

# CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY 2019 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

# Shorelines

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



Chesapeake Conservancy partners on 'Es Mi Parque' Program

PHOTO BY MICHAEL BOWMAN

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.

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## From the President & CEO

# Bay Access for All

The conservation and restoration of our natural resources will require the engagement and support of current and future generations. While we must continue to address the immediate threats of habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change, we must also shift the narrative and focus of environmental conservation and education to be more inclusive of diverse cultures, languages, backgrounds, and orientation. The future of our water quality, wildlife, and our Chesapeake way-of-life depends on it.

According to the Pew Research Center, there are several important demographic trends emerging in the United States, including the following:

- millennials are the largest adult generation, but they are starting to share the spotlight with Generation Z;
- Hispanics are projected to be the largest racial or ethnic minority group in the US electorate when voters cast their ballots next year.

In addition, according to the Brookings Institution, for the first time, non-Hispanic white residents now make up less than half of the nation's population under the age of 15. The new data highlight that the nation's overall population is younger and more diverse.

It is time to celebrate that diversity and elevate all people, generations, places, and cultures of the Bay, especially those who have been historically excluded. To do this successfully, we must proactively accommodate and engage a more diverse population and do it with compassion, love, and understanding.

If we are going to protect and restore this special estuary and watershed, then we need to enhance our connections to all communities and our ability to understand locally and culturally relevant challenges to conservation success.

At the Chesapeake Conservancy, we have created a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Task Force composed of staff and board members. Our goal is to prioritize, value, and embrace those with different perspectives and backgrounds in our workforce, those we partner with, and the communities that we serve.



Chesapeake Conservancy President & CEO Joel Dunn  
PHOTO BY MARK HAMILTON

In this issue of *Shorelines*, we're proud to highlight progress Chesapeake Conservancy and our partners are making on the following mission-related projects:

- protecting land along Fones Cliffs—another symbolic example of our work to protect indigenous cultural landscapes and our Half Chesapeake campaign;
- engaging Spanish-speaking communities at Sandy Point State Park who may be the future leaders of our conservation movement;
- transforming how conservation is done with partners in Pennsylvania by driving restoration where data shows it will matter most.

You can read about all of these positive steps in the right direction and feel proud about your investment in us. We couldn't do it without you and an increasingly diverse array of Chesapeake communities, key players in our environmental future.

Sincerely,

JOEL E. DUNN, *President and CEO*

P.S. You can make an impact on the Chesapeake's future in an exciting new way. Learn more at [chesapeakeconservancy.org/Giving-Tree](https://chesapeakeconservancy.org/Giving-Tree).

## A Cause for Celebration at Fones Cliffs

Partners gathered on June 28 at historic Fones Cliffs along the Rappahannock to celebrate the permanent protection of 252 acres recently added to the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The event marked an important victory in a decade-long effort to save one of the most pristine landscapes in the Chesapeake watershed. The cliffs that tower 100 feet above the river provide globally significant habitat for bald eagles and other bird species. The area is culturally significant as an ancestral home for the Rappahannock people and as a site documented in the journals of English explorer Captain John Smith. Thanks to The Conservation Fund and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), this parcel will now be protected from development and will add opportunities for hiking and birdwatching. Funding for the acquisition came from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which Chesapeake Conservancy helped to secure.

Fones Cliffs was once home to three American Indian towns, and it retains great significance to the Rappahannock people today. "We are so pleased to see this portion of the Cliffs protected from development," said Rappahannock Tribe Chief Anne Richardson. Chief Richardson is also a member of Chesapeake Conservancy's board of directors. "This is the land where



Rappahannock Tribe Chief Anne Richardson at the event celebrating 252 acres preserved at Fones Cliffs. PHOTO BY ZHIVKO ILLEIEFF/THE CONSERVATION FUND

our ancestors lived for thousands of years, and it is sacred to our Tribe. Thanks to all the partners who understand how essential land preservation is to our very existence."

