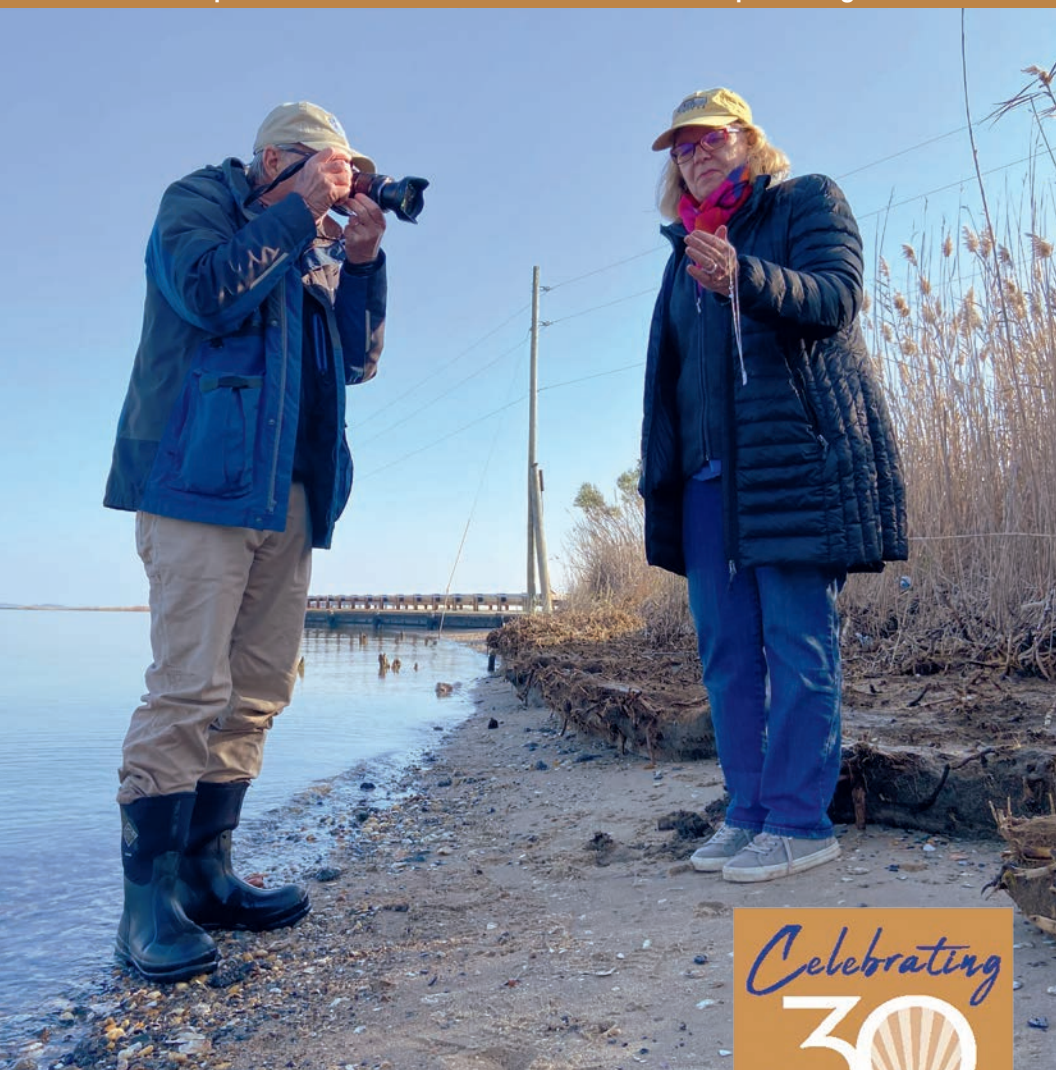


2020 Annual Report

CHESAPEAKE

BAY JOURNAL

Independent environmental news for the Chesapeake region



*The anniversary edition...
30 years at work for you*

Celebrating
30
YEARS

“ *The Bay Journal
gathers together
news that folks
would otherwise
not see.* ”

– A Bay Journal reader

About the Bay Journal

Independent & Experienced

The award-winning team at the *Bay Journal* has been tracking and reporting on environmental issues in the Chesapeake Bay region since 1991. The *Bay Journal* is produced by Bay Journal Media, an independent news organization. That means that the articles you read are not written by activists or government agencies. They are produced by a team of skilled journalists with expertise in the environment of the Bay region.

