



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

STANDING OUR GROUND, STANDING TOGETHER



Dear friends,

This year, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation faced one of the most challenging federal landscapes in recent memory. Critical environmental protections were stalled or rolled back, and the workforce and funding for clean-water programs were threatened. Our mission to save the Bay has never been more urgent—or more vital.

The Chesapeake Bay is not just a body of water. It is the largest estuary in the United States, a sanctuary of biodiversity, and a source of life and livelihood for nearly 19 million people across six states and the District of Columbia. Its rivers and streams nourish farms, sustain fisheries, and provide drinking water to millions. Its wetlands buffer communities from flooding, and its forests filter pollution before it reaches the Bay.

On countless occasions, we saw firsthand what's at stake. Several water-quality goals set for 2025 were missed, prompting renewed urgency and reassessment for the next Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Sea-level rise, warming waters, and heightened storms strained communities and complicated restoration strategies. And cuts to federal grants and staffing halted regenerative agriculture projects and derailed critical Bay collaboration.

Yet, despite these challenges, we also saw resilience. Thousands of volunteers planted trees, built oyster reefs, and restored shorelines.

Students explored the Bay's tributaries, learning to protect the ecosystems they call home. Bay advocates, backed by your support, secured key policy wins in statehouses as state leaders joined to protect the health and vitality of our shared watershed.

The Bay—and the people, cultures, and economies it sustains—is worth fighting for.

The road ahead is steep, but our resolve is strong. Thank you for standing with us. Together, we are a powerful force for clean water, resilient communities, and a thriving Chesapeake Bay.

With determination and gratitude,



Otis S. Jones

Otis S. Jones
Board Chair



Hilary Falk

Hilary Falk
President and CEO

OUR MISSION

Save the Bay and its waterways
by educating, uniting, and inspiring
people to take action.

OUR VISION

A healthy and resilient Chesapeake Bay
ecosystem where people, plants,
and animals thrive together.

00 A Message from Our President and Chair
01 Mission and Vision
02 Highlights of the Year
06 Facing Federal Headwinds

08 Outdoor Education in Every Sense
10 The Future of Our Fisheries
12 Donor Acknowledgments
29 Financial Overview

2024

AUGUST

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, spurred by the leadership of CBF, voted to pursue stronger protections against industrial menhaden fishing in the Bay. Menhaden are a keystone fish critical to striped bass, ospreys, and the Bay's overall food web.

JULY

CBF advocacy helped secure **\$50 million in Pennsylvania's budget** to extend clean-water programs that support farmers and reduce pollution in rivers and streams.



SEPTEMBER

The CBF Education team celebrated another successful summer season of immersive field experiences for students and teachers, including the **Middle School Bay Eco-Camp** at Port Isobel and a five-day student leadership expedition with Washington College where students could earn college credit.



Construction began on two new, **cutting-edge electric vessels** for our Education Programs.



CBF convened **federal, state, and local decision makers** on Tangier Island to advance climate change mitigation and resilience efforts.



CBF's oyster restoration team deployed **600 concrete reef structures** in the St. Mary's River oyster sanctuary, one of the program's most ambitious habitat-building efforts to date.

TOP ROW: CARMERA THOMAS-WILHITE/CBF STAFF, CBF STAFF, JOCELYN TUTTLE/CBF STAFF
BOTTOM ROW: KENNY FLETCHER/CBF STAFF, ANDREW WOOD/CBF STAFF, KARL WILLEY/CBF STAFF

OCTOBER

More than 100 volunteers teamed up with CBF and the city of Hampton, Virginia, to construct a **158-foot living shoreline** that strengthens native habitats and stabilizes the shore against erosion and rising seas.



NOVEMBER

CBF celebrated a near record-breaking year for its **Virginia Oyster Gardening Program** with 627 volunteers raising and returning over 110,000 oysters—capable of filtering up to 5.5 million gallons of water.



