

CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY

2017 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Shorelines

Saving the Chesapeake's Great Rivers and Special Places



Ten years after their re-enactment of John Smith's voyage inaugurates the national historic trail, the crew of Sultana's shallop (shown here on the Rappahannock in 2007) reunites for a retrospective.

PHOTO BY CHRIS CERINO

Return to the River

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 restore landscapes, rivers, and habitats in the Chesapeake Bay region.

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In June, it was my honor to join U.S. Senator John Warner (VA-retired), Chief Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock Tribe, and National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office Superintendent Chuck Hunt for a celebration. Working with the Chesapeake Conservancy, Senator Warner's daughter, Ms. Virginia Warner, donated to the tribe nearly an acre of land on Carters Wharf Road in Warsaw, VA, which is located near a public boat landing at Fones Cliffs along the Rappahannock River. The tribe will use this land for their *Return to the River* program, an effort to reintroduce tribal youth to the traditions of their ancestors that were practiced there for thousands of years.

In the summer of 1608, John Smith made his first voyage up the Rappahannock River. Smith and his crew encountered the Rappahannock Tribe. Today, more than 400 years later, this stretch of the Rappahannock River has changed very little, making it an ideal place to share the story of the Rappahannock Tribe as part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail experience.

The Chesapeake Trail connects people with the rich history, diverse culture, and natural beauty of the Chesapeake. The history of the Rappahannock Tribe and the history of our country are intimately



Members of the Rappahannock Tribe participate in a celebratory drum circle at the event on June 17, 2017.

PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK



In a highlight of my career, Chief Anne Richardson called me a "trail blazing warrior," as she gave me a beaded bolo tie.

PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

tied to the Chesapeake Bay. The land, rivers, and wildlife found here are all a part of our shared identity. Chesapeake Conservancy is working to restore this part of our identity, to ensure that our historical and natural resources, and the story of our people—those before and after John Smith traveled these waters—are preserved and available to all.

Chesapeake Conservancy has been a strong advocate for the permanent protection of Fones Cliffs, currently under threat to become a luxury resort and golf course. This is one of the most unique places in the Chesapeake and one of the most important bald eagle habitats on the East Coast. While the bald eagle has made a remarkable comeback, protecting this globally significant Important Bird Area will help ensure their recovery is sustained across the Atlantic Flyway.

We are so grateful for Ms. Virginia Warner's generosity. The event at Fones Cliffs is one that I will never forget, marking what we hope will be a new era for the Rappahannock people, as their youth return to the river. We will continue to look for ways to cooperate with the tribe to make their vision a reality.

Sincerely,

JOEL E. DUNN, *President and CEO*



PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON

Announcing the 4th Annual Champions of the Chesapeake Awards

Sunday, October 15, 2017
5:00–7:00 p.m.

George Washington's Mount Vernon, VA

Honoring Maryland Governor Larry Hogan,
Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, the Mount
Vernon Ladies' Association, and Microsoft.

Roving Ranger Makes Its Debut

Bringing the Chesapeake Trail to the People

Inspired by the food truck phenomenon that is the rage in some parts of the country, the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office has introduced a colorful mobile truck to serve as a "Roving Ranger" for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The mobile visitor contact station is a new way to spread the word about outdoor fun throughout the Chesapeake Bay region.

The new mobile visitor center was developed in partnership with Chesapeake Conservancy. The size of a delivery truck with large scenes of the Chesapeake Bay on all sides, it's a one-stop shop where you can learn about places to go and things to do on the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail—and collect the much-sought-after "passport" stamp from the National Park Service.

The Chesapeake Trail is, in a sense, a national park in our collective backyard. It comprises much of the Chesapeake region, as beautiful and precious to our nation as the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, or Yosemite. The Roving Ranger will help more people discover outdoor activities along the trail, such as hiking, paddling, and fishing, as well as sites that allow visitors to immerse themselves in the history of the land and its people over the course of many thousands of years.

The Roving Ranger debuted April 22 during an Earth Day event at Mallow's Bay on the Potomac. It was the first of many occasions when rangers and Conservancy staff meet people where they are and share information about nature, conservation, and recreation both close to home and farther away, just waiting to be explored. The goal is



Josh Montanari, education, youth, and volunteer coordinator for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, meets trail visitors at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis, MD. PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

to reach diverse communities, fostering a sense of stewardship and a desire to take care of the natural, historical, and cultural resources that make the region so unique.

