

Northeast Region Urban Business Plan Baltimore Rivers to Harbor Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership



Our Vision for Baltimore

Collaborating with community-based organizations, government agencies and other institutions, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will work to connect residents with green corridors and Bay waters. Building stronger connections to nature and wildlife will enhance the social and economic vitality of Baltimore communities and will provide the foundation for a shared regional ethic of environmental stewardship.

A thriving community once flourished at Masonville Cove. However, railroad tracks were built in the mid-1900s preventing access to the river, and the area was eventually abandoned. Partners came together to restore the area, established the Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center and secured funding for programs at the center. Since 2007, programming has reached 8,000 students and 300

Six cities in the Northeast Region are working on a commitment to connect urban residents to conservation and the great outdoors: Baltimore, MD; New Haven, CT; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI; Springfield, MA; and Yonkers, NY. The Northeast Region urban business plan illustrates the accomplishments, vision, goals and estimated funding necessary to achieve priority actions and objectives of the Northeast Region's six Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships.

teachers. The work in Masonville Cove has leveraged over \$1.6 million from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, local partners, and matching grants.

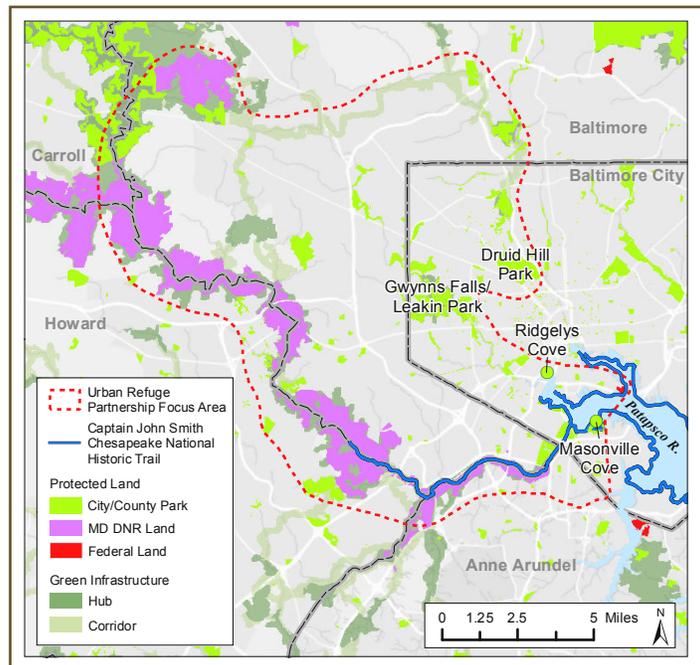
The project has grown into a larger partnership that seeks to address youth unemployment, environmental concerns and disconnection from green space. Youth employment and poverty are both serious concerns in south and west Baltimore. Nearly 55 percent of youth in the area live in poverty, much greater than the city-wide average of 28 percent or the statewide average of 10.5 percent. The area has a 22 percent unemployment rate, compared to the state's unemployment rate of five percent.

Much of South Baltimore is close to sea-level and vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including sea-level rise and flooding. However, many of the communities in the area lack access to the resources and infrastructure that can alleviate these impacts. Ultimately, partners hope to work together to address environmental concerns, provide solutions and support for the local community by investing in green infrastructure to promote a resilient ecosystem that benefits the people of Baltimore.

The partnership builds on a strong history of regional collaboration, including the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, Baltimore Urban Waters Partnership, the Maryland Partnership for Children and Nature, and the new Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition.

Geographic Focus Area

Over the next 10 years, the Baltimore Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership will grow from the neighborhoods and communities around the Middle Branch and Masonville Cove into the key tributary watersheds of Jones Falls, Gwynns Falls, and the Patuxent River.



Goals

- Enable community members and visitors to explore the region’s diverse natural and cultural assets through an expanded network of trails that connect its green and blue places.
- Instill a wildlife and conservation stewardship ethic by connecting community residents, especially youth, to the region’s land, water, and wildlife through nature-based recreational and educational opportunities.
- Involve local communities in restoring, enhancing, and maintaining the natural resilience and species biodiversity of the Gwynn’s Falls, Jones Falls, and Patapsco River watersheds and the Middle Branch portion of the harbor.
- Enhance physical health and well-being in the neighboring communities through exposure to nature-based recreation opportunities.
- Introduce an increased number of young people from local communities to career opportunities in wildlife and conservation fields.



Below are the primary actions partners hope to accomplish over the next 10 years

Action	Description	Estimated Cost
1	Expand and streamline youth employment opportunities for ages 14-24, as well as improve equitable access to conservation careers for neighborhoods in the focus area.	\$160,00
2	Enhance connectivity and accessibility of green space within the focus area. Connect major parks, natural areas and other greenspaces via multi-use trails. Specifically, work to connect Ellicott City, the Patapsco Greenway Trail, Masonville Cove Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, Port Covington, the Gwynn’s Falls Trail, and the BWI trail to each other to allow residents and visitors to explore the region’s diverse natural and cultural assets via pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly routes.	\$100,000 (does not include cost of trail creation)
3	Restore and protect green space in the focus area. Implement strategic and desired habitat restoration and land protection projects that provide wildlife habitat, climate change resiliency, and community recreation and education features. Identify the priority projects through working with the Maryland Wildlife Diversity Action Plan, Baltimore City’s Office of Sustainability, and the Climate Resiliency Project. Align these projects with equity goals by engaging active neighborhood citizen groups and ensuring the projects help address needs for green infrastructure in the most underserved communities. These projects will be located within the community in areas such as schools, libraries, community centers, and other public spaces.	\$250,000
4	Implement a communications and community action strategy, informed by research, to effectively improve and provide outdoor education, conservation, and recreation opportunities in the focus area.	\$150,000