



Chesapeake Conservation Corps Expands to Include Climate Change – Host Organizations Sought

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(Annapolis, MD) November 17, 2022 - The Chesapeake Bay Trust announced today that the very popular Chesapeake Conservation Corps program for youth is officially becoming the Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps. The program in its new form seeks organizations working on energy and climate to apply to serve as Host Organizations to Corps members.

The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, passed by the Maryland General Assembly, provides the Corps with an additional \$1.5 million per year, increases the stipend for its youth members, and expands its scope to cover a wider range of climate topics.

New for the 2023-2024 class, members will work on clean and renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency, climate adaptation activities specifically in communities disproportionately affected by climate impacts, mitigating health impacts of climate change in underserved communities, and more. Examples of specific activities on which young people will work may include helping connect residents to energy efficiency programs, saving them money and helping reduce greenhouse gases; tree planting, green rooftops and other activities to help with urban heat island effects; clean transportation, such as bike and pedestrian trails; retrofits of low-income households and schools, libraries, and other public buildings; and renewable energy technology and generation.

“The expansion of this incredible program will further into the climate arena particularly in disproportionately affected communities,” said Senator Paul Pinsky, one of the lead authors of the Climate Solutions Now Act. “Young people need to have the skills to address climate issues, and the world needs these young people to become our climate adaptation and mitigation leaders.”

The young people working on these specific energy and climate issues will join their colleagues working in the watershed restoration and protection, wildlife habitat improvements, agriculture, and K-12 environmental education arenas. Climate change affects all of these areas, emphasizing the links between climate, the Chesapeake Bay, and all other environmental and human health topics will be a primary focus of the expanded Corps moving forward.

“Our decision to lean into and expand the mission and work of the Trust’s Corps program to include clean energy projects which provide on the job training in the energy efficiency, environmental protection, regulatory administration, and renewable energy generation sectors will be game changer for many young people living in communities disproportionately impacted by climate change.” said Senator Mary Washington, who worked on the bill last session. “While these youth and young adults are deployed to implement a range of strategies to mitigate climate change in Maryland, they will also gain critical skills needed in the clean energy and green workforce sectors and take a big step toward a career ladder that

offers numerous opportunities to secure livable and sustainable wages for themselves and their families for decades to come.”

The Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps provides onsite training and educational opportunities for young adults interested in exploring their environmental passions in a professional space. During their time in the Corps, members are matched with both non-profit and government host organizations and receive hands-on guidance aimed at improving local communities and protecting natural resources. Members of the Corps are given a one-year-stipend, training, and other support by the Chesapeake Bay Trust during their time in the Corps.

The Corps began in 2010 by Senate President Mike Miller, who had a dream to create a youth green jobs program to help individuals recover from the recession. Since then, the Corps has become a premier launching pad for green careers and a reliable resource for environmentally focused organizations who are recruiting the next generation of environmental professionals. Over 350 alums have become leaders in the environmental movement as well as engaged individuals bringing a stewardship ethic to non-environmental careers. Many members are hired by their host organizations following their years of service.

“I was able to support local communities through shoreline restoration projects, which sequestered carbon, improved local water quality and wildlife habitat, and provided water access,” said Jacob Honn, a Corps alum who spent his year of service with the National Aquarium in Baltimore. “In addition, my Corps experience taught me how I can turn my passion for the environment into a worthwhile career. I am excited that the Corps is going to expand to include placements that will further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help communities adjust to hotter temperatures and stronger storms.”

As a result of the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, each annual class will grow from 33 in 2022-2023 to 55 members in 2023-2024 and beyond.

During the year, Corps participants work directly with their host organizations while also receiving extensive job trainings hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Trust as well as other service-learning opportunities including grant writing and project management.

“This program allowed us to expand our services in a sustainable way,” said Greg Bowen, executive director of the American Chestnut Land Trust. “We have had several Corps members over the years who have increased our conservation work within the watershed with programs and scientific research that we still use today. Ultimately, their work allowed us to expand our permanent staffing, which has increased our capacity.”

Funds for the program are provided by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which is supported by the Chesapeake Bay vehicular license plate program (the “bay plate”) and other sources; the Maryland Department of Natural Resources; the U.S. National Park Service; and Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE); and now the new \$1.5 million annual appropriation from the State of Maryland.

“This program is such a win-win-win for the young members, the Host Organizations, and the communities in which they serve,” said Dr. Jana Davis, president of the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which administers the Corps program. “Their work increases the capacity of their hosts as they learn and become

experts in their fields. I won't be surprised if we see the next generation of climate leaders in our region coming from this program.”

The Trust's mission to empower community groups on the ground to lead their own restoration efforts, often with grant monies and training. In the past 5-10 years, the Trust has increased the amount of resources it provides to help communities with resiliency and sustainability in the face of climate change. Examples include grants to local governments to better treat stormwater in the face of stronger and more frequent storms, research and tools for local entities in the face of changing rainfall patterns, and adaptation practices like urban tree planting projects to temper heat island effects.

Entities particularly focused on energy and climate interested in learning more or applying to serve as a Host Organization in the program should visit <https://cbtrust.org/chesapeake-climate-corps/apply/>

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (www.cbtrust.org) envisions a restored, protected, and resilient Chesapeake Bay watershed and other natural resources in our area, from the Coastal Bays to the Chesapeake to the Youghiogheny River. The Trust empowers about 400 local community-based groups each year with the resources they need to take on a meaningful and measurable role in restoring forests, streams, rivers, bays, wildlife, and more in their own communities. The Trust is supported by the sale of the Chesapeake Bay license plate; donations to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund on the Maryland State income tax form; donations made by hunters, fishers, and boaters in the Maryland online natural resource licensing system; 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 over two decades. On average, 90% of the Trust's expenditures are directed to its restoration and education programs.