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ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

**Historically Black Beaches
of the Chesapeake**

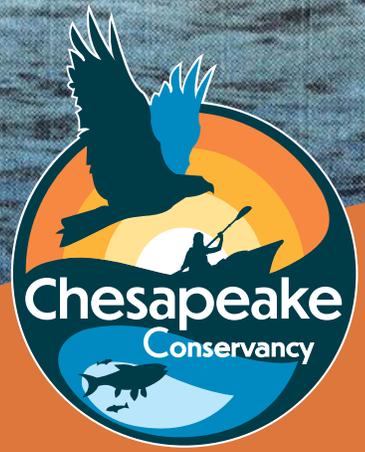
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CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY
Summer 2024 Newsletter

SHORELINES

SAVING THE CHESAPEAKE'S GREAT RIVERS AND SPECIAL PLACES

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This Is How We Win the Fight to Save the Chesapeake Bay

In April, Chesapeake Conservancy joined Pennsylvania government officials and partners at a beautiful farm to mark the moment that the Chesapeake conservation movement changed forever.

This was one farm out of 83,000 farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We stood alongside Turtle Creek, one of the hundreds of thousands of creeks, streams and rivers that flow through the Chesapeake Bay region.

We were there to celebrate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) delisting of two segments of this stream. Delisting means removal of the two segments from the impaired waters list in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) most recent Integrated Water Quality Report, which EPA approved in April 2024. A total of 5 stream segments were delisted in central Pennsylvania as part of the Conservancy’s stream delisting program.

Following 10 years of restoration efforts by Pennsylvania’s Northcentral Stream Partnership, the conservation community has proven the power of partnership and focused restoration work by implementing a strategy that improved this agriculturally impaired stream. A strategy that inspired a movement across Pennsylvania to delist 30 streams by the year 2030, leveraging partnerships and new high-resolution data to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our restoration efforts.

We now have tangible proof that the partnership’s efforts are paying off: aquatic insects are returning to the stream. With political will, federal and state funding, and partnership with landowners, we can deploy this strategy Baywide, saving local streams and, in so doing, the Chesapeake.

As Pennsylvania State Senator Scott Martin said that day, “Pennsylvania has often been in the spotlight, and it’s often talked about how maybe it’s not doing its part. But this 10-year effort brought together multiple state and federal agencies and local organizations with a common goal of cleaning up the water that runs through an agricultural landscape while maintaining a thriving farming community.”

Pennsylvania is setting an example, and states across the watershed are paying



Chesapeake Conservancy’s Executive Vice President of External Affairs Mark Conway (left) and President and CEO Joel Dunn attend the May 8, 2024, bill signing of Maryland’s Whole Watershed Act, legislation inspired by successful strategies in Pennsylvania.
 COURTESY PHOTO

attention. As Maryland’s General Assembly wrapped up its legislative session, it passed the Whole Watershed Act, inspired by this very strategy we celebrated at Turtle Creek.

Chesapeake Conservancy and partners are now taking this partnership and data-driven approach to 18 more streams across central Pennsylvania and are replicating the effort in Lancaster County where the Lancaster Clean Water Partners are coordinating restoration of 39 streams.

This is how we win the fight to save the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

As Ann Swanson, who retired after 35 years as the executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, wrote to me after learning of this partnership achievement, “Your work really does make me believe restoration is possible.” Currently, there are 12 additional stream segments as part of the program that are within 10 points of delisting.

Thank you to the many partners and funders who participated in this achievement and to Senators Gene Yaw and Scott Martin for their political courage in supporting this strategy.

Please read more on page 4 about the moment Chesapeake conservation changed forever.

Sincerely,
 Joel E. Dunn



Shining a Light on Under-told Stories of the Chesapeake

Billie Holiday, Count Basie, James Brown, Ray Charles, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding and Little Richard are among the renowned Black artists who traveled the “Chitlin’ Circuit”—places where Blacks were welcome to enjoy entertainment and recreation during the intense era of Jim Crow laws and forced racial segregation.

While Blacks were prohibited from visiting beaches like Ocean City, Maryland, or Atlantic City, New Jersey, three Chesapeake Bay beaches—Carr’s Beach, Sparrow’s Beach and neighboring Elktonia Beach in Annapolis, Maryland—were vacation getaways and prominent venues that welcomed Blacks.

After years of advocacy and fundraising, in 2022, the City of Annapolis, Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation (BOCF), Chesapeake Conservancy and the state of Maryland entered into an agreement with The Conservation Fund to acquire Elktonia Beach, ultimately creating a waterfront public park where the cultural history of “The Beaches,” as they were called, would be shared with this and future generations.

