



**00:00 Mike Burke:** My name is Mike Burke, I live in Collington in Mitchellville, Maryland. I've been sort of a supporting player in the Chesapeake Bay restoration work for about 30 years. I worked extensively on Capitol Hill as a legislative aid on both the House and the Senate side. And in between my stints on Capitol Hill, I worked as... For the Environmental Protection Agency worked as the head of their government relations team in the Atlantic region, which includes pretty much all of the Chesapeake except for the upstate stuff in New York. And then later was the associate director, one of the associate directors, of the EPA Chesapeake Bay program office. So, in all those roles, I was able to really support other people doing some terrific work on Bay restoration efforts. Some of it involved helping to get appropriations for specific projects or for the Bay program, oyster recovery, force buffer programs, small watershed grants programs, the years with the EPA in the government relations department. I did a lot of work with a lot of the different members who were interested in various aspects of Chesapeake Bay restoration.

**01:32 MB:** So of course, all the members of the Maryland delegation were big advocates for Bay restoration and quite a few of the members from both Virginia, smaller numbers from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and West Virginia. I did occasionally work with a couple of people from New York, although that was nominally outside my area. And then when I worked for the program office in Annapolis, my responsibilities were communications and government relations. So we worked on revamping the communications program at the Bay program office with much more emphasis on actual results, in addition to the great work that's done by the modellers. And that helped, I think, change the focus of the program a little bit. And then also worked with the members of the executive council and their principal deputies who, as you know, are the governors from the three states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and the Mayor of DC and the EPA administrator. And then as we expanded our focus more up into the headwater areas, we pulled in the secretary of city environment in Delaware, New York, and West Virginia as part of the principal staff. So a lot of intergovernmental work there trying to get everybody on the same page to help advance Bay restoration efforts.

**03:01 Speaker 2:** What would you say some challenges are that you've run into in working with different entities and trying to get everyone on the same page?

**03:09 MB:** You know when I worked on the House of Representatives and in the United States Senate, of course the difficulty oftentimes was getting other members of Congress to recognize the importance of the Chesapeake as a national treasure, not just a proverbial issue for local representatives. And so we spent a lot of time trying to educate other members and their staffs about the importance of the Chesapeake. Why it was a resource of national significance, that warranted national efforts. And so that was a bit of a challenge. One of the ways we most directly tried to deal with that was to get staff members to join us on trips to the Chesapeake and spend a day getting some briefings, getting out on the water, a chance to see the resource, see what the program's all about, and what kinds of things we were asking staff to talk to their bosses about. Those programs pre-dated me. Peter Marx led most of those early efforts. He was my predecessor as Associate Director on the government relations side. And I think they continue to today.



**04:27 MB:** They're a great way to try to make sure that staff members who have... Usually don't stay in Washington long. The pay is not good and the working hours are atrocious. And it tends to get people to move through pretty quickly. But those were some challenges there... We had some other kind of unique challenges that we ran into along the way that just required some innovative problem-solving. I'm thinking about, in particular, about a project on the Anacostia river.

**05:02 MB:** When the Woodrow Wilson Bridge was replaced, the new span of the Potomac River required the destruction of some wetlands. And there is a requirement that anytime that a federal project results in that kind of thing, that there needs to be replacement projects. And they should be within the same watershed, and preferably geographically near where the site of the taking took place. So there was a great project that had been sitting in the background on restoring about 26 acres of wetlands which is considerably more than were lost, but about 26 acres of wetlands right below the Bladensburg Marina area right along the Maryland-DC border. The problem was there had been, as happened so often in the past, the wetlands that had been there had been filled in. There was an unregulated dump where people would just drop stuff, and there was a lot of rubble fill from construction sites, including the building of the New York Avenue Bridge over the Anacostia there.

**06:21 MB:** So there was an awful lot of fill in this area that needed to be taken out, and then some efforts made to try to then to get into the actual restoration of those wetlands. The Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary John Porcari at the time was quite interested in trying to use federal funds that would be available from the Woodrow Wilson project into this particular project. So he was a huge advocate and a very, very big help on it. One of the problems was it was unclear what to do about this dump and whether or not it posed environmental risks to Anacostia.

