

CHESAPEAKE BAY TRUST, NOAA AND THEIR PARTNERS AWARD \$689,000 TO RESTORE SHORELINES ALONG THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(May 15, 2009) The Chesapeake Bay Trust, in conjunction with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Restoration Center (NOAA), the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, announced this morning the award of more than \$689,000 in grants to promote living shorelines projects in the Chesapeake Bay region. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin was on hand to present the eleven awards at a ceremony held at a restoration site in St. Michaels, MD.

"Living shorelines are an important new restoration approach designed to protect coastal areas against erosion at the same time that they restore ecologically significant wetland habitat," said Dr. Allen Hance, Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which leads the unique public-private funding collaborative. "The Chesapeake Bay Trust is proud to work together with NOAA, the Keith Campbell Foundation, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and our grantees to install living shorelines that create measurable improvements to the health of the Chesapeake Bay."

The area where land and water intersect is important to the health of the Chesapeake Bay. These shoreline areas trap sediment, filter pollution, and provide important habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, such as blue crabs and fishes in their critical early life-history stages. In an attempt to combat erosion, many shorelines have been hardened over time with artificial shoreline armor such as seawalls and bulkheads. In many cases, these artificial structures are not fully effective at protecting shorelines from erosion, and in fact can actually increase the rate of coastal degradation. In addition, these artificial structures decrease the ability of shorelines to provide natural habitat and to serve other ecological roles beneficial to the health of the Bay.

"It is critical that we take an active role in preserving and nurturing the entire Bay habitat," said Senator Benjamin L. Cardin. "Shoreline restoration is a key factor in any restoration effort, and it needs to be carried out with skill and appreciation for the entire eco-system. I am pleased that this grant program invests in future shoreline restoration projects that will benefit all of us."

Senator Cardin was joined by Congressman Frank Kratovil, Peter Byrnes, Chairman of the Board of the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Secretary Shari Wilson of the Maryland Department of the Environment, and Peyton Robertson of NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office, at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Living Shorelines Site in St. Michaels, MD to make the announcement.

“The Chesapeake Bay has lost 60 percent of its historic wetlands and more than 99 percent of its native oyster populations,” said Jim Balsiger, Acting Administrator for NOAA Fisheries. “NOAA and its partners have restored more than 28,000 feet of living shorelines, which help to reduce shoreline erosion and protect these valuable resources.”

The living shorelines concept represents a new way of approaching restoration by incorporating natural techniques to stabilize coastal shorelines, while also providing critical habitat for Bay wildlife. Some of these methods include the strategic placement of native vegetation, sand and other materials, including submerged oyster reefs. Wetlands and offshore reefs naturally reduce wave energy, preventing coastal erosion and protecting important areas near the shoreline.

"This is a fantastic example of a public-private partnership: State government joining forces with environmental advocates and non-profits to improve the habitat of our shorelines," said Secretary Shari Wilson, Maryland Department of the Environment. "In 2008, Governor O'Malley signed legislation requiring soft shorelines wherever feasible. Tuesday, Governor O'Malley courageously committed to more than double Maryland's effort to restore the Bay. Building soft shorelines, such as the projects announced today, transforms the law and commitments into on-the-ground progress."

Since this partnership began in 2005, more than \$2 million has been awarded to 45 projects throughout the region to install living shorelines. This successful collaboration has restored tidal wetlands and educated communities about the value of habitat and restoration. Altogether, these projects have resulted in the restoration of 28,200 linear feet of living shorelines.

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust:

The Chesapeake Bay Trust is a nonprofit, grant-making organization. Funding provided through the Chesapeake Bay Trust is sparking on-the-ground change in communities throughout Maryland and developing Bay stewards in classrooms across the state. The Trust is supported by the sale of the Maryland *Treasure the Chesapeake* license plate, donations to the *Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund* on the Maryland State income tax form, and donations from individuals and corporations. Fully 90 percent of the Trust's expenditures are directed to Chesapeake Bay restoration and education programs.

About NOAA:

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

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