



# November Maryland Outdoor Learning Partnership (OLP) Leadership Meeting

November 22, 2024

PRESENTED BY

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Maryland State Department of Education

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

# Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we stand upon the ancestral lands of many Indigenous nations, whose histories, cultures, and spirits continue to enrich this place.

We honor the Piscataway, Sesquehannock, Anacostans, Nanticoke, Powhatan, Chesapeake, Nansemond Indian Nation, Pamunkey, Chickahominy, Upper Mattaponi, Mattaponi, Rappahannock, Monacan Indian Nation, Cheroenhaka, Patawomeck, Accawmacke, and Nassawadox and other Indigenous peoples who have inhabited and stewarded the Chesapeake Bay watershed for countless generations.

We recognize the deep connection these nations have to the land, waters, and resources of this region. We pay tribute to their resilience, their wisdom, and their enduring contributions to the vibrant tapestry of life in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

As we gather and engage in our work, we do so with a profound respect for the Indigenous peoples who have come before us. We commit to honoring their legacy and working towards a future that is just, equitable, and sustainable for all.



2. Context Setting: OLP 101 and Recent Progress
3. OLP Member Showcase: Connections to OLP's Work
4. Environmental Literacy in Action: Youth Climate Institute
5. Discussion: Charting OLP's Collective Work
6. Closure

# Welcome

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools, Maryland State Department of Education

Josh Kurtz, Secretary of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

# Welcome!

## Vision

Inspired by nature and rooted in science to improve and grow stewardship for Maryland's natural resources.

## Mission

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources leads the state toward a resilient future by using data, partnerships, and an innovative spirit to improve ecological, social, and economic outcomes for all communities





# Environmental Literacy Priorities



- Improve student ability to take action benefitting Chesapeake and coastal ecosystems through outdoor learning and stewardship. (*Grant Gateways Outcome 4*)
- Promote environmental and climate education and public stewardship of Maryland's Natural Resources. (*Priority #7, internal DNR Strategic Plan*)

# Maryland State Department of Education

## Mission

We will ensure a rigorous and world-class educational experience for every Maryland student, in every neighborhood, that prepares each to be college and career-ready, through:

- strategic direction and leadership;
- policy making and resource allocation; and
- engagement and advocacy.

# Maryland State Department of Education

## Environmental Literacy Priorities

Identifying, highlighting, and supporting the scaling of national and state-based environmental literacy best practices

Identifying opportunities for strengthening multidisciplinary environmental literacy connections through the use of local environmental phenomena, problems, and data

Supporting professional learning to empower educators to support high-quality environmental literacy education

Supporting the collaborative work of the Outdoor Learning Partnership, Maryland Commission on Climate Change, and other initiatives



## Presentation Outline

1. Welcome
2. Context Setting: OLP 101 and Recent Progress
3. OLP Member Showcase: Connections to OLP's Work
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## Meeting Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain the origin, recent work, and purpose of the Maryland Outdoor Learning Partnership (OLP);
- Collaborate with OLP members and representatives on shared work related to OLP's mission; and
- Discuss opportunities and emerging priorities in OLP's future work.

# Maryland Outdoor Learning Partnership

The mission of the partnership is to **empower all of Maryland's youth** to grow as **environmental stewards** that **access, conserve, and restore** our natural resources to ensure a **climate-ready Maryland**.



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# Context Setting: OLP 101 and Recent Progress

Zachary Carey, Director of Science, Maryland State Department of Education

# Continuing Maryland's Environmental Education Leadership

**1989**

- Maryland became the first state to require a comprehensive, multidisciplinary program of environmental education

**1999**

- State standards for Environmental Literacy were adopted by the State Board

**2008**

- Governor Martin O'Malley issued an Executive Order establishing the Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature (CIN)
- CIN recommendations guided the revision of the Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards
- CIN creates Outdoor Bill of Rights

**2011**

- Adoption of the Environmental Literacy High School Graduation requirement



# Continuing Maryland's Environmental Education Leadership

**2017**

- Governor Larry Hogan issued an Executive Order establishing the Project Green Classroom (PGC) initiative

