

# Fiscal Year 2018



## **Maryland Department of Natural Resources**

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources leads the state in securing a sustainable future for our environment, society and economy by preserving, protecting, restoring and enhancing our natural resources.

## Natural Resources at a Glance

- In 2018, the Maryland Park Service was rated above average or excellent by **86%** of visitors surveyed about their overall **park outing**.
- Fishing and Boating Services has developed an interactive **boating speed limit** map available on the department's webpage and mobile app for use by boaters statewide. It was accessed by the public via the website application approximately **1,100 times**.
- In 2018, Fishing and Boating Services held **46 fishing rodeos** for community organizations and youth groups.
- During the summer of 2018, DNR's Abandoned Boat and Debris Program removed an estimated **80,000 pounds of debris material** from the Chesapeake Bay. DNR's efforts in debris removal are ongoing and working to eliminate potential hazards to both commercial and recreational boaters.
- The Wildlife and Heritage Service has maintained the **statewide deer population** at approximately **222,000** which is down from a long-term high of **300,000**.



### Objectives

- Sustainable populations of living resources and aquatic habitat
- Healthy Maryland watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers
- Natural resources stewardship opportunities for Maryland's urban and rural citizens
- Conserve and manage statewide network of ecologically valuable private and public lands
- Diverse outdoor recreation opportunities for Maryland citizens and visitors
- Diverse workforce and efficient operations

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## FY18 Highlights

- **Revised Structure:** Reorganized and restructured offices and units to improve communications and coordination, including forming a dedicated Office of Legislative and Constituent Services.
- **Listening to Consumers:** Provided constituents with customer experience surveys to obtain feedback to respond to concerns and improve services.
- **Refreshed Approach:** Ensured that all employees continue to improve customer service skills through formal, in-person training sessions across the state. Online training will expand reach to field staff.
- **Reduced Delay:** Improved processing times for services to help citizens and businesses more easily accomplish their transactions.
- **Improved Tracking:** Increased response time and time-to-resolution of electronic, telephone, written and in-person correspondence.
- **Reaching Wider Audience:** Used communications and social media tools to better engage and reach wider audiences with important information on events, news and programming.

## Recognition Given to Employees

**Employee Recognition Awards** – The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recognizes the accomplishments of its employees in the areas of innovation, exceptional performance and customer service. There were over 78 individual awards for innovation, exceptional performance and customer service which were awarded within each of the department’s units.

These recognition awards programs include the Fishing and Boating Services Recognition Award program which recognizes employees with both individual and team awards. The Maryland Forest Service recognizes a Forester, Ranger, and Employee of the Year. Finance and Accounting Services recognized employees for providing outstanding internal customer service for the department. Natural Resources Police honored Officers of Year, Award of Merit, Superintendent’s Commendation, Superintendent’s Special Achievement Commendation, and Certificate of Appreciation winners. The additional DNR units participate in a variety of opportunities which recognize staff for their performance and dedicated service.

**Employee Appreciation Day/Picnic** – Employee recognition events aligned with State Employee Appreciation/Recognition Day. Staff located in the J. Millard Tawes building, the department headquarters in Annapolis, were welcomed in the lobby by the Executive Team. The Annual Picnic was held on May 11, 2018 at Sandy Point State Park. Everyone helped with the event, as it was potluck and required active participation from staff resulting in a successful team-building event. Secretary Mark Belton recognized all staff and the department’s appreciation for their work.

**Employee of the Year** – As part of the picnic, we announced the 2017 Employee of the Year. In addition to the presentation of the award, the 19 nominees and winner, Carrie Kennedy, were recognized on the department’s various internal and external communications channels.

**Employee Service Awards** – The department also regularly recognizes the state service of its employees who have achieved milestone years of service of 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 years. There were 118 employees who reached a milestone in 2017. The list of employees who achieved a milestone service year were also recognized on a placard at the entrance of the J. Millard Tawes building and thanked for their dedication.

**Governor’s Customer Service Hero Award** – Tom Schisler was one of the Department of Natural Resources employees that was selected the Governor’s Customer Service “Hogan’s Heroes” Award. The award was presented at the Board of Public Works Meeting held December 20, 2017. Rangers Mouton and Ranger Cutcher were also selected for the Governor’s Hogan’s Heroes Award and were congratulated by the Governor’s Office of Performance Improvement with the Governor’s citation for excellent customer service.

