

CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY

2015 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

# Shorelines

*Saving the Chesapeake's Great Rivers and Special Places*



The *Benzonia*, part of the mysterious ghost fleet at Mallovs Bay  
PHOTO BY: DONALD G. SHOMETTE

# Thinking Seven Generations Ahead

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## Mission

The Chesapeake Conservancy's mission is to strengthen the connection between people and the watershed, conserve the landscapes and special places that sustain the Chesapeake's unique natural and cultural resources, and encourage the exploration and celebration of the Chesapeake as a national treasure.

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As a new father, the drama that unfolds on our wildlife webcams seems a bit more meaningful to me this year. Our new webcam features peregrine falcons Boh and Barb and their eyasses (baby falcons) perched on the 33rd floor of the Transamerica building in downtown Baltimore. Then there's our osprey cam on Kent Island featuring Tom and Audrey, who with a new "Tom" this year, failed to have viable eggs, but then took in two foster chicks who came from an ill-fated nest. It seemed as though we felt their shared disappointment and then joy as we watched it unfold on the webcam.

I'm far from the only one hooked on these raptor reality shows. Both our osprey and peregrine wildlife webcams are averaging 8,000 views a day, from more than 100 countries: Iceland, Ghana, Cayman Islands, Armenia, China, and Belize, just to name a few. Visitors come from all 50 states, including some very devoted viewers from Wyoming, who spend the longest time on average viewing the cam. Tuesdays are the highest traffic days.

Our wildlife webcams do more than provide entertainment; they connect people to nature. We believe when people feel connected to nature, they will work to take care of it. We couldn't ask for better ambassadors to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail than Tom and Audrey, while Boh and Barb lead to interest in our Greater Baltimore Wilderness partnership.



Boh & Barb's three chicks pose for a photo after getting banded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. PHOTO BY: CRAIG KOPPIE

Osprey and peregrine falcons represent two great conservation success stories. Their populations declined dramatically from the 1950s to 1970s due to pesticide poisoning from DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane), resulting in brittle egg shells too weak to produce healthy chicks. With the ban on DDT and the work of many very dedicated conservationists, both species have made a comeback.

But now, I worry about the monarch butterflies. *The Washington Post* recently



Chesapeake Bay Summit on Maryland Public Television, April 21, 2015. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYLAND PUBLIC TELEVISION

reported that since 1990, about 970,000,000 monarch butterflies have vanished. At age 38, it is hard for me to imagine a formerly abundant animal—one that I watched with wonder as a child—threatened by extinction so soon in my lifetime. Could it be that my children will be the first generation not to know the beauty of the monarch butterfly? I can't let that happen, not on my watch.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is an important habitat for the monarch butterfly, but with a human population approaching 18 million and climbing, the region is losing tens of thousands of acres of open space each year.

Recently, I was honored to participate in Maryland Public Television's Chesapeake Bay Summit. The moderator asked the panelists: "What are some new ways of thinking about cleaning up the Chesapeake in the future?"

My answer about land ethic wasn't really a new way after all. It was inspired by my friends, Oren Lyons and Sid Jamieson, members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy. They taught me that the Iroquois believe we should think seven generations into the future when making decisions. Can you imagine thinking about where we develop our roads and our new neighborhoods and our new cities and thinking about how it will affect people 140 years from now?

At the Chesapeake Conservancy, we want planners to think that way, and we can provide them with innovative tools to do so. Read in this issue of *Shorelines* an example of how we were able to use proactive innovation to help preserve the viewshed at Mt. Vernon.

Thank you for your support of the Chesapeake Conservancy. We can't protect our great rivers and special places for future generations without you.

JOEL DUNN, *President and CEO*

# National Marine Sanctuary Designation Sought for Mallows Bay

Surreal, majestic, and reminiscent of another time, are all words that can be used to describe Mallows Bay, a small bay on the Maryland side of the Potomac River just 30 miles south of Washington, DC.

Mallows Bay has the largest collection of historic shipwrecks in the Western Hemisphere. Its ghost fleet includes more than 100 wooden steamships built for the U.S. Emergency Fleet during World War I in an effort that propelled America to the forefront of shipbuilding.

The wooden ships were built quickly and at less expense than steel ships, but they lacked durability. Ultimately the products of 58 shipyards in 16 states came to rest in the shallows of the Potomac at Mallows Bay. The marine graveyard also includes many other wrecks of vessels from Revolutionary times through the 1900s.