**2019**

- Maryland Green Schools Act of 2019

**2020**

- Maryland's Environmental Literacy Standards were revised

**2022**

- Maryland's Conservation Careers Guide was published

**2023**

- Maryland's Environmental Literacy Standards Framework was published

**2023**

- Park Equity Analysis & MDOT Access Map was created

# Continuing Maryland's Environmental Education Leadership

## Maryland Leading the Field

- Experiential, and outdoor environmental literacy education
- Collaboration across government agencies and stakeholder groups such as non-profit organizations and non-formal environmental education
- Advancing the work of environmental literacy, access to nature, work force development, and school sustainability

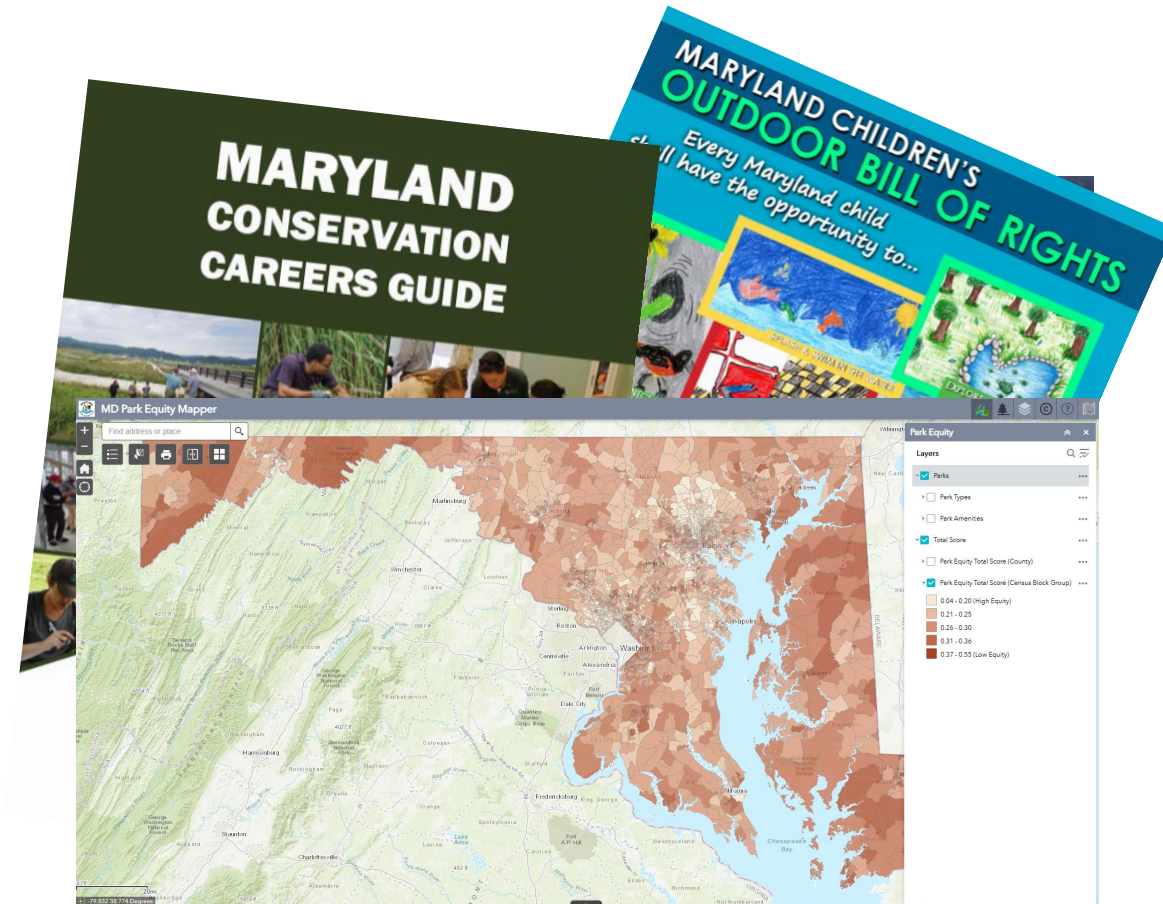


Image from Project Green Classrooms Kick-Off (2017) , [Outdoor Bill of Rights](#) (2008), [Maryland Conservation Careers Guide](#) (2023), [Park Equity Analysis and MDOT Access Map](#) (2019),

## OLP Established

**Governor Wes Moore** established the **Maryland Outdoor Learning Partnership (OLP)** by Executive Order (EO) on **April 22, 2024**, tasking OLP with empowering all of Maryland's youth to grow as environmental stewards that access, conserve, and restore our natural resources to ensure a climate-ready Maryland.

