

Watershed Stewards Academy

August 2025 Newsletter

Hello Watershed Stewards!

Please remember to enter your projects and volunteer hours into the WSA database and reporting system. Click [here](#) to log in!

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Click here for [WSA's Facebook Page!](#)

To access this private group from the main Facebook page, click on 'More' and then 'Group' to request to join the group.



Featured Project / Stewards

WSA Education and Outreach Capstone: Building Relationships in Howard County to Benefit the Bay

By Emily Littleton and Robin Hirschhorn, WSA Class of 2025

For many stewards, the capstone is a chance to get your hands dirty and make a visible change in a community – creating rain gardens or planting trees and native plants. Our team chose a different direction. We initiated an education and outreach project in Harper's Glen, an older 133-home townhouse community on 13 acres in Columbia, Maryland, at the headwaters of the popular Wilde Lake. Our goal: to raise residents' awareness of the impacts of their behaviors on their nearby stream and provide information on simple changes they can make to protect it.

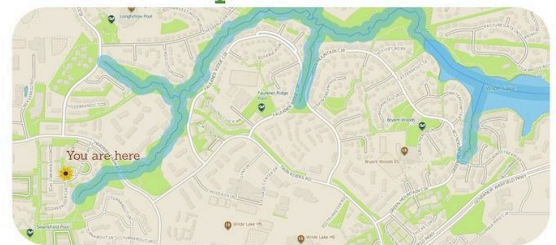
The Harper's Glen community has an active and committed HOA board who recognize the importance of environmental stewardship. Their partnership helped get our capstone underway and build momentum.

Our Path to the Harper's Glen Community

It's clear that Harper's Glen is a community that cares. In the shade of tall trees, kids play, neighbors socialize, and people walk their dogs. While the townhomes take up most of the land, homeowners take good care of their small properties. Yet, like most communities, Harper's Glen also has its share of erosion and sediment pollution, invasive ivy and bamboo, pet waste, downspouts onto impermeable surfaces, and other sources of stormwater pollution.

Maps from the Maryland League of Conservation Voters using data from Howard County, show Harper's Glen as being in an area disproportionately impacted from a health and environmental standpoint. The region is also where Howard County receives the majority of their drainage complaints. The Columbia Association has identified the area as the site of a future nearby bamboo removal project. As a multi-dwelling community, residents don't have as much opportunity to engage with the land around them and may not realize the impacts they have. All were good reasons to use our capstone to focus on Harper's Glen.

Harper's Glen



Meet Your Stream!

Caption: We used this map to show the community how their neighborhood stream leads to Wilde Lake.

Our Capstone: “Greening the Glen” Community Event

The HOA board shared that they hold an annual spring clean-up, but that attendance had been very limited. We saw that as a big opportunity. Working with the board, we expanded the clean-up into a “Greening the Glen” community event with an informational table, an interactive stormwater pollution game, giveaways of native plants, gardening gloves, and pet waste bags, and cupcakes and ice cream cups. We hoped the enticements would bring in members of the community who may not already be knowledgeable about watershed issues. We also sought to listen more than talk and to engage with residents around the issues they cared about the most.

The residents and HOA board members were thrilled with the event turnout. One member of the board remarked that attendees included “some we haven’t seen in years!” We were thanked numerous times by board members and residents. (“Thanks so much for coming to OUR community!”)

Our watershed game provided a fun way to initiate engagement with residents. Attendees rolled a large cube we made with each side depicting a different stormwater issue relevant to the community (erosion, pet waste, etc.). Attendees would then answer a question related to the topic that came up. Winners (everyone!) got their pick of gardening gloves, cupcakes, ice cream, a native plant, dog waste bags, and educational resources. Each item provided an opportunity to discuss how it connected with protecting their stream.

We had a good number of highly engaged children come, so we adjusted the game for them and offered appropriate giveaways including crayons, sidewalk chalk, dog origami, and environmental worksheets.

Our goal of being an inclusive event was met. We spoke with and played our game with residents who spoke multiple languages and had a number of people who required mobility assistance and made good use of the tent with chairs.

