

September/October 2023 ECOPort Newsletter

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September/October 2023

ENVIRONMENT

Canton Railroad Invests in Cleaner Air for Baltimore

[Canton Railroad](#) has replaced two diesel freight switchers built in 1952 with new diesel, near-zero, Tier 4 emission standards freight switchers. The previous switchers were more than 70 years old, with unregulated emissions and averaging more than 2,600 hours of use per year.

The \$4,750,000 investment in the new freight switchers is part of [Maryland's Volkswagen Mitigation Plan](#), which used \$3,800,000 from Maryland's Volkswagen Trust Funds and \$950,000 in matching funds from Canton Railroad. Thanks to the new freight switchers, nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions are estimated to be reduced by 15.35 tons per year, advancing MPA's commitment to environmental justice.

Canton Railroad, a company solely owned by [Maryland Transportation Authority](#), serves the [Port of Baltimore](#) and connects with [CSX](#) and the [Norfolk Southern](#) railways.



Photo: Canton Railroad's two new freight switchers will help reduce emissions in the Baltimore area.
Photo by George Pitz

Terrapin Education Research Partnership Brings Turtles to Maryland Classrooms

Several Maryland students are soon going to have some cold-blooded classmates!

Through the Port of Baltimore's Terrapin Education Research Partnership (TERP), 175 juvenile turtles hatched at Poplar Island will be distributed to schools around the state and reared by the students in classrooms from fall through the following spring.

This program creates hands-on experiences for the students while fostering a love and appreciation for the beauty of the Chesapeake Bay and the wildlife that call it home!

"Students learn to care for and monitor the turtles, giving them a strong connection to the local environment, as well as giving the turtles a head start in life. Turtles in the TERP program skip their hibernation, giving them time to grow larger than wild turtles of their same age," said Environmental Specialist Emily Sperling.



TERP was created between the Maryland Port Administration, , [Maryland Environmental Service](#), [Ohio University](#), [Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center](#), [National Aquarium](#), [Calvert County Public Schools](#), and the [Schmidt Outdoor Education Center](#).

Learn more about this turtle-y awesome program at [E3-Portal](#).

COMMUNITY

Latino Conservation Day: Fun for Everyone from “the Abuelitas to the Grandkids”

On July 30, 2023, [Masonville Cove](#) hosted Latino Conservation Day, a celebration of the [Hispanic Access Foundation's](#) nationally recognized Latino Conservation Week. According to Swathi Ayyagari from the [National Aquarium](#), the event was designed to encourage everyone, especially the Latino community, to enjoy and explore public lands and to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards.

“It was a sight, seeing all the families, from the [abuelitas](#) to the grandkids, participating in the activities during the day and exploring the beauty of the space together. No one is ever too old or young to enjoy nature and discover its wonders,” said [Patterson Park Audubon Center](#) Senior Coordinator of Community Programs Jorge Abraham Lopez Trejo.

“The majority of our community members arrived on buses provided by two lead organizations, and this, for me, really highlighted the dire need for equitable public transportation that connects our people to green spaces in a safe and dignified way,” said Valerie Navarro Pasi3n, the Baltimore outing leader for [Latino Outdoors](#).

Participants, including 118 Latino visitors, enjoyed boat rides, archery, fishing, birding, arts and crafts, nature journaling, a terrapin exhibit, and outreach tables.



Latino Conservation Day event partners included Templo de Albanza Y Restauracion, Patterson Park Audubon Center, Latino Outdoors, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Chesapeake Conservancy, Patapsco Heritage Greenway, and Patuxent Research Refuge.

Photo by National Aquarium

Become a “Friend of Masonville Cove”



Did you know that Masonville Cove, the nation's first Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, has an official friends group to support this vital neighborhood green space?

