



KEEPING MARYLAND WATERMEN WORKING: OYSTER BAR AND LAND RESTORATION PROJECTS FACT SHEET

Recognizing the challenges facing the commercial blue crab industry, Governor Martin O'Malley and the Maryland General Assembly set aside \$3 million in FY'09 state capital funding for work projects to help mitigate economic impacts. Currently \$2.5 million is supporting oyster bar rehabilitation and land restoration projects. The primary use of these funds, being administered by the Oyster Recovery Partnership, will be to reclaim shell on 1,000 acres of oyster reefs. The remaining \$500,000 is being set aside by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for aquaculture-related projects in 2009.

Every year 2,600 acres of hard bottom oyster habitat in the Chesapeake Bay are lost. Historically, fossil shell has been used to capture natural spat sets; however there is no available shell and the state currently does not have a permit to acquire it. (A shell dredging permit application is being prepared and reviewed by the Maryland Oyster Advisory Commission).

Maryland Waterman Participation:

- All watermen with a commercial tidal fish license (TFL) were offered the opportunity to participate in this program. (See www.dnr.maryland.gov/oyster/). Preference for fall work was given to those most impacted by the crab restrictions (licensed Captains and crew who crabbed in Maryland in 2008) who only selected to work in the fall.
- Boat Captains will receive \$500 per day (which includes boat use, fuel and all related operating costs) and crewman \$150 per day. Land based workers will receive \$15 per hour.

Information on Projects:

Bar rehabilitation involves using power oyster dredging gear to reclaim oyster shells covered by a thin layer of silt and sediment. The intent is to prepare historically productive oyster bars for a natural spat set and/or planting of disease-free hatchery seed. All oysters collected during the process are being sent to the hatchery for use as brood stock or replanted on sanctuary bars.

New oyster bars targeted for rehabilitation will be bottom mapped and/or surveyed by divers to better understand the bottom conditions prior to treatment. Oyster bars being targeted include:

- High salinity regions with high densities of shell deposits and a high probability of receiving a natural spat set.
- Lower salinity, large scale sanctuary areas with a high probability for extended survival. These bars (like Severn River) would receive hatchery seed in 2009.
- Managed oyster bars in all salinity regimes. These bars would receive hatchery seed in 2009 as part of the reserve program to evaluate aquaculture feasibility.
- Aquaculture demonstration areas.

- Fall Projects: Approximately 100 acres of oyster reefs have been selected for the fall work period. It includes two sanctuary bars in the Severn River and two aquaculture bars, one Reserve bar in the Patuxent River and one in Tangier Sound.
- Land Projects: Land restoration projects may include road/trail restoration, tree thinning, and wildlife and aquaculture construction projects. Details and manpower requirements are still being determined and the work projects are expected to begin in December, weather dependent.
- 2009 Projects: Oyster reefs (primarily sanctuaries) being selected for the next phase of the program has not been finalized. As planned, approximately 900 acres of oyster reefs will be rehabilitated between February and June.

Breakout of Work Applications Received:

Applications	Captain	Crew	Land	Other / Notes
Watermen (2008 crabbers) who only selected to work in the fall	67	51		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 105 watermen are currently working for 5 days in the fall and 4 more days in 2009 • 13 applicants opted for 2009 work instead
Watermen (with a TFL) who selected only fall work	16	21		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants to receive 9 days of work in 2009
Watermen who selected any multiple combinations of fall work, spring work and/or land work	209	157	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants to receive 9 days of work in 2009
Watermen who selected only land work			79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants to receive 9 days of work beginning in Dec 08
Late Applications				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 applicants
Applicants with violations, pending court cases, or missing information				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79 applicants
Totals (695 applicants)	292	229	84	90