



Conservancy for Charles County Announces Leadership Transition, Celebrates Legacy of Longtime President Hal Delaplane

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LaPlata, MD, January 22, 2026

The Conservancy for Charles County, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to protecting sensitive natural lands throughout Charles County, announces a transition in leadership. After 14 years of distinguished service as Board President, **Hal Delaplane** is stepping down, passing the torch to longtime board member and immediate past Vice President **Hugh Williams**, who will guide the Conservancy into 2026 and beyond.

Williams, a La Plata resident and local attorney, also serves as Chair of the Town of La Plata Board of Appeals. Board member **Barry Gebler** will assume the role of Vice President. A resident of Hughesville, Gebler is a Melvin Jones award recipient for his service to the community through the Waldorf Lion's Club. Gebler also volunteers tutoring an adult reader through the Charles County Literacy Council.

Under Delaplane's leadership, the Conservancy achieved significant conservation milestones. The organization expanded the lands under its protection by **579 acres**, bringing the total to **2,273 acres**. These additions include two forested properties within the Mount Vernon watershed and the 208-acre, county-owned Pomonkey Forest. The Conservancy also played a key role in establishing the **Watershed Conservation District** in the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan and has remained a committed defender of that designation in court.

In addition, the Conservancy helped spearhead the launch of the **Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance**, a regional network of partners working together to accelerate land conservation across Southern Maryland.

Today, the Conservancy holds **29 conservation easements**. The ecosystem services provided by these protected lands—including carbon sequestration, air pollution removal, stormwater mitigation, groundwater recharge, nitrogen uptake, and vital wildlife habitat—are valued at **\$4 million annually**. In 2026, the Conservancy will continue advancing its mission to protect the county's most important natural resources while expanding community outreach and growing its membership.

About the Conservancy for Charles County

Founded in 1996, the Conservancy is dedicated to preserving the natural landscapes, open spaces, and farmland that make Charles County an ecological cornerstone of Chesapeake



Bay restoration. Individuals and organizations interested in supporting local conservation are invited to become members at **ConserveCharles.org** by clicking “Become a Member.”

The Conservancy of Charles County acknowledges its funding and community partners.



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