FINAL SUMMARY OF THE COX CREEK CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING January 21, 2026 - 5:30 PM

Cox Creek Operations and Maintenance Complex
1000 Kembo Road, Curtis Bay, MD 21226
Hybrid Meeting

Attendees:
Alluvia Consulting: Kristen Keene
Anne Arundel County Bird Club: Dawn Merino*
Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee (C O C) Facilitator: Angie Ashley
Maryland Environmental Service (MES): Amber Peters, Dallas Henson
Maryland Port Administration (MPA): Darren Swift, Holly Miller, Joseph Ross, Katrina Jones, Kelvin Moulden, Nathan Thompson
Pasadena Sportfishing Group (PSG): Robert Schmidt, Robert Christy*
Resident of Legislative District 31 : Gary Gakenheimer*
Resource Environmental Solutions (RES): Chuck Hegberg
Riviera Beach Community: Karen Warner
Rock Creek Community: Ruth Sliviak
Stoney Beach Community: John Garofolo*
Straughan Environmental: Larry Trout

* Denotes Cox Creek C O C members.

Action Items:
- No Action Items

1.0 Welcome, Introduction, and Opening Remarks — Angie Ashley, Facilitator; Gary Gakenheimer, Chair

The meeting materials can be found at the following link: 1/21 Cox Creek C O C Meeting. Ms. Ashley welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order. Mr. Gakenheimer provided opening remarks and requested a motion to approve the October 22, 2025, Cox Creek C O C meeting summary, which the Committee approved.

Mr. Gakenheimer reviewed the action items from the October 2025 meeting, noting that the Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) Annual meeting information was distributed, and the completed 2026 DMMP master meeting calendar was included in the evening's meeting materials and posted on the Maryland DMMP website.

2.0 DMMP Project Updates — Holly Miller, MPA

Ms. Miller recapped the annual meeting and highlights of the annual report. The 2025 Annual Meeting was held on December 5th, with 167 participants. Of those, 97 attended in person, and 70 attended virtually. The meeting also included representatives from 54 different organizations.

A key highlight of the meeting was the Science and Stakeholder Voices panel discussion, which featured community members sharing their experiences collaborating with MPA. The panel explored how the Port works with scientific experts, local communities, and workforce development initiatives to support environmental, economic, and community benefits. Panelists shared their personal insights and participated in an extended question-and-answer session.

Ms. Miller shared that the 2025 Annual Report is now finalized, was presented at the annual meeting, and is available on the Maryland-DMMP website. Ms. Miller reviewed key points from the annual report. The report includes several important funding and policy updates. In FY25, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MPA's close partner and the agency responsible for dredging the 50ft. federal navigation channels, included $187.9 million in work related to the Port of Baltimore in its budget and work plan. This total includes $71.9 million allocated to advancing the Middle Chesapeake Island Ecosystem Restoration (Mid-Bay) project, an essential component of the DMMP.

Additionally, in 2025, fundraising efforts led by the Masonville Cove Partnership, a collaboration including MPA, Living Classrooms Foundation, the National Aquarium, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, raised $450,000. These funds will support ongoing programming and the continued work at Masonville Cove.

Ms. Miller shared highlights related to 2025 dredging projects. During the year, approximately two million cubic yards (cy) of dredged material were removed from the channels and placed at Cox Creek, Masonville, or Poplar Island. Work also began on the Colgate Creek dredging and geotube project, which involves dredging approximately 163,000 cy of material and using a direct into geotube inflow and dewatering approach. This is the first project of its kind that MPA is implementing, providing the opportunity to learn a great deal about this dewatering method.

Additionally, 1,600 cy of dredged material were beneficially used as a part of the Stony Beach Community Living Shoreline Project. Lastly, nine Innovative Reuse (IR) Research and Development (R&D) projects are either complete or nearing completion, and we expect all to be completed by the first half of 2026. Altogether, this reflects a significant amount of progress made throughout 2025.

