A Message from the President and Executive Director

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to share with you our 2015 Annual Report, summarizing the Chesapeake Legal Alliance’s (CLA) pro bono legal support to citizens and non-profit organizations working to achieve a clean, healthy, and ecologically diverse Chesapeake Bay.

With your support, 2015 marked our highest level of CLA volunteer attorney engagement in terms of the most legal activities supported and the most clients assisted since our founding in 2009! CLA facilitated over 5,000 hours of free legal support to 92 organizations and individuals – those who otherwise would have no recourse to critical legal help.

The value of the hours donated to our mission by our volunteer attorneys exceeded $2 million - another benchmark in CLA’s history! As a donor, you should take pride in that fact that every dollar contributed to CLA generated over $6 worth of legal services toward protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay.

Without the support of our donors, we would be unable to carry out our job of continuing to expand our attorney network, research cutting edge legal strategies, and serving clients throughout the 64,000 square mile Chesapeake Bay watershed. Our clients tell us regularly that knowing they have access to legal services through CLA empowers them to do much more than they would be able to accomplish otherwise.

Working with our clients, we have helped address water quality in over 800 rivers, streams and other waterways, and have assisted in preserving or minimizing damage to over 6,000 acres of land, including conservation areas, pristine forests, and habitat for threatened and endangered species. In the course of these activities, we have helped protect drinking water supplies and reduced pollution from urban, suburban and agricultural communities throughout the Bay watershed.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we thank you for helping CLA and our “Lawyers for the Bay” achieve these wins for the Bay watershed, moving us closer to our goal of a clean and healthy Chesapeake Bay.

Russell Stevenson
President

Jacqueline Guild
Executive Director

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CLA assisted 92 clients, several of which are composed of 10 or more organizations. Of these clients, 31 were new to CLA.

By empowering citizens and environmental organizations with legal muscle and expertise crucial to successful advocacy, CLA provides a missing resource in the efforts to save the Bay and its watershed. Our efforts are achieving change in citizen expectations, government enforcement of laws and regulations, and compliance by the regulated community.
Wins for the Watershed

We are proud of the work of our volunteer attorneys in 2015 that contributed significantly to projects to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. Notable efforts include:

Keeping the Chesapeake Bay Clean Up Plan on Track - the Bay’s best hope for recovery

Filed amicus briefs on behalf of the City of Annapolis, in Federal District Court and the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, in support of the Environmental Protection Agency’s successful defense of the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or “Chesapeake Bay Clean Up Plan.” This important win became final early in 2016 when the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of the lower courts’ decisions upholding this critical and comprehensive joint federal-state effort to restore the health of the Bay.

Provided legal analyses and drafting assistance on proposed regulations and policies in support of state implementation plans to achieve pollution limits set by the TMDL.

Curbing Agricultural Pollution - the largest source of Bay pollution

Assisted groups challenging the legality of permits for large poultry and other animal production facilities where the location of these operations or permit conditions would pose adverse effects to the environment and public health.

Provided legal support to advocates in their successful efforts to implement the “Phosphorus Management Tool,” regulations designed to prevent over-use of phosphorus-laden poultry manure as a fertilizer.

Provided legal support for efforts to hold large integrators responsible for managing and disposing of poultry litter.

Provided legal support to coalitions seeking to increase the use of best management practices designed to reduce nutrient pollution from farming.

Stemming Urban/Suburban Stormwater Runoff - the fastest growing source of Bay pollution - and preserving the Bay’s natural buffers

Helped eliminate or reduce the impact of development on thousands of acres of forests, wetlands, parks, conservation areas and other lands and hundreds of associated waterways.

Defeated efforts of developers to circumvent requirements of the Maryland Critical Area Act, the Maryland Forest Conservation Act, federal and state Endangered Species Acts, and the federal Clean Water Act.

Contributed to the protection of pristine waterfront forests, including two of the largest contiguous forest stands remaining in Annapolis, and assisted with two new wetland restoration projects.

“Chesapeake Legal Alliance has been an amazing resource for the Choose Clean Water Coalition and its members. Their volunteer attorneys helped us analyze and comment on technical documents, providing knowledge and expertise that we would not otherwise have. They also connected us with an attorney that was an expert on lobbying regulations to help our members understand the general rules related to lobbying by 501(c)(3) organizations. Their assistance to the Choose Clean Water Coalition has been invaluable.”

