

Resilience Authority of Charles County, Inc.  
Annual Report

Pursuant to Maryland Annotated Code, Local  
Government Article §22-113

Submitted December 31, 2025

# ***Resilience Authority of Charles County, Inc. Annual Report 2025***

## **History**

The 2020 Maryland General Assembly passed enabling legislation that authorized a local government to create a Resilience Authority that would mitigate the impacts of climate change through infrastructure investment, and the legislation was codified in Title 22 of the Local Government Article of the Maryland Annotated Code. In December 2020, the Board of Charles County Commissioners passed a local law establishing the Resilience Authority of Charles County, Inc. that was subsequently codified in Chapter 299 of the Charles County Code.

## **Mission and Vision**

The Resilience Authority of Charles County, Inc. (“Resilience Authority”) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that, as a government instrumentality, is operated for the public purpose of responding to the impacts of climate change in communities across Charles County, Maryland. The risks of climate change are not shared equally, so the Resilience Authority prioritizes the most vulnerable communities, and all efforts are grounded in principles of diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice. The Resilience Authority’s vision is to set a national example of climate resilience grounded in environmental justice for everyone. The Resilience Authority works with the Charles County government to fund and accelerate the pace and scale of nature-based climate resilience projects with multiple benefits. Through government, education, nonprofit, and private partnerships, the Resilience Authority seizes the opportunity to turn climate change challenges into opportunities to create more equitable and environmentally sustainable communities throughout Charles County.

- In 2023, the Resilience Authority hired its first Executive Director, greatly expanded its project portfolio, and began pursuing funding for its projects.
- In 2024, the Resilience Authority successfully secured funding for its 2023 Implementation Project Portfolio in underserved and overburdened communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Also in 2024, the Resilience Authority was approved as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization by the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- In 2025, the Resilience Authority achieved the cumulative milestones of 1) securing a total of \$5.7 million for equitable nature-based climate resilience projects across Charles County, and 2) employing and providing climate resilience career development for local high school students and young adults for three years as part of our Charles County Resilience Authority Youth Corps (RAYC).

## **Board Members**

The 2021-2023 founding Resilience Authority Board Members were appointed by the Charles County Board of Commissioners and reflect the racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of Charles County. The composition of the Board includes members of the Charles County

Government Executive Leadership Team (ELT), members who represent a Charles County municipality, the business community, the agricultural community, a Charles County resident, experts in soil conservation and stormwater management, a representative of a Maryland State Government entity focused on the environment and infrastructure issues and a member from the climate change science community. As planned and provided for in its Bylaws, in 2023, the Bylaws were updated and clarified to reflect the Resilience Authority’s status as a government instrumentality with independent nonprofit status. This year the Resilience Authority continued to independently manage itself. The Board of Directors has independent authority to elect its Officers and Board members, apart from Charles County Government ELT members, which are appointed by the Charles County Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Directors met virtually each quarter throughout the year, with an in-person meeting in July 2025 to elect a new Board Treasurer, and to conduct a Strategic Planning work retreat.

**Membership**

**Term Expires**

Teresa Ball (Chair)	June 30, 2027
Timothy Wells (Vice Chair)	June 25, 2026
Ryan Hicks (Secretary)	June 25, 2025
Jacob Dyer (Treasurer)	June 25, 2028
Daniel Donohue	June 30, 2027
Dr. Charles C. Glass, P.E.	June 25, 2026
Martin Harris	June 30, 2027
Dave Nemazie	June 25, 2026
Bonnie Norman	June 30, 2027
David Wood	June 25, 2027
Karen Price	June 30, 2027

**Personnel Updates**

- **Executive Director Position Funding:** The Resilience Authority Board of Directors and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences (UMCES) entered into an agreement in 2024 to cover the Executive Director’s salary from January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The Executive Director position was filled on January 23, 2023.
  
