

**FINAL SUMMARY OF THE
DREDGED MATERIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
November 24, 2025, 9:00 AM
Virtual Meeting**

Members Attending:

Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) Liaison: Adam Lindquist

DMMP Management Committee Liaison: Dr. Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm

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

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT): Acting Secretary Samantha Biddle

Others Attending:

Arcadis: Albert Buell

Angie Ashley Consulting: Angie Ashley

Baltimore Port Alliance (BPA): Rupert Denney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation: Gussie Maguire

Council Fire: George Chmael II

Maryland DNR: Richard Ortt

Maryland DNR, Maryland Park Service: Mark Spurrier

Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE): Matthew Rowe

Maryland Port Administration (MPA): Nichol Conley, Johnathan Daniels, Jennifer Guthrie, Margie Hamby, Jennifer McGee, Holly Miller, Darren Swift

Maryland Environmental Service: Dr. Charles Glass, Mackenzie Miller

The Association of Maryland Pilots: Eric Nielsen

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division, Baltimore District (CENAB): Lacy Evans, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Pollak, Eric Lindheimer, William Seib, Trevor Cyran

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division, Philadelphia District (CENAP): Michael Hart

University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES): Elizabeth Price, Lisa Wainger

Action Items:

- No action items.

1.0 Convene: Introductory Comments

Acting Secretary Samantha Biddle, MDOT

The November 24, 2025, DMMP Executive Committee meeting was convened. Acting Secretary Biddle put forth a motion to approve the October 27, 2025, meeting summary as written. The DMMP Executive Committee unanimously approved the October 2025 meeting summary.

2.0 2025 DMMP Annual Report

Holly Miller, MPA

Darren Swift, MPA

Dr. Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm, UMCES

Ms. Miller introduced the 2025 DMMP Annual Report and stated that the following presentation would include stories that best capture the 2026 theme, Stewardship Fueled by Science, grounded in data, powered by innovation, and strengthened by collaboration. To align with the new office name and manage the expanded content, MPA's Office of Navigation, Innovation, and Stewardship (NIS) updated the report outline. The 2025 DMMP Annual Report was reorganized into four sections, including Funding and Policy, Navigation, Innovation, and Stewardship. In 2025, MPA made significant strides

in strategic and operational initiatives for dredged material management. Funding and policy advancements, Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF) expansion, new DMCF design and construction, and the exploration of new management options are all progressing toward the objective of finding sustainable, climate-resilient solutions for dredged material placement.

Funding and Policy

The ability to deliver long-term projects is strengthened by smart policy and political support. It is made possible through strong partnerships with federal agencies, the Maryland Congressional Delegation, and other stakeholders. In an environment where MDOT, and by extension MPA, faces significant budgetary challenges, MPA requires sustained congressional support. To that end, MPA has continued to work with state, federal, and local partners to advance funding that supports critical infrastructure and restoration projects.

The James Island Phase I design is complete, with permits in process and the first construction contract anticipated in 2026. In 2025, \$71.9 million in federal funding was secured, ensuring the project could advance according to the cost-share agreement.

Fundraising efforts by the Masonville Cove Partnership, which includes MPA, Living Classrooms Foundation, National Aquarium, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, raised over \$450,000 in 2025. The funds raised will continue the great work and programming that occurs at Masonville Cove through the Partnership.

In 2025, work with policy partners was productive in a number of ways, driven by sustained strategic engagement with political partners. Working with political partners, MPA supported the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which passed in 2024. This legislation included key provisions to advance the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration (Mid-Bay) Project and the Seagirt Loop Modernization Project in 2025. MPA engaged and informed political partners through site tours, briefings, and advocacy for sustained federal investment in dredged material management. This ongoing outreach and relationship building has built new awareness of the impact of MPA's efforts.

Navigation

Mr. Swift stated that long-term sustainability of the Port of Baltimore (POB) depends on MPA's ability to plan decades ahead while adapting in real time. Managing almost 5 million cubic yards (mcy) of dredged material annually is an incredible task. The long-range capacity planning effort reflects exactly that: a science-driven approach to increase dredged material placement capacity while building resiliency for natural habitats, communities, and infrastructure.

