



## Goal 4: Protect Baltimore's ecology and bio-diversity

Baltimore City is part of a very unique collection of ecosystems including the Chesapeake Bay and four regional watersheds. Practicing good stewardship of our natural world improves the ability of future generations to eat fresh food, breath clean air, drink healthy water, and enjoy open space.

### KEY FACTS AND RELATED EFFORTS

- \* The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area includes all land within 1,000 feet of tidally-affected water. The Baltimore City **Critical Area Management Program** holds waterfront development to higher environmental standards to protect this sensitive ecosystem. All projects must protect and enhance Baltimore's ecology and diversity by reducing pollutant runoff and enhancing wildlife habitat through retaining or planting native vegetation near the water. Over 800 trees, 1,600 shrubs, and many herbaceous species were planted by developers under this program in 2009.
- \* In 2009, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks and Department inventoried and mapped all the stand-alone trees and shrub collections in the 209-acre Cylburn Arboretum. The Department also identified and mapped all trees in Patterson Park and hired a consultant to create a **Tree Master Plan** for Baltimore City's five major parks.
- \* Begun in 1997, the **Baltimore Ecosystem Study** is a long-term ecological research project funded by the National Science Foundation and the Environmental Protection Agency to learn how an urban area works as an ecological system. In the summer of 2009, BES re-inventoried 201 plots throughout the city as part of their work to better understand the ecological interactions in the whole range of habitats -- from the center city of Baltimore out into the surrounding rural areas.
- \* According to Eco-check's 2008 **Chesapeake Bay Report Card**, the Patapsco and Back Rivers' benthic community condition declined from unusually good conditions in 2007. Benthic and phytoplankton community condition tend to vary greatly between years. Aquatic grass distribution has remained very poor since 1989, with the exception of a short two-year period (2004 and 2005), when the score increased to 72%.
- \* In 2009, **Herring Run Watershed Association** installed 198 rain barrels and 3 rain gardens, planted over 1100 trees, removed 1.2 acres of invasive plants, and sold over \$41,000 worth of native plants, all of which increased the quality and availability of in-stream and upland fish and wildlife habitat.
- \* **Jones Falls Watershed Association** and its volunteers planted over 800 canopy and understory trees, removed 11,765 lbs. of invasive plants, and collected 21,705 lbs. of trash from school campuses, public parks, watershed streams, and rivers throughout Baltimore City and County in 2009.

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### STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- If you have a garden, plant native species to provide habitat for local pollinators and birds
- Tell your workplace that native landscaping matters
- Compost your organic waste and add it to your soil
- Use a rain barrel to reduce stormwater runoff
- Volunteer with your local watershed organization on their days of action