

National Park Service  
Chesapeake Bay



# CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS

Expanding Youth Workforces and Stewardship in the  
Chesapeake Bay



2014



Painting planter boxes on the All Sensory Trail at Patapsco Valley State Park

## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS A Partnership Network

Chesapeake Youth Corps is a partnership network of federal, state and local agencies, and non-profit organizations that employ and engage young people in conservation and restoration projects in the Chesapeake Bay region. While the individual youth programs have been long established, the partnership network connecting them is a fairly new innovation. The Chesapeake Youth Corps partnership is coordinated by the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay.

The primary impetus for the Chesapeake Youth Corps (CYC) initiative in 2011 and 2012 was development of the federal *Strategy to Protect and Restore the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*. The strategy was prepared at the request of President Obama in Executive Order 13508 that called for the expansion of “Chesapeake Conservation Corps workforces.” A team of advisors determined that forming a partnership network was the most effective way to expand workforces.

The National Park Service (NPS) contributes funding that supports youth crews hosted by partners. A team of four NPS interns placed at CYC host organizations helps partners accomplish projects connected to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

**This report illustrates the many accomplishments and activities of the Chesapeake Youth Corps network in 2014.**



Storm drain stencil project of the CYC interns.

## STATISTICS 2014

**1530** Total Hours of Mentoring Interns

**25** NPS-Related Projects Completed along the Chesapeake Bay

**8840** Hours Worked by Interns

**75** Educational Events Held

**37** Educational Materials Created

**9** Grants Awarded

**3423** Total Youth Participants



CYC Partners  
and Interns  
Meeting

**PARTNERS**  
2014

Please reference this page for acronyms throughout this document:

Virginia Department of  
Conservation and Recreation  
(DCR)  
Youth Conservation Corps  
(YCC)  
Summer Crews

Anne Arundel County MD  
Department of Recreation and  
Parks (AAC R&P)  
Summer Crews

Anacostia Watershed Society  
(AWS)  
CYC Intern

James River Association (JRA)  
CYC Intern

Maryland Department of Natural  
Resources (DNR)  
Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC)  
Summer Crews  
CYC Intern

Parks & People Foundation (P&P)  
BRANCHES  
School-Year Crews  
Summer Crews  
CYC Intern

Montgomery County  
Conservation Corps (MCCC)  
Year round Cohorts

National Park Service  
Chesapeake Bay (NPS)  
CYC Intern

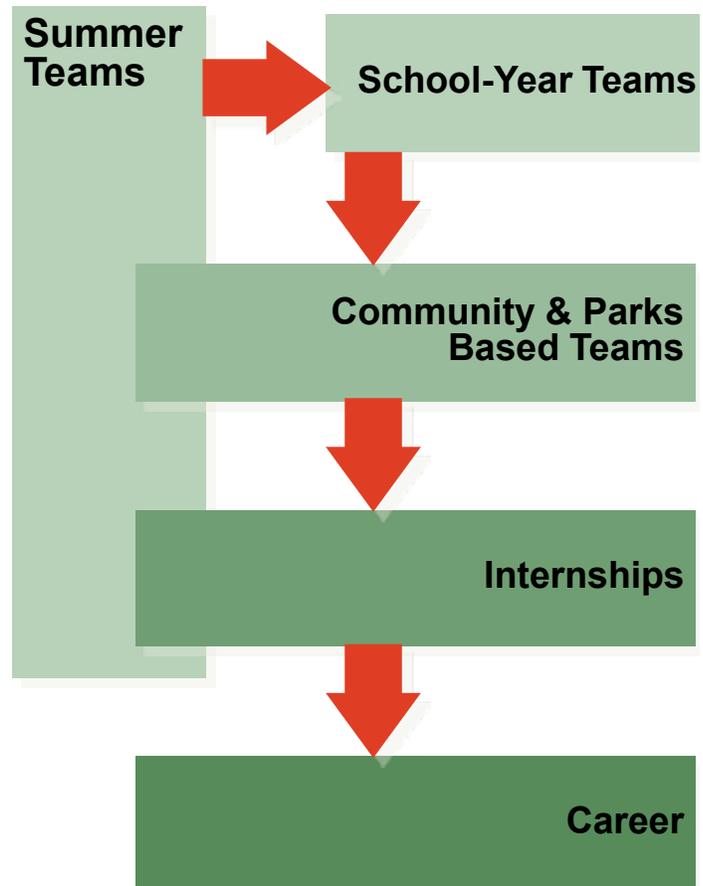
MCCC Crew members getting a tour of the Anacostia river.



## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Meet the Youth Participants

Governmental and non-profit organizations have increasingly placed a strong emphasis on developing a career pathway for young people. The National Park Service, for example, has had a fairly robust presence for K-12 students through curriculum-based and Junior Ranger programs. However, less attention has been placed on creating opportunities for service learning and youth employment until very recently. The Chesapeake Youth Corps network fills an experience gap in the career ladder in cultural and natural resources, particularly with NPS.

### Pathways Model





Colonial Heights student holding a worm

# CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Youth Participants at a Glance

### First Experiences:

- First time working for pay
- First time working for an employer
- First time kayaking/canoeing
- First time camping
- First time in a national park

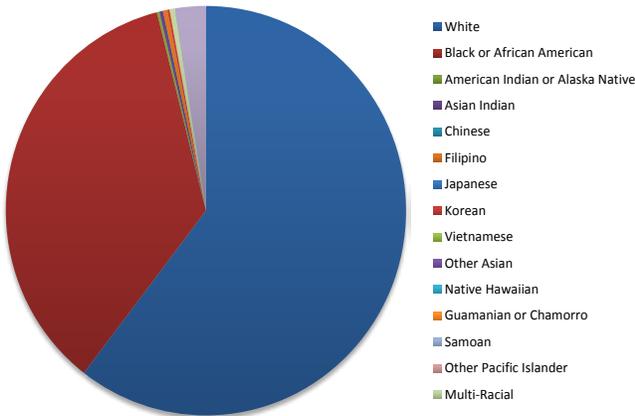
### Age Range for CYC 14 to 25

**14-17** : Most partner programs welcome young people as crew members beginning at age 14 as high school freshmen.

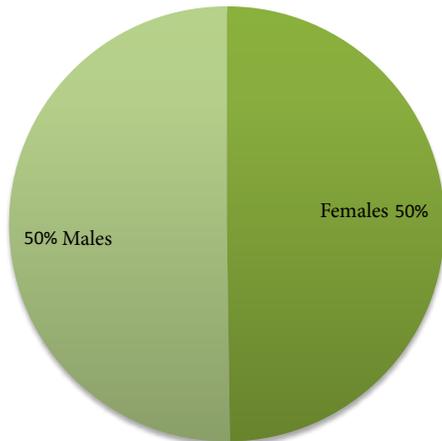
**18-21** : Crew leaders are typically people who spent a few seasons as crew members and are now advancing to a supervisory role.

**22-25** : Interns are in a transition period moving towards full-time career employment.

CYC YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS



CYC YOUTH GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS





Engaging Youth  
during Great  
Outdoors America  
Week

## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Meet the Interns

Five year-round NPS interns completed a year of service with partners James River Association, Parks & People Foundation, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service and Anacostia Watershed Society. NPS interns serve as a resource for partners and as ambassadors for NPS. The interns support partners with project coordination, training, funding source research, grant writing, environmental education program research and development, and outreach and recreational activities.

“The CYC is a great network that I am very happy to be a part of. Everyone in the partnership seems to be passionate about helping the youth and bettering the environment for future generations.”  
-James Rush, CYC Intern,  
National Park Service

“The students’ character development throughout the trip was a very dramatic transition to witness. These groups gained a sense of personal ownership of the river, and became more motivated to take action and responsibility in the watershed.” - Georgia Busch, CYC Intern, James River Association about JRA Expeditions

# 15

grants were applied  
for and 9 were  
awarded.

# 15

partner  
organizations  
recruited.