The entire conservation community and the public can rightfully celebrate this tremendous accomplishment. However, an adjoining 968 acres remain threatened as the corporate owner seeks to reorganize under Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings.

Chesapeake Conservancy will continue to be vigilant in monitoring all activities related to the proposed development and will continue our strong advocacy for conserving this property and its irreplaceable natural, historical, and cultural values.

*"You see... Joe just never quit. He has spent years pursuing this goal and he never quit."*



Chesapeake Fellow Joe McCauley and President and CEO Joel Dunn reflect on their work to conserve Fones Cliffs. PHOTO BY KYM HALL, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

"This is one of my favorite pictures of all time," commented Joel Dunn following the event. "This is Joe McCauley (Chesapeake Fellow at Chesapeake Conservancy) and me on the edge of Fones Cliffs today, celebrating the protection of 250 of the hardest fought acres in the world. You see... Joe just never quit. He has spent years pursuing this goal and he never quit. There are lots of people and organizations to thank, especially the USFWS, Rappahannock Tribe, and The Conservation Fund. But all of the partners would agree that Joe McCauley was the driving force behind this. He brought everyone together to make it happen. I believe in Joe. I have confidence in Joe. He has already set another goal of protecting the adjoining property, whose owner recently filed for bankruptcy. Joe exemplifies the type of team members we have here at the Chesapeake Conservancy."

## Engaging Tribal Youth in Virginia

Working with American Indian tribes in Virginia, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and Chesapeake Conservancy partnered to create the Maritime Crafts Field School to provide instruction on historical handcrafts for tribal youth and to educate them in the disappearing art of traditional fishing methods. The first session was held in June at the Rappahannock Tribal Center in Indian Neck, Virginia.

Over the course of four sessions, members of American Indian communities of Virginia will learn traditional fishing methods of the Chesapeake Bay. In addition to engaging American Indian youth, this project also includes healthy recreation and outdoor access to places of cultural significance on the Rappahannock River. At its conclusion, participants in the field school will be able to use traditional methods to build canoes and to catch fish using handmade hooks, spears, nets, and weirs.



PHOTO BY CAROLYN BLACK

Canoes were an essential mode of transportation for indigenous people of the Chesapeake Bay, although making them was a significant community effort that could take days and weeks. For the *Return to the River* pilot program, Rappahannock tribal members start the lengthy, yet rewarding, process of creating a dugout canoe using a pine log. After removing the bark with hand tools and oyster shells, the participants apply small fires to start scraping away the wood to carve out the bottom of the canoe.



The bilingual staff leads a seining activity at Greenbrier State Park in Boonsboro, MD, during an Es Mi Parque event. PHOTO BY WILL GRINNELL.

## Reaching the Chesapeake's Increasingly Diverse Population

by Gabrielle Roffe

In the past five years, state and county parks in the Washington Metropolitan Area have seen a huge shift in demographics in their park visitorship from traditional “hikers and bikers” to increased populations of Latin American origin or descent, or “Latinx.”

With these shifts came change in how visitors use public lands and the need to adapt to new user groups. In 2015, the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office (NPS) identified the needs of the 80 percent Latinx community at Sandy Point State Park near Annapolis, Maryland, through a visitor use study conducted by an intern from Hispanic Access Foundation.

While Maryland's Department of Natural Resources is working to improve facilities for increased usership at parks and

provide programming through the Es Mi Parque program, NPS and Chesapeake Conservancy identified the need for more outreach to the diverse populations visiting Sandy Point as an opportunity to educate about stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay.

This summer we are piloting a bilingual Spanish outreach and engagement program at Sandy Point funded by NPS. We know that translating signs and materials into Spanish is not enough. We need to make the extra effort to meet the community where they are and develop programming that meets their needs. In order to accomplish these goals, we recruited through Spanish departments at local colleges and community resource centers for the Latinx community and hired two bilingual interpretive outreach assistants who are stationed at Sandy

Point to develop programming to better engage the Latinx community.

