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**Contact:** Kelly Swartout, Chesapeake Bay Trust, (410) 974-2941 ext. 107; [kswartout@cbtrust.org](mailto:kswartout@cbtrust.org) or Donna Fuqua, Charles County, 301-885-2779  
[FuquaD@charlescountymd.gov](mailto:FuquaD@charlescountymd.gov).

### **Meditation Rain Garden at Christ Church Creates a Sanctuary on Charles Street**

*LaPlata, Maryland* – A newly constructed meditation rain garden at Christ Church on Charles Street creates a quiet, reflective space for both congregation and community members. The garden project was funded by the Charles County Watershed Protection and Restoration Program (WPRP) and the Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) and led by the Port Tobacco River Conservancy and the church's congregation. The peaceful setting is designed to capture rainwater from the church's roof and allows it to slowly soak back into the ground, exactly as called for by the WPRP, the goal of which is to reduce the amount of rainwater that turns to stormwater, which carries pollutants into Charles County waterways during and after storm events. In addition to these water quality benefits, the garden is full of habitat-friendly plants that thrive in the local conditions, creating a sanctuary for humans and animals alike.

“The faith community has been such a wonderful new partner in protecting and creating natural spaces,” said Jana Davis, executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Trust. “These green spaces have such power to accomplish so many goals, from those that benefit us (reflection, meditation, human health) to those that benefit habitat for other creatures. We are thrilled that the County has partnered with the Trust in making resources available for these types of projects.”

In addition to the project at Christ Church, several other awards totaling over \$30,000 were made, affording other local watershed groups and non-profit organizations to take the lead on community-driven projects, build capacity for future work, and contribute to the County's water quality goals (see list below).

Other groups have the opportunity to receive funds as well. This new partnership between the County and the Trust will continue, and the two partners announce the next round of funding that will have an application deadline of September. Groups such as churches, other faith-based organizations, homeowners associations, civic groups, schools, boys and girls clubs, environmental organizations, and other not-for-profits are encouraged to apply for projects that improve natural resources, particularly those that treat stormwater, or that engage residents in natural resources issues. Interested applicants can apply through the Trust through the Outreach and Restoration Grant Program.

“Charles County is undertaking in-the-ground efforts to do our part to help restore the Chesapeake Bay, its rivers, streams, and other natural resources,” said Erica Hahn, Planner II, Charles County

Watershed Protection and Restoration Program. “We recognize that restoring the Bay and its tributaries takes teamwork, and this grant program is a great opportunity for the County to partner with local communities and organizations to have a positive impact on rivers, streams, and the Bay.

The full list of recent awardees of the Charles County Community Watershed Assistance Grant Program:

**Rainwater Capture Facilities at Mattingly Park**

**Grantee Organization: Town of Indian Head**

**Grant Amount: \$12,500**

To design rainwater capture facilities including rain gardens, bioswales, riparian buffers, and rain barrel planning at Mattingly Park along the banks of Mattawoman Creek.

**Outdoor Classroom at Dr. James Craik Elementary School**

**Grantee Organization: Port Tobacco River Conservancy**

**Grant Amount: \$10,605**

To design rain gardens and an outdoor classroom on a school property that will provide a space for students and teachers to learn about healthy waterways and habitats.

**Rain Gardens and Conservation Landscapes at the Charles County Conservation District Building**

**Grantee Organization: Charles County Soil Conservation District**

**Grant Amount: \$4,800**

To design demonstration gardens that will capture rainwater, provide enhanced habitat, and showcase healthy watershed activities to Conservation District building visitors.

**Targeted Watershed Stewardship Research and Inventory of Bryan’s Road Residents**

**Grantee Organization: Mattawoman Watershed Society**

**Grant Amount: \$3,118**

To conduct research within the Bryan’s Road community to develop outreach programming that engages homeowners in watershed stewardship practices on individual residential properties.

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) is excited to partner again with the Charles County’s Watershed Protection and Restoration Program (WPRP) to fund projects through the Trust’s Outreach and Restoration grant program. This program is now accepting applications requesting funds for the planning, design, and construction of stormwater management practices, stream and wetland restoration, and public education and outreach. The Trust is seeking project proposals that improve water quality in Charles County communities and/or increase citizen awareness and involvement in watershed protection efforts, or both within three distinct funding tracks: Outreach Projects: The goal of projects in this track should be to implement outreach and education programming to raise public awareness and engagement in the challenges and solutions to restoring natural resources: local green spaces from urban to rural, parks, streams, rivers, and bays; Restoration Projects: The goal of projects in this track should be to implement stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that benefit both the community and the quality of one or more natural resources (example: native

plants, trees, water); and Outreach and Restoration Projects: Projects in this track combine the goals above.

Non-profit organizations, including local watershed groups, community associations, service and civic groups, and faith-based organizations, are eligible and encouraged to apply for funding. As part of an effort to more fully engage underrepresented groups in its grant-making, the Trust strongly encourages projects that increase awareness and participation in multicultural communities to improve watershed health and local ecological ownership.

Applications are due on September 11, 2017 by 5:00 p.m. To learn more and review the request for proposals, visit <https://cbtrust.org/outreach-and-restoration/> or contact Abbi Huntzinger at 410-974-2941, x106.

#### About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust ([www.cbtrust.org](http://www.cbtrust.org)) is a nonprofit grant-making organization dedicated to improving the natural resources of Maryland and the Chesapeake region through environmental education, community engagement, and local watershed restoration. The Trust engages 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 and state agencies, such as Charles County Watershed Protection & Restoration Program. 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.

#### About Charles County Watershed Protection & Restoration Program

The Charles County Community Watershed Assistance Grant Program aims to provide accessible funds to organizations and agencies to build capacity within local groups to plan, develop, and design a variety of projects including but not limited to outreach and education programs, small community-scale watershed assessments and action plans, and stormwater best management practices (BMPs).