

CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY 2020 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Shorelines

Saving the Chesapeake's Great Rivers and Special Places



Jackpot! 438 Acres Conserved

PHOTO BY DAN MURPHY/USFWS

COVER STORY PAGE 4

Mission

The Chesapeake Conservancy's mission is to conserve and restore the natural and cultural resources of the Chesapeake Bay watershed for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. We serve as a catalyst for change, advancing strong public and private partnerships, developing and using new technology, and empowering environmental stewardship.

Board of Directors

- Randall W. Larrimore, *Chair*
- Molly Joseph Ward, *Vice Chair*
- Leslie Delagran, *Treasurer*
- Marc Bunting, *Secretary*
- Maite Arce
- Mark Belton
- Thad Bench
- Michael Brubaker
- Joel E. Dunn
- Verna Harrison
- Stephanie Meeks
- John G. Neely
- Mamie A. Parker, PhD
- John J. Reynolds
- Chief G. Anne Richardson
- Jeffrey Sabot
- Richard Scobey
- Nancy B. Walters, PhD

Honorary Members

- Gilbert M. Grosvenor
- US Senator Paul Sarbanes (ret.)
- US Senator John Warner (ret.)

Emeritus Directors

- Patrick F. Noonan
- Charles A. Stek

Chesapeake Conservancy Staff

- Joel E. Dunn, *President & CEO*
- Patty Allen, *Vice President of Administration*
- Michael Bowman, *Partnership Communications Coordinator*
- Mark Conway, *Executive Vice President of Programs*
- Jody Couser, *Senior Vice President of Communications*
- Jacob Czawlytko, *Senior Geospatial Analyst*
- Carly Dean, *Program Manager*
- Melissa Ehrenreich, *Senior Vice President of Development & Business Strategy*
- Jessica Elliott, *Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member*
- Kelsey Everett, *Partnership Digital Resources Associate*
- Ellen Gardner, *Senior Vice President of Finance / Chief Financial Officer*
- Adrienne Gemberling, *Project Manager*
- John Griffin, *Program Manager, Chesapeake Conservation Partnership*
- Louis Keddell, *Geospatial Program Manager*
- Emilie Lahneman, *Development and Annual Fund Coordinator*
- Jacob Leizear, *Senior Geospatial Analyst*
- Kumar Mainali, *Geospatial Data Scientist*
- Joseph McCauley, *Chesapeake Fellow*
- Emily Mills, *Geospatial Technology Manager*
- Susan Minnemeyer, *Vice President of Technology*
- Mary Molloy, *Geospatial Analyst*
- Erin Montgomery, *Communications Associate*
- Mende Naylor, *Executive Assistant*
- Reed Perry, *Manager of External Affairs*
- Matthew Provost, *Vice President of Development*
- Gabrielle Roffe, *Manager, Equity & Community Engagement*
- David Saavedra, *Geospatial Technical Lead*
- Helen Sieracki, *Human Resources Coordinator*
- Rachel Soobitsky, *Geospatial Project Manager*
- Lisa Spallitta, *Accounting Coordinator*
- Susan Stephenson, *Grants & Contracts Specialist*
- Katie Walker, *Senior Geospatial Analyst/Project Coordinator*
- Emily Wiggins, *Geospatial Analyst*

A Bold Vision

Many would agree that the summer months bring out some of life's best moments in the Chesapeake Bay. A calm morning sunrise and the silhouettes of watermen carefully tending to crab pots. An osprey making a magnificent dive into the water for a fish. A boat ride down the river. An afternoon walk on a shaded trail with your family. A fresh piece of corn and a slice of watermelon from a Chesapeake farm.

Woven together, these moments make up the story of the Chesapeake and our relationship to this amazing landscape. The relationship between people and our nation's largest estuary is among the richest and oldest of any landscape in the country, dating back thousands of years to when the first humans arrived on the Chesapeake Bay.

The story of the Chesapeake Bay and its lands includes significant moments in our nation's history: Powhatan's empire at Werowocomoco, Captain John Smith's voyage up the Chesapeake, the arrival of the first African slaves at Old Port Comfort, the founding of the nation's capital on the Potomac, the Civil War battles of Bull Run, Antietam, and Gettysburg, and Harriet Tubman's heroic journeys to freedom, just to name a few.