The Roving Ranger will also raise awareness for the trail's environmental and economic benefits. Outdoor recreation is a huge boost to the economy. The Outdoor Industry Association reports that in Maryland, where the Chesapeake Conservancy is headquartered, outdoor recreation generates \$9.5 billion in consumer spending, 85,000 direct Maryland jobs, \$2.8 billion in wages and salaries, and \$686 million in state and local tax revenue. Virginia's statistics are even more impressive.

The U.S. Department of the Interior reports that in 2016, 6.7 million park visitors spent an estimated \$234.6

million in local areas while visiting National Park Service lands in Maryland. These expenditures supported a total of 3,300 jobs, \$119.3 million in labor income, \$193.2 million in value added, and \$309.7 million in economic output for the Maryland economy. Imagine how these activities impact the entire Bay region.

The Chesapeake Conservancy is grateful to be partnering with the National Park Service on the Roving Ranger. Together, we are bringing the Chesapeake Trail to people in their own backyards and inspiring them to explore nearby portions of the trail, as well as offerings in other parts of the region.



The National Park Service and Chesapeake Conservancy Roving Ranger made its debut in April 2017. PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

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www.chesapeakeconservancy.org





Participants in the 10th-anniversary retrospective, sponsored by Sultana Education Foundation, included (left to right): crew members Bill Ryall, Liz Schale Vidana, Ian Bystrom (captain), Leona Dalton, Austin Hall, Donkey Dover, John Mann, Ashley Maloney, Forrest Richards, and Rebecca Pskowski. Two crewmembers, Andy Bystrom and Kelly Poole, could not attend.
PHOTO BY MICHAEL WOOTTON

“Wind in Our Sails:” Launch of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail

by Paula Degen

May 12, 2007, people jammed onto Jamestown Island to participate in the 400th anniversary of the founding of the first permanent English settlement in America. A weekend of activities capped years of preparation—including a royal visit from England’s Queen Elizabeth and the construction of a new National Park Service visitor center at the site of Historic Jamestowne. And there, at the height of the festivities, 12 young people sat on stage while dignitaries spoke of the adventure about to begin.

The seven young men and five women were embarking on a voyage to re-enact the Chesapeake Bay explorations of Captain John Smith 400 years earlier. For the next three months, these modern explorers would serve as ambassadors for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, which had been designated five months earlier as the 25th addition to the National Trails System and the first primarily water-based national historic trail.

As the speeches ended, the crowds and cameras moved to the rocky edge of the James River and the crew gingerly made their way to a shallow, single-masted, wooden boat tethered nearby. Built as a replica of the shallop that Smith and his fellow-colonists used to explore the Chesapeake’s rivers, the 28-foot open boat looked impossibly small for the scale of what lay ahead for the 12 people

who climbed aboard that day. Amidst shouts of encouragement, they shoved off to officially inaugurate the new national historic trail. They returned 121 days and approximately 1700 miles later to this same Jamestown shoreline—with tans, friendships to last a lifetime, intimate knowledge of the Chesapeake Bay, and the accomplishment of their ambitious mission.

The re-enactment story started a few years earlier at Sultana Education Foundation in Chestertown, Maryland, where volunteers led by veteran shipwright John Swain had built the replica 1768 schooner *Sultana* as the centerpiece of the organization’s education program. Ready for a new project, Sultana’s education director at the time, Chris Cerino, suggested building a replica of the shallop used by English colonists to explore the Chesapeake. Cerino and Sultana President Drew McMullen began thinking of the possibilities if a replica shallop actually re-traced Captain John Smith’s voyages, making stops along the way to convey Sultana’s education mission of teaching about the history and environment of the Chesapeake.

Meanwhile, Patrick Noonan, chairman emeritus of The Conservation Fund, was spearheading efforts to have a national historic trail designated to recognize the significance of Smith’s explorations in the founding of the nation. Initially

with Gilbert Grosvenor at National Geographic Society and Will Baker at Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and soon to be joined by individuals and groups throughout the Bay region, they formed the Friends of the John Smith Trail to work for trail designation. (See summer 2016 *Shorelines* for story of establishing the national historic trail.)

Sultana’s boatbuilding efforts and the Friends’ promotion of the new national historic trail eventually converged and gave birth to the idea of having the re-enactment voyage inaugurate the trail.

Even before the trail was designated December 19, 2006, Sultana began recruiting the crew that would be essential to the success of a re-enactment effort. Would anyone respond to this posting in the summer of 2006?

WANTED: energetic and flexible adventurers to undertake a 121-day open boat voyage of the Chesapeake Bay. Applicants must be prepared to row up to 15 miles each day, live in close quarters with 11 crew on board a 28-foot boat, and survive for weeks on end without benefit of a bed, toilet, running water, air-conditioning, refrigeration, and most other modern comforts. Salary and benefits minimal.

