

# CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY 2021 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

# Shorelines

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



## Military Readiness & Conservation Go Hand in Hand

PHOTO BY U.S. AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. BRITTANY A. CHASE/DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

COVER STORY PAGE 3



## 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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# Conservation Currency

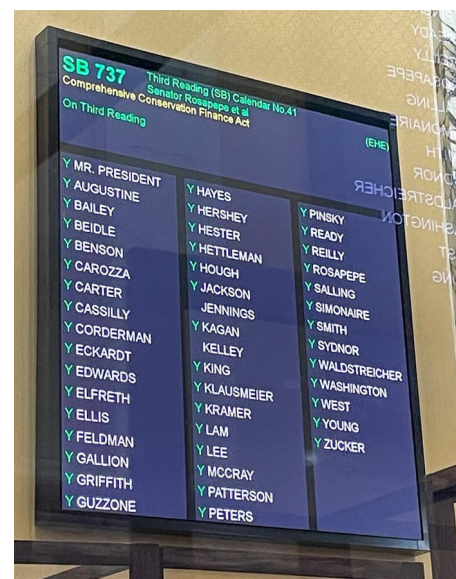
Summer feels a bit sweeter this year. The smell of "Old Bay" seasoning brings back memories of crab feasts from summers past, and for a moment, things feel closer to normal as we venture through this phase of the pandemic. The work of conservation and restoring the health of the Chesapeake Bay carries on, while finding the resources to make it happen is an ongoing challenge.

Recently, the Environmental Policy Innovation Center and Chesapeake Conservancy released a comprehensive new report, "Private Conservation Finance: The Chesapeake Bay's Global Lead and How to Expand It." Private conservation finance is a set of market-based and government policy approaches that can deliver conservation outcomes while generating a financial return for investors.

While we continue to adamantly support all regulatory and public funding programs for the Bay, we are looking to further enhance our movement by harnessing new financial commitments to use market tools and investment strategies to conserve our natural resources. Private investment is of critical importance to meet the goals of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement and to achieve the Chesapeake Conservancy's goal to conserve 30% of the Chesapeake by 2030.

Through our study, we learned that approximately \$4.2 billion of private investment has been deployed over the past 20 years to benefit Chesapeake conservation goals, although we note that this is likely an underestimate. This includes investments in land protection, forest management, wetland and stream banking, nutrient banking, public-private partnerships, pay-for-success contracts, voluntary carbon credits and environmental impact bonds. We expect the amount of private investment to double or triple in the near future, especially if we remove barriers to that investment.

During the 2021 session of the Maryland General Assembly, Sen. Jim Rosapepe sponsored the Comprehensive Conservation Finance Act (SB 0737) with fellow co-sponsors Sens. Guy Guzzone, Sarah Elfreth, Mary Washington, Will Smith, Ron Young and Katie Hester.



Tally board records votes as the Comprehensive Conservation Finance Act unanimously passes Maryland Senate. COURTESY PHOTO

The chair of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, Sen. Paul Pinsky, shepherded the legislation through his committee and on the Senate floor with unanimous votes. There were more than 25 letters of support from state agencies, environmental/conservation nonprofits, and investment and restoration companies. There was no opposition.

The legislation arrived in the Environmental and Transportation Committee of the House of Delegates too late in the session to be thoroughly reviewed. However, both the chair and vice chair of the committee, Delegate Kumar Barve and Delegate Dana Stein respectively, and Sen. Rosapepe, vice chair of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, have pledged to introduce the legislation during the 2022 session for early consideration and hopeful passage. Thanks to your support, Chesapeake Conservancy will be there advocating for its passage.

Sincerely,

JOEL E. DUNN, *President and CEO*

# Military, Environmental, Agricultural Interests Align in Chesapeake Bay

By C. Todd Lopez, DOD

*On Earth Day, April 22, Chesapeake Conservancy joined with partners to welcome Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks to Vienna, Maryland, to highlight the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Partnership, a significant tool for conservation on the Delmarva Peninsula. We are pleased to reprint this press article [edited for space] from the Department of Defense.*

About 70 miles southeast of Washington is Vienna, Maryland. It sits on the Nanticoke River, which drains into the Chesapeake Bay.

Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks visited the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape in Vienna on the 51st anniversary of Earth Day to highlight the Sentinel Landscape partnership there.

