

Introduction

Worcester County, in cooperation with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), is developing a watershed plan for the Assawoman Bay. With the completion of the Assawoman Bay WRAS, subwatershed plans will have been completed for all subwatersheds in the Maryland Coastal Bays watershed. *The WRAS is concise, clear, comprehensive watershed plan that reflects specific goals, objectives, and commitments to preserve and restore habitat and water quality.* The key goal of the WRAS is to protect and restore water quality and wildlife habitat.

Services MDE and DNR brings to the project include the following:

- a. Watershed Characterization Report: a summary of all readily available natural resources data for a given watershed.
- b. Synoptic Survey Report: a water chemistry analysis (nutrients, temperature, conductivity, pH) and biological survey (macro invertebrates, fishes, habitat).
- c. Stream Corridor Assessment Report: the results from ~100 mile stream walk using DNR's Stream Corridor Assessment Methodology.
- d. Coordinator assistance: a part time coordinator is available to assist the local partners during the WRAS process.
- e. Approximately \$40,000 (reimbursable) in direct financial assistance: available to support development of WRAS document

including but not limited to: county staff salaries, restoration, postage, or transportation.

The assistance MDE and DNR provides supplement local knowledge, local government information, and stakeholder concerns. After assessing the data, incorporating stakeholder concerns, and establishing priorities for preservation and restoration, the natural resource management objectives and decisions are written by local government into the WRAS document. The final WRAS document will consist of the following components.

- a. An overarching goal aimed at protecting, preserving, and restoring habitat and water quality. At a minimum, habitat goals need to address streams, wetlands, and forest buffers.
- b. A comprehensive assessment of natural resources, i.e. a "characterization" of your watershed.
- c. A description of the stakeholder process.
- d. Identified priorities, opportunities, concerns, challenges:
 - Sensitive areas
 - Important areas for preservation or protection;
 - Stakeholder concerns and visions for the watershed; and
 - Challenges and management opportunities; including areas of concern, potential mitigation,

restoration, and protection opportunities, etc.

- e. A description of how the data and information provided by DNR, or other sources, was assessed and used in making your natural resource management decisions.
- f. Natural resource management objectives, prioritized in order of importance, based on data, opportunities and challenges, and described in detail. Each objective includes the following:
 - A description of how it would be quantified.
 - A description of how the objective would be monitored to determine the objective was being met once implementation activities began.
 - A description of the technical and financial assistance needed.
 - An identification of the responsible party assigned to meet the objective.
 - A local program change, i.e. zoning or comprehensive plan changes that complements or supports the management objective.
 - How the objective would address pollution impairment identification by a TMDL, and an estimate for the load reduction expected.
 - How the objective would involve meaningful public participation in the implementation phase,

leading to a sustainable local capacity for watershed protection and restoration.

- A schedule for implementation.

Meetings:

July 18, 2007 minutes

August 15, 2007 minutes