



(RIDGELY, MD—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)  
May 28, 2026

## ***Chesapeake Homelands* Shares Stories from the Diverse Indigenous Cultures of the Chesapeake Bay Region**

Adkins Arboretum and Beech Works are excited to announce the first offerings from *Chesapeake Homelands*, a new project that shares stories from the diverse Indigenous cultures that make up the Chesapeake Bay region.

The project will contribute to a more complete narrative of the Chesapeake Bay's storied landscape by presenting conversations focused on the stories, history, and culture members of the region's Indigenous communities want to highlight—in their own voices.

A conversation presented in two parts and a video series were recorded at the Arboretum, which is located on the ancestral homelands of the Choptank people. The recordings feature Daniel Firehawk Abbott a descendant of the Nanticoke and Choptank people and Drew Shuptar-Rayvis, a descendant of the Pocomoke Indian Nation.

The conversation between Abbott and Shuptar-Rayvis, both accomplished interpreters, begins in *Walking With Our Ancestors*, and explores the early history of Maryland's Eastern Shore and what led each of them to work in interpretation. In, *A Place of Memory*, Daniel and Drew continue their conversation, delving into tribal governance and tradition, language, the landscape of the Eastern Shore, and the importance of oral history.

In the two-part video series, *Changing World, Changing Weaponry*, Abbott and Shuptar-Rayvis trace the history and evolution of weaponry among the Eastern Woodland people. Shuptar-Rayvis introduces the project in his evocative essay, *Wapanacomoco: The Country of the East*.

A descendant of the Eastern Shore's Nanticoke and Choptank people, Daniel Firehawk Abbott is the principal Native American prehistoric/historical interpreter at Historic Jamestowne Island. While serving on the Board of Directors of the Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance, he designed and guided the construction of the Chicone Village at Handsell in Dorchester County. Abbott has also partnered with the Arboretum on interpretive projects and programming.

Drew Shuptar-Rayvis (Pekatawas Makataweu "Black Corn") holds a cum laude B.A. in anthropology and sociology from Western Connecticut State University and a certificate in

archaeology from Norwalk Community College. His family heritage includes indigenous Pocomoke, Pennsylvania Dutch, Welsh, Swiss, English, Scots-Irish, Boyko Ukrainian, and Ashkenazi Jewish. He was appointed Northern Cultural Ambassador of the Pocomoke Indian Nation by resolution of its tribal council, chief, and vice chief, and honors all of his ancestors as a practicing living historian and regularly participating in colonial-era reenactments, interpretations, and public educational events.

Conceived as a pilot, Beech Works intends to expand the project over time and continue collaborating with additional tribal communities in the Chesapeake region, creating resources that invite further appreciation of the homelands and contributions of the Indigenous people and communities who thrived here and continue to do so.

Listeners and viewers can find the project at [chesapeakehomelands.com](http://chesapeakehomelands.com). The audio recordings have been released as the *Chesapeake Homelands* podcast, and in addition to the project website, they can be found on all major podcast platforms.

*Chesapeake Homelands* is a project of Beech Works, Inc. The pilot offerings were produced in collaboration with Adkins Arboretum, and have been financed in part by Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. with State funds from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, an instrumentality of the State of Maryland. However, project contents or opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

**Contact:**

Lauren Giordano  
Programming and Marketing  
Beech Works  
[lgordano@beechworks.org](mailto:lgordano@beechworks.org)

Laura Vlahovich  
Director of Communications  
Adkins Arboretum  
[vlahovich@adkinsarboretum.org](mailto:vlahovich@adkinsarboretum.org)

**Photo:**

A high resolution photo has been included with this release for press use—

BeechWorks\_ChesapeakeHomelands\_AbbottShuptarRayvis.jpg

Caption—Daniel Firehawk Abbott (left) and Drew Shuptar-Rayvis (right), record for Chesapeake Homelands at Adkins Arboretum.

Credit—Photo courtesy Beech Works, Inc.

###

**About Adkins Arboretum**

*Located at the headwaters of the Tuckahoe Creek in Caroline County, Maryland, Adkins Arboretum is one of the few botanical institutions focused on conserving and promoting the flora of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain. The*

*Arboretum's collection comprises 400 acres of native plant communities in cultivated gardens and successional patterns of meadows, old fields, pine plantations, young hardwood forests, mature bottomland forests and wetlands. The Arboretum strives to inspire environmental stewardship, provide respite and healing and celebrate natural and cultural diversity through the joy and wonder of the natural world. Learn more at [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org).*

**About Beech Works**

*Beech Works is a non-profit organization dedicated to broadening public discourse and advancing public education on social issues through thought-provoking documentary and narrative media projects. With educational and community outreach, Beech Works strives to engage, inspire, and foster discussions on the issues facing our society today. Learn more at [beechworks.org](http://beechworks.org).*