



Choose Clean Water
COALITION

2019 **ANNUAL REPORT**

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE COALITION,

When I think back and reflect on 2019, there is one word that comes to mind: change. Over the past year, I have started to feel this ‘breeze of change’ begin to pick up. This could be because of internal changes here at the Coalition this year, with the hiring of two new staff and, my own personal change, becoming the new director of the Coalition. But I think it is more than that. It is something broad in scope and affecting the whole Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Change can mean different things to different people. It can be either resisted or welcomed, scary or exciting, accidental or intentional, and I saw all those versions of change in our watershed this year. On the scary side, we are experiencing more and more impacts from a changing climate in our region, as new precipitation and temperature records are set. However, we are also seeing the positive results of years of on-the-ground work coming to fruition, with increased habitat, improved water quality, and healthy underwater grasses in our waterways. After decades of human-made degradation, our work is making a difference and the Bay is showing signs of resilience against pollution.

We are also seeing a very intentional change in our partnerships and the way we approach our work. While we continue to see instances of resistance at the federal level, the Coalition has focused more of its resources on state-level policy change, supporting our members in their efforts to pass legislation and increase funding for clean water programs. Also, with the release of the Coalition’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Action Guide, we are facilitating the creation of a more inclusive and diverse community across the watershed, making us a much stronger movement for clean water.

I hope you are as inspired as I am reading about the changes catalyzed by our more than 240 members across the watershed in 2019 and that it is motivation for your work in the coming year. With change comes the opportunity for inspiration, innovation, and creativity. Which is why I find myself looking forward to that light breeze turning into a stronger wind—one that continues to push us out of our comfort zones and helps us to continue our work to clean our rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay.



For clean water,
KRISTIN REILLY
Director

ABOUT

The Choose Clean Water Coalition harnesses the collective power of more than 240 groups to advocate for clean rivers and streams in all communities in the Chesapeake Bay region. By mobilizing the advocacy community and coordinating policy, messaging, action, and accountability, the Coalition is able to speak louder with one voice toward our collective goal—**clean water**.

19
policy sign-on letters
1,114
signatures on sign-on letters
40
meetings with Congressional offices
on our annual Lobby Day

