

YEAR IN REVIEW

2024

Sharing stories of our
lower eastern shore
heritage and traditions



OUR MISSION:

Promote, preserve and protect the cultural heritage, historical linkages and natural assets of Maryland's lower eastern shore.

OUR VISION:

Maryland's Beach to Bay Heritage Area unifies, elevates and celebrates the collective stories of the lower eastern shore's heritage, cultural traditions and natural resources.



Pocomoke River State Park

LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

The Beach to Bay Heritage Area has had a busy year in 2024! We continue to expand our programming, special projects and offerings to the region. It's our mission to promote, preserve and protect the cultural heritage, historical linkages and natural assets of Maryland's lower eastern shore.

Our achievements in 2024 included:

- The unveiling of two African American heritage murals
- The development and installation of more interpretive signs
- Radio programming with Delmarva Public Media highlighting rarely told stories of our African American heritage
- Creation of the Beach to Bay Museums Passport
- Certified Interpretive Guide Training
- A StoryMapping project of the Beach to Bay region
- Hiring of a part-time Program Specialist

As we look to 2025, we have new grant-funded projects, including the reimagining of the Beach to Bay Indian Trail and an archaeological dig in Worcester County. Both projects will involve the Native American tribes in the region.

We will continue to offer new programming and our very popular mini-grant program. Our 5-year Strategic Plan continues to be our guiding principle, allowing us to chart our course for the future and continue to elevate, celebrate and sustain the stories, traditions and natural heritage of the Beach to Bay Heritage Area.

We hope you'll be a part of one or more of our exciting programs and projects!

Sincerely,



Mindie Burgoyne
President



Lisa Challenger
Executive Director



FUNDRAISING AND GRANTS

BBHA RECEIVED MORE THAN \$218,000 IN FUNDING

BBHA received a total of \$218,597 in funding during 2024. We were awarded funding by the Rural Maryland Council, MAERDAF program for the redevelopment of the Beach to Bay Indian Trail. Maryland Humanities SHINE Grant helps cover operational costs to carry out our program. Maryland Historical Trust non-capital grant will fund the archaeology project in Worcester County. Maryland Heritage Areas Authority funds a variety of our activities, and 2024 saw an additional grant that funded our Passport program and the Certified Interpretive Guide program.

FUNDER	AMOUNT
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority	
Management Grant	\$125,000
Additional Open Grant	\$38,461
SHINE (Maryland Humanities)	\$10,000
Maryland Historical Trust	\$20,000
Rural Maryland Council	\$22,911
Giving Tuesday	\$2,225
TOTAL FUNDING RECEIVED	\$218,597



Museum of Eastern Shore Culture in Salisbury.



Historic Henry Hotel in Ocean City.



MINI GRANTS AWARDED

Beach to Bay Heritage Area was proud to award a total of \$25,000 in funding to the following projects:

ORGANIZATION

MINI GRANT PROJECT

Crisfield A & E	Oyster Can Planters in the Downtown District
Delmarva Discovery Museum	Exhibit Enhancements and Lighting
MD Coastal Bays Program	Coastal Bays Boardwalk Exhibit
Worcester County Economic Development and Tourism	Pocomoke River Brochure
Ocean City Museum Society	Video Documentary
Community Players of Salisbury	World War II Performances



MHAA FUNDING FOR THE HERITAGE AREA

The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority granted \$369,550 to lower eastern shore organizations.

ORGANIZATION

MHAA PROJECT

AMOUNT

Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Inc.	FY2025 Management Grant	\$100,000
Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Inc.	FY2025 Block Grant	\$25,000
Delmarva Discovery Center & Museum, Inc.	Mural Visions: Native Wisdom	\$20,000
Furnace Town Foundation Incorporated	Furnace Town Restoration Phase 3	\$38,750
Henry Hotel Foundation, Inc.	The Henry Hotel Restoration Project	\$100,000
Ocean City Museum Society, Inc.	Museum of Ocean City Exhibit Installation	\$50,000
Salisbury University - The Museum of Eastern Shore Culture	Interpretation and Accessibility for the MESC	\$35,800

TOTAL MHAA AWARDS FOR BEACH TO BAY HERITAGE AREA

\$369,550

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Crisfield’s mural, crafted by Michael Rosato, features the portraits of 17 individuals who made a lasting impact in the community.

