

THE DELAWARE CENTER FOR THE INLAND BAYS

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

To **PRESERVE, PROTECT** and **RESTORE**
Delaware's Inland Bays,
the *water that flows into them*, and
the *watershed around them*.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



As blissful retirees, young families, and excited vacationers arrive to the Inland Bays watershed, so do new pressures on the Inland Bays ecosystem. Population growth puts pressure on natural resources, but it also expands the number of opportunities we have to engage the next wave of Bay champions.

The Center is reaching out to both long-time residents and to those newly entranced with the powerful web of life that is the Inland Bays watershed. In 2017, we entered the third year of the Clean Water: Delaware's Clear Choice education campaign—dedicated to

cleaning up Delaware's polluted waters by developing financing for water quality improvement projects. We also engaged 1,622 individuals at 31 presentations about the Bays and continued to assist communities by helping them clean up pollution from stormwater that flows from their streets into the Bays. Our message to these residents is that controlling stormwater runoff is not just about clean Bays; it is also about beautifying communities while protecting homes and businesses from flooding.

This past year, we provided opportunities for everyone to learn about the Bays by becoming involved with our programs. We led teams of volunteers to monitor one of the world's most significant population of horseshoe crabs - a 450 million-year-old creature whose eggs feed entire populations of shorebirds. We created passages over dams to help baby American eels return to their native streams after their epic migrations from the Sargasso sea. We even guided the hands of volunteers to plant forests that will provide wildlife habitat and clean water.

The Center's **research, education, and restoration** programs are all supported by the minds, hearts, and hands of the growing community we serve. Thank you for your interest and support of the Center in 2017 and into the future, as we work together to restore one of Delaware's most magnificent natural resources.

Chris Bason
Executive Director



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GENEROUS GRANT ENERGIZES OYSTER RESTORATION PROGRAMS

This past summer, Tidewater Utilities, Inc. and their banking partner, CoBank, gave the Don't Chuck Your Shucks and Oyster Gardening programs some very generous support! As the beneficiaries of the 20th Annual Tidewater Utilities Charity Golf Tournament, the Center was awarded \$24,000, earmarked specifically for these programs which aim to restore the once-abundant oyster population to the Inland Bays. Able to filter pollution, improve water clarity, and provide a rich and diverse habitat for dozens of other species of aquatic life, the oysters from these programs have the power to give back.

“Don't Chuck Your Shucks”, a partnership between the Center, local restaurants and the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation, removes shell from the waste stream and uses it in restoration projects that directly benefit the Inland Bays.

Spent shell is particularly attractive to oysters and mussels which require a hard substrate on which their larvae can set and grow. Projects that use these shells include Living Shorelines, which use shell bags as a building material, and the Oyster Gardening program, which uses the shell for cultch, a substrate used to set oyster larvae on. The funds donated will be used to purchase materials for the curing and bagging of the recycled shell, and to promote and distribute promotional materials.

The Center's Oyster Gardening program works with waterfront property owners to raise oysters in the waters off their docks and shorelines. Not intended for human

consumption, these “work-horse” oysters are used to improve water quality in dead-end lagoons and other degraded parts of the Bays while creating a source of shellfish for other enhancement projects. Tidewater funds will help purchase new gear for the program and defray costs of hatchery and storage operations. Created in 2003, Oyster Gardening has been a staple of public outreach for the Center and currently engages 88 participants, with the goal of 150 by the fall of 2019.

The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays would like to sincerely thank those that attended, and supported the 20th Annual Tidewater Utilities Charity Golf Tournament—and offer a very special “thank you” to Tidewater Utilities, Inc., a Middlesex Water Company Affiliate, and Co-Bank, for selecting the Center as their 2017 charity and match recipient!



Bob Collins and Chris Bason explain oyster floats to Tidewater Utilities, Inc visitors Carol Murphy, Jerry Esposito (President), Bernadette Sohler, and Joe Cuccinello.

AMERICAN EELS GET A "LEG UP"!



Burton Pond spillway downstream



Board Chair, Susie Ball, and Environmental Scientist, Andrew McGowan, affix the eelway to a piling of the dam

Each year, tiny American Eel larvae drift with the ocean currents thousands of miles from east of the Bahamas to estuaries along the Atlantic coast—including our own Inland Bays! After almost a full year at sea, these larvae develop into juveniles and swim up the Bays in search of freshwater creeks and ponds. Unfortunately, dams often cut the migration short.