Following that success, BOCF and Chesapeake Conservancy partnered to create an interactive online map chronicling 65 historically Black beaches and other places of historical significance in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This map will help empower additional conservation efforts, ensuring more stories of the Chesapeake’s Black history are told.

The map highlights places spanning from the landing of the first enslaved Africans in English-occupied North America at Jamestown,

Virginia, to the creation of Black entertainment venues during the time of Jim Crow.

The map is based on extensive research of online resources such as newspapers, blogs, state web pages and the *Negro Motorist Green Book*. Identified locations are beaches, parks or supporting infrastructures that have significance and are related to nearby waterways. Chesapeake Conservancy and BOCF acknowledge that the list is probably incomplete. They hope this first edition will lead to discovering information on even more beaches that are significant to Black history in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

“It’s so important that we continue to do the hard work of ensuring that the story of the Chesapeake is told through ebony eyes,” said BOCF President and Founder Vince Leggett. “African American land conservation and heritage preservation have become the ‘gold standard’ for measuring the future success of the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation. We are equally sensitive to the sea level rise, climate change and the effects of environmental hazards. Many of the sites identified in this study are situated on the water’s edge, and our elders, truth-tellers and griots are disappearing at a rate far surpassing vanishing shoreline,” continued Leggett.

“After partnering with Blacks of the Chesapeake and others to conserve the historically Black Elktonia Beach for a public park in Annapolis, we knew we couldn’t stop there,” said Chesapeake Conservancy Executive Vice President Mark Conway. “There are so

many other places in the Chesapeake that are significant to Black history. Some are painful reminders of the dark days of enslavement, while others are more joyous stories of recreation, entertainment and culture. All of these stories need to be told. We hope the study will lead to other Black history and conservation success stories.”

The map of beaches and sites of Black historical significance in the Chesapeake is available on Chesapeake Conservancy’s website at www.chesapeakeconservancy.org.



IMAGE COURTESY OF MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES

Elktonia-Carr’s Beach Heritage Park Expanded

Just over a year and a half after Elktonia-Carr’s Beach Heritage Park was opened to the public in August 2022, the acquisition of an adjacent 0.67-acre property once owned by Dr. Parlett Moore, a former president of Coppin State University, expanded the park. Funding for this acquisition came from the City of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, The Conservation Fund, Blacks of the Chesapeake, Chesapeake Conservancy, Maryland Heritage Area Authority and hundreds of private donors, including Merrill Family Foundation, France-Merrick Foundation and the William L. and Victorine Q. Adams Foundation, Inc.

According to Vince Leggett, BOCF president and founder, the expansion “represents another historic milestone of achievement for the 20-year odyssey to preserve the last vestiges of African American land situated directly on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay.”



The City of Annapolis welcomes visitors during the property improvement process. Access to Elktonia Park and Carr’s Beach includes a quarter-mile interpreted walking path across the street from the campus of Annapolis Maritime Museum Park, located at 7300 Edgewood Road.

Blacks of the Chesapeake President and Founder Vince Leggett (left) and The Conservation Fund Maryland State Director Bill Crouch celebrate the expansion of Elktonia-Carr’s Beach Heritage Park.

PHOTO BY J.T. DEAN/CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY



Turning Point for Chesapeake Bay Restoration: Stream Delisting

This called for a celebration: two segments of Turtle Creek in Union County, Pennsylvania, were removed, or “delisted” from the federal Clean Water Act impaired waters list following 10 years of a partnership effort.

At a seventh-generation farm (soon to be eighth when new family members move in) along Turtle Creek, state officials and conservationists gathered in April to mark a turning point in Chesapeake conservation. Finally, they had tangible proof. Stream restoration is possible.

The Turtle Creek watershed in southeastern Union County is a prime example of how strong partnerships, innovation and sustained and strategic investments have restored local streams. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) worked with other agency partners to restore eroding streambanks and reduce sediment at the source, inches away from the stream, and as a result, stream segments at Turtle Creek Park are being delisted in DEP’s 2024 Integrated Water Quality Report, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved in April 2024.

