

CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY

2016 WINTER NEWSLETTER

# Shorelines

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

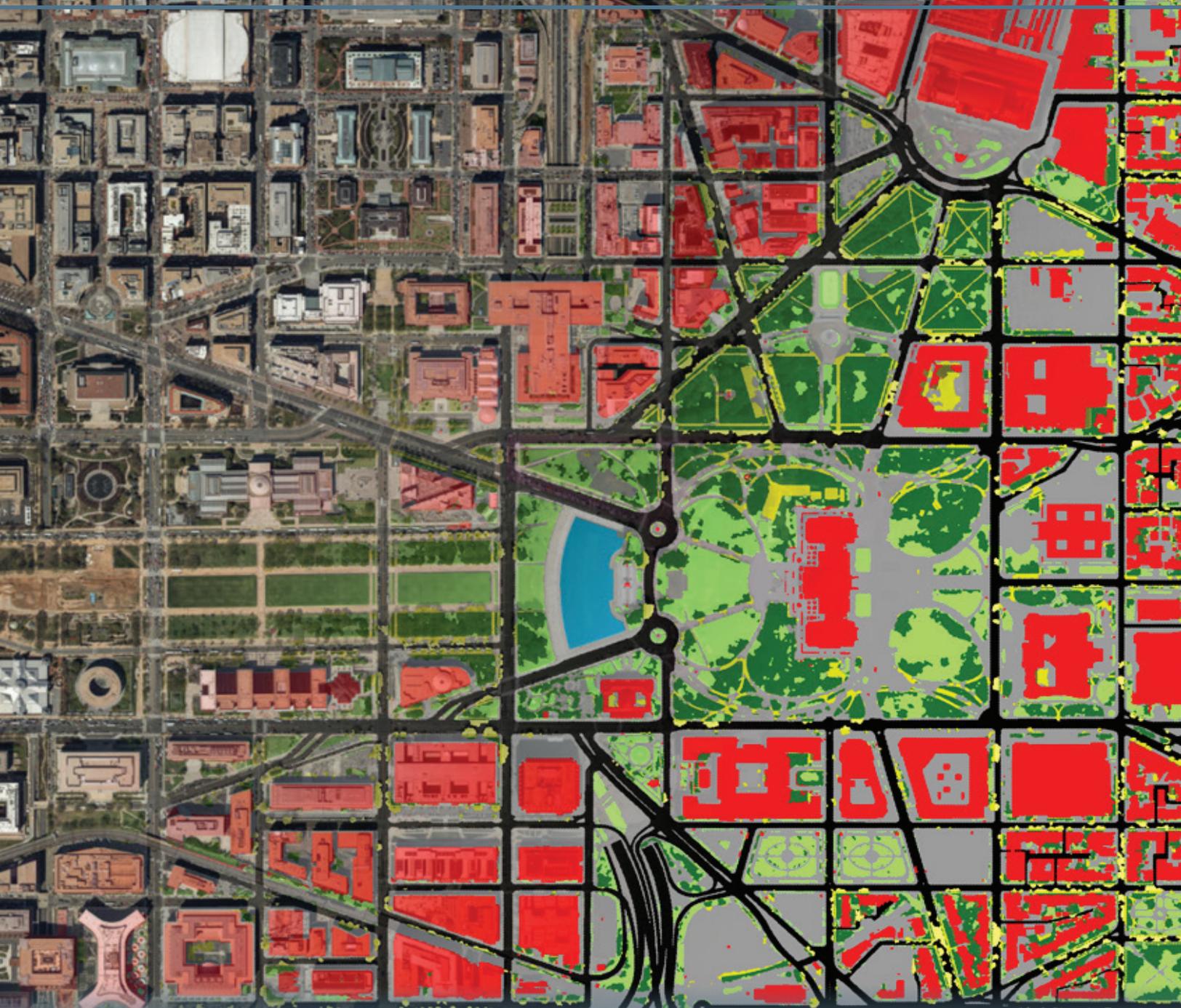


IMAGE FEATURING THE U.S. CAPITOL, WASHINGTON, D.C., AN EXAMPLE FROM THE HIGH-RESOLUTION LAND COVER PROJECT BY THE CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY CONSERVATION INNOVATION CENTER

# Conservation Entrepreneurs



Chesapeake Conservancy President & CEO  
Joel Dunn  
PHOTO BY MARK HAMILTON

### 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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As 2016 comes to a close, we reflect on the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS) and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Our nation is stronger thanks to Teddy Roosevelt and the founders of NPS who had the foresight 100 years ago to put serious thought into the future of our public lands and to protect those places so that we can enjoy them today. Many would argue that our national parks are America's best idea.

