LT. GOVERNOR BROWN KICKS OFF COMMUNITY-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN UP EFFORT IN BALTIMORE

Through Small Watershed Action Plan, Brooklyn/Curtis Bay Residents Being Trained To Identify and Assess Environmental Hazards In Their Communities

BALTIMORE, MD (March 13, 2014) - Today, Lt. Governor Anthony Brown kicked off the Small Watershed Action Plan effort in the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay neighborhoods of Baltimore. At the event, Brown gave brief remarks to local high school students, volunteers and staff and went on a practice field survey with several students to learn about the work they are doing.

A joint effort between state agencies, community groups, local schools, non-profits, local faith-based groups, and environmental experts, the Plan is the beginning of an effort within the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay to recruit citizens to help identify, assess, and clean up areas of illegal dumping and trash buildup that is infiltrating watersheds leading to the recently opened Masonville Cove nature area and into the Patapsco River.

"Masonville Cove and the Small Watershed Action Plan are a model for what we can accomplish by working together in a community-based effort to build a better, more sustainable future for Maryland," **said Lt. Governor Brown.** "All of our communities play a role in protecting our environment, and as we look to the future, we must strengthen our commitment to environmental justice for our most vulnerable populations in cities and towns throughout Maryland."

The National Aquarium, with grant funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Chesapeake Bay Trust, worked with state agencies and others to create the Small Watershed Action Plan, which addresses the impact that illegal dumping in urban communities has on the Masonville Cove watershed.

It includes partnerships with local watershed associations, citizen awareness campaigns, and volunteers in addition to experts from the Maryland Port Administration, National Aquarium, Living Classrooms Foundation, Baltimore City Department of Planning, Baltimore City Department of Sustainability, Moffatt & Nichol and Center for Watershed Protection.

"We are proud to join Lt. Governor Brown and all of the Small Watershed Action Plan partners in working toward a cleaner, healthier Baltimore Harbor and Chesapeake Bay," **said John Racanelli, National Aquarium CEO.** "As the nation's first Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, Masonville Cove is an inspiration for the community and a great resource for conservation education."

As part of today's training, experts from the National Aquarium and Center for Watershed Protection taught community members and students from Benjamin Franklin High School how to conduct a thorough neighborhood assessment. They were trained on how to identify and document hot spots related to trash, illegal dumping, illegal discharges, and water flow. After the training, residents went out into the community in small groups, each led by an Action Plan expert.

"The Masonville Cove Environmental Center is beautiful place in Brooklyn & Curtis Bay working to reconnect our community with nature, while educating us to help preserve that nature for our present and future," **said Pastor Billy Humphreys.** "The SWAP is simple and strategic to the revitalization of our community because it will help us practically clean our streets, our watershed, and our water. Brooklyn & Curtis Bay are grateful to have the Masonville Cove, the SWAP Team, and now the Lt. Governor Anthony Brown on our side in making this a better place to live and raise a family."

Masonville Cove is a $153 million environmental restoration project that is transforming one of Baltimore Harbor's most contaminated sites into an area that will benefit wildlife, local residents and the port industry.

It includes an 11-acre parcel of land which was replanted with native trees, shrubs, and wetland plants and includes walking trails, fishing from a designated pier, and areas for bird watching. A non-motorized boat ramp is also available for kayaks and canoes. This project is the first of a three-phase project that will see about 41 additional acres of land restored and made available to the public over the next few years. It is free and open to the public.

It is also home to an environmental education center which has welcomed thousands of grade school students for hands-on environmental learning. The Living Classrooms Foundation, National Aquarium Baltimore, and Brooklyn-Curtis Bay Coalition, known as BayBrook, develop and run the education programs for the center. The center itself is a "near-zero, net-energy" building, with green features such as a ground-source air conditioning system that uses half the energy of a conventional building; solar energy; rain barrels that collect roof rain runoff to water greenery and flowers; a reflective roof that decreases the amount of heat transferred into the building; and an energy recovery ventilator where exhaust air is used to heat or cool fresh air using a heat exchanger, making ventilation more efficient.

The restoration project sits on the site of the former home of Kurt Iron and Metal and the Maryland Shipbuilding and Drydock Company. Both companies conducted maritime salvage and ship-breaking operations contributing to the environmental degradation of the waterfront and surrounding area. In 2007, the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) began a massive cleanup effort of this site. More than 61,000 tons of trash and debris were removed, including 306,074 gallons of petroleum-tainted water; 17,398 tons of timber; and 6,588 tons of concrete rubble; and 27 abandoned vessels that needed to be remediated or removed from the water at the site.

The Maryland: Smart, Green & Growing initiative is a multi-agency, Statewide initiative to help Maryland achieve a more sustainable future by linking community revitalization, transportation improvements, economic development, smart growth and environmental restoration efforts. The Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center brings together many of the goals of this key initiative into one project.