“The establishment of Friends of Masonville Cove heralds a new dawn of unity and a gathering place for a dynamic, vibrant and inclusive community of individuals who strive to preserve the natural beauty bestowed upon their community,” said Greater Baybrook Alliance (GBA) Environmental Justice Organizer Ralinda E. Wimbush. “This dedicated group presents a platform that unites residents, providing them invaluable opportunities to partake in educational programs tailored to both children and adults alike. The Friends of Masonville Cove also represents a gathering point for social events aimed at fostering camaraderie and strengthening community bonds.”

Learn how you can become a Friend of Masonville Cove by emailing parks@greaterbaybrookalliance.org.

Photo: Nestled amidst the industrialized Baybrook Peninsula, Masonville Cove showcases the extraordinary transformative power of conservation and ecological impact. With lush greenery, a flourishing ecosystem, and protected habitats, this refuge acts as a haven for a diverse array of plants and animals, serving as a crucial ecological landmark within the community.

Photo by GBA

Masonville Cove Partners with Local Youth-Serving Organizations

The summer has ended, but education and outreach activities carry on at and around Masonville Cove! After successfully hosting youth leaders from Community Law in Action (CLIA) this summer, the Cove is continuing to engage young people through partnerships with community nonprofits in South Baltimore, like City of Refuge and Elev8 Freedom Schools, among others.

Since the Environmental Education Center opened its doors in 2009, the Cove has aimed to provide equal opportunity for young Baltimoreans to connect with their environment. Today, that goal is still at the center of the Cove's operations. Reflecting on CLIA's visit, Executive Director Rashad Staton shared, "For the majority of our youth leaders, this was their first time visiting this particular area of South Baltimore and learning of ... its valuable role in preserving wildlife and its connectivity to environmental justice and beautification."

To this end, Masonville Cove is ever expanding their partnerships with local youth-serving organizations. To get involved or plan a visit, contact events@masonvillecove.org.



Photo: As part of Leadership Baltimore, Katrina Jones (MPA Harbor Development) was invited to participate in the Freedom School summer program at Arundel Elementary in Cherry Hill.

OUTREACH

You're Invited! Cox Creek DMCF Open House

The MPA invites you to come and explore the expansion of the Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (Cox Creek DMCF) the 5th Annual Cox Creek Open House to be held on October 21, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The Cox Creek Open House is a special day offering free access to this unique facility with 126 acres of preserved wetlands. Enjoy a riding tour of the dredged material containment facility to see the expansion underway and see the plans for the new Swan Creek Nature Trail. Enjoy some fishing or take a self-guided birding tour of the adjacent Swan Creek Wetland. There will be much to do and see for all ages.

Cox Creek DMCF Open House

Saturday, October 21, 2023, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

1000 Kembo Road, Curtis Bay, MD 21226

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com/cox-creek-open-house-2023 or contact ecoport@marylandports.com or (410) 385-4465.



Photo: The Cox Creek DMCF Open House will include interactive, family-friendly activities such as “Touch-A-Truck,” live animals, educational games, arts and crafts, and the opportunity to observe and learn about wildlife.

Photo by Katrina Jones/MPA

Checking in on the Dredged Material Management Program's Achievements at Mid-Year



MARYLAND PORT ADMINISTRATION DREDGED MATERIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM 2023 MID-YEAR REPORT

2023: Building the Future Together

Building on a successful history of thoughtful investment, careful implementation, and planning for future innovation, the Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) put forth the following recommendations for 2023 to further support the Port of Baltimore in achieving successes that will benefit our region economically, environmentally, and socially for decades.

Funding & Policy Recommendations

1. Engage the Maryland Congressional Delegation, American Association of Port Authorities, and federal and state partners to ensure favorable legislation and sufficient funding for priority DMMP projects and the Corps navigation program.
2. Leverage partnerships with federal and state agencies and related collaborative efforts, including the Maryland Commission on Climate Change to facilitate legislation and funding that support the DMMP and the Port in addressing climate change and resiliency planning.
3. Seek available state and federal funding for GHG emissions reductions, including Port electrification opportunities, to meet the new target of a 50% reduction by 2025 and net zero by 2045. Looking ahead, leverage ongoing carbon reduction programs and other environmental initiatives with additional opportunities to achieve environmental justice, equity, and diversity objectives.

