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ECO Port Newsletter November/December 2021

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Happy Holidays from the Port of Baltimore!

November/December 2021

ENVIRONMENT

Port of Baltimore Climate Change Strategy Highlighted at COP26

This fall, the global priority of fighting climate change brought together almost 200 nations for the [2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference](#), also known as COP26. One of the conference presentations provided world leaders the opportunity to learn about the Port of Baltimore's innovative efforts to address the impacts of a changing climate.

Conference organizers stated, "Ports, like other forms of transport infrastructure, are potentially vulnerable to the effects of the changing climate, particularly extreme weather. Therefore, it is critical – not just for ports themselves but also for the economies they support – that the sector is well-prepared for climate change."

[Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration](#) (MDOT MPA) Manager of Strategic Planning and Special Projects Jill Lemke, one of the agency's leading climate change experts, provided a virtual presentation on MDOT MPA's strategy. "It was an honor to represent Baltimore and describe what we are doing to become a more climate resilient port at what can be considered the Super Bowl of climate change. I look forward to applying some of the principles discussed during the sessions here in Baltimore. Although each port may face very different challenges, there are plenty of similarities to learn from," said Lemke.

PRACTICAL CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION SOLUTIONS FOR PORTS

2ND & 3RD NOVEMBER | IN-PERSON/VIRTUAL

“ The World's ports are on the front lines of climate change. Join us to discuss how we are assessing climate risks and adapting to become more resilient. **”**

Jill Lemke
Manager, Strategic Planning & Special Projects,
Maryland Port Administration.

Click below to register for this event:
<https://maritime.org/inb-2021/inb-events/adaptation-solutions-ports/>

PEEL PORTS GROUP | COP26 INTERNATIONAL MARITIME HUB

Watch the entire presentation, "Navigating a Changing Climate," [here](#).

Birds Resting & Nesting at MDOT MPA Dredged Material Sites

From American white pelicans to whimbrels, the word is out. Some of the best places for birds to rest or nest can be found at MDOT MPA dredged material sites. According to [Maryland Environmental Service \(MES\)](#) Senior Environmental Specialist Tim Carney, 2021 was another banner year for birding. Nearly 250 species, including several "firsts" and many rarities, were identified during official censuses at [The Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project at Poplar Island \(Poplar Island\)](#), [Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility \(DMCF\)](#), [Masonville DMCF](#), and the [Hart-Miller Island Dredged Material Placement Site](#). On the last day of November, a rare sighting in Maryland of the snowy owl was recorded at Poplar Island.



Photos: Since reopening during the pandemic to tours in August, birders have had an opportunity to see species like these scenes from 2021: a snowy owl at Poplar Island, Nelson's sparrow at Masonville Cove, and a bald eagle at Cox Creek. Photo Credit: Tim Carney/MES

Living Shoreline & Trash Wheels Reel in Environmental Excellence Awards

Two partnership projects received prestigious MDOT Environmental Excellence Awards, an annual recognition of notable achievements in environmental compliance and sustainable practices across MDOT.

The award for environmental quality went to the new living shoreline at the [Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center](#), the headquarters of [Anne Arundel County Public School's](#) (AACPS) Environmental Literacy and Outdoor Education Office, that was made possible by a partnership with MDOT MPA, MES, AACPS, and the [Chesapeake Bay Trust](#). The 300-foot living shoreline comprised of 5,000 native plants on the Severn River provides vital erosion protection, improves water quality, and increases wetland habitat. MDOT MPA received the equivalent of 11.68 acres of impervious area restoration credits for less than \$30,000.

The People's Choice Award—determined by the votes of MDOT employees—went to MDOT MPA's trash and litter reduction initiatives including Baltimore Harbor's four trash wheels. Located at the mouth of Gwynns Falls, Gwynnda the Good Wheel of the West was commissioned as Baltimore's fourth trash wheel supported by MDOT MPA in June 2021.

"During this continuing COVID crisis, it is especially significant that these awards allow us to celebrate the innovative and exciting environmental projects going on in our beautiful state of Maryland and to recognize the people behind those efforts," said MDOT Deputy Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Enterprise Services R. Earl Lewis, Jr.