Nature claimed the wrecks, which now support diverse ecosystems that are teeming with marine life, attracting recreational fishing and ecotourists. The area also supports a diversity of wildlife, including bald eagles, heron, deer, and turtles. Osprey have even chosen some of the shipwrecks for building their nests.

In addition to its natural resources, Mallows Bay boasts rich American Indian and African American history. This section of the Potomac River is part of the traditional lands and cultural landscape of the Piscataway-Conoy nation, as well as the site of important archeological findings. African Americans have been

a part of the area's history for centuries as well, with history related to African slaves landing on Maryland's shores, fighting in the War of 1812 and the Civil War, and building many of the wooden steamships that now rest in Mallows Bay.

The Chesapeake Conservancy is proud to be a partner in an effort to designate Mallows Bay as a National Marine Sanctuary, which would protect this marine landscape for generations to come. The nomination is currently in review by NOAA, the administrator of the National Marine Sanctuary System. If approved, Mallows Bay would be the first National Marine Sanctuary in the Chesapeake Bay region.

You can visit Mallows Bay and stroll along the banks to view many of the shipwrecks from shore, or paddle by kayak for an up-close and personal look at the sunken wrecks. To learn more about Mallows Bay from Maryland historian Donald Shomette, author of *Ghost Fleet of Mallows Bay*, watch *Secrets of the Chesapeake* produced by Maryland Public Television (MPT). The program is available to view on the Conservancy's website courtesy of MPT at [www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/mallows-bay](http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/mallows-bay)



An aerial view of the northern sector of Mallows Bay.

PHOTO BY: DONALD G. SHOMETTE



Chesapeake Conservancy's team gathers for a cleanup at Mallows Bay, April 2015.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JODY COUSER



The ship *Caribou* with *Benzonia* lying across her.

PHOTO BY: DONALD G. SHOMETTE



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## New Tool Helps Conserve an Old and Historic View

Stand on Mount Vernon's back porch and look out across the Potomac River. The nearly unbroken sweep of woods and farm fields is very similar to that which George and Martha Washington would have seen any spring day from their home here in the 18th century.

That this beautiful and historic view is nearly intact is no accident. Protecting it required the foresight to recognize the threat posed by the fast growth in suburban Washington, DC, and it took hard work by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association and an act of Congress to address it. The solution was Piscataway Park, created specifically to preserve the view from George Washington's house.

Piscataway Park was established in 1961. It now covers 5,000 acres and stretches for six miles along the Potomac shore, from Piscataway Creek to historic Marshall Hall. When it began acquiring land, the park, administered by the National Park Service, was a



George Washington's Mount Vernon along the Potomac River. PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON



Replica of Captain John Smith's shallop stops at Mount Vernon during 2007 trip to inaugurate the nation's first national historic water trail. PHOTO BY: MICHAEL WOOTTON

pilot project for the use of easements to protect land from obtrusive urban expansion. But the park also protects the site of a prominent Indian settlement that Captain John Smith visited as he explored the Potomac River, as well as habitat for songbirds and other animals, and public access to the Potomac and to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

As a means to protect Mount Vernon's view, Piscataway Park has been a success.

Yet it has not ended the threat that continued development poses. An example of how easily the view can be spoiled exists. A little more than six miles away, across the Potomac and up Piscataway Creek, is a development called The Preserve at Piscataway, begun in 2010. Despite the distance from Mount Vernon, it is easily visible and one of the few modern developments seen from the historic home. It is a perfect example of an intrusion that new viewshed analysis and viewshed conservation could have prevented.

Recently the Chesapeake Conservancy worked with the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association (which, by the way, is the oldest conservation organization in the U.S.) to build a geographic information system (GIS) that allows anyone with a web browser to see how a proposed building might intrude on the view from Mount Vernon. The new GIS tool added new technologies to previous work conducted by Prince George's

County and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. It can show how much and what part of a building would be seen from Mount Vernon and which trees are important to screen the proposed structure from view. This information provides county development officials previously unattainable detail that can help them and the developer site a building in a way that it will not spoil the view. It also shows conservationists the properties that have the highest priority for conservation—for example, those that have the tallest trees to screen distant development, or those that are most likely to be developed and seen from Mount Vernon.

