

FINAL DRAFT
SUMMARY OF THE DREDGED MATERIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

August 21, 2023, 2:00 PM

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Headquarters
Harry Hughes Conference Room
7201 Corporate Center Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076

Members Attending:

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF): Allison Colden

DMMP Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) Liaison: Adam Lindquist

Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Secretary Josh Kurtz

Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE): Secretary Serena McIlwain

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT): Secretary Paul Wiedefeld

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), North Atlantic Division, Baltimore District (CENAB):

Lieutenant Colonel David Myers

USACE, North Atlantic Division, Philadelphia District (CENAP): Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Beeman

University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES): Dr. William C. Dennison

Others Attending:

Angie Ashley Consulting: Angie Ashley

Council Fire: George Chmael II

DNR: Richard Ort

MDE: Suzanne Dorsey, Matt Rowe

MDOT: Sandy Hertz

MPA: Robert Munroe, Rachael Gilde, Jennifer Guthrie, Margie Hamby, Holly Miller, Darren Swift

Maryland Environmental Service (MES): Dr. Charles Glass

USACE CENAB: Justin Callahan, Trevor Cyran, Eric Lindheimer, William Sieb, Doug Stamper

USACE CENAP: Michael Hart

UMCES: Dave Nemazie, Dr. Lisa Wainger

1.0 Convene: Introductory Comments

Secretary Paul Wiedefeld, MDOT

The August 21, 2023, Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) Executive Committee meeting was convened, and attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations. Secretary Wiedefeld put forth a motion to approve the November 29, 2022, DMMP Executive Committee meeting summary as written. The Executive Committee unanimously approved the November 2022 meeting summary.

2.0 Port Highlights

Robert Munroe, MPA

Mr. Munroe stated that the 2023 theme of the DMMP, "Building the Future Together," is essential to remember given that it is only together in collaboration with all partners of the DMMP that the Port of Baltimore (POB) can continue to be distinguished as a leading national port and a vital link in the country's supply chain. The mission of the DMMP is varied and significantly important. Through the DMMP Executive Committee, needed infrastructure is built, new technologies for dredged material are innovated, new jobs are provided, educational and outreach opportunities for youth and disadvantaged communities are established, and natural resources are restored and more sustainably managed.

Mr. Munroe stated that the committee will be provided highlights of the Port's growth, including an overview of the state of the POB as it relates to cargo, MPA's important partnership with Ports America

Chesapeake, the status of the Howard Street Tunnel, and cruise operations. The committee will also receive an update on progress in support of the 2023 DMMP recommendations that guide DMMP efforts, which are grouped into three categories: Funding & Policy, Planning & Operations, and Outreach & Education.

Mr. Munroe stated that movement of cargo at the POB has been successful and busy over the past twelve months. The COVID-19 pandemic had a vast and significant impact on the international maritime shipping industry. Since the shutdowns and obstacles that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, the POB has rebounded. Despite lingering worldwide supply chain issues, last year the POB set a record in handling \$74.3 million worth of cargo. Records were also set in general cargo tons, imported roll-on roll-off construction machinery, and imported containers. For the twelfth consecutive year, the POB led the nation in handling more than 750,000 cars and light trucks. The data gathered through May 2023 indicate that the records set last year are likely to be exceeded this year leading to yet another record-breaking year for the POB. As of May 2023, imported roll-on roll-off construction machinery are up 30%, general cargo tons are up 8%, and imported containers are up 10%.

