

## A Logo Comes to Life

### The Logo Whisperer

Chesapeake Conservancy's Senior Vice President of Communications Jody Couser approached Scott Combs with a big ask: create a new logo that would capture the spirit of the organization and the Chesapeake Bay.

"My goal was to create a logo for Chesapeake Conservancy that would reflect a healthy Chesapeake Bay and the joy and interconnectedness of this beautiful place—among people and wildlife, recreation and the economy," said Couser. Her creative challenge to Combs? Make it "swag-worthy." She added, "I also wanted this logo to be stylish and appeal to our current and future supporters."

Combs, a former executive at a major advertising agency turned independent consultant, was up for the challenge. He immersed himself in the Chesapeake,



### The Mural Artist

Chesapeake Conservancy's logo comes to life in a

breathtaking new way in a 75-foot mural at the Earl Conservation Center, which is home to Chesapeake Conservancy, Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation, Chesapeake Legal Alliance and the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education.

Made possible through the generosity of the Earl family (see related story, p.3), the mural was commissioned to welcome visitors and inspire staff. More than just a work of art, it serves as a visual narrative of the Bay's beauty, resilience and the importance of protecting it for future generations. The artist, Gayle Mangan Kassal, an Annapolis resident known for her vibrant and dynamic murals, has created art for hospitals, schools and institutions from Boston to Washington, D.C. She is also a highly regarded educator and a member of the Maryland Pastel Society and Annapolis Art Alliance.

The mural spans nearly the entire length of the first floor and features iconic locations such

as interviewing board members, staff and supporters to understand Chesapeake Conservancy's mission and values.

When it was time to present his concepts, Combs met with Couser virtually. "He showed me the first logo on the screen, and I said, 'That's it. That's the one,'" Couser recalled. "He went on to show a few more options, and we advanced all of them to the next phase of review with my colleagues—but sure enough, we ultimately selected that very first design."

The final logo tells a powerful story. A healthy Chesapeake Bay supports menhaden, which in turn sustain the osprey soaring overhead. The water is clean and inviting for recreation, for wildlife and for those who depend on it for their livelihoods. Combs, whom Couser dubbed "the logo whisperer"—noting how rare it is to nail a concept on the first try—has since designed several more logos for



Scott Combs  
COURTESY PHOTO

Chesapeake Conservancy's programs and for the United4CNRA coalition. He continues to support Chesapeake Conservancy with brand messaging and strategic communications.

Explore more of his work at: [scottcombs.myportfolio.com/projects](https://scottcombs.myportfolio.com/projects).



Mural artist Gayle Mangan Kassal  
COURTESY PHOTO

as Cape Henry, Fones Cliffs, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and the region's tributaries and wetlands, along with native flora and fauna. Each scene flows into the next, creating a seamless journey through the Chesapeake's diverse ecosystems.

Kassal worked in close collaboration with Chesapeake Conservancy staff, environmental experts and naturalists to ensure every scene resonated ecologically. "It was an honor to meet James Earl, himself a talented artist, and to bring the Chesapeake Conservancy's logo and mission to life," Kassal said.

"Spending so much time in Earl Conservation Center, I have come to know the passionate conservationists who work here. I hope the mural inspires them and honors the Earl family legacy. The Chesapeake Bay is a special place for my family and my chosen home."

She added, "I'm especially grateful to the Chesapeake Conservancy team, to Lauren

Peeler Brice and to Broadneck High School student Addison Thornton for supporting my research into the many stories, species and landscapes that are woven into the design."

Chesapeake Conservancy welcomes you to come see the beautiful mural. Please let us know you're coming at [info@chesapeakeconservancy.org](mailto:info@chesapeakeconservancy.org).

Visit [gaylemangankassal.com](https://gaylemangankassal.com) to see more of Kassal's stunning artwork.