decline. All four sea turtle species found in Maryland are protected by the Endangered Species Act. In this presentation, you'll learn how to tell turtles apart, and you'll learn about dangers that turtles face, about native species and habitats, and about common non-natives in the state. Of course, no presentation on turtles would be complete without live turtles.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).



## ***Funding and Material Support***

### **Chesapeake Bay Trust – Environmental Education Grant Program Now Open!**

*Deadline: Thursday, December 12, 2024*

This Program is designed to support the advancement of environmental literacy ensuring every student in Maryland graduates with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation to take informed and responsible actions to protect and improve the environment. As a state partner of Project Green Classrooms in Maryland, the Trust is committed to supporting efforts to reconnect children with the outdoors, specifically by funded programs that support the Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards and graduation requirement for all students in Maryland public schools. The Trust is also committed to the regional efforts of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement's Environmental Literacy Goal of every student experiencing at least one Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) in elementary, middle, and high school.

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

### **NOW OPEN – Pooled Monitoring Initiative's Restoration Research Award Program**

*Online Information Session: Tuesday, January 7, 2025, 12 - 1pm. Register [here](#).*

*Due date: Thursday, January 23, 2025*

The Chesapeake Bay Trust has funding available for our research questions around effectiveness of stormwater and stream restoration programs at the watershed/catchment scale (Q1, Q2); effectiveness of restoration practices at the project scale (Q3a/b, Q4, Q5a/b/c); social science research questions to accelerate adoption of BMPs and help quantify targeted outcomes (Q6, Q7a/b/c); and trade-offs in resource improvements incurred by restoration practices and the resulting net ecological change (Q8).

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

### **The Chesapeake Bay Trust's Anne Arundel County Watershed Restoration Grant Program is Now Open!**

*Deadline: Thursday, March 20, 2025*

The Anne Arundel County Watershed Restoration Grant Program is a partnership between the Trust, the Anne Arundel County Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration, and the City of Annapolis. This program will fund projects to reduce pollutants through the implementation of watershed restoration practices. Projects must

accomplish on-the-ground restoration that treats rainwater runoff from impervious surfaces at a cost-effective price or demonstrate the accomplishment of another metric that will help the County and City meet local water quality and runoff reduction improvement goals. Applications under this award program that demonstrate sound design and cost efficiency in meeting this goal will be most competitive. To demonstrate this, applicants will be required to provide sound technical designs and project budgets.

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

### **Grant Funding Available – Prince George’s County Stormwater Stewardship Grant Program**

*Deadline: Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 4pm*

*Technical Assistance Workshop – Thursday, November 7, 2024, 5 – 6:30 pm, Register [here](#).*

This grant program from the Prince George’s County Government and the Chesapeake Bay Trust funds on-the-ground restoration activities that improve communities, improve water quality, support the County’s Climate Action Plan, and engage Prince George’s County residents in the restoration and protection of the local rivers and streams of Prince George’s County.

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

### **Chesapeake Bay Trust’s Watershed Assistance Grant Program is Now Open!**

*Deadline: Friday, December 6, 2024*

Virtual informational workshop: Tuesday, October 1, 2024, 6 pm

Program Overview: The Watershed Assistance Grant Program is a partnership between the Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust), the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and West Virginia’s Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP). This program offers grants for the design of watershed restoration and protection projects, as well as for planning and programmatic development projects.

Design requests are accepted for a variety of nonpoint source best management practices (BMPs), including stream restoration and other stormwater BMPs. Planning and programmatic project requests may cover watershed characterization, surveys, assessments, action plans, studies, program development, or financing strategies that enhance local capacity.

Up to \$100,000 for the design of stormwater BMPs

Up to \$150,000 for the design of stream restoration practices

Up to \$75,000 for watershed planning and programmatic development

We encourage you to reach out early to discuss your project ideas!

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

### **NEW Jones Falls – Healthy Environment, Healthy Communities Grant Program**

*Deadline: Thursday, December 5, 2024*

Applicants can request funds for a range of project types. Generally, requests will fall into one of the following project types:

- Outreach, education, and engagement on environmental topics and natural resources in the community
- Environmental action projects that improve the environment/natural resources in the community
- Watershed/environmental restoration projects

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

## **Chesapeake Bay Trust - Community Engagement Mini Grant**

*Deadline: Rolling*

Designed to support activities that enhance communities, engage residents, and improve natural resources. They fund small-scale activities such as tree plantings, rain gardens, stream cleanups, and storm drain stenciling, among others.

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

## **Chesapeake Bay Trust Grants and Opportunities**

The Chesapeake Bay Trust's grant-making strategies are shaped by three core objectives; environmental education, demonstration-based restoration, and community engagement. We look to these objectives as basic touchstones for developing our programs, engaging new partners, and communicating about our work.

Click here for more information or to apply, click [here](#).



### *Items of Interest*

#### **Anne Arundel County's FY24 "A Land of Rivers" Annual Report is now available!**

The Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration is proud to share our FY24 Annual Report, A Land of Rivers!

View the report at <https://www.aacounty.org/public-works/bwpr/annual-reports-land-rivers>

This report documents the conditions of our waterways, describe solutions and communicate the urgent need to protect our County's waters, and live up to our promise to make Anne Arundel County The Best Place – For All.

#### **Branching Out - New Issue Available**

A new issue of *Branching Out* is now available! In this issue: Plan to make plans for 2025, meet two new UME educators, read about American holly in our "Native Trees of Maryland" feature and about Osage-orange in our "Invasives in Your Woodland" feature. And don't forget the Brain Tickler -- a special end-of-the-year challenge!

The Fall 2024 issue is available here: <https://go.umd.edu/Fall-2024>

Download your PDF copy from our website: [Branching Out Vol. 32 no. 4](#)



### *Employment Opportunities*

[Watershed Restoration Environmental Specialist](#) | Harford County Govt

[Maryland Sea Grant State Science Policy Fellowship](#) | University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

[Garden and Environment Educator](#) | Living Classrooms Foundation | Baltimore

[Executive Director](#) | Gunpowder Valley Conservancy | Towson

[Internship Program Coordinator](#) | The Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC)

[Senior Director of Development – Major Gifts](#) | Potomac Conservancy

[Program Manager I \(Climate Engagement\), Grade 23](#) | Montgomery Co. Gov. Dept. of Envir. Protection

[Planning Specialist III \(ESD Private Properties\), Grade 23](#) | Montgomery Co. Gov. Dept. of Envir. Protection

[Local Government Specialist](#) | The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

[Construction Representative III, Grade 23, Stormwater Management](#) | Montgomery Co Govt

[Conservation Funding Director](#) | Potomac Conservancy

[Landscape/Horticulturist- Installation/Maintenance \(Crew Member\)](#) | Lauren’s Garden Service

[Program and Grounds Assistant](#) | Howard County Conservancy

[C-StREAM Internship Program Coordinator](#) | The Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC)

[Soil Health Specialist](#) | The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

[Regional Environmental Review Coordinator](#) | DNR, Environmental Review Program

[Geospatial Technical Lead](#) | Chesapeake Conservancy

[Stormwater Management Engineer](#) | City of Annapolis

[Environmental Engineer](#) | Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Environmental Protection Specialist](#) | Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Faculty Research Assistant I-HPL Oyster Hatchery](#) | The UMD Center for Environmental Science

[Aquatic Resource Education Specialist](#) | MD Dept Natural Resources