

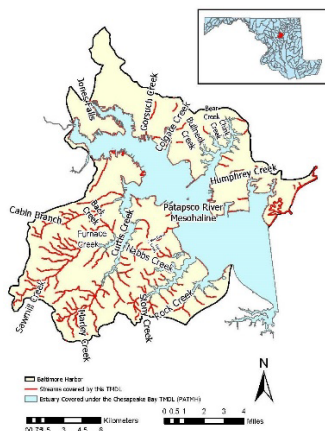


# TMDL for Sediment in the Non-Tidal Baltimore Harbor Watershed

## What You Need to Know

### Background

The [Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, for sediment in the Baltimore Harbor River watershed](#) establishes an annual load limit for total suspended solids (TSS) to the non-tidal streams within the watershed. A separate sediment TMDL, for the tidal Baltimore Harbor, was established as part the Chesapeake Bay TMDLs in 2010.



The [Baltimore Harbor watershed](#), is located on the western shore of Maryland in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County. The Baltimore Harbor Watershed is located immediately south east of Baltimore City and includes Old Road Bay and other small tributaries to the Patapsco River and Chesapeake Bay. Smaller tributaries feeding the Harbor are the Gwynns Falls (upper Middle Branch of the Harbor), Jones Falls (Northwest Branch of Baltimore Harbor), Bear Creek, Furnace Creek, Marley Creek, Rock Creek, Stony Creek, and Curtis Creek. The watershed is located predominately on the western shore of the Coastal Plain region



Impaired aquatic life and wildlife in the watershed was first identified in 2002 based on results from the Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS), a randomized survey of stream health. As part of the MBSS, streams are scored against reference watersheds where habitat and aquatic diversity is high, using two biological indices: the Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (BIBI) which looks at the biological community in the bottom sediments, and the Fish Index of Biotic Integrity (FIBI).

<b>Watershed ID</b>	<b>Maryland 8-Digit: 02130903</b>
<b>Watershed size</b>	55,176 acres not including water/wetlands
<b>Waterbody type</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> - through 4 <sup>th</sup> -order non-tidal streams
<b>Waterbody designated use not being met</b>	Aquatic life and wildlife
<b>Reason for impairment</b>	Stream biology impacted by excessive sediment
<b>TMDL Baseline year</b>	2009
<b>Overall sediment reduction percent</b>	53%
<b>Related Chesapeake Bay Segment</b>	Patapsco River Mesohaline (PATMH)

A biological stressor identification (BSID) analysis was conducted in 2014 to identify possible causes of the stream degradation. Using MBSS data, [the BSID](#) showed strongly associated with impervious/urban and anthropogenic impacts, inorganics (chlorides/sulfates), sediment and instream habitat stressors, channelization, and inadequate riparian buffer. as potential causes. Based on this assessment, the Baltimore Harbor watershed was listed as impaired for sediment, as along with other pollutants on [Maryland’s 2018 Integrated Report of Surface Water Quality](#).

## TMDL

The TMDL for sediment in the non-tidal Baltimore Harbor watershed, was established at a level to ensure acceptable biological integrity in the watershed’s streams.

The TMDL was developed with a reference watershed approach using loading results from the Phase 5.3.2 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model. Annual sediment loads

from reference watersheds—those with good biological integrity—were compared to predicted loads under a modeled all forest scenario to establish an acceptable ratio of current loadings to loadings in a natural condition. This ratio, known as the forest normalized load (FNL), was also calculated for the Baltimore Harbor watershed, and the TMDL was established based on the reduction needed to achieve the reference FNL.

## Allocations

Allocations to point sources such as wastewater treatment plants and regulated stormwater, are called Wasteload Allocations (WLAs), and allocations to nonpoint sources, like cropland, are called Load Allocations (LAs). Sector load reductions in this TMDL were assigned using the controllable load methodology from Maryland's Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) for the Chesapeake Bay. This methodology assigns reductions to controllable loads (e.g., agriculture & urban) and gives credit to existing implementation efforts, resulting in different percent reductions for different source categories.

The watershed has one wastewater discharger, which was assigned a total WLA of 1 ton of TSS per year—a load less than 1% of the TMDL. No reductions were applied to this source, as it would produce little discernible water quality benefit.

Regulated stormwater sources include four individually permitted Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4s), Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County and the State Highway Administration, State and Federal Phase II permits, and several entities covered under general permits. The WLAs are described in detail in the TMDL’s [technical memorandum on point sources](#). Regulated stormwater WLAs represent 95% of the total TMDL.

The LAs for this TMDL, as presented in the [technical memorandum on nonpoint sources](#), account for the remaining portion of the TMDL and are assigned to agricultural, and natural source categories.

The Baseline and TMDL equations for the Baltimore Harbor watershed, including source categories and allocations are provided in the equation below.

<i>Baseline Equation:</i>	<b>6,982</b>	=	<b>115</b>	+	<b>62</b>	+	<b>6,804</b>	+	<b>1</b>	<b>TSS tons / year</b>
	Baseline Load		Forest		Agriculture		Stormwater		Wastewater	
<i>TMDL Equation:</i>	<b>3,247</b>	=	<b>115</b>	+	<b>62</b>	+	<b>3,069</b>	+	<b>1</b>	<b>TSS tons / year</b>
	TMDL		Forest LA		Agriculture LA		Stormwater WLA		Wastewater WLA	
<i>Reduction from baseline</i>	53%		0%		0%		55%		0%	

*Note: The loadings in this TMDL are expressed as Edge-of-Stream, or EOS, loads, based on the Phase 5.3.2 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model*

## Next Steps

Most of the sediment reductions in this TMDL are assigned to urban stormwater sources. Implementation of these reductions will occur in parallel with efforts to fully implement the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDLs by 2025. While the endpoints of the TMDLs are different—tidal water quality actions will result in progress toward both goals.

Sediment reductions from agricultural sources are usually achieved by managing runoff and erosion with best management practices (BMPs) such as conservation tillage, and riparian buffers. Statewide programs and regulations that promote agricultural BMPs will reduce sediment loads in the Baltimore Harbor watershed. The Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, for example, makes funds available for planting cover crops.

For urban stormwater, sediment reductions are typically achieved by addressing water quality and quantity with stormwater BMP retrofits. Retrofits include the modification of existing stormwater ponds, the installation of new structural BMPs, tree planting and stream restoration. Individually permitted MS4 jurisdictions are required to develop plans for implementing the sediment reductions from this TMDL. The BMPs described in these plans may also be used for meeting permit impervious area restoration requirements.

While this TMDL establishes a sediment loading target for the watershed, and sediment load reductions are an important tool for tracking progress, the measure of its successful implementation will be its effect on in-stream biological health. The watershed cannot be classified as meeting water quality standards until it is demonstrated that aquatic life is no longer impaired by sediment.