The technical magic of this new tool is based on the ability to map data in great detail, something the Chesapeake Conservancy is perfecting through its Conservation Innovation Center. The Conservancy calls this *Precision Conservation*. It is based on high resolution data gathered from satellites and airplane imaging systems that is precision-located through GPS. It can be used for many things, such as helping a landowner spot exactly where to plant trees to help control pollution from a property, or determine which lands have the highest conservation value based on

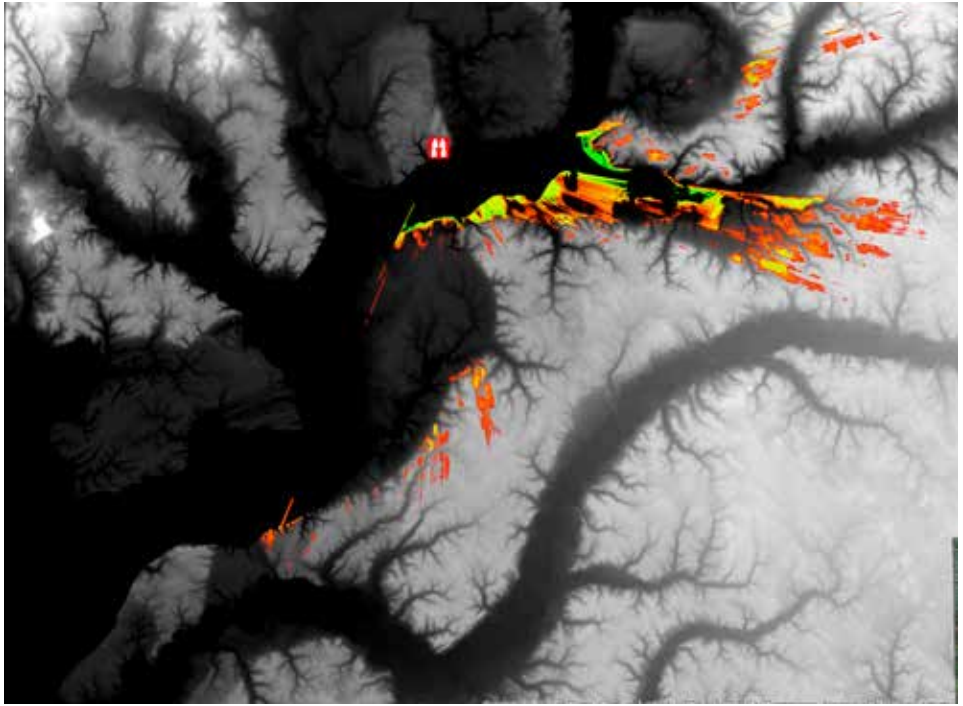


Former U.S. Senator John Warner from Virginia with Chesapeake Conservancy's President and CEO Joel Dunn on the dock at Mount Vernon in 2007, discussing the land Senator Warner helped to conserve. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOEL DUNN

a mix of factors, such as the trees, water, topography, and even history.

In the case of Mount Vernon, one essential ingredient in the tool is LIDAR, or Light Detection and Ranging, to generate detailed, three-dimensional information about the land's topography and surface characteristics, such as the heights of trees. It uses light—a pulsed laser—to measure distances and uses GPS to note exactly where they are recorded.

The Mount Vernon story captures so much about why it is important to conserve our Chesapeake landscapes. It illustrates the importance of two



A map of the viewshed from Mount Vernon produced by our Conservation Innovation Center. The binoculars in red box mark where Mount Vernon stands. The colored areas show where potential development would be visible—starting with the green areas, where a standard multi-story house could be seen, and increasing in height all the way to a multistory condominium in the red areas.

invaluable conservation tools: easements to protect land, and the use of smart planning and good tools to find the right places to protect. Many of these places are historic. And even more of them have irreplaceable ecological values. They

shelter wildlife, and they provide buffers against air pollution, drought, flood, and climate change. Equally important, they are places for us to play, and places where we can learn.

## Land and Water Conservation Fund 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Joel Dunn  
PHOTO BY: JODY COUSER

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Congressman Steny Hoyer recently invited President and CEO Joel Dunn to speak at a press conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The event took place May 22 at Douglas Point Special Resource Management Area, a site in Charles County, MD, overlooking the Potomac River. This site is on both the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

Douglas Point was a particularly appropriate staging area because the 584-acre natural area was purchased by the Bureau of Land Management through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It is part of the nearly 2,000 acres of public land known as the Nanjemoy Natural Resources

Management Area. The BLM, state of Maryland, and Charles County co-manage the combined acres of state, county, and federal lands.