Planning & Operations Recommendations

1. Conduct capacity and demand planning beyond a 20-year timeframe to support long-term sustainable dredged material management options while achieving capacity recovery through the 2020 RB2 Strategy.
2. Begin to remediate the property adjacent to the Cox Creek DMCP to implement long-term, large-scale RR and capacity recovery efforts.
3. Incorporate the potential impacts of climate change and facilitate the use of nature-based and climate-resilient solutions into long-term DMMP project planning, DMCP design and operations, and related project delivery while leveraging the best science available to quantify carbon sequestration benefits from the beneficial use of dredged material.
4. Conduct a second pilot CAD project to further evaluate the concept under different conditions and refine techniques for utilizing CAD as a Baltimore Harbor dredged material management solution.
5. Explore alternative funding and cost savings options to advance the habitat design and future management of HR North Cell in partnership with DMH.
6. Engage the Corps, the Commonwealth of Virginia, resource agencies, and other stakeholders to refine the list of suitable, cost-effective dredged material placement options, including beneficial use opportunities, for the Virginia Channels.
7. Ensure that planning, design, and operations efforts related to DMMP infrastructure and restoration projects accelerate nature-based and climate-resilient solutions, consider and incorporate the equitable distribution of benefits, and that any associated adverse impacts are not disproportionately borne by vulnerable communities.

Outreach & Education Recommendations

1. Prioritize environmental justice by effectively engaging with stakeholders in English and Spanish wherever possible; and increasing the public's knowledge about the Port of Baltimore in order to pursue outcomes that equitably benefit all Marylanders.
2. Recruit DMMP committee members that reflect the diversity of the communities adjacent to, and impacted by, the Port.
3. Create equitable access to DMMP sites to intentionally engage youth in educational programs as a pathway to thriving career opportunities, including those in STEM and maritime-related industries.

DMMP 2023

With many ambitious goals set for this year and beyond, the MPA has released the [2023 Mid-Year Report on the Dredged Material Management Program](#). Read about the progress on the recommendations that the DMMP is pursuing in 2023 in the overall effort to further support the Port of Baltimore in achieving successes that will benefit our region economically, environmentally, and socially for decades.

The report lays out the goals and progress to date at mid-year on important program priorities, including funding and policy, planning and operations, and outreach and education. With a few months left to go in 2023, the DMMP is on track for another great year working with its incredible partners.

View the report in its entirety at maryland-dmmp.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/DMMP_Mid_Year_Report_2023_Final.pdf

Property Acquired for Innovative Reuse Activities and Future Cargo/Maritime Use

An average of more than 4.7 million cubic yards of sediment –an amount that would fill the Raven’s Stadium at least twice -- is dredged annually from the shipping channels leading to the Port of Baltimore. The challenge then becomes what to do with the dredged material. One solution, innovative reuse (IR), repurposes the dredged material for other uses, such as construction materials or shoreline berms.

Last year, [Maryland’s Board of Public Works approved a purchase agreement](#) for MPA to acquire a 140-acre property from [Tronox](#), a former industrial facility located next to the [Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility](#) (Cox Creek DMCF). The property will be utilized by MPA to conduct large-scale innovative reuse projects , which is a key component in securing the long-term success and sustainability of the Port of Baltimore.

The property was part of a larger parcel of land known as the Hawkins Point Plant Site that was used for the manufacturing and packaging of titanium dioxide. Due to the presence of residual environmental contamination from industrial activity, MPA, [Maryland Department of the Environment](#) (MDE), and Tronox signed an Administrative Consent Order to ensure that the site is cleaned up and fully remediated to meet current environmental standards. Although MPA did not contribute to the environmental conditions at the property that occurred before the December 2022 purchase, the agency has agreed to help address the environmental needs along with Tronox over the next ten years, which will return the former industrial site to productive use and result in substantial long-term cost savings for the state. MPA is currently developing a master site development plan.

