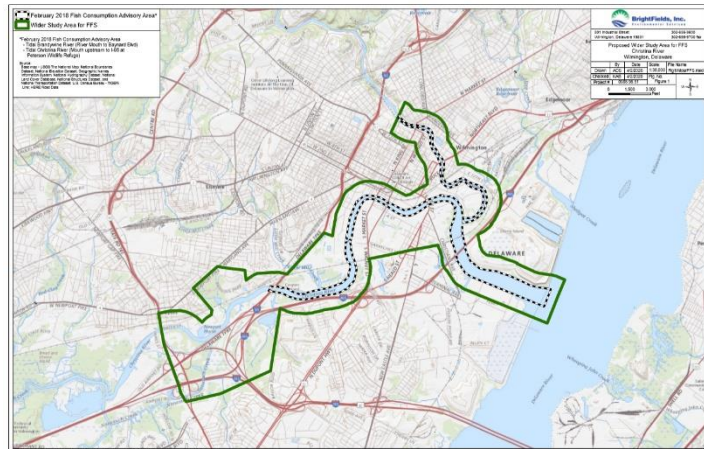


## CBR4 Project Summary – April 2020

The Christina Conservancy is seeking funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in support of creating a lower **Christina-Brandywine River Remediation Restoration Resilience (CBR4)** Plan. This will not be a lengthy document, but an overlay of conservation resources identifying priorities and key strategies and projects to restore and protect them.

The CBR4 planning area is approximately 4,000 acres / 10 linear miles of the tidal main stems of the Christina and Brandywine Rivers and surrounding riparian areas in the City of Wilmington and New Castle County, Delaware. This area corresponds with the February 2018 Delaware Toxics Fish Consumption Advisory Area and is the study area shown on this map (Delaware River along right-hand side.)



The aim of the CBR4 plan is a feasibility assessment and plan to guide and complete the transformation of the lower Christina and Brandywine Rivers in Wilmington into a fishable, swimmable river. This will include using a logical step-wise ecosystem-based approach to assess, prioritize and plan for a suite of projects. These projects will remediate legacy toxic contaminants like PCBs in river sediments where there aren't opportunities to work with responsible parties via existing laws, and protect and restore tidal wetlands, shoreline, shellfish beds and riparian areas that provide the habitat and clean water to support and grow healthy fish and wildlife. For example, restoring freshwater mussels in key areas will increase water quality for spawning/juvenile fish, as well as people.

After years of industrialization and neglect that left Wilmington's riverfront abandoned and polluted, the Lower Christina and Brandywine are coming back to life. This is due largely to the City and State's investment in the Wilmington Riverfront through economic development and environmental remediation. Today, the City is well on its way to controlling Combined Sewer Overflows, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) is addressing land-based contaminants following the WATAR (<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/dwhs/SIRB/Pages/WATAR.aspx>), and the Riverfront Development Corporation (RDC) is actively bringing businesses and people back to the river. As a result, water quality is improving, fish populations are healthier and on the rise in conjunction with vibrant redevelopment of the waterfront.

What was formerly thought impossible is becoming possible. This urban river can be restored to health, and this project will address two of the greatest remaining challenges to realizing that vision: cleaning up legacy contaminants in sediments within the river itself and protecting and restoring shoreline and riparian areas as economic development continues. Under the leadership of the Christina Conservancy (CC) and with technical expertise from DNREC, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE), Sarver Ecological (SE) and other partners, this public-private initiative will establish a comprehensive plan to

guide remediation, restoration and resilience efforts from sediment to shore, with support and input from the City, County, State, RDC, and conservation and community partners.

This plan will be built on thorough examination of current conditions by top experts, the application of verified approaches where they work best, and innovative techniques backed by science. It will provide both a compelling vision for a future Christina-Brandywine Riverfront that thrives economically and environmentally, as well as a practical blueprint to guide decision-making and leveraging of resources for implementation, with an eye towards long-term solutions. Thirty years ago Governor Russell W. Peterson and the Task Force for the Future of the Brandywine and Christina put forth a bold vision for the Riverfront and it's the success of that original vision that drives the need for this new plan.

Within the proposed planning effort, DNREC will take the lead on assessing and planning for in-stream remediation of contaminated sediments, engaging with a variety of contractors in a feasibility assessment to identify and diagnose contaminant hot-spots and the best approaches/technologies to remediate them. The CC will take the lead on engaging a variety of partners and contractors in a feasibility assessment and plan identifying opportunities for improving fish, shellfish, wetland, and riverside habitat, which also enhances recreation uses. PDE will be the primary technical experts for shoreline assessment and nearshore and wetland habitat restoration needs and opportunities. SE will focus on the restoration of associated plant and ecological communities in the riparian area for maximum water quality and other species and habitat benefits. New and existing partnerships will be sought and leveraged to engage local government and business stakeholders and provide planning and engineering support to integrate restoration activities with efforts to provide and promote recreation and economic development.

DNREC, the CC, and other partners will work together to engage a diversity of stakeholders in creating a vision for restoration of the lower Christina-Brandywine that combines these elements into one concise plan and identifies roles for various entities to play to move them forward. These stakeholders include community groups and their members and constituents along each segment of the river, as well as landowners. There are over 4,500 parcels of land along the lower Christina and Brandywine River in Wilmington owned by a variety of entities including individuals, businesses, corporations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. The CBR4 planning project team will seek input from key landowners in the feasibility assessment and planning process and will focus more detailed restoration planning efforts on parcels with the most access and opportunity for restoration. These are likely to include large parcels in public or non-profit ownership, such as the Russell Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge and other lands owned by the Riverfront Development Corporation on the Christina River, and the Diamond State Salvage and maintenance yard sites owned by the City of Wilmington on the Brandywine River with many opportunities for working with public and private owners of smaller parcels in between.

The request from NFWF is for just under \$250,000 over a two-year period, leveraging over \$600,000 of investments from the Christina Conservancy, DNREC and other partners.