Inspiring Action

Our readers are vocal, passionate citizens, and we aim to deliver information

they can use: in-depth reporting that helps make sense of complicated and challenging topics. Surveys show that many readers rank the *Bay Journal* as their most trusted source of environmental information in the Bay watershed.

A Nonprofit Newsroom

We are dedicated to sharing our coverage as broadly as possible. That's why subscriptions are free. We extend our reach by operating the Bay Journal News Service, which distributes articles at no charge for use by other media across and beyond the Chesapeake region. We are primarily funded by grants and reader donations.



Celebrating
30
YEARS

Report to our Readers



Dear Bay Journal readers,

This annual report is a special one. We are proud to share highlights of our reporting and outreach during 2020 — made possible by your enthusiastic support, despite the many challenges of COVID-19. Our community of readers is remarkable. We thank each and every one of you, whether you donated to the *Bay Journal* or simply shared it with your friends, family and colleagues.

We are also in the midst of our 30th anniversary, celebrating three decades of the best environmental news coverage in the Bay region. So we're taking this opportunity to showcase our history, growth and impact, and to explain why we believe the *Bay Journal* has grown to be a news source like no other. We hope you agree.

I am also very excited about the *Bay Journal's* future. People are clearly hungry for environmental news. We now reach approximately 200,000 people per month, and our audience continues to grow. We have added films and videos to our offerings and launched a podcast. We are energized about investigating the looming Bay cleanup deadline, the evolving challenges of climate change, land use controversies and so much more. So stay tuned. And I can't say it enough: We couldn't do it without you!

Lara Lutz
Editor/Executive Director

Left: Lara Lutz interviews a Virginia expert for a 2013 article about underground streams in the Bay's headwater areas.

