

Restoration Partners,

DNR is reaching out to you as a past applicant of the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund to communicate a change in application requirements that will begin in the FY26 grant cycle (projects that are submitted by December 2024, and can break ground beginning in July 2025).

Beginning in the FY26 grant cycle, Chesapeake and Coastal Service will require that stream restoration projects in the [below areas](#) provide pre-restoration [Maryland Biological Stream Survey](#) (MBSS) benthic macroinvertebrate data in order to be eligible for funding:

1. Designated cold water streams ([MDE Use Classes III and IV](#));
2. Existing cold water species (identified by the presence of trout or benthic macroinvertebrate cold water obligates (*Tallaperla* and *Sweltsa*)); or,
3. High quality ([MDE Tier II](#)) stream catchments.

Stream restoration is a valuable tool to help Maryland meet its total maximum daily load (TMDL) and Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals; however, the state must also strive to limit any potentially negative consequences to in-stream biology from these projects.

To be considered consistent with MBSS protocols, benthic macroinvertebrate data must be collected by a person certified in benthic macroinvertebrate sampling, the sample must be processed by an individual who is certified in laboratory processing and subsampling, and a person who is a certified taxonomist in both EPT East and North American Chironomidae by the Society for Freshwater Science must perform the benthic macroinvertebrate taxonomy. The contact information for individuals who are already certified can be found on the [MBSS Registry of Certifications](#) and information on how to become certified can be found on the [MBSS Training](#) website.

Please consult the below guidance on the collection of pre-restoration MBSS data:

1. Where should monitoring occur?
 - a. Minimum of one sample at the downstream end of the project (not below, but within the project extent).

- b. We encourage additional samples if the applicant feels those samples are necessary or appropriate to represent pre-restoration environmental conditions.
 2. When should monitoring occur?
 - a. For application funding purposes, we require data collected before grant submission.
 - b. Data must be no older than two years old (e.g., if application is submitted in December 2024, then the data can have been collected no earlier than spring 2023).
 - c. Chesapeake and Coastal Services are requiring these data for grant application review only; permit reviewers may require additional monitoring for their programs beyond the scope of this grant application.
 3. How should these data be reported?
 - a. Applicants will submit the following items in their applications:
 - i. IBI scores (if unable to calculate this, contact DNR)
 - ii. MBSS data sheets (or copy)
 - iii. Benthic taxa list from certified lab

A subset of projects submitted in these sensitive watersheds may be audited by Maryland DNR each year. If your project is selected as one of these restorations, a DNR scientist will reach out to coordinate sampling.

Please reach out to Sara Weglein (sara.weglein@maryland.gov) or Ari Engelberg (ari.engelberg@maryland.gov) if you have any questions.