

## Baltimore-Patapsco Federal Urban Waters Partnership

**Start Date:** June 1, 2011

**End Date:** Ongoing

**Partners:** Deployment of the National Urban Waters Federal Partnership is the joint role of 13 Federal Departments and groups, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of the Interior. The USDA Forest Service is the lead agency on the Baltimore-Patapsco Urban Waters Federal Partnership. There are numerous agencies from all levels of government, as well as many non-government organizations, that participate in activities related to the Baltimore-Patapsco Urban Waters Federal Partnership.

**USGS Project Manager(s):** Robert J. Shedlock and Edward J. Doheny

**Background:** Many urban rivers, stream, lakes, forests, and wetlands in the United States are polluted, degraded, and inaccessible. The surrounding communities often are not reaping the environmental, economic, and social benefits that living near a water body can provide. Research has demonstrated that a clean, safe, accessible urban environment, including urban forests, gardens, parks, lakes, and rivers, is directly linked to improved public health, stronger local economies, and lower crime rates. The Urban Waters Federal

Partnership was developed to reconnect economically underserved urban communities with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies, and collaboration among agencies and organizations at all levels in different metropolitan areas across the Nation.

The Partnership was formally launched in Baltimore in June 2011. Baltimore is one of seven original pilot project areas in the United States that was selected, along with Anacostia, Washington, D.C; Gary, Indiana; Bronx/Harlem River, New York City; Denver, Colorado; Los Angeles, California; and New Orleans, Louisiana.

**Objectives:** On a national level, the Partnership seeks to

- (1) create opportunities for new jobs leading to careers in conservation,
- (2) restore rural and urban forests and their related streams, wetlands, and riparian areas,
- (3) adopt water conservation measures to ensure sufficient quantities of clean water,



Streamgaging in Baltimore's urban areas:  
Station 01585219, Herring Run at Sinclair Lane at  
Baltimore, MD.

- (4) deploy science-based best management practices,
- (5) improve environmental literacy, and
- (6) leverage the combined authorities and resources of the participating federal agencies.

**Approach:** The Baltimore-Patapsco Partnership has organized to develop plans and actions in four topical areas including, 1) local restoration and best management projects, 2) spatial mapping information and tools, 3) the Green Pattern Book (guidelines for implementing green infrastructure and different types of greening projects), and 4) monitoring, modeling, and research. A subcommittee in each of these topical areas has formed. Full partnership meetings are held quarterly to coordinate among all partners, and to report back on progress within the subcommittees. The USGS, MD-DE-DC Water Science Center participates actively on the monitoring, modeling, and research subcommittee, with goals of enhancing communication between partners on monitoring needs, and water-related issues such as improved water quality in urban areas, flood hazards, and water supply.

**Results:** The subcommittee for monitoring, modeling, and research has been involved with assessment of monitoring goals, and inventorying monitoring resources and locations in the greater Baltimore region among different agencies and groups. The subcommittee organized and held a workshop in June 2014 on urban waters monitoring assets in the Greater Baltimore area. The workshop brought together representatives from city, county, and federal agencies, as well as representatives from non-government and volunteer monitoring organizations, and academic researchers. All the major county and city agencies in the Baltimore region were represented at the workshop. This diverse group gave a series of presentations covering all the major water-monitoring programs in the metro area, including biological monitoring. The talks and the ensuing breakout sessions resulted in an initial inventory of nearly all the monitoring assets in the region. The workshop also set forth a plan to develop a forum to establish lines of communication and collaboration between researchers from the Baltimore Ecosystem Study and local monitoring interests. Workshop participants also developed wish lists for better monitoring programs and to develop the capability to conduct more integrated assessments of the large body of data being collected. A steering committee has now been formed to carry forward the recommendations from the June 2014 workshop.

**Publications:** For more information on the Baltimore-Patapsco Urban Waters Federal Partnership, please see the following fact sheet: Grove, J.M., *Reinvesting in the Baltimore Region and its Urban Waters—Linking Communities and their Environments*, available online at:

<http://www.urbanwaters.gov/pdf/baltimore.pdf>

For more information on the National Urban Waters Federal Partnership, please visit the following web