

CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY 2014 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

# Shorelines

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



Aerial view of the Gunpowder River.  
PHOTO BY: EMILY MYRON



Conservancy at the White House	3
Engaging Communities Along the Great Rivers	4
Improving Access to the Chesapeake's Rivers	6

716 Giddings Avenue, Suite 42  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
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.

**Board of Directors**

- Paul E. Hagen, *Chairman*
- Douglas P. Wheeler, *Vice Chairman*
- Dr. Mamie A. Parker, *Secretary*
- Nicholas H. Dilks, *Treasurer*
- Stephen R. Adkins
- Donald R. Baugh
- Scott L. Beatty, Jr.
- Jane Danowitz
- Robert Friend
- Heather Gartman
- Robert Gensler
- Michael D. Hankin
- Stephen F. Harper
- Page Hayhurst
- Ann W. Loomis
- H. Turney McKnight
- Jeffery More
- Patrick F. Noonan
- Blaine T. Phillips, Jr.
- H.W. "Skip" Wieder

**Honorary Members**

- Gilbert M. Grosvenor
- U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes (ret.)
- Charles A. Stek
- U.S. Senator John Warner (ret.)

**Chesapeake Conservancy Staff**

- Joel Dunn, *Executive Director*
- Jeffrey Allenby, *Director of Conservation Innovation*
- David Burke, *Conservation & Strategic Planning Senior Advisor*
- Matthew Collins, *Intern*
- Paula Degen, *Interpretive Specialist*
- Sarah Elder, *Director of Operations*
- Evelina Erickson, *Director of Development*
- Regan Gifford, *Outreach Coordinator*
- Julia Harrison, *Intern*
- Emily Myron, *Project Manager*
- Joanna Ogburn, *Director of Programs*
- Conor Phelan, *Conservation Analyst*
- Michael Shultz, *Public Relations Advisor*
- Helen Sieracki, *Executive Assistant*
- Colin Stief, *Intern*
- Peter Turcik, *Intern*
- Colleen Whitlock, *Director of Administration*

*From the Executive Director*

**Conservancy at Work on Many Fronts**

Our organization is hard at work to protect the Chesapeake's great rivers and special places. Every day we are inspired by our wildlife and history to achieve long-term results for our supporters and future generations. Achieving our mission and goals requires an unprecedented amount of community support and collaboration.

Much of our work focuses on community-based conservation initiatives, which begin with identifying local conservation and public access priorities along the Chesapeake's great rivers. Through initiatives such as *Envision the James* and *Envision the Susquehanna*, we use some of the most innovative technologies to inform residents, agencies, and nonprofits of their natural and cultural resources and to solicit their opinions regarding conservation needs. We then work with these partners to develop a shared vision for the future of our river corridors.

To implement a community vision requires resources, partners, and hard work. Conservation isn't free or easy. Our organization is working to ensure there is collaboration among partners and sufficient public and private funding to get the job done. We are advocating at the federal, state, and local level for conservation resources, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails program, and state land conservation and public access programs. We are also working closely with the philanthropic community to secure vital private funding to attract and match public resources.



The Chesapeake Conservancy strives to foster a conservation community in which every citizen has a voice, takes part in the effort, and shares in the rewards. Instead of a single step on a path, we seek a community of environmental consciousness, where the impact of many is far more than the efforts any individual—person, organization or agency—can achieve on its own. We seek a collective impact for the benefit of current and future generations.

In this issue of *Shorelines*, we highlight some of the Conservancy's work to engage communities in conservation, improve public access to the Bay and its great rivers, and use innovative technology to address conservation challenges. From Woodland Wharf on the Nanticoke to the White House in Washington, the Conservancy has an ever-increasing role in shaping the future of the Chesapeake Bay.

We hope you will join us in these important efforts to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay.



JOEL DUNN, *Executive Director*

**Conservancy Celebrates Return of the Ospreys to the Chesapeake**

The Chesapeake Conservancy celebrated the return of the wildly popular Osprey Cam with "Welcome Back Osprey" in April at Metropolitan Kitchen and Lounge in Annapolis. Donors were given the chance to meet Conservancy staff, as well as osprey expert Dr. Paul Spitzer and the Crazy Osprey Family, who own the property where Tom and Audrey nest. Thanks to all who attended!



