FINAL SUMMARY OF THE COX CREEK
CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
April 22, 2026 - 5:30 PM
Cox Creek Operations and Maintenance Complex
1000 Kembo Road, Curtis Bay, MD 21226
Hybrid Meeting

Attendees:
Anne Arundel County Bird Club: Dawn Merino*
Anne Arundel Patapsco River Alliance (AAPRA): Thomas Marston
Arcadis: Bert Buell
Community Member: Evelyn Hoon
Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee (COC) Facilitator: Angie Ashley
Maryland Environmental Service (MES): Amber Peters, Dallas Henson, Robert Natarian
Maryland Port Administration (MPA): Bertrand Djiki, Darren Swift, Holly Miller, Joseph Ross, Katrina Jones, Kelvin Moulden, Nathan Thompson
Northgate Environmental: Jacob Lacy
Pasadena Sportfishing Group (PSG): Robert Christy*
Resident of Legislative District 31: Gary Gakenheimer*
Riviera Beach Community: Karen Warner
Rock Creek Community: Ruth Sliviak

* Denotes Cox Creek COC members.

Action Items:
- No action items were recorded.

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 COC Meeting. Ms. Ashley welcomed attendees, called the meeting to order, and led introductions. Mr. Gakenheimer provided opening remarks and requested a motion to approve the January 21, 2026, Cox Creek COC meeting summary, which the Committee approved.

2.0 NIS Announcements **Holly Miller, MPA**

Ms. Miller announced the next *Get to Scoop on Dredging* Community event on June 3, 2026 at the Riviera Beach Public Library in Pasadena. This event is an opportunity for community members to learn more about dredging, meet experts, and ask questions. It will be an open-house style event, with stations focusing on different aspects of the program or process.

Additionally, on April 30th, the Baltimore Port Alliance is hosting its Spring Hiring and Career Expo to help employers find talent, strengthen the maritime workforce, and connect professionals, recent high school graduates, and college students with opportunities in the maritime transportation and logistics sector. The Expo will be held at the Community College of

Baltimore County- Dundalk Campus.

Ms. Miller provided an update on the proposed Brandon Shores Housing and Redevelopment Project, which is planned to be developed adjacent to the Cox Creek Forested Conservation Easement Area. A public meeting was held on March 5, 2026, followed by a public comment period that closed on March 19, 2026. All of the materials, including plans and the meeting recording, are posted on the Anne Arundel County website. A packet of materials, including the public comments and responses, has been mailed to those who submitted official comments.

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

Mr. Swift reviewed the 2026 Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF) inflow events, beginning with the Shallow Creek project, which involves 25,000 cubic yards (cy) of material and is currently underway. To date, approximately half the material has been received. However, due to weather-related delays, the project is anticipated to be completed before seasonal time-of-year restrictions (TOYR) take effect.

Mr. Swift noted that the Hart-Miller Island Pier and Baltimore SAIL250 inflow projects have been completed. Federal maintenance dredging, which includes work in a portion of the Seagirt West Channel as well as several sections of the Brewerton Channel, has been delayed by the contractor. As a result, dredging activities in the Baltimore Harbor are now expected to begin in mid- to late June. This federal maintenance dredging is anticipated to be completed in July and will involve approximately 530,000 cy of material. To date, in 2026, about 65 million gallons of water have been discharged from the DMCF.

Other updates related to the Cox Creek DMCF include progress on the +80 dike design. The dikes are currently at +60, and work on the +80 design is underway. The design effort is approaching the 30% completion stage. Mr. Djiki added that the design is planned to be completed in 2027.

Further excavation of the upland cell at the Cox Creek DMCF is planned to begin in fall 2026 to maximize available capacity at the facility. In advance of this, the Colgate Creek material currently dewatering in geotubes in the upland cell will be removed and transported to designated locations.

Mr. Swift reviewed DMCF operations and shared updates on the biochar project that was presented at the previous meeting. He explained that dredged material arriving at Cox Creek is typically hydraulically offloaded and mixed with water to form a slurry, which brings significant water into the facility. Additional water accumulates from rain and other weather. To maximize capacity, the team focuses on removing this water efficiently so the material can dewater and consolidate. Over the next 20 years, the DMCF will need to manage about 22 million cubic yards of dredged material from channel maintenance dredging activities.

Before any material is placed in the DMCF, it must undergo rigorous testing. Only non-hazardous material is permitted to enter the facility. Material is classified as non-hazardous based on the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) test.

Another method used to place dredged material in the DMCF is mechanical. Mechanical placement does not involve the addition of water. In this process, a scow arrives at the site, a crane uses equipment such as a clamshell to remove the material, and the material is placed into dump trucks. Those trucks then transport the material to a constructed offloading area, where it is mechanically deposited into the DMCF.