Ms. Miller noted that, although it may be an unintended outcome of MPA projects, the placement sites have become truly exceptional birding habitats. In 2025, 224 bird species were recorded at Poplar Island, 229 at Hart-Miller Island, 202 at Masonville Cove, and 205 at Cox Creek and Swan Creek. According to the eBird listserv of overall species leaders and birding hotspots, Hart-Miller Island ranked as the number one birding hotspot in Maryland. Cox Creek and Swan Creek ranked sixth, Poplar Island ranked eleventh, and Masonville Cove ranked twelfth. All MPA dredged material placement sites placed within the top twenty statewide, which is a remarkable reflection of the ecological value these areas continue to provide.

Highlights from the 2025 community engagement efforts include recording just under 19,000 interactions with community members throughout the year. MPA also hosted 611 events and held 25 DMMP Committee meetings. These activities provided opportunities to share information and hear input from community members.

In 2025, MPA's educational programming reached more than 11,000 students through initiatives such as the Youth Birding Camp and the Masonville Cove Links WildSTEM internship program for college students. Over the course of the year, staff also engaged with 469 classrooms, 27 percent of which were certified Green Schools through the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE). Additionally, 36 percent of the classrooms served were Title I schools, representing students from predominantly low-income families.

MPA also partnered with the Baltimore Port Alliance to host a Hiring and Career Expo. This year's event was the largest to date, drawing in more than 300 job seekers and 43 employers.

3.0 Cox Creek DMCF Update **Darren Swift, MPA**

Mr. Swift shared planned Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF) inflow events for 2026. The Baltimore County Shallow Creek project, which involves 27,000 cy of material, is actively being received at the site. The HMI Pier Project, will produce 500 cy of material that was not included in the previous meeting update, was completed earlier this week. The Baltimore Sail250 dredging project will begin following the Shallow Creek and HMI Pier projects, with approximately 25,000 cy anticipated. Later this winter, federal maintenance dredging will begin, which includes work in a portion of the Seagirt West Channel as well as various sections of the Brewerton Channel. From these federal projects, approximately 530,000 cy of material is expected to be received over the winter season.

When Cox Creek DMCF was expanded in the +60 dike construction, it resulted in unavoidable impacts to 1.16 acres of nontidal wetlands and 2.32 acres of nontidal buffer area. To offset these impacts, a mitigation project site at the Genesee Valley Outdoor Learning Center in northern Baltimore County was identified. Although the +60 dike construction was completed some time ago, the mitigation project experienced delays due to contracting and permitting challenges. MES, on behalf of MPA, advertised the contract in fall 2025, with the solicitation for bids closing in late December 2025. The goal is to award the contract in late January or early February 2026 for a seven-month construction period, after which MPA will maintain and monitor the site in perpetuity as part of its mitigation responsibilities.

A time-lapse video of the Colgate Creek project was shown. Mr. Gakenheimer asked about the impacts of cold weather on the geotubes. Mr. Swift responded that the geotubes have performed well and continue to function as intended on site.

Mr. Swift further explained that, based on the most recent progress meeting held the previous day, the project is nearing completion, with only a few remaining high spots between Seagirt and

the Dundalk Marine Terminals. The total volume of material placed in the geotubes is approximately 178,000 cy.

Ms. Ashley asked whether the geotubes were able to contain all of the dredged material. Mr. Swift explained that not all material could be placed in the geotubes due to the presence of heavy clay that could not be converted into a pumpable slurry. As a result, the contractor requested approval for mechanical offloading. This alternative method used a scow docked at the pier and a crane with a clamshell bucket attachment. The material was removed by clamshell bucket, loaded into trucks, and transported to a nearby stockpile area adjacent to the waterside sediment basin. The material was left to dry since it had not been mixed into a slurry. Once freezing temperatures subside, the material will dry sufficiently to be processed and hauled off-site.

Mr. Swift explained that once the current phase is complete, all material in the geotubes must be removed from the DMCF to enable additional excavation and maximize capacity. Approximately 350,000 cy of additional material within the Cox Creek DMCF will need to be excavated, which will involve digging deeper into the cell to expand capacity. Although there has been a delay in the contracting process, award of the contract and issuance of a Notice to Proceed (NTP) are expected in late March or early April 2026, at which time excavation and associated hauling can begin. All geotube material and the additional excavated material must be removed from the DMCF by October 2027, in advance of the next inflow season.

