

# SHORELINES



A Newsletter of the Chesapeake Conservancy  
Saving the Chesapeake's Great Rivers and Special Places

Spring 2013



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# Chesapeake Conservancy

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716 Giddings Avenue, Suite 42  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(p) 443.321.3610

info@chesapeakeconservancy.org  
www.chesapeakeconservancy.org

## 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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COVER PHOTO: DAVID OWEN HAWKHURST

## Note from the Executive Director Bridging the access gap

A recent study by the National Park Service found the Chesapeake watershed lacks adequate public access. The study, advocated by the Chesapeake Conservancy, catalogued more than 1,100 places in the watershed's six states and the District of Columbia where a person may view the water, swim, launch a boat, or fish. They may sometimes have access to all these activities in one place, and sometimes only one of them. While this may seem a large number, the study noted there were scores of miles on some rivers and the Bay where no access existed.

At the same time, the demand for getting to and into the water continues to grow. People want to fish, swim, and boat. They want to explore the region's water trails. They want to connect with this region's most valuable asset – the Bay and its rivers.

We aim to help them. One of the Conservancy's key strategic goals is to increase access, connect people to the watershed, and encourage conservation of this important natural resource.

To that end, we've advocated for funds and raised some more for new launch sites for canoes, kayaks, and small boats, and we've advocated for more swimming beaches. We've worked with the National Park Service, state and local governments, and like-minded non-profits to identify other access points.

We've also developed and gained support for an innovative effort to create new public access from existing public rights of way where roads run beside or cross streams and rivers. Often, when bridges are constructed



or repaired, substantial areas near their abutments are developed and used to place equipment, store materials, and provide parking for construction workers.

When the bridge work is done, these spaces could be converted to launch sites for canoes and kayaks and fishing spots. We've advocated for this simple idea in state legislatures and in Congress. We've put together a coalition of support from fishing and boating groups. And now, in Maryland, we're supporting a bill we hope will make this possible.

While this idea may seem obvious, and costs little to nothing to execute, making it happen takes effort. This work supports our mission to strengthen the connection between people and the watershed. It makes access a reality.

Creating public access makes sense. We're doing our part.

JOEL DUNN, *Executive Director*



## Connecting People

# Building the bond between people and the watershed

If you want to get face to face with the Chesapeake Bay or one of its great rivers, who better to guide you than a waterman? Who knows more intimately the moods of the Bay, the ways of the watershed community and its people, or the connections between the land and the water? Today's watermen represent a cultural and historical legacy of the once-healthy Bay, and their experiences can help tell the story of this important natural resource.

The Chesapeake Conservancy developed the Watermen's Heritage Tourism Training Program to provide watermen and their family members the skills needed to develop a heritage tourism business – finding a way to not only support their livelihood, but to also celebrate and preserve a way of life.

Now, with 80 watermen trained through the program, several operating tours to supplement their work on the water and a new website developed to support their efforts, this heritage tourism platform has officially set sail.

Recently, the Maryland Historical Trust recognized this effort as deserving of its Preservation Partnership Award, presented in February to the Conservancy and their program partners.



DAVID OWEN HAWKHURST

The watermen's program is just one of the ways the Conservancy builds a bond between the people of the watershed and its landscapes and waterways.

This spring a new educational program will provide tomorrow's conservation leaders with their own personal connection

to the Bay. In collaboration with Outward Bound Baltimore, a series of three Capt. John Smith expeditions on the upper Bay will begin. Using kayaks, high school age students will explore from the lower Susquehanna River, across the Susquehanna flats to the Elk and Sassafras Rivers. While gliding along the upper Chesapeake's shore it will not be hard for the students to imagine the landscape as it must have been four centuries ago. Thickly wooded bluffs still line the Bay here. In the distance the students will see the rise of land that Smith called Peregrine's Mount, named for one of his trusted fellow adventurers.

Some of this land is in public ownership, but an equal amount is private land protected by conservation easements. This mix of ownership helps protect the region's scenic beauty, history and natural resources, including wildlife habitat and water quality, and it provides the students an example of how public agencies and private individuals can collaborate to conserve a landscape.

This pilot program provides us with a new outreach opportunity, and could be replicated throughout the watershed to connect more youth to our Chesapeake Bay.

Meanwhile, on the James, Rappahannock, and Susquehanna Rivers the Conservancy is hard at work with a third approach to creating access. Here we have worked with local governments to develop canoe, kayak, and boat launch sites that help forge a connection with and appreciation for these powerful rivers.

