

For Immediate Release

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Waterkeepers Chesapeake Welcomes Leda Huta as Next Executive Director

(Silver Spring, MD) Waterkeepers Chesapeake’s Board of Directors is pleased to announce the selection of Leda Huta, a proven leader in coalition building and an expert in fostering organizational impact and excellence, to be our new Executive Director. She succeeds Betsy Nicholas who served as Executive Director from 2012 to 2022, before moving to Potomac Riverkeeper Network to be the VP of Programs in January.

Huta comes to Waterkeepers Chesapeake (WKC) from the Endangered Species Coalition (ESC) where she led the national 400-group coalition since 2006. While at ESC, Huta transformed the organization from a watchdog group to a proactive and inclusive movement addressing the root causes of the biodiversity crisis. Huta’s long-term experience in setting strategic direction, advancing advocacy programs, and supporting coalition members will be a great asset for WKC’s 17 Waterkeeper members.

“I am greatly honored to have been chosen to lead Waterkeepers Chesapeake to steward the organization through its next steps in building on its long record of successes,” stated Huta. “The waterways and ecosystems of the Chesapeake have shaped my view of nature, people, and life itself. As the hub-of-the-wheel of the 17 Waterkeepers of the Chesapeake and coastal bays region, the organization has vast potential to advance shared goals. And my focus will be on uplifting the incredible commitment and dedication of the staff as well as the Waterkeepers and the communities they serve. Supporting the abundant grassroots capacities of this coalition is absolutely vital to secure the return of healthy, safe, and free-flowing local waterways in the region.”

Huta is a champion for women’s leadership and advancing equity and inclusion in the environmental movement. She co-founded EcoWomen in 2004 and has participated in several women’s leadership programs. She has centered justice, equity, diversity and inclusion at ESC, and co-wrote two reports that demonstrate how biodiversity’s benefits are an inequitably distributed human right.

“The Board of Waterkeepers Chesapeake is impressed with Leda’s credentials and her extensive experience leading an environmental coalition. We are delighted that she can now bring that acumen and expertise to the Chesapeake region, and know she will be an asset to the overall Bay restoration movement,” said Jesse Iliff, former Waterkeepers Chesapeake Board Chair and Chair of the Executive Director Search Committee. “We thank Acting Executive Director Robin Broder for her successful stewardship of the organization during these past several months of transition and know she’ll continue to provide excellent support going forward.”

Huta is a life-long Marylander who has spent countless hours kayaking, canoeing and paddleboarding on local waterways. She now lives along Sligo Creek. In addition to her passion for protecting critical environmental resources, Huta has taught yoga since 2011, and is fluent in Spanish and Ukrainian. Huta has a Masters in Environmental Law & Policy from the Vermont Law School. She will begin her new role at Waterkeepers Chesapeake on September 18, 2023.

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Waterkeepers Chesapeake fights for clean water and a healthy environment by supporting 17 Waterkeepers throughout the Chesapeake and coastal regions as they protect their communities, rivers, and streams from pollution. <https://waterkeeperschesapeake.org>