As the first bilingual-focused staff for our partnership, Julian Segovia and Daniel Salomon are leading the way at Sandy Point this summer. Both Julian and Daniel are motivated by their passion for connecting to their heritage and communities in an authentic way. Coming from art backgrounds, they have breathed a new life into what environmental education programs look like. They have developed innovative and engaging programs for the Latinx community and have helped the park connect to visitors in new ways. Not only have they provided translation and support for fishing, kayaking, and nature programs, they have also developed creative programs like “Pintando la Bahía”—a painting program on the

beach—“Historias en Español” storytime, and “Música Reciclada,” a music program using recycled materials as instruments.

As Julian said, “People like to know that you see the need in the community, so if your program is targeted towards the Spanish-speaking community, let them know. The community often feels left out and disadvantaged through language barriers and social stigmas, therefore they will see you as their representative and want to participate with you and your park.”

We are incredibly proud of Julian and Daniel’s passion in improving communication and engagement at Sandy Point and connecting more people to the Chesapeake Bay. We hope to continue their efforts next summer after this successful pilot season and continue to engage a more diverse community of conservation stewards of the Chesapeake.

## About the Author:

### *Gabrielle Roffe, project and partnership coordinator*

As the project and partnership coordinator, Gabrielle (Gaby) works closely with NPS on the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network to promote stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay. Prior to working at Chesapeake Conservancy, Gaby worked with the USFWS building urban partnerships and community engagement programs in Kansas City and Denver, as well as with the National Aquarium in Baltimore. She completed her BA at the University of Southern California and her MS in environmental science at Towson University. Outside of work, Gaby loves to collect bugs, practice yoga, brew kombucha, travel, and spend time with family.

“My personal conservation ethic is to connect people to nature and empower them to conserve and protect the environment, especially those who have been historically excluded. I grew up around the Chesapeake Bay and when I began working at Chesapeake Conservancy in November, I was thrilled to be able to connect back to the Bay and its people. I found that Chesapeake Conservancy is an innovative organization, a catalyst for change, which is a perfect opportunity to expand our reach and help build capacity to reach more diverse audiences through our public lands. As demographics shift throughout the country and the watershed, conservationists understand the need to engage more diverse audiences in their work to connect people to nature, and this summer we have had the opportunity to do just that.”



Daniel Salomon reads “La Hormiguita” by J.S. Pinillos to children at Sandy Point State Park. PHOTO BY WILL GRINNELL



Gabrielle Roffe - Project & Partnership Coordinator

PHOTO BY PATRICK SMITH



Julian Segovia - Bilingual Interpretive Outreach Assistant

PHOTO BY KELSEY EVERETT



Daniel Salomon - Bilingual Interpretive Outreach Assistant

PHOTO BY KELSEY EVERETT

# Chesapeake Conservancy Again Awarded Four-Star Charity Navigator Rating



In June, Charity Navigator, America’s largest and most utilized independent evaluator of charities, awarded Chesapeake Conservancy the coveted four-star rating for sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency for the second consecutive year.

From a letter from Charity Navigator’s President and CEO Michael Thatcher: “We are proud to announce Chesapeake Conservancy has earned our second consecutive four-star rating. This is our highest possible rating and indicates that your organization adheres to sector best practices and executes its mission in a financially efficient way. Attaining a four-star rating verifies

that Chesapeake Conservancy exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in your area of work. Only 31% of the charities we evaluate have received at least two consecutive four-star evaluations, indicating that Chesapeake Conservancy outperforms most other charities in America. This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets Chesapeake Conservancy apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness.”

“We couldn’t be prouder of our second four-star rating from Charity Navigator,” said Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn. “We work hard to ensure donations from our generous supporters make the most impact on

the ground, helping to restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay.”