Sultana actually received scores of applications from experienced adventurers across the U.S. Project leaders chose the following crew: **Ian Bystrom**, a Coast-Guard-licensed captain with experience as chief mate aboard the schooner *Sultana*, would serve as captain for the expedition. **Andrew Bystrom** had experience in teaching elementary-aged children and as a writer. He would serve as scribe for the mission, regularly posting journal notes on a website dedicated to the Captain John Smith 400 Project. **Leona Dalton**, in addition to having a masters in history from Washington College, was an experienced rower with the college’s varsity team. **Donald (Donkey) Dover**, who also had extensive rowing experience, had crewed on a historic sloop and was a certified emergency medical technician. **Austin Hall** had professional experience as a whitewater rafting and backcountry guide. **Ashley Maloney** was a member of Stanford University’s crew team and had extensive background in experiential and historic education, including serving as education director aboard the schooner *Sultana*. **John Mann** led canoeing and boating trips on the Chesapeake and had been a staff naturalist at an outdoor school. **Kelly Poole**, a licensed captain and experienced sailor, had crewed on several historic vessels, among them *Pride of Baltimore II*. **Rebecca Pskowski** had also crewed on *Pride of Baltimore II*,

as well as worked as lead educator on the schooner *Lynx*. **Forrest Richards** had a degree in colonial and 20th-century American cultural history and crewed on several historic sailing ships. **William Ryall** graduated from the University of Manchester in England and had also crewed on several historic sailing ships. **Elizabeth Schale** (now Vidana) worked as a sea kayak guide and as an educator aboard schooner *Mystic Whaler*, and was certified as a wilderness EMT.

These are the 12 who shared the close quarters of the boat; sailed or rowed at any time day or night, rain or shine; pitched tents on the nights they could sleep ashore; engaged the public in exploring the Chesapeake Bay and learning about American Indian history, early English settlement, and natural resources in Smith's time and today. These are the 12 who captured the imagination of people who followed their progress at events, daily website postings, and through worldwide media.

Ten Years Later

May 10, 2017, almost 10 years to the day the re-enactment voyage set out from Jamestown, Sultana hosted a reunion for the shallop crew in Chestertown. Ten of the 12 crew members came back to present a retrospective for the standing-room-only audience gathered at Sultana's new education center. Sultana's president, Drew McMullen, welcomed the crowd and introduced Joel Dunn,



Honorary Chesapeake Conservancy Board Member Gil Grosvenor stops by the exhibit.
PHOTO BY SARAH ELDER

The Chesapeake Conservancy and the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office were recently awarded the Marion Thompson Fuller Brown Conservation Award for their 2017 Garden Club of America Flower Show exhibit. The judges noted that the exhibit was "a visually appealing and highly educational presentation which motivates visitors to enjoy and experience the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail."



The crew sets out from Jamestown May 12, 2007, for a three-month re-enactment voyage to launch the new national historic trail.
PHOTO COURTESY OF SULTANA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

who had worked for The Conservation Fund to win the national historic trail designation. Dunn is now the president and CEO of Chesapeake Conservancy, which grew from the Friends of the John Smith Trail—the nonprofit group instrumental in establishing the trail. Dunn described how the trail has become a framework for conservation of Chesapeake lands and rivers, citing specifically recent success in preserving Werowocomoco, site of John Smith's meeting with Powhatan, the most influential Indian leader at the time.

Bob Campbell represented the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office, which administers the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Recalling the shallop re-enactment voyage that launched the trail, Campbell said the event had "put the winds in our sails that are still carrying us forward today." He noted that the trail exists because of the commitment of partners, exemplified by the long-standing partnership with Sultana. The National Park Service recently designated the new Sultana Education Center as an official visitor center for the trail.

Chris Cerino—who is credited with the original idea for replicating the shallop and the voyage—gave a historical overview. He then introduced each of the 10 crew members present to describe various aspects and "takeaways" from the experience.

They spoke of long hours on the boat in all kinds of conditions; of a rotating cycle of six people rowing at a time, switching positions at 30-minute intervals to work different muscles; of trying to get comfortable in the 30 minutes they were

not rowing. They described simplified lives not connected to screens and 24-hour news cycles, and how rowing at an average of 2½ knots gave them the chance to see the Bay in a way probably not seen in 400 years. They noted the incredible interest of town councils, museums, and others in hosting events, and the generosity of landowners who opened their yards and often their homes to the travelers.