**07:12 MB:** So when I was working as the government relations person for EPA, I was able to reach out to our Brownfields program in the region and had them come and do what's called a site assessment, so they took samples at the dump site and someone and were able to charge that to Brownfields program, so we were able to get a good characterization of the dump. Once it became clear that it was just rubble fill, there was no hazardous materials there, then it became possible to push all of that material out of the wetlands. They created a new sort of lined and well-protected dump for all that material on adjacent land in the state of the... They didn't have enough money though, to continue to do all this work even after EPA had picked up the tab for the Brownfields assessment.

**08:09 MB:** So the project sort of was hanging in limbo. The projects are supposed to be... These replacement wetland programs, are supposed to be done at the same time that the other ones are being removed through the same project time period, so the clock was ticking on us. We talked to Senator Sarbanes office and Charlie Stek who was Projects Director for the senator, about this need, and he agreed that this was something that the Senator was quite interested in, and so Senator Sarbanes put some effort into securing funding in the appropriations bill that year to fund basically the removal of all that rubble into this new area. Few million dollars, it paid pretty much entirely for the cost of doing that removal and then we had sufficient funds from the Woodrow Wilson Project to go ahead with that restoration.



**09:10 MB:** So that is the second largest wetlands restoration project in the Anacostia. The largest one being when the Army Corps of Engineers created a lot of wetlands down around Kingman Island, from old channelization work that they had done, they done some big restoration project there, and with the Aquatic Gardens, you know that was a kind of thing where, again, I think my role was the sort of service facilitator, help with EPA, help with the department of transportation, help with a little bit of extra federal funding, so that all these other people who were doing the heavy lifting could actually be well-coordinated and get the job done. So those are the kinds of things that I think basically what I try to do for the Chesapeake to is facilitate and help others. The whole story of the Chesapeake restoration is exactly that. It's putting together the right partnerships, getting the right players engaged and getting everybody working together to pull in the same direction.

**10:22 MB:** So whether it was on things like the Farm Bill, which I worked on when I was on Senate staff, making sure that there was adequate funding for Bay region farmers to get conservation funding that they needed to support their efforts. We pulled together a group of representatives from all of the Bay states, including the up watershed states and collectively went and made a presentation to the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee about where all of us viewed as the needs for this kind of special program funding and were quite successful in convincing the a community in the Senate that they needed to come along with this sort of program or working with the environmental advocacy community in pushing for... And implementing the small watershed grants program that again, I've been working with Charlie Stek, was able to get in included as part of the Chesapeake Bay reauthorization legislation and then adequately funding that program over the years to make sure that those projects were helping throughout the entire watershed, really innovative and locally based programs, that I think really help engage people, makes it clear that the effort requires lots of local initiatives and gave us an opportunity for sort of spreading the word about the need for restoration efforts throughout the watershed and they proved very powerful.

**12:03 S2:** With you serving in a liaison-type role, what do you think the biggest gaps are in understanding between people doing the work on the ground and government agencies? And what do you see your role as connecting those gaps, where are their perspectives drastically different?

**12:25 MB:** Right. Right, well I think the officials in Maryland and Virginia and to a large degree, in the District of Columbia, are extremely well-versed knowledgeable about Bay issues. They face some serious issues about funding, and programmatic decisions that they need to make. When you're the Governor of Maryland, you need to make decisions that are about restoring the Chesapeake, but you're using limited dollars that might also be going to education programs or transportation projects, or healthcare. There are a million different things that government needs to be engaged, engaged fully in. So I think the role of the liaison is to help understand what the limits possible are within constraints, and being sensitive to the constraints that these various government entities face. Those challenges expand exponentially as you move up Watershed.

**13:33 MB:** Pennsylvania has always been a key member of the Bay restoration effort from the very beginning, with Governor Thornburgh back in 1983. [13:42] \_\_\_\_ for the government officials in the headwater states is particularly acute. The public doesn't have the same personal experience



about the Chesapeake Bay that we do here or there or Virginia or DC. So the goal I think is to help translate the restoration efforts in the Chesapeake into restoration efforts around local watersheds within those other states, so they get a chance to see how doing that local work provides local benefits for water quality, recreation, ecological restoration and then those efforts can be combined within the Chesapeake overall restoration effort. There's some other things that are technical things. The EPA Water Department in both of the regional office out of Philadelphia and in headquarters in DC worked on developing nitrogen removal projects at wastewater treatment plants and really pioneered those efforts in the United States and later around the world where doing these nitrogen projects, vastly reducing the nitrogen load that's coming from wastewater treatment plants, has made an enormous difference in the amount of those excess nutrients that are getting into the water.

