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Chesapeake Bay Trust President Dr. Jana Davis to Retire After Transformative Tenure; Longtime Leader Kacey Wetzel Named Next President

Annapolis, Maryland – The Chesapeake Bay Trust (Bay Trust) announces Dr. Jana Davis will retire as President after more than two decades of service to the organization.

Under Davis's leadership, the Bay Trust experienced unprecedented growth, expanding both its reach and impact throughout the Chesapeake Bay, Coastal Bays, and Youghiogheny River watersheds. During her tenure, the Bay Trust's funding grew from \$2.4 million in grant awards in 2005 to \$39.8 million last year, empowering hundreds of community organizations, schools, homeowners' associations, faith-based groups, and other nonprofits to restore natural resources. This record year brings the Bay Trust to more than \$250 million in awards since its inception, funding community-driven projects that have planted more than 9.6 million trees and native plants; removed over 14.4 million pounds of litter, including plastics that harm our ecosystem and health; and engaged more than 3.4 million students, teachers and volunteers.

"The Chesapeake Bay Trust understands that meaningful environmental change happens when people are empowered to lead and sustain projects they dream up for their own communities," said Davis. "It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve alongside such an extraordinary staff, Board, partners, and grantees to support our local communities and protect our shared natural resources."

Davis led the Bay Trust through significant milestones, including the expansion of partnerships with federal, state, and local governments; the creation of innovative grant programs; the award-winning redesign of Maryland's beloved "Protect the Chesapeake & Coastal Bays" license plate; and the opening of the Bay Trust's net-zero green headquarters in Annapolis. Building on her training as a marine scientist specializing in shoreline habitat ecology, Davis also helped advance the science and implementation of living shorelines and is still a sought-after expert in the field nationally. She will transition to a part-time Senior Science Policy Advisor role to provide support during the organization's transition and return to her scientific roots, providing science synthesis work as part of the Bay Trust's Pooled Monitoring Restoration Research Initiative.

"Jana built the Chesapeake Bay Trust into one of the nation's leading environmental grantmaking organizations," said Alexander Núñez, Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Trust Board of Trustees. "Her strategic vision and leadership always centered on empowering everyday people to lead meaningful conservation work for their own communities. We are immensely grateful for her leadership."

Building on Davis's transformative tenure, the Board of Trustees appointed longtime Bay Trust leader and Vice President of Outreach and Education Programs, Kacey Wetzel, as the organization's next President.

"The Board of Trustees is thrilled to welcome Kacey Wetzel as the next President," said Núñez. "Kacey earns this opportunity as the result of her forward-thinking approach, proven leadership, consistently high level of performance, and unwavering commitment to our mission."

Throughout Wetzel's 18-year tenure at the Bay Trust, she has helped shape the organization's strategic direction and served as an international expert in the field of community-based social marketing. She has instilled a social science rigor into the Bay Trust's grantmaking and partnership initiatives, including the nationally recognized Capacity Building Initiative with Chesapeake Bay Funders Network partners and the Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps Program. She has played a central role in growing the Bay Trust's funding portfolio, strengthening relationships with public and private partners and expanding programs that empower communities to protect and restore nature and their neighborhoods at the same time.

Wetzel is part of the Leadership Maryland Class of 2025 and was named one of 100 Leading Women by The Daily Record in 2017.

Recognized throughout the region as a collaborative and innovative leader, Wetzel has helped position the Bay Trust as a trusted partner capable of translating public and private investments into measurable environmental and community outcomes.

"I could not be more confident in Kacey's leadership," said Davis. "Having worked alongside Kacey for nearly two decades, I have seen firsthand her commitment to our mission. Kacey has been instrumental in shaping the Bay Trust's growth, and I know the organization will climb to new heights under her guidance."

"Having served this organization since 2007, I am honored to step into the role of President and lead us into our next chapter," said Wetzel. "I take the helm with immense gratitude, a deep sense of responsibility, and an energized commitment to advancing socio-environmental strategy as we carry out our mission of empowering people to restore nature."

Wetzel will assume the role of President following Davis's retirement on September 18, 2026.

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ABOUT THE CHESAPEAKE BAY TRUST

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (www.cbtrust.org) envisions a restored and protected Chesapeake Bay watershed and other natural resources in our area, from the Coastal Bays to the Chesapeake to the Youghiogheny River. Every year, the Bay Trust empowers about 400 groups by providing grants and technical assistance to accomplish environmental education, community outreach, and local watershed restoration projects. The Bay Trust is supported by the sale of the Protect the Chesapeake Bay & Coastal Bays 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 Bay Trust has received the highest rating from Charity Navigator for over two decades: On average, 90 cents of every dollar go to programs.