Colleen Moore Whitlock echoed that, as she described working with the hosts of local events. "Without the support from so many cities, towns, and individual landowners around the Bay the mission of the project would have gotten nowhere, and the crew would have had many more nights of uncomfortable sleep on the shallop itself. . . . The shallop and our exhibit were either the central focus of the event or a smaller part of a larger festival. . . . Each local group was committed to bringing the history of the region to life and introducing the public to the trail." Whitlock has continued to provide coordination skills, first as staff of the Friends of the John Smith Trail and now as director of administration for Chesapeake Conservancy.

All of the crew referred to the voyage as a life-changing event, and several credit it with their career choices. Ten years later, trail partnerships are thriving, and people are exploring and learning about the Bay through trail experiences. The replica shallop rests at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, where people can read its story and imagine what an adventure that must have been.

Chesapeake Conservancy Partners to Help Restoration Efforts at Dumbarton Oaks Park

Nestled in busy Washington, DC, is a fantastic park called Dumbarton Oaks Park that gives visitors a respite from the hustle and bustle of our nation's capital. Situated in Georgetown with an entrance along R Street, Dumbarton Oaks Park was formerly the home of Ambassador Robert and Mrs. Mildred Woods Bliss, who donated the property to the National Park Service in 1940 to be a unit of Rock Creek Park. This 27-acre sanctuary offers a path along a small stream with gorgeous little waterfalls, each built so the water makes a different sound as it goes over each fall. A stone bridge straight out of a Romantic period painting will take you over the stream and into a meadow at the foot of a hill covered with beech trees.

The Dumbarton Oaks Conservancy, a nonprofit partner to the National Park Service, is working to remove invasive plants that have nearly taken over the grounds and replace them with native species and to repair damage caused by stormwater runoff, which has eroded the stream banks, caused sediment

buildup, and even caused damage to the stone waterfall structures.

The Chesapeake Conservancy has joined in this project, using technology to identify where these efforts will provide the most benefit to the park. Our Conservation Innovation Center has created a high-resolution elevation map to understand how the water flows over the land. This information will be used to advise projects such as planting trees to help with stream bank erosion. We have created a web viewer to make this information accessible to the Dumbarton Oaks Conservancy and other potential partners on the project.

In an effort to encourage people to visit the park and fall in love with it as we

have, later this year we will release a story map application that gives you a little taste of what you can expect to see on your walk through the trails. We hope you will visit this green oasis in the middle of Washington, DC, and support the efforts to keep this special place healthy.



Located in Washington, DC, Dumbarton Oaks Park offers 27 acres of respite from the hustle and bustle of the city.
PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

Next Generation of Conservation

Chesapeake Conservancy Corp Member Jake Leizear

Since August of 2016, the Chesapeake Conservancy has had the pleasure to have Jake Leizear working with us as a member of the Chesapeake Conservancy Corps through the Chesapeake Bay Trust. He has also been working with more than 30 other Corps members at different host sites to become better stewards of the Chesapeake Bay watershed's natural resources.

Jake's work, part of a capstone project for the Conservation Corps program, focuses on the Chesapeake Trail along the Patapsco River in Baltimore, paying particular attention to the Middle Branch of the river and Baltimore's Inner Harbor. His work with the Conservancy includes community engagement; cartography; Geographic Information Systems (GIS); and raising awareness, support, and involvement in the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition.

He organized a Green Jobs and Opportunities Fair at Coppin State University to show Baltimore area

students about possible careers in conservation and what they can expect if they enter the field.

His experience with GIS has been useful in mapping the Patapsco River to create a paddling guide that maps amenities and addresses safety issues, such as water quality and temperature, and areas along major active shipping channels where paddlers should practice caution while traveling.

Additionally, he has worked with partners such as Baltimore Recreation and Parks, Baltimore Community Rowing, and the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition to develop signage along the Patapsco about the Chesapeake Trail and other green resources and to get people excited about the historical context of the trail.

A 2016 graduate from University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Jake holds a bachelor of science in environmental science and a GIS certification, with a strong interest in human GIS application

and community engagement and involvement.

Jake said much of his experience before the Conservancy was academic and had not given him the chance to see what a degree and a job in his field looks like. After his program, Jake feels very differently about careers in conservation.

"In the last year I have had this great opportunity to meet all these different people doing all of these different things and see what a true conservation professional looks like in practice," Jake said. "When you're coming up as a conservation major or in environmental sciences, or whatever, you are presented with the notion that you can come back and be a professor and get your Ph.D., or you can go into the real world and be a park ranger, an activist, or a legislative lobbyist."