# 8840

hours worked by  
interns



Intern Paul Ryberg leading a paddling excursion

## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Intern Highlights

Intern highlights in the 2014 season include:

- Interns hosted “Field Experience” events for fellow interns and mentors, and host organizations. Immersive experiences, environmental education, team-building exercises, and fellowship helped the intern teams begin their year of service with support from each other.
- Interns continued the project to create foundational documents for the partnership network, including manuals on transportation and job-training opportunities.
- By the end of the service year, each intern secured full-time employment either with the hosting organization or in a related field.
- Each intern completed his or her own capstone project, a year-long initiative created, developed, and implemented by the intern.

The Chesapeake Youth Corps intern team completed a series of capstone projects.

**“Bridging the Watershed” Field Sheets:** Lesson plans for DNR crews using this environmental education program.

**Interpretive Framework:** A planning guide of environmental and educational interpretive themes and how to communicate them along the Anacostia River Water Trail.

**James River Expeditions:** Designed a three step “Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience” for students from Highland Springs High School.

**Gwynns Falls Trail Audio Tour:** P&P remastered the audio tour for the trail improving its quality and ease of use.

**Interpretive Material:** Lesson plans and enrichment activities for youth corps crews plus informal educational games for youth camps.



Virginia DCR crew

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM

## Virginia State Parks Youth Conservation Corps

### Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Cyndi Juarez, Director of Community Engagement and Volunteerism

Virginia DCR's Youth Conservation Corps engages Virginia's youth in a structured program of important conservation and park projects on public lands while providing learning that fosters teamwork, self-esteem, social responsibility and respect for the environment.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation organizes various crews working on conservation and restoration projects to improve their parks and water access along the major rivers. The crews are stationed at various parks and spend three weeks living and working at the park. These are some of their accomplishments:

- **Mason Neck State Park:** Resurfaced trails along Kanes Creek Trail and Bay View Trail as well as maintenance on the Beach trail overlook.
- **York River State Park:** Rerouted .5 miles of trail to include water views

as well as completing maintenance on other parts of the trail.

- **Westmoreland State Park:** Helped develop parking and a new trail with water views on the Wellford Tract at Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
- **Leesylvania State Park:** The crew worked on a project to create access to the river through the park's picnic area.
- **Shenandoah State Park:** Added rock dust and refurbished damaged areas of the river trail; diverted runoff and repaired waterbars to prevent future damage. The crew

also did trash cleanup along the Shenandoah River.

- **James River State Park:** Worked on trail maintenance and enhancement to the river trail by doing viewshed clearing and increasing visitor access to the river.
- **Pocahontas State Park:** Completed various maintenance projects at Henricus Historical Park and at Pocahontas State Park



JRA Expedition getting ready to launch

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM  
**James River Association**

### James River Association

Jessica Templeton, Education Program Manager and Intern Mentor

Georgia Busch, CYC Intern

The mission of the James River Association is to be the guardian of the James River. They provide a voice for the river and take action to promote conservation and responsible stewardship of its natural resources. JRA achieves these goals through core programs: Watershed Restoration; Education; Outreach; River Advocacy; and their Riverkeeper program.

CYC Intern Georgia Busch served as environmental educator for the James River Ecology School on Presquile National Wildlife Refuge and designed service learning experiences to bond youth to the environment. Georgia's accomplishments include:

- Participated as a leader of the James River Expedition summer program. Three 8-day programs were held, giving participants the opportunity to build skills and gain understanding of the James River. Thirty high school students and seven high school teachers from across the watershed paddled 260 miles of the James River.
- Incorporated themes of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, changes of the Chesapeake Bay over time, and important trail sites into a new service-learning program at the school.
- Supported the *Envision the James* initiative to increase public access to trails and propose cultural and heritage initiatives in the James River corridor through collaboration with partners.
- Strengthened and constructed new relationships with partner organizations throughout the James River corridor through engagement with the James River Expeditions, *Envision the James*, Virginia's YCC crews, and the internship network.

