

Poplar Island

Environmental Restoration Project



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, less than 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.

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. The Poplar Island project will restore approximately 1,715 acres of habitat consisting of 776 acres of tidal wetlands (low marsh and high marsh habitat), 829 acres of upland habitat, and a 110-acre open water embayment. At completion, the project will allow for the placement of approximately 70 mcy of dredged material.

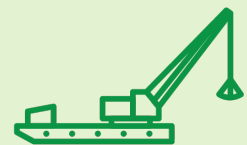


1,715 ACRES



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

2001



First inflow was received in 2001



Restores 776 acres of tidal wetlands, 829 acres of upland habitat, and a 110-acre open water embayment



International model for the beneficial use of dredged material

Poplar Island



Maryland Environmental Service

Terrapin Education and Research Partnership (TERP)

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.



- 53,200+ Students have participated in MDOT MPA & MES in-class outreach programs and field experiences since 2010
- 16,300+ 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, poplarislandrestoration.com, or email poplartours@menv.com.



Since monitoring began, more than 240 species of birds have been observed on or just offshore of Poplar Island. Year after year, wildlife including the diamondback terrapin and many species of birds return to the island for vital nesting habitat. Poplar Island hosts the largest nesting colonies of both common (State listed as Endangered) and least terns in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay. Poplar Island is a registered monarch waystation providing habitat for migrating monarchs. Over 2,000 monarchs have been tagged on the island since 2019.



USFWS

“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