“We are proud to showcase the significant accomplishments made to improve Turtle Creek and the surrounding watershed.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Chesapeake Bay Program Acting Deputy Director Khesha Reed, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Policy Director Nicole Faraguna, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer, Pennsylvania State Senator Gene Yaw, Pennsylvania State Senator Scott Martin, Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn, Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy Executive Director Renee Carey and Union County Conservation District Watershed and Program Specialist Savannah Rhoads

PHOTO BY PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Restoring water quality and habitat while maintaining the watershed as a working agricultural landscape was no small undertaking, and it is yielding incredible results,” said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. “The Turtle Creek watershed is a prime example of how strong partnerships, innovation, and sustained and strategic investments have restored local streams. This success would not have been possible without our state and local agency partners, including the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy and county conservation districts. Together, we’ll restore more streams and protect more watersheds across Pennsylvania.”

“The Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy is thrilled to see the northcentral stream partnership’s work is creating cleaner water in Turtle Creek and other streams throughout the region,” said Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy Executive Director Renee Carey. “It’s a team effort to select, design, and implement each and every project. We’re grateful to be part of a team that is improving local waterways one project at a time.”

“The success we celebrate today is just the start of what we can achieve when we apply funding in a more strategic way and align it

with local goals and expertise. With the new Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program directing funding to agriculturally impaired waters based on local priorities and expansion of Chesapeake Conservancy’s data-driven guidance, we are equipping our local partners to push the gas pedal on their clean water efforts,” said Pennsylvania Delegation Chair, Chesapeake Bay Commission Senator Gene Yaw.

“Today’s event is recognition of the success of Pennsylvania’s efforts to support healthier waterways, including the Clean Streams Fund, which is being held up as a national model for other states. We are proud to be stepping up with new ideas that are focused first on Pennsylvania’s own waters but also benefit our neighbors downstream,” said Appropriations Committee Chair Senator Scott Martin.

“Today, at Turtle Creek, the conservation community has proven the power of partnership by implementing a strategic and focused approach to improving agriculturally impaired waterways, marking a turning point for the Chesapeake Bay restoration movement,” said Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn. “Now what we need is the will and additional resources to

deploy this type of data-driven, successful strategy watershed-wide.”

“The success story being written here on Turtle Creek is nothing short of remarkable and should inspire us to keep working to conserve, protect, and enhance our aquatic resources statewide,” said Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Tim Schaeffer. “By improving the water quality locally, the benefits are ultimately realized hundreds of miles downstream where fish and other aquatic life benefit throughout the Susquehanna River watershed and the Chesapeake Bay.”

“Now what we need is the will and additional resources to deploy this type of data-driven, successful strategy watershed-wide.”

—CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY PRESIDENT AND CEO **JOEL DUNN**

For more information about the ongoing Turtle Creek restoration effort, view the interactive story map at dep.pa.gov/turtlecreek. Chesapeake Conservancy also produced a brief

video about the stream delisting, which is available on the Conservancy’s website at www.chesapeakeconservancy.org.



Soon-to-be-eighth-generation farm owned by Mary Beth and Frank Griffith in East Buffalo Township, Union County, Pennsylvania, site of the celebration event

PHOTO BY PENNSYLVANIA DEP

Major Step Forward for the Chesapeake National Recreation Area

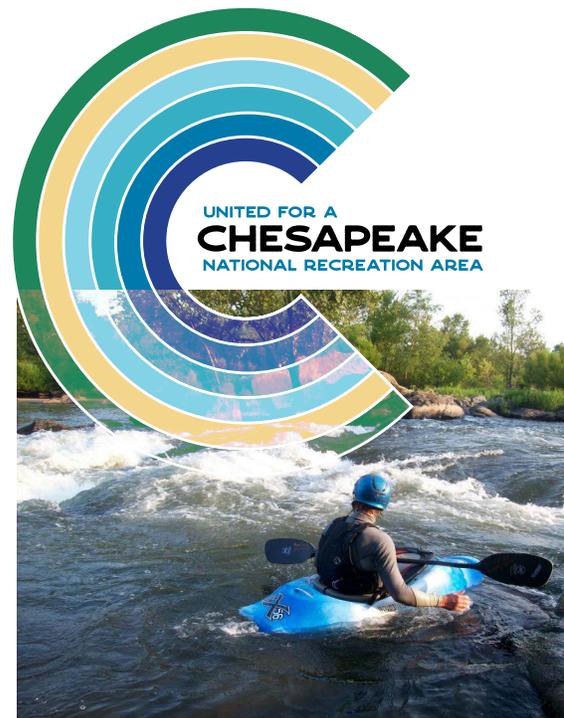
On May 15, the National Parks Subcommittee of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act (CNRA) (S. 2620). The bill was introduced by Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.); co-sponsors include Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Tim Kaine (D-Va.).