These pivotal moments in history, the beauty and bounty of the lands and waters, and the culture and traditions we cherish today are what make the Chesapeake Bay a national treasure. To properly share this story, and to enhance public access to the Chesapeake's many natural, cultural, and historical resources, Chesapeake Conservancy is calling for the establishment of an official unit of the National Park System to be dedicated to the Chesapeake Bay.

A Chesapeake National Recreation Area would bring the National Park Service and the Chesapeake Bay to the people by establishing community-based hub



Chesapeake Conservancy President & CEO Joel Dunn
PHOTO BY MARK HAMILTON

sites where the National Park Service would connect visitors to the story of the Chesapeake and recreational opportunities in the community. It would enable partner parks, like existing local and state parks, to benefit from the powerful branding and marketing opportunities associated with the National Park Service. A Chesapeake National Recreation Area would unify these community hubs and partner parks to establish a common, coherent, and widely accessible narrative for the Chesapeake Bay.

This is a bold vision for the Chesapeake Bay, and this is the right time. With your help we can increase Bay access for everyone. As we pursue a Chesapeake National Recreation Area, Chesapeake Conservancy invites you to join us in building support in your communities and networks. Watch for information coming soon on how you can help.

Sincerely,

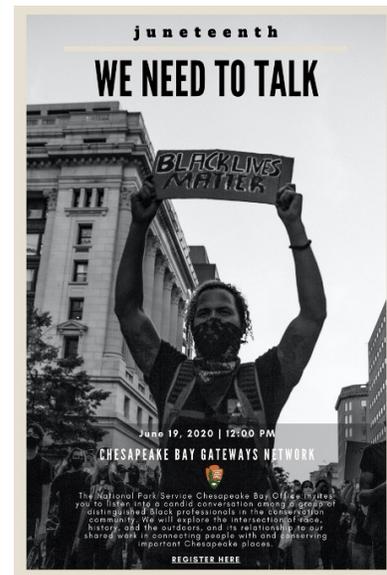


JOEL E. DUNN, *President and CEO*



Chesapeake Conservancy Receives 4-Star Rating From Charity Navigator for the Third Year in a Row!

We Need to Talk



Our partners at the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office have started a new web-based discussion series called, “We Need to Talk,” to amplify the voices of people of color working in Chesapeake conservation and recreation fields. The first conversation was among distinguished Black professionals in honor of Juneteenth. Two additional sessions have featured Latinx colleagues. The “We Need to Talk” series explores the intersection of race, history, and the outdoors and its relationship to the shared work in connecting people with and conserving important Chesapeake places.

We were pleased to contribute promotional support and are proud of our partner for hosting these important conversations. To view the first three sessions visit the “Chesapeake NPS” YouTube page.

Scaling Up Solar with Optimal Siting

Maryland is one of 30 states in the US with a renewable portfolio standard, which requires 50 percent of the electricity sold by utilities to come from renewable sources, with 14.5 percent to come from solar. To accomplish this goal, careful consideration must be given to where the solar panels will be located and how to avoid the use of prime farmland and adverse environmental impacts, such as loss of forest, wetlands, or other ecologically important areas.

A recent analysis of Baltimore County and the City of Baltimore by Chesapeake Conservancy’s Conservation Innovation Center used geospatial analysis to identify optimal solar sites and to answer the key question: “Are enough optimal sites available to meet Maryland’s renewable energy goals for solar energy?”

“The results of our analysis showed extensive opportunities for solar panel placement on optimal sites, including previously degraded lands; rooftops of commercial, industrial, and residential buildings; and creating solar canopies on parking lots,” said Chesapeake Conservancy’s Vice President of Conservation Technology Susan Minnemeyer. “By maximizing solar on optimal sites we can avoid using land now dedicated to farming or nature.”

Valleys Planning Council, a nonprofit based in Towson, commissioned the report “Solar Siting Methodology for State and Local Governments Pilot: Baltimore County and City.” A draft was recently shared with the Governor’s Task Force on Renewable Energy Development and Siting, established by Governor Larry Hogan in 2019.

For more information, visit chesapeakeconservancy.org.



The Target store in Middle River, Maryland, is one of four Target stores in Baltimore County with rooftop solar installations. PHOTO BY WILL PARSON/CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM WITH AERIAL SUPPORT BY LIGHTHAWK

Partnership Conserves 438 Acres in Wicomico County, Maryland

The Taylors Trail Sand Ridge Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) in Wicomico County, Maryland, is home to an additional 438 acres of conserved land at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, thanks to a partnership between the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), The Nature Conservancy, and Chesapeake Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy and USFWS collaborated to identify the property's natural attributes and worked with the landowner to include it in the national refuge system. Private funds secured by the Chesapeake Conservancy from the Mt. Cuba Center and funds from the sale of the federal migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps, commonly known as "Duck Stamps" also helped make the project possible.