Christine Durham, Dr. Paul Spitzer, and the Crazy Osprey Family.

PHOTO BY: JEFFREY ALLENBY

# Conservancy Co-Hosts “Hackathon” for White House Climate Change Initiative

Chesapeake Conservancy Executive Director Joel Dunn joined prominent technology innovators and climate scientists at the White House in March to launch the Climate Data Initiative, part of President Barack Obama’s climate change program.

Climate change poses new challenges for the Chesapeake ecosystem, already stressed by pollutants, population growth, and increasing development. With approximately 12,000 miles of shorelines, nearly all of it low-lying, the Chesapeake is particularly vulnerable to changes in sea levels, which rise here at two to three times the global average rate.

## Hackathon Event

To help address these challenges, the White House and Intel Corporation invited the Chesapeake Conservancy’s Conservation Innovation Center to co-host a multi-day “hackathon” through Intel’s *Code for Good* program. A hackathon is an event where computer programmers and other professionals collaborate intensively on targeted software projects.

While the name may sound a little offbeat, the work is anything but. The hackathon will bring together some of the best minds in technology to design new ways to address today’s most crucial conservation needs. In



support of the Administration’s Climate Data Initiative, this “code-a-thon” will generate tools and applications to help local governments, nonprofits, and other interested parties use large datasets that detail the potential impacts of climate change and sea-level rise.

“We want to turn data into insight,” Dunn said. “We want to drive innovation by encouraging creativity, by making information more easily accessible, and by enhancing collaboration across the public, private, nonprofit, and academic sectors. This event provides us with a unique opportunity to gather experts from a range of fields and tap into the collective to create real-time solutions to conservation issues.”

This first Chesapeake Hackathon, taking place this fall, will focus on land use planning in the Hampton Roads/Norfolk area of Virginia. It has support from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the

City of Norfolk, as well as corporate support from Intel and the Earth Science Research Institute (ESRI), the world leader in Geographic Information Systems software.

The Chesapeake Conservancy expects the hackathon to develop decision-support tools that will help local partners better understand the long term implications of current land management decisions, as well as scenario-planning tools that will help partners identify pathways to achieve a community’s conservation ideal.



Tangier Island, one of the low-lying islands of the Chesapeake threatened by sea-level rise and climate change. PHOTOS BY: STARKE JETT, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# Envision the Chesapeake: Facilitating Large Landscape Conservation in the Great Rivers of the Chesapeake

Over the past three years, the Chesapeake Conservancy has developed an innovative community-based conservation planning methodology that combines public input with the latest scientific-based planning tools and high resolution data to identify priorities throughout a watershed.

Pioneered through our *Envision the James* and *Envision the Susquehanna* initiatives, the Conservancy has constructed a process of engaging strong local organizations and the public to generate a cohesive conservation and restoration “vision” to help plan and prioritize efforts across an entire watershed.

We want conservation to be relevant to each community, and what better way than allowing its members to tell us what they want – a conserved landscape, a boat ramp, a new park, or an eco-tourism industry? This approach encourages a community



Activities along the Susquehanna and the Nanticoke are the latest examples of the Conservancy’s river corridor work:

## Envision the Susquehanna

*Envision the Susquehanna* seeks to identify community-supported conservation actions that protect the Susquehanna’s ecological and cultural integrity. The Conservancy is working with a core team of partners representing the Susquehanna River Heartland Coalition for Environmental Studies, Wildlife Management Institute, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and an advisory council that includes the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force. Similar in design to *Envision the James*, which launched in 2011, the *Envision the Susquehanna* team has embarked on a sophisticated community engagement strategy to identify conservation priorities.