Ten years ago, Pat Noonan, president of The Conservation Fund; U.S. Senators Paul Sarbanes and John Warner; Will Baker, president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation; Ann Swanson, executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and many others had the similar foresight to create the John Smith Chesapeake Trail, which has produced new opportunities for partnerships; collective impact; and new federal, state, and private funding for conservation, public access, and restoration.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed continues to face challenges like pollution and poor water quality, unbridled conversion of our forests and farms, and development encroaching on the Chesapeake's special places like Fones Cliffs in Virginia—currently under threat to be developed into a golf course and resort. With 98% of the Chesapeake's shoreline privately owned, another challenge that troubles us is public access. We can be angry about the injustice of the current state of the Bay, but see light in the future despite all of the various challenges.

I'm pleased to report that in 2016 major threats to water quality all showed improvement. Our community also successfully permanently protected some of the most iconic places in the Chesapeake Bay, in particular Werowocomoco—the capital of the Powhatan confederacy for hundreds of years and one of the most significant

American Indian sites in eastern North America. The antiquity and spirituality of this place cannot be overstated. I think of it as the Machu Picchu of the Chesapeake.

More than 400 years ago, Captain John Smith mapped the Chesapeake with the tools of his time: a compass, a quill, and the stars overhead. Today the Chesapeake Conservancy and our partners have created a map of the Chesapeake using the tools of the 21st century—cutting edge technology.

In this issue of *Shorelines*, you will read about the completion of the Chesapeake Land Cover Data Project, which we believe will help fuel a conservation revolution—a revolution born of hope, evidence, partnerships, and strong community support. We are leveraging multiple generations of extraordinary leadership and hard work with technology to raise all ships in the conservation movement, making everyone smarter, more efficient, and more effective at restoring and conserving our great rivers and special places

Sincerely,

JOEL DUNN, *President and CEO*

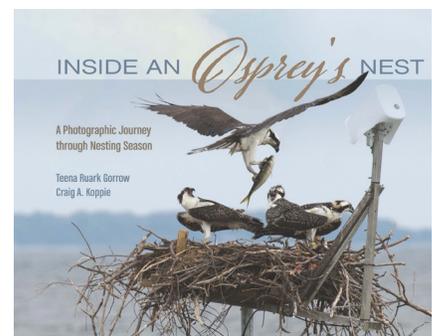
P.S. Please visit our website [www.chesapeakeconservancy.org](http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org) for ways you can engage in our fight to save Fones Cliffs.

Now available! *Inside an Osprey's Nest* by Teena Ruark Gorrow and Craig A. Koppie, featuring extraordinary photographs and the story of Tom & Audrey, the osprey cam stars who reside at the home of the "Crazy Osprey Family."

On the Chesapeake Conservancy's website, you can purchase this coffee table book for just \$24.99, with \$10 going directly to support conservation programs. It makes a great gift.

Get yours today!

[www.chesapeakeconservancy.org](http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org)



# Indigenous Cultural Landscapes Allow Tribes to “Go Home Again”

By Joseph McCauley, Chesapeake Fellow

In 1940, Thomas Wolfe wrote *You Can't Go Home Again*, a novel about finding one's identity in the modern world. In popular American speech, the phrase has come to mean it is impossible to relive the optimistic expectations of youth once you have experienced the world as an adult. Perhaps so, but through the Indigenous Cultural Landscapes initiative, the Chesapeake Conservancy and the National Park Service intend to turn that concept around for the American Indian tribes of the Chesapeake region and demonstrate that in some respects, you can go home again.

The Indigenous Cultural Landscapes initiative (ICL) is an attempt to identify and map geographic areas where Chesapeake tribes once lived, where they worked the land, fished, and hunted, gathered materials for pottery, weaponry, and utensils, and where they fought for survival against the English incursion.

ICLs are defined as trail-related resources for the John Smith Chesapeake Trail in its comprehensive management plan. From the National Park Service's and Chesapeake Conservancy's perspective, identifying and mapping these places help us achieve one of the trail's three goals: “to share knowledge about the American Indian societies and cultures of the 17th century.” Equally important, this initiative provides an opportunity for Chesapeake American Indian tribes to, in a sense, go home again. This collaboration among the

tribes, the Conservancy, and the Park Service is also critical to achieving another of the goals of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail: “to interpret the natural history of the Bay (both historic and contemporary).”