4.0 BioChar Project **Larry Trout, Straughan Environmental**
Chuck Hegberg, RES

Mr. Swift introduced the biochar project and described its relevance to previous discussions regarding discharge permits and water management within the DMCF. Mr. Swift explained that when multiple inflow events occur in close succession, the facility can accumulate more water than can be readily managed. Mr. Swift emphasized that there are no water quality issues at the DMCF. The biochar study is intended to improve the ability to discharge water on demand, accept additional material, and provide an additional tool for DMCF operations. Another benefit of accelerating water removal, the material can consolidate more quickly, supporting capacity recovery.

Mr. Trout of Straughan Environmental and Mr. Hegberg of RES introduced themselves. Mr. Trout noted his 12 years of experience working with biochar following its introduction by Mr. Hegberg and highlighted their prior collaboration on biochar-related projects, adding that the study offers an opportunity to evaluate biochar's practical ability and benefits to filter various targeted permit contaminants using different biochars and amendments at the DMCF as an additional facility management tool to be used at the facility.

Mr. Trout reviewed the purpose and process of the Cox Creek DMCF, including the management of dredge material from the Baltimore Harbor through a process that allows solids to settle and ponded water to be discharged back into the river once it meets regulatory permit requirements.

Mr. Trout described the key water quality parameters evaluated in the study, noting that the effort was undertaken proactively to better understand and manage potential operational considerations. These parameters included total suspended solids (TSS), which can affect water clarity and may transport nutrients and metals; elevated pH, which, if it were to exceed permit limits, could restrict discharge and reduce treatment efficiency; nutrients such as ammonia, which at elevated levels have the potential to contribute to algal growth; and dissolved metals, which are monitored due to their potential effects on aquatic organisms if concentrations were to increase.

Mr. Hegberg explained that biochar, short for biological carbon, is a treatment media similar to activated carbon, such as that used in household water filters. Biochar is considered a green carbon because it is produced from waste stream materials. In the study, biochars were generally classified as either high mineral or high carbon types, depending on fixed carbon content and feedstock source. Biochar is produced through high-temperature processes such as pyrolysis or gasification, in which material is heated in the absence of oxygen, resulting in a highly porous carbon structure. This porous framework gives biochar its ability to interact with and remove various contaminants during treatment.

Biochar is widely regarded as a green, carbon-negative carbon material because of how it is produced and how it stores carbon. It is made from biomass waste streams that would otherwise decompose, be landfilled, or be burned, releasing carbon back into the atmosphere. Through pyrolysis, a portion of that biogenic carbon is fixed into a stable carbon matrix, allowing it to remain stored for the long term, provided the biochar is not later reused as a fuel. The process can also be largely self-sustaining, as the syngas and vapors generated during production are often used to supply the heat needed for pyrolysis, reducing or eliminating the need for external fossil fuels such as natural gas. From a cost and performance standpoint, biochar is generally a more affordable alternative to activated carbon, occupying a middle ground between charcoal and activated carbon in terms of carbon structure and functionality. By comparison, activated carbon is typically manufactured through more energy- and chemically intensive processes, often using coal-based feedstocks such as anthracite. Activated carbon has become increasingly expensive, particularly due to growing demand for treatment of emerging contaminants such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), making biochar a cost-competitive option for many water quality applications.

To address the key questions of the study, the project team conducted a pilot column test using simple bench-scale sampling with different carbon media to evaluate performance. Water

samples were collected from the Cox Creek DMCF; however, constituent concentrations in the site water were so low that the column testing did not produce measurable removal efficiencies. Mr. Hegberg explained that, to allow for meaningful evaluation, a test solution was prepared with constituent concentrations far higher than anything the facility would be expected to encounter. The column test duration was limited to ten minutes, which is insufficient for biological processes to occur; therefore, the results reflect only the physical adsorption capabilities of the carbon media for metals and other constituents.