Watch the official video announcement from MDOT Deputy Secretary Earl Lewis [here](#)

Protecting Patapsco River Shorelines with Dredged Material

In October, the [Maryland Board of Public Works](#) approved the sixth contract supporting efforts to advance the innovative reuse of dredged material with a focus on cost-effectiveness and scalability as recommended by the Innovative Reuse & Beneficial Use Strategy.

[CSI Environmental, LLC](#) was selected to conduct a study and demonstrate the feasibility of using dredged material from the Masonville DMCF in geotextile tubes to create vegetated upland and shoreline berms. The tubes will be placed at [BGE's Spring Gardens facility](#) on the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River, where they will be planted and monitored.

"We're excited to see how dredged material might be used to protect the region's shorelines which are under threat due to sea-level rise," said MDOT MPA Innovative Reuse Program Manager Kristen Keene. "Thanks to the support of the Board of Public Works, we continue to learn more about innovative and commercially-viable options to reuse dredged sediment, which will help us both recover capacity and extend the lifespan of sediment containment facilities."

COMMUNITY

Wharf Logs to Find New Life at Local Park

A bright idea will keep surplus Port material out of the waste stream and benefit local communities. Wharf logs, placed on the edge of vessel berths to serve as curb stops, wear out over time and need to be replaced. MDOT MPA Office of Environmental Quality General Manager Bill Richardson wanted to repurpose these worn-out “bumper pads,” made of composite plastic material, to keep them from ending up in a landfill.

Although they no longer had value to the Port, the wharf logs were state property, and appropriate protocols needed to be followed in order to donate the surplus material. After receiving the necessary approvals, MDOT MPA oversaw the donation to the [Baltimore Port Alliance](#) (BPA) for future use by community associations.

The [Greater Baybrook Alliance](#) (GBA) had been searching for material to serve as bollards to prevent illegal dumping at Farring Baybrook Park in Curtis Bay. A match was made, and BPA member [C. Steinweg](#) generously supplied the labor to cut the wharf logs to size and bundle them on pallets. MES arranged for transportation.

“The material donation came at the perfect time, just after GBA received a grant for park gating from Keep Maryland Beautiful. Working with a local landscaping company, the bollards will prevent vehicle access and improve park experience,” said GBA Director of Revitalization Programs Sarah Hope.



Photo: Thanks to innovative thinking and partnerships, large, retired wharf logs will be kept out of the waste stream. Photo Credit: Sarah Hope/GBA

University of Maryland Graduate Students Turn to Port for Capstone Project

[University of Maryland Global Campus](#) (UMGC) environmental management graduate students recently had an opportunity to see practical applications of their field of study. Through a semester-long capstone project with the MDOT MPA, the students studied the current use of renewable and zero-emission technologies in port environments across the globe and researched the potential benefits of solar power at MDOT MPA facilities.

After joining her MDOT MPA colleagues for the students' final presentation via Zoom one evening in early November, MDOT MPA Manager of Strategic Planning and Special Projects Jill Lemke said, “I was so impressed by the depth of the students' research and innovative ways of thinking. Their presentation was very informative and professional. I hope they learned a lot from this tangible real-world experience, and I thank them for their hard work.”