**Why are we here, what have we done, and where are we going?**

[Executive Order 01.01.2024.15](#)

## Our Why – Empowering Marylanders



Maryland recognizes that in order to **empower** current and future Marylanders to **be climate-ready, environmental stewards** who value, protect, and restore the natural world, all youth should have the **opportunity to learn about and connect with nature and develop environmental literacy** during the course of their education.

[Executive Order 01.01.2024.15](#)



## Our Why – Conserving Maryland’s Natural Resources

Conserving Maryland's natural resources, including the **Chesapeake and Coastal Bays**, their **waterways, natural habitats, agricultural lands**, and the hundreds of thousands of acres of diverse land that stretch from the **Blue Ridge** and **Allegheny Mountains** to the **Atlantic Ocean**, requires stewardship guided by a personal connection to the natural world, environmental literacy and a practical knowledge of climate change, and local action by current and future generations.



## Our Why – Centering on Communities and Collaboration



Maryland's natural resources and communities face urgent environmental challenges exacerbated by pollution and climate change. These challenges inequitably burden Maryland's youth and underserved communities.

To promote thriving communities, all Marylanders must be prepared for environmentally sustaining workforce advancements and the growing green job economy through equitable workforce development.

The State of Maryland is committed to collaborating with partners to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and the shared priorities of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

## Our Why – Supporting Students, Teachers, and Schools

Spending frequent time outdoors in unstructured and structured experiences increases student engagement and achievement across disciplines, improves human health, and empowers students to implement actions in their local environment.

Reducing the impact of Maryland's school buildings and grounds on their local watershed fosters an environmental stewardship ethic among students, builds community resilience, and prepares the State's communities for climate impacts.



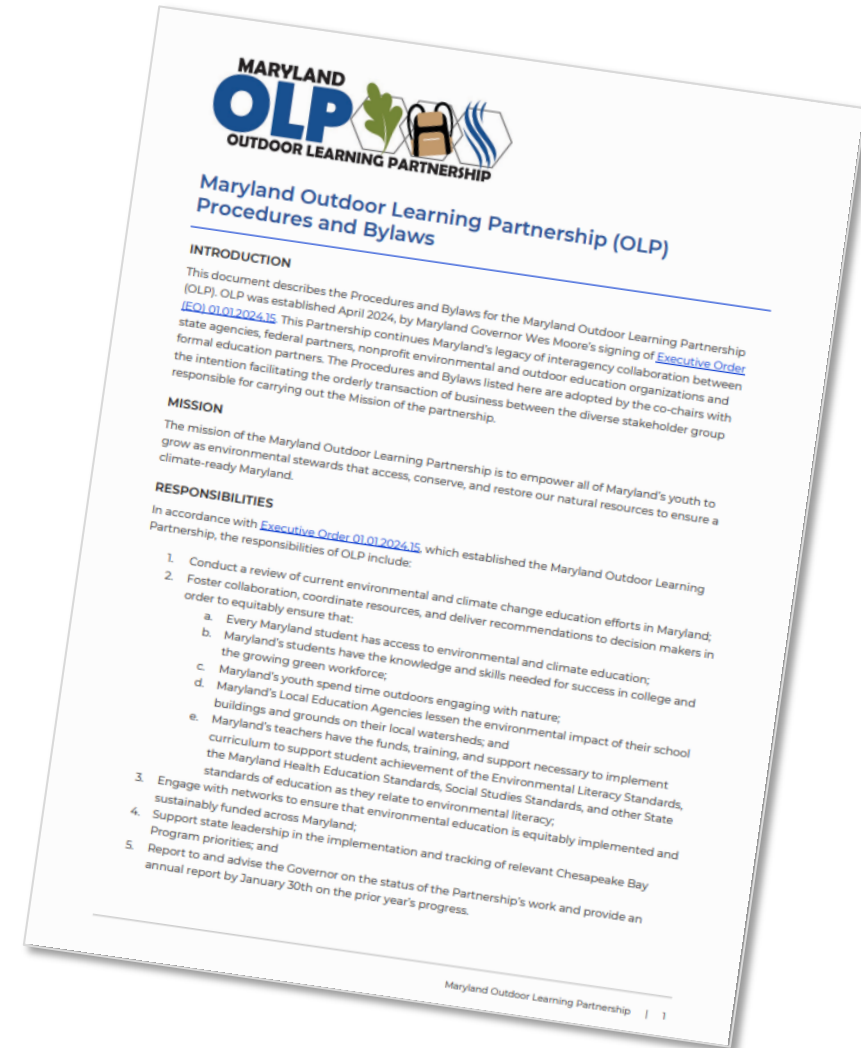
**Maryland's teachers** and **environmental educators** must be **supported** through coordination and partnership of **State agencies** and **key partners** to provide adequate funding, access to professional development, and **equitable learning opportunities** for all of **Maryland's youth**.