The ICL concepts and opportunities came together beautifully in April and May of this year when six members of the Rappahannock Tribe, including Chief Anne Richardson, visited several sites along the Rappahannock River and two tidal tributaries. Tribal members were joined by archeologists from St. Mary's College of Maryland, along with staff from the National Park Service and Chesapeake Conservancy. During the first trip, stops included Sabine Hall, which may have been the site of the Rappahannock town of Toppahanock; Cobham Farm, where the Rappahannock dug clay for pottery even into the 1960s; and Totuskey Creek, which formed one boundary of the land grant to Moore Fauntleroy that resulted in one of many moves the Rappahannock were forced to make by the English.

During the second of the two trips, the group visited Beverly Marsh, a special place whose history is unquestioned. On August 18, 1608, as Smith's shallow approached the narrowest part of the river at what is now called Fones Cliffs, Rappahannock bowmen let loose a volley of arrows directed toward the English.

Smith had erected shields along the gunwales of his boat, so the arrows did no harm. The event is exquisitely

captured in Smith's writings and there is little doubt as to the location, with the high white cliffs being a prominent feature in the story. What remains in doubt is the future of this ecological and historic treasure, as Richmond County has approved two development proposals that

would place hundreds of homes and townhouses atop Fones Cliffs. While Beverly Marsh is permanently protected through the generosity of the Wellford family, Fones Cliffs is highly threatened.

The entire Fones Cliffs ecosystem is within the boundary of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and efforts are ongoing to bring the properties into public ownership, or at a minimum, protect them via conservation easements. If they were to come into public ownership, it would provide opportunities for tribal members, young and old, to visit their ancestral lands. It would provide equal opportunities for visitors from around the nation and the world to experience what it must have been like to be there in 1608, since the landscape is remarkably intact, with few intrusions of 21st-century habitation.

When completed, the Rappahannock ICL report will have multiple uses. Areas mapped as having a high probability of being sites of occupation and utilization by the Rappahannock Tribe can provide another layer of information for those who wish to conserve their lands. Adding this information to known priority areas for fish and wildlife, for example, will help focus efforts to work with willing landowners who are interested in both habitat and cultural resource conservation.

Participation in the endeavor is encouraging the tribe in ongoing efforts to revisit their cultural heritage and relearn the traditional skills involved. The tribe has launched a project they call “Return to the River,” which is an initiative to engage tribal youth in fishing, canoeing, and camping along the Rappahannock River, as their ancestors did centuries ago.

Without the active participation of the Rappahannock Tribe, the ICL project would be just another academic exercise. Tribal members' recollections, research, and willingness to become fully engaged in the process are what set the ICL initiative apart from more traditional archeological endeavors. Where this path will ultimately lead, only time will tell. But for now it offers hope for the Rappahannock and other Chesapeake tribes that you can go home again.

*This article, here abridged, originally appeared in Living Landscape Observer.*



Chief Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock Tribe and Joseph McCauley, Chesapeake Conservancy Chesapeake Fellow  
PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPH MCCAULEY



Land cover data image of Denton, MD, generated by the Chesapeake Conservancy's Conservation Innovation Center



## A Watershed Moment

### High-Resolution Land Cover Project Ready to Guide Precision Conservation

There's no question that technology has changed every facet of modern life. The corporate world and the health care industry are just two examples of fields that were quick to capitalize on the power of technology and become more efficient. However, until relatively recently some areas of the conservation movement lagged far behind in harnessing the power of technology and innovation.

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP)—a regional partnership of the Environmental Protection Agency, other federal, state, and local governments, nonprofits, and academic institutions that leads Bay restoration efforts—knew that improving their data about the Bay watershed landscape would be critical when it came time in 2017 to reevaluate the progress made toward meeting reduction targets for pollution loads.

The Chesapeake Conservancy challenged traditional thinking about costs and barriers to creating high-resolution data. They coordinated with the CBP partnership, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and University of Vermont to complete the Chesapeake Bay High-Resolution Land Cover Project, which is one of the largest, high-resolution datasets for the nation. The Chesapeake Conservancy's Conservation Innovation Center (CIC) collaborated with both Esri and Microsoft to reduce dramatically the processing time required.