BRANCHES Crew working together to complete a ropes course



CYC PARTNER PROGRAM  
**BRANCHES**

### **Parks & People Foundation**

*Guy Hager, Senior Director*

*Nicole McDaniels, Green Career Program Coordinator and CYC Intern Mentor*

*Michael Buasen, CYC Intern*

BRANCHES is Parks & People Foundation's year-round job training program for Baltimore City youth ages 14-21 and part of Parks & People's Green Career Ladder. BRANCHES addresses two vital needs in the City of Baltimore: the need for meaningful employment of economically disadvantaged youth, and the need for a trained workforce caring for parks and open green spaces.

CYC Intern **Michael Buasen** worked with Parks & People throughout the year as an intern and a crew leader with the P&P BRANCHES program. Mike's accomplishments include:

- **BRANCHES Crew Leader:** Led a crew of three BRANCHES members while also completing other CYC duties as well as work for Parks & People Foundation.
- **Geocaching Activity:** Organized and led an activity where he taught crews about geocaching and GPS technology. They then used this information to find geocaches in a park.
- **GIS Project:** Mike taught the crews about GIS work and its applications with the help of Boomerang Geospatial. The crews mapped out trees they had trimmed and plotted them on a map.
- **Environmental Education:** Organized a joint event with the education department of the Parks & People Foundation.
- **Canoe & Scoop:** Participated in a Canoe and Scoop event at Middle Branch Park in an effort to clean up the waterways with the BRANCHES crews.
- **Camping trip:** Coordinated a camping trip with the BRANCHES crews in Tuckahoe State Park to build teamwork and leadership skills for the crew members.



DNR crew working at Todd's Inheritance

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM

## Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps

### Maryland Department of Natural Resources

*Fred Banks*, Director of Conservation Jobs Corps

*Cindy Hawkins*, Program Manager and Intern Mentor

*Chassity Seymour*, CYC Intern

The Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps works with community youth organizations to provide conservation service opportunities in Maryland state parks. Youth participants build employability skills, discover Maryland's natural resources, and develop a sense of stewardship through service-learning projects.

**CYC Intern Chassity Seymour** served as a project lead during her time at the Department of Natural Resources. Her accomplishments with DNR included several NPS-related projects:

- **All Sensory Trail:** In the Hilton area of Patapsco Valley State Park, crews constructed an accessible sensory trail. The trail has a rope that runs along the perimeter to guide the visually impaired as well as being wheelchair accessible. Read more about this project on page 18.
- **Pier Construction:** Youth Participants worked with Pocomoke State Park volunteers and staff to construct three new piers, and three ADA accessible paths leading to the piers.
- **Heritage Greenway Trail:** Crews worked on proj-

ects to increase accessibility. They added universally accessible entrances and transition ramps, and updated the trail's interpretive panels.

- **Historic Lock Restoration:** The CJC cleaned up and restored a historic lock at Susquehanna State Park. The crews cleared vegetation and repaired a fence that prevents people from getting down into the lock. Finally, they reopened a portion of the walking path around the lock.
- **Todd's Inheritance:** The crew installed a fence around the historic area and cleared the area of trash and debris. Crew also stabilized a shed on site and removed a patch of invasive phragmites.



An AWS Rice  
Rangers Group  
on the Anacostia

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM  
**Anacostia Watershed Society**

### **Anacostia Watershed Society**

*Lee Cain*, Director of Adult Education and Intern Mentor

*Paul Ryberg*, CYC Intern

The Anacostia Watershed Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Anacostia River and its watershed communities by cleaning the water, recovering the shores, honoring the heritage, and engaging the youth.