Our newest efforts are at Jersey Shore, PA (see story on page 5) and at Port Royal, VA, a small town located where US 301 crosses the Rappahannock River. Upstream on the Rappahannock, at Old Mill Park in Fredericksburg, VA, the Conservancy



DAVID OWEN HAWKHURST

Bobby and Terry Witt, graduates of our heritage tourism training, show visitors the ins and outs of oystering and crabbing on the West and Rhode Rivers.

just finished an access project, and at the Lawrence Lewis, Jr. Park in Charles City County, VA, construction of a new boat ramp has been completed. These launches open long sections of these rivers to modern day adventurers and will shrink the distances between landings. Our hope is that soon it will be possible to take small boat trips along the Capt. John Smith Trail and find public places to camp and put in and take out boats within a day's paddle of one another.

We are not alone in this desire. When the National Park Service conducted an access study of the watershed, it found that there is a public demand for camping sites and launch spots that would allow paddlers to explore the Capt. John Smith Trail. We have already begun working with the Park Service to identify suitable sites.

Forging the bond between people and the watershed happens best when people experience the Bay and its rivers, when they feel firsthand the connection between river and landscape. We are dedicated to making those connections.

# Honoring Harriet Tubman: progress through partnerships



## Just In • Harriet Tubman National Monument Announced!

ACCESS/DNR

Ground breaking for Maryland's Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park included (L to R) Harriet Tubman Organization President Donald Pinder, DNR Secretary John Griffin, NPS Director John Jarvis, descendant of Harriet Tubman Patricia Ross-Hawkins, Superintendent of Parks Nita Settina, Governor Martin O'Malley, Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar, Dorchester County Councilman William Nichols, and Secretary of Dept. of General Services Al Collins.

To mark of the 100th anniversary of Harriet Tubman's death, Maryland broke ground in March for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park. The park honors Tubman, who fled slavery, then returned to lead others out of bondage, and in later years championed women's rights.

In 2011, we played a key role in the establishment of the Fort Monroe National Monument. Similarly, over the last several years, we've been the leading voice for the establishment of a Harriet Tubman National Monument, further enabling the exploration of Tubman's extraordinary life in the setting where it began in the Chesapeake.



Harriet Tubman escaped slavery, led others to freedom.

In many ways, the landscape in southern Dorchester County appears similar to when Tubman's story unfolded in the mid-19th century. Conservation of these landscapes, and creation of a new national monument and state park, will encourage tourism here and along the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway.

To make the project possible, the Chesapeake Conservancy worked with partners such as the Harriet Tubman Organization, The Conservation Fund, National Park Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, and Dorchester County Tourism.

### Partnerships Work

*We continue to seek partners to support strategic priorities and would like to talk with you about opportunities to work together. Please contact us at 443.321.3610 today.*

Secretary of Natural Resources John Griffin, Director of the National Park Service John Jarvis, and Chesapeake Conservancy board vice chairman Patrick Noonan attended the ground breaking.



## Connecting People Webcam enlivens Conservancy's website

Thanks in part to support from the Shared Earth Foundation, the Chesapeake Conservancy has launched a new webcam to track an osprey nest located at the southern end of Kent Island. We are excited to share this intimate view of one of the Bay's local residents—the majestic osprey. The webcam, a part of the Conservancy's expanded and enhanced website, has been outfitted to allow a very large number of people to view the nest activity simultaneously. Ospreys are top predators in the Bay's food web and are largely dependent on fish for their survival. Their population's health, measured by things such as hatching success, provides one indication of how well the Bay is doing. The Chesapeake Conservancy plans to create other wildlife cams, to allow people to get an up-close view of the watershed's wildlife.



[ospreycamera.org](http://ospreycamera.org)

## Connecting People Jersey Shore project creates access to John Smith Trail

Collaboration works. Last fall we worked with the Otsego Land Trust in Cooperstown, New York to develop an access site to the Susquehanna River just below Otsego Lake, the headwaters of the Susquehanna.

Using that model we worked with the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership and the Borough of Jersey Shore in Pennsylvania to secure funding to create a waterfront park and access point on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River.

The park and boat launch will provide the only public access on a 17-mile stretch of the river and meet a long-held desire by Jersey Shore residents for a waterfront park.