Jill Witkowski, Executive Director, Choose Clean Water Coalition
Holding Industry Accountable for its Pollution - clean up and permit enforcement

Successfully appealed a permit approved for Columbia Gas to extend a natural gas line across 81 streams on the grounds that it violated state and federal water quality requirements.

Provided ongoing support to efforts to hold owners of the former Bethlehem Steel Plant, south of Baltimore Harbor, to consent to clean up the site and prevent toxic substances from migrating to the Patapsco River and other nearby waterways surrounding heavily populated areas.

Helped empower communities and coalitions with efforts to prevent adverse environmental and health effects from hydro fracking and associated pipelines and other infrastructure, including drinking water exposures and pipeline construction through national forests.

Oyster Restoration Efforts - the Bay’s natural filtering system - and Habitat Protection

Stayed decision to eliminate ten of twelve oyster harvest reserve areas in Maryland rivers to allow further evaluation of this component of Bay oyster recovery efforts.

Negotiated agreement with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to conduct more thorough analyses of the compatibility of aquaculture and conservation goals when reviewing aquaculture permit applications for oyster conservation areas.

Developed a strategy for addressing the failure to map and designate habitat protection areas as required under the Maryland Critical Area Act, thus taking steps to protect habitat for migrating fish and other sensitive species in Bay rivers.

Worked to protect habitat for threatened, endangered and sensitive species, including the northern long eared bat, cow knob salamander, James spiny mussel, yellow perch, and brook trout.

“Due to the efforts of CLA to provide us with expert legal representation, our organization has become a stronger voice for sensitive wetlands and waterways impacted by the Columbia Natural Gasline project in both Harford and Baltimore counties. These waterways include streams that are designated as drinking water supply streams for 1.5 million people in the Baltimore-metro area and that also support wild and native trout.

Without CLA’s support, the Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER® would not have had equal footing in the motions, memos and oral arguments to be able to challenge the weak Maryland Department of the Environment Wetlands and Waterways Permit and have the permit remanded back to the agency by court order.”

Theaux M. Le Gardeur, Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER®
CLA Clients