**15:16 MB:** So part of it's technical, part of it is doing public education with whether it's a small watershed project, so people could see what's going on locally, or environmental education programs, where the staff of EPA and the support of the principal leaders of the [15:37] \_\_\_\_\_ program were able to initiate education programs, so that we build a stewardship ethic in the next generation that's coming through. And all of those efforts and tons more that I haven't mentioned are all important in helping to educate on both a generic level, but also in terms of some technical support and so on, for restoration efforts. And the liaison role is to get the experts, which are not me, to connect with the people who need these sorts of connections, help be made.

**16:20 S2:** Is there advice that you would give or have given people who are doing the work on the ground in terms of how to communicate or connect with either government agencies or corporations or people who may be less interested in their cause?

**16:38 MB:** Some of it is pretty easy. There are a ton of local watershed organizations that are out through that are already devoted to taking care of their local waterways. And there has been a very good effort led by some very good people to try to bring that entire coalition of the small watershed groups together so that they can start to learn from one another, and also get that reinforced message about how those local actions are helping. It also provides a clearing-house for us to efficiently be able to talk to small watershed groups about things like the watershed grants program combined with, or actually done under now the auspices of the National Fish and Wildlife Federation, a quasi-public organization that takes the federal funding that provided through the EPA Grants program, for example, combines it with the same kinds of programs from fish and wildlife service or the NOAA, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and the private sector where various organizations are willing to donate some money.

**17:55 MB:** The Federation then takes all of that grant money, pools it together and is able to fund projects that these groups do by putting on workshops that are oriented towards all those local groups that helps them understand what the grant making process is involved and help facilitate getting those most important projects funded out across the watershed. Part of our role was to help those grant makers understand what the priorities would be, the kinds of projects that would be most important towards the restoration. And then the goal was to try to link up those high priorities with the needs of the local watershed groups to be able to come up with funding solutions for those kinds of projects.



**18:46 S2:** Could you talk about when you started your career and where you ended it and how you feel like the conversation has changed over time?

**18:55 MB:** Sure. You know, I grew up out in far Western Pennsylvania, really right at the top of the Allegheny Mountains, barely on one side of the Mountains was drainage towards the Chesapeake Bay and the other side was drainage towards the Gulf of Mexico. So the Chesapeake Bay was pretty far removed from our experience. Then I lived and worked, my wife and I, in the Philadelphia suburbs for quite a few years. And it wasn't until I came down here to the Washington area working for a suburban Philadelphia Congressman at the time, that I personally became interested in and a growing appreciation of the Chesapeake. I'd done a lot of environmental work in Pennsylvania, but it was not at all focused on Chesapeake Bay restoration.

**19:46 MB:** So my personal transformation from just a resident of the region quickly grew into a real passion for Bay restoration efforts, and I was able to... When I joined EPA in the Government Relations department in Region III, we dealt with a lot of issues, Super Fund, air quality and so on. But my love really turned on the Chesapeake Bay program and water quality restoration efforts. And understanding too the link between air quality and water quality in the Chesapeake and how those programs intersected. So it was a quick, wonderful education for me to get to know the programs that were out there. We were engaged, I think, at the time in an effort to try to say in a very cooperative way without a lot of push behind it, doing restoration efforts.

