



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Baltimore District



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Army Corps, Maryland DOT sign agreement to commence \$4 billion Chesapeake Bay restoration project

BALTIMORE - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District, and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) signed a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) for the \$4 billion Mid-Chesapeake Bay ecosystem restoration project at MDOT Headquarters, Aug. 23, 2022.

The PPA – signed by Col. Estee Pinchasin, Baltimore District commander, and MDOT Secretary James F. Ports, Jr. – outlines the roles, responsibilities, and financial obligations for both partners for the restoration of both James and Barren islands in Dorchester County, beneficially re-using material dredged from the Port of Baltimore approach channels and the Honga River, respectively.

The first contract for phase one on Barren Island is anticipated for award in the coming weeks.

“It’s an honor to sign this agreement signifying ‘all systems go’ for this critically important project that will provide so many environmental benefits for Maryland,” said Maryland Transportation Secretary Ports. “Rebuilding James and Barren islands will promote wildlife, restore coastal shorelines, and provide us with a long-term placement site for dredged material from port shipping channels, allowing us to accommodate larger ships bringing more cargo and business to Maryland.”

Every year, USACE dredges nearly five million cubic yards of material from the channels and anchorages serving the Port of Baltimore to maintain current depths and widths for safe navigation. Once the material is removed, it must be contained or disposed of in an environmentally conscious manner.

“With this project, we hope to build upon the success of Poplar Island,” said Pinchasin. “The habitat we restored and created using dredged material is flourishing. We are proud to partner again with the Maryland Department of Transportation’s Port Administration and employ innovative solutions that benefit the Chesapeake Bay’s ecosystem today and will do so for generations to come.”

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“We are very excited to work closely with Col. Pinchasin and her outstanding team at the Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, on this legacy initiative,” said Maryland Port Administration-Port of Baltimore Executive Director William P. Doyle. “The Mid-Bay project is the next frontier for coastal and island restoration. It will give us dredged sediment placement capacity for 30 years and strengthen the shoreline of Dorchester County.”

The Mid-Bay project includes restoration of 2,072 acres of lost remote island habitat on James Island and 72 acres of remote island habitat on Barren Island. Habitat may include submerged aquatic vegetation, mudflat, low marsh, high marsh, islands, ponds, channels, and upland areas.

USACE received more than \$80 million in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to complete the design and preconstruction activities for this project, to include the first construction contract award.

Based on the current schedule, Barren Island may start to accept dredged material as early as 2024 with James Island accepting in approximately 2030, after sill and dike construction efforts to hold the material are completed at each location. The Mid-Bay project is anticipated to be completed in 2067 – providing more than 40 years of capacity to place almost 100 million cubic yards of dredged material.

Poplar Island, the ongoing ecosystem restoration project by USACE and MDOT MPA, wrapped up construction of an expansion effort in January 2021. The expansion provides substantial ecosystem benefits and additional dredge material capacity for the approach channels to the Port of Baltimore until 2032.

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Baltimore District celebrates 175 years of Service to our Nation in 2022

Since the Nation’s fight for independence, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has played a vital role in developing our Nation. The Baltimore District has a long and storied history that extends as far back as the early 1800s when USACE constructed Fort McHenry, successfully shielding Baltimore against British attacks in the War of 1812. And when the threat of coastal attack diminished in the 1820s, Baltimore District turned its attention to developing roadways, railways, canals, and more, marking the beginning of the District’s Civil Works mission. Baltimore District delivers vital engineering solutions in collaboration with its partners to serve and strengthen the Nation, energize the economy, and reduce disaster risks. Baltimore District has an extensive flood risk management program, inspecting nearly 150 miles of levee systems and operating 16 dams, translating to the prevention of more than \$16 billion of flood damages to date. The district maintains 290 miles of federal channels, including dredging the Baltimore Harbor, which material is beneficial mainly for restoration missions, such as the expansion of Poplar Island in the Chesapeake Bay. The district has vast ecosystem restoration missions that include restoring native oyster populations in the Bay. Baltimore District is the only district to operate a public utility — the Washington Aqueduct — that produces an average of 135 million gallons of drinking water per day at two treatment plants for approximately one million citizens living, working, or visiting the National Capital Region. The district also cleans up formerly used defense sites, decommissions and deactivates former nuclear power plants, and performs cleanup of low-level radioactive waste from the Nation’s early atomic weapons program. Baltimore District executes a robust military construction program and provides real estate services. These civil and military missions and diverse engineering services support communities and warfighters while addressing the ever-growing list of emerging national security requirements and ultimately protecting the Nation.

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