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## **Special Report and Map Released on Chesapeake's Treasured Landscapes**

The Friends of the Capt. John Smith Chesapeake Trail, the Environmental Law Institute, and the National Geographic Society today released a special report and map recommending the development of a bold and coordinated strategy for conserving the Chesapeake's treasured landscapes and calling for more federal investment in land conservation.

The report, titled *Conserving Treasured Landscapes in the Chesapeake: A Special Report*, bases its findings on the Environmental Law Institute's careful analysis of more than 25 federal and state conservation programs. To download the report and the map, visit [www.treasuredlandscapes.org](http://www.treasuredlandscapes.org).

Protecting these landscapes is a key component of President Obama's recent Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order, and responds to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar's stated desire to develop a Treasured Landscape program nationally and to use the Chesapeake as one of the targeted regions.

"We believe this report and the National Geographic Society map will help the Department of the Interior and its partners define a Treasured Landscape Initiative in the Chesapeake region, and we offer it in that spirit," said Patrick F. Noonan, Vice Chairman of the Friends. "There is an indivisible link between healthy landscapes and healthy rivers."

The report notes that intact landscapes provide the Bay the diverse habitats that lead to productive fisheries and the immense filtering capacities needed for healthy waters. From these landscapes we get clean water, healthy air, and outdoor recreation, and they contain the history, landmarks, and places that make the Chesapeake special.

"This report provides a framework to help government agencies and conservation groups prioritize the most significant and diverse Chesapeake landscapes for conservation," explains Leslie Carothers, President of ELI. "This framework holds promise to increase conservation resources and improve effective coordination among the dozens of existing programs aimed at protecting farmland, historic sites, recreational access, economic development opportunities, and water quality across the Bay region."

The report suggests a two-part definition for treasured landscapes. It says a significant or "treasured" landscape in the Chesapeake Bay watershed is one having both significant ecological and cultural value and providing multiple ecological, recreational, and cultural benefits at a landscape scale.

The report outlines five action points for a new conservation strategy. Those points are:

1. Build on the excellent state conservation planning models and create a unified Bay-wide planning approach to coordinate existing information and to target future conservation investments.
2. Better coordinate resources from multiple conservation programs to conserve priority landscapes at a scale sufficient to protect significant ecological, historic, and cultural assets.
3. Increase funding, specifically full funding for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund and establish a dedicated fund within the Land and Water Conservation Fund to conserve Chesapeake treasured landscapes.
4. Create and build partnerships to leverage public and private funding for landscape conservation.
5. Establish new units of the National Park and National Refuge systems, building upon the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the Chesapeake Gateways Network.

President Obama's Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order strategy will be adopted in May 2010. This report and subsequent discussions with federal, state, and local government officials and private and nonprofit leaders will help shape the final strategy and seek to secure new resources for the protection of Chesapeake Bay treasured landscapes.

For copies of the report and the map, please visit [www.treasuredlandscapes.org](http://www.treasuredlandscapes.org).

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The Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail, a nonprofit organization, coordinates and advances conservation, public access and education efforts across the watershed in support of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and Chesapeake Bay priorities. Our goal is to ensure conservation, stewardship, access, and enjoyment of the Chesapeake's iconic landscapes and waterways and its cultural and historic assets, highlighted by the Capt. John Smith National Historic Chesapeake Trail. [www.chesapeaketrails.org](http://www.chesapeaketrails.org)

The Environmental Law Institute makes law work for people, places, and the planet. The Institute has played a pivotal role in shaping the fields of environmental law, policy, and management, domestically and abroad. Today ELI is an internationally recognized, non-partisan research and education center working to strengthen environmental protection by improving law and governance worldwide. [www.eli.org](http://www.eli.org)

The National Geographic Society is one of the world's largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations. Founded in 1888 to "increase and diffuse geographic knowledge," the Society's mission is to inspire people to care about the planet. Throughout its 121-year history, the Society has encouraged conservation of natural resources and raised public awareness of the importance of natural places, the plants and wildlife that inhabit them, and the environmental problems that threaten them. [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)