

Inaugural Class of Chesapeake Conservation Corps Volunteers Announced

Program administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust provides hands-on job training and leadership education for young people throughout Maryland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Annapolis, MD) November 15, 2010 – Today the Chesapeake Bay Trust unveiled its Chesapeake Conservation Corps, a new program that provides service-learning opportunities and green job training for young people through environmental and energy conservation projects. The initiative, enacted by the Maryland Legislature and signed into law by Governor Martin O’Malley, pairs young adults with watershed organizations, local governments and other community-based organizations throughout Maryland. Over the course of the year-long program, Corps volunteers will receive hands-on environmental, leadership and technical training opportunities at the same time that they provide environmental outreach and stewardship assistance to their host organizations and the communities they serve.

“The Chesapeake Conservation Corps is another exciting opportunity for Maryland youth to develop green job skills while having a positive impact in the natural world,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “With the leadership of Senate President Mike Miller and our great partners at the Chesapeake Bay Trust, these young stewards are helping creating a smarter, greener future for Maryland.”

During today's event, U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin, Maryland State Senate President Mike Miller, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Assistant Secretary of Land Resources Kristin Saunders Evans, and House of Delegates Member Doyle Niemann were joined by John Quinn, Director of Environmental Issues for funding partner Constellation Energy and representatives from the office of Congressman John Sarbanes, as well as members of the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Chesapeake Conservation Corps Board of Directors.

“The Chesapeake Conservation Corps provides a unique opportunity for Maryland’s young people to learn firsthand about preserving the environment and the Bay through direct civic engagement,” said Maryland Senate President Mike Miller, the lead sponsor of the legislation that created this initiative. “What better way to learn about what you want to do with your life than by living it day to day and seeing exactly how your actions are making a positive impact?”

In total, 16 young people were matched with 16 organizations statewide. Under the guidance of mentors at their host organizations, the volunteers will work on a variety of environmental initiatives including energy efficiency programs, restoration activities and clean-ups, water quality monitoring programs, reforestation projects and job training programs for youth. The Corps volunteers are between the ages of 18 and 25 and come from diverse geographic and

educational backgrounds, ranging from previous environmental outreach experience to working with international service corps organizations.

“The Chesapeake Bay is the environmental heart of our state. It is also the economic engine that powers our regional economy. The Conservation Corps recognizes that connection by providing the skills and training needed for jobs in the emerging green economy,” said Senator Benjamin L. Cardin. “Habit restoration projects involve a broad-range of skills that are needed to restore and protect the environment, improve health and stimulate future technological innovations.”

In its first year, the program is funded by the State of Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, and Constellation Energy. Volunteers are paid a stipend and are covered for the costs of health insurance and travel. In addition to the on-the-job training they receive at their host organizations and focused leadership and technical training provided by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Corps volunteers will be offered the opportunity to enroll in environmental career certificate programs offered by a consortium of Maryland community colleges.

The host organizations are located throughout Maryland, with five in Anne Arundel County, four in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, three in Prince George’s County, two in Frederick County, and two on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. The participating organizations include: Accokeek Foundation, Alice Ferguson Foundation, Anacostia Watershed Society, Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, Baltimore County Dept. of Protection & Resource Management, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Frederick County Office of Environmental Sustainability, HandsOn Frederick, Maryland Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education, Maryland Coastal Bay Program, Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources Civic Justice Program, Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, National Aquarium in Baltimore, Parks and People Foundation, Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, and the South River Federation.

“The Trust’s mission is to increase citizen involvement in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay,” said Allen Hance, Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Trust. “The Chesapeake Conservation Corps program seeks not only to involve these talented young individuals with today’s restoration programs and initiatives, but also to challenge them to become leaders in tomorrow’s green economy.”

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust:

The Chesapeake Bay Trust is a state-chartered, nonprofit grant-making organization, sparking on-the-ground change in communities throughout Maryland and the broader Bay watershed. Since its inception in 1985, the Trust has awarded more than \$30 million in grants and engaged hundreds of thousands of citizen stewards in projects that have a measurable impact on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The Trust is supported by the sale of the Maryland Treasure the Chesapeake license plate, donations to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund on the Maryland State income tax form, donations from individuals and corporations, and partnerships with private foundations and federal and state agencies. Fully 90 percent of the Trust’s expenditures are directed to its Chesapeake Bay restoration and education programs.