

Chester River Association Announces New Director



After an exhaustive national search, the Chester River Association has named social and legal advocate Heather L. Forsyth as its new executive director.

A native Marylander, Forsyth brings a wealth of community non-profit experience to the position. An attorney, she has worked as a legal aid lawyer and a public defender, including a stint in Dorchester County on the lower Eastern Shore.

Heather Forsyth

“I’ve always been interested in working for the public good,” says Forsyth, who grew up in Annapolis. “I’ve spent a lot of my career, even though I’m a lawyer, as a collaborator, builder and community advocate. That will translate nicely to Chester River Association. Having a legal background helps in almost any sort of community organization.”

Forsyth replaces Bob Parks, who has been at the helm of CRA for the last six years. Forsyth commended Parks for building CRA into a financially stable organization that has garnered the respect of the Chester River watershed’s many stakeholders.

CRA president Marcy Ramsey said Forsyth brings marketing, fund-raising, grant-writing and fiscal management experience to the job. “She’s a consensus builder,” Ramsey added. “She’s used to finding solutions.”

Most recently, Forsyth lived in Tulsa, Okla., where she volunteered as a board member for Sustainable Tulsa, an organization dedicated to supporting the city’s efforts to become a “green” city. Among other things, the group led a successful effort to convert Tulsa city buses from fossil fuels to compressed natural gas. It is also working with city officials in the development of a new

master plan that would result in less sprawl and the greater use of public transportation. Additionally, Forsyth was involved in Tulsa's local foods movement and buy local campaign.

Since 2009, Forsyth worked as a judicial assistant for the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals. She has a law degree from University of Maryland. While there, she managed the Maryland Public Interest Law Project, a non-profit that promotes and supports law students working for public interest organizations.

Forsyth is no stranger to Chestertown. Her mother has resided here for over a decade. Forsyth and her husband, Harry Forsyth, who works in aeronautic maintenance, will move to the area in early January.