**20:50 MB:** And all of those efforts really laid the ground work for the much more aggressive programs of restoration that really began, I think, in the year 2000. The EPA Water Department had determined that the waters of the Chesapeake were not meeting the water quality standards, and the focus really had been started for a variety of technical reasons with Virginia. Where Virginia needed to come up with a program that would address water quality, and improve the water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. And so the legal requirement would be the Water Act. So the effort was to try to get all the states to together to work in a cooperative fashion with a very specific goal in mind, which was to achieve water quality in those Virginia waters by the year 2000. When it became apparent that that was not going to happen under the kinds of programs that had previously been used, Governor O'Malley of Maryland as the Chairman that year, or two years, of the Chesapeake Executive Council, really pushed to start establishing firm numerical goals, and with regular reporting requirements. This was an outgrowth of something that he had started in Baltimore City and expanded to the State of Maryland, called initially City Stat, and then later, they did a State Stat program and a Bay Stat program.

**22:31 MB:** And that got converted into something that was adopted by all of the leadership within the watershed, that they would take specific actions and measure their efforts every two years to see how well they were doing. When EPA determined that Virginia had not met its water quality standards by the year 2000, then it becomes the responsibility under the Clean Water Act for the Federal government to take over and develop a program. What they did, and this is largely under the leadership of Rebecca Handler, who was then the Director of the Chesapeake Bay program office in Annapolis, was to develop a new set of water quality standards for the Chesapeake that would be ecologically-based, not standard off the shelf kinds of things that had been used in the past. It was a huge scientific undertaking. Rich Batiuk, a Bay program office EPA employee, led a multi-state



effort to develop those new water quality standards.

**23:41 MB:** They were officially adopted by the states, and then proceeded to develop the plans, very specific plans, that would require the restoration effort in each one of those watershed states. The unparalleled computer programming and modeling that had been developed by the EPA Chesapeake Bay program, with super computers that had never been done in the world before, were able to tell states when they took certain kinds of actions, what would be the resulting water quality benefit for each one of those actions.

**24:21 MB:** They helped states develop very specific programs that would lead to water quality restoration. They had the back-up that if the states didn't do it through the programs that they had available in their toolkit, then EPA would be required to use its much more limited toolkit of Federal programs to try to achieve those same results. The fact is that doing a lot of restoration efforts that could be done through the Farm Bill and through some various volunteering programs are much more cost effective than the kinds of programs that EPA would be able to do through its regulatory scheme. So having the states take the lead gave them the chance to put their unique [25:10] \_\_\_\_ on each one of the programs that they developed, but they had EPA there as the back stop and the referee to determine whether or not those efforts would actually meet the water quality standards that were being demanded.

**25:30 MB:** That effort was really considerably different than the kind of effort, voluntary effort, that I had been introduced to with the Chesapeake Bay program. But it really depended on all those years of voluntary cooperation to build the relationships, to build the confidence, and build the certainty that these people from different states with different priorities knew that they could trust one another and that the work they did together would make a difference. They were excited about the prospects and they worked, in some respects, a regulatory miracle to come up with programs that worked. Of course, they were... This effort was famously or infamously sued by National American Farm Bureau and a few others that wanted to try and block the program because it did require that the agricultural community become engaged much more aggressively in reducing the pollutants coming into the Chesapeake Bay. When that court case ended up in... The Farm Bureau did a smart thing, they decided that they wanted to bring the suit in a very agricultural intensive area, that was not immediately adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay, hoping that they would get a more favourable ruling from the federal judge that they had to go before. The federal judge though, from the Central District of Pennsylvania, has the wonderful name of Sylvia Rambo.

**27:12 MB:** She heard the case and ended up deciding that what we had with the Chesapeake Bay program was what she called a model of federal state cooperation in dealing with, coming up with the water quality standards and programs for restoring the Chesapeake. That decision was appealed to, first in the circuit court and then later to the Supreme Court, and was upheld at every stage of the game. So I think what happened was that all of those years of cooperation, led to the confidence for them to be able to step out in a much more regulatory fashion. And the majority of all of these programs that had been building up over that time enabled the program to take steps that are now achieving some real important water quality benefits for all of those watershed states and the Chesapeake overall.



**28:19 MB:** And I think we've seen more improvements in the Chesapeake Bay in the last 10 years than we had seen the previous, about 30 years of the voluntary programs that had been underway. But I don't think all the improvements that have happened now would have been able to happen had it not been for all that previous work. Others around the country have tried to emulate the Bay Program and said, "How do you do this?" And all of those years of working together are really hard to replicate if you try to start much further down the line. I think the Bay Program has a ton to teach people.