There were two rounds of trash clean-ups which resulted in numerous bags of trash from around the community and along the stream.

Building a Lasting Outreach Campaign to Benefit the Watershed

The event kicked off what will be a lasting commitment to the community. We are producing educational materials to insert into the HOA’s newsletter and will create a “Harper’s Glen: Meet Your Stream” educational booklet to provide to new residents. And we hope to encourage current and future stewards to make Harper’s Glen and nearby communities part of their areas of focus. For example, the Harper’s Glen board has already invited us back to participate in their Fall Festival to continue our collaboration on watershed protection in their community.

We are thankful to the residents of Harper’s Glen and to their board, our capstone mentor Deborah Wessner, Watershed Steward Amy Marshall who volunteered and shared notes from a watershed event from her own capstone, the Howard County Watershed Stewards Academy and Program Coordinator Terry Matthews for all their support in making this capstone possible. Feel free to reach out with any questions:

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Caption: Robin and Emily at the Greening the Glen.



Attendees engaging with watershed issues at the event.

Communities like Harper's Glen are the backbone for improving the health of local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Together, we can make good things happen.

About our Capstone Team

Robin Hirschhorn retired from a long career in the environmental field. She started as a marine ecologist, supported industrial environmental management and cleanup, and worked with Federal facilities on improving their sustainability.

Emily Littleton is a freelance writer who spent her career in corporate communications at National Public Radio with a focus on executive, stakeholder, and crisis communications.

Project mentor Deborah Wessner has a long history with the Howard County WSA, as one of the first graduates of the program and serves on several Columbia Association advisory committees.



Continuing Education

Common Issues with Ponds and Management Tips – UME, Andy Lazur

Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 12 – 12:40 pm

Ponds of any size and type are dynamic aquatic ecosystems. Warmer water temperatures may create additional concern for ponds and water quality. Excessive aquatic plant growth, and low oxygen are a few examples. This webinar will present basic pond management principles and practices to keep ponds healthy.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).



Upcoming Events

Public Input Sought for Next Chapter of Chesapeake Bay Restoration Work

Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Location: Tawes State Office Building (first floor), 580 Taylor Ave., Annapolis

Parking is available in Lot K, directly across from the Tawes bldg entrance (across from Herbert M. Sachs Dr.).

Maryland will host an open house in Annapolis to provide information for the public about the recently released draft revisions to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The Agreement is the voluntary plan – signed by Maryland, New York, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – that details priorities to restore the Chesapeake Bay for the benefit of communities across the region.

Experts from Maryland state agencies will be available to explain the proposed revisions to the Bay Agreement and answer questions that attendees may have. There will also be an opportunity for the public to submit their thoughts on the revisions as part of the public feedback period, which runs until September 1.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact [Leila Duman](#) or [Bailey Robertory](#) with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

NHSM Paddle and Ponder the Patapsco

Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 9am - 12 pm

Location: Daniels Dam, Ellicott City

Join us for a unique on-the-water experience that invites you to explore the future of the Patapsco River while canoeing its scenic stretch near Daniels Dam. Guided by a representative from American Rivers, a national nonprofit dedicated to protecting and restoring rivers, this paddle offers an engaging opportunity to connect with nature and learn about the Daniels Dam Feasibility Study.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

2025 C-StREAM Summer Symposium

Friday, August 8, 2025, 9am - 2pm

Location: Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) in Edgewater

This annual event is an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our C-StREAM interns as they present their summer research and experiences, and to connect with colleagues and partners working to support the next generation of environmental leaders.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

CUSP (Chesapeake Urban Stormwater Professionals) 2025 - Free / Virtual

Wednesday, August 27, 2025

The Chesapeake Urban Stormwater Professionals (CUSP) is a FREE professional training program from the Chesapeake Stormwater Network! The core of the program is a 14-webinar curriculum that is taught in two parts. Part 1 introduces the basic impacts of stormwater runoff and how they can be reduced or mitigated by stormwater and urban watershed restoration practices. Part 2 focuses on the essential functions of municipal (or MS4) stormwater programs, and how to improve local watershed management.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