The LWCF helps preserve historical and natural resources like Douglas Point and other irreplaceable resources along the Captain John Smith Trail. As the lead nonprofit partner on the *Rivers of the Chesapeake* collaborative proposal to LWCF, the Chesapeake Conservancy is fighting to bring a portion of these monies to the Chesapeake.

The LWCF is set to expire this year without action from Congress. The Conservancy is working hard to garner support for full and permanent funding of this essential tool for conservation and public access.



From left to right - (At podium) U.S. Congressman Steny Hoyer; U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell; Director Neil Kornze, Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Secretary Mark Belton, Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn at Douglas Point in Charles County, MD.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## National Park Service Launches “Find Your Park” Campaign

The National Park Service’s (NPS) 100th birthday is not until next year, August 25, 2016, but the celebration has already started. NPS and the National Park Foundation recently launched the “Find Your Park” campaign to offer special programs, events, and activities intended to drive awareness, deepen engagement, and increase support for America’s parks, particularly with the next generation of park visitors.

National parks, historic sites, and trails — such as the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the newly established Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Park here in the Chesapeake region — offer a wide array of inspirational stories of America’s incredible natural resources, history, and diverse cultural heritage.

“There is something for everyone in our 407 national parks, whether it is the breathtaking landscapes or the historical and cultural sites that tell the story of our country,” said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell. “As we approach the centennial anniversary of the National Park Service, this is a perfect time for all Americans—especially young people—to Find Your Park, from neighborhood parks to national parks and all public lands in between.”

The Find Your Park campaign is not limited to just national parks. State parks, local parks, trails, museums, and historic sites offer people of every age and background the opportunity to connect with history and culture, enjoy nature and outdoor recreation, and make new discoveries.

It is your support that enables NPS to offer the wonderful resources that provide the space to escape from the

stresses of normal life and rejuvenate the spirit. Visit parks near you today and consider taking a young person with you. You can encourage curiosity and foster stewardship for the natural world and America’s cultural identity for future generations.

As an added incentive, Find Your Park is promoting a centennial project contest showcasing 100 Find Your Park stories and featuring prizes, including annual national park passes, camping gear, adventure kits, and a fully guided weekend getaway for two.

Did you know there are more than 50 national parks in the Chesapeake Bay watershed? How many have you visited? Have you traveled about the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail? Check out the new “Find Your Chesapeake” website at [www.FindYourChesapeake.com](http://www.FindYourChesapeake.com) or download the free Chesapeake Explorer app at [www.chesapeakeexplorerapp.com](http://www.chesapeakeexplorerapp.com) to find parks and trails in the Chesapeake.

To share your story, enter the centennial project contest, or find a national park near you, visit [www.findyourpark.com](http://www.findyourpark.com). Get out and Find Your Park!



The National Park Service - Chesapeake launched a new website in June to help you Find Your Chesapeake. Featuring more than 350 special places around the Chesapeake region, this is the “go-to” site to learn about events, find trip ideas and things to do, and discover places to enjoy authentic Chesapeake experiences. Inspired by the national Find Your Park campaign, [www.FindYourChesapeake.com](http://www.FindYourChesapeake.com) is your key to making Chesapeake connections.



Geocaching—a treasure hunt using modern GPS technology—is fun for all ages and a great family activity. The geotrail along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail will expand to 100 Chesapeake locations for the National Park Service centennial. PHOTO COURTESY OF NPS/MATT RATH

## New Adventures on the John Smith Trail



Do you yearn for adventure? Would you like to go on a real-life treasure hunt? Then you have something in common with Captain John Smith, who came to explore the Chesapeake region in 1607.

Today you can follow the Captain John Smith GeoTrail and visit some of the areas where Captain Smith went on his Chesapeake voyage of discovery 400 years ago. At locations all along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, 54 geocaches are hidden and waiting for you to find by using a GPS device.

For those expeditious few who have already found all 54 current locations, there is good news! In honor of the approaching centennial of the National Park Service, the Captain John Smith Geotrail will be expanded to 100 locations! New challenges abound as you attempt to retrace Captain Smith’s expeditions and learn about his remarkable journeys.