"We can only succeed in conserving wildlife on a landscape level through partnerships with organizations like Chesapeake Conservancy and local communities. The Duck Stamp is an excellent example of how waterfowl hunters and others who buy them can directly contribute, with 98 percent of the funds going to land acquisition. Each partner plays an important role which ultimately protects habitat and provides a place where the public can still enjoy wildlife, whether by bird watching, hunting, hiking, or fishing, all vital to the economic as well as ecological health of the Nanticoke watershed," explains Marcia Pradines, complex manager for the Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, US Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Conservation success stories often involve many partners.

Once again, Mt. Cuba Center was there to help us bring another high priority conservation project over the finish line," said Joel Dunn, Chesapeake Conservancy's president and CEO. "This parcel includes 95 acres of forest and is located just downstream from a previously protected corridor of more than 19,000 acres that was made possible through a partnership with Mt. Cuba Center, Chesapeake Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, the Department of Defense, and other partners."

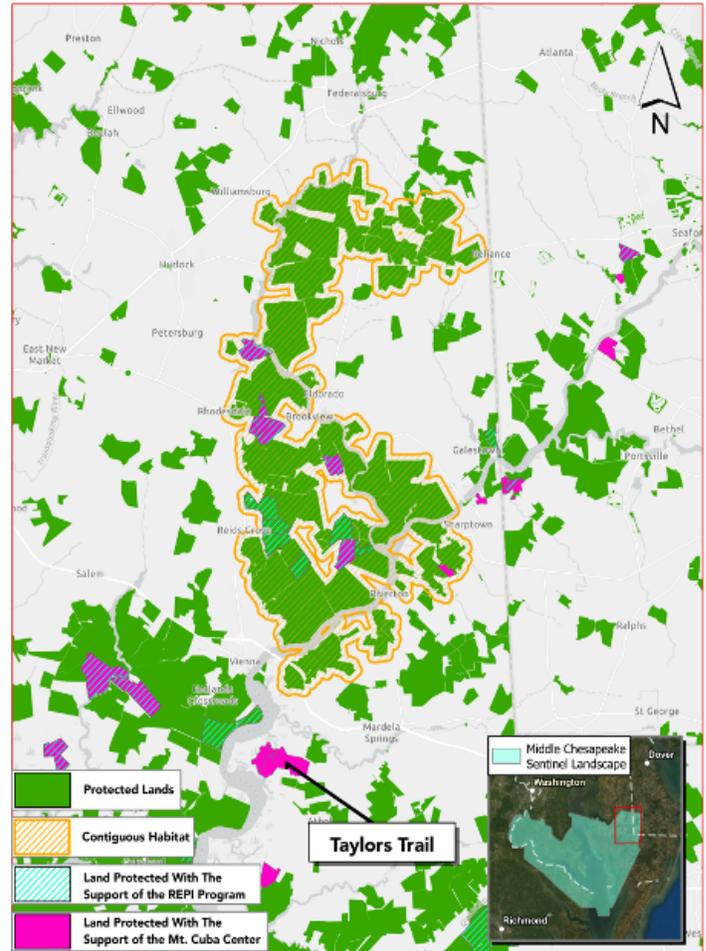
"Mt. Cuba Center is committed to the conservation of open space and natural habitats," said Ann Rose, Mt. Cuba Center's president. "We thank Chesapeake Conservancy for their leadership in this important project, and we're gratified that our support helped bring partners together to conserve these precious landscapes."

"We were so fortunate to find this unique gem of diverse plant and wildlife habitat right in the heart of the Nanticoke watershed. We are pleased that the efforts of this coalition of private and public partners resulted in the permanent protection of this property that had been in the landowner's family for generations," said Elizabeth Carter, land protection director for The Nature Conservancy.

The property, now part of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, is comprised of upland forest, more than 275 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands, a stand of mature Atlantic white cedars, and a unique dune habitat that will be restored to native short-leaf pine.