The Chesapeake Conservancy seeks to connect people to the watershed and in so



The planned park with boat launch is near the confluence of Pine Creek and the Susquehanna West Branch.

doing encourage them to conserve landscapes, just as the Jersey Shore project does. When completed, the project will become an official National Park Service access point to the Capt. John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

As with the Cooperstown project, we helped secure critical funding needed to purchase three parcels along the river. The project also has local partners and support from the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network.

## River Corridors: Large Landscape Conservation Corridor plans identify best places for engagement, conservation

On a landscape as large as the Chesapeake Bay watershed, it is difficult to know where to start conservation, engagement, and education efforts, but the Conservancy has approached this work by using the Chesapeake's great rivers as a framework. This has resulted in a series of river corridor conservation initiatives that capitalize on the character and history of each river to prioritize this work.

Currently, we are engaged in projects along three of the Chesapeake's great rivers: the Potomac, the James, and the Susquehanna. These projects take different forms, but each seeks to engage the public to create a vision to guide landscape-scale conservation throughout the corridor.

### Potomac River Segment Plan

The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail covers thousands of miles of Chesapeake waterways. In order to aggressively implement such an extensive trail, the National Park Service has worked with the Chesapeake Conservancy and other partners to develop

implementation plans by river segment. The first, completed in 2011, was for the Lower James River. Now, we are working with the National Park Service to complete a plan for the Potomac River. Public input will heavily influence the plan, and the Conservancy will play a key role in speaking with stakeholders and running focus groups.

### Envision the James

The Chesapeake Conservancy, James River Association and National Geographic Maps collaborate on Envision the James, a project that invites communities and individuals to create a common vision for the James River. The project incorporates outreach meetings with "real time" electronic polling devices and a new National Geographic Maps web portal, [www.EnvisiontheJames.org](http://www.EnvisiontheJames.org), that features rich media content about the James and additional survey techniques to record and report public feedback about the vision. The draft vision will soon be presented to the public and key stakeholders for review.



### Envision the Susquehanna

Now the Conservancy is taking its visioning process to Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York to develop a vision for the Susquehanna River corridor, including the West Branch. This vision will be centered on opportunities to value and enhance habitat conservation and restoration, cultural heritage preservation and education, recreational access, and economic development. The Conservancy will soon release a Susquehanna River map, created in partnership with National Geographic Maps.

## Conservation Innovation Report identifies new ways to improve conservation targeting

The Chesapeake Conservancy recently completed a report that explores the role that information and communications technology can play in prioritizing the protection and restoration of the region's most valuable ecosystems, by rapidly and accurately identifying landscapes that have the greatest potential to provide critical habitat and maintain or improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay.

For the report, titled "The Emerging Role of Technology in Precision Conservation," Conservancy staff interviewed more than twenty-five experts from across the country and worked with researchers, industry leaders, and our partners to understand how new applications of remote sensing technologies and software could enhance our conservation targeting efforts. Through our research, we identified the importance, potential, and limitations of five technologies that can evaluate the characteristics of a landscape to have a substantial impact on the quality of water coming off the land.

Using these technologies to determine a parcel's characteristics affords us unprecedented access to information about the land surrounding the Chesapeake Bay and a broader understanding of which areas should be priorities for conservation and restoration. These technologies will not only provide us with greater expertise for our land conservation efforts, they will



ensure that conservation organizations across the Chesapeake Bay watershed also have the tools they need to make wise investments to provide real results and protect the land that is essential to restoring the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

This project was supported through a generous grant from the Digital Energy and Sustainability Solutions Campaign (DESSC), a group of twenty-one of the largest information and communication technology companies in the world. DESSC has supported a second phase of the project this year, demonstrating the effectiveness of these technologies by identifying high value landscapes in the Chester River watershed.

The Chesapeake Conservancy will be partnering with Washington College to provide on-the-ground water quality information to help illustrate the impact that intact riparian buffers and agricultural best management practices have on the Chesapeake's water quality.

To read the report, visit: [chesapeakeconservancy.org/reports.html](http://chesapeakeconservancy.org/reports.html) or call us at 443-321-3610 to request a copy.

## Conservation Innovation New app for Program Open Space

The Chesapeake Conservancy has released a new iPhone app, "AdvocCards," that will enable us to create advocacy campaigns in support of conservation. The first campaign, already underway, allows Maryland residents to show off their favorite outdoor places and their support for Program Open Space. The app uses a picture taken on a user's iPhone and turns it into a physical postcard that is then sent to influential State senators along with a message encouraging them to maintain full funding for Program Open Space.