At locations designated as sentinel landscapes, a multiagency and multi-departmental partnership connects private landowners with government assistance programs that fund land protection and natural resource restoration projects. By aligning these programs in sentinel landscapes, the departments of defense, agriculture and the interior use taxpayer dollars more efficiently and accomplish more on the ground with fewer resources.

Environmental conservation groups in the region are interested in preserving the wetlands and natural habitats that surround the Nanticoke. But there's broader interest, as well, in preserving larger sections of the region – not just to keep agriculture strong, but to preserve the Navy's use of that airspace for testing and flying aircraft.

A big part of that preservation effort is DOD's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration [REPI] program.



**From left to right: National Park Service (NPS) Chesapeake Bay Office Superintendent Wendy O'Sullivan, Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks, NPS Acting Superintendent of the Colonial National Historical Park and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail Steven Williams and NPS Superintendent of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Deanna Mitchell**

PHOTO BY U.S. AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. BRITTANY A. CHASE/DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The program allows the military services to partner with state and local governments to preserve land use around military installations and ensure DOD's continued ability to train in those areas.

If agricultural land inside the bounds of the Atlantic Test Range, where Naval Air Station Patuxent River tests aircraft, is opened to commercial or residential development, the Navy may no longer be allowed to fly over those areas.

Ensuring the Navy's continued use of that airspace is one of the key responsibilities of the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Partnership.

In the Chesapeake Bay area, REPI helps fund the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Partnership, which involves a multitude of state, local and environmental organizations in addition to DOD, DOI and Agriculture. "We all work together to advance a set

of shared land-use goals around our military installations and ranges," said Kristin Thomasgard, REPI director.

She said REPI has been able to leverage about \$17 million in DOD funding with over \$88 million in federal, state, local and private funds to protect more than 50,000 acres of land within the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Partnership area of concern and enroll 131,000 acres of land in technical assistance programs that lead to sustainable land-use practices.

"What this really demonstrates to me is that together we have been able to achieve outcomes that go far beyond what we can do individually," Thomasgard told partners.

*(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)*



**View of the river from the new Nanticoke Crossing Park**  
PHOTO BY JODY COUSER

## New! Nanticoke Crossing Park

In June, Sussex County Land Trust and Chesapeake Conservancy celebrated the newly conserved Nanticoke Crossing Park in Delaware. Located on the south side of the Nanticoke River near the Woodland Ferry, this 41-acre property includes 29 acres of mixed hardwood-pine forest, 12 acres of open area with large canopy trees and 1,900 feet of meandering shoreline with healthy, freshwater tidal, wetland plants. The new park on the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (Chesapeake Trail) will provide public access to the river by means of an old lagoon that will be revitalized for public use.



## Goal: Restore 30 Agriculturally Impaired Streams by 2030



Chesapeake Conservancy and local restoration partners gather around a Precision Conservation map to plan their outreach strategy for the Halfmoon Valley Farm Tour in 2019. PHOTO BY ADRIENNE GEMBERLING

On Earth Day, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf joined with Chesapeake Conservancy and local conservation partners to announce a new collaborative environmental initiative for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to restore the health of 30 agriculturally impaired streams by 2030.

"The Pennsylvania rivers and streams that drain into the Chesapeake Bay are the backbone of many communities across the commonwealth. Restoring those rivers and streams brings back recreation opportunities like fishing and boating, and improves water quality, which helps communities downstream.

This '30 x 30' stream restoration effort will build on the type of work that my administration, the Chesapeake Conservancy and many others are doing every day to help Pennsylvania farmers restore streambanks, install best management practices and continue to be stewards of the land," Gov. Wolf said. "Restoring Pennsylvania's waters pays dividends here in our communities and downstream, and I am proud to join this effort."

"On behalf of Chesapeake Conservancy and our partners, we thank Gov. Wolf for his commitment to this exciting effort to restore 30 streams by 2030," said Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn.

"Partners working from Lycoming to Lancaster County have identified 30 streams where collaborative restoration can restore stream health the quickest and remove the stream from the impaired waters list.

"While more resources are still needed, we are already seeing tangible results in Pennsylvania's local streams from public and private investments. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been a valuable partner in helping to shape this initiative and ensuring monitoring is in place to evaluate success at key milestones."