MPA, in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), completed the Seagirt Loop Feasibility Study in 2023, concluding that deepening the West Seagirt Branch Channel to 50 feet would enhance safety and efficiency for large container vessels. In January 2025, the WRDA authorized the construction of the recommended channel modifications pending construction funding. Once construction funding is secured, the project is expected to be completed in two phases, with the first phase anticipated to start in November 2026 and the second phase occurring a year later.

The Mid-Bay Project is a new placement site located in Dorchester County near the remnants of the badly eroded Barren and James Islands. MPA continues work to obtain the necessary permits for construction. Gratitude was expressed to MDE for processing the permit applications. The Mid-Bay Project is a crucial future placement site for Chesapeake Bay material and integral to maintaining cargo

ship passage to the POB. This is a top priority for MPA and one of the clearest examples of stewardship fueled by science. This project is more than placement capacity; it is the next generation of leadership in beneficial use (BU) that MPA started with the Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project at Poplar Island (Poplar Island). MPA is excited about what is to come and knows that continued stewardship and advocacy will be required to maintain the support needed at the state, federal, and local levels.

At Cox Creek DMCF, the construction of the dikes to elevation +60 feet was substantially completed in 2024; however, in 2025, MPA is making plans to further excavate the upland cell to maximize capacity. With the excavation of an additional 350,000 cubic yards (cy) of clay, site capacity will increase to 14.7 mcy. The design effort for raising the dikes to +80 feet kicked off in 2025, with final design slated for late 2026. Construction of the +80 dikes would begin in 2029. In association with the Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee (COC), the Swan Creek Nature Trail design is now complete, and MPA is seeking permits to begin construction, which is anticipated to begin in 2026. The trail is anticipated to be open to the public in early 2027.

Masonville is comprised of two sites, including an active DMCF and Masonville Cove, which hosts an award-winning environmental education center. At the DMCF, MPA completed the dike raising to +30 feet, providing an incremental 1.8 mcy of placement capacity. The design to raise the dikes to +45 feet is now complete and in 2026 MPA plans to advertise for construction bids. At the Masonville Cove Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership site, a new economic study conducted by economists from Morgan State University and UMCES determined that the Masonville Cove has an estimated economic value of over \$10 million. This valuation underscores Masonville Cove's role as a vital resource for both residents and the environment. Masonville Cove was designated as a Chesapeake Gateways Network site, enhancing national recognition and improving access to this regional treasure. To improve access to Masonville Cove, MPA and its partners have secured two grants totaling \$2.86 million to support the design of a shared-use path to connect Masonville Cove to the Gwynns Falls Trail and nearby communities. The design of this path, called the Masonville Cove Connector, is underway with full design completion expected in 2027.

Ms. Miller stated that Poplar Island is an international model for its BU of dredged material to restore remote island habitat. Poplar island serves as the largest active DMMP site with 71.1 mcy of total capacity, 24 mcy of which are still available to accept dredged material. As a center of research, Poplar Island has long been studied by scientists, and in 2025, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and partners studied juvenile oyster populations' ability to settle on stone reefs, how fish use habitat in Poplar Island's restored marshes, and the impact of supporting diamondback terrapin development. Scientific learnings from Poplar Island are already being incorporated into the planning and design of the Mid-Bay Project.

Although dredged material placement at Hart-Miller Island ceased in 2009, its COC has remained deeply engaged, giving this site new purpose. The group is a key partner in developing a closure plan for the site and has been collaborating with MPA and its partners to explore options for the North Cell habitat development. After a multi-year hiatus, the Hart-Miller Island 5-Miler returned this year and was hosted by Maryland DNR and MPA, in coordination with Charm City Run. The event welcomed 104 racers and an additional 25 spectators who enjoyed the scenic race and the island's natural beauty. Hart-Miller Island continues to be a birding hotspot with 215 species recorded in 2025. Notably, a Mottled Duck was observed for the first time on Hart-Miller Island in 2025 marking the first documented sighting of this species at any MPA site.

