



## Annual Report for 2023

### **Introduction**

Resolution No. 16-18, adopted by the County Commissioners for Calvert County (BOCC) on April 17, 2018, sets forth the purpose and required activities of the Calvert County Environmental Commission (EC). In this Resolution, the EC must submit an annual report describing the EC's activities and identifying environmental issues and concerns deemed important by the EC.

The Environmental Commission is pleased to present this report detailing the EC's activities between January and December 2023.

### **Environmental Issues of Significant Concern**

In 2023, the Environmental Commission focused on environmental issues of immediate concern to Calvert County residents. The initiatives continued from 2022 were radon awareness, residential stormwater management, and residential septic-field maintenance.

**Radon:** The EC distributed 40 radon test kits and informational sheets between three tabling events. The EC hosts an informational [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document](#) about radon hazards and remediation on their website. The EC successfully requested the BOCC proclaim January, 2024, to be radon-awareness month. Finally, the EC successfully requested five social media posts on the County's Facebook page. The EC will continue to pursue the radon strategic initiative in 2024.

**Stormwater:** The EC reviewed actions that residents can implement in their own yards to improve water quality. The EC contacted Caroline Virginia DiGiovanni, University of Maryland Extension, Watershed Restoration Educator, and scheduled her to speak at the January 2024 meeting in preparation for a rain-barrel workshop in 2024.

**Septic:** The EC again raised awareness about septic-field maintenance by hosting the Pump for the Bay raffle, with generous support from the Maryland Department of Health, Environmental Health Division. In 2022, the EC asked Calvert's Department of Communications and Media Relations Team to create an educational video on maintaining residential septic systems; as of January 30, 2024, this video has had 829 views and received all positive feedback.<sup>1</sup> In 2023, twenty-five entries were received. Most entrants heard of the raffle through their septic company, the second leading way recipients heard of the raffle was through the EC's tabling events. The first prize is up to \$500 for reimbursement; as the winner only spent \$350, the residual \$150 went to a second-place winner. Other prizes include park passes and tickets generously donated by Calvert County Parks & Recreation and the Calvert Marine Museum; and gift cards from Dream Weaver Café, Prince Frederick Midas Muffler, and Lusby Motors.

**Bird Safety:** A new significant issue for 2023 was bird-safe buildings. The Commission researched best practices and invited an expert guest speaker on bird-safe practices. Commissioner Lutmerding met with staff from the Public Library and the Department of Public Works, and successfully advocated for the application of bird-safe stickers to

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<sup>1</sup> See "[BREAKING NEWS! Pump for the Bay—Calvert County, MD.](#)"

the Calvert Library, Twin Beaches Branch. Additionally, the Commission submitted recommended language to the Department of Planning & Zoning for incorporation into the Zoning Ordinance update.

**Community Outreach and Education**

The EC’s community outreach included three outdoor festivals:

- Earth Arts Fest, Annmarie Garden (April 22, 2023);
- Calvert County Fair: Youth Day, Calvert County Fairgrounds (September 29, 2023); and
- Patuxent River Appreciation Day, Calvert Marine Museum (October 7, 2023).

At these events, the EC engaged the public with a watershed model, information sheets, and a prize-wheel where participants could win prizes for answering questions about Calvert County’s environment.

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Environmental Issues**

The EC provides environmental educational material to the community through documents called Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). These FAQs are on the EC’s website and are available at community events.

During 2023, the EC focused on updating and strengthening citations for the FAQs. Additionally, a QR code was made to reduce the number of paper handouts needed at tabling events. The QR code is available for attendees to scan, and then navigate to the FAQ of their choosing. In 2023, there were 149 unique webviews of the FAQs webpage, 13 more views than 2022.

**Guest Speaker Presentations to the Environmental Commission**

Guest speakers are invited to meetings to further the environmental education of Environmental Commissioners and the public. In 2023, the Commission heard eight presentations. If given permission, presentations are made available on the EC website. Though a quorum was not present at December’s meeting, it was well attended by the public and the talk by Joe Berg was reported in the January 3, 2024 edition of *Southern Maryland News*.

<b>2023 Guest Speakers</b>			
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Month</b>
Maryland Sea Level Rise and Cove Point Shoreline Erosion	Dr. Lora Harris and Shelby Johnson	Univ. of MD Cntr for Env’l Studies, Chesapeake Biological Lab	February
Stormwater Facilities in Calvert County	Robert Estes	Friends of Hunting Creek	April
Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant: Environmental Update	Jason Prowinski	Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant	May
Bird-Safe Buildings	Dr. Mark Southerland	Safe Skies Maryland	July
Zoning Ordinance Update	Will Hager	Calvert County Dept. of Planning & Zoning	August
Water Analysis of St. Leonard Creek Watershed	Mary Hoover	Amer. Chesnut Land Trust	October
Calvert County’s Recycling Program	Mariia Liubarskaia	Calvert County Dept. of Public Works	November
Stream Restoration Projects	Joe Berg	Biohabitats, Inc.	December

**Environmental Commission Membership**

As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, the EC had ten members (sadly, Commissioner and Deputy Chair Dave Hardy died in November 2023). Through the year, the EC had an average meeting attendance of six or seven Commissioners. The only month the EC did not achieve a quorum was December. New members included Jo Anna Lutmerding and Albert (Abby) Ybarra.

Environmental Commission Attendance Record												
January 2023–December 2023												
MEETING DATE	Campbell, Dave <i>Chair</i>	Hardy, Dave <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Britt, Kevin	Kerr, Heather	Levin, Jim	Lutmerding, Jo Anna	Matatov, Roman	Rogers, Andrew	Rooney, Michael	Smith, Neil	Ybarra, Albert	TOTAL MEMBERS
JANUARY 30						Not a member					Not a member	9
FEBRUARY 27				Excused		Excused					Excused	6
MARCH 27												8
APRIL 24												6
MAY 22			Excused				Excused				Excused	6
JUNE 26												9
JULY 31												7
AUGUST 28												6
SEPTEMBER 18												6
OCTOBER 30												7
NOVEMBER 27												6
DECEMBER 18	NO MEETING HELD											4
KEY: <b>PRESENT</b> <b>ABSENT</b> <b>NOT A MEMBER</b> <b>Quorum: 5</b>												

**Administrative Items**

On January 24, 2023, the Commission bylaws were amended, redefining a quorum as five members. In September, October, and November, the EC held meetings at the Harriet E. Brown Community Center. However, the Commission chose to move back to the Prince Frederick Library in December for the better aesthetics.

**Finances**

Of the \$1,559.00 budget, \$610 was spent on the aforementioned 40 radon testing kits and \$420 on 1,000 septic reminder magnets. Additionally, the EC used residual Planning & Zoning promotional funding to purchase 625 pollinator-friendly wildflower seed packets (\$400).