The goal of the analysis was to evaluate performance under realistic flow conditions, recognizing that any future pilot system would need to be designed around MPA's typical discharge volumes, which average approximately five million gallons per month. Understanding these flow ranges will help determine how biochar can be incorporated into a modular treatment train, particularly when a single parameter, such as pH, limits discharge and targeted treatment is needed to meet permit requirements.

Mr. Hegberg stated that a full year of data was reviewed, including high, medium, low, and mean values. Based on this review, alkalinity, pH, and TSS were identified as the most relevant parameters, with pH playing a key role due to its influence on metal behavior and biological processes. Mr. Hegberg noted that the system functions similarly to a wastewater treatment plant, where water moves through clarifiers followed by aerobic and anaerobic treatment stages for nutrient removal.

A heat map was presented showing correlations among parameters, particularly between nitrogen and pH, suggesting that targeting specific parameters could improve overall system performance and support a more nature-based, passive treatment approach. Overall, the data indicated that conditions at the lower end of the observed ranges are not overly concerning. It was also noted that the data are highly seasonal, with summer conditions showing different patterns due to the absence of pumping and associated testing, and that rainfall significantly influences the results.

Column testing results from the Cox Creek DMCF were then presented. Mr. Hegberg explained that four biochars were evaluated, including two high-mineral types and two high-carbon types, to assess treatment efficiency. The mineral biochars performed well for ammonia removal and for copper and zinc, while the high-carbon biochars demonstrated greater effectiveness for copper and zinc removal.

Mr. Hegberg explained that analysis of nitrogen compounds showed negative removal values, indicating that nitrogen was released rather than retained under the test conditions, as illustrated in the reduction efficiency (char only) results that were presented. This outcome occurred because the short-duration column test (10 minute retention) did not allow sufficient time for biological processes to occur. While some nitrate removal was observed, total nitrogen removal

was not achieved, underscoring that effective nitrogen and phosphorus removal is largely dependent on biological activity. Mr. Hegberg also noted that early removal of ammonia is beneficial, as it reduces the potential for nitrate formation later in the treatment process.

Mr. Hegberg noted that additional refinement is needed, as not all biochar and media combinations were evaluated. However, the results to date indicate that different biochar types can directly remove certain constituents and can also function synergistically with additional media to enhance overall treatment performance.

Mr. Hegberg and Mr. Trout summarized that the study demonstrated biochar's ability to effectively reduce dissolved metals and ammonia, balance pH under gravity flow, and improve upstream solids removal. Improved solids removal is important because many contaminants bind to TSS, and reducing TSS also helps prevent clogging within the treatment train. Biochar is not intended to function as a sediment filter, and removal of suspended solids would occur through a separate treatment step within the overall system.

Building on these results, Mr. Hegberg explained that the findings informed the design and sequencing of the pilot treatment train. The study showed that biochar is most effective when used in combination with other treatment processes rather than as a standalone solution, functioning as an enhancer within the overall system. Biochar's large surface area supports the development of a biological film, similar to a carbon filter in an aquarium, where microbial activity contributes to pollutant removal. Increasing microbial presence on the biochar enhances treatment effectiveness. The study also reinforced that excess solids can interfere with downstream adsorption and that treatment order plays a critical role in overall system performance.

Ms. Merino inquired whether the report was available for review. Mr. Swift explained that the committee was seeing the material prior to MPA's review of the final report, but making the report available in the future after MPA review may be possible.

Mr. Christy asked what happens to the biochar once it becomes ineffective and whether it can be renewed or reused. Mr. Thompson responded that, given the constituent concentrations present at the DMCF, the biochar is not expected to reach its maximum capacity. The primary factor limiting biochar performance is clogging by sediment, which can reduce its ability to filter water. One reuse approach discussed was blending the material for use as landfill daily cover .