If passed into law, the CNRA would create a network of landmarks along the Chesapeake Bay and unite new and existing National Park Service sites and trails, as well as partner parks. The key goals of this initiative are to increase sustainable public access to the Bay so a more diverse range of visitors can enjoy it, preserve its natural ecosystems and tell the untold stories of Indigenous peoples, free and enslaved Blacks and others with historical connections to the Bay.

“Thanks to Sen. Van Hollen’s leadership, this is a great day for the Chesapeake Bay, with

another step forward in the four-decade effort to establish National Park Service recognition for the nation’s largest estuary,” said Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn. “The Chesapeake Bay is as spectacular as Yellowstone or Yosemite, as great as the Great Smokies and as grand as the Grand Tetons. Establishing the Chesapeake National Recreation Area expands resources for environmental protection and makes it clear that the United States cherishes the Chesapeake, the birthplace of American identity. As a great gift to future generations, this legislation ensures public access to our nation’s largest estuary while providing for the needs of those who live here and depend on the Bay for their livelihood.”

Visit united4cnra.com for information on supporting CNRA designation.



Designation as the Chesapeake National Recreation Area would increase access, enjoyment and preservation of the Chesapeake’s special places.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN DOYLE

A New Wildlife Refuge for the Chesapeake?

The public comment period concluded in April for the proposed Southern Maryland Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge that would include lands in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties. If approved, the refuge will be the first established in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in 26 years.

Lands considered for conservation would promote connectivity of mature forests, protect wetlands and further the ecological integrity of natural communities in southern Maryland.

As proposed, the new refuge will consist of four watershed-based units: the Lower Patuxent-Calvert Unit, Nanjemoy-Mattawoman Unit, Zekiah-Wicomico Unit and McIntosh Run-St. Mary's Unit.

The acquisition boundary covers about 577,420 acres. Within this geography, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to acquire up to 40,000 acres through a combination of fee-simple and conservation easement purchases from willing sellers.



The wildlife refuge would protect wetlands and other habitat for green heron and a variety of diverse species.

PHOTO BY ROGER SMITH

The proposed wildlife refuge, to be managed as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, would provide valuable habitat for fish and wildlife, support migrating waterfowl, protect water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and offer recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing.

CHESAPEAKE BAY PADDLE IS BACK!

July 20, 2024

Paddle races and a post-paddle festival!

Proceeds benefit the Oyster Recovery Partnership, Chesapeake Conservancy and Waterkeepers Chesapeake.

Thank you to founder Chris Hopkinson and sponsors! Visit baypaddle.org to learn more.

Maryland Meets 30% Land Conservation Goal Six Years Ahead of Schedule

On May 15, Maryland Governor Wes Moore and Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources Joshua Kurtz announced that the state has achieved a milestone goal for land conservation six years ahead of schedule.

The legislation, known as the Maryland the Beautiful Act, established goals of conserving 30% of the state by 2030 and 40% by 2040. The Maryland Department of Planning, in the latest update of the [Maryland Protected Lands Dashboard](#), reports that Maryland has already met the 30% mark, with more than 1.85 million acres conserved as of February 2024. The percentage of protected lands within Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed has also surpassed 30%.

"In response to the global nature crisis, Maryland continues to set the bar for the nation in meeting President Biden's executive order to conserve 30% of the nation's land and waters by 2030," said Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn. "Achieving the 30% goal six years ahead of schedule gives us the surge we need to meet the next goal, conserving 40% of the state's lands by 2040."



Maryland Governor Wes Moore (left) and Secretary of Maryland Department of Natural Resources Joshua Kurtz visit Bacon Ridge Natural Area near Annapolis.

PHOTO BY MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Wildlife Webcams

The peregrine scrape at 100 Light Street in Baltimore, home to one of Chesapeake Conservancy's three wildlife webcams, celebrates an anniversary this year. Forty years ago, Scarlett, the building's first peregrine, had her first successful mating with a wild peregrine, later named Beaugard. They produced the first natural-born peregrines bred in an urban environment on the East Coast in three decades.

We thank explore.org and the property hosts for making another great cam season possible! You, too, can join a worldwide audience in enjoying livestreams of the peregrines, as well as webcams of osprey and great blue heron at chesapeakeconservancy.org/webcams.