STAFF



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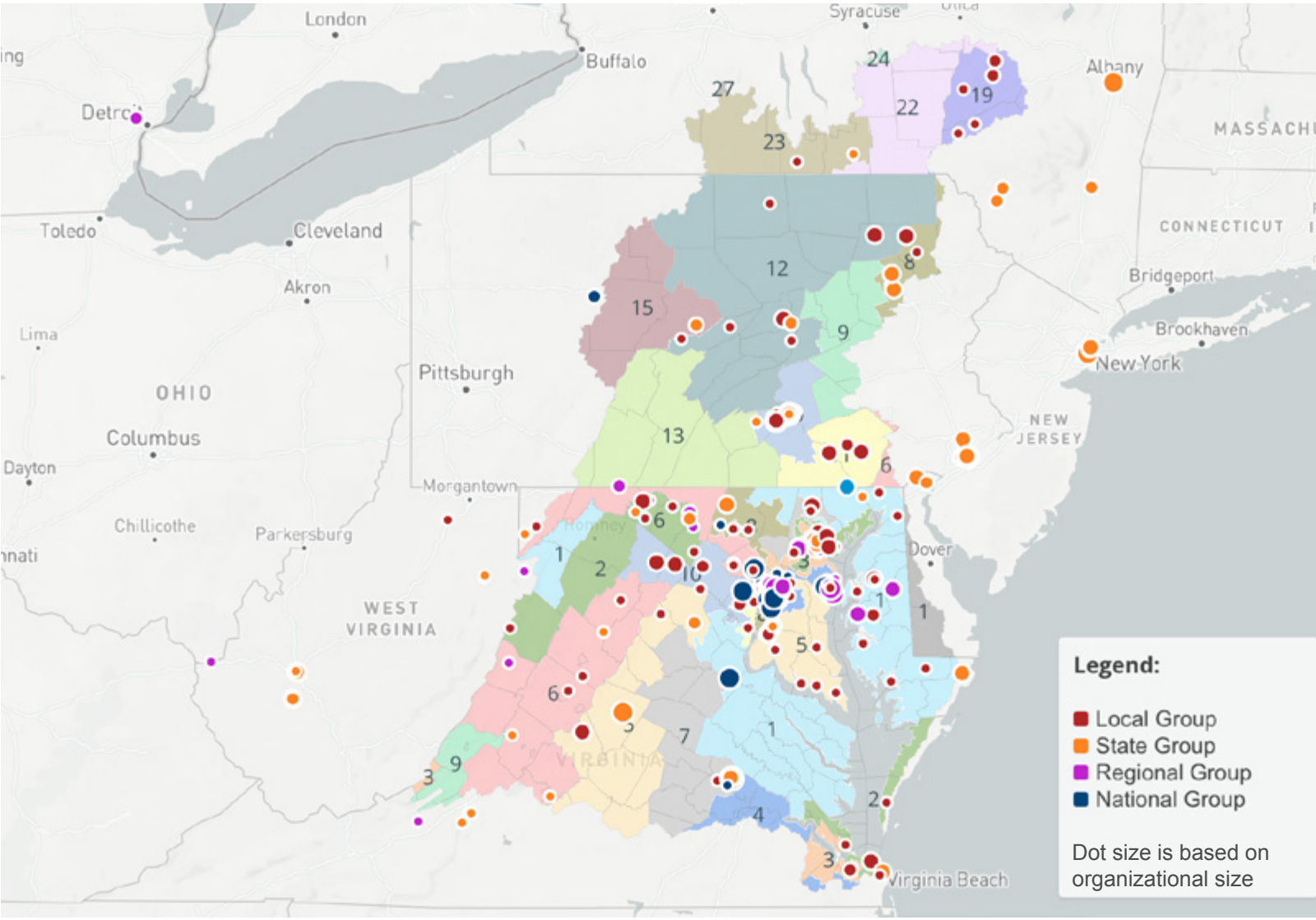
DREW ROBINSON
Senior Communications Manager

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR STATE AND OUTREACH LEADS:

Laura Miller (DE) Taylor Nezat (PA)
Ben Alexandro (MD) Pat Calvert (VA)
Danny Lapin (NY) Tanner Haid (WV)
Leslie Orzetti (NY)

MEMBER MAP

The Coalition has more than 240 members that span the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed, with organizations in every state and the District of Columbia. To see full list of Coalition members, visit: www.choosecleanwater.org/members.



STEERING COMMITTEE

**Co-Chair | +State or Outreach Lead*
Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
Anacostia Watershed Society
**Audubon Naturalist Society*
Baltimore Tree Trust
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
**Conservation Voters of PA*
+Delaware Nature Society
James River Association
+Maryland League of Conservation Voters

National Aquarium
National Parks Conservation Association
National Resources Defense Council
**National Wildlife Federation*
Piedmont Environmental Council
+PennFuture
Potomac Conservancy
+Virginia Conservation Network
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
+West Virginia Rivers Coalition

The Coalition focuses on six different policy priority areas that are critical to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Each of these priorities have a dedicated workgroup, which gives Coalition members a space to engage, strategize, and collaborate. Here are some of the highlights from these workgroups in 2019:



AGRICULTURE

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Agriculture is the single largest source of nutrient and sediment pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay. This is particularly true in Pennsylvania, with the Commonwealth responsible for 69 percent of the nitrogen pollution that the EPA requires is removed by 2025. This is why it is critical for local, state, and federal governments to provide farmers with both expertise and financial support to implement conservation practices on their land.