In addition to its location in the heart of the Taylors Trail

(continued on page 5)



The newly conserved land added to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge includes a stand of mature Atlantic white cedars, considered a rare community in Maryland due to intensive logging in the 19th century. PHOTO BY DAN MURPHY/USFWS

Partnership Conserves 438 Acres *(continued from page 4)*

Sand Ridge ESA, it is proximate to the Barren Creek ESA and more than 200 acres of protected Chesapeake forest land.

“The Department of Defense celebrates this conservation achievement. While we were not directly involved in this project, it complements the Navy’s conservation projects in the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape, ensuring that Atlantic Test Ranges and Naval Air Station Patuxent River can

continue to develop, test, and evaluate safe and effective aircraft for our nation’s service men and women,” said Kristin Thomasgard, director of the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program.

“I can’t claim to have seen all of the forested wetlands on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, but I’ve been in a few, and this is the largest stand of large Atlantic white cedar trees I have seen. Previously, I had only seen

one or two individuals in forests that were dominated by maples, black gum, and bald cypress (another rare tree). Atlantic white cedar forests are considered a rare community in Maryland due to intensive logging in the 19th century. Thank you to Chesapeake Conservancy for playing an integral role in this project,” said Dan Murphy, chief, Division of Habitat Conservation, US Fish and Wildlife Service Chesapeake Bay Field Office.



President Signs Great American Outdoors Act

On August 4, 2020, President Trump signed the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), a truly historic moment for conservation here in the Chesapeake and across the nation. GAOA permanently and fully funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), effectively doubling, in perpetuity, conservation funds for our national parks and public lands as well as our state parks. GAOA also provides substantial funding to address deferred maintenance at national parks, wildlife refuges, and other public lands over the next five years. Thank you to all the members of Congress who supported this once-in-a-generation conservation legislation!

Technology for H₂O

Chesapeake Conservancy’s Conservation Innovation Center (CIC) recently joined with the Safe Water Conservation Collaborative, a vibrant network of more than 25 partners, including water utilities, land conservation organizations, and community groups working to protect safe, clean drinking water for communities in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

In June, the collaborative published an interactive map and a story map with support from the Land Trust Alliance’s Land & Water Initiative and the CIC to identify land in Jefferson and Berkeley counties essential to drinking water safety.

“Land conservation has a direct impact on water quality,” said Chesapeake Conservancy’s Geospatial Analyst Mary Molloy. “By using GIS to prioritize conservation projects, together we can create more impact using fewer resources. This is precision conservation at work.”

Learn more at chesapeakeconservancy.org or <https://arcg.is/1jHXDS>



This image shows priority parcels and protected areas in West Virginia. The map is a product of the Safe Water Conservation Collaborative’s prioritization model.

CHESAPEAKE CONVERSATIONS



Tune In to Our New Podcast!

Cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay is one of the largest and longest running ecosystem restoration efforts in the world. Over the last 50 years, billions of dollars have been invested to restore the Bay, and the world is watching to see how the Chesapeake responds. Our new podcast, “Chesapeake Conversations,” hosted by Joel Dunn takes an in-depth look at what’s working for the Chesapeake and what’s not, and will feature interviews with a diverse group of conservation leaders. “Chesapeake Conversations” is produced by Platform Media, LLC, with music by Scott McDaniel from Wild Echo Media. Special thanks to our partners and donors who make our work possible. Find us on Apple, Spotify, or wherever you download your podcasts. Subscribe now!

Charles and Mary Dankmeyer

For Charles and Mary Dankmeyer, soaking in the wonder of the Chesapeake is a daily joy.

“We have a real fondness for the Chesapeake,” Charles said recently from the home along the Magothy River he shares with his wife, Mary. “When we started living here in 1975, people would walk on the shorelines with a wheeled soft crab basket and would just roll it along the bottom and pick up the soft shells! You could almost time when the weather would change by the thousands of swans that would visit in November. That is the wonderful thing about nature—you get to enjoy the beauty, the migratory birds, and harvest the bounty.”

The couple describes a fellow Chesapeake pair for life, George and Georgette, mating Canada geese that visited them regularly, marking the passage of time before development began changing the coastline and the character of the Bay.

“The swans are almost all gone, and there has been so much change. We really want to recover the Bay for future generations,” said Mary.

The couple first approached Chesapeake Conservancy to explore donating a property they owned on the Eastern Shore that had become a rookery for blue herons. Working with the Conservancy, they helped fully conserve the property and became avid supporters of the Conservancy’s work.

