

Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island

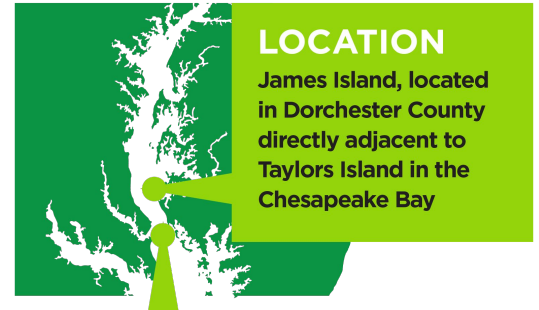
Ecosystem Restoration Project



The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) innovative approach to environmental restoration using dredged material is the foundation for the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Project (Mid-Bay Project). Sediment dredged from navigation channels will create wildlife habitat and restore the ecosystem of the severely eroding James and Barren Islands, both located in Dorchester County. The entire project will provide more than 30 years of capacity for material dredged from Maryland Chesapeake Bay approach channels.

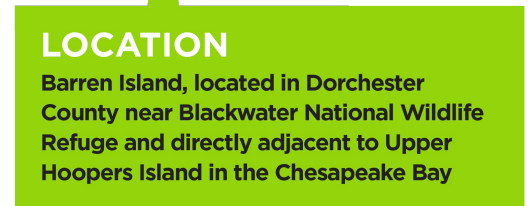
MID-BAY UNDERWAY

In 2009, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) finalized the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report & Environmental Impact Statement that examined the feasibility of protecting and restoring aquatic, intertidal wetland and upland habitat for fish and wildlife utilizing dredged material. After careful review and consideration of technical, economic, and environmental factors, as well as stakeholder input, it was determined that the restoration of James and Barren Islands was the preferred alternative. Funding from the USACE work plan supports planning, design and construction. In 2022, a Project Partnership Agreement between the USACE and MPA was executed, and the Tidal Wetlands License and Water Quality Certification were issued for Barren Island. The first phase of construction at Barren Island is underway and design is underway for James Island, with construction anticipated to begin in 2025. Inflow at James Island is anticipated to begin before Poplar Island reaches maximum capacity (approximately 2030).



LOCATION

James Island, located in Dorchester County directly adjacent to Taylors Island in the Chesapeake Bay



LOCATION

Barren Island, located in Dorchester County near Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and directly adjacent to Upper Hoopers Island in the Chesapeake Bay

2,144 ACRES



Total anticipated restoration footprint
Total anticipated capacity: 90-95 million cubic yards (mcy)



Construction at Barren Island and design for James Island is underway

James Island will accommodate nearly 2 mcy of sediment to be dredged annually while maximizing its use as a beneficial resource to restore remote island habitat



Barren Island restoration will protect seagrass beds and promote new growth, which provides habitat to attract fish, crabs, and oysters

Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island



James Island

MAINTAINING SHIPPING CHANNELS HELPS RESTORE HABITAT

The restoration of James Island, located in Dorchester County directly adjacent to Taylors Island in the Chesapeake Bay, will utilize dredged material from the Chesapeake Bay approach channels serving the Port of Baltimore to restore 2,072 acres of lost remote island habitat. Approximately 45% of the dredged material placement site will provide upland habitat and 55% wetland habitat. Restoration of Barren Island, located in Dorchester County near Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and directly adjacent to Upper Hoopers Island, will utilize dredged material from the local shallow draft channels to restore a minimum of 72 acres of remote island habitat. The restoration will also include the installation of large protective stone sills, a segmented breakwater, and two bird habitat islands. The newly formed wetlands and structures will slow not only the erosion of Barren Island itself but also the adjacent land.



Barren Island

ACCESS

Construction is underway and there is no public access at this time.



Given the success of the Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project at Poplar Island, the restored islands are expected to provide valuable habitat to a diverse array of wildlife while maintaining the economic viability of the Port of Baltimore. This will greatly aid in achieving the Chesapeake Bay Program's Vital Habitats Goal.



Barren Island

"Everything with the Mid-Bay Project seems to be going very well. The team let us know what they planned to do and are following through as planned."

– Bobby Whaples, Dorchester Seafood Harvesters Association