



Comments of Advocates for Herring Bay
Submitted to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Oyster Restoration and Aquaculture Development Plan, May 2010
August 16, 2010

The Advocates for Herring Bay strongly support efforts by the State of Maryland to restore the oyster population of the Chesapeake Bay. In particular, we applaud the designation of the historic oyster bars of Herring Bay---Bay Shore, Parker, Long Bar, Fairhaven, and Holland Point---as sanctuary zones under the state's May, 2010 "Oyster Restoration and Aquaculture Development Plan."

Herring Bay supported a productive oyster fishery through the 1970s. Its oyster beds were included in the Yates survey in 1911 and its terrace and scarp structure has been the subject of research on the geomorphology of productive oyster habitats (Smith, G.F, *The Location, composition, and origin of oyster bars in mesohaline Chesapeake Bay*, 2002). The subsurface contours of Herring Bay, which are evident in a widely circulated map from 1776, may share some of the features of the "trap estuaries" that have shown promise in recent restoration efforts (see Attachment A). The arc of Herring Bay includes over a mile of natural shoreline, a naturally vegetated sub-estuary, and relatively low levels of impervious surfaces because of the small scale of the communities that adjoin its shores (see Attachment B).

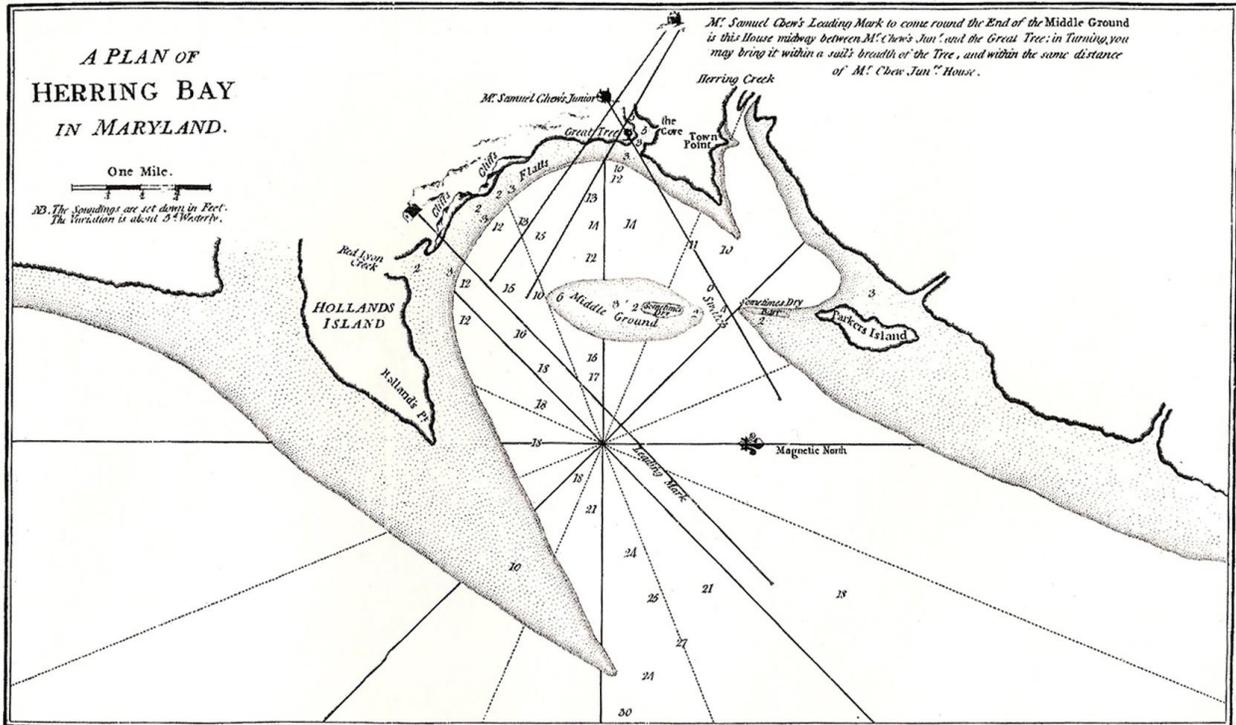
Reversing the tragic decline in the oyster population is a daunting task that will require an unprecedented level of effort by governments and citizens alike. Sanctuaries reserved exclusively for oyster habitat must be established, built, and protected if we hope to realize the ecological and economic benefits of restoring this keystone species. The May 2010 plan provides an excellent framework for that effort; tangible progress, however, will require a firm commitment by the state to fund and enforce those initiatives in areas like Herring Bay. For our part, we plan to launch an oyster gardening program this fall to increase the stock needed for reefs being built in Maryland. Similarly, after monitoring local water quality trends for the last four years, our local communities are moving forward on measures to reduce the runoff that adds sediment and other pollutants that could otherwise impair oyster habitat.