This year, the Coalition supported the work of its members in Pennsylvania to establish the first state cost-share program for agricultural best management practices (BMPs). A cost-share program would help provide farmers with the resources they need to implement pollution reducing projects, like planting stream buffers, building manure containment facilities, and installing streamline fencing. To start this campaign, the Coalition interviewed farmer John Dawes Sr. of Huntington Farm in Alexandria, Pennsylvania, who has seen both environmental and economic benefits from the BMPs he has implemented on this land. To see these interviews, visit www.choosecleanwater.org/blog/pa-farmers.

In 2020, the Coalition plans to expand on this work and highlight more farmers in Pennsylvania who would like to see the state provide more clean water funding.



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EQUITY

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Our work fighting for clean water not only has environmental benefits, but benefits people as well. A growing list of studies demonstrate the positive contributions nature makes to mental and physical health. At the Coalition's Annual Conference, Chad Brown, a decorated U.S. Navy veteran, spoke about the benefits clean water has provided on his journey to overcome post-traumatic stress disorder. According to Chad, "I was in a place in my life dealing with a lot of darkness with my disability that Veterans Affairs documented now as 50 percent disabled. I kicked the medications and I used the river as my guide, strength, and power to fight and take a stand."

Through nature, Chad and thousands of veterans throughout the United States have a pathway for healing. In partnership with the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, members of the Equity Workgroup endorsed the Accelerating Veterans Recovery Outdoors Act as means to expand therapeutic treatment options for people coping with stress. Supporting this bill not only creates more inclusive opportunities for everyone, it strengthens our capacity to provide powerful forms of therapy for the millions who have served to protect our waterways and open spaces.

Other Highlights

- As a means to build broad partnerships across the Chesapeake, the Coalition released a custom tool as a pathway to achieve diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) outcomes. With guidance from Coalition members, Chesapeake Bay Funders Network, Chesapeake Bay Trust, and Skeo Solutions, the DEIJ Action Guide was created to help organizations overcome blind spots and cultural biases observed in our work.
- Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake and Coalition staff met with Senator Van Hollen's (D-MD) office to deliver petitions asking them to join the Senate's first ever Environmental Justice Caucus. The meeting was a success, as the Senator joined the Caucus.

I used the river as my guide, strength, and power to fight and take a stand.

- Chad Brown



SHALE

FEDERAL AFFAIRS

The Clean Water Act (CWA) is one of our nation’s bedrock environmental laws. Over the last few years, Coalition members have relied on Section 401 as a critical defensive measure enforced by the federal government to protect our most precious resources and to fight back against natural gas development within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Under the direction of President Trump’s Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed revisions to Section 401 that would undermine states and tribal authority to review the impact of federally licensed projects such as dams and pipelines. The CWA has halted the development of disastrous projects such as the Mountain Valley, Constitution, and Atlantic Coast Pipelines.

This year, the Shale Workgroup organized efforts to defend protections under the CWA. One of the most notable highlights was a sign-on letter organized by Waterkeepers Chesapeake and the workgroup. The letter included comments from 58 Coalition members on the proposed changes to Section 401. Now more than ever, we must ensure states continue to have full authority to deny environmentally hazardous projects that do not meet water quality standards.

Other Highlights

- The Shale Workgroup hosted a webinar on Section 401 highlighting the importance of adequate permitting applications that are working to protect our waterways. The webinar included learnings and perspectives from Appalachian Voices, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Clean Air Council, and Waterkeepers Chesapeake.
- ShoreRivers, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance, Potomac Riverkeeper Network, and No Eastern Shore Pipeline led a panel discussion on the proposed new and expanded Delmarva natural gas pipeline on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Panelists discussed the status of the proposal, lessons learned from pipeline fights, engaging the environmental community, and how groups can deliver the most effective advocacy response.

Bipartisanship is rarely seen in Washington these days. But working for clean water often breaks through the norms to achieve restoration goals. One example is the bipartisan effort to secure a consistent and long-term federal presence to protect and restore habitat in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Chesapeake WILD bill (Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense) would, for the first time, give the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service legal authority and funding to execute specific on-the-ground work in the Bay region. The Choose Clean Water Coalition, in conjunction with Ducks Unlimited and Trout Unlimited, advocated for the WILD bill, which was shepherded through the U.S. Senate by Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV). This was followed by a corresponding bipartisan House bill, introduced by Representatives Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Rob Wittman (R-VA).

