



Choose Clean Water  
C O N F E R E N C E

A New Era for Clean Water

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
FOR PRESENTATIONS AND FIELD TRIPS  
2024 Choose Clean Water Conference**

May 20-22, 2024  
Turf Valley Resort  
Ellicott City, Maryland

**The Choose Clean Water Coalition (Coalition) is issuing a request for proposals from interested applicants who would like to lead an engaging presentation or field trip at the Coalition's 2024 Choose Clean Water Conference.**

**Deadline for submissions: January 12, 2024**

*Please read these instructions carefully before applying.*

## **I. Introduction**

Every year, the Coalition's Choose Clean Water Conference gathers an inclusive and diverse group of more than 300 people from throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. The conference provides a three-day forum for participants to learn about the most important and up-to-date Chesapeake restoration issues, network with fellow Chesapeake Bay supporters and activists, develop strategies to advance federal, regional and local restoration goals, and learn from successes.

This unique gathering offers a tremendous opportunity to gain broad exposure for a wide range of clean water issues in the Chesapeake Bay region. **Any person or organization** with valuable experience and knowledge to share is invited to apply to lead a session, workshop, and/or field trip at the Conference.

The Conference is typically attended by Chesapeake watershed advocates, including policy experts, project implementation staff, communications staff, and executive directors of local, state, regional, and national environmental nonprofits. Additionally, the conference draws representatives of state and federal agencies, community groups, business, agriculture, and industry. Attendees have a range of knowledge about the Chesapeake and its rivers and streams, and are looking for compelling stories that explore policy issues, successful restoration projects, grassroots engagement strategies, and emerging issues.

**This year's conference theme is *A New Era for Clean Water*.** The rivers and streams feeding the Chesapeake Bay face many threats that we urgently need to address. As we near the 2025 deadline to have clean water protections in place as part of the Bay restoration effort, we must recommit to providing clean water to every person in the Bay region. Meeting our goals will require innovation, commitment to following the latest science, and an unprecedented level of collaboration.

While we are encouraged by many wins in our work for clean water, the challenges presented by a warming climate, deforestation, and population growth are only growing. We must enter a new era for clean water, accelerating progress by developing new goals and strategies. A new generation of leaders is needed to meet these challenges and capitalize on opportunities to improve local water quality.

We are excited to bring the Choose Clean Water Conference back to the geographical heart of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, gathering in Ellicott City, Maryland. Closely associated with record flooding and the threats posed by increased extreme weather events due to climate change, Ellicott City and the surrounding area has many lessons to offer. These include novel approaches to reduce urban and suburban polluted runoff, pioneering tactics to control the influx of pollution washing off agricultural land, and local examples showcasing best practices in community outreach and collaboration with local governments.

As the Coalition celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this conference seeks to connect the more than 290 nonprofit organizations in [our membership](#). We hope the sharing of new tools, resources, and experiences—all while building and cultivating critical relationships—will equip and inspire conference attendees to accelerate their work for clean water.

The Coalition is looking for applications from local, regional, and national organizations or people working on issues of relevance to water restoration in the Chesapeake Bay region. We especially encourage applications from organizations, businesses, or people participating in projects in historically underserved communities and/or representing cultural, racial, and other kinds of diversity. The Coalition is dedicated to using the conference to highlight all voices of the Chesapeake Bay region and strives to serve as an inclusive platform for the entire clean water community.

### **A Note on COVID-19**

All presentations at the conference will occur in-person; we will not have the option to present virtually. As always, we are committed to creating an environment where everyone feels safe and comfortable. We will release a complete list of health and safety protocols closer to the conference.

Questions? Contact Drew Robinson at [RobinsonAQ@nwf.org](mailto:RobinsonAQ@nwf.org).

## II. Submitting a proposal

This year's conference theme is *A New Era for Clean Water*, which we hope will bring forward presentations and field trips that energize participants through thoughtful engagement, share new and innovative learnings, and stir enthusiasm for entering a new era in our clean water movement. Proposals should incorporate this theme into their presentations and field trips. The Coalition is seeking innovative and creative proposals on the following categories: ***This is not an exhaustive list. We welcome proposals focused on topics outside of these categories.***

- Issues
  - Agriculture
  - Chesapeake Bay Restoration Effort (TMDL)
  - Clean Water
  - Climate Change/Adaptation/Resilience
  - Environmental Justice
  - Land Conservation
  - Local Government
  - Nonpoint Source Pollution
  - Pipelines/Shale/Fracking
  - Public Access/Recreation
  - Public Health
  - Source Water/Drinking Water
  - Stormwater
  - Toxics
  - Wetlands
- Skills – Organizational and Professional Development
  - Campaign/Movement Building
  - Capacity Building
  - Communications
  - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - Environmental Education
  - Fundraising
  - Policy/Advocacy
  - Public Engagement