Once the majority of the water is discharged from the DMCF, the material is allowed to dry and consolidate through a process called crust management. As drying progresses, the MES on-site operations team, led by Mr. Natarian, begins trenching around the perimeter of the facility to direct remaining water to low points and discharge locations. Efficient removal of water supports material consolidation and helps restore capacity for future dredge material inflow events.

A photo of the pre-discharge water quality sampling was shown. Mr. Swift explained that prior to any discharge, water is sampled, tested, and the results compared against the limits specified in the discharge permit. Sampling parameters include pH, total solids, copper, zinc, and ammonia. If the sample results are within permit limits, the water may be discharged. If results exceed the permit thresholds, the water cannot be released. The current practice is to hold the water until it meets permit requirements. Throughout discharge, water is sampled at regular intervals of every twenty minutes using specialized sampling equipment to ensure ongoing compliance.

A snapshot of the discharge permit was displayed, outlining the required sampling parameters and associated reporting limits for each parameter. All results are reported to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), which reviews and monitors the data, typically quarterly. Mr. Swift highlighted that for nitrogen and phosphorus, the permit only requires reporting, with no daily maximums or monthly averages. Ms. Miller explained that the absence of permit limits for nitrogen and phosphorus is due to a Harbor-wide discharge permit for nutrients, under which the Cox Creek and Masonville DMCFs are assigned waste load allocations under the total maximum daily load (TMDL). Limits on nutrient discharges for all MPA Baltimore Harbor sites (Masonville and Cox Creek DMCFs) are set and reported under this permit, with limits applied to the combined discharges from both sites.

Mr. Swift explained that no PCBs or chlordane have been detected in the water at the site to date. As a result, these parameters are included for reporting purposes so that MDE can continue monitoring for any elevated concentrations. Mr. Thompson added that this information also

supports the development of harbor-wide TMDLs, noting that all permitted facilities are required to report PCBs to help MDE better understand overall discharge conditions throughout the Harbor.

Ms. Ashley asked whether the material is tested prior to being brought into the DMCF, and Ms. Miller confirmed that it is.

Mr. Swift reiterated that all water must meet discharge permit requirements before release and is therefore sampled and tested before and throughout discharge. If water levels become too high within the DMCF, the dredging contractor will recirculate the water by reusing it to create slurry with incoming dredged material and pumping it back into the facility. This approach supports water level management.

Because water quality issues outside of permit limits can prevent discharge back into the Patapsco River, the operations team began exploring biochar as a potential filtration or treatment option to expand discharge opportunities, improve operations, and free up capacity for consolidation. As an example, in summer 2025, an algal bloom occurred due to elevated nutrient levels, which also contributed to higher pH. These conditions, which commonly occur when water remains in a DMCF during warmer months, prevented discharge and highlighted the need to investigate treatment options such as biochar.

During the previous meeting, the team presented results from bench-scale laboratory testing, which demonstrated that biochar could decrease levels of total suspended solids (TSS), pH, nutrients, and some dissolved metals. Potential next steps were discussed, including whether the project moves forward, and whether treated water should be recirculated within the DMCF to gradually improve overall water quality over time or treated and discharged directly. Any demonstration project would include testing water before and after treatment to ensure permit compliance prior to discharge. The overall process would remain similar to existing operations, with dredged material inflow and stormwater collecting in the DMCF, followed by an added treatment step when needed.

Mr. Gakenheimer asked whether the order of testing the water and the biochar treatment should be switched, noting that water should be tested first since treatment may not be needed if the water already meets requirements. Mr. Swift agreed and explained that biochar treatment would only be used when water does not meet permit requirements, not on a continuous basis. Mr. Swift also emphasized that testing would occur both before and after treatment to verify effectiveness and ensure compliance before discharge.

Mr. Gakenheimer asked whether testing is completed in real time or sent for analysis. Ms. Miller stated that some tests are conducted on-site, while others are sent to a laboratory. Parameters

such as TSS, ammonia, phosphates, and pH can be analyzed on-site, while others, such as metals, are sent to a contracted lab Mr. Thompson noted that laboratory results generally do not fluctuate significantly over short timeframes.

Mr. Swift noted that the team is exploring a small-scale, on-site pilot project that would incorporate water treatment before discharge. The overall objective is to reduce retained water, increase available capacity, and improve the ability to manage water levels ahead of warmer conditions that may lead to algal blooms.

Mr. Christy noted that continual circulation of water could help reduce algae growth.

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

Mr. Ross provided a brief update and overview of the Swan Creek Nature Trail (SCNT) project, reminding attendees that the approximately two-mile loop trail is designed through the Cox Creek Forested Conservation Easement Area and Swan Creek Wetlands and will include three boardwalks and one pedestrian bridge to help users navigate low or wet areas, including a swale that supports stormwater management from the DMCF.

