

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Anne Atkins
Phone: 804-502-8262
Email: CommunicationsDragonRun@gmail.com

Climate Change and the Chesapeake Bay: What Are We Doing in Virginia?

Friends of Dragon Run (FODR) will host a discussion about current activities to prepare for and combat the impact of climate change and sea level rise specifically on areas of Virginia along the Chesapeake Bay. The Bay is the largest estuary in the U.S. and spans six states plus Washington D.C. Approximately 18 million people live within the Bay's watershed and its economic impact is in the billions of dollars.

Climate change and sea level rise will profoundly impact the Chesapeake Bay. Some of these impacts are already being felt and will continue to increase, altering the Bay's ecological balance, water quality, and the communities that rely on it.

Join FODR's General Meeting on Sunday, February 25, at 2:00 p.m. via zoom to learn about current efforts to monitor and mitigate climate change effects in the Chesapeake Bay by both government and communities.

The event will feature a lively presentation by Cirse Gonzalez and Stephanie Letourne from the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Virginia (CBNERR-VA) on water quality research and mitigation within the tributaries such as Dragon Run and York River watersheds, and the larger Chesapeake Bay. These speakers are known to be both informative and uplifting.

The presentation will highlight ongoing research and work with communities and individuals to:

- Prepare for and combat the impacts of sea level rise and climate change
- Community engagement on the health of our waters - both quality and quantity
- Examples of key science initiatives for the Bay and tributaries such as Dragon Run

- Work to protect species and protect against invasive species
- Fun facts about the bay and this amazing watershed

As Coastal Training Program Coordinator with Chesapeake Bay NERR in Virginia, Cirse Gonzalez works to inform and empower decision-making in coastal resource management through capacity building, technical assistance and community engagement. Cirse believes that the most effective resource management is achieved through transdisciplinary means, inclusive of community and multiple ways of knowing. To her efforts in education, access and engagement, and any participatory process, Cirse brings experience in communications and outreach, natural resource management, responsible recreation and marine science.

Her work and research history stems from a variety of agencies and organizations, including: the U.S. Federal Recreation Council (aka FICOR), where she served as Executive Director; NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, where she worked in outreach as well as constituent and legislative affairs; five U.S. marine laboratories, where she studied the ecology and physiology of algae and crabs; and the Hispanic Access Foundation, for whom she recently wrote a report on Latinos and the Ocean. While navigating her career, Cirse has lived and worked in geographies from Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska to Madagascar. Cirse has a B.S. in Biology from Duke University and a Master of Marine Affairs from the University of Washington.

Stephanie Letourneau is a first-year graduate student in the Professional M.A. program at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). She works as a Graduate Assistant for the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Virginia with the Coastal Training Program, which includes community communications supporting the York River and Small Coastal Basin Roundtable.

Prior to starting at VIMS, she worked for nearly three years as the Community Science Manager for Dickinson College's Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM), where she coordinated ALLARM's Stream Team program, working with partners and volunteers throughout Pennsylvania. She also coordinated ALLARM's participation in the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative, a dynamic team across Chesapeake Bay states to support community-based data collection efforts and integrate data into a regional database. Stephanie graduated in 2020 from Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in environmental science.

Don't miss this important program on February 25. To join the zoom session, visit DragonRun.org and click the *General Meeting* button. The program begins at 7:00 pm.

Friends of Dragon Run

P. O. Box 882
Gloucester, VA 23061
www.dragonrun.org

Friends of Dragon Run (FODR) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Our mission is to protect, preserve, and encourage the wise use of the Dragon Run watershed. We fulfill our mission through education, stewardship, and citizen science. For more information about Dragon Run and to join our activities, visit DragonRun.org.

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Cirse Gonzalez paddling Dragon Run