**29:02 MB:** As one of my roles, one of my fun roles as the Government Relations Director for the Bay program office was to often host other groups from around the country who would come to learn about how the Bay program operated. We hosted international delegations on a regular basis that wanted to come in and see how this program worked. People like Rich Batiuk and others from within the program were requested to make presentations at Watershed conferences around the country and around the world to try to spread that gospel. And I think that's been a really helpful thing. To help us stay energized, stay focused, recognize that what we're doing is important at the level of the Anacostia River, it's important at the level of the Chesapeake Bay and it's important at the level of ecological restoration efforts around the world.

**30:03 S2:** It seems like, with the example you just gave, the work and the relationships were built over such a long period of time, and no one could anticipate where it would go. Do you think part of the struggle for other communities to emulate that program is because it's trying to be too planned or too structured or too intentional. Not that it's not planned and intentional but just in terms of it morphing from a voluntary program to a mandatory program, do you think there's any aspect of that that makes it harder?

**30:38 MB:** I think it is hard to replicate. I spoke at a conference out in Nevada of all places. And there... There's no big bodies of water there. But they were concerned about ecological restoration of... In the Intermountain West of a lot of the functions that they had lost over the years in base of grasses, overgrazing, wild fire, the number of challenges that they faced were not dissimilar to what we had in the Chesapeake. When we talked, my whole pitch to them wasn't, "See how you can take 'A' from the Bay program and make it 'A' in the Intermountain West program." Instead it was, to understand from their own perspective, what were their biggest challenges and how best should they go about adopting these cooperative efforts within the states. And what would be the glue that would hold those programs together.

**31:48 MB:** The Bay program because the EPA was there and had a dedicated program to the Chesapeake Bay and was given to provide funds for those initial watershed states to devote staff resources to all of this initial planning and programming that went on. They couldn't have done that without that seed money from EPA. These are much like, in the non-profit world there are grants that are made that help organizations do capacity building. And that's basically what EPA did with a lot of those grants in the early years, was to build the capacity, to have a set of resources, personnel resources, human resources out across the entire watershed that understood and could work together on programs. Other organizations, I think, need to take the same kind of approach. Don't try to replicate Chesapeake, they should build their own unique programs that understand what their challenges are, and come up with their own innovative programs that are gonna help them address,



"What is the issues... What are the issues that we face and how should we as a body take advantage of the resources that we might have?"

**33:15 MB:** We were lucky in the Chesapeake to have all the right kinds of leadership at all the right kinds of times. You know, people like Fran Flanigan, we talked about him earlier, were really just extraordinary public servants, not necessarily government servants, who worked in these areas. The people like Bob Perciasepe who was the head of the water programs for the state of Maryland, ended up being the Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and helping to expand and understand those programs nationally. People like Chuck Fox did the same thing. Worked from the state and translated that into leadership roles in the federal government. I think there's no doubt that Senator Charles 'Mac' Mathias played a key role in helping the program actually get started all the way back in the 1980s. There's no doubt that Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland, with just an extraordinarily talented assist from Charlie Stek, his Projects Director, really kept the program moving forward and making advances all the time. There were other key players throughout, Governor Baliles in Virginia, Dick Thornburgh as I mentioned earlier in Pennsylvania, these were all people who were in key positions who really rose to the challenge and provided extraordinary leadership just when we needed it.

**34:53 MB:** I think Bill Matuszeski led the Bay program through all those years of capacity building, and then Rebecca Handler has sort of an unheralded role as helping to flip the switch on program from being, basically entirely volunteer into a program that had a regulatory framework and underpinning for it. But it had to be the right people, at the right time, taking the right kinds of actions and we've been incredibly fortunate in the Chesapeake to have just exactly that. People like Rich Batiuk, Lou Linker at the Bay programme office led a group of really incredibly talented computer programmers who did things that had never been done before in terms of watershed planning based... Built on works that the Army Corp of Engineers had originally done. Each time when there was a need for a program to take it up a notch, we had the right people there, that were able to do exactly that. When Senator Sarbanes retired, Congressman Cardin, then became Senator Cardin and really picked up that mantle and was able to run with it as kind of a leader among leaders in the Bay program legislatively.