- **Chesapeake Bay Trust Conservation and Climate Corps Member**  
 In 2025, the Resilience Authority was matched with a Chesapeake Bay Trust funded “Year of Service” Corps member, and she began working full-time with the Resilience Authority in September. With a work program that includes developing print and online educational and community outreach materials, she is a valued member of the Resilience Authority team. She will be working with the Resilience Authority through June 2026.

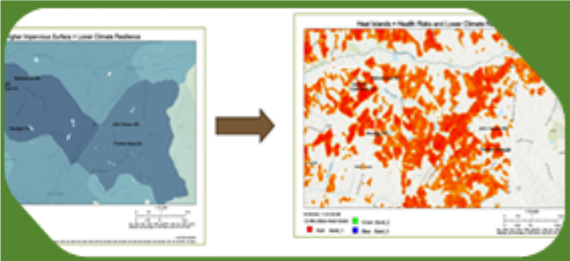
***Projects: Turning Climate Challenges into Opportunities for Resilience Grounded in Environmental Justice, Equity & Access to Nature.***

# The Local Picture: Climate Challenges in Charles County

The Resilience Authority’s work in Charles County focuses on interconnected challenges that shape local risks and opportunities.

## Rising Temperatures

Rising temperatures and limited tree cover create urban heat islands, leaving residents in concrete-dominated areas facing higher heat, greater health risks, poorer air quality, and higher cooling costs.



## Increasing Precipitation and Severe Storm Events

Heavier rainfall and severe storms cause flooding and property damage, worsened by impervious surfaces and poor drainage.



## Rising Sea Levels

Rising sea levels contribute to flooding, erosion, and habitat loss along our coastline.



## The “Nature Gap”

There exists a well-documented nationwide “Nature Gap” for underserved communities, and Charles County is no exception. This Nature Gap reflects a lack of access to nature and its health and climate resilience benefits.



# Bouncing Forward

## How We're Turning Local Challenges into Lasting Resilience

Each of these actions directly addresses the climate challenges outlined on the previous page—linking planning to measurable community impact.



### Expanding Urban Tree Canopies

Planting urban tree canopies in heat-island areas to reduce the impacts of rising temperatures.



### Nature-Based Stormwater Solutions

Using green infrastructure to reduce flooding, manage runoff, and improve water quality.



### Building Living Shorelines

Building living shorelines along our coast to reduce erosion and flooding while restoring vital habitat.



### Expanding Access to Parks and Green Spaces

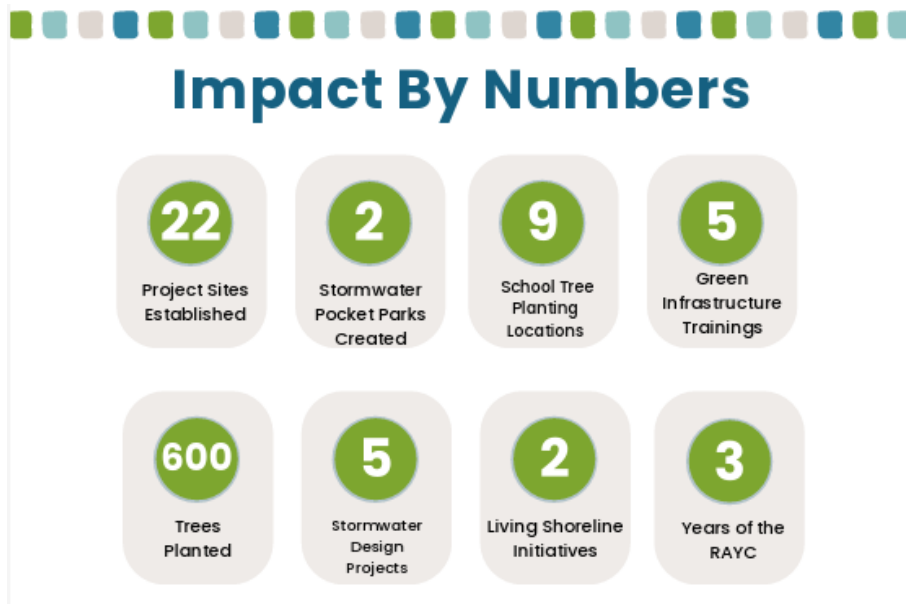
Increasing access to nature and its health and climate resilience benefits.