“The most recent score and rating places Chesapeake Conservancy with an overall score of 96.93 out of 100 points and 100 for accountability and transparency,” said Chesapeake Conservancy Director of Development Melissa Ehrenreich. “The rating indicates that the Conservancy executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way while adhering to good governance and other best practices to ensure we maximize our donor investments to achieve lasting impacts. Thank you to our generous supporters for helping us to realize this goal for the second consecutive year.”

## Chesapeake Conservancy: Measuring Results, Making an Impact

A recent poll of our partners in Pennsylvania shows:

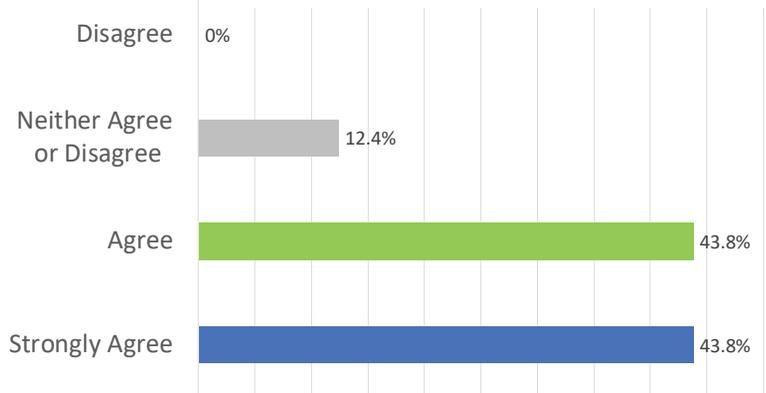
As a result of the precision conservation initiative...

**33.3%** say that more/new private funding has entered their community

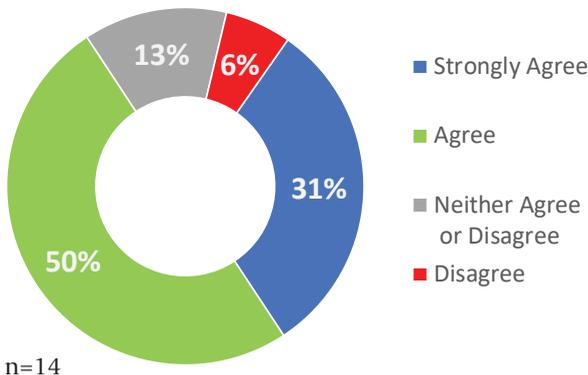
**55.6%** say that more/new state funding has entered their community

**77.8%** say that more/new federal funding has entered their community

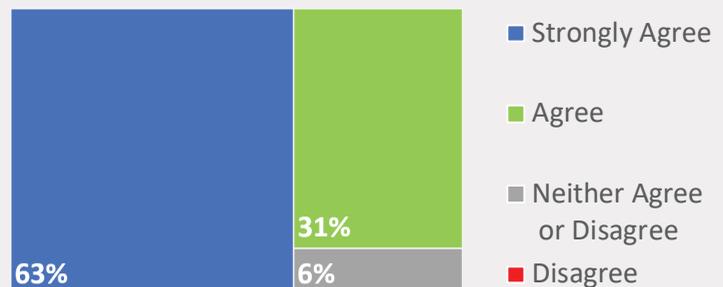
“I believe that the collaborative approach has changed the way this conservation community works and will result in the acceleration of water quality and habitat improvements.”



“I believe that the data-driven, precision conservation approach has changed the way this conservation community works and will result in the acceleration of water quality and habitat improvements.”



“I believe that other communities in Pennsylvania and elsewhere would benefit from the precision conservation approach.”



## explore.org

Our wildlife webcams provide a window into some of the Chesapeake Bay's most iconic species: osprey, peregrine falcons, and great blue herons. There's a beautiful partnership that makes this possible. In addition to the property owner hosts, the "Crazy Osprey Family," on Kent Island; the managers of the Transamerica Building in Baltimore that is home to the peregrine falcons; and the property owner on Maryland's Eastern Shore who shares a great blue heron rookery with the world, there's also a California-based foundation making this all possible.