“We have traveled to many different areas of the world, and the Chesapeake is as stunning as any other place we have ever experienced. Chesapeake Conservancy’s work is important to us, not to just conserve it but to make sure that more people can enjoy it,” Charles said.

Earlier this spring, Charles and Mary decided to include Chesapeake Conservancy in their estate plans. They became members of the Seven Generations Society, named in honor of the Native American principle of making decisions mindful of seven generations to come. Charles and Mary join others who are taking long-term action to ensure this national treasure is protected and shared with future generations by including Chesapeake Conservancy in their estate planning.



George and Georgette were frequent visitors to the Dankmeyers’ yard on the Magothy River in Maryland. COURTESY PHOTO

“When we are gone, what is going to do the most good? We have made a home with nature; we’ve enjoyed it. Now it is incumbent upon us to pass those treasures on to future generations.”

We invite others to join Charles and Mary and become members of the Seven Generations Society. Contact us at 443.321.3610 or mehrenreich@chesapeakeconservancy.org.

Summer Employees Create Legacy of Multicultural Interpretive Projects

Hello! My name is Yazan Hasan and I am an interpretive outreach assistant at Chesapeake Conservancy, a position funded by and part of the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateways Program, along with my talented coworkers Julian Segovia, Isabel Layton, and Carly Sniffen. We have been tasked this summer to provide interpretive services and education to those who want to enjoy the Chesapeake, with an emphasis on under-represented communities who may not have access to nature the way others do. With the pandemic, our jobs have had to be restructured, and many of the programs and workshops we’ve done in previous years have had to be adapted. With these new challenges come many new opportunities for growth.

In the short time we’ve been here, we’ve been fortunate to start working on some very exciting projects. My projects have focused on YouTube, taking a bilingual approach to digital media and traveling across the Chesapeake in search of stories to tell and opportunities to educate. So far we’ve started a series on the native animals of the Chesapeake and exploring overlooked parks. We hope to start a series on Black history in the region and how it ties to conservation.

Julian Segovia has been working on developing mentorship opportunities for Latinx in Maryland public schools. He has also been working on creating online content, such as educational arts integrated programs and information about indigenous history.

Carly Sniffen is involved in numerous projects, such as writing blog articles and website content, working with me on video content, creating educational resources and lesson plans related to the Chesapeake Bay and promoting stewardship, and creating visual components for various websites. Carly hopes to work on a series of blog articles spotlighting artists from various American Indian



Thank you to the NPS Chesapeake Bay Office for funding our Chesapeake Gateways summer youth employees. From left to right, top to bottom: Bilingual Interpretive Outreach Assistant Julian Segovia, Interpretive Outreach Specialist Yazan Hasan, Bilingual Interpretive Outreach Assistant Isabel Layton, and Interpretive Outreach Specialist Carly Sniffen, pictured here at one of their many Zoom meetings.

tribes and highlighting the importance of expressing cultural heritage through tribal art and storytelling from the indigenous perspective.

Isabel Layton began an inventory of online Spanish resources and education programs to identify the gaps in content. She has been translating programs such as the “Create Your Own State Park” activity on the Maryland Park Service website. Isabel is now creating videos and other content for ESL (English as a Second Language). Additionally, she planned and moderated a youth roundtable event for Latino Conservation Week.

Moving forward we would like to create more content focusing on the historic communities of the Chesapeake Bay and their stories, which

(continued on page 7)

New Board Member: Stephanie Meeks



Student Conservation Association President and CEO **Stephanie Meeks** has been elected to the Board of Directors. "We are pleased to welcome Stephanie Meeks to the board. She brings a wealth of expertise in nonprofit management, the protection of cultural resources and land conservation, and strengthening the next generation of conservation leaders," said Chesapeake Conservancy Board Chair **Randall Larrimore**.

"I have dedicated my career to organizations that value conservation of land and cultural resources while helping to build the next generation of conservationists. Now as a board member for Chesapeake Conservancy, I look forward to making a difference here in my own community and in communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed," said Meeks.

Board & Staff Updates

Retired NPS Director **Bob Stanton** recently stepped down from the board to spend more time with family and other projects. We thank him for his years of service to our organization and helping to grow our partnership with the National Park Service.

We recently said farewell to three staff members who have contributed greatly to Conservancy programs. **Jeff Allenby**, who as director of conservation technology has been instrumental in developing the Conservation Innovation Center, left to accept a position with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. **Susan Shingledecker**, former vice president and director of programs, has joined Earth Science Information Partners (ESIP) as the executive director. **John Davy**, Virginia project and partnership coordinator, retired this summer. We wish Davy a very happy retirement and Allenby and Shingledecker the best of luck on their new adventures. We hope to partner with them on future projects.