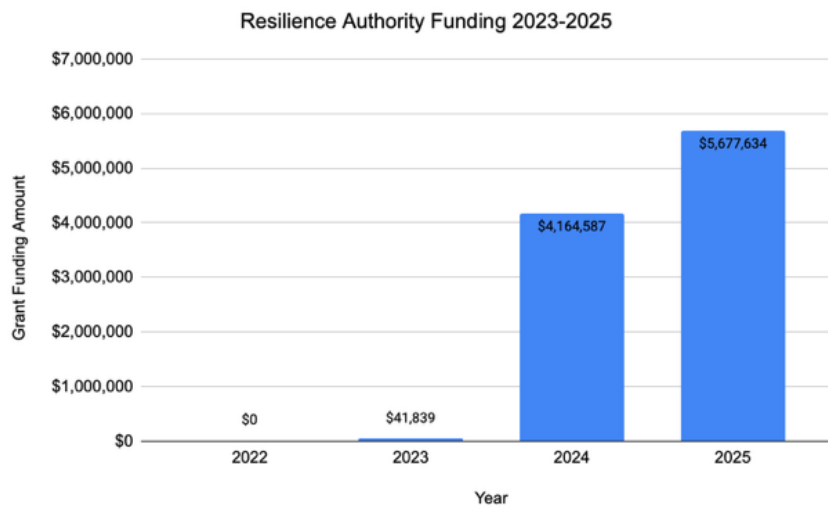


# PROGRESS

*As of 2025:*



*Secured State, Federal, and Regional Grant Funding for Resilience Projects:*



## **Challenge to Opportunity: Concrete to Green**

### **Targeting Urban Heat Islands Stormwater Flooding Equitable Access to Nature**

The Resilience Authority, in collaboration with the Charles County Government, secured over \$1.3 million in funding to implement innovative nature-based stormwater solutions in multiple public parks and community spaces that help prevent flooding, reduce dangerous heat levels, absorb pollution, improve air and water quality, and beautify communities. These projects have been used as National Recreation and Parks Association case studies in building community resilience. Project highlights:

#### **Town of Indian Head Tree Equity Program**

The Resilience Authority was awarded \$226,609 through the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Mid-Atlantic Environmental Justice Program to develop a community-led tree equity plan that will result in establishing and maintaining 100 native trees in areas burdened by hazardous heat island effects and stormwater flash flooding.

#### **Bensville County Park Restoration, Demonstration, and Training site with an ADA accessible educational Nature Trail.**

The Resilience Authority secured over \$500,000 in grants to install innovative nature-based heat mitigating stormwater best management practices, including urban soil restoration, conservation landscaping, and extensive native tree and shrub planting, that effectively restore habitat, improve air and water quality, enhance equitable access to nature. This project incorporates training workshops for county staff, Resilience Authority Youth Corps (RAYC) participants, and homeowners on establishing and maintaining climate resilient and wildlife friendly alternatives to traditional mowed lawns.

#### **Stormwater Pocket Parks**

The Resilience Authority is removing excess concrete and asphalt in Charles County's urban Waldorf area to provide much-needed public access to greenspace and nature, while also addressing dangerous heat island effects and stormwater flooding.

*See below: Elite Stormwater Pocket Park and Waldorf Senior & Recreation Center Accessible Pocket Park.*

## Elite Gymnastics and Recreation Center Stormwater Pocket Park Groundbreaking



On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Community members joined the Charles County Commissioners, the Resilience Authority, and Charles County government leadership to kick off construction of a Stormwater Pocket Park! This project, which received an Official Citation from the Charles County Commissioners, will transform an unused parking lot into a much-needed green space for all ages. Once a source of heat and flooding, this bleak asphalt area will become a shaded green park where children play, families gather, and nature thrives. Beyond its beauty, the park will cool the area and capture and treat stormwater runoff to reduce chronic flooding at the site; improving both air and water quality.

