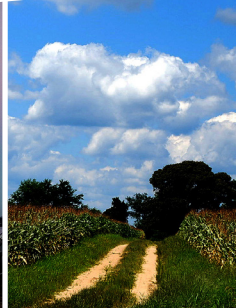
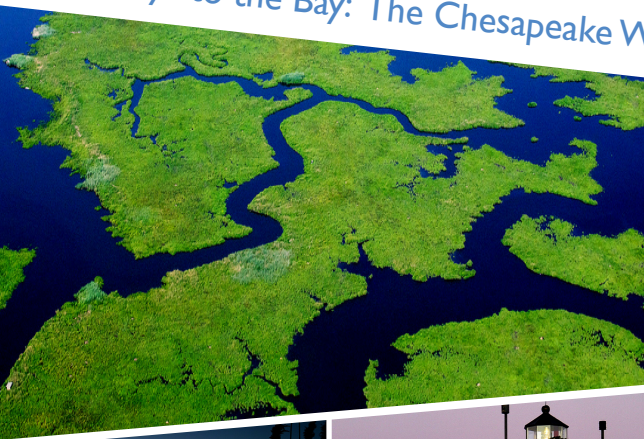


# Your Bay, Your Watershed

Pathways to the Bay: The Chesapeake Watershed



**A**ll of us who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are linked to the Bay by many pathways. Whether we live right on the water or miles from the Chesapeake, our actions have a profound effect on the Bay.

Everything that goes on in the Chesapeake watershed will eventually affect the Bay. Used oil dumped down a storm drain in Baltimore, pesticides from a Pennsylvania farm, sewage from an old septic tank in Virginia, or sediment from an Eastern Shore construction project, all end up in the Bay. So even those of us who live far from the Bay itself need to see how our actions affect it. We all can help the Chesapeake by cleaning up the pathways to the bay.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is the land area drained by the Bay. The Bay's watershed is made up of the thousands of smaller watersheds drained by the streams that crisscross our land and flow, by way of our rivers, into the Chesapeake.

The Bay watershed extends 64,000 square miles. Home to 17 million people, it includes the District of Columbia and parts of six states: New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia.



## In Our Cities and Towns

Cities and towns place a tremendous strain on the Chesapeake Bay. Oil and grit from our roadways, litter on our streets and runoff from construction projects all find their way from our cities and towns into the Chesapeake Bay. Storm drains are a pathway to the Bay. Pollutants from storm drains reach the Bay by way of local streams and rivers.

Wastewater treatment plants are a pathway to the Bay. They cleanse the water we have used before, releasing it back into our waterways. Treatment plants remove pollutants such as solids, oil, grease, and in some cases, nitrogen and phosphorus from the water they receive.

## In Business and Industry

As consumers, we've come to rely on power plants, industries and businesses for services and products that make our lives more comfortable. But providing each of these amenities exacts an environmental cost, and with it, responsibility for controlling the effects of our choices on the environment.

In Maryland alone, some 10,000 businesses pretreat their wastewater before releasing it to local wastewater plants. Another 600 industries are working to do their part by controlling the pollutants they discharge directly into our streams and rivers.



## On the Farm

With more than 2 million acres of farmland in Maryland, farmers play an important role in protecting the Bay. Farm runoff containing fertilizers, pesticides or animal waste can harm the Bay.

Farmers help the Bay by implementing soil conservation and water quality measures. Best management practices give farmers ways to control soil loss and runoff from their farms. These include contour farming, vegetated filter strips and animal waste practices. Effective use of these practices helps protect groundwater and surface waste from pollution.

## At Home

In Maryland alone there are over 1.5 million households, and millions more through the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Whether you live in a house or an apartment, the choices you make every day affect the Bay. Cleansers, fertilizers, and pet waste are a few of the pollutants from our homes that put the Bay at risk.

Careful water use, wise selection of household products and sensible handling of household wastes, including recycling are some of the ways individuals are helping to clean the pathways to the Bay.





# Facts about the Chesapeake Watershed

**Length:**

At 200 miles long, it is the largest estuary in North America, and the third largest in the world.

**Width -**

Narrowest point: 4 miles, near Aberdeen, MD

Widest point: 30 miles, at Cape Charles, VA

**Average Depth:**

21 feet

**Volume of Water:**

18 trillion gallons

**Watershed Area:**

64,000 square miles,

from Cooperstown, NY to Lynchburg, VA

**Watershed Jurisdictions:**

New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of Columbia, Delaware, Virginia and West Virginia

**Watershed Population:**

17 million people, and 150,000 new residents each year

**Ratio of Land to Water:**

14 parts land to one part water. The same ration for the Great Lakes watershed is 2 to 1. This means that the Chesapeake must process much more land-based pollution than other bodies of water.

**Wildlife:**

The Bay supports more then 2,700 species of plants and animals, including 348 species of finfish, 173 species of shell-fish and produces 500 million pounds of seafood per year.

**Bay Pathways:**

More then 100,000 streams, creeks and rivers thread through the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Over 150 streams, creeks, and rivers drain into the Chesapeake bay watershed. The Susquehannah river provides 50 percent of the freshwater flowing into the Bay.





## What You Can Do

A healthy Bay begins with you. Here are some actions you can take to help restore the Bay:

### Conserve Water

- Fix leaking faucets.
- Take short showers.
- Don't let water run while washing dishes or brushing teeth.

### Save Energy

- Turn off lights, TV and other electronics when leaving a room.
- Minimize trips to your refrigerator- especially in summer.
- Insulate your home and your hot water heater.

### Protect Your Watershed

- Avoid overuse of chemical fertilizers.
- Plant trees, bushes, grass and groundcover on your property to minimize runoff.
- Be a pooper-scooper. Protect your stream from the nutrient pollution caused by pet waste.

### Dispose properly of hazardous household items.

- Use greener cleaning products.
- Recycle oil and other automotive fluids.



# REduce use cycle ject

## **REDUCE waste.**

Avoid disposable items. Pass along used items such as magazines, housewares, furniture or clothing that may be useful to others.

## **REUSE what you can.**

Grocery bags, aluminum containers and plastic bottles can be reused. Yard waste and kitchen scraps (except for meat products) can be composted.

## **RECYCLE.**

Visit MDE's waste diversion webpages for information on recycling in your area.

## **REJECT.**

Don't buy overpackaged or non-recyclable goods.





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