**The Secretary's Star Award** – As the department nominates individuals for the Governor's Customer Service Hero Award, Secretary Belton also awards nominees with a monthly departmental award. At the department's Leadership Team meeting on September 11, 2018, Jacob Holtz, Kerry Wixted, and Robert Bender were recognized with the Secretary's Star Award for outstanding customer service. Jim Harris, Karen Knotts, Sandi Pepi, James Harris, Susan Hampton, Joe Love, Brynn Bales, Lt. Robert Ford, Anthony Terry, and Erik Zlokovitz have been recognized this year for their commitment to excellent customer service. In addition, a number of team efforts have been recognized through this award, including, Engineering and Construction, the DNR Icebreaking Team, Licensing and Registration Service, and Finance and Administrative Services.

In addition to these efforts, the Office of the Secretary is committed to showing appreciation for the hard work of employees. Visiting locations across the state, unit retreats and doughnut drop-ins have been utilized to improve employee morale and provide opportunities for internal feedback and ideas for customer improvement.

## Leadership Analysis of FY18 and Summary of FY19 Approach

During FY18, the department took a number of steps to further the goals of the Governor’s Customer Service initiative, including better communication with constituents and stakeholders with more timely responses to them, rapid responses to customer service complaints, and customer service training that served as the model for other state agencies.

Additionally, DNR analyzed the Governor’s Customer Satisfaction Survey data provided by the Governor’s Office of Performance Improvement to identify programs that had significant room for improvement and worked successfully on corrective measures.

The department also is evaluating its service to businesses – large and small, new and established – to listen to them, understand how best to work with them and improve efforts to meet business needs.

In FY19, the department plans to better measure its progress and further enhance it. This includes a refinement of its customer service training and reinforcement of that training and speedier responses to interested parties and customer-focused improvements.

Throughout the department, staff has successfully completed year two of enhanced outreach to the Hispanic community. Six state parks hosted *Es Mi Parque* (This Is My Park) programs during 2018, which strive to engage a growing population here in Maryland and in the network of 72 state parks.



Outreach events were held at Patapsco State Park (June 23), Sandy Point State Park (July 10), Point Lookout State Park (July 16), Greenbrier State Park (July 21), Cunningham Falls State Park (August 5) and Rocky Gap State Park (August 18).

Each event was attended by 50-100 children. Bilingual educational (English/Spanish) coloring books we passed out, along with park maps, fishing guides and other trinkets. Staff also bought 20 fishing rods for casting demonstrations and accuracy contests for young park visitors and adults at each event. Additionally, Natural Resources Police and water safety staff demonstrated proper fitting for life jackets.

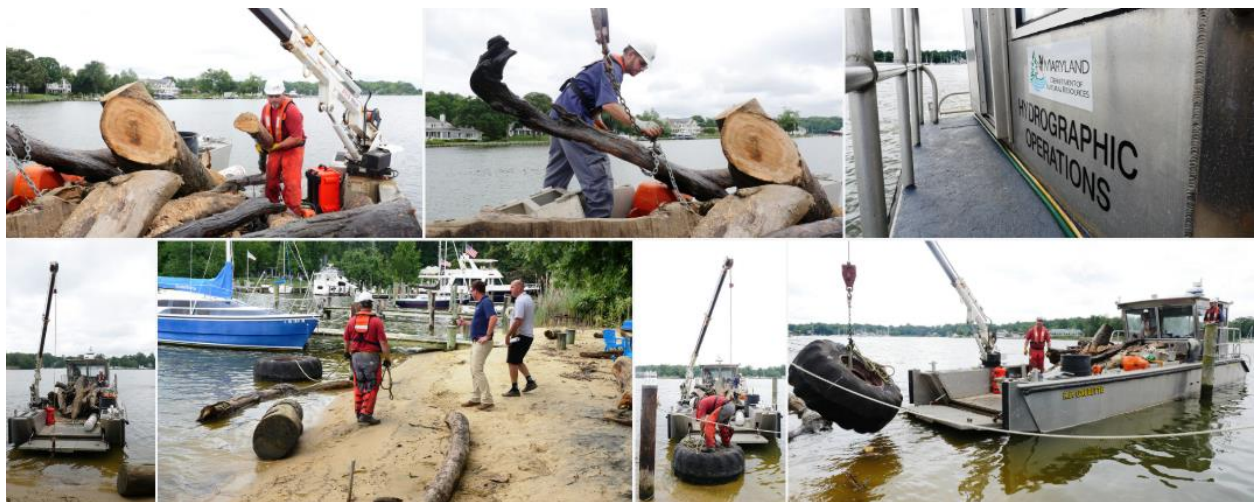
Through a very generous grant from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, the department purchased life jackets to give away for various activities and contests that education and outreach staff conducted.