DECEMBER

60 Minutes featured CBF President and CEO Hilary Harp Falk, who shared insights from Smith Island, highlighting the resilience of frontline Bay residents confronting the realities of sea-level rise.



The Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership, coordinated by CBF, added 130,000 new trees in Pennsylvania during the fall planting season. This is just part of the 2.7 million trees added this fiscal year that will clean our water, reduce erosion, capture CO2 from the atmosphere, and more.



The Chesapeake Oyster Alliance, founded and led by CBF, presented their 2025 Innovation Awards to 17 groups, awarding \$150,000 in grants for oyster restoration projects with new technologies, public education initiatives, and aquaculture techniques. Support for these projects brings us closer to the goal of adding 10 billion oysters to the Bay.

State, federal, and local leaders of the **Chesapeake Executive Council** convened, pledging to update the Chesapeake Bay Agreement—which guides federal-state restoration efforts—by the end of 2025.

2025

JANUARY

CBF adopted a new **five-year strategic plan** focused on science-backed strategies, collaboration, and innovation.

CBF launched a partnership with **Newport News Public Schools** on a two-year climate literacy project that will train educators to develop climate curriculum tailored to local issues.



FEBRUARY

The **Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative** elected a CBF representative to lead its efforts to support Eastern Shore farmers while protecting waterways and communities from poultry farming pollution.



CBF advocates and oyster growers **engaged lawmakers** in Annapolis, highlighting the importance of funding, programs, and legislation critical to restoring oysters and protecting the Bay.

MARCH

Five Maryland watersheds were selected for the state's new **Whole Watershed Act Pilot Program**, aimed at accelerating restoration across entire river systems, with CBF aiding efforts in the Severn, Antietam, and Choptank Rivers.



APRIL

The **Virginia Senate** appointed a CBF representative to the legislative committee focused on tackling recurrent flooding across the Commonwealth, reinforcing CBF's role in addressing climate-driven challenges.

Pennsylvania announced that the **Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program** finalized more than 1,300 contracts with a value of \$1.13 million over two years. The program, which CBF helped create and promote, expands conservation practices on farms.



CBF took a stand against the proposed **AquaCon salmon farm** in Cecil County, Maryland, by challenging its permit. The farm poses serious threats to water quality, underwater grasses, and spawning areas in the Susquehanna River and the Bay.

TOP ROW: CBF STAFF, SUSAN SIMONSON, BRIAN GISH/CBF STAFF
BOTTOM ROW: NIKKI DAVIS, BROOKE LANDRY/MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

MAY

Maryland Governor Wes Moore signed the **Bay Legacy Act**—championed by CBF—to boost water quality and economic growth through green infrastructure and pollution reduction.



CBF launched its **largest living shoreline project** to date in Hampton, Virginia, spanning more than 1,000 feet and combining oyster reefs and marsh plantings to protect against erosion and sea-level rise.



JUNE

CBF hosted the **Mid-Atlantic Climate Change Education Conference** concurrently at the Philip Merrill Environmental Center in Annapolis and the Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach, with 130 educators from across the watershed in attendance.

More than 2,600 volunteers turned out for CBF's annual **Clean the Bay Day**, removing 48,000 pounds of litter from Virginia waterways and making a powerful statement for clean water and community action.



CBF purchased a former shucking house in Galesville, Maryland, and is transforming it into the **Truman T. Semans Center for Oyster Restoration and Innovation**, a center for Bay-wide oyster restoration, innovation, and collaboration.



CBF and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science announced their new collaboration on a **Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card**.

Virginia completed its commitment to restore oyster reefs in six tributaries. This marked a major milestone in the **world's largest oyster restoration project**, in which CBF continues to be a partner and advocate.

TOP ROW: JOE ANDRUCYK/GOVERNOR MOORE'S OFFICE, KATI GRIGSBY/CBF STAFF, SUE MANGAN PHOTOGRAPHY
BOTTOM ROW: CONCEPTUAL RENDERING BY BIGNELL WATKINS HASSER ARCHITECTURE, KATI GRIGSBY/CBF STAFF



Facing Federal Headwinds

CBF is fighting federal cuts that risk destroying more than 40 years of collaborative federal and state efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay.