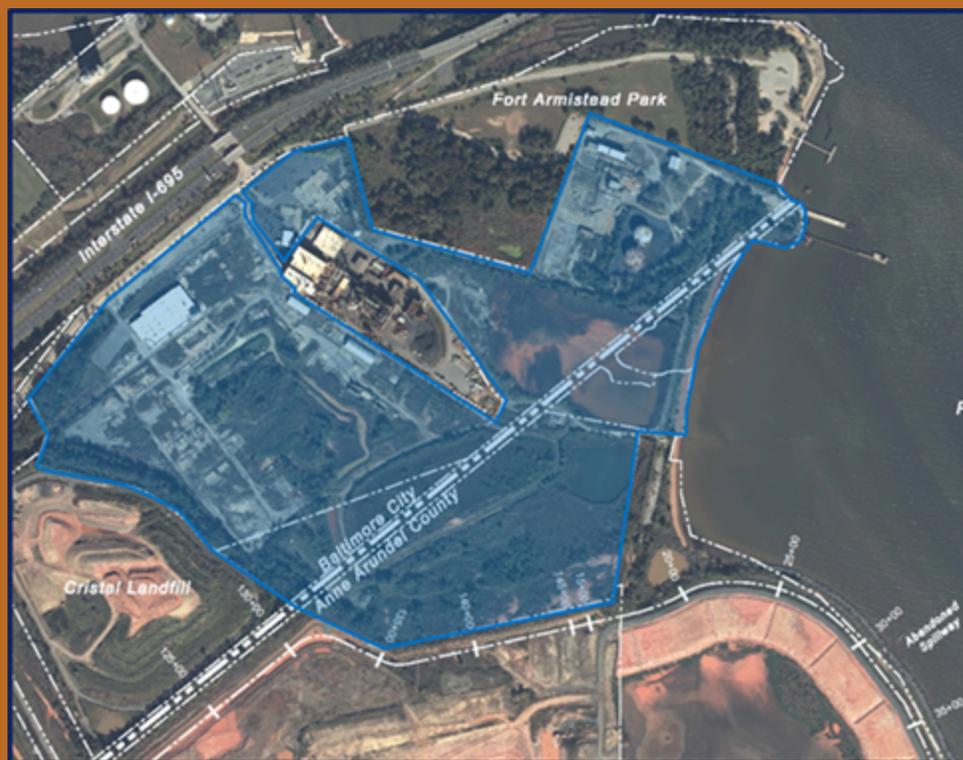


Photo: The remediation will be phased to allow incremental site development and MPA will start processing dredged material from the Cox Creek DMCF for innovative reuse starting in late 2024. Based on today’s cost per cubic yard to manage dredged material, this would result in over a \$200 million savings to the State over a 20-year planning horizon, far outweighing the costs of MPA participating in addressing environmental conditions on the property.

[Google Earth Image](#)

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.

Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee Meeting - October 11th at 5:30 PM

Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility Operations Building
1000 Kembo Road
Baltimore, MD 21226

Innovative Reuse Committee Meeting - October 17th at 5:30 PM

Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility Operations Building
1000 Kembo Road
Baltimore, MD 21226

Cox Creek Open House - October 21st at 10:00 AM

Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility Operations Building
1000 Kembo Road
Baltimore, MD 21226

Cox Creek Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting - November 8th at 6:00 PM

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

DMMP Management Committee Meeting - November 15th at 10:00AM

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

DMMP Executive Committee Meeting - December 4th at 2:00 PM

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

DMMP Annual Committee Meeting - December 7th Time: TBD

MedStar Harbor Hospital
3001 Hanover Street
Baltimore, MD 21225

[MPA Website](#)

[Port of Baltimore Magazine](#)

[Environment Website](#)



ECO Port Newsletter is the Maryland Department of Transportation 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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