Like the inspiring teamwork of those involved in the DMMP, MPA also benefits from its valuable partnership with Ports America Chesapeake at the Seagirt Marine Terminal. Over the last year, Ports America Chesapeake has invested more than \$166 million into terminal improvements that have contributed to making Seagirt Marine Terminal one of the most efficient terminals in the country. Improvements allow two ultra-large container vessels (ULCV) to be serviced simultaneously at Seagirt Marine Terminal, electrified yard cranes created additional container storage, and increased gate capacity and truck velocity through the gates. Over the weekend of August 19, 2023, MPA berthed the Evergreen Ever Max, which is the largest vessel to ever call on the POB. The vessel has the capacity to handle 15,432 twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) containers and is over 1,200 feet in length, which is over four football fields long. While the strong growth in containers is encouraging, MPA aims to build the future at Seagirt Marine Terminal in a more sustainable way including implementing efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To progress toward a more sustainable future, MPA has partnered with Ports America Chesapeake and applied for an electrification resiliency related grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP). The electrification resiliency project will further electrify and decarbonize container yard operations. It will aid in reducing truck miles driven and idling within the terminal along with also providing a living shoreline at the empty 20-acre container depot across the street from the terminal. The living shoreline will be developed by removing deteriorated sea wall and timber bulk heads currently located along Colgate Creek and replacing it with a living shoreline made with natural materials that promote vegetation growth and habitats for marine life.

Mr. Munroe stated that great progress has been made on the Howard Street Tunnel. The project includes renovating the 127-year-old Howard Street Tunnel with clearance improvements to accommodate double stacked container rail cars traveling to and from the POB and includes improving vertical clearances at twenty-one other project sites between Baltimore and Philadelphia. CSX is responsible for overseeing the construction and is currently in the process of wrapping up the projects located in Pennsylvania and are anticipated to break ground in Delaware and Maryland in the fall of 2023. Overall, the project is on track to be completed in 2026. Completion of the tunnel is expected to increase the POB's business by 160,000 containers annually and generate more than 13,000 jobs from both construction and from future added business.

Mr. Munroe stated that the cruise industry is continuing to rebound at the POB. Despite the industry

wide shut down for most of 2020 and 2021, the cruise industry is once again sailing at full capacity at the POB. Carnival and Royal Caribbean cruise lines are being joined in September 2023 by a third cruise line at the POB, Norwegian, which will sail a fall schedule from Baltimore to New England and the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Munroe expressed gratitude to the MPA Harbor Development team and, in particular, Ms. Holly Miller who entered as the Director of Harbor Development during challenging times. Ms. Miller exhibited persistence and perseverance over the past year. Mr. Munroe also expressed gratitude on behalf of MPA to those in attendance for their service, the gift of their time to participate in meetings such as the DMMP Executive Committee, and their commitment to the DMMP.

3.0 State of the Dredged Material Management Program **Holly Miller, MPA**

Ms. Miller welcomed the Committee and provided a brief overview of the DMMP.

Ms. Miller stated that to support international and interstate maritime commerce, there must be safe and efficient passage for ships calling on the POB. The channel system serves as a maritime highway linking the POB to the Atlantic Ocean. Sediment builds up in the channels over time due to wind and tidal actions. To ensure the appropriate depths needed for the large ships to enter and exit the POB, the marine highway must be maintained through the act of dredging. Each year nearly 5 million cubic yards (mcy) of dredged material is removed from the channels leading into the POB. This amount of dredged material is enough to fill up the Raven's Stadium twice every year. To ensure there is a long-term plan for the management of this dredged material, the MPA and the USACE collaborate very closely on the DMMP.

In 2001, the Maryland General Assembly enacted the Dredged Material Management Act (DMMA) that established and guides the DMMP and the DMMP Executive Committee to ensure that the navigation channels in the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore Harbor remain open for waterborne commerce. The DMMA prohibited the disposal of dredged material through open water placement and established a hierarchy of dredged material management options to be included in a long-term plan with innovative reuse and beneficial use (IRBU) as the first prioritized option.