For more information, visit [www.geocaching.com/play/geotours/captainjohnsmith](http://www.geocaching.com/play/geotours/captainjohnsmith)

Ready? Set? Geocache!



# Mike and Dina Weiss

Material gifts are not always the best choice when looking for something meaningful to give a loved one. Dina Weiss felt that way about her husband, Mike. Instead of buying him something that he did not need, Dina gave Mike a membership in the Conservancy's Osprey Club.

Mike and Dina, of Silver Spring, MD, are enormous fans of the Conservancy's osprey and falcon webcams. Mike is also a wildlife photographer, who has spent time documenting the cycles of osprey and raptor nests.

When the couple learned about Tom and Audrey they quickly became hooked. Mike even planned to join the Osprey Club himself but never got around to it, which was fortunate for Dina, who was looking for a gift for Mike's 60th birthday.

"I felt that getting a membership for Mike would make a very meaningful connection for him—that he could connect with a community that shares his love so deeply," Dina explained. "It's about providing something that is part of a person's passion, but also making a contribution to an organization that is trying to raise awareness in a global way. That's important—kind of a ripple effect. You want to help sustain what is meaningful to you."

The gift was a hit, and Mike said he was thrilled to unwrap his Osprey Club packet. Mike watches the osprey cam before going out on photography trips. He says watching the up-close lives of Tom and Audrey has showed him the various behaviors of osprey and given him an awareness that allows him to better capture the lives of the osprey he photographs.

"It is a much better experience if you understand not only the identity of the animals, but also their behavior," Mike commented. "There really needs to be an awareness of what the animals' environment is, and the impact we have on their environment. It's such a treasure."

The Conservancy's wildlife webcams are not just a great source of entertainment. Through these programs viewers learn about the ecosystems of the Chesapeake



Chesapeake Conservancy supporters Mike and Dina Weiss. PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE AND DINA WEISS

Bay and are inspired to take care of them so our beloved webcam stars and every other species in the Chesapeake can flourish. "What the Conservancy does with the cameras is really helping raise that awareness," Mike noted, "and what needs to be done to protect and be respectful of them."

To see Mike's photography, visit [www.underwatervisuals.com](http://www.underwatervisuals.com)

## Exclusively at the Gear Shop

Stay cool this summer and support the Chesapeake Conservancy with this limited edition t-shirt featuring the Conservancy logo on the front and an osprey design on the back. Only \$15.00. Order online at [www.chesapeakeconservancy.org](http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org)

PHOTOS BY: PETER TURCIK



# Conservancy Staff News

Joel Dunn was named president and CEO in April by the Board of Directors. The title change from executive director reflects his responsibilities and leadership of the Chesapeake Conservancy.



PHOTO BY: JONATHAN HUDSON

Jody Hedeman Couser joined the Conservancy in the new position of director of communications. A native of Annapolis, she oversees the Conservancy's public and media relations.

Previously, she was principal of River Bay Communications, LLC, and press secretary for a Maryland gubernatorial candidate. She served as director of communications in the cabinet for Anne Arundel County Executive

Janet S. Owens. She has also worked as public information officer for the American Medical Association, director of communications and development for the National Association of Police Organizations, and production manager at The Kamber Group. She has a B.A. in political science from Roanoke College and a masters in political management from The George Washington University.

Colleen Whitlock, director of administration, recently celebrated five years with the Conservancy. Colleen's tenure dates back to when the Friends of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail merged with the Friends of Chesapeake Gateways to become the Chesapeake Conservancy.

Emily Myron, project manager, was recently recognized for her outstanding work on the *Rivers of the Chesapeake Collaborative Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)* project.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VERNA HARRISON

and widely recognized conservation leader in the Chesapeake Bay region, to the Conservancy's Board of Directors. Harrison is the principal of Verna Harrison Associates, LLC, providing consulting services

in public policy development and implementation, coalition building, facilitation, strategic planning, and board development. Previously, Harrison served as executive director for The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment from its inception in 2003 to 2014. "I think the Chesapeake Conservancy is a breath of fresh air in its forward thinking approaches to conservation," Verna Harrison said. "I am particularly excited about the new technology aspects under development and how they can be used with traditional approaches to conservation."

## Board News

Chesapeake Conservancy welcomes Verna Harrison, public policy consultant



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