TWO NEW BLACK HERITAGE MURALS COMPLETED; ONE MORE TO GO

As part of our African American Heritage Project, the Beach to Bay Heritage Area commissioned three murals to commemorate our Black heritage on the lower eastern shore. The Eastern Shore is rich with Black history spanning over three centuries and art is an excellent medium to share this history with our Shore communities and visitors alike. Public art has the ability to draw out emotions, tell narratives and encourage people to reflect on and celebrate our history in ways that words alone cannot express. In 2024 two murals were completed, with a third coming in 2025. The Salisbury mural, painted by We Are Limitless Studios, depicts Frederick Douglass and the Wicomico County Courthouse to honor his role in helping raise funds for the John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church. Crisfield’s mural, crafted by Michael Rosato, features the portraits of 17 individuals who made a lasting impact in the community. A third mural will bring to life Ocean City’s Black history.



Salisbury’s new mural, painted by We Are Limitless Studios, depicts Frederick Douglass and the Wicomico County Courthouse.



Eight new interpretive signs share the stories of Black communities at several locations.

NEW INTERPRETIVE SIGNS HIGHLIGHT BLACK HISTORY ON THE SHORE

2024 saw the creation of a new batch of interpretive signs that celebrate and tell the stories of our Black communities at several culturally significant sites. BBHA received a grant from the Maryland Department of Commerce and Office of Tourism Development to create new interpretive signs highlighting Black history here on the shore. A total of eight signs were designed and created for: The Chipman Cultural Center (formerly the John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church), Germantown School, Henry Hotel, San Domingo School, St. James Methodist Episcopal Church, Sturgis One-Room School Museum, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and the Reverend Dr. Charles Albert Tindley. Signs have been installed at Germantown School, Sturgis One-Room School Museum, and San Domingo School. Rev. Dr. Tindley’s sign sits outside of New Bethel United Methodist Church in Berlin, which is considered his original church.

‘RARELY TOLD STORIES’ AIR THROUGH DELMARVA PUBLIC MEDIA

“Rarely Told Stories of the Eastern Shore,” made in collaboration with Delmarva Public Media, is a radio segment that aims to shed light on the Shore’s less told stories. Five new episodes were recorded and aired featuring Black history on the Shore. From a single-room school nearly lost to history to one of the only hotels in Ocean City that welcomed Black guests in the 1900s, Maryland’s Eastern Shore is full of secrets to uncover and many of its own residents find themselves surprised about our less recognized history. New episodes released in 2024 covered:



The Story of Glass Hill

Maryland’s Dark Ties to Colonization Prior to Abolition of Slavery

The Crisfield Protest of 1961

The Resilience of the Henry Hotel

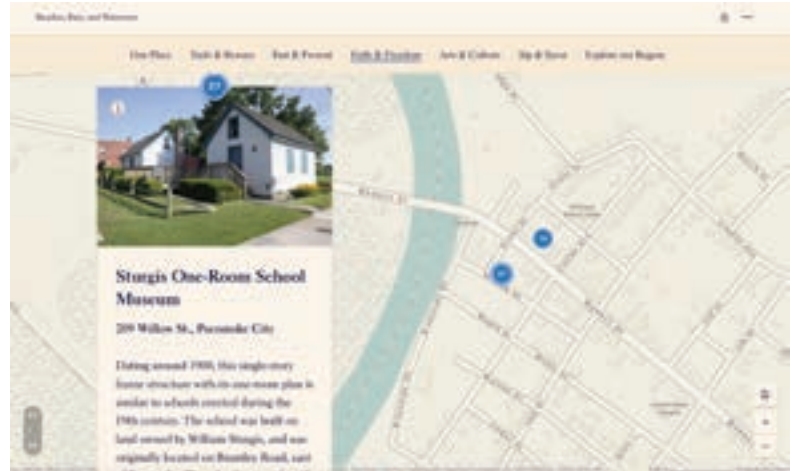
The Rebirth of a Former Rosenwald School

You can listen to them at beachesbayswaterways.org.

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STORYMAPPING BRINGS INTERACTIVE SPIN TO BEACH TO BAY HERITAGE AREA

In 2024 we teamed up with Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative, an outreach unit of Salisbury University, to create the Beach to Bay StoryMap. StoryMapping is a technique that uses GIS technology to visualize content or stories along two dimensions: activities or steps of the journey and content that supports each activity. The final product was a website revolving around interactive maps of the Beach to Bay Heritage Area broken down into several layers. These layers highlight activities and points of interest such as walking and water trails, museums, arts and entertainment districts, public art, our African American self-guided driving tour, and more. Not only does this create a holistic view of the area, but it also makes the Beach to Bay Heritage Area StoryMap an excellent guide for tourists in the area that want to plan their visit. Users can even input their current location and set a radius to discover activities and points of interest around them, allowing them to find places to visit on the fly. Experience the StoryMapping website at beachesbayswaterways.org.



