



For Immediate Release: March 19, 2018

Contact: Erin Valentine, Chesapeake Bay Trust, evalentine@cbtrust.org or (410) 974-2941, x113

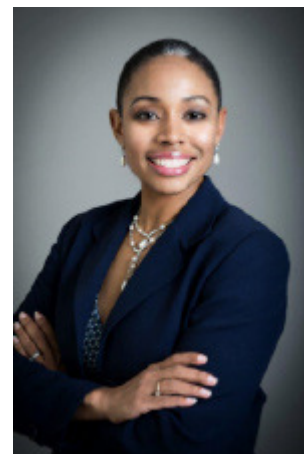
Governor Appoints Two New Members to Chesapeake Bay Trust Board of Trustees

Annapolis, Maryland – Two Baltimore-based professionals, Coretta Bennett and Thomasina Poirot, have been appointed to the Chesapeake Bay Trust’s Board of Trustees by Governor Larry Hogan. Their appointments fill spots vacated by departing Board members, Terence Smith, PBS NewsHour Special Correspondent, who as a former Trust chairman will remain active on the organization’s Trustees’ Council, and Steve Linhard, Chief Operating and Financial Officer for Chesapeake Medical Imaging.

The Chesapeake Bay Trust, a nonprofit grant-making organization established in the 1980s by the Maryland General Assembly, supports grants for teachers to get their students outside, community groups to install natural resource restoration projects, faith-based groups to install stormwater practices on their grounds, science that advances watershed restoration, and other projects in the K-12 environmental education, watershed restoration, and community engagement realms. Through \$10 million in 400 grants made each year, 80,000 students and 40,000 volunteers plant thousands of trees, install hundreds of rain barrels, and accomplish a variety of other improvement activities.

“I am pleased to appoint Coretta Bennett and Thomasina Poirot to the Chesapeake Bay Trust’s Board of Trustees,” said Governor Hogan. “The Chesapeake Bay is our greatest natural treasure, and protecting and preserving it for future generations is a responsibility our administration takes extremely seriously. We are proud to partner with the Trust in their work to support vital watershed restoration and environmental education work throughout our region. I am confident the combined experience and technical expertise of Ms. Bennett and Ms. Poirot will be a great asset to the Trust and their efforts to engage and inform Maryland citizens.”

Bennett is Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Bithenergy, an award-winning renewable energy development and engineering firm. As COO, she oversees day-to-day operations, strengthens B2B relationships, implements corporate initiatives in energy production and management, and provides oversight of investors and financial institutions. A Baltimore native, Bennett is a graduate of Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. She earned her B.S. in Civil Engineering from Morgan State University, an MBA in Strategic Business Policy and Finance from Rutgers University, and is a LEED Accredited Professional BD+C.



Bennett is an active advocate for women in engineering, advising numerous women engineering development programs. She is deeply committed to the education and well-being of youth. Bennett serves as the Vice President of the ACE Mentor Program of America Baltimore chapter, which encourages high school students to pursue careers in architecture, construction, and engineering. Additionally,

she serves as an adjunct lecturer at her alma mater, and is PTA President and a group leader in her church.

“I am humbled and inspired by the opportunity to serve the great State of Maryland and the entire Chesapeake region through the Chesapeake Bay Trust,” said Bennett. “It is a tremendous responsibility and privilege to collaborate with such an esteemed board working to propel sustainability, promote innovation, and endorse programs that positively benefit communities throughout the region.”

Poirot is an associate with the Baltimore office of Venable LLP, a nationally ranked general practice law firm. As a member of Venable’s Product Liability and Mass Torts Practice Group, her practice focuses on complex pharmaceutical litigation and insurance coverage matters, including advising nonprofits on insurance and risk management issues. She received her undergraduate degree from Villanova University and her law degree from the University of Baltimore School of Law.



Poirot is a dedicated volunteer and has a strong presence in the Baltimore community. She serves as co-chair of the Board of Directors for the Baltimore Tree Trust, and is also on the Board Directors of South Baltimore Learning Center, Volunteering Untapped, and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture. She has previously served as the Chair of the Advisory Board of Business Volunteers Unlimited’s GIVE program for young professionals and on the Board of Directors of the Friends of Great Kids Farm. She is the Defense Research Institute Young Lawyer’s Liaison for Maryland Defense Counsel.

“I am beyond excited to join the very talented Board and staff of the Trust and their unwavering commitment to environmental awareness and restoration,” said Poirot. “The Trust is making a huge difference in our state and the Chesapeake region, particularly through its grant programs, and I am elated to be a part of the process. As Co-Chair of a nonprofit organization which received one of the Trust’s generous grants, I have first-hand knowledge of the tremendous impact these grants have upon environmental projects spanning throughout the region. I’m dedicated to helping other organizations with their projects and assisting the Trust in its continuing effort to fulfill and grow its mission.”

“We are thrilled and very fortunate to have Coretta and Thomasina join the Trust board, and greatly appreciative of the service of Terry Smith and Steve Linhard, who have been with the Trust for over eight years,” said Benjamin Wechsler, chairman of the Trust’s Board of Trustees. “Coretta and Thomasina are both highly respected in their fields, have a track record of dedicated service to their communities, and each brings a unique and relevant perspective that will strengthen the Trust’s grant programs and operations as we take on new and exciting opportunities.”

The Trust is governed by a 19-member Board of Trustees composed of fourteen members appointed by the Governor, two members of the Maryland General Assembly designated by the Senate President and Speaker of the House, and designees of the Secretaries of the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources, Environment, and Agriculture.

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (www.cbtrust.org) is a nonprofit grant-making organization established by the Maryland General Assembly dedicated to improving the natural resources of Maryland and the Chesapeake region through environmental education, community engagement, and local watershed restoration. The Trust's grantees engage hundreds of thousands of individuals annually in projects that have a measurable impact on the waterways and other natural resources of the region. The Trust is supported by the sale of the 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, state, and local governments. The Trust has received the highest rating from Charity Navigator for fourteen years: 92 percent of the Trust's expenditures are directed to its restoration and education programs.

###