**36:13 S2:** What would you say the future holds, the next 40, 50 years for the Chesapeake? What are your hopes? What are your fears? Concerns?

**36:24 MB:** Well, I think, we're making, I think, extraordinarily good progress in a number of ways. The challenge, I think, in the short run, is with Pennsylvania being able to meet its water quality standards. Half of the fresh water that goes into the Chesapeake on any given day comes from the Susquehanna River and that's Pennsylvania writ large. And Pennsylvania has still an enormous amount of work to do with their farmers and with forestry programs. The Bay foundation as the leading advocate in the NGO community for the Chesapeake has really stepped up and come up with a unique program of helping Pennsylvania plant 10 million trees over the next several years. That's gonna be a huge challenge and to be able to get more farmers to engage more fully in restoration programs and conservation programs is gonna be a big challenge in the short run. I think that the will is there and with some additional focus we'll be able to achieve those water quality standards, if not by 2025, I think by shortly thereafter.



**37:51 MB:** The longer term challenge, of course, is climate change. Right now, the program is all focused on what we're projecting for a Chesapeake Bay in 2025 that's not affected by climate change. We know that's not realistic. But that's gonna have to change. We're gonna have to make the next big leap in understanding what warming waters means to the ecosystem with the loss of so many wetlands on the edges of the Chesapeake we lost to rising sea level. There are just a host of incredibly challenging issues that face us that are really perhaps not insurmountable, I hope not insurmountable, but that will require a level of effort that has never been seen before, because it will require the United States to do more than it's ever done before and the world to do more than they've never done before. I think in the short run, we're losing valuable time because of the efforts of the Trump administration.

**39:07 MB:** I'm hopeful that that ends soon and that we can get back to the serious business of Environmental Protection, which has been largely abandoned for the last few years and that we will make a renewed commitment to dealing with climate change, both around the world and obviously here in the Chesapeake. I think the jury's out on this one. I'm just not sure whether or not we can do it. If we can't, we need to be prepared for a future that none of us are really gonna like. I think the efforts that are under way now to start dealing with some adaptation things that are gonna need to happen, are gonna need to be accelerated but the biggest focus is gonna be we need to get serious about the climate change and right now that's not happening.

**39:57 S2:** This is a big question, but from your perspective, how do we get people on board for to take action on climate change?

**40:10 MB:** I've worked with members of congress for years. I've run political campaigns, hard fought, and the politics of the possible has always been sort of a guiding light for me. Press boundaries, try to see what new things you can achieve and reinforce those that you've already made. But to recognize what is politically possible becomes crucial if you wanna make progress. The problem has been that, I hate to be so partisan about this 'cause the Bay program has always been incredibly bipartisan effort of Republican governors like Thornburgh, Democratic governors like O'Malley, it has never mattered. They have always done sort of the right thing and pushed forward, but now we have, we've lost people, Republicans like Wade Gilchrist who's been replaced by a congressman who does not take environmental restoration, I won't say he doesn't take it seriously, he intentionally ignores the science that compels us to action. It's a willfulness that has spread first from Newt Gingrich in the House of Representatives and now with Mitch McConnell in the Senate and Donald Trump in The White House. It's a rejection of all the things that we've done in the past to help make progress. Believe in the facts, believe in the science and this notion of sticking your head in the sand and saying that black is white and white is black is disastrous to our politics in America.

**41:58 MB:** We need to get back to a day when we dealt with the same set of facts. We could argue and have spirited debates about what's the best approach, but at least we could be working from the same set of ground rules. So, quite frankly, what I think needs to happen is at the federal level, in complete a repudiation of the Republican party as it now stands. We need to have the Republican party do a serious reassessment about what they perceive to be in their own self-interest over the



long haul. I think it's gonna take, as I said, pretty much a thorough going defeat at the ballot box before we see them return to a politics of the possible based on reality, not on diatribes out of The White House. And so I think the time's coming and we'll just have to see if, if such a drubbing does happen, and if it does, if it results in a Republican party returning back to its roots, as a party that used to believe in conservation. It was Richard Nixon that started the EPA. It was Teddy Roosevelt that was probably one of our greatest conservation presidents. We need to have a Republican party again that has those kinds of values and roots and basis in reality.