**Construction is Underway!**



The Resilience Authority funded and is implementing this project through Chesapeake Bay Trust's Watershed Assistance Program and Maryland Department of Natural Resources Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, in close collaboration with Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism

## Waldorf Senior & Recreation Center Accessible Pocket Park Ribbon Cutting

Equitable access to nature is key to enhancing our resilience. This wheelchair accessible pocket park was made possible through the Resilience Authority's partnership with Charles County government and County Recreation, Parks, & Tourism. The pocket park features underground stormwater management, and above ground, is filled with raised pollinator garden beds, native trees and shrubs, and provides seating areas in an outdoor public space that absorbs heat and stormwater for a more resilient community gathering space. The Resilience Authority was honored by an Official Citation from the Charles County Commissioners!



Before



After



## Challenge to Opportunity:

### Equitable Implementation of Maryland's 5 Million Trees Effort Charles County Public Schools Reforestation

Communities located in urban heat islands, which are characterized by the presence of numerous heat-absorbing buildings, excess asphalt paving, and limited trees and greenery, are more likely to experience heat-related illnesses and mortality, reduced air quality, and a higher air conditioning cost burden. Well-planned planting and maintenance of native trees builds climate resilience by mitigating heightened temperatures, improving air quality and human health outcomes, and increasing carbon sequestration and stormwater management.

The Resilience Authority has funded, planted, and maintained over 600 biodiverse native trees at nine Charles County Public Schools and a County Senior Center located in urban heat islands and that serve overburdened communities. These trees are watered and maintained on a biweekly basis to ensure survivability and to provide the associated benefits of community adaptation to the effects of climate change. The Resilience Authority, through several state and federal grants, received over \$400,000 in 2025 to not only plant additional native trees but also implement associated community outreach and maintenance.



## Challenge to Opportunity: Coastal Flooding and Erosion

### Restoring Coastal Habitat Creating Coastal Public Access

## Living Shorelines

### Coastal Flooding Resilience, Public Water Access



In response to rising sea levels and coastal flooding, the Resilience Authority secured over \$3.7 million to design and build living shorelines on county and municipal lands in Charles County. These shorelines will absorb flooding, prevent erosion, and promote equitable climate resilience by connecting biodiverse ecosystems with healthy communities.

- Town of Indian Head Living Shoreline Public-Private-Partnership.
- Popes Creek Waterfront Park Living Shoreline.

In addition, the Resilience Authority worked with the University of Maryland Climate Resilience Network to place near real-time water level sensors and weather stations.



## Challenge to Opportunity: Engagement and Education

### Resilience Forward-RAYC Ahead

#### Education, Youth Employment, and Workforce Development

The Resilience Authority, in partnership with the Student Conservation Association, implements the Resilience Authority Youth Corps (RAYC) program that provides local high school students and young adults year-round employment and career development opportunities in natural resources management and urban forestry.

The Resilience Authority has secured over \$600,000 in grant funding for this program to date, resulting in workforce development and employment for local high school students and young adults since 2023, and the planting and maintenance of 600 native trees that mitigate urban heat islands. In 2025 alone, the Resilience Authority secured grant funding to support the RAYC program through 2027.

In addition to our RAYC, the Resilience Authority hosted Jewel Lester, a Chesapeake Bay Trust Conservation and Climate Corps member for the 2024-2025 session and is hosting Molly Ruiz for the 2025-2026 session.



