

PEARCE CREEK IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
May 15, 2026, 10:00 AM
90B North Center Street
Cecilton, MD 21919

Attendees:

Bay View Estates (BVE) Residents: Dave Heacock

Maryland Environmental Service (MES): Saeka Foreman, Christine Offerman*

Maryland Port Administration (MPA): Amanda Peñafiel

US Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District (CENAP): Michael Hart

**Meeting Facilitator*

Action Items:

- CENAP will examine the vegetation along Pond Neck Road to address the issue of the blind corner.

1.0 Welcome & Introductions

Ms. Offerman, Facilitator

- Ms. Offerman welcomed the attendees to the meeting, and the attendees introduced themselves.

2.0 Philadelphia District Corps (CENAP) Update

Michael Hart, CENAP

Pearce Creek DMCF Operations

- Mr. Hart stated the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 25 dredging contract was completed in mid-April 2026.
 - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District (CENAP), received an extension for the dredging window from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) due to delays caused by ice during the winter.
 - Approximately 730,000 cubic yards (cy) of dredged material were removed from the upper Chesapeake Bay channels and placed at the Pearce Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF).
- Mr. Hart stated that the next contract is anticipated to remove 500,000 cy of dredged material.
 - The majority of the material will be placed at the Pearce Creek DMCF.
- Mr. Heacock inquired about the estimated time frame in which the Pearce Creek DMCF will reach full capacity.
 - Mr. Hart stated that CENAP is planning to conduct Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) surveys to evaluate the time frame in which the Pearce Creek DMCF will be full.
 - It is estimated that an additional 3-4 dredging cycles will fill the Pearce Creek DMCF at its current elevation, depending on the quantity of material that is dredged.
 - CENAP will begin developing plans and specifications for designs to raise the dike elevation, increasing available capacity. Dike construction is estimated to take place over a two-year period.

3.0 MPA Updates

Spring 2025 Exterior Monitoring Update

Amanda Peñafiel, MPA
Christine Offerman, MES

- Ms. Peñafiel stated that sampling for the Spring 2026 exterior monitoring was completed the week of 5/11.
 - The lab results from the Spring 2026 exterior monitoring are anticipated to be received later this year and presented in Spring 2027.
- Ms. Offerman stated that two (2) exterior monitoring events occurred in 2025 (Spring and Fall 2025) due to the updated Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Water Quality Certification requirement.
- Baseline samples were collected in Fall 2015, Spring and Fall 2016, and Spring 2017.
 - The post-placement monitoring has occurred since Spring 2018.
 - The Spring and Fall 2025 sampling programs tested for surface water chemistry, sediment chemistry, sediment bioassays, and benthic community.
 - Ms. Offerman noted that the benthic community metrics in the monitoring reports differ between the Spring and Fall sampling due to the time-of-year restriction for use of the Chesapeake Bay Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (B-IBI) metrics which require samples to be collected between July 15 and September 30.
- Ms. Offerman identified the testing site locations on a map, which includes six (6) monitoring locations and one (1) reference site in Pearce Creek Lake and one (1) monitoring location and one (1) reference site in the Elk River.
 - Ms. Offerman stated that the reference sites represent areas that are not influenced by the discharge from the DMCF so that they can be used as a baseline.
- The data for the surface water results were comparable between the reference and monitoring locations.
 - The data were within the range of baseline concentrations.
 - Hardness in the Pearce Creek Lake was significantly higher than the baseline, but the data was comparable between the reference and monitoring locations.
 - The chemical testing presented overall low concentrations and was consistent with results from previous sampling events.
 - There were no exceedances of the water quality criteria.
- The data for the sediment results were comparable between the reference and monitoring locations and were also generally within the range or slightly below the baseline concentrations.
 - The Pearce Creek Lake monitoring and reference locations consisted of silts and clays, and Pearce Creek Lake 7 (PCL-07) consisted of sand and silts.
 - The Elk River monitoring location consisted of mostly gravel and sand with some silt and clay.
 - The Elk River reference location consisted mostly of silt with some gravel, sand, and clay.
 - The nutrients in the sediments were naturally variable at all locations but were generally within the range of or less than baseline concentrations and comparable to the reference location.
 - Ms. Offerman noted that there was generally higher sulfide at most Pearce Creek Lake locations but were consistent between the monitoring locations and reference location.
- The results of the chemical testing were compared to the freshwater sediment guidelines.
 - Each chemical has two (2) values which are the threshold effect concentration (TEC) and probable effect concentration (PEC).