Mr. Hegberg explained that the treatment system is staged, with different components serving specific functions, such as dedicated metal-treatment areas. In some cases, biochar combined with other media, such as zeolite, could be incorporated into concrete, while other removed materials could be blended into soils, provided they do not interfere with biologically driven

processes managed by microbes. Mr. Hegberg noted that metals represent the primary consideration, as they remain tightly bound within high-mineral biochar and would require very low pH conditions to be released. Mr. Hegberg also noted that elevated alkalinity must be balanced to allow the necessary chemical and biological processes to function effectively.

Mr. Hegberg reviewed the staged treatment train design. Stage 0 consists of a small pilot system operated first to confirm system performance prior to scaling up, allowing greater control over influent conditions entering subsequent stages. Stage 1 removes the majority of TSS, followed by Stage 2, which captures finer particulates not removed upstream. Stage 3 incorporates a filtration system containing biochar, sand, zeolite, and sulfur to target dissolved constituents, including metals and ammonium. Stage 4, referred to as the phosphorus polisher, provides final phosphorus removal as a polishing step. Stage 5, the denitrifying bioreactor, provides additional nitrate reduction if needed using a wood-chip media designed to remain saturated and functional for approximately 20 years.

Mr. Hegberg also discussed limitations observed during the study, explaining that fluctuating water conditions make it difficult to establish a clear breakpoint for media replacement and noted that certain treatment processes, particularly nitrate removal, require longer contact times to be effective. Mr. Hegberg further noted that headloss increases with additional treatment stages and emphasized that maintaining system performance would require routine monitoring and periodic media management.

Mr. Trout explained why the study was relevant to the Cox Creek DMCF, noting that its purpose was to support transparent, data-driven decision-making and provide flexibility in selecting treatment options while identifying controllable water quality parameters. He added that the study also sought to clarify tradeoffs between performance and system complexity. In addition, the effort aimed to guide future water-treatment approaches using sustainable materials, which is why biochar, a renewable, biomass-based product, was evaluated as a potential option.

The next steps for this study include finalizing the report and working with MPA to determine whether to pursue a pilot project. Mr. Hegberg also noted that a few other states have implemented permanent systems similar to those discussed for Cox Creek and that these systems have been successful.

Ms. Keene inquired whether biochar, once removed from the treatment system, could be blended with dredged material. Mr. Hegberg confirmed that it could.

Ms. Sliviak asked about the disposition of constituents associated with the biochar once it is removed from service and whether there are environmental impacts associated with the material. Mr. Hegberg explained that the environmental impacts associated with biochar production are

relatively low because the source material, wood biomass, is processed in a low-oxygen environment that primarily produces carbon dioxide and water. Mr. Hegberg noted that most high-end commercial production facilities are equipped with baghouses or electrostatic systems to capture particulate matter. Potential issues such as high mineral tars, nitrogen oxides, or sulfur oxides are generally associated with processing materials such as municipal solid waste or pressure-treated wood, which are not used in this application. Mr. Hegberg added that advanced systems include an oxidizer, whereby gases produced during char formation at temperatures of approximately 1,000 to 1,400 degrees are directed into an oxidizer where air is introduced, raising temperatures to approximately 1,800 to 2,000 degrees and effectively destroying remaining harmful compounds.

Ms. Sliviak further inquired about what happens to biochar once it is no longer effective. Mr. Hegberg explained that spent biochar can be repurposed and blended into soil products or incorporated into concrete or similar materials, depending on the application.

Mr. Hegberg noted that the use of biochar within the Chesapeake Bay watershed is expanding rapidly. For those interested in additional technical background, attendees were directed to the Chesapeake Bay Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee website and the 2024 report on biochar that discusses its production methods, history, and role in the circular economy.

5.0 Swan Creek Nature Trail **Joseph Ross, MPA**

Mr. Ross provided a brief update on the Swan Creek Nature Trail (SCNT) project, stating that the project has officially entered the advertising phase, with a solicitation for bids currently being advertised. MPA was able to proceed with this step after obtaining the required approvals from representatives at State Highway Administration for the Recreational Trails Program grant. Additionally, MPA has submitted final structural, landscaping, and erosion and sediment control plans as well as trail specifications to State Highway Administration (SHA) for approval as a part of the grant process.