---

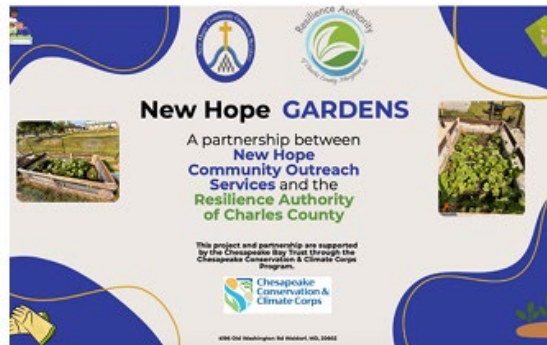
## Green Infrastructure Training

The Resilience Authority is building long-term community stewardship through our new Green Infrastructure Training Program. In partnership with the Chesapeake Stormwater Network, Bartlett Trees, the Charles Soil Conservation District, and Maryland DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service, we are hosting five sessions to ensure we're not only installing nature-based practices but also equipping the people who will maintain them for years to come with an understanding of what, how, and why green infrastructure makes us more resilient, and how to care for practices installed.



---

## New Hope Urban Food Forest



### Fall Harvest: Urban Food Forest at New Hope Community Outreach Services, Inc.

Building on the food gardens established by Waldorf's New Hope Community Outreach Services, the Resilience Authority established an ongoing partnership with New Hope to expand the gardens and grow an Urban Food Forest at New Hope's facilities in Waldorf. Access to fresh food is RESILIENCE!

Fall Harvest from the Food Forest: Apples, Kale, Broccoli, and Squash



The work of the Resilience Authority is grounded in Science, Inclusive Community Input, and Strategic Planning

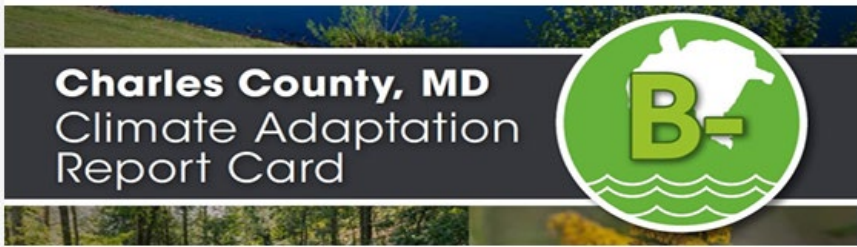
2025 Charles County Climate Adaptation Report Card

UMCES Climate Adaptation Report Card for Charles County

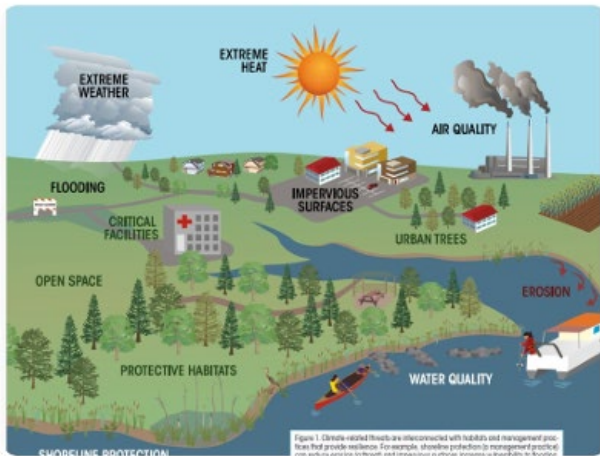
The Resilience Authority and Charles County government completed its work with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences (UMCES) to assess the preparedness of Charles County communities for climate change and sea level rise events.

Modeled after the first-ever Coastal Adaptation Report Card for the State of Maryland, this local effort provides a simple, straightforward, and thoughtful method of communicating with the public about climate resilience.

Charles County is the first county in the U.S. and internationally to look at both vulnerability and resilience together in a Climate Report Card.



The 2025 Charles County Climate Adaptation Report Card offers an overview of both the climate related risks facing Charles County and the capacity of its communities to adapt to those challenges.



## Findings of the Charles County Climate Adaptation Report Card

Three of the six Human Well-Being categories score a C or D, and PARK EQUITY — access to high-quality parks that provide respite from heat — scores most poorly.