The DMMP includes a 20-year rolling plan that outlines the projected demand for dredged material, the need for regular maintenance, and identifies adequate placement capacity or alternative management solutions for the dredged material. Implementation of the DMMP relies heavily on coordination with regulatory agencies, engineers, environmental interest groups, industry partners, institutions of higher learning, non-government organizations, and stakeholder engagement with communities and other interested parties. Ms. Miller shared the planning structure of the DMMP that leverages a series of stakeholder committees that assist in the implementation of the DMMP. Actively engaging and partnering with this wide variety of stakeholders allows MPA to provide outcomes that are economically, environmentally, and socially beneficial. Annually, the DMMP develops a report that summarizes accomplishments over the year and provides recommendations to serve as the road map for the upcoming year. The Committee was provided with a copy of the 2022 Annual Report summary as well as the 2023 Mid-Year Report, which summarizes the progress made to date in 2023.

In the 2022 Annual Report, the DMMP put forth recommendations for 2023 to continue building on a successful history of thoughtful investment, careful implementation, and planning for future innovations. These recommendations are intended to support the POB in achieving successes that will benefit our region economically, environmentally, and socially for decades and better align the DMMP with important policy initiatives such as combatting the effects of climate change, addressing the connection

between transportation and public health, driving innovation and growing science technology engineering and math (STEM) industries, prioritizing workforce development and access to education, and prioritizing environmental justice. The recommendations are divided into three categories: Funding & Policy, Planning & Operations, and Outreach & Education.

Funding & Policy Recommendations

Regarding the Funding & Policy recommendations, Ms. Miller stated that MPA has been working toward achieving the strategic objective of engaging congressional delegations, federal and state partners, and port associations to ensure favorable legislation, sufficient funding, and support for climate change and resiliency planning.

One of the Funding & Policy recommendations for 2023 is to leverage partnerships with federal and state agencies in addressing climate change and resiliency planning. Working with DNR on coastal resiliency was a specific opportunity that was identified. MPA and DNR met in February 2023 to identify opportunities for collaboration that include IRBU in resiliency projects throughout the state. Discussions related to regional sediment management continued in June 2023 and there are plans to continue discussions to develop a comprehensive and inclusive approach to combat climate change in dredged material management efforts.

MPA continues to leverage available funding opportunities to advance priority initiatives. MPA received a Federal Highway Administration (FHA) Climate Challenge Grant to study constructing vegetated berms using dredged material to be used for flood protection. This study is being conducted in partnership with the University of Maryland (UMD). MPA has also received two rounds of grant funding from the FHA Federal Lands Access Program for the design and construction of a shared use path at Masonville Cove. Lastly, MPA will need additional funding for greenhouse gas emissions reduction programs to meet Maryland's new target of 60% reduction by 2031 and net zero by 2045. MPA continues to identify and review funding opportunities including the new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant programs and existing programs such as the EPA's Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) programs.

Maryland Senate Bill 782 was signed by the Governor in April 2023 and requires the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee to establish specifications for purchasing recycled products. Dredged material was specifically named in the bill, and MPA is working toward the approval of dredged material as a qualified sustainable or recycled material. In August 2023, MPA staff presented to the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee on the IRBU program and in the future will be participating as a stakeholder on one of the committee's sourcing teams.

MPA is committed to being resilient in the face of climate change. MPA is an active participant in the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and works with MDOT, MDE, DNR, UMD, and others to identify opportunities and plan and implement measures to address climate change impacts. Additionally, MPA is working to advance the 2020 IRBU Strategy action item to investigate how beneficial use of dredged material can be expanded to address Maryland's coastal resiliency needs.

Planning & Operations Recommendations

Ms. Miller provided an update on the progress made towards the Planning & Operations recommendations.

Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Project

The Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration (Mid-Bay) project is an aquatic ecosystem restoration project that will restore remote island habitat through the beneficial use of dredged material and is a partnership project between MPA and the USACE. Restoration activities will occur near Barren and James Islands, which are both located in Dorchester County. Mid-Bay is a follow-on project to the Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project at Poplar Island (Poplar Island). Mid-Bay will provide between 90 and 95 mcy total capacity for Maryland Chesapeake Bay Channel maintenance dredged material over a 40-year period through the restoration of over 2,100 acres of remote island habitat. The Mid-Bay project is advancing, with notable progress on both Barren and James Islands. The Barren Island Phase I construction contract was awarded in October 2022 and construction began in March 2023, which will include installation of most of the protective stone sills and breakwaters that line the western side of the island. James Island design efforts are ongoing, with modeling and geotechnical analysis being used to determine structural and nature-based solutions for habitat design.