As Senator Van Hollen said, “Protecting Bay wildlife is crucial to Maryland’s environment and economy. The Chesapeake WILD Act will provide more resources for our local partners to undertake critical conservation efforts... I look forward to working to secure its passage and provide the Bay with this boost in support.”

Senator Moore Capito noted that, “This grant program, built on a successful model of collaboration between local landowners and conservation stakeholders, will not only improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, but also improve the health of populations of species important to sportsmen and fishermen.”

While this bill still has a long way to go before it’s law, these legislators demonstrate that bipartisanship is alive and well in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. And with this type of cooperation, we can make tremendous progress toward achieving our clean water goals.

Other Highlights:

- Once again, the Trump administration proposed slashing the budget to the EPA’s Chesapeake Bay Program by 90 percent. But following a coordinated, passionate lobbying effort from the Bay community, the Bay Program’s budget increased 16 percent from \$73 million to \$85 million. This added support will pay huge dividends in meeting pollution reduction goals.

This bill makes it clear that conservation and recreation can go hand-in-hand in the Chesapeake watershed.

-Senator Shelly Moore Capito (R-WV)



POLLUTED RUNOFF

©Matt Rath



TMDL

©Kristin Reilly

Rapid and increasing urban and suburban sprawl has made stormwater the fastest growing source of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It is crucial, especially as we face continued impacts from climate change, that state and local governments continue to install green infrastructure projects that help reduce the amount of polluted water that enters our rivers and streams after rain events.

In Virginia, the Coalition is working to increase and maintain steady funding for the Commonwealth’s Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF), which provides resources for local governments to implement restoration projects that provide recreational, environmental, and economic benefits. Last year, the funding for this program was almost eliminated until Coalition members pushed back and secured \$10 million.

Educating elected officials about the importance of funding SLAF is critical, which is why the Coalition visited two Virginia cities this year, Hopewell and Waynesboro, to interview local government representatives and residents about large-scale pollution reduction projects they had installed using SLAF. Both of these projects have created more habitat for wildlife, provided recreational opportunities for residents, and reduced the amount of pollution entering local waterways. To learn more about SLAF and see the videos, visit www.choosecleanwater.org/blog/slaf.



For almost ten years, the Coalition has worked to ensure that in 2019, the six Bay states and the District of Columbia would submit comprehensive and robust plans detailing their plan to reach their 2025 clean up goals. In service to this effort, the Coalition submitted nine sign-on letters containing more than 250 signatures, demonstrating the high expectations of Coalition members for the jurisdictions to create and submit strong final plans.

Members of the TMDL workgroup also repeatedly met with EPA and Chesapeake Bay Program leadership over the course of the year to continue our collaborative relationship and also ensure that federal government agencies continue to hold the Bay jurisdictions to a high pollution reduction standard. All this work culminated in the submission and EPA’s formal review of the seven jurisdictions’ final Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs).



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At the end of 2019, the Coalition was disappointed to see that most of EPA’s evaluations of the final WIPs fell short of holding the Bay jurisdictions accountable to their goals, especially in the review Pennsylvania’s plan. The Coalition will work in 2020 to ensure that these plans are amended and properly implemented.

“Protecting and preserving the Chesapeake Bay requires that every state in the watershed do its part.”
- Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)



2019 CONFERENCE



The Coalition hosted the 10th Annual Choose Clean Water Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, on May 21-22. Every year this conference brings together nonprofits, businesses, and government and elected officials to provide a space for attendees to learn from, share, and network with one another. This year's theme was, "Clean Water. Healthy Communities," which highlighted the important connection between environmental and human health.