This year, the Trump administration rolled out an existential crisis for the decades-long Chesapeake Bay restoration effort with sweeping staffing, funding, and budget cuts to agencies and organizations critical to Bay restoration work, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Geological Survey, and the National Parks System.

CBF stepped up as an outspoken leader on behalf of the Bay movement, coordinating with partner organizations, farmers, educators, and watershed communities to convey the urgency of protecting the Bay restoration movement. This included filing a friend of the court brief to support the fight against defunding agricultural conservation work.

Because most of our funding comes from our remarkable donors, we are well-positioned to hold the line, fight back, and speak on behalf of our many partners whose work relies heavily on federal funding. Partners like Pennsylvania farmers.

A CHALLENGE IN PENNSYLVANIA



In April, the federal government froze grants awarded to support conservation practices on Pennsylvania farms, leaving behind unpaid contracts, people out of work, and obstacles to reducing pollution to local waters and the Chesapeake Bay.

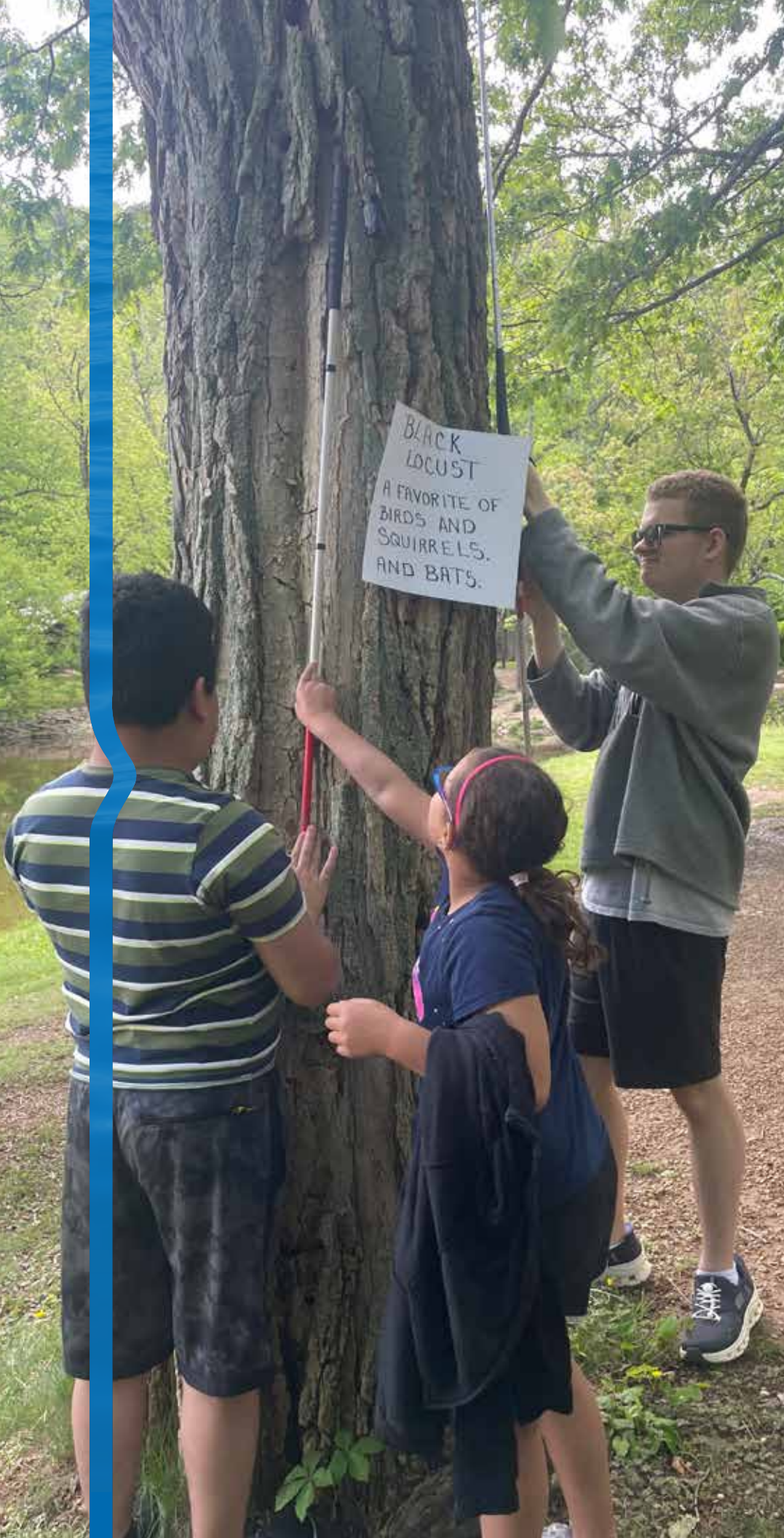
In Berks County, new trees at Deanne Boyer's farm would have absorbed and filtered runoff that flows into nearby Willow Creek. "By planting these trees, we could increase our water infiltration in