The "30 x 30" stream restoration initiative will support community-based efforts that are already underway to reduce pollution and sediment in Pennsylvania streams and provide healthy habitats for fish and wildlife, outdoor recreation and better water quality for local communities.

The effort directly supports agricultural landowners seeking to restore local streams near their land.

Many community partners have engaged in this effort, including the Pennsylvania departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), seven county conservation districts, as well as the dozens of nonprofits, research institutions and local, federal and state agencies involved with the Central Pennsylvania Precision Conservation Partnership, Lancaster Clean Water Partners and the Live Stake Collaborative.

### (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

"Through this remarkable investment, this partnership has been able to sustain local, historical, agricultural and fishing traditions; protect critical forest habitats; improve community resilience to climate change and strengthen military readiness at one of the Navy's most important aircraft testing locations in the country."

Funding from REPI helps support the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Partnership's efforts to preserve agriculture in the area, maintain natural habitats and keep Navy aircraft flying, Hicks said.

"That's why programs like REPI are so important for how we think about maintaining the quality of our training environment, the longevity of our assets and also the relationships with the communities that we work so closely with that surround our installations," she said. Use of the airspace that makes up the Atlantic Test Range is at the heart of the mission at NAS Patuxent River, where airborne research and development testing help bring aircraft – including the F-35 Lightning II – into the Navy.

Navy Capt. John Brabazon, the commander of NAS Patuxent River, said REPI and the partnership keep his installation's mission viable. "To date, REPI funding has been used to preserve 63 separate parcels – that's 63 willing land owners, 63 conservation partners doing the very time-consuming work to preserve more than 12,000 acres, so far, beneath the range air space," he said.

# 2021 Champions of the Chesapeake

Three public servants were honored by Chesapeake Conservancy as this year's Champions of the Chesapeake. Since 2014, Chesapeake Conservancy has recognized individuals and organizations from across the region for exemplary leadership and dedication to protecting and restoring the Chesapeake's natural systems and cultural resources. This year's awards were presented to two members of Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) – Jason Fellon, watershed manager, and Marcus Kohl, regional director – as well as National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Doherty.

Governor Tom Wolf bestowed the Champions of the Chesapeake awards on behalf of Chesapeake Conservancy to the two DEP employees, Marcus Kohl and Jason Fellon, in celebration of DEP's strong contributions to the community-based "30 x 30" stream restoration effort.

The award, which is Chesapeake Conservancy's signature award celebrating conservation leadership in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, recognizes Kohl and Fellon's longtime efforts and innovative leadership to improve the quality of Pennsylvania's environment for the benefit of the commonwealth's people, wildlife and habitats. The award further recognizes the outstanding contributions of DEP as a whole to improve and to protect Pennsylvania's environment.

"Marcus and Jason are just two examples of the exemplary work that DEP staff do day in and day out. This accolade is well deserved, and the type of work they have overseen and directed will be what achieves the '30 x 30' milestone," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell.

"Marcus and Jason epitomize one of the bedrock principles of my administration: Government that works. Their dedication and collaboration have led to millions of dollars in investments into clean, healthy streams, like the Turtle Creek watershed in Union County," Gov. Wolf said. "I'm proud to acknowledge them for their roles in projects that make Pennsylvania a better place."

In a separate ceremony, hosted by Historic Annapolis and Chesapeake Conservancy, National Park Service (NPS) Chesapeake Bay Office Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Doherty was presented the Champions of the Chesapeake award in honor of his devotion, commitment and passion for the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Doherty has been an incredible partner and leader in Chesapeake Bay conservation and the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership.

Doherty retired in June after 41 years with the National Park Service, where he first started as a monitor of mountain goats at Glacier National Park. From there, he was executive director of the Columbia River Gorge Commission for ten years and then the chief of planning for national parks and national heritage areas in the mid-Atlantic region. Doherty served as the first director of the NPS Chesapeake Bay Office after Congress passed the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act in 1998. The legislation created the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network, a network to identify, interpret, conserve and restore Chesapeake resources and connect people to the Bay.

In his 22 years of service with the Chesapeake Bay office, Doherty helped build the Gateways Network as well as the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, create hundreds of public access sites, oversee the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and much more.

