



Urban Rivers Restoration Pilot Fact Sheet Elizabeth River Basin, Virginia

BACKGROUND—Over the last century, numerous industries have left a legacy of pollution in the Elizabeth River. Both civilian and military facilities have discharged pollutants into the river, especially polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and heavy metals. Approximately 600,000 people live in the Elizabeth River Basin area.

ACTIVITIES, AUTHORITY, AND FUNDING—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Commonwealth of Virginia are involved in individual projects and initiatives in the Elizabeth River Basin. The USACE, for example, is working with local cost-sharing sponsors to remove contaminated sediments. EPA oversees the activity at several Federal and private Superfund sites on the Elizabeth River and has provided funding to a local grass roots environmental organization, the Elizabeth River Project (ERP), for water monitoring, public education, and stakeholder coordination. Due to the numerous sources and types of contamination, ERP's stakeholder coordination efforts have provided a valuable avenue of communication. Also, ERP has been instrumental in bringing about voluntary reductions of discharges to the river from a number of companies along the river.

The Water Resources Development Acts of 1990, 1996, and 1999 authorized the USACE's Elizabeth River Basin activities. Between FY98 and FY01, Congress and local sponsors provided \$2.4 million for a feasibility study. The FY03 Energy and Water Development Appropriation provided \$471,000 to continue this effort. Both the sediment and wetlands portions of the USACE project are in the preconstruction engineering and design phase. In FY02, the Elizabeth River Project received a Chesapeake Bay Program grant (\$100,000) from EPA for a restoration project on Paradise Creek, a tributary of the Elizabeth and a grant (\$100,000) from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for water quality and toxics monitoring.

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