In 2010, major media outlets across the country highlighted the impact of Chesapeake Conservancy initiatives. From the Watermen's Heritage Tourism Training Program, to Chesapeake Landscape Conservation, to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and a first-of-its-kind regional geocaching challenge. Our innovative projects garnered coverage in Los Angeles, New York, Washington, D.C. and throughout the Bay Watershed.

National Media
Spread the Word on Conservancy Programs

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Federal Aid Sought To Conserve Chesapeake Land

THE SUN
Watermen Try Their Hand at Tourism: Program Helps Crabbers, Oystermen Find Ways To Supplement Income

The Virginian-Pilot
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Join the adventure and donate today!
www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/support.html
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J. Stanley Winton

We partnered with the NPS to develop a coalition of conservation groups and government agencies called Partners for a Chesapeake Treasured Landscape Initiative. The coalition proved valuable in gaining support for land conservation in the Executive Order and its work continues.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partnership

In September 2010, the Conservancy signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to work together to carry out the conservation strategies described in the Final Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay (under Executive Order 13308). We are currently engaged in discussions to serve as USFWS’ core partner to implement land conservation goals along the Bay’s river corridors.

James River Conservation

Building upon our land conservation success in 2009 along the Potomac River, we were pleased to partner with The Conservation Fund to conserve 125 acres of bald eagle habitat along the James River. The property, called the Blair Wharf tract, is surrounded by the James River National Wildlife Refuge and has a scenic shoreline along the John Smith Trail that is now protected.

Advocacy

During the last year we developed strong support from Members of Congress for congressionally directed funding in the FY2011 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bills in the House and Senate. Funds would go towards a Chesapeake Treasured Landscapes Initiative, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network and expansion of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. At the time of this publication the bills are still under consideration by Congress.

Developing the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

In October, the National Park Service completed its draft Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) for the John Smith Trail and designated the Chesapeake Conservancy as its “primary partner” in developing the trail. We have finalized a work program that will support the NPS’ planning and communications efforts as the trail develops.

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The National Park Service released the draft Comprehensive Management Plan for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail in October 2010. The Conservancy worked closely with the NPS to provide planning and communication support.
Thousands of Students To Experience Jamestown’s Smith Trail Kiosk

Through the generous support of a legacy grant from the Jamestown 400th Comemoration Commission and in partnership with the National Park Service, we built an interactive exhibit at the Historic Jamestowne Visitor Center. Now complete, the exhibit includes a display and electronic kiosk with content about the John Smith Trail, Jamestown and the smart buoy system. Following installation and a short period of testing, the kiosk will be ready for public use in early 2011. Based upon information from the National Park Service, we expect that nearly every fourth grader in Virginia will walk by the exhibit next year when they visit the park.

Expanding the Trail: Connecting Trails Report

In September, with the help of historians and other scholars throughout the region, the Chesapeake Conservancy completed a detailed assessment of six rivers in the Bay—the Susquehanna, Choptank, Chester, upper James, upper Nanticoke and upper Anacostia—to determine their potential historical and ecological connections with the John Smith Trail. The assessment analyzed the associations these rivers had with John Smith’s voyages, American Indian cultures and the Bay’s natural history of the 17th century. Our research found that portions of all six rivers meet the standards we developed jointly with the National Park Service for inclusion as a component of the John Smith Trail. Based on this study’s findings, we will submit to the Secretary of Interior an application to designate these six rivers as ‘connecting trails’ to the John Smith Trail, as authorized under the National Trails System Act. The connecting trails have the potential to add more than 900 miles to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia.

Even before the plan was completed, the Chesapeake Conservancy worked with local partners to develop visitor guides for the John Smith Trail on three rivers: the Anacostia, Chickahominy and Nanticoke. These guides provide information on access sites and points of cultural and natural interest to trail explorers.

The Conservancy is also implementing the Join the Adventure Campaign—an initiative that connects people to the trail through outdoor recreation and hands-on stewardship activities. We believe that personal experience on the Chesapeake and its rivers, whether paddling a kayak or restoring a stream bank, can foster a solid understanding of the ecosystem and our shared history.

“Smart” Buoys

To mark the trail and inform users about John Smith’s historic voyages as well as weather and water quality conditions, the Chesapeake Conservancy has continued to work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other partners to deploy “smart buoys” along the trail. On May 17, 2010, NOAA deployed a new federally funded buoy on the Potomac River near National Harbor. Then on July 27, NOAA deployed a new privately funded buoy in the Chesapeake Bay west of the Little Choptank River and near the Goose’s Reef, made possible by the Dominion Foundation. With these two new buoys, a total of nine buoys are now in operation providing real-time information about the Bay and the trail for boaters, students and scientists.

Promoting Chesapeake Gateways, Other Recreation and Tourism Opportunities

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Star-Spangled Banner Geotrail

In February, the Chesapeake Conservancy, in partnership with the National Park Service and the Maryland Geocaching Society, launched the Star-Spangled Banner Geotrail. Using handheld GPS units, participants can search for hidden “geocaches” at more than 35 sites in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Since its inception, the trail has welcomed more than 6,500 visits at locations as diverse as Tangier Island, Fort McHenry and the Calvert Marine Museum. More than 200 geocachers have completed the challenge and visited 20 or more sites along the trail, earning a commemorative Star-Spangled Banner coin as a prize for their achievement.

Chesapeake Trips and Tips

To encourage residents and visitors to get outside and enjoy the Chesapeake’s many natural, cultural and historical treasures, the Conservancy and the National Park Service have developed and expanded Chesapeake Trips and Tips. A popular weekly e-newsletter, Tips and Tips highlights interesting, unusual and off-the-beaten-path ways to discover authentic Chesapeake places. Recent editions have featured Havre de Grace skipjack cruises, Delmarva crab feasts and Shenandoah hikes as well as information on the Smith Trail and hands-on conservation tips.
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