



Office Hours for the Curtis Bay and Surrounding Communities and Patapsco and Back River Watersheds:

Supplemental Environmental Projects

Tuesday, March 12th 12pm-1pm
Tuesday, March 19th 6:30pm-7:30pm
Held virtually on Zoom

Agenda and Abbreviated Notes

1. **Welcome, Agenda Overview, and Introductions (5 minutes)** - The Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) provided an overview of the purpose of each office hour, introduced the Trust, and the Trust team leading each Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) body of work.
2. **Overview of the Supplemental Environment Projects (5 minutes)** - The Trust gave a brief overview of the Supplemental Environmental Projects funding for the Curtis Bay and Surrounding Communities and the Patapsco and Back River watersheds.
3. **Update on the SEP Progress (15 minutes)** – The Trust gave a summary of the steps taken so far to develop these two bodies of work.
 - a. The Trust held a listening session on January 30th for the Patapsco and Back River Watersheds SEP, and on February 8th for the Curtis Bay and Surrounding Communities SEP, and followed up with attendees post listening sessions.
 - b. The Trust scheduled two office hours sessions from March 12th and March 19th. (Notes from these sessions are included below.)
 - c. The Trust continued developing the Request for Proposals (RFP).
 - We're taking project types, community needs and goals, and other ideas into consideration as we develop the RFP.
 - We began drafting proposal evaluation criteria.
 - We're considering how to streamline and simplify the application process as much as we can.
 - d. The Trust drafted a tentative timeline for program development and release.
4. **Open Discussion (30 minutes)** – The Trust opened the floor for discussion, input, and questions and answers.

Questions and Answers:

The questions and answers below are a summary of the questions and answers we heard and discussed at each office hour.

1. Are the Middle Branch and Harbor area included in the eligible project locations for this SEP funding?

- a. Yes, the Middle Branch and Inner Harbor area are eligible for the Patapsco and Back River SEP funding, as they are located in the Patapsco River Watershed.
2. Can applicants leverage partners who are already working on these initiatives?
 - a. Yes, we encourage this! We know there are several strong, ongoing initiatives and this funding is meant to serve community priorities and interests.
3. Can applicants use this funding as match to continue funding programs that are already up and running?
 - a. Yes, this funding can be used to build upon and expand programs that may already be in existence (e.g., funding from these two SEPs can be used to continue funding a water monitoring program).
4. Would water quality testing and monitoring fall under the outreach and education portion of this funding?
 - a. Yes, water quality monitoring and testing would fall under outreach and education.
5. Can this funding be used for bacteria testing projects?
 - a. Yes, this funding can be used to test and monitor bacteria in waterways. This could be submitted as part of a water quality monitoring project. Please reach out to the Trust with specific ideas or questions about your proposed project.
6. Can this funding be used for the maintenance of an already installed environmental restoration project?
 - a. Funding solely maintenance for an existing restoration project is not a priority for this funding opportunity; however, funding can be used for maintenance projects paired with an educational or community element. Please reach out to the Trust with specific ideas or questions about your proposed project.
7. Has the Trust considered and decided on funding caps for projects?
 - a. Funding request parameters for each project type are still under consideration. Generally, larger restoration projects will cost more to implement, and the funding request parameters will reflect this. The Trust is working on considering project types and costs and how that will translate into funding request parameters.
8. Can applicants use this funding to turn raised garden beds into native planting projects?
 - a. Yes, this program can generally support the installation of native plantings. This may include transitioning raised gardens beds that currently have non-native plants, and transforming vacant lots and open spaces, etc. into native planting projects. Please reach out to the Trust with specific ideas or questions about your proposed project.
9. How do we trust that something like [the illicit discharges from the wastewater treatment plants] won't happen again, and we don't lose all the great progress from this work?
 - a. This is an important question to keep in mind as we move this work forward. Monitoring and enforcement of proper wastewater treatment plant protocol are outside the scope of this funding opportunity and the role of the Trust. However, funds can be requested to build community awareness of local natural resources, relevant infrastructure, and how to monitor or report incidents. The Trust will share this question with our SEP funding partners and will follow up/update this section with any updated information that we have on this question.
10. Can this funding opportunity support multi-year programs?
 - a. Our awarded project periods are typically 12 to 18 months. This project period depends in part on the type of project and length of time needed to successfully implement the project. Additionally, we are flexible when possible with timeline extensions, which can be granted on a case-by-case basis. Project periods longer than 18 months can be considered on a case-by-case basis, please reach out to the Trust to

discuss prior to applying.

