



Calvert County Environmental Commission Annual Report for 2024

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 2024.

Environmental Issues of Significant Concern

In 2024, the Environmental Commission focused on environmental issues of immediate concern to Calvert County residents. The initiatives continued from 2023 were radon awareness, residential stormwater management, and residential septic-field maintenance. New issues were migratory bird safety and small business environmental sustainability.

Radon: The EC distributed radon test kits and informational sheets during three tabling events. On our website, the EC provides an informational [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document](#) about radon hazards and remediation. At the EC's request, the BOCC proclaimed January 2025, to be Radon-Awareness Month. Finally, the EC worked with Calvert County's Communications & Media Relations Department to run five social media posts on Radon Awareness on the County's Facebook page, and Radon Awareness was featured in the November 2024 edition of the new departmental newsletter, "Planning Perspective."¹ The Facebook posts reached 4,783 people with seven reactions and seven shares. The EC will continue to pursue the radon-related strategic initiative in 2025.

Stormwater: Caroline Virginia DiGiovanni, University of Maryland Extension, Watershed Restoration Educator, spoke to the EC at the January 2024 EC meeting. The EC supported a rain barrel workshop led by the University of Maryland Extension Service and the Calvert County Department of Public Works. The workshop was held June 1st at the Community Resources Building and was well attended. The EC is planning to support an additional rain barrel workshop in March 2025 at the Northeast Community Center.

Septic: The EC again raised awareness about septic-field maintenance by hosting the Pump for the Bay contest, 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 December 30, 2024, this video has had 905 views and received all positive feedback.² In 2024, thirty Pump for the Bay contest entries were received. Most entrants heard of the raffle through their septic company, with others learning of the raffle from social media, EC outreach events, or from friends. The first prize is up to \$500 for reimbursement for septic tank pumping costs. Other prizes include free passes generously donated by Calvert County Parks & Recreation and the Calvert Marine Museum.

Bird Safety: Commissioner Lutmerding led a community effort to host the first Calvert County celebration of World Migratory Bird Day. The team involved the Twin Beaches Public Library, the North Beach Nature Center, Calvert County Planning & Zoning, and Calvert County Division of Natural Resources. Calvert County Communications &

¹ See Calvert County Department of Planning & Zoning, "Planning Perspective" email to listserv (Nov. 2024).

² See "[BREAKING NEWS! Pump for the Bay—Calvert County, MD.](#)"

Media Relations provided great support with designing the event flyer, advertising through social media, and appreciation gifts for the speakers. The event was a success with speakers, a bird walk, kid crafts, and community group displays. The EC also advocated integrating bird-safe provisions into the Zoning Ordinance update.

Community Outreach and Education

The EC’s community outreach included staffing booths at six community events:

1. UMD Extension Rain Barrel Workshop (June 1, 2024);
2. Patuxent River Wade-In (June 9, 2024);
3. UMCES Chesapeake Biological Lab Open House (September 7, 2024);
4. Calvert’s World Migratory Bird Day Celebration (September 21, 2024);
5. Calvert County Fair: Youth Day, Calvert County Fairgrounds (September 27, 2024); and
6. Patuxent River Appreciation Day, Calvert Marine Museum (October 12, 2024).

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.

On October 26, 2024, the Department of Public Works hosted members of the Environmental and Planning Commissions on a tour of wastewater treatment facilities in southern Calvert County. The group visited a Solomon’s Wastewater Pump Station, the head works under Solomons Bridge and the Solomons Wastewater Treatment Plant.

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 posted on the EC’s website ([Environmental FAQs](#)) and several are featured at community events.

During 2024, the EC focused on updating and strengthening citations for the FAQs. 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.

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 2024, the Commission heard six presentations. If given permission, presentations are made available on the EC website.

2024 Guest Speakers			
Topic	Presenter	Organization	Month
Rain barrel education and local workshops	Caroline Virginia DiGiovanni	Univ. of MD Extension Watershed Restoration	January
Restoration efforts around Calvert waterways	Daniel Bornstein	Chesapeake Bay Foundation	April
The designation of Southern Maryland National Heritage Area	Christopher Sperling	Calvert County Planning & Zoning, Hist. Preservation	May
Habitat protection and best practices for fireflies	Ben Pfeiffer	Firefly Conservation & Research	July
Upcoming environmental legislation	Dominic Butchko	MD Ass’n of Counties (MACo)	September
Invasive species control	Mara Cunningham	North American Invasive Species Mgmt. Ass’n	December

Environmental Commission Membership

As of December 31st, the EC has five Commissioners. Through the year, the EC had an average meeting attendance of six Commissioners. The only month the EC did not achieve a quorum was February, and October's meeting was cancelled. New members include Mara Cunningham; Commissioner Smith's term expired and resigned; Commissioner Matatov resigned but remains active with the Commission.

Environmental Commission Attendance Record											
January 2024–December 2024											
MEETING DATE	Campbell, Dave <i>Chair</i>	Ybarra, Abby <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Britt, Kevin	Cunningham, Mara	Levin, Jim	Lutmerding, Jo Anna	Matatov, Roman	Rogers, Andrew	Rooney, Michael	Smith, Neil	TOTAL MEMBERS
JANUARY 29				Not a member					Coaching		6
FEBRUARY 26	NO MEETING HELD, Lack of Quorum										
MARCH 25		Excused									5
APRIL 15											8
MAY 20											6
JUNE 24											8
JULY 31											5
AUGUST 26											5
SEPTEMBER 30											7
OCTOBER 30	NO MEETING HELD, Cancelled due to illness										
NOVEMBER 25							Not a member				6
DECEMBER 16							Not a member				5
	KEY:	PRESENT	ABSENT			Not a member				Quorum: 5	

Finances

Of the \$1,559.00 budget, \$892.50 was spent on radon testing kits, \$150 was spent on Pump for the Bay brochures, \$26.90 was for a new member shirt, \$183.96 was spent on Bird Day materials, and \$124.37 was spent on outreach supplies (tablecloths, totes, watering can). Note: these expenses are for the calendar year, 2024.

