



## 2026 CHESAPEAKE WATERSHED FORUM CALL FOR POSTER SESSION PROPOSALS

Submission Deadline: 11:59 PM on Friday, August 7, 2025

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### **Background and Theme**

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay will hold the [21st Annual Chesapeake Watershed Forum](#) on November 13-15, 2026, at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, WV. This watershed-wide event reaches up to 400 restoration and conservation practitioners annually to inspire and empower local action towards clean water.

The poster session will be held at 7:00 PM on Friday, November 13, at NCTC. The poster session is a juried event, with awards for best poster in the new professional and professional categories. Winners will receive free registration to the 2027 Chesapeake Watershed Forum.

### **Our 2026 theme is “Practical Solutions for People and Planet.”**

As we enter a new era for the Chesapeake, the focus has shifted from what we must do to how we will get it done. The 2026 Chesapeake Watershed Forum theme centers on the tangible: the tools, techniques, and collaborative models where research meets results.

This year, we invite technical and topical experts across disciplines to share their research or hard-earned knowledge with the Forum community. Every session is designed to apply practical solutions to ongoing challenges—whether through deepening scientific understanding, mastering a new restoration methodology, or scaling a real-world solution. By bridging the gap between innovative research and on-the-ground action, we are building the foundation for watershed success. Join us to find the practical building blocks for people and the planet.

*Note, posters do not have to fit the Forum’s theme.*

### **Poster Session Guidelines**

#### **Proposal Evaluation:**

Poster abstracts that relate to a field of interest ([see below](#)) will be accepted unless we receive more than 40 submissions, therefore exceeding the room capacity.

If we receive more than 40 submissions, poster applications will be judged using the following criteria:

| Evaluation Criteria  | Poor (1 Point)   | Good (2 Points)  | Excellent (3 Points)   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>1. Timeliness, importance, and appropriateness of the topic to the field and Forum attendees.</b>         | The topic and abstract suggest the poster is not current or appropriate to the field or to the Forum participants. | The topic and abstract suggest the poster is not groundbreaking, but is a relevant topic to Forum participants. Some Forum attendees will find this topic interesting. | The topic and abstract suggest the poster is cutting-edge, immediately relevant, and groundbreaking to the field. Most Forum attendees will find this topic accessible and interesting.                          |
| <b>2. Research and presenter engagement.</b>   | There is no evidence of meaningful research included in the topic and abstract.                                    | The topic and abstract include some vaguely or poorly defined research.  | The topic and abstract include clear, compelling, unique, and well-detailed research.  |
| <b>3. Practical Application and Transferability (e.g., skill building, problem-solving, action planning)</b> | There is no stated practical application in the topic or abstract.   | The practical applications in the topic and abstract are too broad and/or self-evident to be valuable.   | The topic and abstract illustrate a clear practical application to a broad range of participants. It includes immediately usable resources or relevant perspectives that many attendees would highly appreciate. |

Poster proposals that describe organizational activities or are otherwise incomplete will not be accepted.

### Poster Session Proposal:

Each proposal must answer the following:

- Title of proposed poster (100 characters or less).
- A short summary/abstract (1200 characters or less)
- Under which field of interest does your poster fall? You must select one.
  - Restoration, Conservation, and Science
  - Education, Engagement, Advocacy
  - Communications
  - Professional Development
- Which category below best describes you?
  - New Professional (post-high school to less than 5 years of work experience)
  - Professional (greater than 5 years of work experience or volunteer work)

### Presenter Expectations:

- Poster presenters are expected to "host" (stand next to) their poster during the Poster Session (Friday, November 13 at 7:00 PM at NCTC) to interact with and answer questions from attendees.
- Poster dimensions should be 3' x 4'. Presenters are expected to print their own posters and bring them to NCTC. Easels will be provided.

- Remember to keep good design practices in mind when assembling your poster. More resources and examples will be available once proposals are accepted.
- For more information about the 2026 Chesapeake Watershed Forum, [click here](#).

### **New for 2026: Chesapeake Watershed Registration**

For 2026, we are implementing a registration lottery to manage the high demand for participation in the Chesapeake Watershed Forum and improve accessibility for all interested parties. A registration lottery allocates limited attendee spots using a random, computer-generated selection process.

If your poster proposal is selected for the Poster Session, you will be exempt from the lottery. You will receive an email from Patti Bohnsack at [chesapeakeforum@allianceforthebay.org](mailto:chesapeakeforum@allianceforthebay.org) to complete the registration form and payment.

If you wish to attend the Chesapeake Watershed Forum regardless of your acceptance in the Poster Session, we highly recommend submitting a registration lottery application by the deadline of Friday, August 21. You can read more information about the registration lottery [here](#), and complete your lottery application [here](#).

### **Important Dates:**

- Thursday, June 11: Poster Session Request for Proposals Open
- Friday, August 7: Poster Session Request for Proposals Close
- Thursday, August 20: Notification of Acceptance
- Friday, August 21: Lottery Application Deadline
- Friday, November 13 at 7:00 PM: Poster Session

### **Submission Form:**

[Click Here](#) to submit your poster proposal. Please prepare your proposal before submitting it via the online portal. For further information or questions about guidelines, contact Lauren Sauder at [lsauder@allianceforthebay.org](mailto:lsauder@allianceforthebay.org).