Innovation

Mr. Swift stated that innovative reuse (IR) and BU are critical components of the rolling 20-year plan. These new management techniques will operate at scale to provide dredged material capacity, and in 2025 MPA advanced work on these projects on several important fronts.

MPA updated the IR and BU strategy incorporating lessons from more than a decade of pilot projects. MPA also initiated permitting for a geotube drying field to begin reclaiming capacity at the Cox Creek DMCF. MPA expanded IR and BU of dredged material for onsite and community applications, including DMCF road improvements and shoreline restoration at Stoney Beach. Finally, MPA partnered with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to further integrate dredged material into construction practices, including approval for specifications for dredged material to be added to the 2026 Standard Specifications for Construction and Materials.

In addition to the work MPA is doing to expand traditional placement capacity at Cox Creek DMCF, it is also making progress in the development of the Cox Creek Sediment Technology and Reuse (STAR) Facility. This facility will serve as the hub for MPA's IR and BU programs, critical components of the rolling 20-year capacity plan. MPA issued a Request for Information (RFI) for large-scale IR operations at the Cox Creek STAR Facility, with the RFI scheduled to close on December 19, 2025.

The robust pipeline of development projects was a key factor in refining the plans for the Cox Creek STAR Facility. Of the nine Research & Development (R&D) project contracts that have been awarded, two remain underway and are expected to conclude in the first quarter of 2026, including Harbor Rock's investigation of lightweight aggregates and supplementary cementitious materials, and the University of Maryland's research on vegetated earth berms for flood protection of a variety of infrastructure. Outside of the R&D projects, COMUS Sustainable Pozzolan Products is conducting research into the use of Baltimore Harbor dredged material as a partial replacement for cement in concrete production. The findings show that this material can serve as a natural pozzolan, which when blended with Portland Cement, creates a durable "green cement." Unlike traditional cement production, this process does not rely on fossil fuels, offering a promising solution for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Stewardship

Ms. Miller stated that people and communities are central to shaping operations and sustaining the DMMP's impact. MPA's investments in people, through education, access, and workforce development are building long-term capacity in the communities served.

In 2025, stakeholder engagement remained a cornerstone of the DMMP, supporting inclusive participation and public benefit. MPA welcomed almost 19,000 community members across more than 600 events including committee meetings, shoreline cleanups, and site tours. Now in its second year, the Mid-Bay Community Stakeholder Group is generating new ideas and contributing meaningfully to local engagement strategies and MPA design plans. In 2025, MPA continued supporting and sponsoring community events like bird banding events, the Cox Creek Open House, Latino Conservation Day, Urban Wildlife Conservation Day, the Nause-Waiwash Native American Festival, the Groove City Culture Fest, and the Taste of Cambridge. As neighboring communities grow more connected to the POB, they also become co-creators in its future.

This year, MPA extended its communications to better serve diverse stakeholders with initiatives including the iMPact Report Series which highlights the county-specific economic, environmental, and community benefits MPA delivers to Marylanders in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Anne Arundel

County, Dorchester County, and Talbot County. Throughout 2025, MPA released a series of informative videos about dredging as part of its Spotlight Series. These videos provide easily accessible information about the work of the DMMP and how it supports MPA's mission. MPA grew the "Friends of" volunteer groups at Masonville Cove and Hart-Miller Island, pursuing collaborative opportunities and shared resources for the groups. MPA and its technical partners also hosted hands-on dredging open houses titled "Get the Scoop on Dredging" for residents in Turner Station and North Point.

