

November/December 2023 ECOPort Newsletter

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Happy Holidays from the Port of Baltimore!

November/December 2023

ENVIRONMENT

Port Sites Trending on eBird

Eared Grebe Sighted at Cox Creek Open House

Four [Maryland Port Administration](#) (MPA) Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) sites are trending as [eBird](#) hotspots currently ranking in Maryland's top ten for 2023. Out of 2,455 sites, [Hart-Miller Island](#) is #1 with 220 species, [Masonville Cove](#) is #3 with 214 species, [Cox Creek/ Swam Creek Wetlands](#) is #7 with 201 species, and [Poplar Island](#) is #9 with 199 species.

During the Port of Baltimore (POB) Annual Open House held at its Cox Creek facility in October, participants in the bird census recorded four new species for the site in 2023: ruddy turnstone, American wigeon, house sparrow, and most notably an eared grebe, which has not been recorded at Swam Creek Wetlands and POB Cox Creek Facility since 2015. Since the open house, [Maryland Environmental Service](#) (MES) Senior Environmental Specialist Tim Carney has observed two additional species.

The Cox Creek Open House featured 11 exhibitors including [Orchard Beach Volunteer Fire Department](#), [Arlington Eco Outdoor Education](#), [Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management](#), and [Scenic Rivers Land Trust](#), and welcomed 150 visitors.



Photo: "The most exciting bird found at the 10/21 Open House was an Eared Grebe. This aquatic species is rare in Maryland and has only been observed at Cox Creek twice prior to now. This year's bird remained in the DMCF until early November, where it foraged for small fish with a flock of Ruddy Ducks."
- Tim Carney/MES

Photo by Tim Carney/MES





Photo: For the first time, [Pasadena Sportfishing Group](#) hosted youth fishing at the Cox Creek Open House. Each child that participated caught at least one fish.

Photo by Amira Hairston/MPA

COMMUNITY

Masonville Cove Connector Progresses



After more than 61,000 tons of trash and debris that dated back to the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904 were removed thanks to the efforts of MPA, [Masonville Cove](#) was named the nation's first [Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership](#) by the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) (USFWS) in 2013. Today, Masonville Cove is a green oasis for outdoor recreation and a beautiful haven for wildlife with more than 50 acres of restored wetlands, nature trails, and a nature center, but it can be hard to get to without a car.

Partners including MPA, the [Federal Highway Administration](#), the [National Park Service](#), and [USFWS](#) are working to create safe and equitable access to Masonville Cove. Currently in development, the [Masonville Cove Connector](#) will provide access to the waterfront for neighboring communities and link with the existing [Gwynns Falls Trail](#) and the proposed [Baybrook Connector](#) to form over 20 miles of trails.

View the proposed plan and share your comments [here](#) and sign up to receive updates [here](#).

Bilingual Tour of Hart-Miller Island

In October, the first official Spanish bilingual tour was provided at Hart-Miller Island for visitors from the [Audubon Mid-Atlantic's Baltimore Program](#) (formerly [Patterson Park Audubon](#)) and [Bird Ambassadors/Embajadores de Aves](#), which is a comprehensive, year-long program designed to connect Latinos and migratory birds who share similar travel routes along the Americas.

Participants explored the site and its history, learned about erosion and dredging in the Chesapeake Bay, and saw rare birds including trumpeter swans, a wild turkey, American avocets, and long-billed dowitchers.

"As part of the immigrant Spanish speaking community in the Baltimore area, I am very excited to see opportunities like this open to the Latine/o community. It doesn't matter where you are from or what language you speak, the appreciation and connection we all have for birds and nature in general breaks barriers and connects all," said Audubon Mid-Atlantic Senior Coordinator, Education, and Outreach Jorge Abraham Lopez Trejo.



Photo: The first official Spanish bilingual tour of Hart-Miller Island was a huge success. Additional tours are being planned for other MPA sites.

Photo by Audubon Mid Atlantic's Baltimore Program and the Bird Ambassadors/Embajadores de Aves

Second Act: Port Materials Benefit Community

[New Broadway East Community Association](#) (NBECA), a nonprofit working to engage community members and foster housing, education, empowerment, and economic dignity in Baltimore's Broadway East community, welcomed donated materials coordinated by the [Baltimore Port Alliance](#) (BPA) Environmental Committee.

Once destined for the landfill, materials such as containers, wooden beams, metal frames, and wharf logs are being put to good use by NBECA for their community programs.

Support was provided by BPA and several member companies. To store supplies, [Ports America Chesapeake](#) provided a 20' container with delivery underwritten by [Terminal Corporation](#). Wharf logs were cut to size by [C. Steinweg](#) with delivery made possible by MES. The wharf logs will be used as bollards to prevent illegal dumping in Broadway East's community green spaces.

"The gifted container and wharf logs are allowing the Broadway East Community to move forward with plans to enhance safety and environmental justice standards that reduce waste and violence within marginalized communities. We are fortunate to have this partnership with the BPA and its members, including the MPA, that provides opportunities for a change in lifestyles," said NBECA's President and CEO Dr. Doris Terrell.



Photo: Harold Madison (left), representing NBECA, and Jamie Meyers (right) with M&W Towing, stand by the container provided by Ports America Chesapeake.

