



THE GREAT CHESAPEAKE BAY SCHOONER RACE

Racing to save the Bay

The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race Virtual Race 2026 Toolkit

Welcome to the sixth annual Virtual Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race! The Virtual Race was conceived in 2020 as a way to continue serving **our mission**, even when it was impossible to run a full race on the water. Over the past five years, the Virtual Race has raised over \$303,000 for conservation and education work on the Chesapeake Bay.

The 2026 Virtual Race will begin at noon on Wednesday, August 12, and run through 3:00 PM on Saturday, August 15.

The following information is designed to get you started with your online fundraising campaign. It contains both general information and logistical details about the race, along with tips for successful social media engagement. It's impossible to cover everything in a single document though, so please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions.

All the best,
The VGCBSR Team

Event Details

The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race (GCBSR) was founded to promote public awareness of the Chesapeake Bay's maritime heritage and encourage the preservation and improvement of the Chesapeake's natural resources. We accomplish this goal in part by donating the proceeds of the race to organizations in our region who share this vision. The race normally begins in Baltimore, Maryland, and ends 118 nautical miles down the Chesapeake Bay in Norfolk, Virginia. Entry is open to all schooner-rigged vessels, and N-Class vessels by invitation. The 2026 Bay Race will take place October 13-19. The race and all race week activities are run by volunteers and donations which keep the race going strong.

Here in the Virtual Race, things work a bit differently. Each of the schooners in the Virtual Race has designated a charitable cause for which you'll raise money. When the race starts on August 12, you'll begin to collect donations for your cause. The team that brings in the most money is the winner! It's a fairly simple idea, but when it's done well it's a powerful way to make an impact in our world.

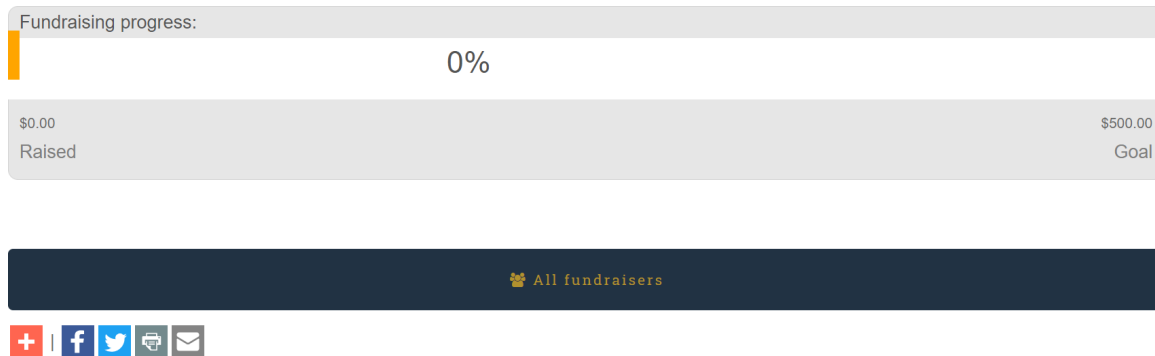
Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

The Virtual GCBSR is a "peer-to-peer" fundraising campaign. This means it'll all happen online, using your own social networks. You'll tell your friends, colleagues, family, and online supporters about the event, and hopefully they'll reach out to their peers as well. The more you spread the word, the more successful you'll be and the more visibility your organization will have during the event.

When you register for the Schooner Race, we create a special fundraising webpage for your team. Each team has a unique fundraising webpage, and you will receive that address in a separate email. If you do not have a fundraising page address, please contact Sherman Gifford at Education-VA@schoonerrace.org.

That webpage is the one place where donors can contribute to your fundraising campaign, so the link to that page is the one you'll want to distribute. Social media networks like Facebook and Twitter are the simplest ways to share your link, but feel free to be creative with email or other platforms as well.

One simple way to share your link on social media is to use the "share" buttons at the bottom of your fundraising page. They should look like this:



The official race starts at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, August 12, and closes at 3:00 PM on Saturday August 15. Donations can only be accepted during this official race period. But that doesn't mean you have to wait until then to spread the word! Before the race, please work with your partner organizations to make a plan, distribute your fundraising link, and build excitement around the event.

Before the race starts, you can:

- Talk with your partners and plan for promoting your fundraiser.
- Begin distributing the link to your fundraising page, via email or social media.
- Work on video or other content that promotes your schooner or your cause.
- There will be a link to your organization's regular web page, so ensure that is up to date and that it directs potential donors to your unique GCBSR Virtual Race fundraising page
- Make sure your social media pages are active and updated, and that you've followed/friended all the accounts you'll be working with. Check that you and your partner organizations are following each other, and that everyone has connected online with GCBSR.
- Put up a few "save the date" social media posts about the fundraiser.

