



# The Army's Chesapeake Environmental Update

## Chesapeake Bay Meeting Highlights

**Federal Agencies Committee (FAC)** meeting was held on October 31, 1996 at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, MD. The highlights from this meeting included:

- ◆ Leslie Weldon, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), has been brought on staff at the U.S. Army Environmental Center (USAEC) to provide access to natural resource expertise in the USFS, furnish Installation Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP) support, and build cooperation between Army installations and the USFS. For more information, call her at (410) 612-7078.
- ◆ Aileen Smith, DoD Chesapeake Bay Coordinator, announced that the new FAC workgroup, entitled the Federal Land Stewardship Workgroup, will hold a kick-off meeting on November 25, 1996 to establish the members and mission of the workgroup.
- ◆ Jerry Griswold, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), gave a presentation on NRCS's Emergency Watershed Protection Program, which helps restore damaged areas, particularly those that have been hit by a natural disaster. A recommendation was made that NRCS share expertise with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to ensure both agencies develop the most ecologically sound restoration designs.
- ◆ Al Todd, USFS, gave a presentation on the latest Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative that was signed by the Executive Council on October 10, 1996. See the related article in this newsletter for the latest information.
- ◆ The FAC provided recommendations to the USACE panel members on the Anacostia Federal Workplan. USACE plans to have a final document by December 18, 1996.

**Implementation Committee (IC)** meeting was held on November 7, 1996 at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office in Annapolis, MD. Highlights from this meeting included:

- ◆ The Nutrient Subcommittee plans to finalize the Septic System Report by January 1997. This report will provide information on nutrient inputs to the Bay from septic systems.
- ◆ Representatives from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) discussed their research on non-native species of oysters. They are currently testing sterile Japanese oysters to see if they could be successfully introduced into the Chesapeake Bay. They will work closely with the Living Resources Subcommittee to ensure that the process and decisions are safe and beneficial to the Bay ecosystem and are in compliance with *The Chesapeake Bay Policy for the Introduction of Non-indigenous Aquatic Species*.
- ◆ The National Biological Service (NBS) has merged with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to form the Biological Resources Division. USGS will be developing a new Chesapeake Bay Strategic Plan for their organization that will incorporate the mission and goals of the new division.
- ◆ The U.S. Postal Service has officially joined the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- ◆ Mike Haire, Toxics Subcommittee, presented the proposed revised Toxics of Concern (TOC) List to the IC for review, discussion, and approval. The revised list proposes delisting atrazine - an agricultural pesticide. Discussion ensued over whether delisting was appropriate. The group decided to defer delisting until a formal EPA listing and delisting process could be established and an understanding was reached about how the states are addressing their TOC commitments. The IC also recommended that the TOC definition be reevaluated since the current definition only includes those chemicals that have a negative impact on the Bay as a whole and does not take into account those chemicals that are negatively affecting the Bay in specific areas.

### State of the Bay: The Shad

Richard St. Pierre, the Susquehanna River Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS), gave a presentation on the status of shad in the Bay at the November 7 IC meeting. Shad is an anadromous fish that was once the most commercially valuable species in the Bay. Overharvesting, stream blockages, and habitat degradation reduced the shad's population to near extinction in the Bay by the mid-1970s. In 1980, Maryland imposed a moratorium on the fishery that Virginia followed suit on in 1994.

According to St. Pierre, shad numbers have increased overall in the Bay over the last 15 years. They have particularly increased in the upper Bay and Susquehanna River where numbers have grown from fewer than 10,000 fish in 1981 to over 300,000 fish in 1995. St. Pierre attributed the increase to hatchery introductions that were started in 1986 and a second Conowingo Dam fish lift that was established in 1991.

Shad populations are expected to continue to increase in the Bay. With the completion of fish passages at Boshers Dam (1997) and York Haven Dam (2000), over 650 miles of historic spawning habitat in the James and Susquehanna Rivers will be restored.

Elsewhere on the Atlantic Coast, shad populations appear to be declining. St. Pierre related this decline largely to ocean fisheries where shad catch is indiscriminant, unregulated, and not reported or under-reported.

St. Pierre made several recommendations for the shad, including continuing to implement the Bay Program restoration efforts, maintaining the moratorium until population levels reach 2 million, and eliminating directed ocean fisheries.



## Fort Meade Hosts DoD Habitat Restoration Workshop

On October 16, 1996, Fort Meade hosted a DoD Habitat Restoration Workshop. This workshop was the culmination of a series of four workshops that addressed habitat restoration issues in the Chesapeake Bay. The workshops were the result of requests made by the attendees of the March 1995 DoD conference entitled, "Restoring the Chesapeake: Accepting the Challenge."

The first three workshops were sponsored by DoD and occurred at Langley Air Force Base, Va., the Anacostia Naval Station, Washington D.C., and Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. These workshops addressed overall habitat restoration issues, program management ideas, and opportunities.

In response to requests for more specialized training, the Army sponsored the October workshop. This workshop focused on one of the Chesapeake Bay Program's latest restoration initiatives - riparian forest buffer zones.

Mr. Bill Harmeyer, environmental coordinator at the Maryland installation, hosted the workshop. Over 51 participants attended the workshop, including representatives from Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Defense Logistics Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and major Army command facilities in the Chesapeake watershed.

Mr. Al Todd, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) liaison at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office, gave a presentation on the functions and values of forest buffers, the three zone concept

for forest buffers, and the status of the Chesapeake Bay Program's forest buffer initiative.

Mr. Harmeyer discussed Fort Meade's efforts to restore forest buffers on the post. Ms. Marian Honeczy, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), talked about the Maryland State Forest Conservation Program and DNR's efforts to assist Fort Meade's reforestation program.

Ms. Lauren Wenzel, DNR, talked about the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategies, which divide the participating signatory Bay Program states into subwatersheds. Each subwatershed has a specific nutrient reduction plan. Ms. Wenzel focused on Maryland's program, Fort Meade's efforts in the Patuxent Tributary Strategy, and partnership opportunities.

Mr. Bill Woodson, U.S. Army Environmental Center (USAEC), discussed how forest buffers assist the Army's primary mission of readiness and identified possible sources of assistance to establish more forest buffers on military installations.

After lunch, Mr. Janmichael Graine, USAEC, mediated a panel discussion on barriers and solutions to environmental management and how installations can be leaders in the riparian forest buffer initiative. The workshop concluded with a tour of Fort Meade's fish ladder and reforestation areas. For the minutes of this meeting, contact Susan Phelps, Horne Engineering Services, Inc., at (703) 641-1100.

## The 1996 Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative

In October 1994, the Chesapeake Executive Council (EC) adopted Directive 94-1 that called upon the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) to develop a set of goals and actions to increase the focus on riparian stewardship and enhance efforts to conserve and restore riparian forest buffers. A 31 member Riparian Forest Buffer Panel was formed, representing a wide range of viewpoints and experience.

Over the next 2 years, the panel developed definitions and recommendations which they compiled into a report, entitled *Final Report of the Riparian Forest Buffer Panel*. This report defined a riparian forest buffer as, "an area of trees, usually accompanied by shrubs and other vegetation, that is adjacent to a body of water which is managed to maintain the integrity of stream channels and shorelines, to reduce the impact of upland sources of pollution by trapping, filtering, and converting sediments, nutrients, and other chemicals, and to supply food, cover, and thermal protection to fish and other wildlife." The panel determined that the appropriate width of a forested buffer will vary depending on site conditions, topography, adjacent land use, and the benefits one is trying to gain by creating a buffer. Technical guidance on buffer width can be found in the Technical Support document as well as various other sources.

On October 10, 1996, the EC accepted the recommendations and definitions of the panel by signing the *Adoption Statement on Riparian Forest Buffers*. With the signing of this agreement, the EC also agreed to:

- Assure, to the extent feasible, that all streams and shorelines will be protected by a forested or other riparian buffer.
- Conserve existing forests along all streams and shorelines.
- Create 2,010 miles of riparian forest buffers by the year 2010.
- Adopt the policy recommendations of the panel.
- Direct each state and the federal government to establish a riparian buffer implementation plan with conservation and restoration benchmarks addressing the policy recommendations of the panel by June 30, 1998. (Contact Al Todd, CBP, at 1-800-YOURBAY for more information.)

### Upcoming Events

An In-Progress Review (IPR) meeting is being scheduled for March 1997 at the Pentagon. Stay tuned for more details.

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