A screenshot from the StoryMap website for the Beach to Bay Heritage Area.

PASSPORT PROGRAM ENCOURAGES MUSEUM VISITS

Unveiled in the Spring of 2024, our new Beach to Bay Museum Passport includes historic sites and museums located throughout the lower shore – from the Smith Island Cultural Center to St. Martins Church in Showell; from Pemberton Hall to Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum. Visitors are encouraged to get their passport stamped for prizes, and museum and historic sites are helping to cross-promote each other. Passports are available at the visitor centers, state parks and museums and historic sites featured in the Passport. The Passport was made possible by a grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.



ADVERTISING WITH MEDIA ONE

BBHA was able to take advantage of a Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Marketing Grant, where we utilized the strengths of content creation and activation. Local writer Jim Duffy showcased three articles on African American history, local foods and outdoor recreation. The final result was above and beyond industry averages. A total of 1.8 million impressions were delivered with a click-through rate average of 2.7%.



BBHA SITES FEATURED IN 'EDIBLE DELMARVA' FEATURE

Beach to Bay Heritage Area had a six-page spread in “Edible Delmarva” highlighting Smith Island Cake history, birding, and our Passport program. This is the in-room publication throughout Ocean City hotels. The magazine also covers Delaware and the eastern shore of Maryland and Virginia.

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



SMITH ISLAND IN THE SPOTLIGHT ON '60 MINUTES'

Smith Island was featured on "CBS 60 Minutes" late last year. According to the Maryland Office of Tourism, this 13-minute segment reached nearly 10 million people and was worth a whopping \$19.28 million in advertising market value!

20 TRAINED TO BE CERTIFIED INTERPRETIVE GUIDES

BBHA helped make it possible to train 20 people to be Certified Interpretive Guides. Widely used as the primary mode of communication, education, and storytelling in nature centers, museums, zoos, aquariums, parks, and historical sites, interpretation connects people with places, landscapes, and history. The nationally recognized Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) program is designed for anyone who wants to connect visitors with unique places and experiences through improved presentation techniques and strategies.



Participants represented Chesapeake Ghost Tours, Maryland Coastal Bays Program, Sustainable Visions, Purnell Museum, Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum, Experience Smith Island, Furnace Town Historic Site, Rackliffe House and Downtown Salisbury. All funding for the program was provided by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, saving each participant all costs for tuition and materials (approximately \$500 per participant).



Burgess Rural Living Center in Princess Anne.

ANNUAL EVENT HONORS CIVIL RIGHTS

In May, the Beach to Bay Heritage Area celebrated our annual event, “Civil Rights on the Shore: An Evening of History and Song” with Dr. Clara Small and Dr. John Wesley Wright, tenor. It was a celebration of the Civil Rights Movement here on the shore, accompanied by songs of the movement with audience participation. The event was held at the Charles H. Chipman Cultural Center in Salisbury, built in 1838 and the oldest standing African-American church on Delmarva.



BBHA JOINS FORCES WITH SU FOR THE MARYLAND 250 COMMISSION

The United States’ semiquincentennial is quickly approaching in 2026, and in preparation for Maryland’s celebration of America’s 250th anniversary, the Beach to Bay Heritage Area has partnered with Salisbury University to celebrate here on the lower eastern shore. Our unique cultural heritage and history have been shaped by our location between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, but they are often overshadowed by Maryland’s western half on the other side of the bridge. Our partnership with Salisbury University and our communities in the heritage area will help ensure that our contributions to America are shared and celebrated, because our history is American history.





BBHA WINS 'BEST NEW PRODUCT' AWARD

Beach to Bay Heritage Area was honored to be recognized at the Maryland Tourism and Travel Summit in November with the Best New Product Award for the Frederick Douglass Mural in downtown Salisbury. The project was a partnership with Perdue Farms. Salisbury mural artists from We Are Limitless Studios created the award-winning mural.

SMITH ISLAND TO RECEIVE SECOND CAKE SIGN

William G. Pomeroy Foundation approved an additional sign touting the Smith Island cake's long-standing tradition on Smith Island. The additional sign will be placed in Tylerton near the mural. Now visitors to Tylerton and Ewell will be able to learn about this flavorful tradition! The new sign was approved in July 2024.



EASTERN SHORE DELEGATION PRESENTATION

BBHA makes an annual presentation to our eastern shore legislative delegation, updating them on our projects and programs and thanking them for their support. We give a presentation every year in February to let them know how we are using the funding.

