

UNIVERSITIES COUNCIL ON WATER RESOURCES

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) was founded in 1967 as a 501c not-for-profit organization. Currently there are more than 110,000 active members and a staff of approximately 150. The mission is simple, "Save the Bay." This organization has addressed the issues impacting a 64,000 square mile watershed with programs in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia.

The Philip Merrill Environmental Center of the CBF strives to reduce pollution, restore habitat, and replenish fish stocks by combining space-age technology with age-old techniques. The Center represents the essence of the CBF in that the building is made of recycled materials or created through processes that don't harm the environment. The Merrill Center was the first to receive the U.S. Green Building Council's Platinum rating for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. The Center brings education to the Bay through education programs and bringing together teams of students, teachers, volunteers, decision-makers, and visitors where they learn about the Bay and techniques to protect and restore it.

The CBF has three focuses: (1) Protect the natural resources through strong and effective laws and regulations working with government, business and citizens; (2) Restore the Bay's habitats and filtering mechanisms such as forests, wetlands, underwater grasses, and oysters through hands-on projects, and (3) Involvement of citizens through volunteerism. Curricula have been designed to supplement middle school programs by raising awareness. CBF's educators take more than 35,000 students and teachers into the field annually on one day canoe and workboat trips to week-long stays at their learning centers.

Successes are marked by the CBF's pressure to gain enforcement of state's tidal wetland protection acts. Within a year tidal wetland losses declined by more than 90 percent. CBF concerns and work with Congress led to passage of a seven year Chesapeake Bay Study, which provided much of the scientific basis for board interstate efforts. With CBF's leadership, the Governors of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania and the Mayor of the District of Columbia developed the interstate Chesapeake Bay Agreement which brought resources to cleanup of the Bay. This was further enhanced when Virginia implemented a new Chesapeake Bay Agreement that called for a 40 percent reduction in the flow of nutrients nitrogen and phosphorous along with the specific goal of elimination of toxins from all controllable sources. In the 1980-90's, participation in education programs reached 35,000 people annually. Nine benchmarks for Bay Restoration were established in 1996 which included wetlands, underwater grasses, forested stream buffers, migratory fish, oysters, toxics, dissolved oxygen, water clarity, and lost wetlands. Implementation was accelerated with an agreement between CBF and Ducks Unlimited commitment to restore 20,000 acres of wetlands. As new issues arise, CBF develops innovative approaches to addressing the problem from fish-killing *Pfiesteria piscicida*, to oil drilling threats, to runoff from poultry and swine production facilities. The CBF has now served 1.5 million people through the education programs and studies.