Jake Leizear
COURTESY PHOTO

Donor Spotlight – Randy Larrimore

Randy Larrimore has supported the Chesapeake Conservancy since 2010. He is currently a member of our Chesapeake Council and is helping with our conservation efforts along the Nanticoke River in Delaware.

Randy grew up in Seaford, DE, through which the Nanticoke flows. He currently lives in Princeton, NJ, and Bethany Beach, DE. He enjoys boating—particularly while towing the young ones on tubes—and having a blue crab feast with all the fixings with his family in Seaford. He also enjoys golfing with his fiancée, Cathy, as well as biking, kayaking, and boating in Assawoman Bay, near where he now lives in Delaware.

A longtime supporter of conservation, Randy has worked for many years with our founding chairman of the board, Pat Noonan. Through their work together, Randy said he decided to focus his conservation efforts close to home in the Chesapeake. Though he had supported the Conservancy since 2010, Randy only met our president and CEO, Joel Dunn, at an event announcing the protection of land in the Nanticoke River watershed through the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Preparation Integration program. However, Randy said he quickly realized that Joel and the Conservancy are "the real deal."

"Joel and the Conservancy are doing important, and in many cases, groundbreaking work to protect and enhance the recreational benefits of the Chesapeake. I

am particularly excited about the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. As Joel has said, it's like having the Appalachian Trail on water right here in our backyard," Randy said.

As a member of our Chesapeake Council, Randy has helped provide business advice to the Conservancy as well as create relationships with potential partners for projects in the future. He recently took Joel on a boat trip on the Nanticoke, showing him some current and potential projects in the area, giving us some much-needed on-site perspective.

"The Chesapeake Conservancy is incredibly fortunate to have such a committed supporter, advisor, and partner in Randy Larrimore. His love for the Chesapeake is most evident from his work with us. We greatly appreciate his support of our mission and we look forward to our continued partnership with him in our efforts to protect the Nanticoke River," Joel Dunn said.

Randy explained that there are two sides to conservation in the Chesapeake, in his opinion. These include working to restore the health of the Bay and its rivers, as well as encouraging people to use and enjoy the resources of the region. The Conservancy also believes these focuses are vital to protecting and restoring the health of the Chesapeake.

"I think it is incredibly important to encourage people to use the Chesapeake and give them the resources and the



Randy Larrimore
COURTESY PHOTO

means to use it, which is really what the purpose of the Chesapeake Trail is—to help educate people about what happened in the Chesapeake and make it fun to learn more about the Bay. It is amazing to have what is a series of national parks that do not involve taking anyone's land. It's all open space," Randy said. "More than ever before, our citizens need to get involved to protect our natural resources. I am honored to be a part of this critical effort. It has been fun to be involved with an organization that is up and coming. The Conservancy is still small enough that you feel like you can have an impact, and that you're not just one of thousands of people who are involved in the bigger organizations."

Thanks, Randy, for your continued support.

Conservancy Staff News

The Chesapeake Conservancy welcomes three new members to the Conservation Innovation Center team: **Michael Norton** joins the Conservancy as a geospatial project manager. **Emily Mills** and **Rachel Soobitsky** are our newest geospatial analysts.



Michael Norton
COURTESY PHOTO

Michael oversees analytical projects with the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. Some of his projects will

include evaluating change detection methodologies and comparing different land cover classification techniques.

Emily supports Chesapeake Bay Program partnership projects, such as analyzing change detection methodologies and land cover classification techniques, as well as other CIC projects including prioritizing restoration opportunities and creating land cover datasets for partners.

Rachel works to create high-resolution land cover data as part of our *Envision the Susquehanna* initiative.

Director of Conservation Technology **Jeffrey Allenby** and Director of Operations **Sarah Elder** both recently celebrated their five-year anniversaries with Chesapeake Conservancy.

George Ward joined the Conservancy for the summer to help with advocacy efforts for the Chesapeake Gateways

program. He returns to St. John's College in Annapolis this fall for his senior year.

Katie Bisson, a sophomore from the University of Rochester, also spent the summer working with the Conservancy. She worked on projects with the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership.

We bid a very fond farewell to Vice President and Director of Programs **Jenn Aiosa**, who has left the Conservancy to become the executive director of Blue Water Baltimore.

Chesapeake Fellow **Reed Perry** began his graduate degree at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment.

Good luck Jenn, Reed, Katie, and George! Thanks for your tremendous work!



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PHOTO BY JODY COUSER

