Potomac River Non-Shellfish Waters
Monitoring Summary

In response to the Potomac Interceptor Sewer Overflow, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) developed a monitoring plan to evaluate bacteria concentrations (using *E. coli* and *Enterococcus*) in the non-shellfish waters of the Potomac River. *E. coli* and *Enterococcus* are bacteria that are found in the digestive systems of warm-blooded animals, including humans. They are used as indicators for the presence of bacteria and viruses that can be harmful to human health. *E. coli* and *Enterococcus* measurements are used to help determine the risk associated with swimming in the water.

Six sampling stations were selected within the non-shellfish waters of the Potomac River, extending from upstream of the Potomac Interceptor Overflow to the Potomac River mainstem near Indian Head, Maryland.

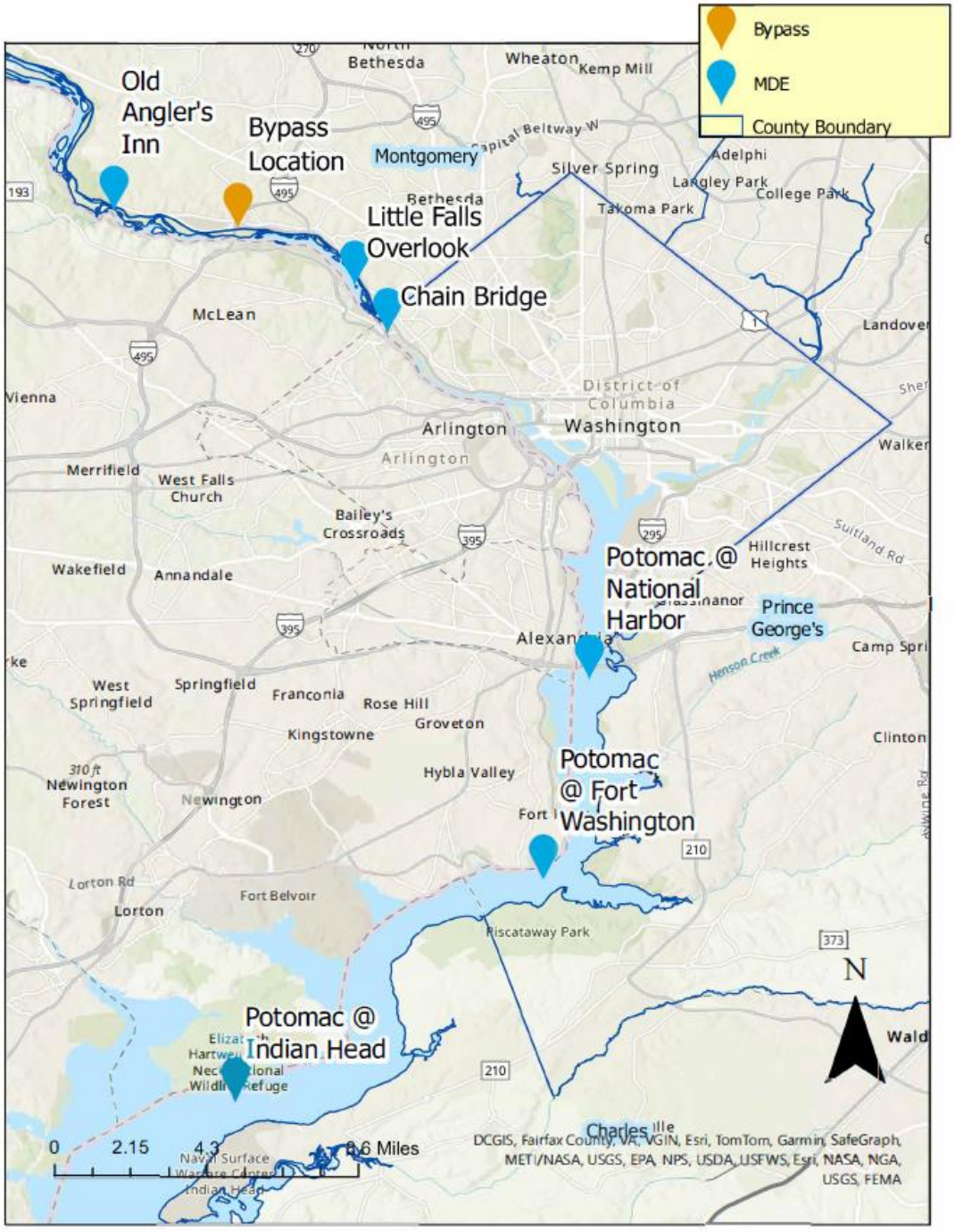
Three of the stations are located within the tidal freshwater zone of the Potomac River: Indian Head (POT-1), Fort Washington (POT-2), and National Harbor (POT-3). At these locations, MDE will collect samples for enterococcus and *E. coli* to maintain consistency with the indicator organisms used by MDE to assess recreational water quality, as well as with samples collected by DC Waters in the Potomac River following the sewer overflow event.