Peregrine falcon eyasses on the 33rd floor of 100 Light Street in Baltimore, Maryland

PHOTO BY CRAIG KOPPIE

Donor Spotlight: Wilt Corkern

Dr. Wilt Corkern has been a champion of Chesapeake Conservancy since its inception. Wilt and his late wife, Mary Bruce, have been long-time dedicated stewards of the Bay's watershed lands and their history. For 22 years, Wilt served as president of the Accokeek Foundation in Maryland, which manages land within Piscataway Park and runs education programming on the culture of the Piscataway people and historic and sustainable farming practices.

He has been a dedicated supporter and volunteer for Chesapeake Conservancy, serving as a member of the Chesapeake Council. "I have supported the Conservancy since its founding, and I am deeply impressed with the breadth and depth of its many accomplishments so far and with the



Mary Bruce and Wilt Corkern

skill and dedication of its leadership and staff. All that makes Chesapeake Conservancy one of the most effective organizations I know," says Corkern.

Bay conservation is a lifelong commitment and a deeply meaningful calling for him. He adds, "I believe that our natural and cultural resources are the key to our region's prosperity and quality of life. I have chosen to honor my wife's memory by supporting Chesapeake Conservancy because I know that its results-oriented approach to conservation will ensure that those resources are here for future generations to use and enjoy."

Check out our many accomplishments in the FY 2023 Annual Report, now available at [chesapeakeconservancy.org](https://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org) (see publications).

Thank you to our incredible donors who make our work possible!



Board and Staff News

Chesapeake Conservancy welcomes the new chair of the board of directors **Stephanie Meeks**, the new vice chair **Matthew Earl**, the new secretary **Ed Hatcher** and three new directors: **Daniel M. Ashe**, **Scott Phillips** and **Philip Tabas**. Additionally, the board of directors named **Randall Larrimore** an emeritus director for having served as chair since 2020. **Marc Bunting**, **Leslie Delagran**, **Dr. Mamie Parker**, **Tony Spencer** and **Molly Ward** have concluded their board service.



Board Chair Stephanie Meeks

COURTESY PHOTO

"On behalf of the board, I am pleased to welcome our new board members," said Chesapeake Conservancy Board Chair Stephanie Meeks. "I look forward to serving as chair during this exciting time of growth and opportunity for Chesapeake Conservancy as we work with our partners to protect 30% of the Chesapeake Bay watershed by 2030."

"We have so much gratitude for Randall Larrimore and his exceptional leadership, particularly through the pandemic and many of the organization's most significant accomplishments. We also thank the former board members for their extraordinary dedication to Chesapeake Conservancy," Meeks continued.

Zoe Fried has joined Chesapeake Conservancy staff as the new development and annual fund coordinator, **Ashley Seymour** as compliance and reporting administrator, and **Logan Stenger** as project manager. New

bilingual interpretive outreach assistants include **Amy Bennett**, **Hilda Zepeda Esquina** and **Rebeca Garcia**.

Sarah Killian has assumed the role of special assistant to the president and CEO. Several team members have new titles: **Ben Alexandro**, program director of the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership; **Mark Conway**, executive vice president of external affairs; **Louis Keddell**, conservation data program manager; **Elliott Kurtz**, geospatial data engineer; **Alicia Sabatino**, GIS web developer/cartographer; **Helen Sieracki**, HR manager; **Lisa Spallitta**, finance and IT manager; **Steve Stork**, project manager and **Katie Walker**, Chesapeake geospatial program manager. Bilingual Interpretive Outreach Assistant **Isabel Layton** and Geospatial Analyst **Ndumezulu Mpopu** have left the organization for new roles.

Show Your Support for Chesapeake Conservancy!

Visit our online store and stock up for summer!

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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. OUR CFC ID NUMBER IS 27293.



Use Your Real Estate to Leave a Legacy for Future Generations

One of the most significant ways you can leave a legacy for future generations is by **donating your land** to Chesapeake Conservancy. As development encroaches on the last open spaces in the Chesapeake watershed, we encourage landowners to consider **Chesapeake Conservancy's Giftlands Program**. Your gift may qualify you for a federal income tax deduction or other tax benefits. Seek the advice of your financial or legal advisor to make sure this gift fits your goals.

This is the **greatest gift** that you can leave behind.
This is your legacy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT
[GIVING@CHESAPEAKECONSERVANCY.ORG](mailto:giving@chesapeakeconservancy.org)



We've Moved!
Earl Conservation Center

PHOTO BY SUE BUYASKAS

We look forward to welcoming you to our new shared space after the renovations are complete.

We are receiving mail at the new address:

Chesapeake Conservancy
Earl Conservation Center
1212 West Street
Annapolis, MD 21401



PHOTO BY KELLY VERDECK