MPA continues to champion environmental education and maritime workforce development through impactful programs that inspire future stewards and industry leaders. MPA facilitated education programs reaching over 11,000 students. MPA also hosted immersive summer programs including Youth Birding Week and the Masonville Cove Links WildSTEM Internship that continue to inspire young people to connect to the natural world and even see a future for themselves in this work. For the seventh time, MPA collaborated with the BPA to host a Hiring and Career Expo. This year's event was the largest to date, with over 300 job seekers and 43 employers in attendance. These efforts reflect MPA's commitment to equitable access, environmental literacy, economic opportunity, and building a more inclusive and resilient workforce in Maryland.

2026 Recommendations

Dr. Miralles-Wilhelm stated that each year the DMMP Management Committee puts forward a set of recommendations to guide the continued success of the DMMP. This year has been another strong year for the DMMP. Thanks to the work of the DMMP and the POB's strategic investments and long-term planning, real, measurable, mutually beneficial progress continues to be seen. The DMMP committees are proud to contribute to these results and are excited about the road ahead. Together it continues to be proved that it is possible to maintain a world-class port and protect the Chesapeake Bay, all while advancing science-informed solutions, supporting job creation, and meeting the needs of communities across Maryland.

Like previous years, the recommendations are organized into three categories including Funding & Policy, Planning & Operations, and Outreach & Education. Dr. Miralles-Wilhelm highlighted themes from each category that help align the DMMP with important policy and social initiatives, related to planning for long-term dredged material management and climate resiliency, scaling innovations, and continuously improving the stakeholder collaboration efforts.

Funding & Policy

The first recommendation highlights that, to keep the POB competitive and sustainable, the DMMP must secure strong funding and enable policies that allow for the maintenance of the channels. This includes support for critical projects like Mid-Bay and advocating for favorable provisions in upcoming legislation. The second recommendation aligns the DMMP with Maryland's climate goals of 60% greenhouse gas reduction by 2031 and net zero by 2045. This recommendation emphasizes reducing emissions in dredging and placement operations, and ensuring funding is available to implement those improvements. The third recommendation keeps MPA looking ahead, ensuring enough placement capacity and matching it with projected dredging needs over a 20-year rolling timeline. MPA wants to ensure strategic forecasting and sustainable planning.

Planning & Operations

With respect to placement options for the Virginia Channels, it was recommended to re-engage the Virginia Bay Enhancement Working Group (BEWG) to help identify cost-effective, sustainable placement sites for material dredged from the Virginia Channels, including opportunities for BU. The

fifth recommendation keeps the focus on applying best-available science to scale nature-based solutions, like island restoration and living shorelines, in DMMP planning. These projects enhance resilience and create ecological co-benefits. The sixth recommendation emphasizes the importance of working with the BEWG to make BU more predictable and easier to implement in the Baltimore Harbor. Following rigorous pilot testing and experimentation, the seventh recommendation emphasizes scaling up IR, turning dredged material into valuable resources for things like construction, fill, and environmental restoration. MPA's Cox Creek STAR Facility and SHA partnerships are key levers here.

The eighth recommendation speaks directly to developing a plan to transform the Hart-Miller Island North Cell into a thriving habitat area, designed in collaboration with Maryland DNR and local stakeholders. It is an opportunity to deliver both environmental and community value. The ninth recommendation speaks to the DMMP's commitment to adaptive management, minimizing and/or mitigating environmental impacts to reduce harm, share benefits equitably, and adjusting practices based on what we learn. This recommendation reinforces that environmental performance is part of operational excellence.

Outreach & Education

While this may come as a surprise, some Marylanders still do not know how vital the DMMP is to the economy, environment, and communities. The tenth recommendation focuses on continuing to improve MPA's world-class engagement and education programs and continuing to tell the DMMP's story even more clearly and broadly to the ever-expanding network of stakeholders. The eleventh recommendation re-emphasizes that equity is a core principle of the DMMP, ensuring that MPA continues to collaborate with communities, engaging the full spectrum of stakeholders in the development of projects and the distribution of the benefits. Decision-making in the DMMP must remain transparent, participatory, and responsive. The twelfth recommendation maintains the ongoing commitment to meaningful engagement as part of all the work of the DMMP.

