



Tim Purinton takes a break while hiking Billy Goat Trail—Section A, which is located on Bear Island in the Potomac Gorge. Bear Island is owned in partnership between the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park and The Nature Conservancy. The partnership is centered around the two organizations' common goals to support recreation and biodiversity conservation. © TNC

A Message From the Outgoing Director

When I arrived in 2017, I inherited a new strategic plan and the need to rapidly scale our fundraising to meet our ambitious climate and clean water goals. I'm pleased to announce that we have exceeded our \$70 million Change is Here campaign goal. The campaign was much more than a number; it enabled us to build impactful programs led by talented staff. We bolstered our four conservation programs: regenerative agriculture, resilient coasts, healthy forests, and green cities. We also became more influential in Annapolis and D.C. with our policy work.

I'm especially proud of launching the Baltimore Program and reigniting land protection in the Allegheny Front. The restoration of the Chesapeake Bay was one of the efforts that drew me to the chapter, and I'm extremely pleased that we have expanded our regenerative agriculture efforts to support our teams in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. We also developed an innovative staff-sharing agreement with the University of Maryland and helped to establish the first in the world stormwater credit program in D.C.

During the campaign, we advanced arguably the largest floodplain restoration project on the East Coast. Today, more than 14 miles of floodplain have been reconnected with the mainstem of the Pocomoke River to capture nutrients that have historically choked the Bay. The Bay's health depends upon the vitality of the uplands that surround it. Over the past five years, we have protected thousands of acres of land that will become future wetlands and assisted at-risk communities to adapt to rising seas.

Smack in the middle of all this was a pandemic. Covid sent our staff home, increasing mental stress and eroding connectedness. Our teams adapted and stoically kept focus on our mission, finding new ways to engage. Covid reinforced the value of nature, and because of that we reinvested in our land stewardship, greatly expanding the use of fire as an ecological management technique. This has improved our relationships with Indigenous communities with whom we are now in close dialogue.

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TOP LEFT: A historic photo of the Pocomoke River shortly after it was dredged and channelized in 1943 © Wallace Kirkland/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images; BOTTOM LEFT: A post-restoration photo of the Pocomoke River © Matt Kane/TNC; RIGHT: An aerial photo of the Pocomoke River restoration. Breaches in the spoil banks allow water to flow into the floodplain. © Severn Smith/TNC

Freeing a Trapped River

10 Years of Restoration and Partnership

For the past 10 years, The Nature Conservancy’s Maryland/DC chapter—along with a roster of partners—has been working to reconnect the Pocomoke River to its natural and historic floodplain. The 73-mile-long Pocomoke River is the easternmost river that flows to the Chesapeake Bay, draining water from Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. In the early 1940s, an approximately 18-mile stretch of the river’s mainstem was dredged and channelized to facilitate the ditching and draining of wetlands throughout the river’s watershed to increase agricultural production in the region.

As we hit the 10-year anniversary of the project’s formation, we celebrate the accomplishments that make this project the largest ecological restoration in Maryland’s history: Our partnership has restored more than 3,000 acres of floodplain along 14 miles of the once-channelized stretch of river, creating a model for large-scale wetland restoration in the Bay. The project has been the result of a substantial and ongoing collaboration between numerous partners, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Delaware Wildlands, Ducks Unlimited, the France-Merrick Foundation, Toms of Maine, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), as well as the cooperation of many local landowners.

To learn more, visit nature.org/MDPocomoke



Tim Purinton cleans up trash with volunteers and partners on Earth Day, 2022. © TNC

A Message From the Outgoing Director, Continued

The chapter has been my professional home for nearly six years, and now is an excellent time to hand the reins to the next leader. On that note, I’m taking on a new role as TNC’s special assistant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to aid in implementation of the major stimulus bills and ambitious conservation initiatives afoot.

In parting, I extend a heartfelt thank you to our trustees, especially current chair Elizabeth Lewis, and past chairs Mark Collins and Steve Hills. Steve often reminds me that conservation impact is about putting “points on the board,” in other words: strive for tangible, lasting results. I cited only a few “points” in this letter. There is so much more to be proud of. In the end, it truly required a team effort.

Thank you, supporters.