CYC Intern Paul Ryberg helped direct the recreation department at the Anacostia Watershed Society. His accomplishments include the following:

- **Kingman Dock Installation:** Facilitated the permit application process and acquired the materials for the proposed dock at Kingman Island. The dock will be installed in 2015 for new access along the Anacostia River.
- **Paddle Nights:** Led 25 free Paddle Nights along the Anacostia River to get people out on the river and educate them about the issues facing it.
- **Tour & Canoe Repair:** Paul led the MCCC in two educational pontoon tours on the Anacostia and then participated in fiberglass canoe repairs so that the fleet was ready for the Paddle Nights.
- **Rice Rangers:** Led student groups on seven rice plantings where students participated in wetland restoration by planting native species as part of a broader restoration effort in Kenilworth Marsh.
- **Kenilworth Wetland Restoration:** Paul led the MCCC crew at Kenilworth Marsh in ongoing restoration efforts with four new goose exclosures totaling roughly 2,000 square feet that will be converted to wetland habitat in 2015.



MCCC, with Ranger Oliveros and Governor O'Malley

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM

## Montgomery County Conservation Corps

### Montgomery County Conservation Corps

*Jacob Newman, Workforce Director*

*Adam Angel, Program Manager*

Montgomery County Conservation Corps uses a comprehensive approach to working with youth 17-24 years of age. The youth are provided opportunities to attain their GED and gain hands-on experience while completing projects in the field designed around conservation principles.

The Montgomery County Conservation Corps (MCCC) is new this year to the Chesapeake Youth Corps partnership network. The MCCC gives youth ages 17-24 the opportunity to obtain their GED while working on projects and gaining real world experience. In addition, participants learn how to obtain state ID's and driver's licenses as well as the necessary skills to write a good resume and interview well.

Most recently, they have been working with the Anacostia Watershed Society, another CYC partner. They went on a pontoon tour of the Anacostia River to learn about the river and the challenges that are faced in restoring it, connecting everything they have learned in their GED classes to a real world experience. The MCCC then participated in a Rice

Rangers event to plant over 100 native plants and constructed a goose exclusion fence to prevent the geese from getting to the freshly planted vegetation. MCCC participants helped elementary school children plant several species of native aquatic plants at the Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens as a portion of a larger restoration project.

*"This is the kind of work that inspired us to join the Conservation Corps. We joined for this kind of hands-on environmental conservation. Planting trees is good and all, but this feels more meaningful."*  
MCCC Crew Chief



AAC R&P  
campers playing  
Bladensburg  
Dodgeball

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM

## Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks

### Anne Arundel County Parks and Recreation

Nicki Fiocco, Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator

Anne Arundel County Parks and Recreation enriches the lives of citizens by offering quality active and passive recreational opportunities and accessible youth and adult services while pursuing the preservation and enhancement of natural, cultural and historic resources.

