Our Vision

The problems afflicting the Chesapeake Bay are due largely to inadequate enforcement of the laws designed to reduce pollution and protect the Bay. This situation is compounded by the fact that the health of the Bay, as well as the human and wildlife populations that inhabit its watershed, are often subject to the agendas of interest groups represented by well-paid attorneys. CLA seeks to level the playing field by finding lawyers who will help citizens and organizations—pro bono—participate in government decision-making processes and enforcement of underutilized laws and regulations.

Assistance is provided throughout the Bay’s 64,000-square-mile watershed on a wide range of matters that affect the health of the Bay. These matters are addressed through litigation, administrative hearings, development of regulatory comments and legislation, advocacy, strategic advice, and assistance with corporate matters.

CLA’s goals are to bring about systemic change in compliance and enforcement and improve upon and create more effective laws, regulations and policies.

CLA has secured legal assistance for 66 clients since its inception in 2009. CLA volunteer attorneys have provided thousands of pro bono hours—valued at nearly $5 million—on 76 matters for various individuals, groups and organizations that share a common concern for the Bay. In the past year alone, CLA placed 44 new matters with volunteer attorneys—a 144% increase over 2011 placements.

**Matters Placed**

In 2012, CLA worked with 25 new clients and added 30 new individual attorneys/law firms to its volunteer network. This growing group of volunteers increases significantly our capacity to match our clients with representation. Last year, CLA achieved a 95% placement record of matters that fall within its mission, and CLA volunteer attorneys provided $1,933,131 million in services to clients who would not otherwise have been able to afford legal representation.

In 2012, CLA’s Board grew to 23 with the addition of six new members, bringing to the organization a wealth of legal, advocacy and corporate experience from public and private sectors.

The CLA staff continues to expand as a part-time administrative assistant joined the team last year, and an outreach coordinator position was created.

Last summer, CLA benefited from the talents of three summer legal interns, one more than the previous summer when the program was started. These young professionals worked with volunteer attorneys to assist with county hearings and advocacy strategies for community groups; research critical area, wetland and forestry law; prepare legal memoranda and sample pleadings; and contribute to CLA’s website and quarterly newsletter. They also had opportunities to view firsthand the challenges facing the watershed by touring local rivers and the Bay. CLA will continue to invite interested students to explore career paths in the environmental community.

In August 2012, CLA held its first attorney training seminar, *Development and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Zoning, Permits and Environmental Law Issues*. Developed by the CLA staff and Board members, this program was held in collaboration with the District of Columbia Bar. The course provided an introduction to relevant laws, regulations and programs, with special focus on the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. This well-received seminar was the first in the history of the District of Columbia Bar to address legal issues specific to the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.
CLA’s volunteer “Lawyers for the Bay” fill the gap where individuals and organizations lack the legal expertise and/or resources to address vital Bay recovery issues. Projects range from inquiries about the application of the law and maneuvering through county hearings to large scale federal litigation and development of regulations and statutes. CLA volunteers also provide legal expertise on matters of regional importance such as nutrient trading, best management practices, and forest protection. Armed with high quality representation, CLA clients are able to work towards real and lasting change for the Bay.

Nature of Matters

Wins for the Bay Watershed in 2012:

- **Pollution Control:** Ruling that migration of offsite pollution from a former steel plant operation in Baltimore Harbor will be addressed as part of the cleanup; environmental claims were protected when plant owners filed for bankruptcy.

- **Critical Area Protection:** Denial of plans for development that ignored critical area requirements, Forest Conservation Act requirements and zoning laws in Maryland. The result was preservation of pristine waterfront areas and protection of wetlands and important forests.

- **Forestry Concerns:** Significant concessions on forest management, runoff controls and environmental impact mitigation by a quarry operator in West Virginia planning to clear cut a mountaintop.

- **Wetlands Protection:** Abandonment of a project to build a large scale energy transmission project that would have involved and impacted negatively the largest, historically, combined area of wetlands located in Delaware, Virginia and Maryland.

- **Remediation:** A lawsuit brought by the State of Maryland against the owner of a closed landfill, and intervention in the lawsuit to clean-up the site and prevent offsite migration of pollutants.

- **Stormwater Controls:** Implementation of stormwater runoff controls from Interstate 495 construction in Virginia.
CLA strives to educate and empower Bay watershed citizens and organizations by providing them with legal resources to make their voices heard and actions count in the fight to protect and restore the Bay. We work with individuals, riverkeepers, land conservation and environmental organizations, homeowner associations, ad hoc groups, coalitions and municipal entities.

