



Chesapeake Bay Floating Islands Launches at Bay Street Ponds

New business introduces innovative floating island technology to the Mid-Shore

Easton, Md. – Nov. 1, 2013 – Chesapeake Bay Floating Islands (CBFI) launched its first floating island in Talbot County today at the Bay Street Ponds in Easton. The installation is a partnership between the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Talbot County, the Town of Easton, the Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy, Waterfowl Chesapeake Inc. and Chesapeake Bay Floating Islands.

Floating islands, also known as floating treatment wetlands, are versatile manmade structures that combine innovative engineering with the natural filtering power of wetlands to improve water quality, reduce pollutants and prevent land erosion. The Biohaven® Floating Islands offered by CBFI are constructed from post-industrial recycled materials that are woven into a matrix that supports the growth of wetland plants and the important microbes that break down and filter out pollutants such as nitrate, phosphate and ammonia to improve water quality. Because of their versatile design, islands such as these are able to filter out more than ten times the amount of pollutants as traditional wetland surface while providing vibrant wildlife habitat.

“All of the partners of Chesapeake Bay Floating Islands are proud to launch our first floating island in partnership with our local governments and like-minded non-profit organizations,” said Brian Gearhart, one of CBFI’s Directors. “We are a local business owned by life-long Eastern Shore residents that are all committed to improving the Chesapeake Bay. We are excited to introduce innovative and versatile technology that has numerous applications for governments, conservation organizations and landowners throughout the region.”

Biohaven® Floating Islands have been installed in locations including Walt Disney World, the Virginia Zoo, and Brooklyn’s Gowanus Canal. They will soon be deployed in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor.

This particular project at the Bay Street Ponds is one of the top priority projects in the Town of Easton’s Tanyard Branch Watershed Planning Project and is expected to enhance the restoration of the site completed by Waterfowl Chesapeake Inc. in 2011. The addition of the floating island is designed to complement the existing wetland shoreline to filter even more pollutants from the Tanyard Branch before they would ultimately reach the Chesapeake Bay. According to multiple studies, most recently one completed by the Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy, the Tred Avon watershed continues to be a critical area of focus for the Town of Easton and Talbot County. Megan, is the recently completed study by MRC the one I mentioned above? If so, you might want to tweak the wording of that sentence.

“The installation of this floating island is a great opportunity to explore the possibilities and cost-effectiveness of this technology in meeting nutrient and sediment load reductions as part of the Talbot County Watershed Implementation Plan,” commented William Wollinski, Talbot County Environmental Engineer. “This partnership is also a great example of what public, private and non-profit organizations can achieve when they work together to leverage their resources to make a significant, collective impact.”

The floating island installation was funded by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund. The wetland plants as well as an interpretive sign at the location were donated by CBFI.

About Chesapeake Bay Floating Islands

Chesapeake Bay Floating Islands, LLC (CBFI) is dedicated to improving water quality, reducing pollutants and halting land erosion in the Chesapeake Bay region. CBFI partners with private landowners, corporations, non-profit organizations and government entities to deploy Biohaven® floating island solutions for stormwater management, agricultural runoff, shoreline restoration, habitat management and wastewater treatment. Constructed of durable, non-toxic, post-consumer plastics and vegetated with native plants, Biohaven® floating islands biomimic natural floating islands to create a “concentrated wetland effect” that removes harmful pollutants and improves water quality while providing vibrant wildlife habitat. CBFI is associated with Floating Islands International, a ten-year old company with over 5,000 islands spanning the globe. For more information visit www.chesapeakebayfloatingislands.com.

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