

Assawoman Bay

Watershed Restoration Action Strategy

Final Report
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Statement of Purpose and Commitment

The Assawoman Bay Watershed Restoration Action Strategy, or WRAS, sponsored by the Worcester County Commissioners and supported by active stakeholder interests, sets forth a blueprint for the sustainable environmental health of the Assawoman Bay and its tributaries. The WRAS is based upon a comprehensive and scientific assessment of the Assawoman Bay Watershed. The Assawoman Bay has been designated as impaired under Maryland's Clean Water Action Plan since 1996, and given the highest priority for restoration. The WRAS science draws upon the historic data contributing to the that designation, while updating and expanding that knowledge with a host of new data which describes and documents water quality, shoreline characteristics, development and farming impact, and a variety of impairments. These data show that considerable restoration is sorely needed. Moreover, they point to where, what, and how much.

By comprehensively assessing the Bay's present state and by reaching deeply into its future, this plan and its background studies chart a clear course towards watershed improvements. That course is made up of specific action strategies that include:

- Planting cover crops and tree buffers
- Restoring wetlands
- Implementing nutrient management plans
- Installing water control structures
- Increasing the size and storage time of manure sheds
- Building filtering and infiltration practices
- Teaching our citizens about the dangers of excessive fertilization
- Maintaining septic tanks and upgrading to denitrification technologies
- Lowering automobile and area emissions
- Planting trees around poultry houses and in urban areas

The WRAS also recommends bold initiatives that will be undertaken by local government to develop and adopt policy and programmatic changes that will:

- Create zoning districts that will help reduce existing nutrient loads and improve water quality and wildlife habitat;
- Prioritize green infrastructure areas in need of protection due to its valuable contributions to wildlife habitat and water quality; and
- Promote conservation subdivision principles that will teach our citizens environmentally sensitive and efficient land uses.

With diligent application of the principles of this Action Strategy and implementation of its recommendations, the Assawoman Bay one day will be de-listed as an impaired waterway. Accordingly, the principal stakeholder entities proclaim the following ethic and commitment:

WHEREAS the Assawoman Bay is one of the most visited bays along the northeastern United States, with tranquil waters bearing recreational and commercial value, and a developed area at its headwaters deriving great economic benefit from her tides; and,

WHEREAS the Assawoman Bay watershed is stressed by the chemistry of urbanization from land, by tides, and from the air; and

WHEREAS the future of the Assawoman Bay and its tributaries, including the management of rural growth and development, enhancement of its wildlife habitat and aquatic resources, definition of its urban growth boundaries, preservation and conservation of its commercially vital farmlands, and protection of the quality of life along its shores and tributaries is of foremost concern to the undersigned stakeholders;

THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the undersigned stakeholders agree to work in concert to implement the recommendations of the *Assawoman Bay Watershed Restoration Action Strategy*, to take bold strides to change the direction of environmental planning and practice, thinking forward to a balanced watershed and working towards achieving it safely, and to engage every watershed citizen as a steward of the Strategy and the Watershed to achieve the goals set forth therein.

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