Since 2017, our generous sponsor and partner who helps us open this window for millions of viewers worldwide is explore.org. explore.org is a multimedia organization that hosts hundreds of wildlife webcams—from pandas to puffins to peregrine falcons. It also creates films and documentaries and is building an archive of more than 250 original films and 30,000 photographs from around the world.

explore.org's founder, Charles Annenberg Weingarten, hopes to inspire conservation



explore.org's partnership with Chesapeake Conservancy make the three wildlife webcams possible. Pictured here is a 2019 scene from the osprey cam. PHOTO BY CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY WEBCAM.

through education. His generosity is helping Chesapeake Conservancy succeed here in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

explore.org maintains the webcam equipment and troubleshoots when the inevitable technical issues arise. They have already replaced two of the Conservancy's cameras with more sophisticated equipment. "Our partners at explore.org are always there, willing to help with any issue. I am so grateful for their generous support, which comes in the form of both technical expertise and funding," said Chesapeake Conservancy's Director of Communications Jody Couser, who manages the wildlife webcams.

The generosity goes much further than the cams in the form of Annenberg Foundation grants. "Several times, when we've needed some extra help to accomplish a goal, explore.org has been there to support us financially," continued Couser. "For example, they've provided matching funds for our crowdfunding campaign and contributed to our advocacy work to save Fones Cliffs, the ancestral home of the Rappahannock Tribe and a globally significant Important Bird Area for resident and migratory bald eagles and other migratory birds."

"explore.org's slogan is: 'Never stop learning.' I absolutely love that. Those are very powerful words to live by," said Couser.

## Conservancy Board & Staff News

Former Maryland Secretary of Natural Resources **Mark Belton** was recently elected to Chesapeake Conservancy's Board of Directors. He is currently serving as the County Administrator for Charles County, Maryland. He has served as county administrator for Queen Anne's County and previously Charles County, Maryland, and for Page County, Virginia. Belton also served as executive director of the Pride of Baltimore. A former Navy Rear Admiral, he served his country for 31 years before retiring in 2014.



Board Member Mark Belton  
PHOTO BY CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

"Mark brings a wealth of leadership experience, a deep understanding of state and local government, and a passion for the Chesapeake Bay. We are honored that he has chosen to contribute his efforts to the Chesapeake Conservancy's mission," **Anne Scott**, chair of the board, said.

In May, Vice President and Director of Programs **Susan Shingledecker** and Project and Partnership Coordinator **Gabrielle Roffe** traveled to San Francisco to spend time with the Golden Gate Conservancy to learn more about its partnership with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. "When it comes to national parks and nonprofit partnerships, Golden Gate is the gold standard model to follow. We came home with a wealth of information and dozens of ideas we would like to replicate in the Chesapeake," said Shingledecker.

In July, five CIC staff members traveled to San Diego for the Esri User Conference including Director of Conservation Technology **Jeff Allenby**, Senior Geospatial Analysts **Jacob Czawlytko** and **Jacob Leizear**, Geospatial Program Manager

**Susan Minnemeyer**, and Geospatial Analyst **Emily Wiggins**. We are proud that the team delivered four presentations on this national stage.

Chesapeake Conservancy thanks **Lauren A. Mariolis**, a graduate student at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment, who spent her summer as our first diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) intern. Lauren helped to draft our DEIJ statement, worked to establish a staff and leadership DEIJ workgroup, and provided guidance on how we can continue to expand Chesapeake Conservancy's DEIJ work, internally and externally.

Thank you to our bilingual interpretive outreach assistants **Daniel Salomon** and **Julian Segovia** (see cover story, pages 4 and 5). Thanks as well to **William Grinnell** and **Emily Sperling** who spent the summer as our seasonal "Roving Rangers," representing the National Park Service and Chesapeake Conservancy partnership at various high-profile events to inform the public about ways to enjoy the Chesapeake Bay.

## Let's Keep in Touch!

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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.



BOY SCOUT TROOP 783, ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD  
PHOTO BY DAVID Q. BARRETT