

Currents

The Newsletter of the Four Rivers Heritage Area

Issue No. 27

Spring 2015

Four Rivers Programs Support Partners, Boost Capacity

One of the Four Rivers Heritage Area's primary aims is to foster heritage experiences by supporting each of our partner organizations in their own efforts. Our programs are designed to boost our partners' capacities to help them succeed and prosper. According to Four Rivers Executive Director, Carol Benson, "Each of our partner organizations has a different mission and ability to offer public programs and visitor experiences that reflect its goals, and Four Rivers seeks to boost them all to enable them to better reach their capacity and potential." The most important programs that Four Rivers has developed for partners include:

Collaborations and Information Sharing – Four Rivers uses a variety of means to foster collaborations among our partners. One of the most important criteria for measuring our efforts is the degree to which new collaborations are forged as a result. Information-sharing is another key tool. During the annual Site Directors Summit, the assembled leaders share their plans and programs for the upcoming year, with the result that all are better-informed about the upcoming calendar, and ideas for collaborations and new partnerships are inevitably sparked. Our chief collaborative program, the annual Maryland Day Celebration, focuses on activities at each participating partner site. This year 33 organizations collaborated in the three days of coordinated activities. (To read more about Maryland Day, please see page 4.)

Mini-Grants Program – The Mini-Grants program is in its twelfth year, and the annual pot of funds is twenty thousand dollars or more, for individual grants up to \$2,500. These are funds for heritage-related projects that must be fully matched by the applicant organization. Partners both large and small seek grant funds to become more visitor-ready: sometimes projects are for "heritage tourism" purposes, such as a brochure, a website, or a new exhibit, and sometimes for building the capacity of the site's operations, such as a strategic plan, or a disaster plan. Projects that include collaborations between two or

more organizations are preferred. One outstanding project underway in Galesville represents a partnership among three Galesville organizations, the Anne Arundel County Public Schools, the County's Dept. of Recreation and Parks, the Lost Towns Project, and the Smithsonian Museum. The Mini-Grants program and criteria are announced each year in late August, with an application deadline of mid-September.

Recognition – Four Rivers has several means of recognizing the efforts of our partners and sharing their news with our community. We have a weekly E-newsletter, a quarterly printed newsletter, *Currents*, and a robust schedule of social media activity. Our annual Heritage Awards program takes place each year in November, and our partners who receive this much-appreciated recognition proudly announce their "award-winning" projects in their marketing.

Technical Assistance – Four Rivers staff welcomes the opportunity to give technical assistance to projects in the planning stage, or to encourage and advise partners on their proposed grant projects and applications. Workshops on a variety of topics are offered periodically, and colleagues are encouraged to call the heritage area office for guidance, a referral, or simply

to talk through the process of some of the challenging tasks they face, such as developing a non-capital or capital grant application, exploring non-profit best practices, or facing concerns about sustainability. Beginners and experienced partners alike are welcome to contact our office at any time!

Pictured above: Top (L to R), Four Rivers Executive Director Carol Benson with Terry Poisson, Social Studies Coordinator for Anne Arundel County Public Schools, at a recent Four Rivers workshop. Photo courtesy Trena Byrd. Below (L to R), Jane Cox, representing both AA County Dept. of Planning & Zoning and the Lost Towns Project, with Gertrude Makell, President of the Galesville Community Center Organization, at an event from the multi-partner project in Galesville. Photo courtesy of Valeu Photography.



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From the Desk of the Executive Director



Our front page article describes Four Rivers' support for local heritage organizations. One innovation this year has been to welcome new colleagues from sites *outside* the heritage area to participate in our planning and informational meetings. We have always opened our workshops to other sites, but this year "outside" partners have joined our Marketing Committee, Education Committee, and Site Direc-

tors Summit, to the benefit of all. In addition, five organizations and one business that are located just outside our boundaries participated in the Maryland Day Celebration this year. We enjoy talking through new ideas, seeking out best practices, collecting useful resources, learning the latest technology, and reaching new audiences.

Each year, Four Rivers supports four committees (Education, Marketing, Stewardship, and Maryland Day Planning), and each will benefit from new participants. Contact our office at 410-222-1805 if you would like to connect, and thank you for your interest and involvement!

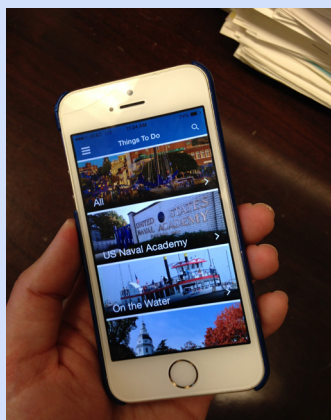
Six Spring Mini-Grants Awarded to Local Non-Profit Organizations for Heritage Projects

Four Rivers has announced six new mini-grant awards to local heritage-related nonprofit organizations as part of our spring mini-grant opportunity. The grants totaled \$11,700 for projects totaling \$56,843, making the combined total for FY2015 mini-grants awarded (both fall and spring) to \$21,055, for total projects of more than \$83,000.

