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\$9.8 Million will Reduce Pollution, Improve Water Quality in Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Ashland, VA – The Chesapeake Bay Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) have announced the recipients of \$9.8 million in grants for restoration, conservation and environmental outreach initiatives across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The 45 projects will leverage more than \$19.6 million in matching funds to lower pollution and improve the health of rivers, streams and the Bay.

The funding for these projects was awarded through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, which is financed by the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program and the Small Watershed Grants Program. Officials and guests announced the awards at the Town Hall in Ashland, Virginia, where a 2014 grant will support improved stormwater management at the headquarters of the Ashland Police Department.

“Through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, NFWF and our partners, especially the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, continue to invest in efforts across the Chesapeake Bay watershed to accelerate the achievement of ambitious state and local water quality improvement goals and strengthen local communities in the region,” said David O’Neill, Vice President for Conservation Programs at NFWF. “In addition to the Fund’s principal partner, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this innovative public-private partnership is also supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and private companies including Altria, CSX, Alcoa and FedEx. The Fund provides state and local governments, watershed organizations and others a critical funding source for innovative and community-based approaches to Chesapeake Bay conservation.”

The Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) Grants Program awarded \$5.8 million to 18 projects that will reduce the flow of pollution into rivers and streams. Whether it is through green infrastructure in urban areas or conservation practices that benefit soil, wildlife and water on farmland, this cutting-edge work will lower nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment loads and help communities meet water quality goals.

“EPA is committed to supporting local governments and other organizations in their efforts to use innovative and sustainable approaches for managing storm water and improving the health of their local waters,” said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. “The nearly \$10 million going to these 45 projects is an investment that will return lasting benefits to communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, helping them become healthier, stronger and more resilient, especially to the impacts of a changing climate.”

The Small Watershed Grants (SWG) Program awarded \$3.9 million to 27 projects that will use on-the-ground restoration, habitat conservation and community engagement to improve local watersheds. A number of grant recipients, which include nonprofit organizations and local governments, plan to remove invasive plants;

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restore stream banks, wetlands, oyster reefs and open spaces; and put rain gardens, shoreline buffers and other stormwater management methods in place.

“The Chesapeake Bay is and will always be an intangible cultural symbol for Maryland and the region as a whole,” said Sen. Ben Cardin, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife. “I want to stress the importance of broad involvement of all stakeholders in the effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay. Pollution does not stop at a state borderline. The populations living and working in the Bay watershed are all in this together. No one source or single sector bears all the blame for degraded water quality in the Bay. But if we all work together and do our part, we will see progress and leave our children a Chesapeake Bay that is healthier than it is today.”

“Not only is the Chesapeake Bay a national treasure, but it is also a major economic driver for the Commonwealth,” Sen. Mark Warner said. “I applaud the efforts of these innovative public-private partnerships to move towards widespread adoption of best practices for urban stormwater and nutrient management. I congratulate all of today’s grantees for their work to protect our tremendously important national resources.”

Examples of this year’s Chesapeake Stewardship Fund grant recipients in Virginia include:

- The Virginia Department of Transportation (\$200,000) will incorporate stream and riparian restoration projects more effectively into their capital improvement processes, demonstrating a project along I-95 and developing information on potential broader application
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (\$210,652) will accelerate the use of new technologies and techniques to use manure more effectively and efficiently on-farm, while minimizing water quality impacts and improving the economic viability of Virginia farms.
- The Piedmont Environmental Council, Inc. (\$200,000) will work with homeowners associations in the region to implement green infrastructure and urban nutrient management demonstrations that will serve as a model to community members across Loudon County.

Since 2006, the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program has provided \$45 million to 109 projects that reduce nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment in the Bay watershed. Since 1999, the Small Watershed Grants Program has provided \$38.1 million to support 731 projects, further leveraging \$127 million in local matching funds for a total conservation investment of more than \$165 million.

For more information about the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, visit www.nfwf.org/chesapeake. To see the full list of this year’s awardees, visit our Backgrounder at www.chesapeakebay.net/presscenter.

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The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that has coordinated and conducted the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. Partners include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and advisory groups of citizens, scientists and government officials. To learn more, visit www.chesapeakebay.net.