

WHO DOES WHAT, WHERE: USING PARTICIPATORY MAPPING AS A MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT TOOL TO INFORM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN MARYLAND

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Since 2013 the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has conducted a series of participatory mapping workshops with coastal stakeholders to better understand which recreational, commercial, and cultural uses occur throughout the state. At these workshops MDNR employs a Geographic Information System (GIS) coupled with e-Beam technology to instantly and accurately collect data from participants. NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas Center originally developed this participatory GIS (pGIS) methodology to map ocean uses in California in 2008. Since then, variations of this methodology have been utilized in different capacities by a variety of groups nationwide.

From 2013-2014 MDNR collected this human use data for the Atlantic Ocean & Coastal Bays, Western Maryland, and the Choptank River. The goal has been to understand how, when, and where users recreate in these bodies of water and surrounding landscapes so that the data can inform a number of planning and land management considerations throughout the state. The resulting datasets are publicly available on Maryland's Coastal Atlas.

In September 2014 the State of Maryland nominated an area in the Potomac River – Mallows Bay – for consideration as one of the first new National Marine Sanctuaries in nearly two decades. In order to inform the nomination process, MDNR and partners have engaged with several stakeholder groups to better understand how, when, and where these groups use the Middle Potomac River. Thinking proactively about the eventual need to have this information to inform management of the area, MDNR chose to utilize this proven methodology once again.

On June 10, 2015 MDNR staff led the effort to map relevant recreational, commercial, and cultural uses in the Potomac River, in the vicinity of the nominated Mallows Bay. MDNR targeted sector-specific stakeholders and had 32 participants join from 13 different sectors. This recreational use mapping workshop provided an opportunity for local experts to share their knowledge about how people use and value the Potomac. In total, 23 maps were developed that showcase a variety of activities that occur in the Mallows Bay area. This information will be used to inform the development of a draft management plan for the proposed National Marine Sanctuary.

This statewide collection of pGIS data informs a number of different planning initiatives in Maryland. The purpose of this presentation is to share the lessons learned and successes of these pGIS efforts, and to explore the application of this pGIS methodology as a successful tool for meaningful stakeholder engagement.