These recommendations represent the collective vision shaped by science, strengthened by collaboration, and grounded in the deep commitment brought to the DMMP. The Maryland DMMP has long been recognized as a national and international model, not only for how dredged material is managed, but for how the integration of innovation and engagement with communities, all while stewarding both commerce and the Chesapeake Bay. Stakeholders all working together to solve complex challenges with integrity, creativity, and care is what gives the DMMP staying power and keeps the POB strong and communities resilient. This is what will carry the work into the next decade and beyond.

Acting Secretary Biddle put forth a motion to approve the 2025 DMMP Annual Report and 2026 Recommendations. The DMMP Executive Committee unanimously approved

3.0 US Army Corps of Engineers Report

**Michael Hart, CENAP
Lt. Colonel Mark Pollak, CENAB**

CENAP Report

Mr. Hart reported that the federal fiscal year (FFY) 26 maintenance dredging operation is scheduled to start December 15, 2025, with a pre-construction meeting on December 2, 2025, and work expected to continue into mid-February 2026.

CENAB Report

Lt. Colonel Pollak announced the award of the FFY26 Virginia contract for the Baltimore Harbor and Channels to Great Lakes Dock and Dredge Company, with dredging to start December 3, 2025, and

continuing through the winter. A kickoff meeting was held on November 17, 2025, at which Great Lakes Dock and Dredge Company was awarded notice to proceed (NTP). The FFY26 Maryland contract for the Baltimore Harbor and Channels was awarded to Curtin Maritime, with NTP planned for mid-December 2025.

Related to the Mid-Bay Project, the second phase of Barren Island restoration is approximately 41% complete, with dredging of the Honga Federal Navigation Channel and placement at Barren Island planned for winter 2026-2027. The first phase of James Island construction is out for bids, due January 6, 2026, and the second phase contract is planned for late 2026.

Poplar Island has 20.8 mcy, approximately 31%, of remaining capacity, with the next inflow period scheduled for winter 2025-2026. The dike-raising contract for Cells 6 and Cell 11 is about 85% complete, with work expected to conclude the winter of 2025-2026.

4.0 DMMP Committee Report

Adam Lindquist, DMMP CAC

Dr. Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm, DMMP Management Committee

Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Lindquist expressed appreciation for the maintenance of a robust, community-focused outreach and engagement program throughout 2025. Emphasis was placed on the importance of transparency and responsiveness in dredged material management, noting that recent actions, including the release of the Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) Subcommittee Final Report, demonstrated commitment to addressing community concerns in a thorough and substantive manner.

Updates were provided regarding Hart-Miller Island, particularly in response to issues raised at the October 2025 DMMP Executive Committee meeting. The CAC and the Hart-Miller Island COC acknowledged the DMMP Executive Committee's engagement and responsiveness to concerns related to staffing and the closure of the North Cell. Follow-up communication after the November 2025 DMMP Management Committee meeting confirmed that these concerns would be addressed, including staffing and operation for the 2026 season. There are ongoing challenges associated with funding necessary infrastructure improvements prior to Maryland DNR acceptance of the North Cell closure. A joint site visit to Hart-Miller Island to assess infrastructure needs and a follow-up meeting in January 2026, from which the CAC looks forward to receiving action items clarifying impacts on the 2026 operating season and the North cell closure timeline. The inclusion of the Hart-Miller Island North Cell work as a recommendation in the 2025 DMMP Annual Report was recognized as a positive and meaningful step forward.

Ms. Miller echoed that MPA is working closely with Maryland DNR to move forward with the concerns surrounding Hart-Miller Island.

Secretary Kurtz thanked Mr. Lindquist and the team for comments on Hart-Miller Island and stated that Maryland DNR is working to ensure there is adequate staffing. Secretary Kurtz then expressed appreciation for the continued stakeholder partnerships, including the CAC.

5.0 Adjourn

Acting Secretary Biddle expressed appreciation to presenters and DMMP Executive Committee members and adjourned the meeting. The 2026 DMMP Executive Committee meeting dates will be announced once scheduled.