

# HEADWATERS

News & Notes From the Virginia Office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation

APRIL 2022

## Take Action on Rockfish Management

Over the past 10 years the striped bass (or rockfish) population in the Chesapeake Bay has plummeted well below healthy levels. Now, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)—the body that oversees fishery management decisions for the Atlantic coastal states—is updating its striped bass fishery management plan and seeking input. This is an important opportunity to help shape the long-term future of this critical fish and help it rebound.

CBF is asking ASMFC to maintain the management triggers that guide decisions and actions to reach a stable population; ensure more rockfish survive catch-and-release; and respond quickly to the results of the forthcoming population estimate, among other items.

Rockfish have been hailed as one of the best examples of fisheries management success. Thanks to a coastwide conservation plan developed by ASMFC in the late 20th century, rockfish were able to rebound from extreme lows in the early 1980s to historical



levels by the mid-1990s. Yet now, with the most recent data showing the fish well below sustainable levels coupled with below-average spawning activity in the Bay, bold management actions are critical.

Please join us in urging ASMFC to ensure a robust fishery management plan for striped bass before the April 15 public comment deadline. Visit [cbf.org/take-action](https://cbf.org/take-action) to submit your comments.

From the Desk of  
**Peggy Sanner**  
VIRGINIA EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR



In early March, the Virginia General Assembly adjourned—without passing a budget for the next biennium. Governor Youngkin has called a special session to begin on April 4 for legislators to work out their differences and pass a final budget proposal for fiscal years 2023-2024.

CBF urges legislators to support funding for programs that will reduce pollution to the Bay, including investments in the Virginia Agriculture Cost-Share Program, which provides cost-share and technical assistance funding to farmers who install conservation practices on their land; the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund, which provides matching grants to local governments for projects that reduce polluted runoff; and grants to upgrade wastewater treatment plants.

Additional proposed Bay-related funding initiatives include money for staff who will coordinate statewide environmental literacy efforts, for a scientist to assist in fishery management decisions, and for two staff to develop a mussel restoration plan.

We urge legislators to pass a state budget that will protect natural resources and advance clean-water efforts in the Commonwealth for all Virginians.

*Peggy*

## Federal Appropriations Support the Bay

After passing a series of continuing resolutions since last fall to keep the government funded, Congress finally passed an appropriations package for fiscal year 2022 in mid-March! While it took longer than we would have hoped, we saw encouraging signs for programs that are critical to the Bay, including funding for the Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) program, a grant program to support efforts to conserve wetlands, reduce water pollution, and restore fish and wildlife habitat; increased funding to the Chesapeake Bay Program, which helps fund restoration projects across the watershed; and robust investment to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Programs, which provide assistance to farmers to implement conservation practices.

President Biden is building on these investments by proposing increases for the Chesapeake Bay Program and USDA Conservation Programs in his fiscal year 2023 budget, which was released at the end of March. Congress will now develop a new appropriations package for fiscal year 2023, building on President Biden's proposal.



**CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION**  
Saving a National Treasure

## CBF Hosts Tree Pruning Workshop



An attendee from this February's tree pruning workshop practiced his skills during the hands-on portion of the event.

At the end of February, CBF hosted a tree pruning workshop in Southside Richmond. Twenty-one folks joined experts to learn the ins and outs of proper tree pruning techniques, such as the best time of year to prune a tree and where to make a cut, among others.

The workshop is part of CBF's work on a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, to collaborate with community organizations to plant more than 650 new trees and install conservation landscaping in targeted Richmond neighborhoods.

## Mountain Valley Pipeline Withdraws Appeal

At the end of March, Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) withdrew its appeal of an agency decision rejecting a key permit for the proposed Lambert Compressor Station, a component of the company's Southgate expansion project, planned to pump gas through an extension of the pipeline.

Last December, the Virginia State Air Pollution Control Board determined that MVP's application for a minor new source review permit did not satisfy environmental justice and site suitability requirements. Soon after, MVP filed an appeal in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. CBF and partners have defended the recent Air Board decision, intervening in the Court of Appeals in support of the board's decision.

## Volunteers Help Plant Live Stakes



Volunteers, including a group from Washington & Lee University, help create a streamside buffer by planting live stakes this March.

In March, CBF hosted volunteers for two days of live stake and tree seedling plantings in Rockbridge County. Live stakes are stem cuttings from dormant trees and shrubs that can be placed directly in the ground, then grow into trees and shrubs that stabilize the streambank. These plantings are possible due to grant funding CBF received from the Virginia Environmental Endowment's James River Water Quality Improvement Program to restore 200 acres of streamside forests in the Upper James River watershed. The program will cover all costs for landowners and farmers to plant and maintain riparian forested buffers.

Now the company has reversed course, notifying the court it seeks to voluntarily dismiss that appeal. The withdrawal of the appeal is another setback for MVP which has suffered delays, legal losses, and citations for hundreds of environmental violations.

The Air Board has only denied one permit in the last 20 years—the Lambert Compressor Station permit. This came after a landmark court decision in 2019 in which CBF and partners successfully argued in the Fourth Circuit that a similar pipeline compressor station proposed for Union Hill did not meet environmental justice standards. Unfortunately, under new procedures expected to take effect July 1, Virginia's Air Board will no longer approve or deny permits.

## CBF in the Community

### RESTORATION

#### Buffers for Birders

Saturday, June 11, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

The Highland Center

61 Highland Center Drive, Monterey

Learn about how streamside forests can protect local bird species such as the threatened golden-winged warbler. After presentations and lunch, there will be a site visit where participants can see real-life examples of landscapes working to protect local birds and other wildlife. Email Sarah Coffey at [scoffey@cbf.org](mailto:scoffey@cbf.org) for more information or to register.

### ADVOCACY

#### Speak Up for Rockfish

Before the April 15 public comment deadline, join CBF in urging the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to develop a robust fishery management plan for striped bass. Visit [cbf.org/take-action](http://cbf.org/take-action) to submit your comments.

### COMMUNITY

#### Summer Student Leadership Expeditions

Registration for CBF's multi-day, in-person, and overnight experience for students entering grades 9-12 for the 2022-23 academic year is open. Students will travel to the most beautiful areas of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, while learning how to help save the Bay. Visit [cbf.org/join-us/education-program/student-leadership/summer-expeditions](http://cbf.org/join-us/education-program/student-leadership/summer-expeditions) to register today.

#### Educator Summer Courses

CBF's Chesapeake Classrooms program offers more than 20 courses that explore the health of the Bay and local ecosystems. Please visit [cbf.org/join-us/education-program/professional-learning](http://cbf.org/join-us/education-program/professional-learning) for more information and to register.

#### Annual Clean the Bay Day

Saturday, June 4, Various locations

DIY Week, Monday, May 30–Friday, June 3

Every year Virginians all over the state join together on the first Saturday in June to pick up litter. When registration is open, choose your locality to find out where you're needed. If you are unable to attend on June 4, you can participate in DIY week. Register to clean up anywhere you have permission and can take care of the disposal yourself. To learn more visit [cbf.org/clean](http://cbf.org/clean).



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