The first sampling event occurred on February 17, 2026. Sampling will continue on a weekly basis until a determination is made to discontinue monitoring.

Potomac Old Angler's Inn (POT-6)

Potomac Little Falls Overlook (POT-5)

Potomac Chain Bridge (POT-4)



Potomac Interceptor Bypass - Post Incident Monitoring Locations

MARYLAND

Updated: 02/18/26, HM

Maryland Department of the Environment

STATION ID	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	DESCRIPTION	PARAMETER
POT-1	38.61292	-77.18097	Center Channel Potomac River near Indian Head, MD	E Coli & Enterococcus
POT-2	38.70608	-77.05300	Center Channel Potomac River near Fort Washington, MD	E Coli & Enterococcus
POT-3	38.78621	-77.03240	Center Channel Potomac River near National Harbor	E Coli & Enterococcus
POT-4	38.92980	-77.11654	Chain Bridge crossing Potomac River	E Coli
POT-5	38.94946	-77.12765	Little Falls Area Potomac River	E Coli
POT-6	38.97975	-77.22880	Old Angler's Inn on the Potomac River	E Coli

Results Table

Station ID	Description	Depth (Meter)	Results 2/17/26 Enterococcus/ *E. coli*	Results 2/24/26 Enterococcus/ *E. coli*	Results 3/3/26 Enterococcus/ *E. coli*	Results 3/10/26 Enterococcus/ *E. coli*
POT-1	Center Channel Potomac River near Indian Head, MD	0.1	<10 MPN/100ml			
			1 MPN/100m			
POT-2	Center Channel Potomac River near Fort Washington, MD	0.1	20 MPN/100ml			
			17 MPN/100m			
POT-3	Center Channel Potomac River near National Harbor	0.1	10 MPN/100ml			
			65 MPN/100ml			
POT-4	Chain Bridge crossing Potomac River	0.1	613 MPN/100ml			
POT-5	Little Falls Area Potomac River	0.1	>2420 MPN/100ml			
POT-6	Old Angler's Inn on the Potomac River	0.1	71 MPN/100ml			

To assess water quality MDE uses EPA's 2012 water quality standards of 410 MPN/100 mL for *E. coli* (fresh water) and/or 130 MPN/100 mL for *Enterococci* (fresh water/marine water). MPN stands for “Most Probable Number;” which is an estimation of the number of colonies of bacteria in a 100 mL sample of water. These thresholds were developed for recreational contact with water, specifically swimming, which involves whole-body immersion and potential incidental ingestion of water. (https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/26.08.02.03-3.aspx)

What does this mean?

E. coli and *Enterococcus* bacteria levels below 410 MPN/100 mL for *E. coli* and/or 130 MPN/100 mL for *Enterococci* would mean these waters would meet water quality standards for recreational contact.