our pastures, which in our area particularly, we've been seeing a lot of heavy rainfall and storms—and a lot of water runoff," Boyer said.

Doing the right thing for clean water costs money up front. To do that, the agriculture community needs federal support it can depend on. Without signed contracts, projects like the one Boyer wanted to install went dormant.

CBF has facilitated the investment of over \$40 million

in conservation efforts across Pennsylvania since 1997, partnering with more than 5,000 farmers to implement proven practices like cover-cropping and planting streamside trees that keep our water clean and our communities healthy. Leveraging federal and state dollars with CBF-raised funds, we have restored nearly 20,000 acres of streamside forest and more than 6,000 acres of wetlands.



Outdoor Learning in Every Sense

Students from the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind explored Sherando Lake through touch, smell, and shared discovery on an outing with the CBF Environmental Education Team in Virginia.

This spring, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation welcomed 26 blind and visually impaired students and their dedicated teachers from the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind for a unique field experience at Lake Sherando in Virginia. After a few thoughtful interviews and coordination with the school's educators, our education team worked carefully to design a day filled with sensory-rich, hands-on learning tailored to blind students.

Set in a lush forest near Lake Sherando, the trip emphasized equal access to environmental education. Guided by a rope walk winding through trees and over streams, students explored habitats using scent, touch, and sound. They marveled at wild azaleas' floral scent, the coarse bark of red oaks, and the crunchy leaf litter underfoot. Using tactile measuring tapes and white canes, students measured trees and identified species by texture and using large-print information cards.

In small groups led by CBF staff, students conducted water-quality testing and discovered Eastern newts swimming in shallow pools, learning how these delicate creatures respond to pollution. Donning waders, they examined macroinvertebrates with their hands and immersed themselves in the surprise and delight of local ecology.

To deepen students' understanding of the lake's connection to the Bay watershed, educator Ken Slazyk introduced a three-dimensional watershed model and other tactile tools that helped bring the region's ecology to life. Rising 11th-grader Amayah Hall said, "Everyone learned something new that day. The water that we tested was healthy, which I appreciated knowing about. I felt very included, and like the CBF educators held us to the same standard that they would anybody else. I would love to go back."

For the CBF Education team, the students' curiosity was inspiring. Whether it was the animals, trees, or tactile models that resonated most with each student, their excitement proved that when opportunity meets innovation, learning becomes limitless.



DEIDRA FLOYD/CBF STAFF



CBF President Hilary Harp Falk raises a glass to Truman T. Semans, the namesake of the new oyster center, at the groundbreaking in September.