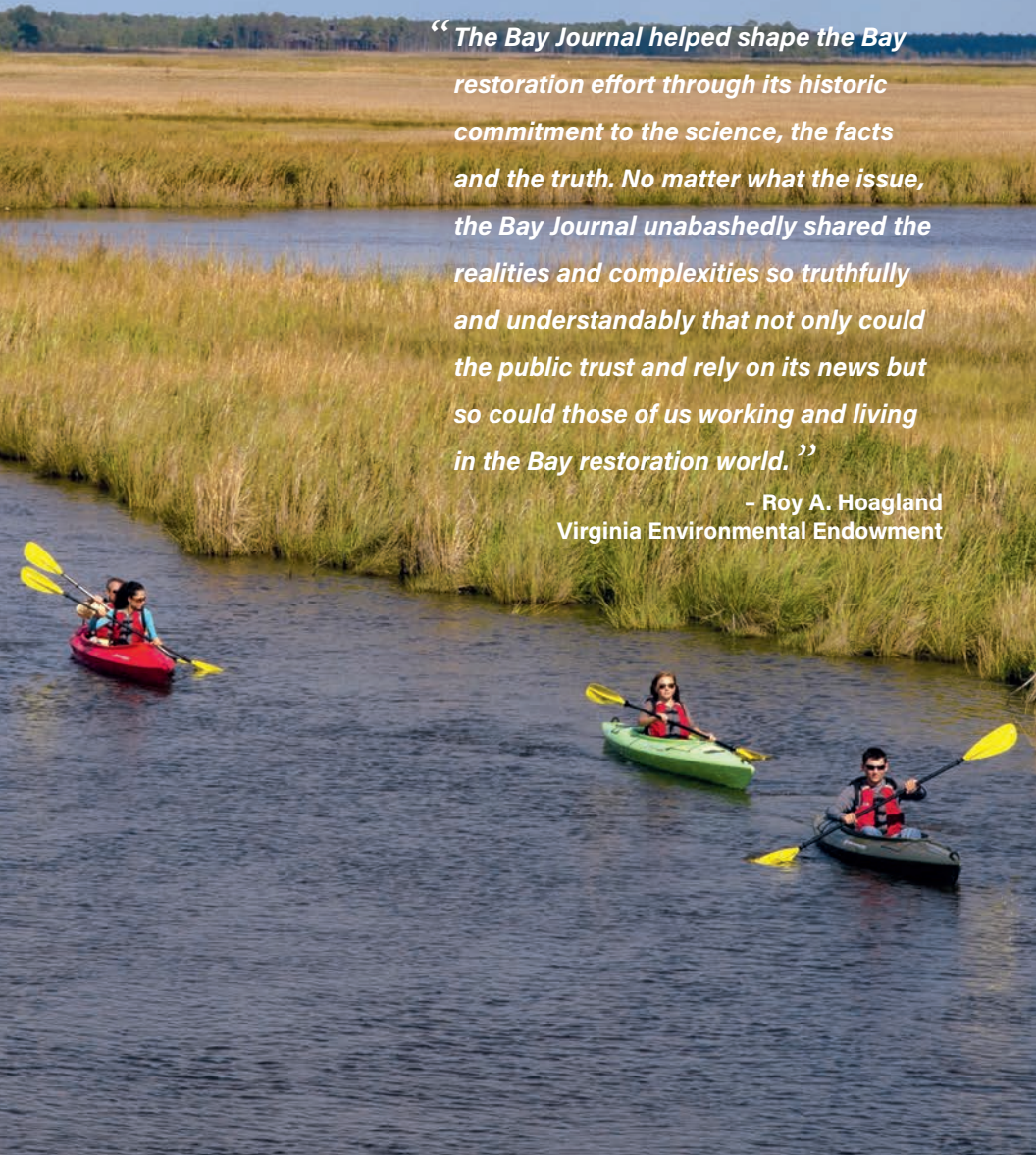
Celebrating
30
YEARS
AT WORK
FOR YOU

“After 30 years, Chesapeake Bay restoration issues have become increasingly complex and challenging, but the Bay Journal breaks down each issue, makes it understandable and places it in the right context.”

– Rich Batiuk, retired
U.S. EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office

“The Bay Journal helped shape the Bay restoration effort through its historic commitment to the science, the facts and the truth. No matter what the issue, the Bay Journal unabashedly shared the realities and complexities so truthfully and understandably that not only could the public trust and rely on its news but so could those of us working and living in the Bay restoration world.”

– Roy A. Hoagland
Virginia Environmental Endowment



The Bay Journal by Decade

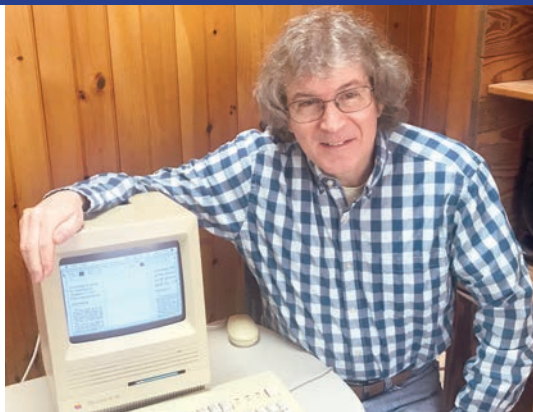
1991-2000

In the *Bay Journal's* first decade, the broad picture of Chesapeake Bay restoration was just coming into focus, and news coverage reflected the challenges that lay ahead. The *Bay Journal* was initially 8–12 pages, produced ten times a year by writer/editor Karl Blankenship and copy editor Kathleen Gaskell, and it was supported mostly by grants from the Chesapeake Bay Program to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. It grew to 20–24 pages by the end of the decade and added some popular columns.

Articles reflected early signs of success in restoring striped bass and shad, optimism about nutrient control efforts, and warnings about the sediment buildup behind Conowingo Dam. Restoration of Poplar Island began and leaders embraced the importance of forests and wetlands. But by the end of the decade, articles began showing the difficulties faced on many fronts, including early concerns about climate change.

Notable headlines

- Is our appetite for sprawl killing the Chesapeake?
- Plan to protect Bay wetlands is completed
- \$12 million lift at Conowingo a boost for Bay fish
- The long road back for Bay rockfish
- Air pollution a growing Bay concern
- EPA report calls for greater effort toward 'environmental equity'
- Phantom microbe strikes fish dead along East Coast
- Nutrient reduction targets are set for major Bay rivers



Founding editor Karl Blankenship recently unearthed the computer he used to create some of the earliest editions of the Bay Journal in the 1990s.

- Restoring streamside forests may be key to restoring the Chesapeake
- Water trails forging new route in Bay's preservation
- Forests losing ground to fragmentation
- Shad fishing to be phased out along coast
- Buildup behind dams looms over Bay cleanup
- Warming trend would put heat on Bay recovery efforts
- The Bay Program must clean Chesapeake by 2010, or else

2001-2010

The *Bay Journal's* second decade saw the addition of part-time and freelance writers, more columnists and a staff photographer.