For 18 months our team of conservation entrepreneurs worked to produce 1 meter by 1 meter resolution land cover data for the entire 64,000 square mile Chesapeake Bay watershed. This new land cover classification provides 900 times more information than existing datasets.

#### What is Land Cover Data?

Land cover data is categorical information about the natural and human-made features that exist on the landscape, such as buildings, tree canopy, and water. Datasets differ in the geographic areas that they represent, their spatial resolution, and the number of landscape feature types that they describe. Across the board, they are expensive to make, and expert staff, computers, and software are required for production. Without accurate and precise data, however, it is often difficult to set realistic, rigorous pollution targets.

#### Power of the Data

Put simply, this data makes it possible to zoom in with 900 times the resolution of what we currently have covering this entire region. Where we once saw only development, we can now see buildings, streets, and trees; where once we saw all forest, we can now pick out roads or houses within the trees. This gives us a more accurate look at what the landscape really looks like—how fragmented is a forest, how connected are the streamside buffers?

"The power of the data behind the Chesapeake Bay High-Resolution Land Cover Project cannot be overstated," Nicholas DiPasquale, Chesapeake Bay Program director, said. "This is a technological snapshot, the likes of which we've never had before, of exactly how the land is being used across the entire watershed. Now restoration and conservation decisions can be made that more closely and accurately reflect real-world conditions."

#### A Ground-Breaking Project

"This project is ground-breaking in many ways," Chesapeake Conservancy Director of Conservation Technology Jeffrey Allenby said. "One of the country's largest high-resolution land cover datasets will now be free to download for anyone, anywhere. This project was recently highlighted in a White House report and has been mentioned as a model to be replicated nationwide."

"Development is a key issue for the Bay, and given the speed with which our population is increasing, we are working with the Chesapeake Bay Program to provide regular, timely updates to this information," Allenby added. "Our methods should reduce update time by half or more of the existing standard."

## Foundation for Precision Conservation

The dataset is providing partner organizations the power to practice precision conservation—the right practices, at the right place, and the right time—by making effective and impactful decisions about where to target their efforts. It has allowed the CIC to leverage technology not only to identify and prioritize high-priority restoration and conservation areas, but also to support partners throughout the watershed in saving time as well as money in implementing projects such as Best Management Practices.

“This is truly what I call a ‘watershed moment,’” Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn said.

“Think of this innovative technology as an MRI for the landscape, the results of which will be harnessed, focused, and deployed to practice precision conservation, helping to make the struggling Chesapeake Bay healthier. This is a foundation for all organizations, agencies, corporations, and individuals to work more effectively together.”

## Benefits to John Smith Chesapeake Trail

The original impetus for the work was to enhance our efforts on the John Smith Chesapeake Trail. For example, the CIC team worked with George Washington’s Mt. Vernon estate to determine the natural “viewshed” across the Potomac River with a tool that enables staff to see what the visual impact of a new building would be on a visitor’s experience, looking out from Mt. Vernon into the surrounding hills.

## Other Uses

There are myriad other ways that this data can be used to help restoration and conservation efforts. The District of Columbia’s Urban Forestry Administration recently turned to the CIC for help to decide where to plant trees on public lands by analyzing such elements as areas where surface water accumulates.

The CIC team has also built other tools working with small land trusts that have little or no internal GIS capacity. Through our “Conservation Toolbox,”

users can view ecological and cultural data, perform simple landscape analyses, and export their work as a report.

In suburban areas, the CIC is also working with some counties to identify opportunities for stormwater retrofits—projects that are installed on existing developed land—to reduce the amount of stormwater entering storm drains or getting into creeks. This will help counties to achieve pollution reduction goals.

This is the largest project to date completed by the Conservancy’s award-winning Conservation Innovation Center.

*“The power of the data behind the Chesapeake Bay High-Resolution Land Cover Project cannot be overstated.”*

*- Nicholas DiPasquale,  
Chesapeake Bay Program Director,  
Environmental Protection Agency*

# Chesapeake Conservancy Creates Stormwater Tool for York County, PA

The Chesapeake Conservancy recently partnered with the York County (PA) Stormwater Consortium to create a customized, web-based tool to streamline and standardize the data, calculations, and formatting of stormwater project reports that are submitted by the 44 participating municipalities each year. The tool will allow the consortium to identify, compare, and prioritize the most cost-efficient projects to help achieve water quality goals and save time during the review process.