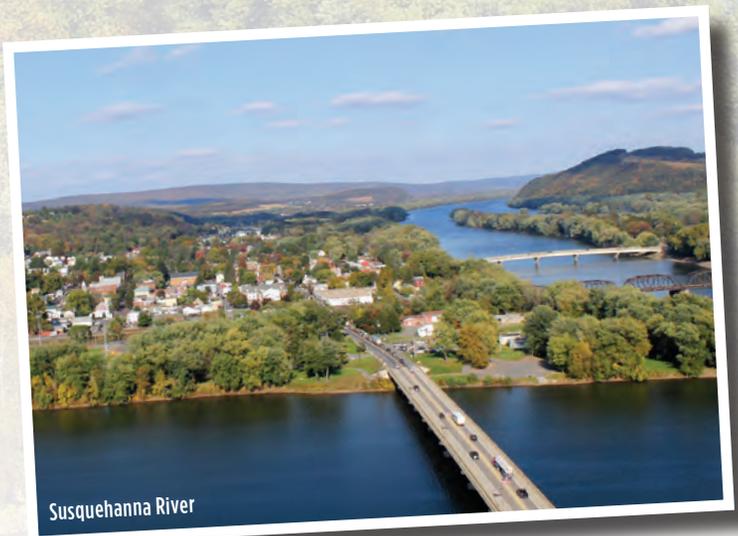


to take ownership over and invest themselves in projects, ultimately making these efforts sustainable. This ethic is the rudder that steers our river corridor conservation programs.

Beginning with a series of public meetings and engagement through interactive web-tools, we start by gathering community input that allows us to identify the opportunities and types of conservation and restoration that are deemed most necessary by the watershed’s residents.

Simultaneously, through the Conservancy’s Conservation Innovation Center, we develop high resolution landscape datasets and analysis tools and work with local colleges and universities to map ecological, cultural, and historical resource data to identify priorities throughout the watershed.

Armed with all of this information, the Conservancy works with an advisory group composed of stakeholders from the river watersheds to develop a written vision that outlines regional priorities and a process through which they can be achieved. These vision documents serve as a coordinating platform to centralize planning and data analysis efforts across each of the Conservancy’s “*Envision*” programs.



Conservancy staff recently took a helicopter ride and toured many of the rivers we work to protect. PHOTOS BY: EMILY MYRON

## Feature: Corridor Engagement

Bucknell University students and teachers have begun the first phase of the strategy with interviews of formal and informal community leaders along the river corridor—asking about the region's conservation history, attitudes toward conservation, and current environmental initiatives. The goal is to understand each region's particular conservation needs and challenges. This information will help guide public workshops and focus groups, as well as a regional phone survey that will be carried out with Lycoming College. Involving colleges in this process has the added benefit of engaging young people in this conservation work—providing opportunities for students to become vested in the future of the Chesapeake.

Ultimately, the Conservancy will use the information gathered through the various engagement methods to develop a vision document for the Susquehanna that identifies and prioritizes actions on a local and regional level that will contribute to a network of conserved ecological and cultural resources.

### Nanticoke River Conservation Corridor

This spring, the Chesapeake Conservancy, in partnership with The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the State of Maryland, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, hosted a landowner workshop along the Nanticoke River. The goal was to share information with landowners about available conservation options to preserve their land, livelihood, and the region's farming heritage.



As landowners choose to conserve their properties and continue farming their land, they not only ensure that the land will stay undeveloped for future generations, they also contribute to the network of protected lands along the river that maintain the region's ecological, cultural, and recreational values. Throughout Maryland and Delaware, the Conservancy is working to fill in the gaps between already protected areas to create an 8,000-acre conserved corridor.

Thus far, the Conservancy has partnered with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), The Conservation Fund, and the Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy to conserve two properties totaling 130 acres along the Nanticoke River. In February, the Conservancy contributed to the acquisition of 114 acres of ecologically sensitive habitat now owned by DNREC. This past June, the Conservancy added to the total by working with The Conservation Fund to protect 17.7 acres now owned by the Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy and known as the Chapel Branch Nature Area, Moore Tract.

### Conservancy wins REPI Award

The Chesapeake Conservancy's Nanticoke River proposal was awarded \$1 million through the Department of Defense's nationally competitive Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Challenge. This award will be used to conserve high priority lands along the Nanticoke and has the potential to give the Chesapeake Conservancy and our many projects national recognition.



PHOTOS BY: EMILY MYRON

# Conservancy Improves Public Access to Chesapeake's Rivers

The Chesapeake Conservancy is dedicated to developing and enhancing public water access along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the Chesapeake Bay, and its tributaries. Despite thousands of miles of shoreline, it is still difficult for the public to get to the water and experience the Chesapeake region's irreplaceable natural and cultural resources.

We are working watershed-wide to reverse this trend and get people out on the water. In 2010, partners of the Chesapeake Bay Program set a goal to create 300 new public access sites across the watershed by 2025. This commitment was recently reaffirmed with the signing of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement in June.

