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For Immediate Release...

**State awards \$2 million to Newport Bay Partnership
Funding supports watershed restoration and flood mitigation**

Newport Bay Partnership (NBP) is being awarded \$2 million from Maryland's Whole Watershed Fund for restoration activities to improve the health of the Newport Bay watershed.

NBP is one of five projects throughout the state being funded for five years by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to take a holistic approach to improving water quality, enhancing habitat, and engaging communities throughout the state.

"Our priority is to ensure restoration efforts reflect the needs of the local community," said Project Coordinator Jessica McIntosh. "We are committed to creating meaningful opportunities for community members to participate in this work."

Year two projects include:

- Croppers Marsh: Restoration of 114 acres of unhealthy salt marsh habitat in Newport Bay, including recreating natural channels, planting marsh grass, creating shallow water habitat, and stabilizing the shoreline. These efforts will reduce erosion, improve water quality, and provide carbon storage. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Maryland Coastal Bays Program will implement this project.
- Bottle Branch restoration: Assateague Coastal Trust is working directly with homeowners along the Bottle Branch stream in Berlin, MD, to address flooding, erosion, and shallow water habitat for wildlife. The project also offers unique outdoor educational opportunities for students at the adjacent Buckingham Elementary School. Maryland Coastal Bays Program is working with Maryland's Program Open Space to identify and purchase land in the Bottle Branch watershed that would prevent the land from being developed and could be used for stormwater storage and treatment.
- Monitoring projects: The state has provided an additional \$250,000 for monitoring projects in the 2027 fiscal year.

"Science will be at the forefront of our efforts," McIntosh explained. "To that end, we have secured funding to monitor changes to the watershed as projects are completed." The data will be included in Maryland's Water Quality Annual Report Card. "We will also be working with the

University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science to establish new monitoring of social and economic factors.”

The Newport Bay Partnership includes Maryland Coastal Bays Program, Assateague Coastal Trust, Lower Shore Land Trust, the Town of Berlin and Worcester County Government. To learn more about our projects, visit our website.

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