## DNR's 2018 Chesapeake Bay Clean-up

Due to record rains in the Mid-Atlantic during July of 2018, millions of tons of debris were released when the flood gates of the Conowingo Dam were opened. In August of 2018, DNR's Hydrographic Operations Division started clean-up efforts and work continues to this day. Anne Arundel County was hit the hardest with debris, but Queen Anne's and Baltimore Counties waterways were also severely impacted. Debris was removed that posed a hazard to navigation. Significant debris remains and with continued rainfall, more areas could be affected.

DNR used a 36' debris/buoy boat, the *R. P. Gaudette*, for most of its clean-up work. The vessel is able to get into shallow water and has a small crane to remove heavy logs.

To date, DNR has removed over 80,000 lbs. of debris, mostly wood, along with old tires and other assorted flood debris.



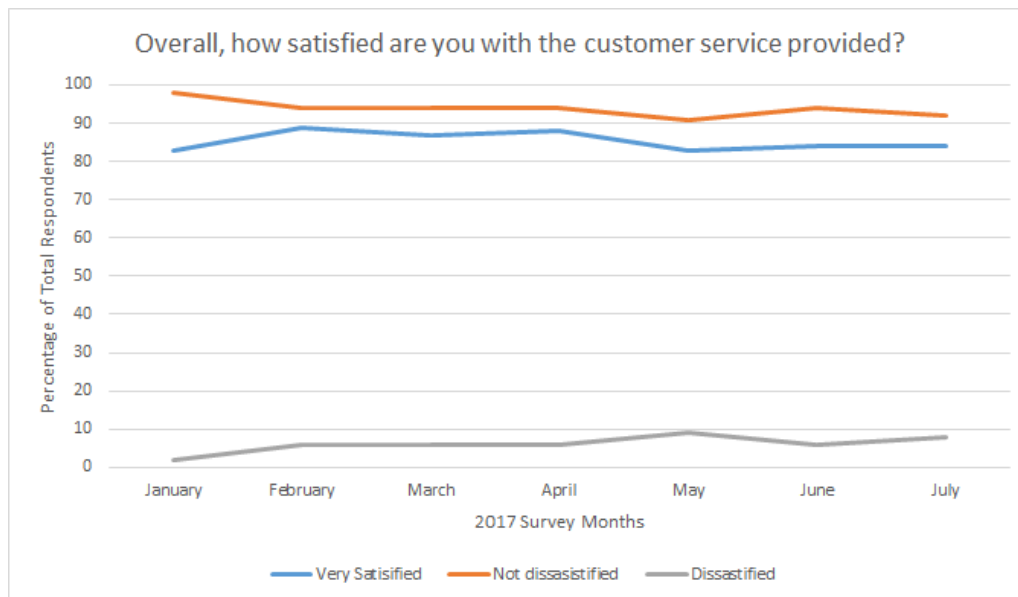


## Detailed FY18 Results and FY19 Plans

### Customer Service Survey Results

The Governor’s Customer Service Initiative has been an invaluable tool and a new vantage point through which the department can assess and improve its service to the public.

The overall satisfaction ratings for the department reveal that 86 percent of the 1,015 respondents were “very satisfied” with the customer service provided, and 94 percent of customers were “not dissatisfied” with the customer service provided.



- As you can see in the orange and blue lines in the graph above that uses the Governor’s Customer Satisfaction Survey results, results show a relatively consistent positive experience by our customers. Through the initiatives, training and strategy set forth in this document, the department plans to continue the steady trend to see satisfied customers.
- As high-use of our state facilities and interaction with our customer typically occurs in warmer months, the department recognizes that during the transition period, our customers may feel those effects as we staff and prepare for the busy season. This may account for the uptick in dissatisfied customers during the month of May.
- To handle the higher volume of customers who enjoy the recreational amenities and programs managed by the Department of Natural Resources, the department hires roughly 700 seasonal staff. Most of these seasonal workers begin service in May. As the volume of customers’ increase, our staff adjusts to handle complaints by hiring and training personnel and by educating the public.

