

# ANNUAL REPORT FRIENDS OF CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS



## GATEWAYS: EXPERIENCE THE AUTHENTIC CHESAPEAKE

Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails are special places that share the story of the Bay and its rivers. Whether you are hiking through a park, paddling along a river, exploring a museum or discovering a historic downtown, Gateways offer rich, revealing ways to enjoy the unique Chesapeake region. Friends of Chesapeake Gateways works to support these experiences, connecting people to a treasured landscape and inspiring stewardship for the future. Through capacity-building, public outreach and advocacy, Friends works to enhance the value, efficacy and long-term sustainability of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network and its member sites.

This has been an exciting year for Friends of Chesapeake Gateways. In 2009, Friends hired our first full-time staff member, spearheaded a regional promotions campaign and offered high-quality training to over 100 Gateway staff and partners. We worked closely with the National Park Service, jointly planning and executing four workshops in the spring and fall. Friends expanded its web presence, which included the launch of a dynamic new website in September. We supported permanent designation of the Chesapeake Bay



Gateways and Watertrails Network and advocated for continued program funding in Congress. The past twelve months have been inspiring and energizing!

I hope you'll join us as we continue to support and enhance the work of the Gateways Network and

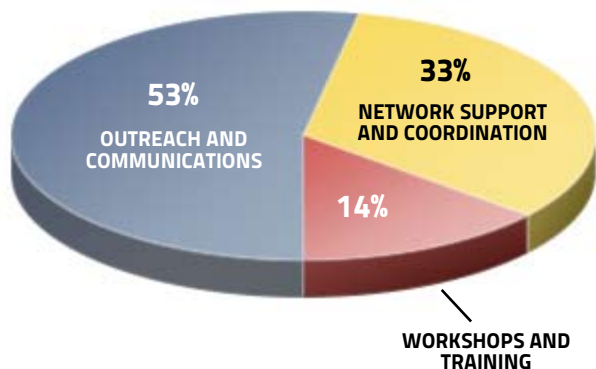
its partner sites. In 2010, let's come together to broaden public access, enjoyment and understanding of our national treasure, the Chesapeake Bay.

*Scott Beatty*  
Scott Beatty  
Chair, Friends of Chesapeake Gateways

The Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network is a program of the National Park Service. On behalf of the Gateways and Watertrails and the Friends of Chesapeake Gateways, we thank them for their guidance and support.



## 2009 RESOURCES BY PROGRAM AREA



Friends of Chesapeake Gateways have been an invaluable public relations and networking resource! ‘Chesapeake Trips and Tips’ e-mails have been a great help in getting the word out about our events throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. Many thanks for the excellent marketing support and assistance for Gateways!”

Paige Howard  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS  
Friends of Mount Harmon

## Getting the Word Out

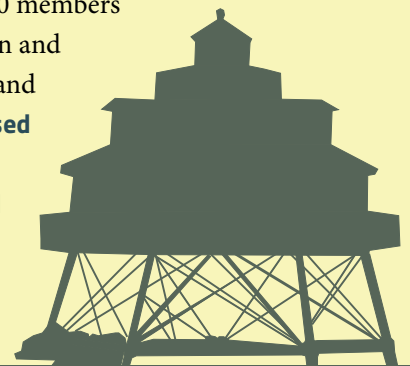
A naturalist-led canoe tour through pristine marshland. A kid-friendly hike along the shore with s'mores as the reward. An oysterfest with music, food and friends. An unforgettable sail aboard a historic ship. What do these events have in common?

They were sponsored by designated Chesapeake Bay Gateways and

Watertrails and promoted across the region by Friends of Chesapeake Gateways. As part of a coordinated outreach campaign, Friends purchased sponsorships on National Public Radio, launched a “Trips and Tips” e-mail newsletter and sent weekly updates to more than 100 members of the media highlighting the fun and adventures offered at Gateways and Watertrails. **The results: increased visitation to sites, enhanced awareness of the Network, and expanded visibility in the press.**



The “Trips and Tips” newsletter is delivered to thousands of e-mail inboxes each month.



