

PRESS RELEASE

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For more information contact

*Jodi Rose, Executive Director
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
jodi@interfaithchesapeake.org
Phone: 410-609-6852*

Faith-Based One Water Partnership Receives \$1M Grant to Improve Water Quality

Annapolis, MD (December 12, 2018) - Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake has been awarded a \$1 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to engage faith communities in watershed restoration in five critical areas of Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The grant will fund replications of the group's One Water Partnership™ program to mobilize 100 congregations in five regional "hubs" over three years in green stormwater management, education, and leadership training. The hub concept identifies groups of faith communities working together to engage in sustainable practices, allowing for a greater impact than if they worked in isolation. The grant targets the Maryland counties of Anne Arundel, Harford, Wicomico, and Baltimore City/County, along with Lancaster County, Pennsylvania -- more than 2,600 congregations with thousands of worshipers and vast land and parking lot acreage.

"The faith community has tremendous power to improve water quality in their local watersheds for their communities and for those who will follow in their footsteps," says IPC Executive Director Jodi Rose. "The One Water Partnership helps them take meaningful action in restoring clean water for all."

This award will scale-up water quality improvements by tapping into faith communities to implement stormwater management practices on their grounds and inspire their members to adopt new behaviors at home. The project engages numerous local organizations in providing education and technical assistance, including the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Blue Water Baltimore, Interfaith Power & Light-DMV, Lower Shore Land Trust, READY of Anne Arundel County, University of Maryland Sea Grant Extension, Watershed Stewards Academies in Anne Arundel and Harford counties, and Wicomico Environmental Trust.

Baltimore City and County, Harford County, Anne Arundel County, City of Annapolis, and City of Salisbury on the lower Eastern Shore have all expressed support for the collaboration. "I am excited to see more Baltimore congregations implementing stormwater management projects on their grounds. It is truly making a difference in reducing stormwater pollution," says Director Rudolph S. Chow, P.E., Baltimore City Department of Public Works.

The five regional hubs will improve water quality as follows:

- 100 mobilized congregations will offset the equivalent of 20 acres of impervious surfaces through stormwater practices and tree plantings
- 36 green stormwater practices will be installed such as rain gardens, planting trees and conservation landscaping
- 36 congregations will develop internal Green Teams and 136 congregational leaders will be trained on how to lead their own congregations to adopting sustainable practices
- 1,525 people will change their behavior and improve their understanding of how to be good stewards of the watershed

- 3,750 people will be educated about environmental challenges of our time and how to respond as moral leaders

The One Water Partnership was piloted in the Jones Falls watershed of Baltimore, involving 39 congregations planting 225 trees and 4,000 sq. ft. of native plants, removing 1,850 lbs. of trash, harvesting 2,700 gallons of rainwater, and treating stormwater runoff from 106,000 sq. ft. of impervious surfaces. To see the program in action, visit www.interfaithchesapeake.org/about. "Blue Water Baltimore witnessed firsthand the positive impacts that congregations can have on water quality while working with IPC in the Jones Falls," says Jenn Aiosa, Executive Director of Blue Water Baltimore, "we are thrilled to be able to expand this approach into the Gwynns Falls."

NFWF, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Program, awarded 49 grants this year across the Chesapeake Bay Watershed totaling \$13.1 million. St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, a member congregation in the Jones Falls One Water Partnership, was also awarded over \$137,000 to install stormwater management projects on their grounds-- the first church to be a NFWF direct grantee--a direct result of the grant-writing training provided through the Partnership.

"Faith communities are among the most powerful places in the world to lead conversations about being stewards of the Earth," says Joelle Novey, Director of Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVA), who will be working with congregations throughout the program. "We're looking forward to supporting these congregations in fulfilling their distinctive call to be stewards of their watershed."

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*The **Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay** works throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed to lead, support, and inspire local action and build partnerships with individuals, communities, governments, businesses, and other groups to restore the lands, rivers, and streams of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Learn more: <https://www.allianceforthebay.org>*

*The **Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy** develops citizen leaders to promote community change for clean waters. www.aawsa.org*

***Blue Water Baltimore** works to restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams and Harbor to foster a healthy environment, a strong economy, and thriving communities. www.bluewaterbaltimore.org*

***Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake** aims to ignite the power of faith communities in the Chesapeake Bay region to honor all of Creation by working together to protect and restore our shared watershed. <http://www.interfaithchesapeake.org>*

***Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NOVA)** works with congregations across Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia to support them in saving energy, going green, and responding to climate change. www.ipldmv.org*

***Lower Shore Land Trust** is dedicated to preserving rural lands, to promoting vibrant towns, and to building a more healthy and connected Eastern Shore. <http://lowershorelandtrust.org/>*

***University of Maryland Sea Grant Extension Watershed Protection and Restoration Program** works with local and state governments, watershed organizations, and community groups in Maryland to build partnerships, identify funding sources, and advise/assist in the planning, implementation and monitoring of restoration projects.*

***Wicomico Environmental Trust** advocates, educates, and works towards the preservation, restoration, and protection of Wicomico County's natural environment. <http://www.wicomicoenvironment.org>*