- Ms. Offerman noted that the effects do not indicate mortality but have potential for impact.
- Metals that were tested were generally consistent with the baseline data.
 - Six (6) metals at the Pearce Creek Lake monitoring locations and four (4) metals at the reference site were between the TEC and PEC. Nickel (Ni) concentrations exceeded the PEC at the monitoring locations and reference site which is anticipated as Ni is naturally high in the region.
 - Ni and Zinc (Zn) exceeded the TEC at the Elk River monitoring location and reference site.
 - Concentrations of all metals were higher at the Elk River reference site compared to the monitoring location.
 - Mr. Heacock asked if the concentrations were higher due to the lack of rain this past year.
 - Ms. Offerman stated that the lack of rainfall could potentially be the cause of the higher concentrations of metals.
- The 10-day whole sediment toxicity testing was conducted using *Hyaella azteca*.
 - The results for each location were compared to the reference site and baseline data that were collected from previous sampling events.
 - The results were consistent with the baseline data, in which the survival rate was high for the Pearce Creek Lake and Elk River sediments, indicating that the sediments support benthic organisms.
- Most of the benthic community metrics were within the range of the baseline data, and abundance was consistent with the baseline data.
 - Localized variability has been identified, but the overall benthic community condition has not substantially changed.
 - The Chesapeake Bay B-IBI was not used as the spring sampling event was outside the required timeframe.
- Ms. Offerman concluded that the Spring 2025 exterior monitoring was the tenth round of post-placement monitoring since placement at the Pearce Creek DMCF in December 2017.
 - Results from all testing are consistent with previous sampling events.

Fall 2025 Exterior Monitoring Update

- Ms. Offerman stated that the data for the surface water results were comparable between the reference and monitoring locations.
 - The data were within the range of baseline concentrations.
 - Hardness in the Pearce Creek Lake was higher than the baseline, but the data were comparable between the reference and monitoring locations.
 - The chemical testing presented overall low concentrations and was consistent with results from previous sampling events.
 - The results were within the range of concentrations observed during the baseline monitoring events, with the exception of Manganese (Mn) and Iron (Fe).
 - The concentrations at the reference site were greater than the baseline, which suggests that the concentrations are not related to the Pearce Creek DMCF.
 - There were no exceedances of the water quality criteria.
- The data for the sediment results were comparable between the reference and monitoring locations and were also generally within the range or slightly above the baseline concentrations.
 - The Pearce Creek Lake monitoring and reference locations consisted of silts and clays, and PCL-07 consisted of sand and silts.

- The Elk River monitoring location consisted of gravel and sand.
 - The Elk River reference location consisted mostly of gravel and some sand.
- The nutrients in the sediments were naturally variable at all locations, but PCL-04 had higher concentrations of Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN) and total phosphorus.
 - Ms. Offerman noted that since only one location had higher concentrations of TKN and total phosphorus, this suggests that the concentrations are not related to the Pearce Creek DMCF.
 - There were generally higher sulfide concentrations at most Pearce Creek Lake locations, but they were consistent between the monitoring locations and reference location.
- Metals that were tested were generally consistent with the baseline data.
 - Six (6) metals at the Pearce Creek Lake monitoring locations and four (4) metals at the reference site were between the TEC and PEC. Ni concentrations exceeded the PEC at the monitoring locations and reference site which is anticipated as Ni is naturally high in the region.
 - Ni exceeded the TEC at the Elk River monitoring location and reference site.
- The results from the sediment bioassay for each location were compared to the reference site and baseline data.
 - The results were consistent with the baseline data, in which the survival rate was high for the Pearce Creek Lake and Elk River sediments, indicating that the sediments are not acutely toxic to benthic organisms.
- Most of the benthic community metrics were within the range of the baseline data, and abundance was consistent with the baseline data.
 - Localized variability has been identified, but the overall benthic community condition has not substantially changed.
 - The Chesapeake Bay B-IBI was used to measure benthic community conditions, and all Pearce Creek Lake monitoring locations except PCL-05 and PCL-07 met the restoration goal.
 - Ms. Offerman noted that the conditions fluctuate over time, and similar results have been seen in the past for PCL-07.
 - The Elk River monitoring location was classified as marginal, which has been seen in the past.
 - The Elk River reference site met the restoration goal.
- Ms. Offerman concluded that the Fall 2025 exterior monitoring was the eleventh round of post-placement monitoring since placement at the Pearce Creek DMCF in December 2017.
 - Results from all testing are consistent with previous sampling events.

Adaptive Management

- Ms. Offerman stated that the Water Quality Certification requirement will be dependent on MDE.
 - The sediment toxicity testing was reinstated beginning in the Fall 2024 monitoring event to fulfill requirements of the Water Quality Certification and will continue to be included in future years unless there is a change in the requirement by MDE.

4.0 Citizen Comments

Feedback from the Community Members

Community Representatives

- Ms. Peñafiel asked for clarification regarding the timeline in which the baseline monitoring was conducted.
 - Ms. Offerman stated that baseline samples were collected in Fall 2015, Spring and Fall 2016, and Spring 2017.
- On behalf of a community member, Mr. Heacock stated that there is a blind corner along Pond Neck Road due to uncut vegetation.
 - CENAP will examine the vegetation along Pond Neck Road to address the issue of the blind corner.
 - Mr. Hart noted that the federal government is still enacting a hiring freeze which is preventing CENAP from hiring seasonal employees that typically conduct mowing operations, making it challenging to maintain the vegetation routinely.
 - Mr. Hart asked Mr. Heacock to provide more details on the exact location of the blind corner.
- The next PCIC meeting will be held on **Friday, October 16, 2026, at 10am.**
- The Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) Annual meeting will be held on Friday, December 4, 2026.