We look forward to working with you in the future to achieve our shared goals.

Respectfully submitted,

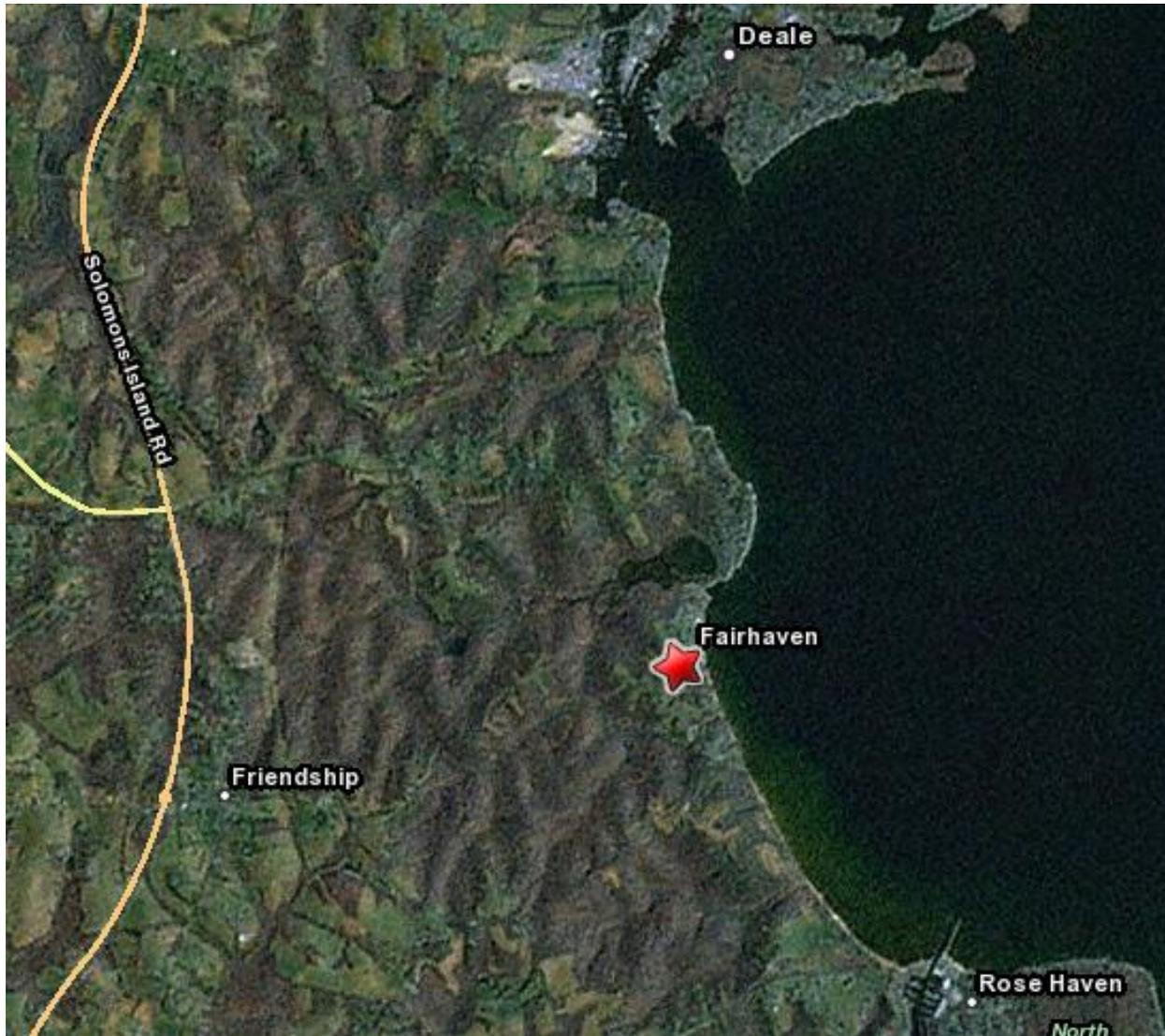
Kathleen Gramp

Attachment A: May of Herring Bay, 1776



Inset from the New and Accurate Chart of the Bay of Chesapeake, printed in London, 1 July 1776.

Attachment B: Aerial view of land adjoining Herring Bay today



AHB ♦ 404 Arundel Road ♦ Tracys Landing, Maryland 20779 ♦
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