The tool, called the York County Stormwater Consortium Best Management Practices (BMP) Reporting Tool, was rolled out in June 2016 as the required process for municipalities to report progress toward meeting their Chesapeake Bay Pollutant Reduction Plan program goals. This year, reports on more than 70 stormwater projects were submitted through the tool.

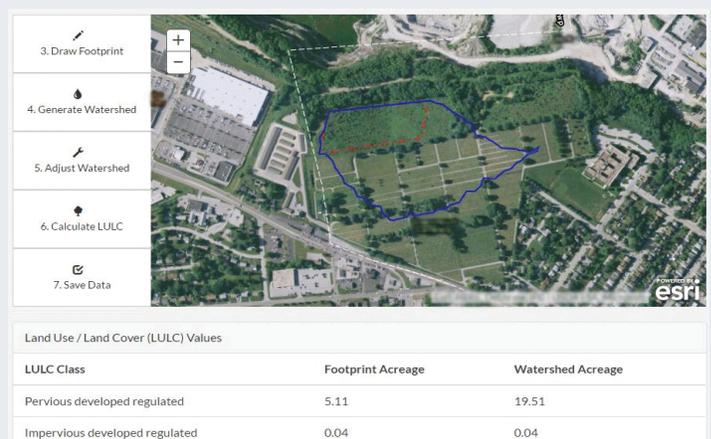
“The first reporting cycle using the Chesapeake Conservancy’s web-based tool increased the efficiency of the

reporting process. Reports submitted were more timely, and the data could easily be downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis and Department of Environmental Protection reporting purposes,” chief of long range planning for the York County Planning Commission, Pam Shellenberger, said.

“The Chesapeake Conservancy’s web-based tool is the kind of creativity and innovation that will help local governments plan and implement stormwater BMPs to restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay and local waters,” Nicholas DiPasquale, director of the Chesapeake Bay Program, EPA, said. “By working

smarter, we can work more effectively. Other communities could benefit greatly from using this type of tool to meet their stormwater management requirements.”

For more information, visit [chesapeakeconservancy.org/apps/yorkdrainage](http://chesapeakeconservancy.org/apps/yorkdrainage)

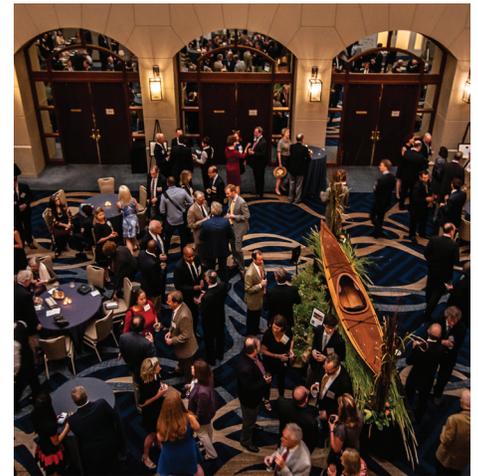


A computer screenshot of the stormwater tool for York County, PA



Chesapeake Conservancy's Champions of the Chesapeake award winners and the event and host committees celebrate after a successful evening on October 4, 2016, at the Loews Annapolis Hotel  
PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

In October, the Chesapeake Conservancy honored U.S. Senator John W. Warner, (VA) (ret.) and U.S. Senator Paul S. Sarbanes, (MD) (ret.), for their support of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Both senators were sponsors of the original legislation in 2006. The Philanthropic Award was presented to Mt. Cuba Center. President Ann C. Rose accepted the award for the center's support of the Conservancy's Nanticoke River Conservation Corridor initiative. Matt Liddle accepted the Corporate Award on behalf of Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) for excellent conservation stewardship and support of the Conservancy's public access efforts. Kimberly Hernandez received the Next Generation Award for her work to help advance designation of the Mallovs Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary as a coastal management fellow of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The passion, dedication, and leadership of these Chesapeake Champions reinforce our belief in the ability to save the Chesapeake's wildlife, culture, and history. Nearly 200 people joined in celebrating their inspiring accomplishments.