Following a substantial reorganization to meet the needs of our growing nonprofit, several Chesapeake Conservancy team members have new titles: **Patty Allen**, vice president of administration; **Jody Couser**, senior vice president of communications; **Melissa Ehrenreich**, senior vice president of development and business strategy; **Ellen Gardner**, senior vice president of finance and chief financial officer; **Emily Mills**, geospatial technology manager; **Susan Minnemeyer**, vice president of technology; **Reed Perry**, manager of external

affairs; **Matthew Provost**, vice president of development; and **Katie Walker**, senior geospatial analyst and project coordinator.

Helen Sieracki transferred from the development team to pursue her passion for human relations as the Conservancy's HR coordinator. We welcome **Emilie Lahneman** as the new development and annual fund coordinator. A recent graduate of the University of Maryland, Lahneman spent the last year serving with AmeriCorps in Montana, working with a small watershed restoration nonprofit as the volunteer and education coordinator. **Erin Montgomery** is the new communications associate focusing on the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, a shared position with the National Park Service. Most recently, Erin has been handling communications for the Maryland Chamber of Commerce. She previously served as director of communications for Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and as his press secretary during his election campaign.

We thank our seasonal staff and summer interns for their contributions to our important work: Intern **Morgan Bench**, Intern **Grace Chamberlain**, Interpretive Outreach Specialist **Yazan Hasan**, Bilingual Interpretive Outreach Assistant **Isabel Layton**, Bilingual Interpretive Outreach Assistant **Julian Segovia**, and Interpretive Outreach Specialist **Carly Sniffen**.

Conway Joins Conservancy Staff



In July, **Mark Conway** joined Chesapeake Conservancy as executive vice president of programs. Conway brings a wealth of experience in public policy, state government, and nonprofit management.

Conway is the second most senior manager at Chesapeake Conservancy, overseeing the organization's programs, partnership with the National Park Service, and the work of the Conservation Innovation Center. He will work closely with the president and CEO and the board of directors to provide strategic direction and help the team accomplish the organization's mission.

Previously, Conway was the executive director for Baltimore Tree Trust, where he was responsible for expanding the Trust's programs, along with securing \$2.7 million from grants, corporations, individual funding, and earned revenue. He also led the city's implementation of OutcomeStat as deputy director of CitiStat. Conway is the Democratic nominee for Baltimore City Council—District 4 (unopposed).

Summer Employees *(continued from page 6)*

are so often overlooked. We would also like to create a resource of videos encompassing environmental education, Chesapeake history, and nature safety. Already well on our way to accomplishing these goals, we look forward to every part of the journey.

By the end of our time here at Chesapeake Conservancy we hope to have created a legacy for the Chesapeake Gateways Network in the form of lesson plans, educational content, mentorship opportunities, and increased access to online environmental education in both English and Spanish.



716 Giddings Avenue, Suite 42 | Annapolis, Maryland 21401

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #273
ANNAPOLIS, MD

Let's Keep in Touch!

-  443.321.3610
-  info@chesapeakeconservancy.org
-  chesapeakeconservancy.org
-  facebook.com/chesapeakeconservancy
-  twitter.com/chesconserv
-  instagram.com/chesapeakeconservancy
-  linkedin.com/company/chesapeake-conservancy
-  FindYourChesapeake.com

CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY RELIES ON OUR MANY FRIENDS TO PROTECT AND CONSERVE THE CHESAPEAKE'S GREAT RIVERS AND SPECIAL PLACES. YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF ANY AMOUNT IS TRULY APPRECIATED. CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY HAS A 4-STAR RATING FROM CHARITY NAVIGATOR. OUR TAX ID NUMBER IS 26-2271377.

LEAVE A LEGACY OF THE CHESAPEAKE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Please consider making a special gift to Chesapeake Conservancy by naming the organization in your will or by designating Chesapeake Conservancy as a beneficiary of your bank account, 401(k) or other retirement account, or life insurance policy. You can help immediately by joining the Chesapeake Stewards Club and providing monthly support for Chesapeake Conservancy's ongoing habitat and land conservation programs. For more information, call 443.321.3610.



©M.ROSATO

Photo by Yazan Hasan