

PRESS RELEASE

CHESAPEAKE BAY RESTORATION FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE SENATOR JEFFREY L. MCWATERS, *CHAIRMAN*

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Legislative Contacts

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For Immediate Release

\$264,461.79 in Grant Awards Approved by the 2015 General Assembly

The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee announces that the awarding of 52 grants totaling \$264,461.79 from 2014 sales of "Friend of the Chesapeake" special license plates has been approved by the Governor and the legislative money committees. The advisory committee received 102 grant proposals from schools, colleges, universities, civic nonprofit organizations, soil and water conservation districts, planning district commissions, state agencies, and local governments.

The advisory committee is authorized by statute to award grants to organizations that provide environmental education and restoration and conservation projects for the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

RESTORATION PROJECTS

Several awards were made for projects that emphasized restoration of the Bay through protection and conservation of riparian forest buffers and oyster reefs.

- **Friends of the Rappahannock** will use award funds to enable students, teachers, and volunteers to identify riparian buffers as a strategy to improve water quality and explain how they work to prevent sediment and nutrient contamination of the Rappahannock River and the Bay; design an action plan to restore a buffer; plant trees, live stakes, and other vegetation along 2,000 linear feet of riparian stream habitat; and conduct restoration site monitoring on past restoration projects. Additional grant funds will be used to construct 960 cubic feet of oyster reef along the southern shore of Urbanna Creek.
- **Earth Sangha, Inc.**, in Fairfax County will use award funds to improve and expand healthy riparian meadows and forests within the Bay watershed in six Fairfax County Parks. The restoration will include site assessment and project planning, materials preparation, volunteer recruitment, invasive alien plant removal, planting and sowing, education, and site maintenance.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The emphasis is on not only classroom education but application of the principles learned in the classroom to the environment. Examples include:

- **Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay**, a Maryland/Virginia-based, nonprofit organization, will partner with the City of Richmond Public Schools to continue the implementation of the "Chesapeake RiverWise Communities" program with RiverWise Education. The program highlights the benefits of providing hands-on watershed and water quality education through the installation of stormwater management practices such as rain gardens, rainwater harvesting with cisterns, and native plant gardens or conservation landscapes (BayScapes).
- **Friends of the North Fork Shenandoah River** will provide three weeklong student summer enrichment environmental education workshops: 2015 North Fork Explorers Summer Camp (6th-9th graders), 2015 Shenandoah River Rangers Summer Camp (4th-6th graders), and 2015 Shenandoah River Players Summer Camp (1st-3rd graders).

The advisory committee was particularly encouraged by the number and quality of school proposals. Of the 14 schools that submitted proposals, 10 were awarded grants. Several school projects combine the concepts of environmental curricula with practical field demonstrations.

- **Locust Grove Middle School** in Orange County exemplifies this approach. The school will offer 50 students intense outside/outdoors learning experiences and opportunities with a focus on co-curricular field trips revolving around science, social studies, and local history.
- **Aylett Country Day School** students will continue to provide field trips to Tangier Island, the Mariner's Museum, and the Bay Foundation Virginia Canoe Program to educate students about a waterman's way of life, the oyster and crab industry, and state regulations that affect the Bay.
- **Newport News Public Schools** will provide field experiences to Huntington Park for all 7th graders through the staff of Chesapeake Experience, transportation, and a full-day teacher training.

General Assembly members of the Advisory Committee are Senator Jeffrey L. McWaters of Virginia Beach, Delegate M. Keith Hodges of Urbanna, and Delegate Margaret B. Ransone of Kinsale. Citizen members include Terra Pascarosia Duff of Virginia Beach, John W. Peterson of Burke, Claiborne B. Roberts of Sandston, and Daniel G. Van Clief III of Charlottesville.

A complete list of the funded projects is available on the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee website at <http://dls.virginia.gov/commissions/cbr.htm>.