Mr. Ross reviewed the project time-of-year (TOY) restrictions, which include limitations to protect sensitive species such as bald eagles, herons, and forest interior-dwelling species. Mr. Ross explained that while these restrictions constrain certain construction activities during specified periods, work may continue in areas outside the TOY boundaries, including parking lots, staging areas, mowing zones, and other open spaces.

MPA anticipates issuing a NTP on August 1 to the selected contractor, which would allow limited preliminary work to begin prior to the full lifting of TOY restrictions later in August 2026. The period leading up to that date will involve numerous meetings and site visits due to the sensitivity of the project area, including the need to account for species-specific considerations such as eagle and heron buffer requirements if nesting activity is identified.

Ms. Warner inquired whether the SCNT would be open by December 2026. Mr. Ross responded that the anticipated opening is early 2027.

6.0 IR/BU implementation Update **Kelvin Moulden, MPA**

Mr. Moulden provided updates on IR and beneficial use (BU). The Cox Creek Sediment Technology and Reuse (STAR) facility site was divided into five operable units (OUs) to facilitate remediation management. Dividing the site into separate units allows areas with different remediation needs to be addressed. In this case, it has enabled progress toward closing out the Upland OU, which requires remediation. The Upland OU is also the area where the IR operators will eventually be located. Completing this portion earlier is important because it supports the timeline for successfully launching the IRBU program. The remedial action plans (RAPs) for all OUs have been approved.

Mr. Moulden reviewed projects completed during the pilot R&D phase, noting that MPA is transitioning from investigatory initiatives to implementation. MPA awarded nine R&D projects, with seven currently complete.

The latest completed project is Northgate Environmental Management who examined the use of cement clinker, which is a precursor to cement production, along with supplementary materials that can serve as a partial replacement for traditional cement. This material is not a full substitute for cement, but it functions as a replacement component. Their analysis showed that up to about 20% of the cement could be replaced with dredged-material-based supplementary cementitious material (SCM) .

The University of Maryland is evaluating vegetated earth berms developed using dredge material. This project is scheduled to be completed by the end of May 2026, and presented at the May IRC meeting.

Finally, Harbor Rock is developing lightweight aggregate and component cementitious materials derived from dredged sediment. Their findings are scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2026, and presented at the February IRC meeting.

Mr. Moulden reviewed targeted capacity recovery goals for the Cox Creek DMCF. For State Fiscal Year 2026, the goal is to reclaim approximately 50,000 cy of material directly from the waterside cell of the Cox Creek DMCF. This effort is planned to scale up over the following five years and continue beyond that period, with the long-term objective of achieving a one-to-one balance between the volume of material received at the DMCF and the volume of material recovered. Reclaimed material could be directed to an IR producer at the STAR facility or used for MPA-led initiatives. Mr. Moulden noted that recovering capacity at the DMCF has a direct monetary value for MPA, explaining that reclaiming approximately 1.2 million cy of material over a five-year period represents an estimated cost benefit of roughly $37 million.

Mr. Moulden described the prospective IR projects that were connected to the Colgate Creek dredging project discussed earlier in the meeting. Both the material dried via geotubes and that mechanically unloaded are expected to be used in IR applications.

The first two sites, Hawkins Point DMCF South Cell and the Masonville Kurt Iron Slip, are prioritized because they are MPA-owned. At Hawkins Point, the material would be used to grade and close out the DMCF, while at Masonville there is potential to use the material during a future phase of dike raising on the interior slopes.

The Baltimore Peninsula site has experienced changes in development and investment partners. Despite these changes, MPA plans to reach out to the current partners during the first quarter of the year to assess their continued interest in using the material.

Finally, the BGE Riverside Substation near Turner Station was identified as a potential site requiring material to support remediation of an emerging wetland. Challenges were noted because soils being removed from the site are impacted by arsenic. Preliminary testing of material from Colgate Creek indicated the presence of some arsenic; therefore, the suitability of using Colgate Creek material at this location remains under evaluation.