"In the early years of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network, Jonathan built a staff, established a working group of innovative thinkers from throughout the watershed, awarded millions of dollars in grants to Gateway projects, and established partnership agreements with more than 170 sites regionwide," said John Reynolds, a member of the Chesapeake Conservancy's board of directors and former deputy director of the National Park Service (retired), who presented the award on behalf of Chesapeake Conservancy.



COURTESY PHOTO



COURTESY PHOTO



Chesapeake Conservancy Board Member John Reynolds, Champion of the Chesapeake Jonathan Doherty, Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn and NPS Chesapeake Bay Office Superintendent Wendy O'Sullivan

PHOTO BY JODY COUSER



## Tribute to U.S. Senator John Warner of Virginia Honorary Member of the Chesapeake Conservancy Board of Directors

By Joel Dunn, President & CEO, Chesapeake Conservancy

The many tributes on the passing of former U.S. Senator John Warner in May are rightfully long on superlatives. Sen. Warner has been described as an “unmatched leader,” a “giant” and a “dear friend.” To me, he was all that and more. His reputation as a political maverick was well documented. He was someone whose litmus test when taking a stand was his conscience and loyalty to country rather than to political party. His family life, military service and Cabinet appointment as Secretary of the Navy were all well covered. Somewhat surprisingly though, Sen. Warner’s credentials as one of Virginia’s most significant conservationists received scant attention.

As senator, he was instrumental in the establishment of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park in the Shenandoah Valley. He supported legislation to create and fund the Chesapeake Bay Program and was on point during the creation of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, our first national water trail. Also called the Chesapeake Trail, it extends over thousands of miles of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, highlighting the 17th-century explorer’s travels and the indigenous cultures of that era to the present.

Sen. Warner loved the Rappahannock River in particular. He talked of personally moving fish from below the Embrey Dam near Fredericksburg and releasing them above the dam so they had a chance to spawn. Perhaps that is what led him to secure \$10 million to have the dam removed in 2004 as part of a military training exercise. That act opened up well over 100 miles of spawning habitat for American shad, striped bass, American eel and other migratory fish species.

During the late 1990s, Sen. Warner championed the newly established Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge by helping secure the first refuge appropriations from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The landscape-sized acquisition boundary of the refuge was novel for its time, as it extends across seven counties and includes over 60 miles of the Rappahannock River shoreline.



U.S. Senator John Warner, his daughter Virginia Warner and Chief Ann Richardson of the Rappahannock Tribe at the 2017 celebration marking the return of an acre of land to the tribe. PHOTO BY PETER TURCIK

Today, visitors can walk trails, launch canoes and kayaks, fish and hunt and enjoy abundant wildlife, thanks to early advocates like Sen. Warner.

His love of the Rappahannock River and its namesake refuge did not end there, but continued well after his retirement from the Senate. He was fascinated by the convergence of bald eagles that occurs along the Rappahannock River, particularly at places like Fones Cliffs, a four-mile formation along the tidal-fresh portion of the Rappahannock River in Richmond County. The forested cliffs reach heights of 80 to 100 feet above the river and are composed of diatomaceous earth formed millions of years ago. Our Chesapeake Bay bald eagles have a burgeoning nesting population along the Rappahannock, but what makes the area even more special is its attraction to eagles from the southeast that migrate north in the spring, as well as eagles from New England and Canada that migrate south in the winter. It is a phenomenon unique to the Chesapeake Bay.

Sen. Warner was determined to help save this special place, and his commitment never wavered. His daughter Virginia joined him in that endeavor when she funded the purchase of one acre of land near Fones Cliffs, which Chesapeake Conservancy then donated to the Rappahannock Tribe.

For the tribe, this modest acquisition marked their return to the river that bears their name after an absence of over 350 years. At a celebration of that event in 2017, John and Virginia Warner were featured guests of the Rappahannock Tribe.

We were honored that Sen. Warner agreed to serve on the Chesapeake Conservancy’s board of directors for many years, and he remained an honorary board member until his death.

In 2016, he was presented with the Conservancy’s Champions of the Chesapeake award. During his acceptance speech, Sen. Warner said this about Fones Cliffs: “Like many of you, this is a place that I would like to see conserved for future generations. In fact, I told Joel seeing to that would be one of my signature efforts. This is as important to me as my work to get rid of Embrey Dam, also along the Rappahannock, which robbed many species from being able to migrate upstream. Well, we got that done. Embrey Dam is gone. And now we’re going to get this done too.”