# Bringing People Together

Networking is the art of meeting people and forming relationships. It is exchanging news on a successful program or a new funding opportunity. It is letting a friend or colleague know about a professional development course or a new state conservation initiative. Networking can be one of the most important avenues for both personal and organizational success, yet it can be hard to know when or how to start. In 2009 Friends of Chesapeake Gateways became a conduit for increased networking opportunities among the more than 160 designated Gateways and Watertrails. Friends sponsored free workshops, where site staff got to know one another while learning new skills. We began publishing “Gateway Notes and News,” a monthly e-mail newsletter featuring updates on the Network and its members. We organized webinars on Chesapeake-centric web resources and created a new online networking presence for Gateways through Facebook and Twitter. **The results: increased connectivity among sites, greater knowledge of the Gateways Network and its resources, and better avenues for dialogue among staff and partners.**



# Strengthening Programs

When economic times are rough, it is hard to find money in the budget for training. Yet, given the rapid shifts in technology, training in new media is absolutely essential. It is also critical to know whether your programs are effective in meeting their goals and objectives. To meet this need, Friends offered eight free workshops to Gateways staff and partners in 2009. In the spring, sessions focused on new interpretive media and its applications, touching on Facebook, Twitter, geocaching, web development and more. In the fall, the subject was program monitoring and evaluation, with an emphasis on creating measurement tools for projects and programs as diverse as walking tours, boating ramps, oral histories and festivals. **The results: better tools for evaluating program effectiveness and increased comfort with new technologies and how to use them.**



Friends hosted a workshop seminar at the Deltaville Maritime Museum in December 2009.



Staff from state parks, non-profits, and county governments attended a program evaluation workshop at Mount Harmon Plantation in November 2009.

## USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SPREAD THE WORD

Friends uses social media tools, including Facebook and Twitter, to keep the Gateways and the public informed of events across the Chesapeake.



Follow on Twitter:  
[www.twitter.com/bayfriends](http://www.twitter.com/bayfriends)

Follow on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/chesapeakegateways](http://www.facebook.com/chesapeakegateways)

I thoroughly enjoyed the Program Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop. The program emphasized the importance of evaluation to help improve programming and quantify results to ensure that the mission of the organization is advanced.”

GINNA TIERNAN  
ADULT PROGRAM COORDINATOR  
ADKINS ARBORETUM



In November 2009, the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore served as host for an evaluation workshop for Gateways staff.

## FRIENDS OF CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS

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Eleanor Mahoney

With the support of the Friends of Chesapeake Gateways, we can continue to promote Chesapeake stewardship through the use and enjoyment of the Gateways and the Captain John Smith and Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trails.”

John Maounis  
SUPERINTENDENT

Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network

# Looking Ahead

## EXPLORING THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER GEO-TRAIL

Set to launch on February 27, 2010, the Star-Spangled Banner Geocaching trail is a journey through American history and across the landscapes of the Chesapeake Bay region. Geocachers will learn the stories of the people who participated in the War of 1812 and see the places they lived, worked and fought. The modern-day treasure hunters will also learn about the Chesapeake Bay today and the responsibility we share in conserving this nationally important resource, all while having a great time on this technology-driven treasure hunt with friends and family. The trail is sponsored by Friends of Chesapeake Gateways, the Maryland Geocaching Society, and the National Park Service.



>> More information is online at [www.friendsofchesapeakegateways.org](http://www.friendsofchesapeakegateways.org).

## WEBINARS ON MARKETING

Beginning in February, Friends will sponsor a monthly webinar series, free of charge, for Gateway sites. Focused on marketing and new media, participants will learn about web development, social networking and outreach through e-mail newsletters, and other cost-effective, digital media tools.

## FRIENDS OF CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS

410 Severn Avenue, Suite 314  
Annapolis, MD 21403

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