Open communication, transparency, and strong collaboration are always a major priority for any project, but it is especially important thus far regarding the Mid-Bay project. MPA and the USACE developed a stakeholder engagement plan to outline a framework for engagement. Included in the framework for engagement is a recorded webinar as well as a Mid-Bay video, which are posted on the [Maryland DMMP website](#), and the release of project newsletters to coincide with pertinent updates; these newsletters are mailed and emailed to stakeholders. Additionally, the project team has hosted open house meetings with community members and watermen and is planning an open house event for the fall of 2023 related to the permitting of the project. MPA and USACE hold Mid-Bay Habitat Development Workgroup and NEPA coordination meetings every other month to engage with agency partners as the Mid-Bay project progresses. Lastly, born out of the Habitat Development Workgroup meetings, a need for deeper collaboration was identified on the Engineering with Nature Modeling and will host a series of workshops over the next few months so that local expertise can be utilized to facilitate the use of nature-based and climate resilient solutions wherever possible.

Innovative Reuse

Ms. Miller stated that IRBU of Harbor Channel sediments is a key component of the DMMP and that MPA continues to work hard to implement the components of the DMMP 2020 IRBU Strategy, which provides clear policy, regulatory, and technical actions needed to make long-term, sustainable IRBU an implemented component of the DMMP to help address capacity recovery.

One of the actions identified in the 2020 IRBU Strategy was to continue to pursue acquisition of additional property to advance long-term, sustainable capacity recovery programs. To that end, MPA recently acquired the property adjacent to the Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF). Due to its proximity, it presents an ideal opportunity to further long-term capacity recovery efforts at Cox Creek through large-scale innovative reuse of dredged material. Presently, there are no similar properties or alternative options with the same scale, location, and proximity to a DMCF. However, like many properties with long industrial histories, this property has legacy contamination and is under an Administrative Consent Order between MPA, the former property owner, and MDE to undergo phased remediation. MPA and MDE will be working very closely on remediation plans to ensure this property is cleaned-up and can be put back into productive use, where it will become a hub for various dredged material reuse applications.

Another action of the 2020 IRBU Strategy is to continue implementation of the dredged material reuse Request for Proposals (RFP) for research and development (R&D) projects. MPA has awarded seven contracts to date, five of which have been completed with promising results toward large scale

applications. MPA is in the process of evaluating two additional proposals, which demonstrates that industry interest in finding innovative solutions remains strong.

Harbor Placement Sites

MPA has two placement sites for Harbor Channel dredged material, the Cox Creek and Masonville DMCFs. Both sites are currently undergoing expansion activities. The Cox Creek DMCF expansion to raise the dikes to +60' and laterally expand onto adjacent upland property is substantially completed. The Masonville DMCF base dike widening was recently completed and will serve as the foundation for incremental dike raising. MPA recently received bids for dike raising to +30' and construction is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2023.

Connecting Communities to Green Spaces

MPA is undertaking two projects to help connect communities to green spaces, which serve important purposes for public health. The first is the Swan Creek Nature Trail, which is a community enhancement project recommended by the Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee to provide recreational access to the over 100-acre conservation easement area adjacent to the Cox Creek DMCF. The second project is the Masonville Cove Connector project that will establish safe, convenient, and equitable access to Masonville Cove and restore access to the waterfront for the communities surrounding the Masonville DMCF. This will also provide an important link to over 20-miles of walking and biking trails, connecting dozens of neighborhoods, a regional hospital and wellness facilities, and green spaces in the area.