More than 350 people attended the conference, which featured sessions on diversity, equity, and inclusion, agriculture, communications, and more. The conference also included remarks from Chad Brown of Soul River and many events that honored the 10th anniversary of the Choose Clean Water Coalition. Three of the Coalition's founders, Verna Harrison, Hilary Falk, and Tony Caligiuri, were honored at the conference reception.

SAVE THE DATE FOR 2020

The Coalition is excited to announce that the 11th annual Conference will be held on **May 19-21** in **Richmond, Virginia**. To learn more about this year's conference and to register, visit www.choosecleanwater.org.

MEMBER LIST

INTERNATIONAL

- Namati
- ## NATIONAL
- American Battlefield Trust
 - American Canoe Association
 - American Rivers
 - Center for Progressive Reform
 - Clean Water Action
 - Defenders of Wildlife
 - Ducks Unlimited
 - Earth Force
 - Earthworks
 - Environmental Action Center
 - Environment America
 - Environmental Integrity Project
 - Environmental Working Group
 - Izaak Walton League of America
 - Land Trust Alliance
 - National Aquarium
 - National Parks Conservation Association
 - National Wildlife Federation
 - Natural Resources Defense Council
 - NatureBridge
 - Nature Abounds
 - Rachel Carson Council
 - Restore America's Estuaries
 - River Network
 - Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
 - Trout Unlimited

REGIONAL

- Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Anacostia Riverkeeper
- Anacostia Watershed Society
- Audubon Maryland/DC
- Audubon Naturalist Society
- Canaan Valley Institute
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Chesapeake Climate Action Network
- Chesapeake Commons
- Chesapeake Conservancy
- Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council
- Chesapeake Foodshed Network
- Chesapeake Legal Alliance
- Chesapeake Stormwater Network
- Coalition for Smarter Growth
- FracTracker
- Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
- Interfaith Power & Light
- Mid-Atlantic Council Trout Unlimited
- Mid-Atlantic Youth Anglers & Outdoors Program
- Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
- Potomac Conservancy
- Potomac Riverkeeper
- Potomac Riverkeeper Network
- Ridge and Valley Streamkeepers
- Rock Creek Conservancy
- Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project
- Southern Environmental Law Center
- SouthWings
- The Downstream Project
- Upper Potomac Riverkeeper
- Upstream Alliance
- Waterkeepers Chesapeake

DELAWARE

- Delaware Center for Horticulture
- Delaware Nature Society
- Friends of the Nanticoke River

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- DC Environmental Network
- Earth Conservation Corps

- Institute for Local Self Reliance
- Surfrider Foundation – DC Chapter

MARYLAND

- Alice Ferguson Foundation
- American Chestnut Land Trust
- Annapolis Green
- Arundel Rivers Federation
- Back River Restoration Committee
- Baltimore Tree Trust
- Blue Water Baltimore
- Cecil Land Use Association
- Chapman Forest Foundation
- Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center
- Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
- Citizens to Conserve and Restore Indian Creek
- Clean Bread and Cheese Creek
- Cleanwater Linganore, Inc
- Conservation Montgomery
- Corsica River Conservancy
- Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth
- Earth Forum of Howard County
- Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
- EcoLatinos
- Engage Mountain Maryland
- Environment Maryland
- Environmental Concern
- Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland
- Envision Frederick County
- Friends of Cabin John Creek
- Friends of Frederick County
- Friends of Herring Run Parks
- Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek
- Friends of Nanticoke River
- Friends of Quincy Run
- Friends of Sligo Creek
- Friends of St Clements Bay
- Friends of the Bohemia
- Growth Action Network of Anne Arundel County
- Gunpowder Riverkeeper
- League of Women Voters of Maryland
- Little Falls Watershed Alliance
- Lower Shore Land Trust
- Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway
- Maritimas
- Maryland Academy of Science at Maryland Science Center
- Maryland Conservation Council
- Maryland League of Conservation Voters
- Maryland Native Plant Society
- Maryland Nonprofits
- Maryland Pesticide Education Network
- Mattawoman Watershed Society
- Montgomery Countryside Alliance
- Muddy Branch Alliance
- Neighbors of the Northwest Branch
- NeighborSpace of Baltimore County
- Parks and People Foundation
- Patapsco Heritage Greenway
- Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust
- Port Tobacco River Conservancy
- Preservation Maryland
- Queen Anne's Conservation Association
- Scenic Rivers Land Trust
- Seyn River Association
- Seyn Riverkeeper
- ShoreRivers
- Sierra Club - Maryland Chapter
- Southern Maryland Audubon Society