In the Inland Bays watershed, one such impediment to eel migration is the dam located at Millsboro Pond. But this is not just a local issue: barriers like these have hindered American Eel populations coast-wide by preventing young eels from reaching their freshwater nurseries. The effects of this disruption ripple out; healthy populations of American Eels are needed to serve as prey for bigger fish and birds, support commercial fisheries, and act as a host in the reproductive cycle of freshwater mussels.

To combat this problem within the Inland Bays watershed, the Center installed three "eel passages" in 2017, located on the Millsboro, Betts, and Burton Pond dams.

The passages are long tubes, lined inside with netting that allow juvenile eels to "climb over" the dam, and enter the freshwater habitats on the other side.

If the three eelways function as designed, they will open an estimated 85 miles of freshwater streams that were previously unavailable to migrating eels the Inland Bays watershed. Scientists hope that by providing access to more habitat like this along the Atlantic coast, American Eel populations will begin to recover.

NEW MONITORING PLAN TRACKS PROTECTION AND RESTORATION EFFORTS



CIB Environmental Scientist, Andrew McGowan, monitors marsh elevation.



A secchi disk is used to determine the transparency—or turbidity—of water.

Throughout 2017, staff worked with the Center's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to develop an updated Environmental Monitoring Plan for the Inland Bays.

Environmental monitoring provides important scientific data that are used to evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken to protect and restore the Inland Bays.

These actions themselves are determined by the Center's long-term goals, defined in the Inland Bays' Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

A critical part of this updated plan is the addition of recommendations for new and enhanced monitoring programs. Among the high-priority recommendations are development of a new mathematical model of the Bays to

predict the outcomes of possible management measures and strategies, improved monitoring of dissolved oxygen and algal blooms, and upgrades to the management of data from the University of Delaware's Citizen Monitoring Program. To implement the new plan, the Center will coordinate with partners including universities, and government agencies.

The data acquired through the Environmental Monitoring Plan will allow the Center to track the status and trends in key indicators of water quality, natural habitat and watershed condition in the Inland Bays. These assessments are used in decision-making and are presented to the public through our *State of the Bays* reports. With this information we can continue to preserve, protect, and restore the Inland Bays in a more data-driven and effective way.

DEWEY BEACH TURNS TO NATURE-BASED STORMWATER SOLUTIONS



Read Ave Living Shoreline in Dewey—photo courtesy of TJRedefer SkyJack Pics

Intense development and the use of impervious (hardened) surfaces in the Town of Dewey Beach has led to more frequent flooding and an increase in stormwater runoff that delivers nutrients and other pollutants directly into Rehoboth Bay.

The Center recently partnered with the Town to develop a Stormwater Master Plan that provides specific recommendations for over 40 green infrastructure stormwater and shoreline projects.

Each project will decrease runoff, reduce flooding, and improve water quality in Rehoboth Bay.

In 2017 we obtained grants from the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council to implement two of the recommended projects: a living shoreline and stormwater tidegate project at Monigle Park on Read Ave., and an innovative bioretention facility along Route 1 next to the Little Store grocery.

Together these projects will prevent 32 pounds of nitrogen and 10 pounds of phosphorus from entering the Bay via runoff each year. They will also serve as important demonstration sites for innovative, nature-based solutions that improve water quality and provide climate resiliency for our coastal communities.

STOCKLEY CENTER HELPS PREVENT STORMWATER POLLUTION



Construction began in late 2016 and wrapped in 2017 with a planting day.

In areas with large amounts of impervious surfaces (such as roads, rooftops, and parking lots), rainwater washes sediments and pollutants into nearby waterways, causing poor water quality.

Until 2017, one such area was the parking lot of the Stockley Center in Georgetown. Located near the 315-acre Doe Bridge Nature Preserve, this parking lot was once a site where stormwater washed pollutants into the ecologically-sensitive Cow Bridge Branch which feeds into the Indian River and Bay.

Starting in 2016, the Center partnered with the site's owners, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, to prevent further pollution by upgrading their failing stormwater pond to a bioretention facility.