In just three years, the conservation community has established 69 new access sites, with momentum building yearly.

The Chesapeake Conservancy has contributed to the development of several completed access sites – Old Mill Park in Fredericksburg and Lawrence Lewis, Jr., Park on James River, both in Virginia, as well as a site in Cooperstown, New York – and we have more access projects in progress. We believe that by connecting people to the Chesapeake, we will inspire a new generation of stewards.

## Access Spotlight: Woodland Wharf Access Project

Once the site of the first steamship landing in Delaware along the Nanticoke, the Woodland Wharf site will now provide public access to the Upper Nanticoke River portion of the Captain John Smith Trail and the Nanticoke River Water Trail.



Woodland Wharf

PHOTO BY: JOANNA OGBURN

In 2012, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control purchased this key site to fill an eight mile gap in public access between Phillips Landing and the Town of Seaford. Adjacent to the Woodland Ferry—a site on the National Register of Historic Places—and down the street from a museum dedicated to local history, this site still carries a significant historical connection to the Nanticoke River.

Although the site has existing infrastructure, significant improvements are needed before it can be opened to the public. The Chesapeake Conservancy has secured funds from the Welfare Foundation to assist the State of Delaware in building a new soft launch and installing Captain John Smith Trail interpretive signage.

Once open, the Woodland Wharf site will support short kayak trips from Seaford, or longer, scenic explorations across the Nanticoke and up the neighboring Gum Branch. The Nanticoke River offers some of the most scenic and evocative landscapes along the Captain John Smith Trail, making this access site especially important for modern-day explorers.

### Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

## Trading Prowess

Captain John Smith traveled here in June 1608, identifying the area on his map as Kuskaraok territory. The people were later known as the Nanticoke, and Smith described them as the “best merchants.”

Living in this narrow part of the Eastern Shore, they likely had access to shells from the Atlantic Ocean. Smith wrote that white shell beads, called “rawranoke,” were highly prized. Historians surmise that the Kuskaraok traded beads with Indians to the north for furs.

Archeology in the Nanticoke River valley suggests the native people also traded for pottery with their neighbors to the south.

*“This river [the Nanticoke], but only at the entrance, is very narrow...the land but low, yet it may prove very commodious because it is but a ridge of land betwixt the bay and the main ocean.”*  
— Captain John Smith, *The General History of Virginia*, 1624

Archeologists have found evidence that Indians of the Nanticoke River valley used pottery similar to that made by Rappahannock and Yeocomico region natives.



A replica of John Smith's shallop sits in a stretch of the Nanticoke River through a marshy landscape looking much as it did in 1608.

Regional panel that will be part of interpretive signage at Woodland Wharf site.

Explore more of the Nanticoke River at these places on the John Smith Trail:

◆ One of the Chesapeake's most scenic rivers, the Nanticoke's wooded and marshy shorelines include long stretches that look much the way they did when Smith traveled here in 1608.

◆ Paddle or motor from Vienna's town marina to nearby Chicone Creek, location of the chief's town of Kuskaraok at the time of John Smith's visit.

◆ See a monument to Captain John Smith's exploration of the Nanticoke at Phillips Landing/Nanticoke Wildlife Area near Laurel, Delaware.

◆ Travel the Nanticoke River Water Trail, coursing nearly 65 miles through farmlands, forests, and marshes of Delaware and Maryland.



Partners on the Trail Chesapeake Conservancy



## Conservancy Staff News

Recent staff changes at the Chesapeake Conservancy reflect a dynamic, growing organization.

In June, the Conservancy welcomed **Evelina Erickson** as the new director of development.

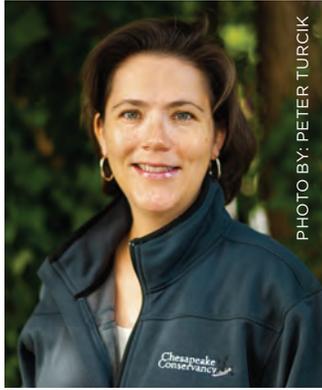


PHOTO BY: PETER TURCHIK

Born in Annapolis and raised on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Evelina comes to the Conservancy with a passion for environmental and historical preservation. Most recently she served as the executive director of Prevention Connections. Her environmental nonprofit experience includes tenures as the acting vice president of development with the American Farmland Trust, director of development with

the Maryland Coastal Bays Program, and associate director

of the Chester River Association. She is also proud of her service as assistant to U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski and former Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening.

