

The Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Project (Mid-Bay Project) is a federal and state partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District and the Maryland Port Administration (MPA). The Mid-Bay Project will restore remote island habitat near James and Barren Islands in Dorchester County, using dredged material from the Chesapeake Bay's Maryland navigation channels. The restoration will provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species, enhance shoreline protection and recreation activities, and assist with maintaining navigational safety.



### Learn More

To learn more about the USACE and the Mid-Bay Project, please visit: [nab.usace.army.mil/Mid-Bay/](http://nab.usace.army.mil/Mid-Bay/)

To learn more about the MPA and the Mid-Bay Project, including a short informational video, please visit: [maryland-dmmp.com](http://maryland-dmmp.com)

### Questions? Comments?

If you have any questions, please contact Rachael Gilde at [Rgilde@marylandports.com](mailto:Rgilde@marylandports.com)

### Stay "In The Know"!

Sign up for project updates at the Maryland Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) website: [maryland-dmmp.com/placement-sites/mid-bay-island/](http://maryland-dmmp.com/placement-sites/mid-bay-island/)

## Upcoming Events

### November Poster Session

- November 18, 2025**
- 4:00 PM- 6:00 PM**
- Madison Volunteer Fire Department  
1154 Taylors Island Road  
Madison, MD 21648**

## Project Newsletter Fall 2025

**Safety Contact Information**  
All work vessels will monitor VHF-FM Channel 13 and 16.

## Barren Island Safety Announcement

**Please avoid accessing the water around Barren Island. Water users should avoid the construction safety zones shown below (Figure 1).** Those entering the construction safety zone should use extreme caution and do so at their own risk. Underwater construction activities occurring in this area may cause damage to water users' equipment and vessels. Please expect to see increased barge and vessel traffic, as well as marked material pipes, throughout the area through September of 2027.



**Figure 1. Barren Island Construction Safety Zone**

## Community Outreach Highlights

This summer and early fall have been exciting for community outreach! The Mid-Bay Outreach Team attended the Groove City Culture Fest, Nause-Waiwash Festival, Taste of Dorchester, and Dorchester Showcase to raise awareness about the project. Thank you everyone who attended and stopped by to engage with our team!

The team looks forward to hosting the **Annual Community Poster Session on November 18th**. The team is excited to engage with the community, provide project updates, answer questions, and receive feedback.

Is your community or special interest group interested in learning more about the Mid-Bay Project? Please reach out to **Rob Etgen ([retgen@councilfire.org](mailto:retgen@councilfire.org))** of the Mid-Bay Outreach Team and let us know how we can connect with you! We look forward to helping your community learn about the benefits of the Mid-Bay Project.



**Dorchester Showcase Event**

## Funding and Construction Status

Through strong Congressional relationships and bipartisan support, an additional \$71.9 million in funding from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the Mid-Bay Project was secured in Fiscal Year 2025. This funding supports construction at Barren Island and James Island.

**Barren Island Phase 2 construction** began in January 2025 and is expected to last approximately three years. Construction of the isolated bird islands, which are being created to provide habitat for breeding birds, and the internal structures to confine dredged material in the southwest wetland is ongoing (**Figure 2**). Construction of the northeast sill and bird islands, as well as installation of reef structures, are anticipated to be completed in summer 2026. Dredging and placement of sediment from the Honga River into the southern wetland of Barren Island is planned to begin in late 2026.

**James Island Phase 1 construction** will include installation of a confined sand stockpile. The sand will be used for building future dikes, which will confine the placed dredged material and protect the restoration project from wave energy and erosion. Construction is expected to begin in 2026. Construction is pending the approval of the Tidal Wetlands License and Water Quality Certification, which are required environmental permits from the Maryland Department of Environment. Once posted, likely in November 2025, contractors interested in bidding on Contract 1 can do so through the federal government contracting site [www.Sam.gov](http://www.Sam.gov).

## Southwest Wetland Design

Work continues on the Barren Island southwest wetland design. The project team is working closely with local partners and environmental experts to ensure the wetland can withstand rising sea levels and major storms. The design focuses on restoring a functional and resilient wetland that provides thriving habitat for wildlife.

The updated wetland design utilizes tidal channels to bring water, sediment, and nutrients into the high and low marsh, and provide passageways for marine wildlife. Approximately 13 acres (similar in size to 10 football fields) of viable Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) habitat will be preserved in the protected shallow water area between the north and south island remnants. These underwater grasses stabilize sediment and provide food, shelter, and clean water for fish and other wildlife.



**Figure 2. A birds-eye view of construction progress at Barren Island.**  
Photo courtesy of GBA in September 2025.

The design will include habitat features that protect the shoreline from washing away (erosion), create more habitat for plants and animals, and enhance environmental benefits. These features include:

**Hummocks** are small, raised areas within wetlands. They do the following:

- Improve the marsh's resilience to sea level rise.
- Support a rich variety of plants and wildlife.
- Provide refuge for birds.



**Marsh Hummocks at Poplar Island**

**Oyster Reef Structures** are artificial reef structures installed near beaches and shorelines that mimic natural oyster habitat, with holes and rough surfaces. These structures accomplish the following:

- Provide hard surfaces for oysters to live on.
- Protect shorelines from erosion by absorbing wave energy.
- Create diverse habitat for fish, invertebrates, and SAV.



**Oyster Reef Structure at Cox Creek DMCF**