This new installation allows stormwater to soak into the ground, where native plants, soil, and mulch can filter out pollutants, remove excess nutrients, and capture sediment. Biochar, a type of charcoal, was also added to increase the soil's ability to capture excess nitrogen and phosphorus.

The project wrapped up in May 2017 when the bioretention area was planted with native species.

This project will result in a reduction of 2.3 lbs per year of phosphorus, 17 lbs per year of nitrogen, and 515 lbs per year of sediment to Cow Bridge Branch and the Inland Bays. As an added benefit, the bioretention area will provide new habitat for birds and wildlife.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Names listed reflect those who donated during the 2017 Fiscal Year 10/2016-9/2017

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 In Memory of Claud "Capt. Butch" Bennett:
 Mr. Richard S. Fischer
 In Memory of Robert H. Robinson, Sr.:
 Alicia B. Howard
 In Honor of Gary Hilkert and Judy Smith:
 Michael Kelrick

**Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balances—Accrual Basis
 September 30, 2017 and September 30, 2016**

ASSETS

Current Assets	2017	2016
Cash	\$ 403,419	\$ 439,957
Grants receivable	206,465	204,621
Prepaid expenses	4,500	26,881
Accounts receivable	14,569	4,370

Total Current Assets	628,953	675,829
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Property, Plant and Equipment (at Cost)

Land	125,000	125,000
Building	887,716	887,716
Furniture and Equipment	345,999	343,286
	1,358,715	1,356,002
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(579,242)	(554,021)

Net Property, Plant and Equipment	779,473	801,981
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Other Assets

DE Community Foundation Endowment Fund	127,105	115,480
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Total Assets	1,535,531	1,593,290
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LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 26,900	\$ 16,653
Payroll Taxes	31,734	2,043
Accrued Salaries and Benefits	1,358	24,717

Total Current Liabilities	59,992	43,413
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Net Assets

Unrestricted		
Board Designated*	127,105	115,480
Invested in Property and Equipment	654,473	676,981
Undesignated	300,419	227,792

Total Unrestricted	1,081,997	1,020,253
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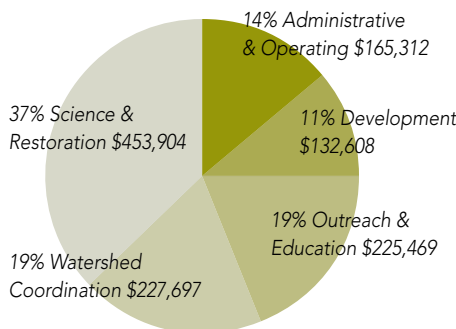
Temporarily Restricted	268,542	404,624
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Permanently Restricted**	125,000	125,000
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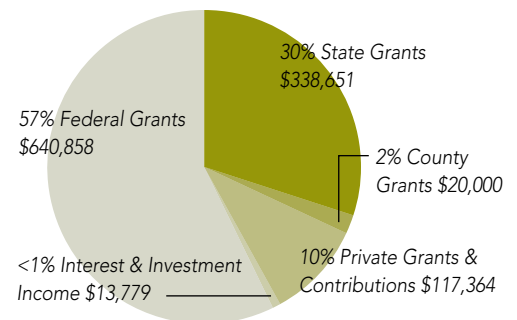
Total Net Assets	1,475,539	1,549,877
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Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 1,535,531	\$ 1,593,290
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* Endowment Fund ** Protected Land



Total Expenses \$1,204,990



Total Revenue \$1,130,652



DELAWARE CENTER FOR THE
INLAND BAYS
 Research. Educate. Restore.

Get on board with the bays.
inlandbays.org

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VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

During 2017, our volunteers logged an outstanding 3,755 hours of work that is valued at approximately \$90,645.70! With YOUR help we were able to hold our 13th Annual Native Plant Sale, maintain the trails of the James Farm Ecological Preserve for thousands of visitors, clean up ½ ton of trash from the Bays, collect data on thousands of fish and horseshoe crabs, plant 12,000 trees, and so much more!

Thank you so much for your hard work and dedication—we couldn't do this without you!

**SAVE
 THE
 DATE**

GARDENING FOR THE BAYS NATIVE PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 5, 2018 (9 a.m.–1 p.m.)
 James Farm Ecological Preserve, Ocean View, DE