Photo by Dan Spack/[EcoLogix Group](#)

Lending a Hand at the Filbert Street Community Garden

In October, BPA returned for a second time to lend a hand at Baltimore's [Filbert Street Garden](#). Twelve volunteers from member companies representing MPA, MES, [Vane Brothers](#), [B&D Environmental](#), [Whiteford Law](#), and the [Baltimore Development Corporation](#), helped spread mulch, paint a sign, and prepare the garden for winter and future spring plantings.

"The Maryland Port Administration was proud to join our fellow Baltimore Port Alliance members in the Filbert Street Garden cleanup. The Port of Baltimore is a longtime workplace for generations of Baltimore families, and we are happy to participate in projects that help to beautify and benefit our local communities," said MPA's Office of Environment Director Bill Richardson.

"It was so gratifying to be back at Filbert Street after the 'Covid enforced' hiatus, and more to the point to witness their accomplishments in expanding the garden and livestock. The Baltimore Port Alliance is looking forward to re-engaging annually and to help with their further expansion," said BPA Environmental Committee Co-Chair Rupert Denny.

"It is always wonderful having the Baltimore Port Alliance at the garden. They are among our most professional volunteers and are always eager to tackle whatever we need to get done on Filbert Street. We hope to see them again in 2024," said Filbert Street Garden's Animal Husbandry Coordinator Charles DeBarber.



Photo: Filbert Street Garden seeks volunteers for tasks ranging from cleaning and building animal habitats to planting, and general garden maintenance. If you are interested in volunteering, contact garden representatives at info@filbertstreetgarden.org.

Photo by Dan Spack/EcoLogix Group

Masonville Visitors Use Echo Sound Detectors to Hear Bat Signals

In October, community members of all ages gathered on the back deck of Masonville Cove in anticipation of a fun evening observing bats, many of which came into view as the sunset.

Soon after, Dr. Ela-Sita Carpenter, an urban wildlife biologist with USFWS, and Eric Fishel, forest manager with [Baltimore Green Space](#), led the group on a bat walk and highlighted the important role these nocturnal pollinators play in our ecosystem and daily lives. Using echo sound detectors community members were able to hear “bat signals” normally not audible to human ears.

Baltimore Green Space and the Maryland Environmental Trust are crucial to ensuring permanent conservation at Masonville. In 2022, Masonville Cove was placed in a conservation easement held by both organizations. October’s bat walk is the first of many collaborative events between Masonville Cove Partnership and Baltimore Green Space, fostering opportunities to connect greenspaces throughout Baltimore.



Photo: Community members learn about different bat species and those native to Maryland.

Photo by Matias Orrego/MES

OUTREACH

You're Invited! Dredged Material Management Program Annual Meeting

The MPA invites you to attend the [Dredged Material Management Program's \(DMMP\) Annual Meeting](#) on Thursday, December 7, 2023. Titled "Building the Future Together," this open meeting is an opportunity to learn about what the DMMP has achieved in the past year, initiatives currently underway, and news about upcoming projects. Participants may attend in person or virtually.

IN-PERSON OPTION:

9:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast and Exhibit Hall

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Meeting Program

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open

[Baum Auditorium](#)

[MedStar Harbor Hospital](#)

3001 S. Hanover Street

Baltimore, MD 21225

VIRTUAL OPTION:

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Maryland-DMMP.com/2023AnnualMeeting

Register to attend in person or virtually at Maryland-DMMP.com/2023AnnualMeeting

For more information, contact: Rachael Gilde at rgilde@marylandports.com.

As a reminder, community members can subscribe online to receive the print copy of the Port of Baltimore Magazine by mail at: <https://mpa.maryland.gov/pages/pob-magazine-subscription.aspx>.



Perfect Day for a Field Trip to Poplar Island

Each year, MPA hosts a field trip for members of DMMP committees including the [Citizens Advisory Committee](#), which serves as the communication link between the public and MPA's Harbor Development Department. This year, the members were surveyed and chose to tour Poplar Island, making the trip by boat from [Sandy Point State Park](#) on a sunny and calm October day.

As one participant stated, "It was much more than a tour. Welcoming members of the water community with information regarding the accomplishments and plans for facilities like Cox Creek DMCF and Poplar Island makes us true ambassadors. The more we know about the important work of the groups assisting with the necessary dredging to keep our Port a viable one while protecting the marine environment we love, the better we can share that information with those who share the waterways with us."



Photo: Eighteen passengers filled the boat and enjoyed their tour of Poplar Island. This thriving wildlife habitat has been restored from an eroded four acres 20 years ago to over 1,100 acres today.

Photo by MES

UPCOMING EVENTS

These committee meetings are open to the public. Some meetings may be virtual or in-person in accordance with COVID protocols. Please visit maryland-dmmp.com for details and access information for each meeting. For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

2023 DMMP Annual Meeting - December 7th Time: 9:30 AM

MedStar Harbor Hospital
3001 Hanover Street
Baltimore, MD 21225

[MDOT MPA Website](#)

[Port of Baltimore Magazine](#)

[Environment Website](#)

MDOT MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MARYLAND PORT ADMINISTRATION

ECO Port Newsletter is the Maryland Port Administration's bi-monthly update of projects and programs that help the agency contribute to a thriving economy, environmental stewardship, and community partnerships. As always, we thank the many private sector businesses, government leaders, communities, and individual citizens who have helped make these achievements a reality.



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