- Sparks-Glencoe Community Planning Council
- St. Mary's River Watershed Association
- Talbot Preservation Alliance
- Transition Howard County
- Trash Free Maryland Alliance
- University of Maryland Extension
- Howard County
- Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.
- Wicomico Environmental Trust

NEW YORK

- Butternut Valley Alliance
- Catskill Mountainkeeper
- Chemung River Friends
- Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
- Environment New York
- Environmental Advocates of New York
- New York League of Conservation Voters
- New York State Council of Trout Unlimited
- Otsego County Conservation Association
- Otsego Land Trust
- Sidney Center Improvement Group
- Upper Susquehanna Coalition
- Water Defense

PENNSYLVANIA


- 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania
- Action Together Northeastern Pennsylvania
- Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring
- Clean Air Council
- ClearWater Conservancy
- Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association
- Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
- Countryside Conservancy
- Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
- Envioneers, Inc.
- Environmental Justice Center of Chestnut Hill United Church
- Lackawanna River Conservation Association
- Lancaster County Conservancy
- Lancaster Farmland Trust
- Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania
- Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association
- Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper
- Paxton Creek Watershed & Education Association
- Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens Group
- PennEnvironment
- PennFuture
- Penns Valley Conservation Association
- Pennsylvania Council of Churches
- Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited
- Pennsylvania Land Trust Association
- Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers
- Protecting Our Waters
- Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air and Clean Water
- Sierra Club - Pennsylvania Chapter
- Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
- Susquehanna Heritage

VIRGINIA

- Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
- Appalachian Voices
- Audubon Society of Northern Virginia
- Capital Region Land Conservancy
- Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore
- Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park
- Clean Fairfax Council
- Elizabeth River Project
- Environment Virginia
- Float Fisherman of Virginia
- Friends of Accotink Creek
- Friends of Dyke Marsh
- Friends of Little Hunting Creek
- Friends of Shenandoah Mountain
- Friends of the Middle River
- Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River
- Friends of the Rappahannock
- Friends of the Rivers of Virginia
- Friends of the Shenandoah River
- Goose Creek Association
- James River Association
- Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
- Lynnhaven River NOW
- Partnership for Smarter Growth
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Prince William Conservation Alliance
- Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection
- Richmond Audubon Society
- Rivanna Conservation Alliance
- Rockfish Valley Foundation
- Scenic Virginia
- Shenandoah Riverkeeper
- Sierra Club - Virginia Chapter
- Surfrider Foundation- Virginia Chapter
- United Parents Against Lead & Other Environmental Hazards
- Virginia Association for Biological Farming
- Virginia Association for Environmental Education
- Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center
- Virginia Conservation Network
- Virginia Interfaith Power and Light
- Virginia League of Conservation Voters
- Virginia Organizing
- Virginia Wilderness Committee
- Wetlands Watch
- Wild Virginia

WEST VIRGINIA

- Blue Heron Environmental Network
- Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition
- Cacapon Institute
- Elks Run Watershed Group
- Experience Learning
- Friends of the Cacapon River
- Laurel Mountain Preservation Association
- Mountain Lakes Preservation Alliance
- Opequon Creek Project Team
- Potomac Valley Audubon Society
- Sierra Club- West Virginia Chapter
- Sleepy Creek Watershed Association
- Warm Springs Watershed Association
- West Virginia Citizens Action Group
- West Virginia Environmental Council
- West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
- West Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
- West Virginia Rivers Coalition
- West Virginia Wilderness Coalition



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