Outreach & Education Recommendations

Ms. Miller stated that, as a top priority for MPA, outreach efforts continue to prioritize environmental justice, reach a diverse representation reflecting the communities MPA serves, and increase the public's knowledge about the POB to pursue outcomes that equitably benefit all Marylanders.

MPA has long recognized the value of engaging with its stakeholders and collaborating on outcomes that are in the best interest of the State of Maryland, the POB, the Chesapeake Bay, and Maryland citizens. In recognition of the need to engage with young stakeholders, MPA conducts numerous educational programs to inform and engage students about the POB. Every year about 20,000 people, including over 130 classrooms, most of which are Title 1 schools, learn about the POB by visiting the DMCFs and participating in community events, meetings, conferences, and educational programs including accessing information on the Environmental Education E-learning (E3) portal. To increase inclusivity and equitable access to MPA's sites, key outreach materials such as fact sheets have been made available in Spanish, and translation will continue to be applied across other communications and websites as appropriate.

Ms. Miller highlighted a few of MPA's key partnerships and educational programming that promote engagement and increase access to STEM fields for students.

Masonville Cove Partnerships

MPA partnered with Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF), the National Aquarium (NA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), who joined the Masonville Cove partnership in 2013 when Masonville Cove was designated the nation's first Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. By providing equitable community access to nature and transformational recreation and educational opportunities, the Partnership is inspiring people to explore, discover, and respect nature and empowering the next generation of environmental and community stewards. Masonville Cove is home to Captain Trash Wheel, hosts the first documented pair of nesting Eagles within Baltimore City, and is home to the largest

nesting colonies of both common and least terns in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay.

Terrapin Education and Research Program

MPA partners with MES, NA, and Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center on the Terrapin Education and Research Program (TERP), which is a head-start program giving terrapin hatchlings the chance for maximum growth during a life stage when they are especially vulnerable to predation and mortality. The program also allows Maryland school children to study terrapin biology, participate in animal care and research, and learn about the Poplar Island ecosystem restoration project and its importance to the POB.

Youth Birding Week

In July 2023, MPA hosted the second annual Youth Birding Week that was sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT). In addition to providing education related to birding, this program also strives to educate urban youth on the pathways to career opportunities including those in STEM and maritime-related industries. The program also increased physical access to the DMMP sites.

Workforce Development

MPA continues to promote workforce development as a priority and provide related opportunities. In July 2023, MPA and the Masonville Partnership hosted the Masonville Cove WildSTEM Summer Internship in partnership with the Harbor City Chapter of The Links, Inc., a social and service organization of prominent Black women in the United States. The internship focused on recruitment at local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and brought four interns together to explore conservation careers, providing exposure to conservation career paths, practical experience, and a pathway for future conservation careers and leadership opportunities in a wide array of career fields. The students came from Coppin State University and Bowie State University.

With the goal of creating pathways to valuable career opportunities, including those in STEM and maritime-related industries, MPA continued its workforce development efforts in collaboration with the Baltimore Port Alliance. Since 2019, the partnership executed fifth Hiring & Career Expos. In 2023 the Hiring & Career Expo brought together 38 employers and approximately 250 job seekers.

4.0 USACE Reports

Lt. Colonel Jeffrey Beeman, CENAP
Lt. Colonel David Myers, CENAB

USACE North Atlantic Philadelphia District (CENAP)

Lt. Colonel Beeman stated that, in March 2023, CENAP concluded the FY21 and FY22 maintenance dredging contracts. Approximately 1.2 mcy of material was dredged from the federal channel during that two-year contract duration, all of which was placed at the Pearce Creek DMCF. CENAP is now preparing the FY23 maintenance dredging contract which is anticipated to be awarded in late September 2023. Based on recent survey data, the anticipated dredging volume is expected to be approximately 0.5 mcy. This dredging will take place in the upper Chesapeake Bay with most of the material being removed from the Worton Point area. The contract will also include an option to dredge the basin at Chesapeake City.