## **Status of Customer Service Training**

- As of fall 2018, more than 80 % of the department’s 1,300 employees have participated in customer service training.
- The department’s customer service training course will be available to all employees in online training materials as a part of our incumbent workforce initiative for FY19.
- For FY18, the department will ensure that all staff have received the initial customer service training and will follow-up with mini-training modules as refreshers to reinforce the value of delivering quality customer service at all times.
- Exploring further options for FY18 to provide refined and targeted training for different levels of employees across the department.

## **Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution**

### Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquires

The department revised its system to address overdue constituent correspondence and to improve the timeliness and quality of the responses.

In an effort to improve responsiveness to constituent requests and provide constituents more options to communicate, a “Contact Us” option is prominently displayed on the home page and throughout website enabling users to reach staff from within the website. That feature will be expanded to all department channels by 2018.

Telephone systems have been updated to handle high-volume constituent calls during specific periods of time (peak hunting, fishing and crabbing seasons as well as seasonal increases in state park use.)

### Best Practices

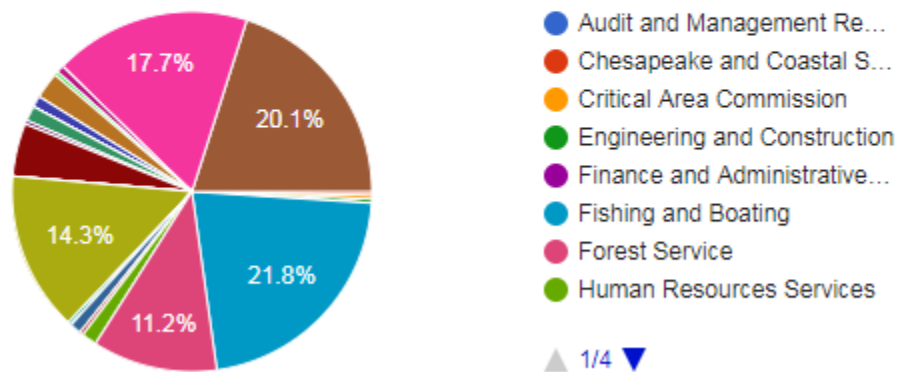
Process improvements to the correspondence system have tremendously improved response times. Staff now has direct access to the Governor’s Correspondence System to enable quicker receipt of correspondence and quicker response times. Responses are now generated through written responses (emails or letters), telephone calls or meetings.

A global tracking system for constituent inquiries to the department has been implemented through the Internet Quorum system. To cater to as many types of visitors as possible, the “Contact Us” page offers a number of options, including a direct link on the “Contact Us” page, email, telephone (including a list of frequently requested numbers) and social media.

The telephone voice response system is assessed regularly to ensure that the options offered on it are consistent with current issues and constituent concerns. Tracking our customer service calls is a benefit recently implemented which captures data on the nature of the call, the focus of the call and frequency. While this tracking system is currently utilized by those who call into the general call line, its implementation in May 2018 is continuing to gain traction department-wide. An example of our nature of the call pie-chart is below, with 21.8 percent of calls received for Fishing and Boating Services, 14.3 percent for Licensing and Registration, 17.7 percent for Wildlife and Heritage Services, and 20.1 percent in the “other” category. The two categories remaining with the largest calls received were the Maryland Forest Service with 11.2 percent and 4.2 percent for the Natural Resources Police.

## Nature of Call

294 responses



## Plans for Improvement

A live chat feature is now under review. The focus of this new feature is to improve customer service, especially in our licensing and registration process. It is hoped that it will increase accessibility and aid in more rapid response results. The Office of Communications and Office of Legislative and Constituent Services will continue to review and revise the current customer service model to improve services to constituents.

## **Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives**

The collaborative effort between the Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of Transportation’s Motor Vehicle Administration is an example of

the commitment to make government services more accessible and convenient to all Marylanders.