In 2012, CLA volunteer attorneys provided legal assistance to numerous clients including:

- **1000 Friends of Maryland** with smart growth advocacy.
- **Annapolis Environmental Commission** with advice regarding Forest Conservation Act requirements associated with property development.
- **Maryland Nutrient Trading Work Group** with development of proposed water quality trading regulations to achieve a viable, enforceable and transparent trading program protective of natural resources.
- **Citizens to Protect Bluff Point** with strategy development, permit comments, testimony and advocacy regarding development of a conservation area and dredging creeks and oyster bars on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Kilmarnock, VA.
- **Biohabitats, Inc.** with acquisition of a patent for floating wetland islands used in Baltimore Harbor and other locations.
- **South Arundel Citizens for Responsible Development** with testimony before county government tribunals regarding opposition to development of wetlands in Deale, MD, and appeal to Anne Arundel County Circuit Court.
CLA Has Assisted:

1000 Friends of Maryland
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Alliance to Restore Northwest Creek
Alliance to Save the Rappahannock
American Chestnut Land Trust
AMP Creeks Council
Annapolis Environmental Commission
Annapolis Green
Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy
Assateague Coastkeeper
Audubon Maryland—DC
Audubon Naturalist Society
Berrywood Community Association
Biohabitats, Inc.
Blue Water Baltimore
BMAT Restoration Work Group
Breton Beach Road Residents
Chapman Forest Foundation
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chester River Association
Choose Clean Water Coalition
Citizens for a Better Charles County
Citizens of Deep Cove
Citizens to Protect Bluff Point
Citizens to Save Little Pimmit Run
City of Annapolis, Maryland
Clean the Creeks of District 2
Clean Water Action
Conservancy for Charles County
Dividing Road Property Owners
Frederick County Citizens Group
Friends of Oxon Hill
Future Harvest—CASA
Gunpowder Riverkeeper
HazNa, Inc.
HOPE Impacts
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper
Magothy River Association
Maryland Bass Federation Nation
Maryland Coastal Bays Program
Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland Nutrient Management Trading Work Group
Mason Springs Conservancy
Mattawoman Watershed Society
Midshore Riverkeeper
Miller Island Community Association
Nanjemoy-Potomac Environmental Coalition
Port Tobacco River Conservancy
Potomac River Association
Potomac Riverkeeper
Queen Anne Conservation Association
Riva Woods Homeowners Association
Sassafras Riverkeeper
Save Your Annapolis Neck
Scenic Rivers Land Trust
Severn River Association
Severn Riverkeeper
Shenandoah Riverkeeper
Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter
South Arundel Citizens for Responsible Development
South County Citizens Group
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
South River Federation
St. Mary’s River Watershed Association
String of Pearls
Waterkeepers Chesapeake

Geographical Areas Served

CLA’s goal is to provide legal services throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

In 2012, CLA continued to broaden its client base as illustrated below.
Finances

Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2012

Support and Revenue

Foundation Contributions $165,550
Individual Contributions 37,815
Law Firm Contributions 16,025
Other Income 852

Total Support and Revenue $220,242

Expenses

Management and General $58,813
Program Services 115,100
Fundraising 68,730

Total Expenses $ 242,643

Change in Net Assets $(22,401)

Net Assets, January 1, 2012 $172,175

Net Assets, December 31, 2012 $149,774

Sponsors

In 2012, CLA was supported by sponsors who share our vision of realizing a clean Chesapeake Bay that can be enjoyed for recreation and responsible food harvest, and that will sustain vibrant aquatic and wildlife populations:

Crowell & Moring LLP • Dealy Foundation • Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner LLP • Goodell, DeVries, Leech & Dann LLP • Hollingsworth LLP • Latham & Watkins LLP • Rauch Foundation • RBC Wealth Management-The Etergino Group • The Abell Foundation • The Campbell Foundation • Town Creek Foundation • Venable LLP Foundation • South River Federation • Steptoe & Johnson LLP • and Wiley Rein LLP.

STAFF

Jacqueline Sincore Guild
Executive Director

Terri Bartos Eckert
Outreach Coordinator

Heather Ballew
Administrative Assistant
“American Chestnut Land Trust is extremely grateful for the assistance provided by the Chesapeake Legal Alliance. We applaud their efforts to contribute to important cases impacting the Chesapeake Bay. It is so important that small land conservation organizations like ACLT and environmental organizations throughout the watershed have a place that they can turn to for legal assistance. The need is great and their contribution is significant.”

—Karen H. Edgecombe, Executive Director, American Chestnut Land Trust

“As a lawyer and a Riverkeeper, I have long believed that additional legal muscle was needed to back up the efforts of community groups and riverkeepers working to protect the Bay and its tributaries. I am thrilled that CLA has taken the lead in empowering citizens with the same high quality legal firepower that the industries they challenge have enjoyed.”

—Fred Kelly, Severn Riverkeeper