The trail will offer hiking and walking opportunities, accessible viewpoints, and four outdoor classroom areas with interpretive signage focused on themes such as birding, woodland animals, native plants, and amphibians. Additional points of interest include the shoreline area and the location of historical shore shacks. The trail base itself will be a natural soil trail base and is ADA accessible, not compliant, given the nature of the area.

Mr. Ross reviewed the anticipated project schedule, noting that advertisement of the project and related site visits occurred earlier in 2026. Bids were due March 6, 2026, and nine competitive bids were received. The submitted bids have been reviewed, and the project team is working on the Concurrence in Award (CIA) paperwork required by the State Highway Administration (SHA) associated with the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants. Contract award is anticipated for mid-May 2026, followed by a pre-construction meeting in June 2026. It is anticipated that the selected contractor will receive Notice to Proceed (NTP) on July 1, 2026, with mobilization beginning in August 2026.

Construction is anticipated to begin October 1, 2026, at the latest; however, the project team has submitted an Eastern Black Rail TOYR Waiver Request Form to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, which, if approved, would allow construction to begin September 1, 2026. MPA is interested in seeing how long it will take to walk the trail in its entirety, which will be determined once the trail is open to the public. Additionally, MPA will be collaborating with local communities to determine how visitors intend to use the trail whether it be for birding, exercise, or simply enjoying nature.

Mr. Ross noted that considerations related to the potential development are being incorporated, including no-trespassing measures and clear distinctions between the trail and adjacent property.

Mr. Gakenheimer inquired about the stage of construction in October 2026 and what may be completed in time for the annual Open House. Mr. Ross explained that while full construction may not be complete, there could be an opportunity to preview a limited portion of the trail during the open house.

Mr. Gakenheimer asked whether construction would be limited to weekdays. Mr. Ross confirmed that construction would likely occur Monday through Friday.

Ms. Warner asked if the previously discussed construction timeline estimate of about three months was still valid. Mr. Ross explained that the estimated construction duration is approximately 120 days, assuming no significant delays from weather or other factors. This estimate is based on active construction days; however, the contractor may be on-site longer than this timeframe to work around TOY restrictions and adverse weather days.

Mr. Marston inquired about the management of the walking trail, particularly during closed hours, and how this may be affected by the planned adjacent residential development. Mr. Ross noted that MPA property will include additional signage clearly indicating property boundaries. While fencing along the SCNT and surrounding areas is not currently proposed, the DMCF will continue to be treated as an active construction site, with protective barriers and appropriate signage in place to restrict public access. Mr. Ross highlighted additional property owners and easement holders in the immediate area and noted that coordination with these entities may be of benefit. Ms. Miller added that the Maryland Transportation Authority Police and Maryland Natural Resources Police currently monitor the property, in part due to past poaching issues, and that these enforcement efforts will continue.

The Committee continued by discussing potential impacts associated with the future adjacent housing development, including those to existing onsite wildlife, including a resident beaver, and additional access points from historic routes to the waterfront, including abandoned rail lines and roadways.

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

Mr. Moulden provided updates on capacity recovery at the Cox Creek DMCF, beginning with background on why capacity recovery is pursued and what the future looks like.

The targeted capacity recovery goals for the Cox Creek DMCF were shown. For the state Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), 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 next five years

and continue beyond that timeframe, with the long-term goal of achieving a one-to-one balance between the volume of material received at the DMCF and the volume of material recovered.

Mr. Moulden described prospective IR projects associated with the Colgate Creek dredging effort. The first site is the Hawkins Point DMCF South Cell, as the north cell has been closed out and reforested with more than 3,000 trees. In the future, the south cell is planned to be closed out once it has received approximately 45,000 cy of material.

The next MPA property that will receive dredged material reclaimed or diverted from the Cox Creek DMCF is the Masonville Kurt Iron Slip. This site can accept up to approximately 150,000 cy of material. Some material will most likely be used for the next stage of dike raising to +42 feet.

The BGE Riverside Substation near Turner Station includes an area impacted by contaminated soils that are being considered for removal and backfilling with dredged material. Project timelines are being coordinated with material availability, potentially aligning in late summer.

Finally, there are still some questions regarding the Baltimore Peninsula project due to recent changes in the development team. Mr. Moulden noted that MPA has reached out to reconnect and better understand how much material may be needed. Earlier estimates were up to 700,000 cy, but that amount could change depending on how the property is ultimately developed.

Mr. Moulden described ongoing capacity recovery efforts in the Waterside Cell, noting that Mr. Natarian and the on-site operations team are using a simple, but effective approach involving a floating excavator mounted on a pontoon to stockpile material along the interior slopes of the dike. Spreading the material allows it to dry and be recovered for future reuse, with approximately 3,500 cy recovered to date.

