



PRESS RELEASE.—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Alexandra Fries, UMCES, 703-371-4165, afries@umces.edu

Liz Chudoba, ACB, 804-793-8785, lichudoba@allianceforthebay.org

**Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative celebrates 10 years
Over 100 organizations contribute 1 million data points to support restoration**

ANNAPOLIS, MD (September 16, 2025)— Today, the [Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative \(CMC\)](#) kicks off its 10 year anniversary celebrations. Over the past 10 years, the CMC has partnered with over 100 organizations who are collecting water quality and benthic macroinvertebrate samples at 2,490 monitoring stations throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

“The Alliance is honored to lead the CMC project and work with so many of our community volunteers and partners over the years,” **said Liz Chudoba, Water Quality Monitoring Initiative Director, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.** “The collective impact of our efforts informs decision-making policies and supports communities across the watershed.”

Formed in 2015, the CMC began as a six-year cooperative agreement through the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Chesapeake Bay Program, to integrate community and volunteer monitoring data into the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. The CMC team was awarded a second cooperative agreement in 2021, continuing the partnership for an additional six years.

The CMC is supported by five partner organizations: the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Izaak Walton League of America, the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring at Dickinson College, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, and the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Virginia at Virginia Institute of Marine Science. These organizations provide technical services to monitoring groups in the Chesapeake Bay region in order to ensure data are of known quality.

“The CMC has allowed the Chesapeake Bay Program to expand its knowledge base and better understand conditions throughout the watershed through broader engagement with the public,” **said Dr. Peter Tango, Chesapeake Bay Monitoring Coordinator, USGS at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office.** “This supports management of our ecosystems by working across local to regional scales to meet state and federal goals for water quality improvements.”



Historically, there were many sources of data, including data collected by volunteers, local governments, and NGO's, that were not being used to track Chesapeake Bay and Watershed health at a broader scale. To address this issue, the CMC team established a quality assurance structure that aligns with state and federal regulatory decision-making processes and enables all data of known quality to be used together across the region. This structure not only helps existing groups, but also breaks down the barriers and enables more monitoring groups to become established in the watershed. To date, over 1.1 million data points have been uploaded to and are publicly accessible on the [CMC Data Explorer](#).

"The CMC Data Explorer has been a game changer for sharing data," said **Mary Claire King, Citizen Science Coordinator at Buttonwood Nature Center, who organizes a volunteer water monitoring program in partnership with the Antietam Watershed Association.** "Our monitoring program includes 28 testing sites, many of which are located on private property. The data explorer allows the landowners a chance to connect with the data collected from their property in real time. It also provides incredible graphs and visuals that we at Buttonwood and AWA use when working with the public to educate on the importance of keeping our local waterways clean. It is such a useful resource for our organizations and is very easy to use!"

Community volunteers and partners are the backbone of the CMC. With the support of generous individuals donating their days, evenings, and weekends, the CMC has increased temporal and spatial data collection throughout the watershed. These data support significant insights on watershed health from tidal estuaries in Virginia, to farms in Pennsylvania, to West Virginia trout streams, to Baltimore Harbor, to communities in Anacostia, to wetlands in Delaware, and forests in New York. No matter the reason individuals are collecting data, it is vital information being used to create positive change for local ecosystems and communities.

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For more information about the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative, visit: <https://www.chesapeakemonitoringcoop.org/>.

For data in the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative, visit: <https://cmc.vims.edu/data-explorer>



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Press Release Quotes

"The CMC's efforts over the last 10 years have created a high standard of data collection that highlights the significance and importance of volunteer monitoring across the watershed," **said Lane Whigham, Director for the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM), Dickinson College.** "CMC has helped share the voices of hard-working volunteer scientists through the Data Explorer, case studies and technical assistance."

"The CMC has been a powerful collaboration between NGO, state, and federal stakeholders to elevate the hard work of volunteer monitors, such as the Izaak Walton League of America's Virginia Save Our Streams volunteers," **said Samantha Puckett, Clean Water Program Director, Izaak Walton League of America.** "Over the last decade, the CMC has created a pipeline for benthic macroinvertebrate data to be used to its full potential, which is a breath of fresh air for the benthic volunteer monitoring community."

"For ten years, the CMC has turned community science-based water quality observations into Bay-wide insight and action," **said David Parrish, Environmental Data Center Manager, Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Virginia Institute of Marine Science.** "Empowered by the CMC, the Data Explorer centralizes efforts to make community science transparent, comparable, and ready to guide decisions."

"We deeply value our CMC partnership and our collaborations with local groups on data quality, interpretation, and science communication," **said Alexandra Fries, Program Manager, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science Integration and Application Network.** "This work informs communities about the highly localized science that CMC groups are doing. Fine-scale data on stream and river health is invaluable to making science-based decisions throughout our watershed."

"Rockbridge County, Virginia through the Rockbridge Conservation Watershed Committee began monthly chemical and quarterly benthic monitoring in 2019 with the equipment, training, and technical support of the CMC to monitor stream quality of our local streams and the potential impact on the bay," **said Dave Bryer, volunteer with the Rockbridge Water Monitors in Virginia.** "Knowing that our data is part of a larger effort to provide a clearer picture of Chesapeake watershed health is a powerful feeling."