

Pesticides and The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project

Statement of Principles

Project Mission and Goals

The Project is dedicated to reducing the occurrence and risks of pesticides in the watershed in order to protect water quality, aquatic life, wildlife and public health. Maryland Pesticide Network and the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future launched the *Pesticides and The Chesapeake Bay Watershed* project in May 2007 to bring together a diverse group of Bay restoration stakeholders to assess the pesticide impacts on the Bay and identify and implement solutions to reduce the use and risks of pesticides in the watershed.

The Bay is impacted by nutrient and pollutant runoff from agricultural, residential, commercial and government actions. Simultaneous with this problem, parallel concerns have emerged from scientific reports regarding the impacts on the ecosystem and public health from pesticides. Public health concerns include cancer, respiratory problems, birth defects, neurological illnesses such as depression, and fertility problems. The Project's 2009 white paper, *Pesticides and the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Understanding the Problem and Identifying Solutions to Reduce the Impact of Pesticides on the Watershed*^{*}, comprehensively reviewed relevant scientific research over the previous 15 years. More recent peer-reviewed research during the past three years has further underscored the ecosystem and public health concerns. References to this research are found on the Project's website, <http://www.mdpestnet.org>, which is updated on an ongoing basis.

The Project originally brought together more than 100 stakeholders – a group that now has grown to over 300 – to assess the pesticide impact on the watershed and develop practical solutions for reducing runoff.

Project stakeholders work together based on these fundamental principles:

1. Project co-sponsors are committed to facilitate the work of the Project's five working groups and to promote stakeholder collaboration via the Project's annual meeting. The co-sponsors do not take a specific position to guide the work of Project participants other than affirming that there is sufficient current data to call for action to reduce pesticide runoff into the watershed. Project staff assist the working groups in implementing their activities.
2. A reduction in pesticide volume and impacts requires multiple strategies tailored to specific target audiences. This should address the continuing use of pesticides, perception of and understanding about pesticides, and available alternatives. Working group outputs take into account and reflect the diversity of opinions and strategies of Project stakeholders.
3. Maintaining a diverse and growing stakeholder community and providing opportunities for open and respectful dialogue is essential for the Project's credibility and work. Current stakeholders include federal, state and municipal government agency scientists and officials; medical and public health experts; waterkeepers, watermen, watershed association officials; extension services experts; farmers; environmental organization officials, and pest management and lawn care industry executives.
4. Those participating in the Project do so either in their individual capacities contributing their expertise, or as representatives of their agencies, organizations or educational institutions.

* http://www.mdpestnet.org/projects/watershed/white_paper.html
<http://www.mdpestnet.org>

The Project's goals which have served to establish its five working groups:

- Identify relevant research and data gaps to assess the main pesticides of concern in the watershed.
- Identify Best Management Practices to prevent pesticide runoff and promote less-toxic strategies.
- Collaborate with, educate and support the agricultural community in implementing Best Management Practices and protecting farmer family health.
- Educate residential and commercial communities about reducing pesticide use and runoff.
- Identify policies needed to reduce the impact of pesticides on the watershed.

Pesticides and The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project
Co-sponsors: Maryland Pesticide Network & the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
1209 North Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD 21202
<http://www.mdpestnet.org/projects/watershed.html>