

# Poplar Island

## Environmental Restoration Project

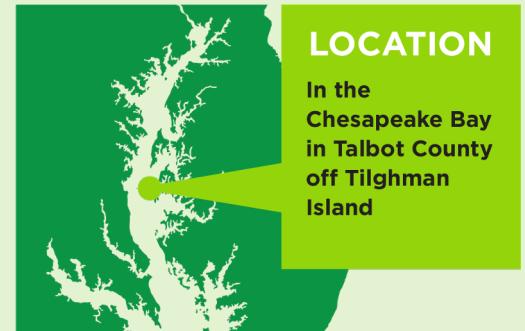
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The Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project at Poplar Island (Poplar Island) is an international model for the beneficial use of dredged material located in the mid-Chesapeake Bay. The US Army Corps of Engineers and MDOT MPA began the project to restore Poplar Island in the 1990s. In 1996, only five acres remained of the 1,140 acres that were documented in 1847. About 100 residents called the Poplar Island town of Valliant home in the 1800s. By the 1920s, all of the residents had left due to erosion. The island then became a hunting retreat that welcomed both President Franklin D. Roosevelt and President Harry S. Truman.

### EXPANSION

The first dredged material was placed in 2001; the island now receives approximately 2 million cubic yards (mcy) of dredged material each year, drawn from the approach channels to the Baltimore Harbor and C&D Canal southern approach channels. In 2017, an expansion project began to increase the site's placement capacity and create approximately 1,715 acres of restored habitat consisting of 776 acres of tidal wetlands (low marsh and high marsh habitat), 829 acres of upland habitat, open water ponds, and a 110-acre open water embayment.



# 1,140 ACRES

Original Capacity: 39.5 mcy  
Capacity (69.8 mcy) will be reached  
By 2032/2033 dredging cycle

2001



First inflow was received in 2001



Expansion will add 575 acres for a total of 1715 acres



International model for the beneficial use of dredge material

# Poplar Island



## Head Start

A popular and successful program engages Maryland students and teachers in conservation by giving terrapins a “head start” in classrooms. During their time in the classroom, the turtles grow to the size of a 3- to 5-year-old wild terrapin. By giving the hatchlings a head start, the students hope to give them a better chance of survival once they are released back into the wild on Poplar Island.



- 51,800+ Students have participated in MDOT MPA & MES in-class outreach programs and field experiences since 2010
- 14,800+ diamondback terrapins have hatched on Poplar Island since 2002
- 700+ classes have released head start turtles on Poplar Island field trips since 2005
- 2,800+ terrapins have been head started by Maryland students since 2005 (about 200 turtles each year)
- 500+ head start turtles have been recaptured on Poplar Island since 2009

## ACCESS

For information about public tours, visit [www.marylandports.com/greenport](http://www.marylandports.com/greenport), [poplarislandrestoration.com](http://poplarislandrestoration.com), or email [poplartours@menv.com](mailto:poplartours@menv.com).



Since monitoring began, more than 240 species of birds have been observed. Year after year, wildlife including the diamondback terrapin and many species of birds including the common tern (recently State listed as Endangered) return to the island for vital nesting habitat.



Chesapeake Bay Program

*“My students [have gained] a deeper appreciation of just how important it is for them to protect the Chesapeake Bay and all that it has to offer. Taking care and raising terrapins to release back into the waters of the bay is one of the highlights of being a fourth grader at Piney Orchard Elementary.”*

-Heidi S. Beall  
Fourth Grade Teacher  
Piney Orchard Elementary  
Anne Arundel County Public Schools