Nature Based Solutions for Coastal Hazards Workshop

Thursday, August 28, 2025, 9 am - 5 pm

Location: 647 Contees Wharf Rd, Edgewater

Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and NOAA's Office for Coastal Management are hosting a training for coastal managers and planners to plan and implement green (natural) infrastructure projects to reduce natural coastal hazards in their community.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

The Woods in Your Backyard online course - Fall 2025

September 8 - November 17, 2025

Our self-directed, non-credit course runs 10 weeks. The online format lets you access the content when it's convenient for you, without worrying about attending evening classes or weekend workshops. The course will help landowners convert lawn to natural areas and enhance stewardship of existing natural areas. Based on the guide of the same name, the course provides strategies to landowners of small parcels of land (1-10 acres) that improve the stewardship of their property for personal enjoyment and environmental quality. It uses a hands-on learning approach to help participants develop and implement a plan for their property. Activities include how to

map habitat areas, understand basic ecological principles about woodland and wildlife, choose and implement a few habitat management projects, and how to set a timetable and record your progress. Online discussion groups will allow participants to interact with others taking the course.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).



Funding and Material Support

Urban Trees Mini Grant Program is now open – Chesapeake Bay Trust and 5 million Trees for Maryland *Deadline: Rolling*

The Urban Trees Mini Grant Program is part of the Maryland General Assembly's initiative to plant 5,000,000 native trees across the state by 2031. This grant program welcomes requests for tree planting projects in urban, underserved communities that cost up to \$10,000. The Urban Trees Mini Grant Program aims to empower communities with the resources they need to plant trees, and thereby transform their neighborhoods into healthier, greener environments for current and future generations. Local governments, non-profit organizations, community and homeowner associations, faith-based organizations, and more are encouraged to apply.

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

Chesapeake Bay Trust - Community Engagement and Restoration Mini Grant *Deadline: Rolling*

Funds activities such as tree plantings, rain gardens, stream cleanups, and storm drain stenciling. To see a longer list of potential projects, read the full Request for Proposals (RFP).

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

Chesapeake Bay Trust - Community Engagement Mini Grant *Deadline: Rolling*

Designed to support activities that enhance communities, engage residents, and improve natural resources. They fund small-scale activities such as tree plantings, rain gardens, stream cleanups, and storm drain stenciling, among others.

For more information or to apply, click [here](#).

Chesapeake Bay Trust Grants and Opportunities

The Chesapeake Bay Trust's grant-making strategies are shaped by three core objectives; environmental education, demonstration-based restoration, and community engagement. We look to these objectives as basic touchstones for developing our programs, engaging new partners, and communicating about our work.

Click here for more information or to apply, click [here](#).



Employment Opportunities

[School Year Educator](#) | Pickering Creek Audubon Center

[Staff Attorney](#) | Chesapeake Legal Alliance

[Human Resources Coordinator](#) | Chesapeake Conservancy

[Program Coordinator- Outreach and Education](#) | The Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust)

[Grants Administrator](#) | Sustainable Chesapeake

[Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Resilience Specialist](#)

[Coast Kids Program Director](#) | Assateague Coastal Trust

[Park Ranger I \(Seasonal\)](#) | Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks

[Program Support Specialist](#) | Multiple Counties – Southern Maryland RC&D Board, Inc.

[Institutional Giving Manager](#) | Casey Trees

[Annual Fund Manager](#) | Casey Trees

[Garden Stewards - Part-time](#) | Filbert Street Garden (Baltimore)

[Fall Mini Internship](#) | Calvert County's Natural Resources and Calvert Nature Society

[Naturalist I](#) | Calvert County's Natural Resources

[Landscape Crew- Installation/Maintenance Landscaper](#) | Lauren's Garden Service and Native Plant Nursery

[Fall Environmental Education Internship](#) | Calvert Co. Natural Resources Division and Calvert Nature Society

[Administrator & Business Manager](#) | Chesapeake Legal Alliance

[Vegetation Maintenance Technician](#) | City of Takoma Park