In the news, the *Bay Journal* documented strife over complex ecosystem issues and the region's failure to meet the Bay's 2010 cleanup goals. Grappling with growth proved difficult. Debates raged over a move to introduce nonnative oysters to the Bay, which ultimately didn't

“ The Bay Journal is a place where I can do the good work of storytelling and trust that it makes a difference. I’m grateful for my years with the Bay Journal and for the staying power of journalism that meets a need. ”

— Whitney Pipkin
Staff Writer



happen. Snakeheads arrived, and so did a wandering manatee dubbed Chessie. The Capt. John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail got under way.

Notable headlines

- Bay partners split on policy for land conversion
- No clear solution for sediment buildup behind Susquehanna dams
- Proposal calls for 1 million foreign oysters in the Bay
- Blue crabs near record low
- Study to consider creating national park for Chesapeake Bay
- Maryland tries to stop snakeheads
- Bay cleanup costs could top \$30 billion
- Bay leaders say they’ll not meet 2010 cleanup goal
- GAO to investigate whether Bay cleanup progress is overstated
- National water trail proposed to honor John Smith voyages
- Environmental stewardship a growing presence in churches
- Population growth may overtake gains in Bay cleanup

- Chessie returns during summer trek
- Mussels could be up a creek without migratory eels
- TMDLs are coming, like it or not
- Passions run high at TMDL hearing

2011-2021

In its third decade, the *Bay Journal* continued to expand staff and readership, and the printed edition reached 48 pages. The website and print edition were redesigned, and the *Bay Journal* began producing films and a podcast.

We continued tracking Bay news and have produced increasingly detailed coverage on flooding and sea level rise, forest health, endangered species, air pollution, bacteria and toxins, strip mining and more. Aquaculture, fracking, microplastics and environmental justice gained greater visibility. And progress toward yet another Bay cleanup deadline has faltered.

Notable headlines

- EPA announces new TMDL, says it will finally clean up the Bay
- Conowingo no longer trapping

sediment, nutrients from Susquehanna

- Blue catfish boom threatens region's river ecosystems
- Marcellus Shale drilling may take huge chunks out of PA forests
- Sea level along Chesapeake rising faster than efforts to mitigate it
- Atlantic sturgeon listed as endangered
- Invisible microplastics a threat to bottom of marine food web
- Air regs have helped water quality more than previously thought
- The 'green ceiling': Environmental organizations lack diversity
- Region not on track to make nitrogen reduction goals
- Tiny insect toppling majestic hemlocks
- Supreme Court refuses to hear Farm Bureau's challenge to TMDL
- Researchers examining effectiveness of stream restoration
- With no sign of recovery, VA to halt stocking shad in James
- Toxics, long-ignored, once again on cleanup radar
- Groups work to stop brook trout from being the fish that got away

- Coronavirus hinders Bay restoration efforts, seafood industry
- Missed again? As Bay states aim for 2025 cleanup targets, many are still far off the mark
- EPA hit with lawsuits over Chesapeake Bay cleanup
- Last stand for eelgrass?

What's ahead?

Never has the path toward sustainable, healthy communities in the Bay region — for both humans and wildlife — faced so many challenges. And everyone deserves to be part of the conversation as we work toward clean air and clean water for all.

As news outlets across the region shrink and fold, the *Bay Journal* will help ensure you have the information and insight you need to help make a difference close to home and across the Bay watershed. We aim to expand our readership with fresh marketing ideas and deliver the news in a variety of ways so that as many people as possible can play a meaningful role in charting a sustainable future.

“ I've landed a front-row seat from which to report in depth on the struggle to restore the Bay. You couldn't ask for a bigger story. In that sense, working for the Bay Journal is the capstone of my journalistic career. ”

— Timothy B. Wheeler
Associate Editor/Senior Writer



2020 News Coverage

The Bay Journal team continued to produce award-winning articles in 2020, despite the many challenges of working during the pandemic. Here are some highlights on the environmental news that we delivered to hundreds of thousands of people across the Bay region and beyond.