In this last week or so before the event starts, make sure your supporters know what the race is, when the fundraiser will happen, and why it's important to you. Both schooners and partner organizations can help with this effort. Remember, your partner organization will have a different set of supporters and followers, and lots of different types of folks may be interested in what we're doing!

Please remember to tag GCBSR in all your posts and use the official race hashtags wherever possible. Accounts and hashtags are listed later in this document.

During the Race

The race starts at noon on August 12. GCBSR will enable the fundraising feature at that time and hopefully donations will start flowing quickly! Once the race starts, you should post regularly - ideally, a few times per day. Use all your accounts - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter - and ask your partners to do the same. Here's a little bit more information about the ways we'll use social media, and how you can use the various platforms successfully.

Facebook

As the world's largest social network and the world's third-most visited website. Facebook has over 3 billion monthly active users. 68% of American adults use Facebook and 51% of them use it several times per day. Facebook is the best platform for sharing highly visual content like photos, videos, and news articles.

Leading up to and during the event, all content will be primarily hosted on Facebook. We will share important content about each participating vessel and their nonprofit race partner. During the race, followers will get updates by following our Facebook page and anyone can join the conversation by tagging our Facebook page and using the hashtags in their related posts.

Think of GCBSR's official Facebook page as the mothership. If your vessel has a public page, please post photos and video to your page & tag @GreatChesapeakeBaySchoonerRace so that we can share your updates and content.

You can also send content directly to SocialMedia@SchoonerRace.org. If your schooner doesn't have a public Facebook page, this will be the easiest way to spread the word about your fundraiser. Please send the content with appropriate captions and tags. We will tag each vessel's non-profit partner in each post related to them.

How will it work?

Does your schooner have a Facebook Page? If yes, tag @GreatChesapeakeBaySchoonerRace in your posts and we will share them to our page.

OR

Send your content (photos and video) with accompanying captions and information. You give us the content & we will direct post it and tag your vessel's page if you have one. We will share 1-2 posts per schooner per day at a max. The more content you send us, the more airtime you get.

What types of content should you post and/send to us?

- Consider filming a short video tour of your vessel or an interview with one of your crew. Tell us about your vessel, what the GCBSR means to you and why you picked your non-profit to support. Keep your videos between 1-4 minutes in length. Facebook prioritizes videos over 3 minutes but we will also post shorter sailing clips or videos.
- Photos and fun stories work well. There is no such thing as too many photos of boats! We will share up to 1-2 updates per vessel, per day. We will post as long as we have content coming from you.

Other Platforms

Other social media platforms can be valuable in different ways. While Facebook will be our primary channel for sharing content, Twitter and Instagram can be valuable supplements.

Instagram

Instagram is a highly visual platform that is best for sharing highly visual content like photos, graphics, and videos. One billion users log into this platform every month. There are about 500 million people viewing and posting to Instagram Stories every day.

Leading up to the event, we plan to share visual content from previous Races and ‘Save the Date’ graphics. During the race, we’ll likely continue sharing photos of schooners as well as updates on fundraising efforts. It’s not easy to share links via Instagram, but it can be a great way to remind folks about the race and keep people updated on what’s happening.

Twitter/X

X, formerly known as Twitter, is a “microblogging” network, where users post short messages that can be read by anyone in the public. As of early 2019, there were 321 million active users, and its use has grown since the 2020 pandemic. GCBSR is not currently using Twitter, but the platform can be a great way to share the link to your fundraising page.

Accounts to Follow

The following links are the official accounts for the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race. Please follow us, friend us, and tag us when you’re posting about the race!



[@GreatChesapeakeBaySchoonerRace](#)



[@SchoonerRace](#)



[The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race](#)

Official Hashtags: [#SchoonerTime](#) [#VirtualGCBSR](#) [#GCBSR](#)

The official hashtags [#SchoonerTime](#) and [#VirtualGCBSR](#), and [#GCBSR](#) will be used on all social media outlets to allow participants, fans, and the public to follow, join, and stay engaged. Whether you are using Facebook, Youtube or Instagram, by clicking on the hashtag from one of the tweets, posts or pictures, it will bring you to all of the posts using [#SchoonerTime](#) and [#VirtualGCBSR](#).

Please use these hashtags when you're posting, too! Hashtags are an easy way to promote the race, and they allow us all to support each other.

Contact Information

If you need assistance with any aspect of your fundraising campaign, please get in touch with us! We're here to help.

Patrick Smith

Social Media

SocialMedia@schoonerrace.org

Sherman Gifford

Online Fundraising Pages, General Race Logistics

Education-VA@schoonerrace.org