1000 Friends of Maryland *
Action Committee for Transit
American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland
Agricultural Certainty Work Group
Allentown Residents for Clean Air
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Alliance to Restore Northwest Creek
Alliance to Save the Rappahannock
American Chestnut Land Trust
American University
AMP Creeks Council
Anacostia Riverkeeper
Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee
Anacostia Watershed Society *
Anglers Club of NY
Annapolis Citizen Group
Annapolis Environmental Commission *
Annapolis Green *
Annapolis Neck Peninsula Federation *
Assateague Coastal Trust *
Assateague Coastkeeper
Audubon Maryland-DC
Audubon Naturalist Society
Back Creek Conservancy
Bay Land Trust
Bay Princess Condominium Association
Bedford County Citizen Group
Beechwood Hill Homeowners Association
Berryswood Community Association
Blue Water Baltimore/Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper *
BMAT Restoration Work Group
Breton Beach Road Residents
Calvert County Citizen Group
Campaign to Reinvest in Oxen Hill, MD
Campbell Foundation for the Environment *
Caroline County Conservation Alliance
Cecil County Department of Public Works
Chapman Forest Foundation
Chesapeake Bay Commission
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Bay Funders Network
Chesapeake Climate Action Network *
Chesapeake Legal Alliance *
Chester River Association *
Choose Clean Water Coalition *
Choptank Riverkeeper *
Citizens, Annapolis, MD (3)
Citizens, Arlington, VA (4)
Citizen, Arnold, MD
Citizen, Caroline County, MD
Citizen, Crownsville, MD
Citizen, Deale, MD
Citizen, Denton, MD
Citizen, Elkton, MD
Citizen, Hallowing Point Trailer Park Citizen, Linthicum, MD
Citizen, Mill Creek, MD
Citizens, Montgomery County, MD (9)
Citizen, Oxon Hill, MD
Citizen, Prince George’s County, MD
Citizen, Queen Anne’s County, MD
Citizen, Sherwood Forest, MD
Citizens, St. Mary’s County, MD
Citizens Against Plan for Eva Mar Development
Citizens for a Better Charles County
Citizens to Protect Bluff Point
Citizens to Save Little Pimmit Run
Citizens to Save Valley Park & Whetstone Run
City of Annapolis *
Clean Water Action
Clean the Creeks of District 2 Coalition for Smarter Growth
Common Cause Maryland
Community and Environmental Defense Services
Conservancy for Charles County DC Bar Association
Dividing Road Property Owners
DMV Environmental Justice Coalition
EcoLatinos
Elk and North East Rivers Watershed Association
Energy Justice Network
Engage Mountain Maryland
Environment Maryland
Environmental Integrity Project
Eyes of Paint Branch
Federal Hill Residents
Food and Water Watch
Frederick County Citizens Group
Friends of Bryan Park
Friends of Cabin John Creek Watershed
Friends of Hillmead Park
Friends of Jug Bay
Friends of Mc Millan Park
Friends of Oxon Hill
Friends of Rock Creek’s Environment
Friends of Sligo Creek
Friends of the Bohemia *
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the National Arboretum
Future Harvest—CASA
Good Jobs First
Greater Goshen Civic Association
Grove Park Neighborhood Association
Gunpowder Riverkeeper *
Harwood Civic Association
HasNa, Inc.
HOPE Impacts
Jessup Improvement Association
Little Falls Watershed Alliance
Lothian Civic Association
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper *
Magothy River Association *
Maryland Agricultural Certainty Oversight Committee *
Maryland Bass Nation
Maryland Clean Agriculture Coalition *
Maryland Coastal Bays Program
Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Native Plant Society
Maryland Open Government Network *
Maryland Pesticide Education Network
Maryland Pesticide Network
Mason Springs Conservancy
Mattawoman Watershed Society
MD-DC-DE Press Association
MD Nutrient Management Trading Work Group
Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy *
Mill Creek Citizen Group
Millers Island Community Federation
Montgomery County Civic Association
Myersville Citizens for a Rural Community
Nanjemoy-Potomac Environmental Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Neighbors of Northwest Branch
North Linthicum Improvement Association
Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association
OpenGov Foundation
Oxford Landing Citizen Group
Patuxent Riverkeeper *
Pines on the Severn Community
Port Tobacco River Conservancy
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac River Association
Potomac Riverkeeper *
Public Justice Center
Queen Anne Conservation Association
Residents of Easton, MD
Riva Woods Homeowners Association
SACReD *
Sassafras River Association *
Save Your Annapolis Neck
Scenic Rivers Land Trust
Seven Oaks-Evanswood Community Association
Severn River Association *
Severn Riverkeeper
Severn School Area Residents
Sierra Club (MD Chapter)
Sierra Club (Southern MD Group)
Shenandoah Riverkeeper
Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County
Smart Growth America
South County Citizens
South Hampton HOA
South River Federation *
Southern Calvert Land Trust
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
St. Mary’s River Homeowner Group *
St. Mary’s River Watershed Association
String of Pearls *
Sunlight Foundation
TAME Coalition *
Town Creek Foundation
Trash Free Maryland
University of Maryland
Upper James Riverkeeper
Urban Ecosystems Restorations, Inc.
Verna Harrison Associates
Waterkeepers Chesapeake *
Watershed Stewards Academy
West Montgomery County Citizens Association
West/Rhode Riverkeeper *
Westport Residents, Baltimore, MD
Wylie Street Community Garden

New 2015 Client * New 2015 Matter with Existing Client
The Back Creek Conservancy is grateful to the Chesapeake Legal Alliance for putting us in touch with CLA pro bono attorney, Ross N. Phillips. Since his appointment as our attorney in November 2015, Ross has been serving as the organization's Registered Agent, and he has given us very helpful advice on the Conservancy's IRS application for tax exempt status. Ross has also guided us on approaches to interacting with waterfront property owners, and he has helped us to develop a strategy to monitor the MDE general discharge permits of yacht yards and marinas on Back Creek. Since then, the IRS has determined that the Back Creek Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, and the Board of Directors is reassured that sound legal counsel is readily at hand.

David Read Barker, Ph.D., Chair, Back Creek Conservancy
CLA THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Our success is due to the following individuals, organizations and foundations who believe in our mission and provided financial support in 2015.

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$10,000 and up
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Helena Foundation
Keith Campbell Foundation
MARPAT Foundation
Rauch Foundation
Town Creek Foundation

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Bay Oyster
$2,500-$4,999
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