FORGING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE

BBHA values our partnerships with area and regional stakeholders to help us seek common ground with our heritage “ways.” Forging mutually beneficial partnerships allows us to elevate our customs and culture beyond our geographic boundaries.

We work with the **Maryland Folk Festival** as part of the Maryland Traditions Folklife Area.

Our partnership with **area museums and historic sites** allowed the Beach to Bay Museums Passport to become a reality.

BBHA is working with New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia to develop the **Cape to Cape Scenic Byway** from Cape May, New Jersey to Cape Henry, Virginia.

BBHA is a member of the **Chesapeake Country All-American Road Coalition**, helping to drive the interpretive plan and interpretive elements along the byway.

Our long-standing relationship with the **Rural Maryland Council** allows us to continue to create projects such as our StoryMap, interpretive exhibits and marketing initiatives.

We are continuing new partnerships with **Salisbury University**, not only with the **Nabb Center for Delmarva History and Culture**, but also with other departments for programming and with the **MD250 Celebration**.

We partner with **Maryland Coastal Bays**, serving on the Citizens Advisory Committee to help guide their Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan.



The Museum of Ocean City opened in September 2024 with exhibits about the history of Ocean City.

2024 BOARD & STAFF

Many of our accomplishments have been led by our experienced board members and stakeholders who have committed countless hours of their time and energy to ensure the success of the organization. By empowering our Board and committee members, we have created a dynamic and energized Board of Directors who will move the Beach to Bay Heritage Area into the future with sound footing.

BOARD MEMBERS

Russ Blake, Treasurer
Mindie Burgoyne, President
Christina Carlson
Michael Day
Jack Lenox
Aaron Levinthal
Dr. Mona Margarita, Secretary
George Ojje-Ahamiojie
Melanie Pursel, Vice President
Carrie Samis
Cynthia Stevens
Dr. Clara Small
Eddie Somers
Laura Soper
Clint Sterling
Ivy Wells
Lee Whaley
Bill Wilson
Liz Wist

LISA CHALLENGER, Executive Director



Lisa brings decades of tourism experience to the Beach to Bay Heritage Area. She was awarded Tourism Person of the Year by the Maryland Tourism Coalition. She also served on the board of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority as a Governor appointee. Having retired after 31 years as Worcester County's Tourism Director, Lisa brings her vast

knowledge and experience to help preserve, promote and protect the heritage of Maryland's Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset counties.

MINDIE BURGOYNE, Board President



Mindie Burgoyne is a writer and businessperson. She works for the Maryland Department of Commerce, and has written several books about the history and folklore of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. She is also the founder and owner of Chesapeake Ghost Tours.

Mindie has been serving on the Beach to Bay Board since 2016 and

brings her wealth of knowledge and skill of storytelling about the eastern shore to her presidency.



BBHA HIRES NEW STAFF MEMBER

In 2024, we brought Andre Nieto Jaime on board as our Program Specialist. Andre joined us in 2023 through the AmeriCorps program. When he graduated from the program, he was offered a position to continue his stellar work! He's a huge asset and we're happy to have him on board!

2024 MEMBERSHIP

We can't do it without you, our members. We thank you for supporting our mission and look forward to working together in 2025!

BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS

Allen Historical Society
Ayers Creek Adventures
Berlin Heritage Foundation
Bishop's Stock Fine Art, Craft & Wine
Chesapeake Ghost Tours
Delmarva Discovery Museum
Duke Marshall Group
Janes Island State Park
Main Street Princess Anne
Maryland Coastal Bays Program
Ocean City Development Corporation
Ocean City Museum Society
Parsons Cemetery
Rackliffe House
Riley & Company, LLC
Smith Island United
Somerset County Historical Trust
Sustainable Visions
Town of Berlin
Westside Historical Society
Wicomico County Recreation, Parks & Tourism
Wilson Realty
Worcester County Economic Development & Tourism

INDIVIDUALS

Russ Blake
Mindie Burgoyne
Emmy Challenger
Lisa Challenger
Michael Day
Nancy Goldsmith
Jackie Gordon
Jill Hall
Jamie Heater
Bill Killinger
Roberta Laynor
Jack Lenox
Aaron Levinthal
Mona Margarita
Hannah Miller
Ed Phillips
Clint Sterling
Connie Strott
Lee Whaley
Bill Wilson



 **BEACH
to BAY**
HERITAGE AREA

14 South Main Street
Berlin, MD 21811
410-251-3163
info@beachesbayswaterways.org
beachesbayswaterways.org



Charles H. Chipman Cultural Center