[Executive Order 01.01.2024.15](#)

# What's happened with OLP?

## OLP's work since the Executive Order was signed:

- Kick off for the Partnership at a leadership meeting hosted at Broadneck High School
- Adoption of procedures and bylaws to facilitate effective collaboration
- Organization of the responsibilities of the OLP into five working groups
- Convening a well-rounded partnership monthly to facilitate collaboration and coordinate resources
- Welcoming 12 representatives from new stakeholder groups (O and below) and 15 organizations not formally named in Project Green Classroom



[OLP Procedures and Bylaws \(2024\)](#)





CHESAPEAKE BAY  
OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL



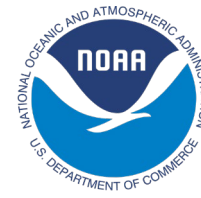
Smithsonian Environmental  
Research Center



MAEOE



Sultana  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION



# Where are we going?

## OLP's work in the coming year

- Convening working groups co-chaired by OLP representatives:
  - Environmental and Climate Literacy
  - College and Green Careers
  - Access to Nature
  - School Sustainability
  - Networks
- Seizing opportunities to connect on Maryland's other initiatives and commitments





1. Welcome
2. Context Setting: OLP 101 and Recent Progress

### **3. OLP Member Showcase: Connections to OLP's Work**

4. Environmental Literacy in Action:  
Youth Climate Institute
5. Discussion: Charting OLP's  
Collective Work
6. Closure

# **OLP Member Showcase: Connections to OLP's Work**

Stephanie Tuckfield, Coordinator Center for Conservation Education and Stewardship,  
Maryland Department of Natural Resources



# OLP Member Showcase: Connections to OLP's Work

To help us better advance the mission of OLP, it is important for us to collaborate as a partnership and to have a landscape of the work being conducted by our member organizations and representatives.

OLP member organizations have prepared showcases of their work as it relates to OLP's mission.

During this portion of the agenda, we will:

- Rotate in small groups to the member tables
- Learn about the work of OLP member organizations
- Connect with fellow members and representatives
- Note possible opportunities for collaboration







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# **Environmental Literacy in Action: Youth Climate Institute**

James Obasiolu, Youth Climate Institute (YCI) Student Ambassador, Student Member of the Howard County Board of Education, Student at Atholton High School





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## Discussion: Charting OLP's Collective Work

Stephanie Tuckfield, Coordinator Center for Conservation Education and Stewardship,  
Maryland Department of Natural Resources

## Discussion: Charting OLP's Collective Work

Now that you have your "WHY"

- What is one commitment you can make for your agency/organization connected to Environmental Literacy for 2025?
- What is one potential action that you would like for OLP to consider taking in 2025?

OLPs mission: “empower all of Maryland's youth to grow as environmental stewards that access, conserve, and restore our natural resources to ensure a climate-ready Maryland.”

**Individual Think Time**  
**3 minutes**

**Table Group Discussion**  
**10 minutes**

**Whole Group Discussion**  
**10 minutes**



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# Closure

Josh Kurtz, Secretary of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Natural Resources