This matching mini-grants program, made possible for the twelfth year through financial support from the City of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, leverages other funding to assist local heritage related non-profit organizations to create new programs, activities, and events that build upon heritage-based interpretive themes, foster collaborative partnerships, and enhance local cultural historic resources and heritage tourism. Organizations and projects approved for FY2015 Spring Mini-grant awards are:

- Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation, Inc., for *A Field Guide to Historic Galesville*, a booklet aimed at improving the visitor experience
- Carroll House Front Entrance Project, for Interpretive Signage and Guide Materials for the Front Door Restoration
- Chase Home, Inc., for a "Chase Home Visitors' Brochure"
- Friends of the Maryland State Archives, for its 2015 Family History Festival, a free community festival and open house planned for Fall 2015
- Galesville Community Center, Inc., for "Hometown Heroes" Community Programs, a series of programs related to the upcoming Smithsonian exhibit to visit Galesville
- Maryland Federation of Art, for promotion and materials for an expanded "Paint Annapolis 2015"

From Brochures to “Apps”: Four Rivers Grants Fund Projects that Improve the Visitor Experience



When a visitor comes to the Four Rivers Heritage Area, how do they decide what experiences they can fit into their day? Do they do advance research before they come? How can our heritage sites attract their target audiences? Our Annapolis and Anne Arundel Conference and Visitors Bureau (AAACCVB) maintains a robust website and several “microsites” that reach a huge (and growing) number of visitors interested in our destination, and their new “App”, *Annapolis Now* (pictured left), is very popular! But for some of our individual heritage sites that are hoping to attract visitors through their doors, there are a number of brochures, websites and “Apps,” under development or recently launched with the support of Four Rivers grants.

Brochures for Heritage Tourists: Because rack cards and brochures are always in high demand, numerous brochure projects have received Four Rivers Mini-Grant support over the years. Recent recipients have included Historic Annapolis, Captain Avery Museum, and Historic

London Town and Gardens, and a new brochure is under development at the Chase-Lloyd House, all supported in part by Four Rivers Mini-Grants. A booklet for visitors to Galesville is also in the works, entitled, *A Field Guide to Historic Galesville*.

Websites: Four Rivers Mini-Grants have supported a website upgrade at Hammond-Harwood House (www.hammondharwoodhouse.org) that has already launched, and two more that are in the works for the Galesville Heritage Society & Museum and the Lost Towns Project. In addition, Historic Annapolis has received more substantial funding in the form of a Non-Capital Grant for \$12,000 from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) for an ambitious project to both update its website and create a Mobile Walking Tour to take visitors around the historic district to visit all its historic properties.

“Apps”: The Annapolis Maritime Museum has received a Four Rivers Mini-Grant to create an “App” that will take visitors on an educational and interactive walking tour through Eastport.

Lisa Barge Joins Four Rivers Coordinating Council

Four Rivers is pleased to welcome Lisa Barge to the Coordinating Council. Lisa is Agricultural Marketing and Development Manager for the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC). She is responsible for promotion of agricultural programs on behalf of Anne Arundel County, and serves as an ombudsman for the agriculture community on matters of business development, health, permitting and licensing.

Lisa’s leadership role in the management of agricultural development of the County is reflected in her service on the following Boards: she is Chair, AAEDC Agriculture Advisory Committee; Chair, Anne Arundel County Public Schools Program Advisory Board; and a member of the Anne Arundel County Farm Bureau and the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission. She also attends the Institute for Integrative Nutrition and is a certified Integrated Nutrition Health Coach. Those who have viewed Four Rivers’ video, *“Our Stories: Land Conservation Successes in Anne Arundel County,”* which debuted last year, will recognize Lisa from her role highlighting the County’s Agricultural Assistance programs. *Welcome, Lisa!*



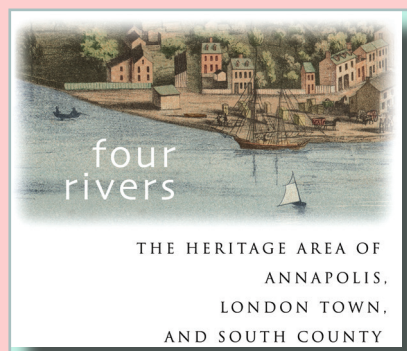
Eighth Annual Maryland Day Celebration Was a Great Success!

For the eighth year in a row, Four Rivers Heritage Area partnered with regional heritage organizations and businesses to showcase the area's historical, cultural and natural heritage. Events and activities took place during the weekend of March 20, 21, and 22, 2015, for one dollar or less; many of the activities were FREE! New participating sites and organizations included: the Anne Arundel Public Water Access Committee with South River Federation at South River Farms Park, Asbury Broadneck United Methodist Church in Broadneck, Enticement Stables at Obligation Farm in Harwood, Franklin United Methodist Church in Churchton, Goshen Farm in Broadneck, and St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Annapolis.

The special activity this year was the "MDSelfie: Picture Yourself in History Challenge." Visitors were invited to take a "selfie" when they visited the participating locations, and many chose to share their "selfies" by uploading them to Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The social media site, "Tagboard," collected the uploaded images for all to enjoy. Four Rivers staff awarded prizes to the images shared on social media in the following categories: "Best Selfie," "Best Overall Effort," "Best Photobomb," and a random drawing winner. Check out www.marylandday.org/mdselfie to see all the winners!

Thank you to everyone who supported Maryland Day, including our participating organizations and businesses! We look forward to next year's celebration!

Pictured: Top left, Michelle Fitzgerald and Emily Huebner of the Maryland State Archives with their photo-mashup activity; top right, Nicki Dalton, reenactor at the Paca Gardens. Above left, Winner of "Best Selfie," image by Janice Hayes-Williams; above right, Mayor Michael Pantelides (second from left) with USNA League Cadets at the Flag-Raising Ceremony. Lower right, Family enjoying activities at the Archives.



Four Rivers is a 501(c)3, charitable non-profit organization. Your contribution supports the heritage sites and organizations that make a difference to our region's quality of life.

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