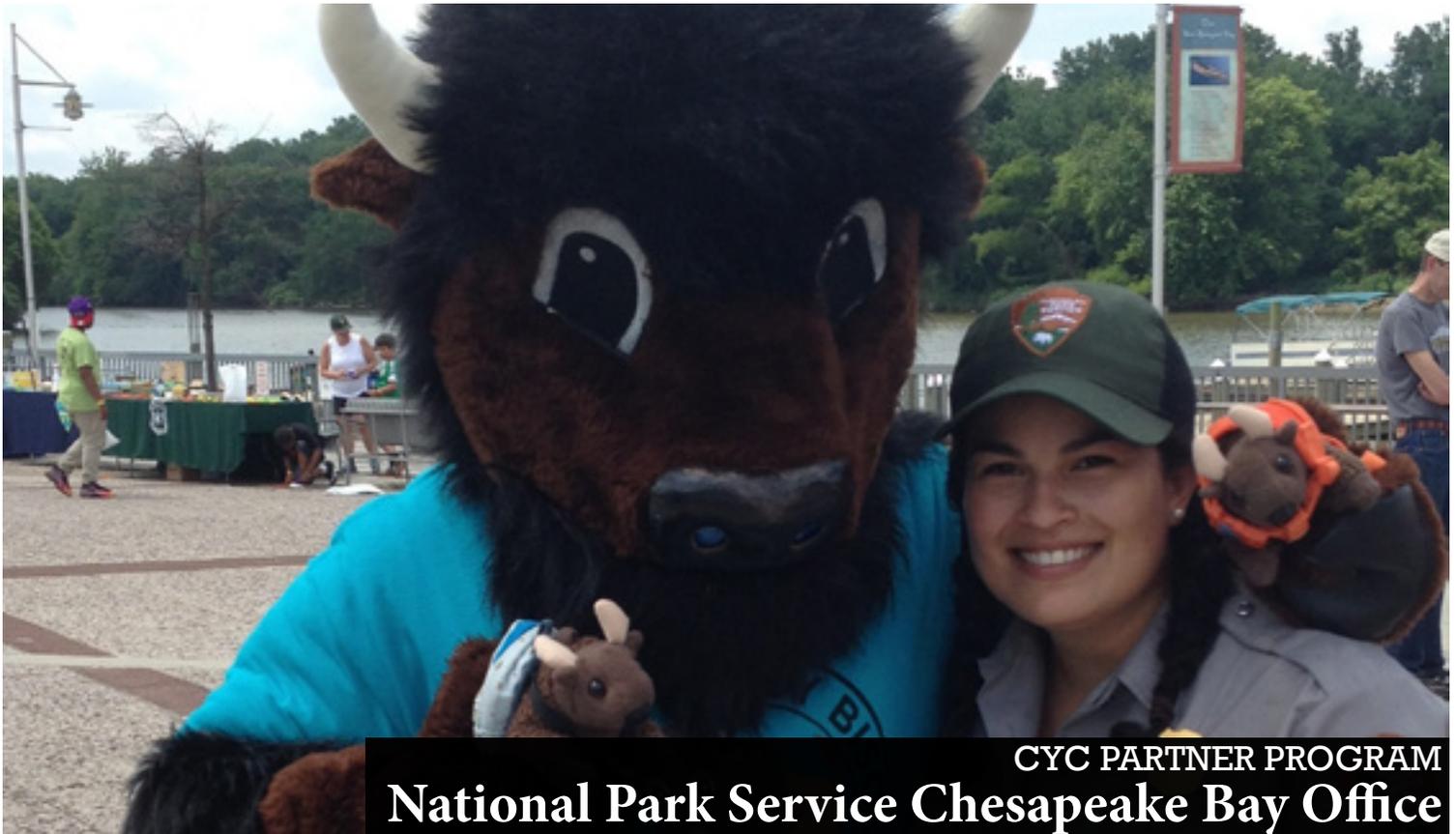
The Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks staff (AAC R&P) offered camps during which campers complete projects in local county parks:

- **Clean Up:** Campers visited Downs Park in Pasadena and did a beach clean up.
- **Planting:** Planted native flowers and weeded flower beds at the North Aquatic Swim Center in an effort to increase the amount of native plants as well as beautify the area. In addition, the Crew planted stormwater control vegetation at the center under the supervision of AACC's horticultural department.
- **Building:** Built a American Indian tipi for the Magothy River Association's heritage project.
- **Cleared:** Three trails at Lake Waterford Park were cleared, blazed, and named.
- **Lessons:** Intern James Rush taught lessons about

habitat fragmentation and the War of 1812 through Bladensburg Dodgeball.

*"Having the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay office as part of the programming in the Youth Conservation Corps brought a new level to the program. The kids learned about habitat fragmentation and the Battle of Bladensburg in a fun and interactive way. Who knew dodgeball could be converted into a lesson on a famous battle!"*

-Nicki Fiocco, AAC R&P



CYC PARTNER PROGRAM

## National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office

### National Park Service Chesapeake Bay

*Lina Oliveros*, Park Ranger and CYC Mentor

*John Davy*, Youth Outdoor Recreation Specialist

*James Rush*, CYC Intern

National Park Service Chesapeake Bay connects people to experiences of the natural and cultural heritage of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers. NPS helps to conserve special places important to visitors, residents, and the nation, for this and future generations.