The Future of Our Fisheries

If you've ever eaten a local oyster or watched an osprey slice through the sky to snatch a silvery menhaden, you've felt the magic of the Chesapeake Bay's living waters. Home to hundreds of fish and shellfish species, the Bay's fisheries are woven into the region's culture, economy, and ecology.

This year, CBF took bold action to protect those resources—driving forward innovative oyster restoration efforts and reigniting powerful advocacy for Atlantic menhaden.

OYSTER INNOVATION

This spring, CBF purchased a historic shucking house in Galesville, Maryland, and began the work to transform it into a new hub for oyster restoration, collaboration, and innovation. The center will be called **The Truman T. Semans Center for Oyster Restoration and Innovation**, named in honor of CBF friend and remarkable Chesapeake champion Truman Semans.



"I believe the Chesapeake Bay is the single most important natural resource for people in the United States. It's worth spending all kinds of time, effort, and fortune to keep going in the right direction. And it is going in the right direction."

—LONGTIME CBF SUPPORTER AND HONORARY TRUSTEE TRUMAN SEMANS

MENHADEN ADVOCACY



Recently, CBF ramped up our long-standing fight to strengthen protections for Atlantic menhaden, a keystone fish critical to striped bass, ospreys, and the Bay's overall food web. A coalition of local commercial fishermen, scientists, angler groups, and conservation organizations are standing up to the one foreign-owned industrial fishing corporation, Omega Protein, that is decimating menhaden.

This year, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, spurred by the leadership of CBF, voted to pursue stronger protections against industrial menhaden fishing in the Bay.

We championed legislation to fund a three-year study by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to close key data gaps. Though the powerful fishing industry's lobbyists stalled the bill, the issue is sparking national

attention and renewed urgency for protecting this natural resource.

CBF is actively educating both the public and policymakers to broaden awareness and support for menhaden conservation.

We are committed to sustainable fisheries—restoring what's been lost, protecting what remains, and ensuring the Bay's bounty for generations to come.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

AUDITED FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR FY25

CBF's management practices ensure that operating and capital campaign funds raised in the current year, as well as campaign funds pledged in previous years, are effectively put to use to support programs to save the Bay.

Support and Revenue

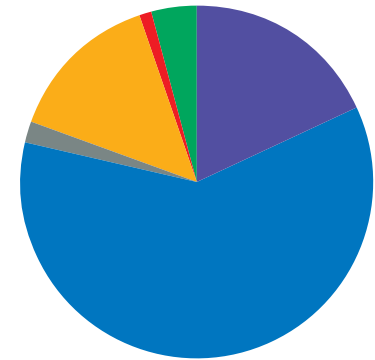
Membership Contributions	6,083,572
Grants & Gifts	21,271,190
Education Contracts & Tuition	578,596
Investment Distribution	4,063,942
Donated Goods & Services	233,029
Other	1,353,635
Revenue for the Current Year	33,583,965

Expenses

Program Services	30,021,886
Environmental Education	8,718,866
Environmental Protection & Restoration	17,562,866
Strategic Communications	3,740,154
Support Services	7,566,857
General & Administrative	3,096,082
Fundraising	4,470,775
Total Expenses	37,588,743

Change in Net Assets Before Capital Additions	(4,004,778)*
Capital Additions	3,058,146
Change in Net Assets	(946,632)
Net Assets, Beginning of year	123,142,296
Net Assets, End of Year	122,195,964

* (\$3,338,193) is related to Making History Campaign and future expenditures.



REVENUE

18% Membership Contributions

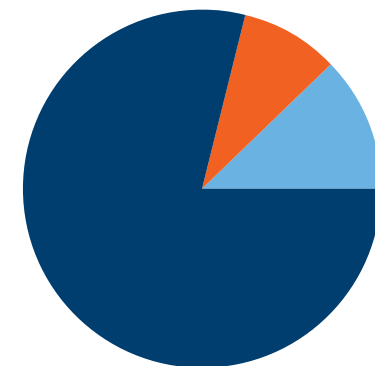
63% Grants & Gifts

2% Education Contracts & Tuition

12% Investment Distribution

1% Donated Goods & Services

4% Other



EXPENSES

80% Program Services

8% General & Administrative

12% Fundraising



Candid Platinum Transparency 2023 Level



America's Best Charities Seal of Excellence



Charity Navigator Four-Star Rating

CBF also meets all the BBB Wise Giving Alliance's Standards for Charity Accountability.