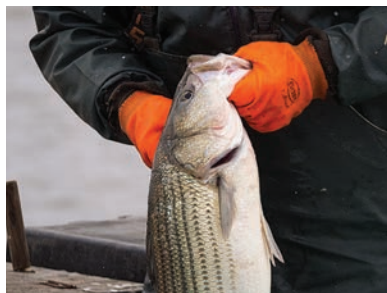


Bacteria alert

A two-part series raised public awareness about the potential human health risks of recreating in streams, rivers and the Bay. Water quality monitoring and public outreach remains uneven across the region and the public is often unaware of the problem.

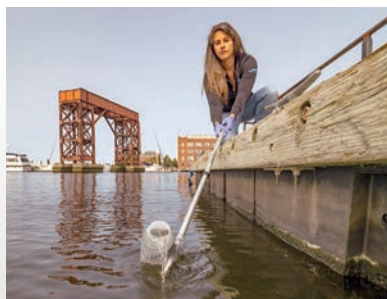
Bay cleanup progress

Analyses show that the region is unlikely to achieve Bay cleanup goals by the 2025 deadline. Lawsuits were filed against the U.S. EPA, alleging inadequate actions to enforce the Bay's "pollution diet." A cleanup plan evolved for the nutrient load escaping past Conowingo Dam, but potential funding sources were unclear. There was also renewed focus on the need to increase diversity and inclusion in the Bay restoration effort.



Fish & oysters

New catch limits were set on the Bay's striped bass population, and Virginia adopted new harvest rules for menhaden. Oyster management brought debate in Maryland, and reef restoration continued in both Maryland and Virginia. Meanwhile, efforts to restore shad have seen little progress, and scientists found mercury in 45% of the fish tested in Bay headwater streams.



Energy & land use

Development and energy projects drew attention and debate, including a large distribution center in Hanover County, VA, and a massive solar project proposed for farmland near Gettysburg, PA. Natural gas pipelines and compressor stations were controversial in Virginia, as was the extension of a natural gas pipeline on the Delmarva Peninsula.



Coping with COVID-19

As a result of the pandemic, oyster and crab sales plummeted. Outdoor recreation surged while nature centers and environmental education struggled to adapt and survive. State and local budgets were hammered, threatening progress on water quality projects throughout the region.

Climate change

The *Bay Journal* reported on a range of regional impacts: “sunny day flooding,” an increased pulse of polluted stormwater, the decline of a tiny marsh bird, the northerly march of fire ants and the shifting range of longleaf pines. We also explored how warmer water is devastating beds of eelgrass.

Forests

Forest advocates were at work in Maryland, where Baltimore increased protection for forest patches and several counties strengthened conservation laws. Regionally, tiny pests are still toppling majestic hemlocks, but forest managers are hopeful that new options may help them fight back.

Toxins & plastics

Bay Journal articles tracked discoveries of PFAS, or “forever chemicals,” in groundwater and the aquatic environment, as well as the growing concern about plastics, both large and microscopic, and their impact on the region’s waterways.



New film

Our award-winning 2019 documentary, *An Island Out of Time*, was followed by the 2020 release of *Saving San Domingo*. This 25-minute film highlights an African American community on Maryland’s Eastern Shore as it celebrates its unique history and works to preserve its values and traditions. *Bay Journal* films are available at bayjournal.com and on the *Bay Journal* YouTube channel.

Your support helps spread the news

The *Bay Journal* team aims to make news about the region's environment accessible to everyone. In 2020, we reached approximately 200,000 people each month through a combination of our printed edition, email newsletter, website, films and videos, Facebook followers and the Bay Journal News Service. Among our readers are teachers and students, scientists, policy makers, conservation leaders and many other engaged citizens.

What is the Bay Journal News Service?

The Bay Journal News Service distributes articles for free use by other newspapers, magazines and websites. This amplifies our ability to share environmental news by reaching readers who may not subscribe to the *Bay Journal*. In 2020, approximately 100 news outlets collectively reprinted *Bay Journal* articles about 500 times.

What is the Local Government Edition?

The *Bay Journal Local Government Edition* provides news and information to local government employees and elected leaders who work on water quality projects to benefit their communities and the Chesapeake Bay. It reaches staff and elected officials in most of the region's 1,800 local governments.



Staff writer Ad Crable (right) talks with a Pennsylvania farmer about the water quality benefits of healthy soil.