Guests mingle during a reception prior to the awards ceremony.  
PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

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South River Federation volunteers plant native plants at the "Impossible Stream" in Annapolis. The plants were used as centerpieces at the Champions of the Chesapeake awards event.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH RIVER FEDERATION



CIC staff from left to right: David Saavedra, geospatial analyst; Margaret Markham, geospatial analyst; Cassandra Pallai, Geospatial Project Manager; Chigo Ibeh, geospatial analyst; Jeffrey Allenby, director of conservation technology; Kathryn Wesson, geospatial analyst; and Louis Keddell, geospatial analyst.  
PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

## Donor Spotlight: Microsoft Azure Opens Door to Nationwide Land Cover Data

One of the most recognizable names in computer software and devices, Microsoft, was not only a generous sponsor to our annual Champions of the Chesapeake awards event but also gave the Chesapeake Conservancy a research grant. This grant allowed the Conservation Innovation Center (CIC) to use Microsoft's *Azure* cloud-based infrastructure to develop land cover data at a highly efficient rate. A dataset that previously took three days to create can be created in as little as five minutes with the right programs running through *Azure*. "This project is fundamentally changing

the face of land cover development by taking the precision conservation work the Conservancy is doing in the Chesapeake and making it possible to replicate on a national scale," Chesapeake Conservancy Director of Conservation Technology Jeff Allenby said.

"With the advent of cloud computing, we've arrived at the beginning of an era that is delivering capabilities that promise to address some of our most pressing problems, including climate change. We believe that data—and efforts to improve the speed of collection and ease of use—can help us better understand,

predict, and assess some of the impacts of climate change on shorelines, and formulate solutions to improve conservation efforts. We support these efforts in a variety of ways, including our *Azure* for Research grant program," Lucas Joppa, lead environmental scientist for Microsoft Research, said. "Microsoft was pleased to award the Chesapeake Conservancy with an *Azure* for Research grant to support their work to help produce land-cover datasets. These high-resolution datasets can improve efficiency and effectiveness by improving the prioritization of conservation efforts."

## Conservancy Staff News

**Michael Gee**, an Encore Fellow, will work with the Chesapeake Conservancy and the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office to explore and develop strategic plans and revenue generating opportunities for the John Smith Chesapeake Trail. Michael was the chief revenue officer for the Crescance Corporation. He brings more than 30 years of business experience to the organization, which includes work for Sprint Corporation; Arete Leadership Consulting, LLC, which he founded and served as a



Michael Gee  
PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

managing partner; NCR Corporation; and Motorola.

**John Griffin**, former Secretary of Maryland Department of Natural Resources, joins the Conservancy as the new Chesapeake Conservation Partnership (CCP) program manager. John brings decades of experience with resource conservation and relationships across the Chesapeake watershed.

Chesapeake Conservation Corps member **Jacob Leizear** will be working with the Conservancy for the 2016–2017 year. He will focus on community engagement; implementation of community greening projects; and raising awareness, support, and engagement in the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition.

**David Saavedra**, a new member of the Conservation Innovation Center's analyst team, joins us from the Chesapeake Bay Program, where he worked on GIS analysis, such as modeling headwater streams and rivers using LiDAR and building

sediment loading models for the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed.

**Robin Talbot** joins the Conservancy as the new executive assistant. A former teacher, Robin also spent more than 20 years working in recruitment, organizational development, and marketing for a variety of industries.

**Jenn Aiosa** was promoted to vice president and director of programs in recognition of her outstanding leadership, hard work, and staff management.

**Kate Baker**, formerly program coordinator for the CCP, is now a project manager for the Conservancy. In her new position, Kate manages Conservancy work related to land conservation in the Nanticoke River watershed and advocating for federal funding for conservation in the Chesapeake region through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

**Colleen Whitlock**, director of administration, recently completed an executive certificate in nonprofit leadership from Duke University.



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THE 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. OUR TAX ID NUMBER IS #26-2271377.

At the Chesapeake Conservancy, our work is inspired by the Haudenosaunee, who for generations have lived by the Seventh Generation Principle of considering how decisions today affect people 140 years from now.

Recently, through a bequest in her will to the Conservancy, Anne Gordon Keidel chose to think seven generations ahead. Like Anne, you, too, can leave a legacy for future generations to enjoy the Chesapeake as we do today.

Please consider making a special gift to the Chesapeake Conservancy by naming the Conservancy in your will or by designating the Chesapeake Conservancy as a beneficiary of your bank account, 401(k) or other retirement account, or life insurance policy.

For more information, call 443.321.3610 or e-mail [mehrenreich@chesapeakeconservancy.org](mailto:mehrenreich@chesapeakeconservancy.org)

An Outward Bound student paddles on the Nanticoke  
PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