11. Will this funding be used until it is spent down?
 - a. Yes, we'll continue this program until all funds have been spent. These SEP funds must go back into the impacted communities and the Trust will work to ensure all available funds are distributed back out to eligible projects and communities.
12. Do projects have to consider impacts by climate change and sea level rise?
 - a. Yes, the narrative questions that applicants will complete as part of their application will include a question on long-term sustainability in the face of climate change, particularly for in-the-ground restoration projects. We want applicants to consider how their projects will be able to adapt to changing conditions and continue functioning and delivering water quality and other natural resource benefits as intended.
13. Can conceptual and engineered design plans be supported by this funding?
 - a. Yes, these types of projects can be supported with this funding.
14. What can be expected as far as reporting requirements, if awarded?
 - a. Awarded projects/organizations can expect to submit a final report upon project completion. The final report will capture a summary of the completed project and provide a space to report water quality benefits realized through completed restoration projects. Additionally, brief, quarterly progress reports over the term of the grant period, and status reports at key milestones of the project may be required, depending on the scope of the project.

Points for Consideration:

The points below are a summary of the feedback we heard and discussed at each office hour, to be taken into consideration as the Trust works to develop this funding opportunity.

1. Restoration and education for improvements to air quality, specifically monitoring and testing, rise to the top as priorities for community members. Consider how to weave these points into the evaluation criteria and structure of the program.
 2. Projects that include co-benefits for the community and the environment should be given weight through the evaluation criteria.
 3. Consider how to shape the funding opportunity to build in transparency around project outcomes. Reporting out the project impact and outcomes realized is an important step in authentically engaging community members in the process.
 4. Ensure that the funding opportunity is set up to support historically underserved communities, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and other communities disproportionately impacted by exposure to pollution.
5. **Recap on Discussion and Closing (5 minutes)** – The Trust summarized a few points discussed in the session, shared the link to our webpage where we'll post updates, and encouraged folks to stay engaged and connected with us.

Draft Timeline for the Supplemental Environmental Projects

Please note: This is a tentative timeline, provided as a guideline to our target dates for key milestones in this process. We will try to share any major updates or changes to this timeline as we move forward.

1. **January 30th and February 8th**, the Trust held a listening session for each SEP.
2. **March 12th and March 19th**, the Trust held office hours sessions for the two SEPs.
3. **April to May**, the Trust plans to finalize the Request for Proposals and open the funding opportunity.

4. **May to June**, the Trust plans to hold a pre-application information session.
5. **July to August**, the Trust plans to close the Supplemental Environmental Projects program.
6. **August to September**, the Trust plans to begin the external review period.
7. **November to December**, the Trust will plan to have funding decisions finalized and announced to the public.

Draft Evaluation Criteria for the Supplemental Environmental Projects

Each application is reviewed by a Technical Review Committee (TRC), composed of individuals who are experts in the fields supported by the RFP and represent communities served by projects funded by the RFP. The TRC ranks and scores all applications based on the criteria listed in the “Evaluation Criteria,” which are used to evaluate how well the project meets the goals of the RFP. The Trust uses a standard set of evaluation criteria that are tailored for each funding opportunity. The evaluation criteria below is an overview of what these criteria may look like for this funding opportunity, however it is not final as we’ll use community feedback and goals to develop the full criteria.

1. Project Goals:

- Do the project goals align with the goals of the RFP and selected Track?

2. Why the Project is Needed:

- Does the applicant justify the need for the project and the practices proposed and/or support existing efforts, and address a relevant community need?

3. Who is Engaged:

- Is the audience being engaged in the project, or the community served by the project, identified as historically under-engaged or under-served?
- Does this project include any partnerships, and if so, are all necessary partners included?

4. Project Plan:

- What is the likelihood of success if this project is funded? Success should be defined as the accomplishment of outcomes proposed.
 - For restoration efforts we’d need items such as: site owner approval to do the project, robust design plan, planting plan, Best Management Practice-specific details, maintenance plan, and permits (if required)
 - For education/outreach efforts we’d need items such as: details on the audience served and tailored messaging for them, the evaluation of knowledge change (e.g., pre/post survey), workshop agenda, etc.

5. Impact:

- How substantial is the impact of the project on: water quality, natural resources, community needs?
- Has the applicant addressed future project sustainability, and how will the project continue on after the grant period?
- How will the project demonstrate valuable knowledge within the community, and how will it transfer into future project initiatives?

6. Budget:

- Is the budget appropriate and cost effective? Are the line items budgeted (e.g., personnel costs) justified in the application? Are partners being resourced appropriately?

Details on the Wastewater Treatment Plants Consent Decree: The Chesapeake Bay Trust was named to administer the funding for the Patapsco and Back River Supplemental Environmental project but was not

involved in the settlement or consent decree. Learn more about the entities involved and details of the consent decree at <https://www.chesapeakelegal.org/cla-and-blue-water-baltimore-enter-consent-decree-with-mde-and-baltimore-city-in-wastewater-treatment-plant-case/>.

If you have additional thoughts, ideas, and/or feedback for us, please contact us!

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Thanks for your time to attend the office hours and share your questions and ideas with the group!