

Cacapon Institute

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Dear Friends,

Since our founding in 1985, Cacapon Institute has had a staff ranging from one to three individuals. Over the last two years we have strategically expanded to a staff of five. This is a real landmark for us. It dramatically increases our capacity to implement environmental change from the Cacapon to the Potomac to the Chesapeake Bay. You, and other members like you, make this success possible.

In February 2012, I will be starting my 17th year at CI, and my 15th as Executive Director. Looking back over the years, the Board and I always dreamed of seeing this kind of growth, both in terms of staff and programmatic diversity. I want to take this opportunity to introduce our excellent staff to you, and share a bit on how each contributes to CI's mission.



Frank Rodgers, Director of Education and Outreach, joined CI in January 2006. He brings CI his skills in watershed education with an emphasis on schoolyard conservation. In the six years he has been here, Frank has been busy delivering real world, hands-on conservation education at schools and improving CI's virtual eSchool. He has a key role in expanding our educational programs. With his finger firmly on the pulse of environmental education throughout the region, he represents CI in the Chesapeake Bay Education Workgroup, the Mid-Atlantic Roundtable on Environmental Literacy, and as a founding member and Vice-Chair of the WV Environmental Education Association. Frank's success with schools and leadership in conference rooms has dramatically expanded CI's capacity to address pollution that degrades our streams. Frank teaches;

"You don't have to be standing in a stream to be in a watershed. Collecting rain, sampling parking lot runoff, or controlling erosion are all [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences.](#)" As an ISA Certified Arborist, Frank has developed a new focus for CI - **Urban Tree Canopy**. UTC is about understanding and caring for 'urban' trees, the trees that grace our neighborhoods, towns, roadsides, parks and schools, and play a major role in reducing stormwater runoff. Frank is a member of the Chesapeake Bay Forestry Workgroup and has built CI into a major player in forestry for the Bay. With Frank's assistance, Jefferson County became the first WV county to formally adopt a UTC plan and just the 6th county in the entire Chesapeake Bay Watershed to do so. Frank and his wife Catherine live in Berkeley Springs where they devote their energies to PETA and animal rescue.

Jennifer Gillies has been working with us on a continuous, part-time basis since 2008. She fashions beautiful and effective watershed educational activities for CI's [Potomac Highlands Watershed School](#). In 2005, she created the now widely used *What is a Watershed* activity that represented her first foray into Flash programming. This summer, we unveiled her finest work to date, [A Virtual Stream Sampler](#) that simulates a volunteer stream sampling trip. It is getting rave reviews wherever it is seen, like at the Maryland Water Monitoring Council Annual Conference earlier this month. Audra Lew, of the ICPRB, says: *"Since I laid eyes on the Virtual Stream Sampler, I have been talking it up to any stream*



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monitor or educator that I encounter. What a GREAT tool!" Jennifer is currently working on more stream simulations and on an urban version of our widely used *Stream Cleaner* activity.

Ben Alexandro joined us as **Outreach Coordinator** in the fall of 2010. His role is to expand our presence in schools, at educational conferences, and to play a central role in CI's work as [Coordinator for the Potomac Watershed Partnership](#) (PWP). He has done a terrific job for CI. He helped put together three PWP Information Exchanges (including the latest on [Restoration Projects in a Changing Climate](#)) and is webmaster for the PWP site. He is directing Musselman High School's WET Club (Inwood, WV) building new skills and [restoring a wetland](#). He is working with Paw Paw Schools where he helped elementary, middle and high school students design and [build a rain garden](#) that has become a focal point for environmental education. Ben is representing CI by giving presentations at the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forum and the Maryland and West Virginia science teacher conventions. He will be presenting at the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education next spring. Devoted to public service, Ben is just back from three weeks in Nepal building a school.



Tanner Haid started work as CI's **Urban Forestry Coordinator** just two months ago but hit the ground running. His core job is to work on a multi-year project to increase the Urban Tree Canopy in towns and communities of the Potomac Basin of West Virginia. In this role, Tanner acts as CI's liaison between the WV Conservation Agency, WV Division of Forestry, and WV Division of Highways. He will be an organizer and spokesperson for urban forestry projects like WVCA's CommuniTree and a community forester working with WVDOT's Urban Forestry and Chesapeake Bay Forestry programs. Tanner has already been featured in a newspaper story and interviewed on the radio, participated in numerous tree plantings, and helped get this exciting new program off the ground.

It is my honor to lead this robust team for effective conservation and meaningful environmental education in the Cacapon, Potomac, and Chesapeake Bay watersheds. As we work on the above programs, we will of course continue our other programs like the [Failure Is Not An Option](#) research project testing a deer exclusion fence to protect riparian buffer plantings, our 15 year old Cacapon and Lost Rivers monitoring program, Stream Scholars Summer Camp, and our work as part of West Virginia's Chesapeake Bay team that seeks to restore our local waters and the Bay.

It is your support that has helped us build Cacapon Institute into the regional force for effective conservation it has become. Your gift of \$100 or more will help ensure we can sustain our efforts into the future.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W. Neil Gillies".

W. Neil Gillies
Executive Director

P.S. You can donate through a [secure link on our website](#).

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