Beginning in May 2017 at the Motor Vehicle Administration’s Essex office, residents could register their boat and trailer, purchase their hunting, fishing and driver’s license as well as renew their boat, trailer and car registration all at one location.

Over the next year this “one-stop-shop” access will be available at numerous centers across the state. Additionally, at numerous locations, kiosks will allow for the renewal of boat and trailer registration, as well as other online services.

## **Making Agency Services Available Online**

AccessDNR is the department’s official, award-winning and free mobile app for outdoor enthusiasts, available on Apple and Android devices.

Whether you want to visit a state park, hunt or fish, explore waterways by boat or kayak or simply watch wildlife, the AccessDNR app provides all the information and services users need on the water, at the beach or in a hunting blind. Features include:

- A location-based sunrise/sunset display
- A Trophy Case, where hunters can upload harvest photos and share through Facebook, Twitter or by email
- An option for hunters to directly report their harvest
- Boating speed limits
- Breaking news and alerts
- Fish and shellfish identifier
- Hunting, fishing and boating regulation guides
- Hunting season information by date
- Maps and directions to boat launches and water access sites, state parks, trails and wildlife management areas
- State Park activities and amenities by location
- Tide time tables and state fish record information



At the end of FY18, 78,709 people downloaded the AccessDNR app for use. It enhances the digital service by giving the customer one-click access to specific outdoor recreational information and online resources.

The Office of Communications now uses the GovDelivery email service and won a national award for its leadership. This enables all departmental messaging to be delivered in a more consistent manner, in both look and language. More than 381,216 individuals have signed up for 25 distinct topic lists, from fishing reports to park events to hunter workshops. We see a 31 percent average open rate, which is well above industry average. We have also set up a closely monitored email address for direct replies to any bulletin. This allows us to actively answer questions and address

concerns in a concise and timely manner, rather than defaulting to an auto-response and requiring more work on the user's part.

In FY18, the department's online store served over 8,900 customers, allowing them to purchase \$403,000 worth of items like park trail guides, black bear stamps, wildlife art prints, park passports and even make conference registration payments.

## **Processing Time for Customer Transactions**

Shortening wait times to receive department licenses in-person by installing kiosks in Motor Vehicle Administration service centers across the state.

## **Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands**

Meetings are scheduled to meet the needs of customers, including after normal business hours and at various sites throughout the state. Geography also plays an important role in setting the location. A new, interactive online calendar has also been implemented this year to ensure that public meetings are publicized and promoted.

## **Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience**

The department hosts numerous social media accounts with Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and Foursquare. Messages are posted daily which direct our customers to various events that the department hosts around the state. We also highlight our various services (i.e., license purchasing and boat registrations). We answer many private messages sent to us from citizens that vary from wildlife identification to assistance with the Maryland Natural Resources Police. The Maryland Natural Resources Police was in contact with 263,627 residents and visitors for FY18 to assist with their needs.

The department's web team ensures that the website is regularly updated by providing skills and support to the entire community of digital content editors. This support empowers digital content editors to create, update and improve content for webpages for their organizational units, including fixing broken links, eliminating outdated content and fixing bad content. The digital content is then distributed through the Office of Communications different media channels, including the email newsletters, social media accounts, video and print publications.

The department's website ([dnr.maryland.gov](http://dnr.maryland.gov)) was used by nearly 4 million unique website users in FY18.

We instituted a customer online survey on the home page to receive website feedback from our customers from an online survey, which shows the reason people come to our website:

Why Did You Visit?	% of Total
News and Information	26%
Recreation	23%
Licensing & Registration	18%
Education/Research	9%
Other	23%
No Response	2%
TOTAL	100%

Customer service email links from the website enable the customer to directly contact our customer service personnel. The customer service team receives on average 400-500 emails a month on topics ranging from nuisance animals, hunting and fishing license renewals, fish kills, water quality in streams, buoys and navigational hazards, state park access, weddings in the parks, and on the department’s new hunter apprentice program.

## Conclusion

The Department of Natural Resources is honored to be making continuous improvements for our customers by revising our structure, listening to consumers, renewing our approach, reducing delay, and improving tracking our time-to-resolution interactions to achieve positive results.

The Governor’s Customer Service Initiative has been an invaluable tool and a new vantage point through which the department can assess and improve its service to the public. The department will continue to review and revise the current customer service model to improve services to constituents.