Previously heading up our fundraising department, **Sarah Elder** has recently been named director of operations to devote her full attention and expertise to strategic and financial planning, policy development, infrastructure, and general operations.

**Emily Myron** has been promoted to project manager.

Also this summer, two new interns are working at the Conservancy's Annapolis headquarters:

**Matthew Collins** is a double major in Environmental Studies and Earth and Oceanographic Studies at Bowdoin College. Matthew is assisting with the Land and Water Conservation Fund Chesapeake proposal as well as the 2014 National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation.

**Colin Stief** is a Sussman Fellow and graduate student at Duke University pursuing a Master of Coastal Management Degree. Colin is working on GIS and data management for the *Envision the James* initiative, producing high-resolution land use maps of the James River watershed.

## Donor Spotlight: Philanthropist Nancy Merrill

Nancy Merrill, president of the Merrill Family Foundation, has been involved with the Chesapeake Conservancy since the conception of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. She helped establish the pillars that make the Chesapeake Conservancy a distinct conservation organization. We would not be where we are without her support.

"It is only through the generosity of individuals like Nancy that the Chesapeake Conservancy is able to fulfill our mission to strengthen the connection between people and the watershed and protect the special places along the Captain John Smith Trail. She is an incredible example to everyone who values the environmental, cultural, and historical treasures of the Chesapeake region. We are honored by her support," said Executive Director Joel Dunn.

A self-proclaimed Severn River Rat, Nancy grew up in Annapolis fishing, crabbing, swimming, boating herself to school, and sailing on the Chesapeake every summer with her family. Nancy's upbringing instilled a love for the Chesapeake that has driven her professional life.

"Growing up on the Chesapeake, it literally is in your blood. I wanted to

take care of it and protect it. It was my natural love for the Bay that inspired my decision to work with organizations that preserve it," she said.

Nancy's extensive knowledge of Captain John Smith's explorations—gained through her education and work—earned her the task of retracing Captain Smith's journeys for The Conservation Fund, sleuthing through 400 years of changed landscape to find and help establish the Captain John Smith Trail. Through this work, the Chesapeake Conservancy was established.

The formation of the Chesapeake Conservancy gave Nancy the opportunity to support an organization that lends itself to every aspect of the Chesapeake, from the ecosystems of the Bay and its tributaries to the cultures of the people in the watershed. She helped secure

funding for the Watermen Heritage Tourism Training Program and has participated in the Conservancy's mission as a grant funder.

"What I appreciate about the Chesapeake Conservancy," Nancy says, "is that it is the only one of the organizations we support that focuses on preserving the history and the heritage of the Chesapeake. When you grow up boating to school and eating the crabs you catch off your dock every Saturday, and having a waterman fishing and crabbing off of your house—to see those ways of life go by the wayside is troubling. To me, preserving the water quality isn't enough if you don't preserve the cultures that go along with living on the Chesapeake. It's not only the water, it is the way of life on the water."

Thanks, Nancy!



PHOTO PROVIDED BY NANCY MERRILL

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.



**WATERMEN  
HERITAGE TOURS**

[www.watermenheritagetours.org](http://www.watermenheritagetours.org)  
**443.924.0500**

## STEP INTO THE WORLD OF A WORKING WATERMAN

*AND SEE THE BEAUTY AND WONDER OF THE  
CHESAPEAKE BAY LIKE NEVER BEFORE!*

**Join a working waterman aboard a historic skipjack or traditional workboat and embark on an extraordinary experience!**

Learn about the watermen's culture and history, hear what life is like out on the water, and discover the natural and cultural history of the area.

Different locations and personalities of the watermen serving as guides for the Watermen Heritage Tours make each tour a unique experience! You can take a sunset sail on a skipjack or enjoy a land tour of an oyster-seeding facility. You can try your hand at oyster tonging, or have an authentic crabbing experience—including catching, cooking, and partaking in a delicious crab feast.

Or let one of the trained waterman guides customize a private tour just for you. Go to [www.watermenheritagetours.org](http://www.watermenheritagetours.org) and sign up for a tour today!

