

Advancing Watershed Restoration at the Local Level through the Chesapeake Bay TMDL

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With the Chesapeake Bay TMDL now in place (as of December 2010), Maryland is tasked with achieving ambitious goals on a strict timeline. Realizing that State initiatives alone will not achieve our implementation goals, Maryland has put in place programs and strategies that target valuable resources at the local level. Aimed at increasing capacity and accelerating large-scale restoration initiatives, the unique partnerships of the Watershed Assistance Collaborative have already given many communities a boost in tackling these goals.

The Watershed Assistance Collaborative (Collaborative) is a federal, state, and nonprofit partnership that includes Maryland's State Agencies, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, University of Maryland Extension, the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center, NOAA and the EPA. Since its inception in the spring of 2009, the Collaborative has fit very well into the overall goals and restoration strategies that Maryland Department of Natural Resources & the State are working toward for the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and the state level Watershed Implementation Plan. More specifically, the Collaborative offers the tools, support, and technical assistance to help local governments and communities plan, target and implement on-the-ground projects, as well as build the capacity to implement best management practices and environmental policies that relate to improved water quality.

In order to meet the challenge of Chesapeake Bay restoration, every local government, every business and every citizen will have a significant role to play. To date, the Collaborative has awarded over \$350,000 for planning and design projects, facilitated stakeholder outreach meetings, delivered detailed Financing Strategies for future implementation options for the partners, and has provided on-the-ground technical assistance to help local government entities and community groups coordinate project implementation, outreach, and leverage additional funding opportunities. Two examples of successful local watershed organizations that utilized the Collaborative and how they have expanded their restoration and outreach efforts will be discussed.

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