



*Martin O'Malley, Governor*  
*Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor*  
*John R. Griffin, Secretary*  
*Eric Schwaab, Deputy Secretary*

September 18, 2009

National Marine Fisheries Service  
Office of Habitat Conservation

Members of Selection Committee,

This letter supports the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA) grant application for the restoration of fish habitats associated with the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS). NERRS is a network of 27 reserves located in 21 states and one territory with the mission of coastal and estuarine stewardship (restoration, conservation, and management) through innovative research and education. Stewardship is central to all we do, and this grant, if awarded, would allow restoration of important fish habitats around the county.

Specifically, NERRS is uniquely suited to meet the partnership requirements of this grant. For example, the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Maryland (CBNERR-MD) is a partnership between the Federal, state and three local governments as well as three private non-profit organizations. We hold Memoranda of Understanding with our partners that define our relationships and roles. These diverse entities all bring unique abilities and insights to the table.

Furthermore, CBNERR-MD is currently interested in two projects that fit the criteria of the proposed project. The first involves the use of permeable reactive barriers that would enhance denitrification. This project would evaluate the effectiveness of a novel restoration approach for nitrogen removal. Our partners in this venture are the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks Department. The second project would restore 100 acres of submersed aquatic macrophyte beds by using specific genotypes of *Vallisneria americana* (wild celery) that are able to tolerate turbid conditions. Partners include University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and the Harford County Parks and Recreation. Both of these projects would improve the potential fish habitat at our Reserve.

Finally, I believe that NERRA is well situated to administer this grant if received. There is a strong partnership with NERRS and I have no doubt that many of the Reserves would be submitting proposal for these funds.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Ebersole, Manager