Rest in peace Senator; you did your part, we will carry on.

*Versions of this piece also appeared in the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star and the Chesapeake Bay Journal.*

## Donor Spotlight: Colin Harrington

Board Member Colin Harrington has a vision for the future of the Chesapeake.

"The Chesapeake is a national treasure. It's not just our region's greatest natural asset – it's one of the most complex, diverse and productive ecosystems in the world," said Colin. "Those of us who live within the watershed gain substantial benefit from that proximity, and yet (despite decades of intense effort) the Bay remains threatened. Achieving national park status would put the Chesapeake on par with other iconic U.S. landscapes – and would also bring resources and visibility to the fight to ensure protection of the Bay for future generations."

Colin has been a fierce advocate for the Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA). As a business owner and lover of the Chesapeake, it wasn't hard for Colin to see the benefits of joining the CEOs for CNRA program.

"There are clear and well-documented 'headline' economic benefits for national

park gateway localities – these range from increased tourism and enhanced local GDP (starting with additional spending at our local businesses) to growth in property values and expansion of regional tax bases.

That said, as someone who's chosen to locate my business in this region, I see a huge number of important social benefits as well. Improvements in quality of life. Improved community equity and inclusion thanks to greater public access. Enhanced talent recruitment as the region becomes an even more desirable location in which to live. The attraction of new residents and the retention of existing residents. Greater shared appreciation for the place we choose to call home."

CEOs for CNRA is a network of executives leading the call to build business community support for the CNRA. We are seeking like-minded, visionary leaders to champion the growing effort to secure National Park System unit status for the Chesapeake Bay.



Colin Harrington COURTESY PHOTO

"I believe the establishment of a national park unit for the Chesapeake will bring significant benefit to the community in which I've chosen to raise children and grow a business. Our group, CEOs for CNRA, is seeking like-minded leaders to help build momentum for this audacious and important effort."

We invite you and other passionate business owners to join our CEOs for CNRA program. Contact Matthew Provost at 508.317.1695 or [mprovost@chesapeakeconservancy.org](mailto:mprovost@chesapeakeconservancy.org).

## Conservancy Board & Staff News



Joel Dunn, president and CEO of Chesapeake Conservancy, presents a framed replica of Captain John Smith's map of Virginia to Verna Harrison in appreciation of her six years of service to the Chesapeake Conservancy's board of directors. PHOTO BY JODY COUSER

Verna Harrison rotated off of the board, having served since 2015. Chesapeake Conservancy is deeply grateful for her leadership and dedication.

In May, Board Member Maite Arce, president and CEO of Hispanic Access Foundation, moderated a panel discussion on how the Biden Administration's plan to conserve and restore 30% of U.S. lands, waters and ocean by 2030 can pioneer collaborative conservation and restoration strategies on public and private lands while addressing the climate crisis, creating jobs and boosting public health and equity. Panelists included Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, Brenda Mallory, chair of the Council on Environmental Quality and Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation.

Also in May, Board Member Dr. Mamie Parker attended the Maryland Cultural & Conference Center (MC3) unveiling of a mural commemorating historical Carr's Beach in Annapolis. Designed by Comacell Brown, the mural recognizes Carr's Beach as one of few historically Black beaches in the area that Black people could safely visit and enjoy during a time of segregation.

President and CEO Joel Dunn recently celebrated 10 years at Chesapeake Conservancy, a true milestone! Dunn's leadership and passion have propelled Chesapeake Conservancy to new heights and helped conserve thousands of acres of land across the Bay watershed.

Senior Geospatial Analyst Emily Wiggins presented at the National Water Monitoring Conference, showcasing Chesapeake Conservancy's partnership with the Water Data Collaborative and our recent web application developed in partnership with the group. The application gathers up-to-date, high-resolution land cover data which will help organizations in their conservation and restoration efforts.

Senior Project Manager Adrienne Gemberling and Geospatial Technology Manager Emily Mills were recent guests on the Waterloop podcast. The pair discussed precision conservation in Pennsylvania and how their work is improving stream health in the Keystone State.



Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley and Dr. Mamie Parker at dedication of Carr's Beach mural  
PHOTO BY MICHAEL BOWMAN





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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.

PHOTO BY SARAH ROSS