### Charles County Shows Moderate Resilience to Climate

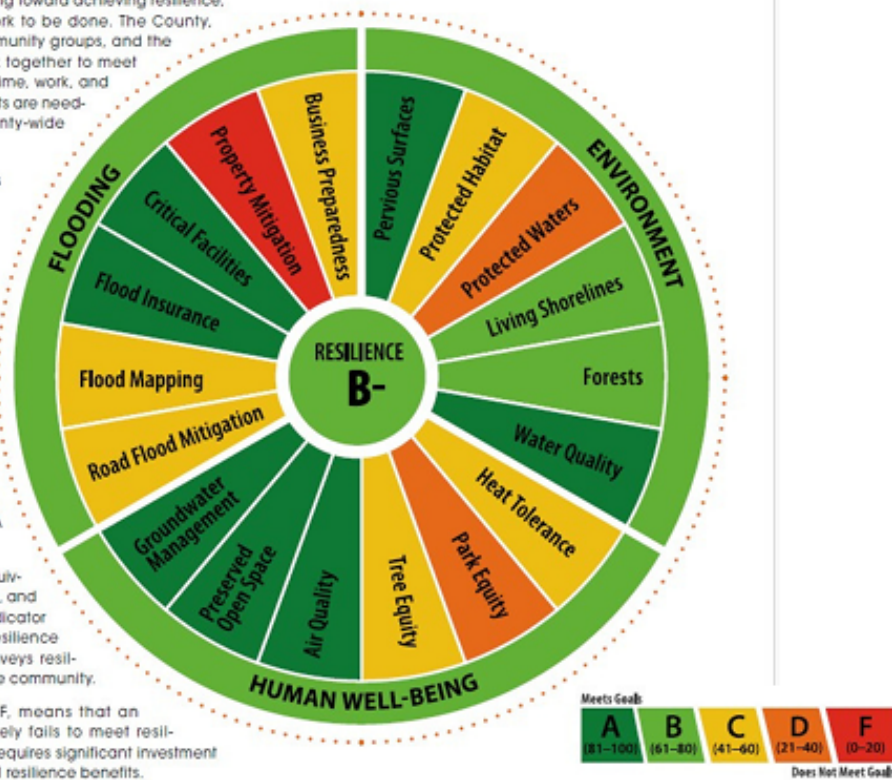
Overall resilience in **Charles County** scores a **B-**. The County is working toward achieving resilience, but there is still work to be done. The County, communities, community groups, and the State must all work together to meet resilience targets. Time, work, and financial investments are needed to achieve county-wide resilience.

Three categories of resilience indicators were assessed: Environment, Human Well-being, and Flooding indicators.

Each indicator was scored on a 0% to 100% scale, corresponding to letter grades from A to F.

A score of 100% is equivalent to a score of A, and means that that indicator meets targets for resilience and therefore conveys resilience benefits to the community.

A score of 0%, or F, means that an indicator completely fails to meet resilience targets and requires significant investment to capture potential resilience benefits.



## Why Park Equity is Important for Climate Resilience

Public parks are vital to community health and climate resilience. They cool urban areas, absorb stormwater, and bring people together to connect and find relief from heat.

However, access to quality parks is uneven. Low-income and marginalized neighborhoods have fewer green spaces, contributing to greater climate and health risks. Charles County's Park Equity score of 32 out of 100 highlights this disparity.

The Resilience Authority is working with the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism to close this gap by improving park access and advancing nature-based equity across the county.

# Development and Adoption of a Five-Year Strategic Plan 2025-2030

In 2025, the Resilience Authority developed and finalized a five-year strategic plan for 2025 to 2030 - a roadmap that reflects the voices of community members, partners, and a broad range of experts who share our vision for a more equitable and climate ready Charles County.



### **New and Continuing Partnerships**

- Charles County Government Executive Leadership Team
- Charles County Community Engagement & Citizens Academy
- Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism
- New Hope Community Outreach Services – Faith and Community Based
- Montgomery County Greenbank
- University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)
- University of Maryland Earth Sciences
- Charles County Public Schools
- Charles Soil Conservation District
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Maryland Forest Service
- Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
- Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM)
- The Student Conservation Association
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development Board (MD RC&D)
- Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Partnership
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

### **Compliance**

The Authority remains in good standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation.