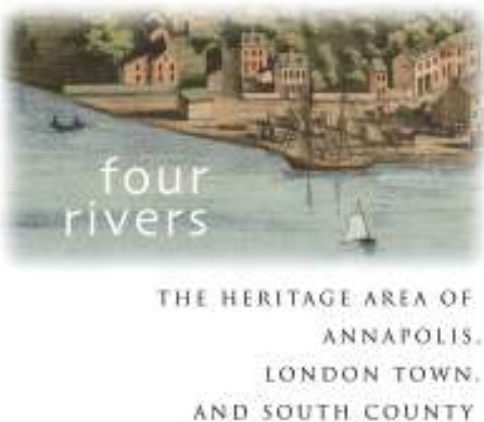


2008 Annual Report

FOUR RIVERS HERITAGE AREA MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Since 2001, Four Rivers has been an important resource for heritage-related organizations and sites in the region. Through Four Rivers' programming, events, workshops, outreach, community awards, and mini-grant program, this organization has demonstrated its dedication to heritage tourism and brought clear economic benefits to the community. In our eight years of operation, **\$1.9 million** in funding for local heritage-related organizations has been distributed through Four Rivers. Projects funded through Four Rivers have leveraged **\$6.4 million** since the organization was certified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

This past year, Four Rivers added the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center, the Jonas Green House, the National Sailing Hall of Fame, the Scenic Rivers Land Trust, the South River Federation, and the Stanton Community Center to its growing list of partner sites and organizations. We have explored the use of new technology, including an "Umbrella Technology Initiative" designed to better serve the public and our partners. Interest in environmental issues and sustainability has increased in the region with particular focus on the health of our rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. As a result, we have invited more natural resource organizations to partner and share in the economic and preservation efforts of Four Rivers. Despite all that was accomplished in 2008, we are anticipating that 2009 will be an even better year for Four Rivers as we face new challenges, explore exciting new directions, and reach out to additional stakeholders and partners!



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Four Rivers: The Heritage Area of Annapolis, London Town & South County

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Timothy Connolly, Treasurer
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Melanie M. Teems

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Donna M. Ware
Historic London Town & Gardens

Staff

Carol Benson, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Aleithea Williams
Heritage Programs Coordinator

MHAA AWARDS \$186,916 IN FUNDING TO FOUR RIVERS AND PARTNERS

Through Four Rivers Heritage Area, the following organizations were awarded capital and non-capital grants from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority for the support of education, preservation, and heritage tourism projects in FY09.



The Annapolis Maritime Museum was awarded \$50,000 to support an interactive exhibit entitled, “Oysters on the Half Shell,” one of the first components of its new Bay Experience Center in the reconstructed McNasby Oyster Company building in Eastport. The “Oysters on the Half Shell” exhibit will bring visitors “face-to-face” with oysters, terrapins, blue crabs, rockfish and other indigenous fauna and flora of the Chesapeake Bay and demonstrate how important oysters are to the health of the Bay.

MHAA funded a capital project grant for Historic Annapolis Foundation in the amount of \$17,500 for repair and painting of damaged exterior wood elements of the William Paca House, an outstanding example of Georgian architecture that serves as the key interpretive site of the Historic Annapolis Foundation. An educational component on the Foundation’s website will document the preservation process and teach viewers about the importance and methodology of this challenging type of preservation project.

Historic London Town and Gardens will receive \$19,416 to research, produce, and distribute an 8-minute video that will introduce visitors to the site, reflecting new improvements and programming. Many of these improvements were funded by previous MHAA grants and include a \$5.1 million visitor center facility with exhibits, archaeology lab and horticultural center, as well as an expanded reconstructed historic area and major upgrades to its 8-acre woodland and ornamental gardens.

The Four Rivers Heritage Area also received a grant of \$100,000 from the MHAA for operations and programming.

FOUR RIVERS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COORDINATING COUNCIL

In 2008, Four Rivers was pleased to welcome Melanie M. Teems, Associate Director of Finance and Administration for the Chesapeake Bay Trust, to the Board of Directors. Melanie’s presence on the Board is critical to Four Rivers’ goal of partnering with more local natural resources organizations. Also joining the Coordinating Council this year were Patricia Blick, Roberta Dorn, John Guild, and Diane Nowak-Waring. Welcome all!

MAJOR IMPACT: FY08 and FY09 MINI-GRANTS AWARD \$42,043 AND LEVERAGE \$115,279 IN FUNDS FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

In 2008, the Four Rivers mini-grant program awarded seventeen grants of up to \$2,500 each to local non-profit groups for the development of new programs, events, projects, and other activities that incorporate our regional interpretive themes, foster collaborative partnerships, and encourage heritage tourism.

FY08

Annapolis Maritime Museum and the **Chesapeake 20 Association** for the development of educational materials, a website, and historic documentation for the Chesapeake 20.

Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation for development of a 3-D virtual historic ship reconstruction and related educational materials at Historic London Town & Gardens.

Banneker Douglass Museum and the **Banneker Douglass Foundation** to develop a cell phone audio tour featuring five historic sites and archaeology displays in Annapolis.

Kunta Kinte-Alex Haley Foundation for "I Dig Galesville Roots," a multi-generational African American history and genealogy project.

Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation and **Lost Towns Archaeology Project** in cooperation with the **Smithsonian Environmental Research Center** for the development of a kayak tour entitled "Paddle Through History: A Cultural and Natural History Tour of the Rhode River."

Annapolis Maritime Museum in cooperation with the **Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation & Lost Towns Archaeology Project** for the development of a guided kayak tour of Back Creek.

Galesville Heritage Society for a new color brochure highlighting the many recent additions to the Galesville Heritage Museum.

Historic Annapolis Foundation to update their "Architecture in Annapolis" brochure that describes each of the styles and periods featured in the HAF Historic Marker Program.

The London Town Foundation to redesign their website, www.historiclondontown.org, to encourage visitation to the site and highlight some of Historic London Town and Gardens' major improvements.

FY09

Annapolis Maritime Museum, for a photography and historic artifact exhibit entitled "Over The Bridge."

Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation, in partnership with The **Lost Towns Archaeology Project** for redesign and upgrade of the *Lost Towns* website, www.losttownsproject.org.

Charles Carroll House, for a lecture series entitled, "Charles Carroll – Out of Place in the 21st Century?" in conjunction with an essay contest for local students.

Friends of the Maryland State Archives, for an interpretive brochure for visitors to the Maryland State House in Annapolis.

Historic Annapolis Foundation, in partnership with the **Banneker-Douglass Museum** and the **Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center**, for a day-long Black History Month seminar.

Kunta Kinte-Alex Haley Foundation, for the development and production of a photographic tribute booklet on the Kunta Kinte-Alex Haley Memorial.

St. John's College, for a multi-media initiative and online exhibit entitled "The Magnificent Seven," as well as a forum to be held at the Banneker-Douglass Museum about the desegregation of the school.

The United States Lighthouse Society, for development of an interpretive plan for maritime exhibits at the Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse and at the Annapolis Maritime Museum.

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS IN 2008

- * Four Rivers hosted a "Fam Tour" to South County on March 13 for local docents and interpreters to familiarize them with historic resources "down south." Participants enjoyed a ride on a Discover Annapolis Tours' trolley, courtesy of Board member Matt Grubbs, for tours of several South County heritage sites.
- * On March 30th, Four Rivers sponsored the first heritage area Maryland Day event with free activities, tours, and events throughout the heritage area from 12 - 5 pm. Twenty-three sites and organizations participated in this program and welcomed over 2,200 visitors to experience the history and heritage of our region.
- * In partnership with Historic London Town and Gardens, Four Rivers co-sponsored a Historic Research Workshop on August 25. The workshop offered in-depth information on using primary and secondary sources and the internet for research.
- * On November 18, sixty individuals attended Four Rivers' first "Mythbusters" workshop, dedicated to starting a dialogue about "busting" historical rumors, folklore, and myths within the heritage area. Presenters were Al Luckenbach of The Lost Towns Archaeology Project, Rod Cofield of Historic London Town and Gardens, and historians Jean Russo, and Jane McWilliams. Lisa Mason-Chaney of Hammond-Harwood House and Donna Ware of HLT joined the other experts for a panel discussion and Q&A with the audience. Interest is high for another "Mythbusters" workshop in the future!



Participants at the "Mythbusters" Workshop, November 18, 2008. Photo by Aleithea Williams

Four Rivers Heritage Area Website Activity at an All-Time High in 2008

The Four Rivers Heritage Area website registered 124,760 total visits and an average of 3,000 *new* visits each month from January 1 through December 31, 2008. The average amount of time spent on the website was 10 minutes, with the highest amount of time spent on the site in January and December, although the spring/summer months showed higher numbers of visits per month. Visitors found www.fourriversheritage.org from 120 different countries and territories around the world. The United Kingdom, Canada, China, Switzerland, and Germany topped the list for international visitors. Within the U. S., the top five "traffic" states were Virginia, New Jersey, California, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, in that order. Not surprisingly, the Events Calendar was the most visited page in 2008, followed by our visitor-friendly "Things to Do."

FIFTH ANNUAL HERITAGE AWARDS

Four Rivers hosted its fifth annual heritage awards ceremony at Historic London Town & Gardens on November 5. The annual awards program recognizes exemplary individuals, organizations, exhibits, programs, and products that contribute significantly to the community by interpreting, promoting, preserving, researching and/or supporting our historical legacy.

Heritage Tourism Product Awards: **Lost Towns Archaeology Project (C. Jane Cox and Jessie Grow)** in collaboration with the **Smithsonian Environmental Research Center** and the **Annapolis Maritime Museum** for the innovative "Paddle Through History" guided and self-guided kayak tours of the Rhode River (partnership with Smithsonian Environmental Research Center) and of Back Creek and Spa Creek (partnership with Annapolis Maritime Museum); and to **Dr. Mark Leone**, Guest Curator of the Exhibit and Director of *Archaeology in Annapolis*; **Amelia Harris**, Exhibit Designer; **Banneker-Douglass Museum**; **Historic Annapolis Foundation**; and City of Annapolis **Mayor Ellen O. Moyer**, for "Seeking Liberty: Annapolis, An Imagined Community" Exhibit at the Banneker-Douglass Museum, in partnership with the Historic Annapolis Foundation and the City of Annapolis.

Heritage Partnership Award: Presented to the **Southgate Memorial Fountain Restoration Committee** (with special recognition to **Alderman Richard Israel**, Chair, and Annapolis **Mayor Ellen O. Moyer**) for their tireless efforts to revitalize this 100 year-old Annapolis landmark.

Heritage Professional Award: **Matthew Grubbs**, Discover Annapolis Tours for his outstanding contributions and extraordinary dedication to heritage tourism and the Four Rivers Heritage Area.

Legacy Award: The **Spiritual Vibrations of Southern Anne Arundel County** received this award for their more than twenty years of service to the community through performing, teaching and sharing the spiritually-inspired traditions of gospel music.

This year, two **Heritage Awards**, the most prestigious honor given by Four Rivers, was presented to two worthy recipients: The **First Presbyterian Church of Annapolis** (Reverend William Hathaway, Pastor) was presented with a Heritage Award for its vision and leadership in developing and implementing an innovative preservation project that is an inspiration to our community, and the "sweat equity" of its members that has ensured its success. **June Taft Hall**, of the Shady Side Rural Heritage Society, received a Heritage Award for her years of service and boundless energy and dedication to the Shady Side community.



Below left: The Spiritual Vibrations performed an *a cappella* version of a gospel tune for the 2008 Heritage Awards audience. **Below right:** The "Seeking Liberty" team and partners receiving their award. From left, Mark Leone, Karen Engelke, Amelia Harris, Four Rivers Chair Patricia Barland, John Guild, Wendi Perry, Mayor Ellen Moyer, and Four Rivers Executive Director Carol Benson.