The rehabilitation work for Chesapeake City Bridge was completed in June 2023. Work is progressing on the \$50 million St. George's Bridge rehabilitation project. The bridge is currently closed to all vehicular traffic but there are no permanent channel obstructions or air gap reductions associated with the remaining work activities.

USACE North Atlantic Baltimore District (CENAB)

Baltimore Harbor Channels

Lt. Colonel Myers stated that there are no changes to report regarding the Baltimore Harbor Channels FY23 construction. The \$30 million FY23 contract for the Baltimore Harbor Channels was awarded in April 2023 with material to be placed at the Cox Creek DMCF. The contractor is currently dredging the Brewerton Eastern Extension Channel. The dredging project is anticipated to be completed in October 2023.

The Baltimore Harbor Maryland Approach Channels FY24 project is on schedule with 350,000 cy anticipated to be dredged from Curtis Bay and placed at the Cox Creek DMCF. Additionally, 1.4 mcy of material is anticipated to be dredged from the Brewerton Eastern Extension Channel and placed at Poplar Island. Environmental coordination with state and federal partners is ongoing. The goal is to advertise in late September 2023, award in November 2023, and begin dredging operations in December 2023. Dredging operations will begin in Curtis Bay and are anticipated to last until March 2024.

The Baltimore Harbor Virginia Approach Channels FY24 project will include 1.7 to 2 mcy being dredged from York Spit and placed at the Wolf Trap Alternate Open Water Placement Site (WTAPS) Northern Extension. The project development team is working on the environmental compliance package to include the Federal Consistency Determination (FCD) and the Water Quality Certification (WQC), which is planned to be submitted at the end of August 2023. The goal is to advertise in January or February 2024, award in Spring 2024, and begin dredging operations in May 2024 carrying through until August 2024. A meeting was held on April 20, 2023, to discuss the best path forward regarding the continued use of WTAPS Northern Extension.

Mid-Bay Islands

Lt. Colonel Myers stated that the Mid-Bay project has begun, and Phase I construction of Barren Island started in October 2022. The \$43.1 million contract was awarded to Coastal Design & Construction, Inc. and is slated for completion in October 2024. Phase II of Barren Island construction is planned to begin in the spring of 2024. The design, development, and contract package will include dredging of the Honga River with the material placed at Barren Island. Modeling and design of James Island is underway, and the first contract is expected to be awarded in the fall of 2025. Construction is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2025. Material will be received at James Island once Poplar Island is at capacity sometime between 2028 and 2032. Related to Mid-Bay, since January of 2020, MPA and USACE have hosted over 41 collaborative stakeholder engagements to solicit feedback. USACE and MPA formalized a commitment to collaboration in a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and disseminated the plan to resource agencies in March 2023. USACE and MPA plan to lay out the process for collaboration and to design and host a minimum of six events each year to facilitate collaboration between the various stakeholders.

Seagirt Loop Deepening Study

Lt. Colonel Myers stated that the agency technical review was signed in June 2023 recommending the deepening of the Seagirt Loop to 50 ft. The report was submitted through the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to be reviewed and transmitted to the Office of Management and Budget. The report was approved by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works in August 2023.

5.0 DMMP Committee Reports

**Dr. William C. Dennison, UMCES
Adam Lindquist, CAC Chair**

DMMP Management Committee

Dr. Dennison stated that, as the interim President of UMCES, the role includes serving as the liaison

between the DMMP Management Committee and the DMMP Executive Committee. The DMMP Management Committee is comprised of senior members of applicable regulatory and resource agencies as well as other key stakeholders including a citizens group.

Dr. Dennison stated that the 2023 Mid-Year Report includes 13 recommendations falling into the categories previously identified in depth by Ms. Miller and serves as an interim check-in on the progress related to the recommendations. It is the DMMP Management Committee's belief that considerable progress has been made to those recommendations thus far.

Dr. Dennison stated that UMCES has a firm commitment to being relevant, meaningful, and helpful toward management policy and therefore the collaboration and coordination across the agencies and stakeholders is critical in advancing the economic, environmental, and social goals. Additionally, it was emphasized that healthy communities are what makes a healthy Chesapeake Bay.