“ The Bay Journal articles have been super helpful in my classroom when examining Environmental Justice. ”

– A Bay Journal reader

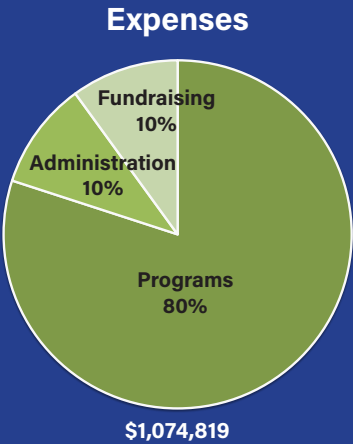
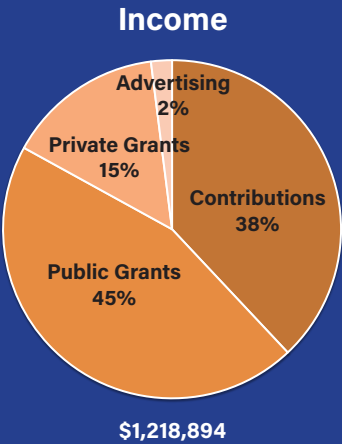
Examples of media that reprinted our articles in 2020:

Annandale Patch (VA)	Leesburg Patch (VA)
Augusta Free Press (VA)	LNP/Lancaster Online (PA)
Baltimore Sun	Lynchburg News & Advance (VA)
Bucks County Herald (PA)	Middletown Press & Journal (PA)
Cecil Whig (MD)	Morrisons Cove Herald (PA)
Chesapeake Bay Magazine	Northern Neck News (VA)
Crisfield-Somerset Co. Times (MD)	Philadelphia Free Press
Cumberland Times-News (MD)	Pike County Dispatch (PA)
Delaware State News	Prince George's Post (MD)
Delmarva Now/Daily News	Punxsatawney Spirit (PA)
Delta Star (PA)	Rappahannock Record (VA)
Dundalk Eagle (MD)	Salisbury Daily Times (MD)
Easton Star Democrat (MD)	Shamokin News-Item (PA)
Elkton Weekend Whig (MD)	Smithfield Times (VA)
The Fishing Wire	Southern Maryland News
Germantown Patch (MD)	Staunton News Leader (VA)
Harrisburg Borough News (PA)	Uniontown Herald-Standard (PA)
Johnsonburg Press (PA)	Urbanna Southside Sentinel (VA)
Kent County News (MD)	Wilmington News-Journal (DE)
Lancaster Farming (PA)	Wyalusing Rocket-Courier (PA)

2020 Financial Report

Fiscal year ending December 31, 2020

We are deeply grateful to the readers and funders whose donations make our work possible. Their names are listed on an ongoing basis in each printed edition of the *Bay Journal*.



Note: These are unaudited financials. For our official statement, email llutz@bayjournal.com.

Our Team in 2020

Board of Directors

- Mary Barber
President
RTI International
- Bill Eichbaum
Vice-President
World Wildlife Fund
- Kim Coble
Treasurer
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
- Karl Blankenship
Secretary
Bay Journal Media
- Don Boesch
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Emeritus
- Don Luzzatto
Hampton Roads Community Foundation
- Mark Platts
Susquehanna National Heritage Area

Staff

- Karl Blankenship
Editor / Executive Director
- Lara Lutz
Managing Editor / Associate Director
- Timothy B. Wheeler
Associate Editor / Senior Writer
- Jacqui Caine
Marketing & Advertising Director
- Jeremy Cox
Staff Writer (MD)
- Ad Crable
Staff Writer (PA)
- Tamara Detrick
Staff Writer (VA)
- Kathleen A. Gaskell
Copy / Design Editor
- Dave Harp
Photographer
- Whitney Pipkin
Staff Writer (VA)
- T. F. Sayles
Editor, Bay Journal News Service
- Andrew Nolan
Chief Financial Officer

***“ Traditional news outlets,
with their for-profit
interests, value speed and
cheapness above all else.
At the Bay Journal, we can
actually do our jobs.
We answer to our readers,
not shareholders.”***

**— Jeremy Cox
Staff Writer/Podcast Host**



**Help share the news! Because everyone should
join the conversation about clean air and clean water.**

- *Tell a friend about the Bay Journal. Subscriptions are free!*
- *Support our work with a donation at bayjournal.com/donate.*
- *Leave a legacy: Consider the Bay Journal in your estate planning.
Email jcaine@bayjournal.com for information.*

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by staff photographer
Dave Harp, except:

Cover/Page 1, Jeremy
Cox

Page 5, Kathleen A.
Gaskell

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