### i. Submitting a proposal for a 45-minute session

#### Requirements

- Submit proposal no later than **January 12, 2024**.
- Submit applications through this form – <https://bit.ly/24conf-session>.
- May have **up to two speakers**; **we will not accept any panel proposals**.
- Leave at least 5-10 minutes for discussion/Q&A during the 45-minute period.
- Presenters of 45-minute sessions have the option to host their session outdoors. Outdoor sessions will meet on the grounds of Turf Valley Resort. The session must have no A/V needs (i.e. PowerPoint presentation, showing videos, etc.). Presenters can distribute paper handouts if necessary.

## ii. Submitting a proposal for a 90-minute workshop

### Requirements

- Submit proposal no later than **January 12, 2024**.
- Submit applications through this form – <https://bit.ly/24conf-workshop>.
- May have **up to four speakers**; panel proposals are accepted for workshops.
- Have no more than 60 minutes of presentation time with the rest dedicated to audience engagement. This can include small group work, role playing exercises, games, group discussions, and more.

## iii. Submitting a proposal to lead a field trip

Field trips are three-hours long (including travel, which should not exceed 25 minutes each way). **We will host all field trips the afternoon of Tuesday, May 21, 2024.**

### Background

Field experiences are a great way to develop a deeper understanding of the progress and challenges to protect and restore our waterways. The Coalition aims to schedule field trips that:

- Complement conference issues
- Allow participants to see restoration sites and completed projects by Coalition members and partners
- Provide participants the opportunity to interact with people who experience the connection to their local rivers and streams.
- Allow participants to experience the culture and unique flavor of the conference host city and surrounding areas

### Transportation

- The Coalition will provide one (1) bus for transportation, to and from field trip location(s), if necessary. Any alternative transportation or other needs must be included in the application and coordinated between field trip organizers and Coalition staff.
- Travel time should not exceed 25 minutes in any direction.

### Requirements

- Submit proposal no later than **January 12, 2024**.
- Submit applications through this form – <https://bit.ly/24conf-fieldtrip>.
- May have **up to two leads**.
- Not exceed three hours.
- All sites must not be more than 25 minutes from the Turf Valley Resort.

## III. Evaluation

### i. Evaluation for 45-minute sessions and 90-minute workshops

The Coalition's Conference Planning Committee will review all session and workshop proposals. The Committee will judge applications based on the following considerations:

- All applications must meet the requirements. We will not consider incomplete applications.
- Preferred applications will:
  - Make a connection between the theme and closely match one or more of the categories.
  - **Include an interactive component that effectively engages audience participants.**
  - Feature speakers with demonstrated expertise in their field.
  - Include diverse voices, particularly speakers from or who work in underserved communities.
  - Include creative visual presentations (Exhibits, before and after photos, models, charts, handouts, etc.).
  - Examine clean water issues throughout the Chesapeake Bay region in a compelling way that underscores the connection of clean water to people, the urgency needed to solve problems, and manageable solutions.

## ii. Evaluation for field trips

Choose Clean Water Coalition staff will judge applications based on the following considerations:

- All applications must meet the requirements. We will not consider incomplete applications.
- Preferred applications will:
  - Outline a **maximum three-hour field trip (including travel time each way)**, complete with proposed stops, descriptions, highlighted speakers, and overarching field trip theme. Travel time should not exceed 25 minutes in any direction.
  - Include leaders or presenters with demonstrated expertise in their field and/or the field trip site(s).
  - Highlight work in economically disadvantaged areas and/or with unique partners.
  - Examine Chesapeake Bay watershed issues in a creative, compelling, and fun way that underscores the connection of clean water to people, the urgency needed to solve problems, and manageable solutions.
  - With limited buses available, we encourage field trips that can be hosted on the grounds of Turf Valley Resort.

## IV. Final Details

- Session and workshop presenters will have access to the standard audio/visual equipment provided by the Coalition, which includes projectors, screens and lectern microphones. Lectern computers will have internet access. Presenters must provide any additional audio/visual needs, working with the Coalition staff and within the limitations of the conference facility.

- All presenters of sessions, workshops, and field trips will receive a free registration to the conference for the day they are presenting.
- Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of their proposal following their submission. We will notify all applicants of the status of their proposal by **February 16, 2024**.

**Please direct all application inquiries to Drew Robinson at [robinsonaq@nwf.org](mailto:robinsonaq@nwf.org)**