

## Living on the water. What's best for the river and your yard?

Do you live on or near the water? Do you have a beautiful water view and want to enhance it? Do you have a stream flowing through your yard? If so, we have some good news to share. There are simple ways you can protect your view, preserve your yard, not harm any birds, plants, or animals that live near your waterway, and improve local water quality with some simple best practices.

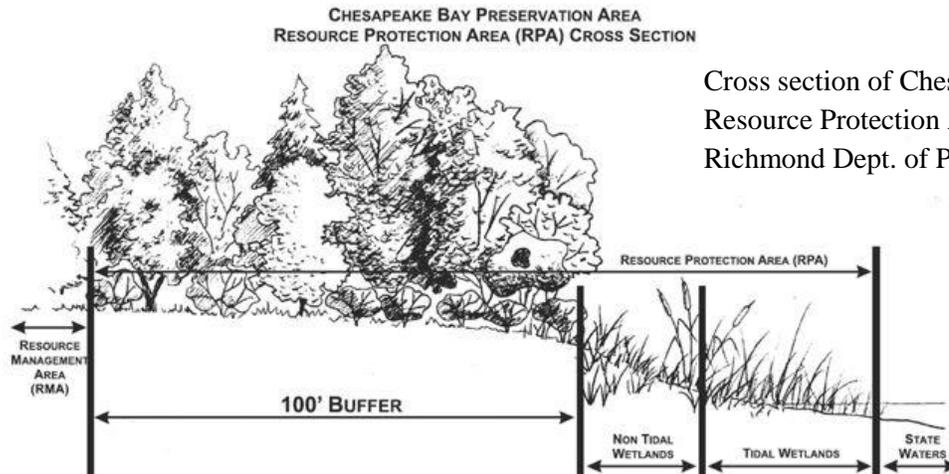
If your home is along a tidal creek or river, the area beside the waterfront in your yard is likely protected by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, or CBPA. Since 1988, the CBPA has protected waterways by safeguarding the trees, grasses, bushes, and shrubs living close to the water. These natural features of the shoreline protect local water quality and should not be disturbed by new development or certain landscaping practices.

It's understandable you want to create your backyard escape. It's also important to understand how what you do in your backyard affects the fish, crabs, birds, and other important animals and plants that live in your waterway and the Chesapeake Bay. Activities such as mowing down to the waterway, removing trees, building a shed, adding a pool, or some landscaping practices can be harmful to local water quality and marine habitats.

The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure and it deserves to be protected. It is the nation's largest estuary and one of the world's most productive. The Bay is home to over 3,700 species of plants and animals, draining 64,000 square miles of land. Your waterway is one of many that can help or harm the Bay.

So, how can you protect your waterway, enjoy your yard, and ensure you're following the CBPA? Your city or county has what you need to know, as well as staff to help ensure you're making the right decisions. All you need to do is call your local planning or environmental department for more information. [Link of contacts for localities to go on askHRGreen's Living Shoreline page.](#)

Here are some general guidelines and information to follow, but your local representative will have more detailed and tailored instructions for you.



*Good to Know:*

- A **buffer** is a vegetated area within the RPA (~100ft) with trees, shrubs, and plants that protects the shoreline from erosion and improves water quality by filtering out pollutants from stormwater runoff.
- **Resource Protection Areas (RPAs)** are critical areas within the watershed. They are usually adjacent to waterways, the most important areas to protect, and are subject to more regulations.
- **Resource Management Areas (RMAs)** are adjacent to RPAs and may extend ~100 feet landward or include all remaining lands within a locality. RMAs include land types that have the potential for causing significant water quality degradation or for diminishing the functional value of a resource protection area if improperly used or developed.
- **Tidal wetlands** are vegetated and non-vegetated areas where the water meets the land, they are periodically inundated as the tide comes up twice a day.

*Good to Do:*

- Seek guidance before you set out to change your landscape by the water. It may be a violation to remove vegetation or build in the RPA without approval.
- Plant native species, this handy [Native Plant Guide](#) for the region will help.
- Don't mow, let it grow, for lawn near the water.
- Don't remove any trees, shrubs, or plants without talking to your city or county.
- Call a [Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional](#) for guidance and to help with plans.



Want to know if you're home or property is located within the buffered area protected by the CBPA? Check out our interactive map [here](#).