

CBP News

CBP Awards Grants To Five Local Projects

by Dave Wilson

The Coastal Bays Program prides itself on using sound science to guide its work related to wildlife and water quality. The \$100,000 the program awarded this week for five projects in the watershed will help continue to direct time and energy to the right places.

The grants, part of the Coastal Bays 2006 implementation grant program, included \$138,615 in match from applicants. By offering the grants, the program helps lure additional money to the watershed.

Awards included \$25,000 for monitoring of terrestrial habitats and species; \$24,940 to use isotopes to determine sources of nutrients in St. Martins River and Johnson Bay; \$22,060 for work to determine the extent and effects of shoreline hardening with riprap and bulkheads in the coastal bays; \$18,000 for a soft-shoreline demonstration project, and \$10,000 for parking lot removal and natural bioretention with plants and landscaping at Public Landing.

Terrestrial monitoring plan

To help get better data on the status of wildlife and the quality of their habitat in the coastal bays watershed, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources will create a terrestrial monitoring plan that addresses development, forests, wetlands, and their associated plant and animal communities. The plan will also include key ecological indicators, a regional monitoring strategy, a data repository, and public education on wildlife issues.

Land use and nitrogen inputs in St. Martins River and Johnson Bay

The past five years of water quality analysis show a gradual increase in nutrients in almost all of the coastal bays. To help determine the root causes, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) was awarded money to use oysters to identify certain isotopic signatures derived from the bivalves' tissue. The data can determine the source of the excess nutrients. The study will focus on St. Martins River and Johnson Bay by assessing land use within these two subwatersheds and relating this to the type of nitrogen entering each waterbody.

Extent and effects of shoreline hardening

For this important grant, UMCES will use aerial photography and field data to map shoreline hardening in the coastal bays and evaluate the impact on habitat at the land-water interface. The university will recommend "softer" alternatives to bulkheads and riprap such as biologs and native plants, including how and where to use them.

Soft shoreline demonstration project

To stop the erosion of some 600 feet of Cape Isle of Wight shoreline, Assateague Coastal Trust will employ hollow triangles called Beach Prisms to limit wave action and promote a more natural, less intrusive recovery of the shoreline. The demonstration project could save some 10,000 square feet of marshland by reversing the rapid shoreline loss at the site from boat traffic and storms. The prisms act much like a dune fence to promote sand accretion behind them.



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