Maryland

Philip Merrill
Environmental Center
6 Herndon Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21403
410-268-8816

Eastern Shore
114 South Washington
Street
Suite 103
Easton, MD 21601
410-543-1999

Clagett Farm and CSA
11904 Old Marlboro Pike
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Pennsylvania

100 Wildwood Way
Harrisburg, PA 17110
717-234-5550

Virginia

1108 East Main Street
Suite 1600
Richmond, VA 23219
804-780-1392

Brock Environmental
Center
3663 Marlin Bay Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
757-622-1964

Washington, D.C.

202-544-2232

COVER PHOTO:
CASON TOWNSEND

Officers

Otis S. Jones
Board Chair
Ann Pelham
Vice Chair Elect
Hilary Harp Falk
President and CEO
Tola Sanni
Treasurer
Alan R. Griffith Chair
William A. Agee
Secretary

Honorary Trustees

Donald F. Boesch, Ph.D.
George L. Bunting Jr.
W. Russell G. Byers Jr.
D. Keith Campbell
Michael J. Chiaramonte
Louisa C. Duemling
Richard L. Franyo
Alan R. Griffith
Carolyn Groobey
Ann Fritz Hackett
C.A. Porter Hopkins
T. Gaylon Layfield III
Harry T. Lester
Byron F. Marchant
Wayne A. Mills
Pamela B. Murphy
Elizabeth Oliver-Farrow
Arnold I. Richman
Marie W. Ridder
James E. Rogers
Truman T. Semans
Simon Sidamon-Eristoff
J. Sedwick Sollers III
Jennifer Stanley
Bishop Eugene Taylor Sutton
Stephen M. Wolf
Alan L. Wurtzel

Trustees

Marnie Abramson
Dara C. Bachman
R. Bruce Bradley
Marc G. Bunting
George B. Clarke IV
Brian Cobb
Jennifer Economos
Mihran Erkiletian
Margaret M. Freeman
Alexandra Grayson
Stanley Trustee
Harry S. Gruner
Timothy W. Hathaway
Richard S. Hoffman
Ann D. Horner
Jonathan D. Manekin
Anne Mehringer
Mamie A. Parker, Ph.D.
Crystal Patterson
Nick Pomponi
Samara Pyfrom
Stanley Trustee
Christa Riepe
Nathaniel J. Rose
Kathryn Gilchrist Simpson
J. Sedwick Sollers III
J. Alex Ward
Denice Heller Wardrop

Senior Staff

Hilary Harp Falk
President and CEO

Thomas W. Ackerman
Vice President
Environmental Education
Henry L. and Grace Doherty Chair

William A. Agee
Vice President for Operations

Rob Beach
Vice President for Marketing and
Communications

Everett Marshall
Vice President for People and
Culture

Katharene J. Poston
Chief Philanthropy Officer

Alison Hooper Prost
Vice President for Programs

Tola Sanni
Chief Financial Officer

Paul Smail
Vice President for Litigation and
General Counsel
Richard T. Pelham Chair

Carmera Thomas-Wilhite
Vice President for Communities
and Partnerships

Allison Colden, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Maryland

Julia Krall
Executive Director
Pennsylvania

Chris Moore
Executive Director
Virginia

Keisha Sedlacek
Senior Policy Director

 888-SAVEBAY

 member@cbf.org

 cbf.org

 chesapeakebayfoundation

 chesapeakebay

 chesapeakebayfoundation

DONATE NOW!



CBF.ORG/GIVENOW