



*Baltimore: Rivers to Harbor  
Urban Refuge Partnership*



# WHY THE URBAN FOCUS?



## RECOMMENDATION 13:

“CREATE AN URBAN REFUGE INITIATIVE THAT DEFINES EXCELLENCE IN OUR EXISTING URBAN REFUGES, ESTABLISHES THE FRAMEWORK FOR CREATING NEW URBAN REFUGE PARTNERSHIPS AND IMPLEMENTS A REFUGE PRESENCE IN TEN DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY VARIED CITIES ACROSS AMERICA BY 2015.”



# Standards of Excellence

- Know and Relate to the Community
- Connect Urban People with Nature via Stepping Stones of Engagement
- Build Partnerships
- Be a Community Asset
- Ensure Adequate Long-Term Resources
- Provide Equitable Access
- Ensure Visitors Feel Safe and Welcome
- Model Sustainability





# U.S. Fish & Wildlife

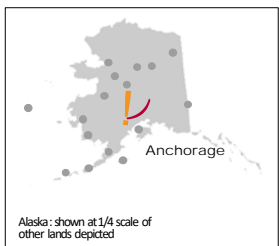
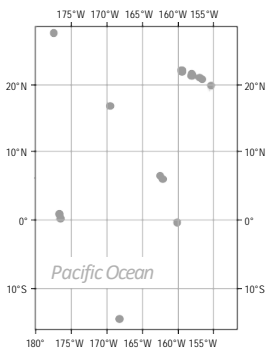
## Urban National Wildlife Refuges



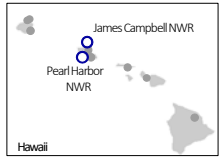
- Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership
- Regional Priority Urban Wildlife Refuges
- Urban National Wildlife Refuges
- Other National Wildlife Refuges (no labels)



Pacific NWRs and Marine National Monuments: shown at 1/6th scale of other lands depicted



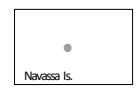
Alaska: shown at 1/4 scale of other lands depicted



Hawaii



Produced in the Division of Realty  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Falls  
Church, VA  
2/28/2017





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Urban Wildlife Conservation Program



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A group of youth "Puddle Stompers" from Head Start find a rough-skinned newt at Deaton River NW in Colorado with the Denver skyline. Credit: Mike Mauro/USFWS

## Know Your Community

### A Social Science Approach

An underlying need for the Urban Program is a better understanding of the factors that facilitate or inhibit connecting urban audiences with wildlife and nature. To address this need, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service led a collaborative research effort with U.S. Geological Survey and North Carolina State University to understand urban audiences, identify barriers to engagement in wildlife-dependent recreation, and identify strategies for the USFWS to overcome these barriers.

[Visit the Human Dimensions Portal »](#)

# Baltimore

## Inner Harbor



## The Masonville Project



# Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center



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**Masonville Cove  
URBAN WILDLIFE  
REFUGE PARTNERSHIP**  
Baltimore, Maryland

**Community Partners:**  
Baltimore and Curtis Bay Coalition  
Living Classrooms Foundation  
National Aquarium

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Department of the Interior**





# *Masonville Cove*



A

Resilience



Biodiversity



Discovery



Equity





# Next Steps



### Introduction

What began as the restoration of an abandoned and contaminated area at Masonville Cove near Baltimore Harbor has grown into a nationally recognized partnership connecting the city's residents to the outdoors. The Baltimore Harbor to Rivers Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership works to improve youth employment and engagement in conservation careers, create connectivity to natural resources through trail development and improve the quality and quantity of green space in south and west Baltimore.

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, the project has resulted in the removal or recycling of more than 60,000 tons of debris and programming has reached more than 8,000 students and 300 teachers. Each year, the partnership hosts four local college students for an eight-week summer internship. Additionally, the work in Masonville Cove has leveraged over \$1.6 million from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, local partners, and matching grants.

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.

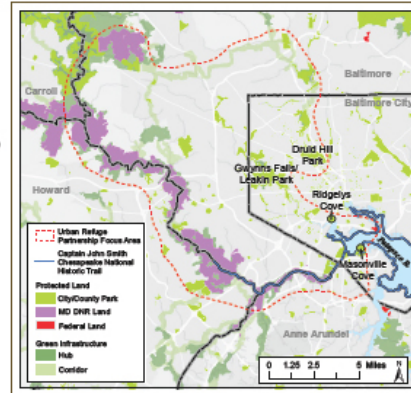
The partnership seeks to address youth unemployment, environmental concerns and disconnection from green space. Youth employment and poverty are both serious concerns in south and west Baltimore. Nearly 55 percent of youth in the area live in poverty, much greater than the city-wide average of 28 percent 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 very close to sea-level and very 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 provide youth

employment opportunities and work with the local community to revitalize the trail system, build green infrastructure, nature play spaces and contribute to a beautiful and resilient ecosystem that benefits the people of Baltimore.