OUTREACH

Dorchester County Area Residents Meet with Partners on Mid-Bay Project

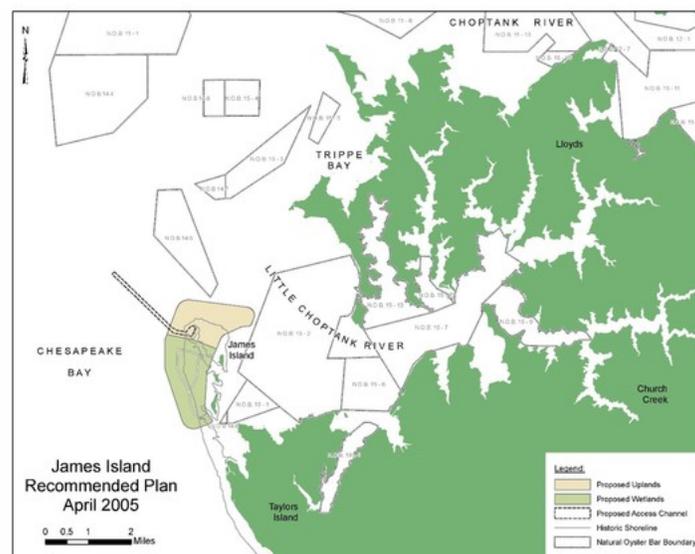
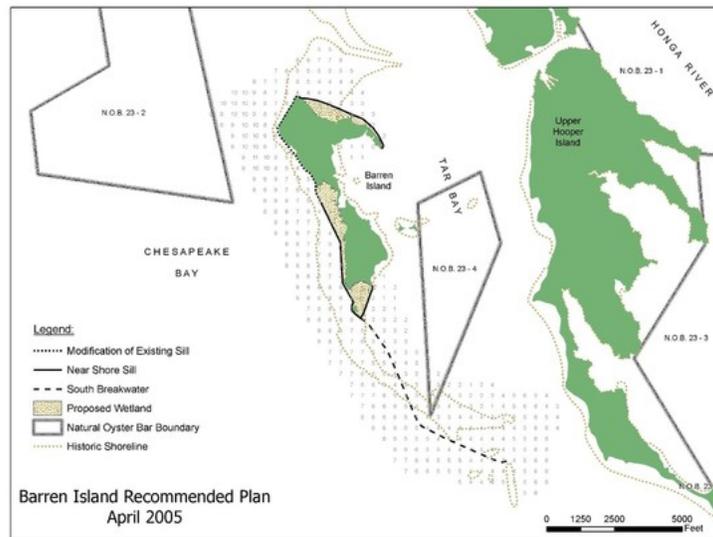
Approximately 50 residents from the Dorchester County area attended a November meeting to learn more about the [Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Project](#) (Mid-Bay Project). The project plans to restore two eroding Chesapeake Bay islands, James and Barren, using dredged material from navigation channels.

Attendees shared support for the effort to restore 2,072 acres on James Island, with 55% preserved as wetlands habitat and 45% as upland habitat. At Barren Island, 72 acres will be restored as wetlands.

"Keeping the community engaged and informed about this exciting project to restore James and Barren islands, as well as receiving feedback from local community members, is our top priority. MDOT MPA is working closely with the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#), area residents, and community groups in Dorchester County to continuously share information and connect with partners on the Mid-Bay project," said MDOT MPA Director of Harbor Development Kristen Fidler.



Photo: MDOT MPA Harbor Development Director Kristen Fidler and Innovative Reuse Program Manager Kristen Keene share information about the Mid-Bay Project with Dorchester County area residents. Photo Credit: MDOT MPA



Maps courtesy of USACE.

Something for Everyone at the Cox Creek Open House

On a beautiful Saturday in October, MDOT MPA and partners welcomed nearly 100 visitors to the Cox Creek DMCF Open House. Visitors explored the expanded site, learned about the construction process, the Port of Baltimore and the dredging program, and enjoyed fun interactive activities.

More than 40 birders also enjoyed the opportunity to see some of the many species supported by the wildlife habitat at the site and the adjoining Swan Creek wetlands.

Participating partners included the [Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore](#), the [Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy](#), [Anne Arundel Bird Club](#), [Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works](#), and local fire departments.



Photo: There was something for everyone at the Cox Creek Open House, even the opportunity to "Touch a Truck." Photo Credit: Angie Ashley/Angie Ashley Consulting

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.

Hart-Miller Citizens Oversight Committee Meeting - January 18th at 6:30 PM

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

DMMP Citizens Advisory Committee/Harbor Team Meeting - February 9th at 6:00PM

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee Meeting - February 23rd at 5:30 PM

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, ecoport@marylandports.com.

[MDOT 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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