DMMP Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Mr. Lindquist welcomed the new committee members and stated how fortunate the DMMP CAC Liaison is to represent MPA's commitment to stakeholder engagement. Mr. Lindquist stated that the trash wheel family including Captain Trash Wheel removed approximately 500 tons of trash and debris out of the Baltimore Harbor in 2022, which is the most ever collected. This is not because there is more trash, but because 2022 was the first full year operating all four trash wheels around Baltimore Harbor. There is less trash than in past years in Baltimore Harbor thanks to recent legislation passed to reduce the consumption of foam containers and plastic bags. As a result of the cleaning up of the Baltimore Harbor waterways, in early August 2023 the Baltimore Blueway was launched. The Baltimore Blueway is a proposed network of water trails and access points throughout Baltimore Harbor. Through collaboration with the DMMP CAC and MPA, Masonville Cove will be a designated stop along the Baltimore Blueway. This opportunity has also led to a connection with the Harbor Safety Committee to educate the public on safe waterway practices.

Mr. Linquist stated that the CAC is extremely pleased that MPA remains dedicated to stakeholder engagement, which is now more critical than ever. Continuing to allow for partner and citizen involvement in the DMMP ensures MPA's mission-critical work continues. It also ensures an equitable distribution of events and that vulnerable communities are not disproportionately impacted by the operations of the POB. For this reason, the CAC supports the intentional diversity, equity, and inclusion language in the DMMP annual recommendations for 2023 to engage stakeholders in a way that reflects the diversity of the communities adjacent to the POB. The CAC also supports the work of MPA partnered with USACE and MDE to maximize the use of nature-based solutions at Mid-Bay. The CAC appreciates that after concern was raised regarding confined aquatic disposal (CAD) MPA decided to place the project's progress on pause to work with and educate community members so that the project can move forward in the spirit of collaboration and respect.

Attendees inquired about the status of the CAD project. Ms. Miller responded that the project has been paused after numerous concerns were raised to take a step back and engage the community in the process and show that MPA is taking concerns expressed regarding CAD seriously. MPA is currently in the process of developing an engagement strategy to educate community members with accurate information. Questions have also been raised by some of the regulatory and resource agencies showing a gap in information surrounding the need for CAD and therefore MPA will be reengaging the Bay Enhancement Work Group (BEWG), which includes regulatory and resource agencies, to discuss the gap in information and ensure that all stakeholders are on the same page before moving forward.

6.0 Comments from the DMMP Executive Committee

Secretary Wiedefeld opened the discussion to questions and comments from the DMMP Executive Committee members. DMMP Executive Committee members expressed support for MPA initiatives, and that the committee should be used to collaborate on projects such as CAD moving forward.

Secretary McIlwain stressed the importance of deeper collaboration on Mid-Bay because there is an opportunity for the project to be a world class leader in nature-based solutions and climate resiliency. She emphasized that MDE wants to be engaged in identifying solutions as part of the larger plan and collaborate prior to permitting.

Secretary Kurtz expressed appreciation for the progress that has been made by the DMMP and expressed excitement for what the future holds. He also reminded attendees that the 4th annual Hart Miller Island 5-miler will be held on Saturday, October 21st.

Dr. Dennison stated that UMCES produces an annual Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card which includes ecological, social, and economic indicators. More recently the report card includes environmental justice indicators such as proximity to green space and walkability to those green spaces. Dr. Dennison expressed support for projects such as the Masonville Cove Connector and applauded MPA's efforts in moving forward such a project that increases equitable access to Masonville Cove. Secretary Kurtz emphasized support for the Masonville Cove Connector project and its ability to connect surrounding communities back to a unique resource.

7.0 Adjourn

Secretary Wiedefeld thanked the presenters and committee members for their attendance and adjourned the meeting. The 2024 meeting dates will be released upon finalization.