The National Park Service Chesapeake Bay facilitates the partnerships that are created through the CYC program by connecting current partners and bringing new opportunities through the network. This year is the first year that the Chesapeake Bay had a CYC Intern on the team. Here are some of James's accomplishments in 2014:

- **Interpretive Materials:** Helped create a set of 10 lesson plans to educate crews about the Captain John Smith Chesapeake and Star-Spangled Banner national historic trails.
- **Partner Outreach:** Completed lessons with crew from Anne Arundel County Parks and Recreation as well as groups of students who attended the Outdoor Alliance for Kids event held at Bladensburg Waterfront Park.
- **Bladensburg Dock Case Study:** Created an access case study to summarize a site through a written description with photos that serves as a guiding to when planning a visit.
- **GIS Work:** Created a map displaying all NPS Chesapeake Bay partners throughout the watershed.
- **Grant Support:** Provided support for the National Park Foundation grant awarded for construction of Patapsco Valley State Park's All Sensory Trail with a media plan, site visits, and technical assistance.
- **Call to Action:** Created three Call to Action stories for the NPS regional office to highlight partnerships and projects within the CYC Network.



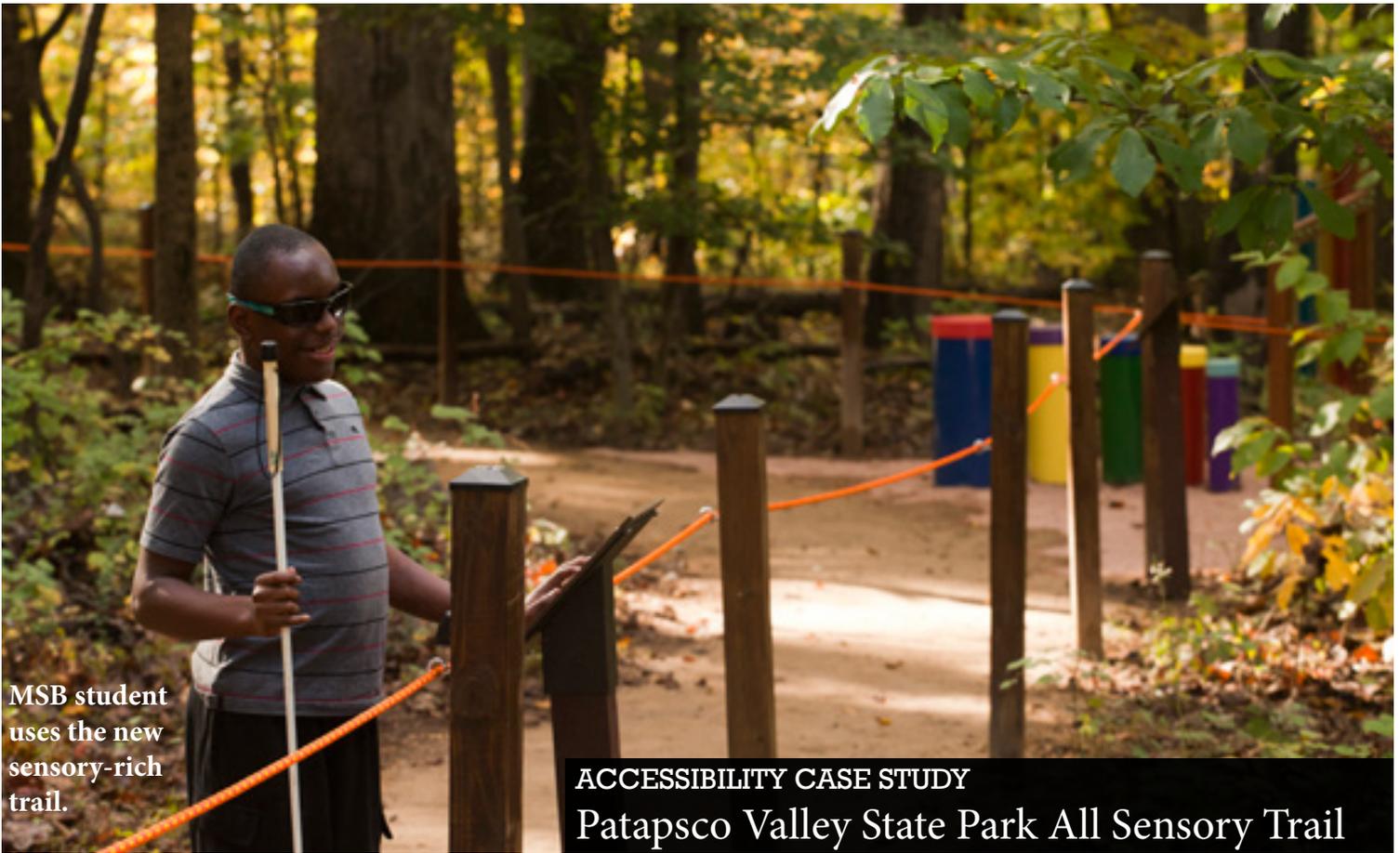
A “touch garden”  
on the All  
Sensory Trail.

**CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS**  
**Accessibility Projects**

The National Park Service is committed to implementing universal design principles so that people of all abilities have more access to outdoor recreation. Therefore, the Chesapeake Youth Corps partnership network seeks opportunities to include universal accessibility projects in its work. This work forms the basis of case studies for trail features, youth engagement, and documentation that helps others interested in similar projects.

In 2014, Maryland’s Conservation Jobs Corps participated in three projects to improve outdoor recreational experiences for people of all abilities. The first one was the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Trail which extends 2.7 miles with a trailhead at the Conowingo Dam. This trail is a component of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The youth crew built universally accessible entrances with ADA-approved surfaces, and transition ramps to enter and exit the trail’s boardwalk. In the second project, CJC participants joined volunteers at Pocomoke River State Park on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Here, the youth crews helped build ADA-accessible paths leading to newly constructed piers. Now, visitors with mobility concerns can more easily reach the piers.

In the third project, Conservation Jobs Corps participants built a sensory trail at Patapsco Valley State Park. Referred to as the All Sensory Trail, Patapsco’s project was inspired by last year’s case study of a similar trail designed and implemented at Lake Waterford Park in Pasadena, Maryland. These innovative trail projects are very popular with park visitors and are attracting interest from park planners in other parts of the country. Read about Patapsco Valley State Park’s All Sensory Trail on the next page.



MSB student uses the new sensory-rich trail.

## ACCESSIBILITY CASE STUDY Patapsco Valley State Park All Sensory Trail

“When you create great programs for people with special needs, you create great programs for everyone.” - **David Neibuhr, Executive Director, Watermen’s Museum**

The National Park Service and Maryland Department of Natural Resources were awarded a \$24,000 grant from the National Park Foundation to build a universally accessible sensory-rich trail experience. Throughout the planning stages and trail development, NPS and DNR consulted with the Maryland School for the Blind whose staff and students made on-site visits and offered recommendations for improvements.

The trail is four feet wide and has posts with a rope extending the full length of the trail on the right side. Throughout the trail, elevated planters for tactile stimulation contain a touch garden and a scent garden. In one section a large number of birdhouses were installed to encourage nesting birds so they can be heard while experiencing

the trail. Outdoor drums and a xylophone were also placed on the trail as another interactive component. Maryland’s CJC participants performed the majority of the work with help from the Maryland Conservation Corps once the CJC session was over.

*“Projects that combine jobs, youth, conservation, and accessibility require strong partnerships! This results in lasting partnerships, a more skilled workforce and a better visitor experience - a win-win for all.”*

Lina Oliveros NPS Park Ranger

Trash cleanup  
being completed  
by the CYC Intern  
team and Mentors



CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS  
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Blue Heron in the  
water at Kenilworth  
Aquatic Gardens

CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS

## Acknowledgements

Expanding youth programs in the Chesapeake Bay region requires collaborative work, funding, connections between programs and teamwork across agencies and organizations. Thanks to the hard work of dedicated individuals, we were able to complete another successful year. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all the partners, families, volunteers and staff that made these youth programs work. Thank you for working together and helping advance youth stewardship and employment in our beautiful Bay.