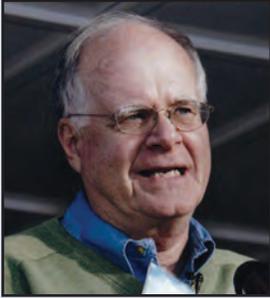
Program Open Space uses money from Maryland's real estate transfer tax to acquire recreation and open space areas for public use. It has protected more than 400,000 acres of land over the last 43 years including sites in every county. Recently, however, there have been attempts to redirect funding elsewhere. We hope that receiving a ground swell of unique postcards with a consistent message will remind State legislators of the importance of Program Open Space and encourage them to maintain the Program as it was originally intended.

The free app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and will be used to support other conservation programs in the future.



**We rely on friends like you to make our conservation programs work—** your support today will make new access projects possible; it will help us conserve landscapes and special places throughout the watershed; and it will enable us to encourage more people to explore and celebrate the Chesapeake as a national treasure. Please consider making a contribution today—together, we can protect this vital natural resource. Go to [www.chesapeakeconservancy.org](http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org) now to make your tax-deductible donation online, or simply use the enclosed envelope. Thank you for making a difference for the Bay.

## Wheeler joins Board of Directors



**DOUGLAS WHEELER**, a conservationist and lawyer who has held leadership posts in national and state natural resource agencies and served on the boards of national conservation groups, has joined the Chesapeake Conservancy's Board of Directors. A resident of Washington, DC., he joined the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1969, serving as Assistant Legislative Counsel. He later became the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. From 1991 to 1999, Mr. Wheeler served as California's Secretary for Natural Resources, exercising responsibility for all of the state's natural and cultural resource programs. He has worked extensively with nonprofit environmental and conservation organizations, and is a partner in the environmental practice of Hogan Lovells US, LLP in Washington, DC.

## Chesapeake Conservancy new staff



**LYNDA EISENBERG** has joined the staff as Program Manager. She previously worked with the Maryland Department of Planning on growth management policies and as lead for the Rural Legacy Advisory Board. She has extensive experience with planning, land conservation, and growth management and is an expert in the use of GIS and mapmaking

tools. Lynda has a Masters of Geography and Environmental Planning from Towson University. Lynda can be reached at [leisenberg@chesapeakeconservancy.org](mailto:leisenberg@chesapeakeconservancy.org).



**HELEN SIERACKI** has joined the staff as Executive Assistant. Helen's work includes managing busy schedules, assisting with fundraising projects, and providing support for meetings and communications. Helen has lived in Annapolis her whole life, and is proud to be part of an organization like the Conservancy that focuses on conserving the natural as well as cultural resources

of the region. Helen holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Ursinus College. Helen can be reached at [hsieracki@chesapeakeconservancy.org](mailto:hsieracki@chesapeakeconservancy.org).

## John Maounis, National Park Service partner, retires

**JOHN MAOUNIS**, the veteran National Park Service superintendant who has overseen the creation and early development of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, retired on March 29th after nearly 35 years of service.

Maounis, and the Chesapeake office of the Park Service that he has led for the past seven years, has been the Chesapeake Conservancy's key partner in its work as an advocate for the Captain John Smith Trail, the Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network, corridor conservation, and public access to the Chesapeake and the region's rivers. It has been a productive relationship.

"The last several years have been the most rewarding of my career," Maounis said in a recent interview. "The places, the partners, all the things we do. Just in the past year we've created a National Historic Trail (the Star Spangled Banner Trail), extended another by one third (the Capt. John Smith Trail), created websites and an app, developed a public access plan, funded twelve access proj-



John Maounis, Superintendent of the National Park Service's Chesapeake Bay Office, said his years here were rewarding.

ects, put the landscape conservation effort on the map, and worked with state and nonprofit partners to support the recognition of the Harriet Tubman and Underground Railroad landscape on the Eastern Shore of Maryland."

In his earlier years with the Park Service, Maounis curated maritime history and an irreplaceable collection of maritime photographs, objects, and small craft at what is now the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park. Later, in Boston, he was again involved in interpreting and preserving that region's cultural resources.

"Cultural values, cultural resources – those are things the National Park Service champions here," he said. "The effort to restore the Bay," he said, "was not just about improving water quality, but was also about conserving landscapes and cultures," noting one great feature of the Capt. John Smith Trail is that that the Trail "is a corridor. It's

more than just a set of wagon ruts, it's wide open, and we need to capture the real sense of history and heritage that is broader and richer than simply the places the explorers went."

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