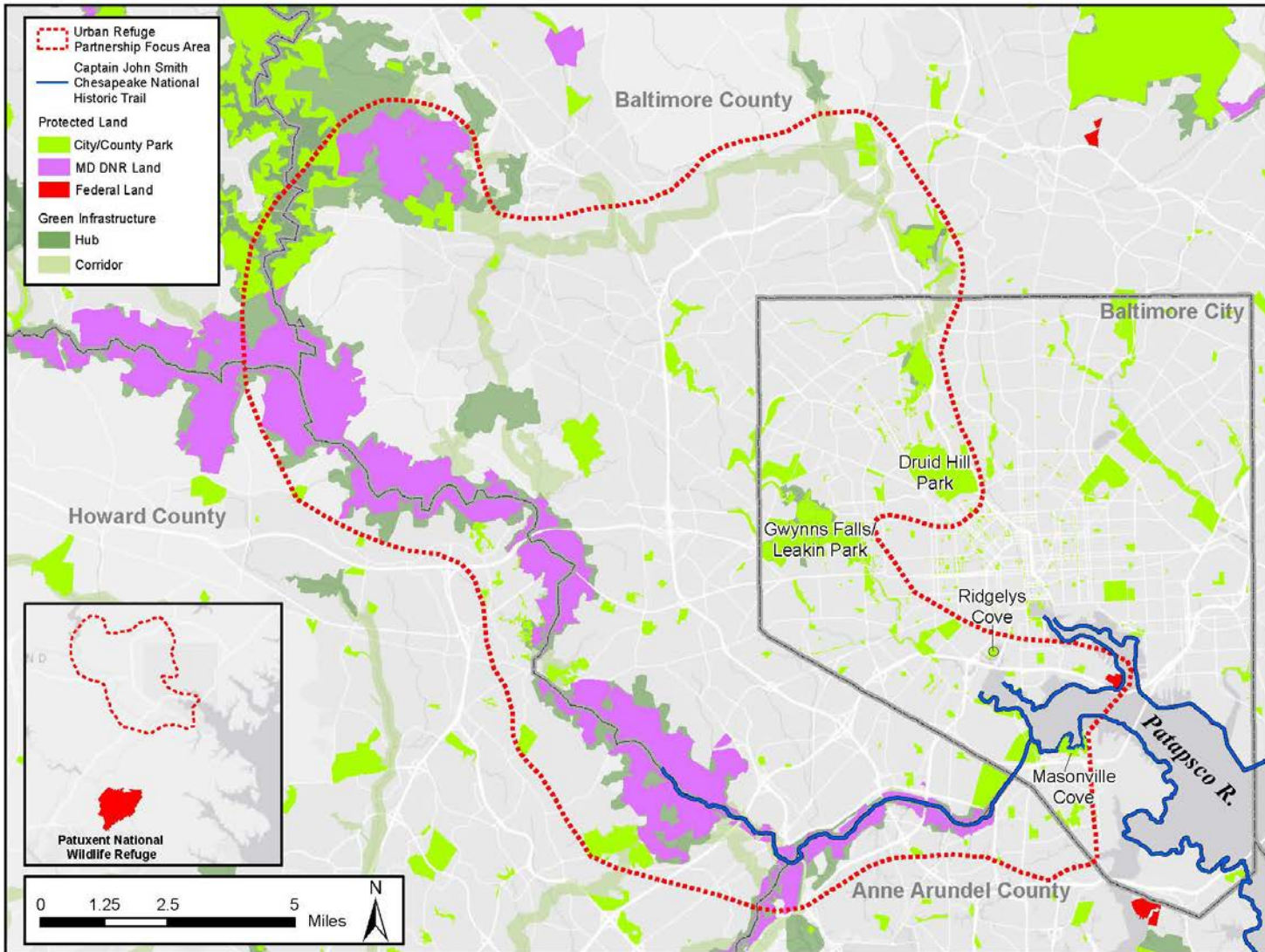
### Geographic Focus Area

Over the course of 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 Patapsco River.



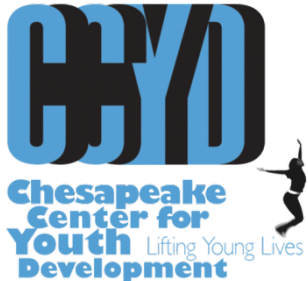
# Beyond Masonville Cove

## Baltimore Harbor to Rivers Urban Refuge Partnership





**PARKS & PEOPLE**  
FOUNDATION



THE  
CONSERVATION FUND