One of the major initiatives currently underway is a bench-scale geotube study evaluating different combinations of geotextile fabrics and polymers to identify the most effective approach for dewatering sediments. Because no single method is suitable for all sediment types, the study is intended to develop a site-specific geotextile and polymer design tailored to sediment conditions at the Cox Creek DMCF. Currently, jar and pillow testing are being conducted. A laboratory analysis and summary memorandum are expected by the end of January or early February. All polymers being evaluated are included on the Maryland Department of the Environment approved list.

MPA is pursuing several capacity recovery strategies to help achieve projected targets. As a part of this, material is being excavated from the DMCF to dry on the interior slopes. This effort has resulted in approximately 1,600 cy of material reclaimed to date, with the potential to recover an additional 2,000 cy. Moving the material onto the slopes helps it dry more effectively, allowing it to be excavated later and stockpiled for potential reuse.

Mr. Moulden noted that surplus geotubes from the Mid-Bay Project had become available and were transported to Cox Creek for potential future MPA-led dewatering activities. Ms. Ashley asked about the status of the recently acquired geotubes. Mr. Moulden explained that the geotubes are currently rolled and empty, and that each includes an internal liner designed to capture fine-grained sediments. Mr. Thompson asked about geotube capacity, and Mr. Moulden responded that capacity varies by size, with individual tubes capable of holding approximately 500 to 2,000 cy of material.

A Request for Information (RFI) was issued to invite private industry to share concepts for developing a large-scale, IR facility at the STAR property. The RFI was released in September 2025 and closed in December 2025, during which time six responses were received. The purpose of the RFI was not to conduct a procurement or select a contractor; rather, it was intended to identify potential operations with which MPA could engage in further discussions and negotiations. No awards will result directly from this process.

MPA is currently in the process of forming an evaluation team. The review is expected to follow a phased approach, with an initial team conducting a preliminary assessment of the submitted responses. The subsequent phase will involve additional groups, including legal, to support the review process. These groups will focus on evaluating the responses in greater detail and assessing the technical and operational feasibility of the proposed concepts.

Mr. Moulden provided an update on the IRBU Strategy document, noting that it has received Executive Committee approval. The IRBU Strategy document was developed with input from the IRC and serves as a roadmap for the program's approach to policy development, technical and operational feasibility, and overall engagement related to IR. The IRC meeting held in early February 2025 included small-group discussions that informed updates to the version developed in 2020. Over the five-year period between versions, the IR program experienced substantial progress, including notable milestones such as finalizing a specification with SHA.

Ms. Sliviak inquired about the HarborRock website, noting that information could be interpreted as suggesting that a project in Baltimore was finalized. Mr. Moulden responded that HarborRock's involvement with MPA has occurred through the previously discussed IRBU R&D program, which supports pilot initiatives focused on technical and operational feasibility, and scalability. Mr. Moulden clarified that MPA does not have any additional agreements or contracts in place that would support listing Baltimore as a fully operational location on HarborRock's website. MPA has encouraged parties interested in future IR partnerships to engage through the formal RFI process. Mr. Swift confirmed that MPA is aware of the conflicting information on the HarborRock website and has reached out regarding it .

Roundtable Remarks & Open Discussion **All Attendees**

Mr. Christy announced that PSG will host its 2026 kickoff event at Kurtz's Beach on February 14 and 15, 2026 with attendance expected to exceed 3,000 participants over the two days. The event will serve as a major gathering for the local fishing community and will feature more than 100 vendors, along with participation from the Coast Guard and the Key Bridge rebuild team. The entry fee for the event is five dollars. In response to a question from Ms. Jones, Mr. Schmidt confirmed that tents, pavilions, and limited indoor areas will be available.

7.0 Upcoming Events and Adjournment **Angie Ashley, Facilitator**

Ms. Ashley shared that the 2026 Cox Creek C O C meetings are on April 22, July 22, and October 28. Additionally, the 2026 Cox Creek open house will be on October 18.