Material from the Shallow Creek project was also referenced, noting the identification of sand within the dredged material. Sand is more readily usable due to its engineering properties, its ability to dry more quickly, and its lower water content, which allows it to be recovered and transported sooner. Approximately 600 cy of sand has been set aside to date.

Mr. Moulden then described an RFP targeting the recovery of 50,000 cy of material from the waterside cell, with work staged on the north-south cross-dike between the waterside cell and the upland cell. The RFP was advertised in February 2026, bids were received in late March 2026, and the procurement process is underway, with the goal of issuing a notice to proceed in May 2026 to recover the material by June 30, 2026. Dewatering and hauling would continue into the next fiscal year, with the contractor responsible for recovery and dewatering on the cross-dike before MES operations transport the material to stockpile locations.

Mr. Moulden discussed the geotube pilot project, which involves the study of geotube fabrics and dewatering flocculants through bench-scale testing to determine the most effective combination for Cox Creek material, noting that dewatering is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The project is currently nearing the completion of Phase II. Phase III of the project is planned to involve a full-scale pilot project and was originally considered for the north–south cross dike; however,

due to upcoming activities at Cox Creek and the need to focus on capacity recovery efforts at that location, Phase III is currently being paused.

An area of property adjacent to the Cox Creek DMCF has been designated as a dewatering field, which would be an MPA-led effort and could support future geotube operations. Mr. Moulden noted that the project is currently in the permitting phase and is expected to move forward. This effort would allow dewatered material to be made available for innovative reuse and beneficial use projects led by MPA, including potential living shoreline applications for local governments and communities. This approach supports overall capacity recovery and reflects the intent of the cross-property access road, which was constructed to facilitate efficient movement of personnel, equipment, and material.

Mr. Moulden also noted designated stockpile areas at the neighboring Cox Creek Sediment Technology and Ruse (STAR) property, which is currently in the permitting phase. The site could accommodate approximately 32,000 cy of dewatered material. Mr. Moulden emphasized that efforts are ongoing to develop sustainable partnerships and establish reliable pipelines for long-term material end use. A previous demonstration project with Baltimore City Department of Public Works at the Quarantine Road Landfill, where dredged material was successfully used as daily cover, was referenced. Building on the success of that effort, Mr. Moulden noted that MPA is investigating re-engaging with Baltimore City to pursue a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that would allow for a consistent supply of material. Outreach is also underway to soil producers, and suppliers are underway to explore partnerships that could connect a reliable supply of dredged material with projects requiring imported soils, emphasizing a focus on establishing long-term, sustained relationships with industry partners.

Ms. Warner inquired about a former industrial facility and its current status, noting environmental concerns. Mr. Moulden stated that the property has been acquired by MPA, renamed the STAR facility, and is currently undergoing remediation in coordination with MDE, along with site development efforts.

Mr. Gakenheimer also inquired about other businesses located on the STAR property. Mr. Moulden noted that one business, Kemira Water Solutions, owns and occupies a portion of property within the boundaries of the STAR facility.

Roundtable Remarks & Open Discussion **All Attendees**

Mr. Gakenheimer inquired about the status of the Masonville Shared Use Path and whether work was still underway. Mr. Ross responded that the project is ongoing with design concepts under review.

Mr. Gakenheimer also shared information on the May 2, 2026 Community Association Summit hosted by the County Executive's Office of Community Engagement & Constituent Services on May 2, 2026 at Anne Arundel Community College.

Mr. Christy noted that the Pasadena Sport Fishing Group held its inaugural 2026 opening show in February and, despite rainy weather, had strong attendance with approximately 2,800

participants. The event included participation from the Coast Guard, the Maryland Department of Transportation Key Bridge Rebuild team, and the Chesapeake Bay Ship Watchers.

Mr. Christy then announced the upcoming Spring Kids Fishing Derby at Fort Smallwood Park, scheduled for June 6, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The event is open to participants ages 5–8 and 9–14, with prizes awarded. All participants receive fishing gear, food, and snacks. While registration requires a $5 fee, it is returned at the event to encourage attendance. Registration is available through the Pasadena Sport Fishing Group's Facebook page or website. In response to a question from Ms. Warner, Mr. Christy clarified that the maximum age is 15 and that parents do not need to hold a fishing license.

Mr. Gakenheimer reminded the group that Safety Awareness Week begins the week of April 27, 2026, held in response to the I-695 incident a few years ago. Events typically include parades of trucks, motorcycles, and cars traveling through the area to promote safety awareness.

Mr. Christy also shared a community announcement regarding Downs Park, noting that Family Fun Day will be held on June 6, 2026. It was a well-attended community event featuring local businesses.

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

Ms. Ashley shared that the next Cox Creek COC meetings are on July 22, 2026 and October 28, 2026. Additionally, the 2026 Cox Creek open house will be on October 18, 2026 and the next Get The Scoop on Dredging will be held on June 3, 2026 at the Rivera Beach Library.