



Coastal & Watershed Resources Advisory Committee (CWRAC)

A Partner of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources

Since 1976, the Maryland Coastal and Watershed Resources Advisory Committee (CWRAC) has served a unique and invaluable role in managing the State's coast.

The diversified membership on the committee allows for informed discussion of coastal issues often leading to valuable input into state programs and policies. This membership includes concerned citizens, representatives of business, civic and conservation groups and local government agencies. Located administratively under the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, CWRAC acts as an independent advisory body to the Secretary of Natural Resources and to Maryland's Chesapeake and Coastal Service (CCS) on policy issues affecting the coastal areas of Maryland. Funding is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the Coastal Zone Management grant.

Giving Stakeholders a Voice in Coastal Resources Management

CWRAC is the primary organization that stakeholders may use to voice their ideas and opinions about coastal resources management. Each CWRAC member represents one clearly defined constituency and acts on their behalf in the activities of the Committee. Members come to CWRAC with a clear understanding of the opinions and priorities of their constituency as they relate to the policies and issues before the

"Serving as a CWRAC member has allowed me to receive up to date and pertinent information on a whole host of coastal issues and pending legislation. The relationships developed and availability of the Chesapeake and Coastal Program staff, as well as the Federal representation, to provide this information and insight has been invaluable for me personally and professionally."

*- Joseph Fehrer
Preserve Manager, Nassawango Creek
The Nature Conservancy*

Committee. Information received and actions taken by the Committee are reported back to member agencies or organizations by CWRAC members.

CWRAC's Role in Shaping Coastal Policies and Programs

Providing General Advice to the Maryland's Chesapeake and Coastal Service

CWRAC regularly provides feedback to CCS through its bimonthly meetings and via NOAA's Section 312 Program Evaluation, which occur about every 3 to 5 years. CWRAC also provides advice on CCS's five-year Section 309 Program Enhancement plans to NOAA. CWRAC members are often tapped to evaluate community-scale project proposals eligible for funding under the Coastal Communities Initiative and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Bays Trust Fund.



*Martin O'Malley, Governor
John R. Griffin, Secretary*



Coastal Zone

Counties:

Anne Arundel

Baltimore

Calvert

Caroline

Charles

Cecil

Dorchester

Harford

Kent

Prince George's

Queen Anne's

Somerset

St. Mary's

Talbot

Wicomico

Worcester

and

Baltimore City

Shaping Legislative Bills and State Policies

Each year CWRAC provides feedback on bills affecting DNR, especially those affecting coastal resources. In addition, CWRAC members are often tapped for special task forces such as the Governor's Task Force on Sustainable Growth and Wastewater Disposal (a.k.a. Septic System Task Force) to help ensure the success of legislative proposals.

Advising the Chesapeake Bay Cabinet

CWRAC regularly meets with the Chesapeake Bay Cabinet to elevate coastal issues and provide advice on State-wide initiatives such as the Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs). For instance, CWRAC members have played a leadership role by supporting the WIP phase II pilot projects, which will help local governments provide more detailed, geographically specific plans for reducing nutrient and sediment loads to the Bay.

Engaging Stakeholders to Develop Collaborative, Sustainable Solutions

Working closely with CCS staff, CWRAC recently hosted a stakeholder event in Berlin, MD to support the sustainable development of Maryland's offshore wind energy resources. This forum allowed various stakeholders such as the fishing industry, environmental groups and citizens to discuss potential coastal use conflicts and recommend solutions.

Convening Coastal Communities Exchanges

These CWRAC networking forums co-hosted with CCS serve as a venue

to highlight projects completed or underway in MD's coastal zone (many of those made possible through DNR-CCS funding programs); to share ideas and lessons learned; to discuss best practices; and to share products and outcomes that might be applicable to - or replicable in - other coastal communities.

Building CoastSmart, Resilient Communities

CWRAC has helped CCS develop its Coast Smart Communities Program that helps local communities identify and implement strategies to protect life and property vulnerable to coastal hazards and climate change. This included helping develop the Governor's Climate Change Action Plan, serving on the Climate Change and Insurance Advisory Committee, and conducting the dry-run role-play exercise that laid the foundation for the Coast-Smart Communities Scorecard.

Benefits of CWRAC Membership and Service

In return for the valuable services provided to CCS and Maryland, CWRAC members receive a number of tangible benefits such as early notice and access to funding opportunities, regular networking with local planners and resource management professionals, and early notification of emerging issues, professional development opportunities and new coastal management tools such as the Coastal Atlas.

For more information on CWRAC and its meeting times and locations, contact Chris Aadland at caadland@dnr.state.md.us or call 410-260-8736.

Photo credits:

Jack Diamond, Chuck Prah,
Laura Younger, Chris Paulis,
George Close and
Andy Aughenbaugh