**43:30 S2:** What tips can you give the next generation of advocates, as they continue this work?

**43:35 MB:** Well, I think this is vitally important that people be engaged at the local level. Support your local groups, help them make progress that people can see and feel and always have a advocacy as well as an educational component to the work that you do. You need to be a disciple for clean water and for ecological restoration. Simply being willing to do your own little part is not enough. We need especially given the scope of the challenges we face probably more than ever, we need advocates who will insist that progress be made, that political leaders take the actions that are necessary to have these efforts come to fruition. Being able to say, "Oh that's politics. I don't like politics. I don't do politics." That's a luxury that we cannot afford anymore. We need people to be engaged up and down the line.

**44:32 S2:** And for regular people who don't work in environmental advocacy, it's interesting 'cause you were saying everyone doing our little part isn't gonna be enough. What can ordinary people do?

**44:32 MB:** Well I think they can do quite a lot. And this is one of the great things about environmental education, we have been at this for a while now and the young people get it. They know that their actions, their individual actions make a big difference. Whether it's recycling in their home or trying to make sure that they're conserving water, using it properly, having a respect for the resource, insisting on...

**45:34 MB:** They and their parents initially, and later just their age cohort, maybe their friends, adopt much more environmentally friendly individual actions makes a difference that they have done and continue to do. Making changes in corporations, requiring them to say, "Hey, we wanna use environmentally friendly products. Don't give us stuff that's over-packaged and ends up in endless amounts of plastic pollution in our oceans and waters." We need to... All of those kinds of actions on an individual level make a difference. It's when we combine them in a thoughtful and cohesive fashion and recognize the power of all of our efforts that we could really harness all of that individual effort into something that's bigger than the sum of all those individual parts.

**46:37 S2:** You were talking about moving from the near the Allegheny mountains to Philadelphia, to the Chesapeake area, and how your passion for Chesapeake grew. Could you talk a little bit more specifically about any moments or things that really ignited your passion for the Chesapeake?

**46:57 MB:** My passion for the Chesapeake, I think started early when we moved into the region, just because of the beauty of the place and rich cultural and historic history of this area. I was fortunate enough in my early dealings with government relations to run into people like Charlie



Stek, and they obviously had this incredible passion about the work that they were doing. And Charlie wanted to get a group together to go out on a boat, of Congressional staffers, but he needed help coordinating with the Chesapeake Bay program office and the federal agencies or someone to do that, and I got to go along and see for myself what the resource was and to start to self-educate and to be... Everybody that I touched base with all had this just passion about the Bay. Fran Flanigan, Anne Swanson, Bill Medizeski. All of these people were just so intensely dedicated to this effort of restoration that I hadn't seen that one in environmental basis since Earth Day, the original Earth Day. And it was inspiring for me. I loved what I saw and I loved what I felt.

**48:25 S2:** Do you have anything else that you wanna add or make sure is captured in this interview?

**48:29 MB:** Well, I would just say that the Bay program, the Bay restoration effort period writ large, it wouldn't be where it is today. It wouldn't be the national model, an international model, it is today without the extraordinary efforts of 15, 20, 30 different leaders who all were stepping up and doing things that hadn't been done before. Just it was a great moment that so many critical people were stepping up and doing stuff that just really made this whole effort possible. Those people were giants in the early effort to get this going. The wonderful thing has been every time one of those people stepped aside, were retired or moved on to do different things, other people have risen to the occasion in the centers of energy, and so on from within the restoration effort have shifted from time and time based on the leadership of different people that have arisen over time, but the overall effort continues because there is now an inter-generational passing of the torch, if you will, and I think that's what gives me hope about the future. Not that Charlie Stek retired or that Governor Baliles just passed away, it's that there are leaders that are still rising to the occasion every day, and I am confident that building on those giants from the beginning, we'll end up being able to say the same thing about people who are just starting their careers now.

**50:13 S2:** Thank you so much.

**50:15 MB:** You bet.

Town Creek Foundation Interviews: 2019  
Conducted by the Peale Center for Baltimore History and Architecture  
Genevieve de Mahy Interviews Michael Burke



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