From Entitlement to Stewardship: Children’s and Young Adult Literature of the Chesapeake Bay

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The Chesapeake Bay

- Largest estuary in United States
- 200 miles long; 4-40 miles wide
- Expansive watershed region

Early Chesapeake Bay Writing: Overflowing Abundance

**Captain John Smith, early 1600s**
- “In diverse places that abundance of fish lying so thicke...we attempted to capture them in a frying pan, but we found it a bad instrument to catch fish with” - Walter Russell & Anas Todkill, companions of Smith¹

**John Davidson Godman, early 1800s**
- “It was astonishing to witness the vast multitudes [of fish] which flocked towards the head of the stream”²

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Environmental degradation and crisis, 1800-2000

Early 1800s:
- Demand for food and settlement area
- Overfishing and sediment runoff

Early 1900s:
- Urban development and fertilizer runoff

1960s:
- Decimated underwater vegetation
- Founding of Chesapeake Bay Foundation

1970s-1980s:
- Conservation and increased surveillance of watermen:
  - A life on the Bay “[is] founded on the right of free plunder. If you follow the water, that’s how it was and that’s how it’s going to be” - Chesapeake Bay Waterman

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Chesapeake Bay Literature and Environmental Degradation

Gilbert Byron, *The Lord’s Oysters* - Entitlement

William Warner, *Beautiful Swimmers* - Adult Stewardship

Priscilla Cummings, *Chadwick and the Garplegrungen* - Encouraging Youth Stewardship of the Bay - Chesapeake Bay as a “teachable” medium

Didactic Chesapeake Literature: Teaching about the Bay Environment

ניין: דיקטייס קשת חוף

Oxford English Dictionary defines *didactic*:
- From the Greek “apt at teaching”
- *Adjective*: “characterized by giving instruction”
- *Noun*: “the science or art of teaching”

Images: Barnes and Noble. 4 April 2011. Web.
Children’s Literature of the Bay: The Lorax Within

🌟 Legacy of Dr. Seuss’s *The Lorax* (1971):

🌟 “But now,” says the Once-ler,

“Now that you’re here,
The word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear.
UNLESS someone like you
Cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to get better.
It’s not.”

## Bay Children’s Literature

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*The Day the Left the Bay* image: Mick Blackistone. Web. 5 April 2011
All Other Images: Barnes and Noble. Web. 5 April 2011.
Author Interview: Priscilla Cummings

“I see this wonderful opportunity through writing books for young people to get them to love it [the Chesapeake Bay] too...[to] make them see it through my eyes and make them love it so when they grow up and they are caretakers of the Bay, they are going to do the right thing for it” (Cummings Personal Interview, 27 August 2010).

Chadwick the Crab image: Barnes and Noble Web. 5 April 2011
Author Image: Priscilla Cummings. Web. 5 April 2011.
# Stewardship Ambassadors:
*Young Adult Literature of the Bay*

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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Result</th>
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| 1 Creation of appealing, strong, unusually competent adolescent protagonists | ★ Draw young readers closer to issues of environmental degradation  
★ Provide examples of stewardship |
| 2 Place-based environmental works | ★ Connect young readers to beauty of Bay  
★ Develop respect for Bay resources |

Book Cover Images: *Barnes and Noble Web. 5 April 2011*
“I...am a lay environmentalist...I certainly would advocate just by my love for the Bay that we do everything we can do...to clear it up and protect it...and I try to get that across [in my writing]. I would say [my books are] not so much environmental advocacy, but I would like to think that my books would inspire kids to get outside...to be...[in] nature” (Meacham Personal Interview, 23 June 2010).

Author Photograph: Margaret Meacham. Web. 7 April 2011.
Book Cover Image: Barnes and Noble. Web. 10 April 2011.
Legacy of Bay Children’s & Young Adult Literature: Environmental Education and the Chesapeake in Memoir

🌟 Professor Susan Cohen:
🌟 “What does it take to give words to water? What does it take to fight back from almost four hundred years of environmental abuse and decline?” (Cohen, 2).

🌟 “The ultimate aim of education is shaping human behavior…before an individual can act intentionally on a particular environmental problem, that individual must be cognizant of the existence of the [issue].” (Hungerford and Volk, 1990, 10).