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For Immediate Release

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Decked Out 2024 Raises Over \$10,000 for the Inland Bays!

Dewey Beach, DE—Hosted at the Hyatt Place Dewey Beach on September 12th, the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays' 18th Annual Decked Out fundraiser raised over \$10,000 to support projects that preserve, protect, and restore Delaware's three Inland Bays.

Decked Out celebrated the Center's 30th anniversary year with Inland Bays oysters, a signature "pearl anniversary" cocktail, and live music by the Back Bay Trio and Reedo. Live and silent auctions featured unique Bays experiences like Inland Bays boat tours and private tours of the James Farm Ecological Preserve. New this year was the 30th anniversary art raffle, where attendees could purchase tickets to win one of thirty one-of-a-kind art pieces generously donated by local and regional artists. The night also marked the announcement of the Center's Watershed Society, a giving opportunity that recognizes people who have provided for the Center in perpetuity through a bequest, other planned gift, or lifetime contributions of \$50,000 or more.

"The Center for the Inland Bays is fueled by the generous spirit of our hard-working partners, fabulous volunteers, and, of course, our financial donors. From amongst them all, stars arise," said Christophe Tulou, Executive Director of the Center. "With our new Watershed Society, we recognize Austin F. Okie (aka "Pete"), one of Sussex County's brightest stars. Pete lives his love for his County's wild lands and wildlife, and his generosity has set the standard for those who also cherish this special place we call Delaware's Inland Bays."

The Center would like to thank the sponsors of Decked Out: Carl M. Freeman Foundation, Ashton Pools by Design, Coastal Plant Care, ReWild DelMarVa Sussex Conservation District, Del-Coast Design & Build, Anne Powell, Realtor, Lord Baltimore Women's Club, Rich Weissmann & Patti Drago, Espo Enterprises, Monument Sotheby's, Delmarva Power, Chesapeake Utilities, Casella, Accent on Travel, Nally Homes, Straughan Environmental, Funland, Tributaries, Sovereign Consulting, Delmarva Public Media, Rehoboth Toy & Kite, Rehoboth Bay Oyster Co., Jack Lingo Realtor. The Center also thanks the generosity of the many area businesses within our community that contributed in-kind to support Decked Out.

Additionally, a special thank you to the thirty artists that donated pieces to the art raffle: Forrest Allread, Jon Bandish, Orion Cameron, Debbi Dean, Marc Emond, Marina Feeser, Shandra Furtado, Maggie Heffernan, Laura Hickman, Erin Hellman, Sherry Insley, Maureen Johnson, Mike Johnson, Laura Killpack, Emma Kirby, Kim Klabe, Morgan Krell, Michelle Koenig, Lisa H. Lau, Ed Lewandowski, Jordan Mincy, Kait Monroe, Bonnie Palmatory, Renata Price, Nick Serratore, Dale Sheldon, Crystal Stokowski, GW Thompson, Asher Truitt, Hannah Whiddon.

The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a nonprofit organization established in 1994 and is one of 28 National Estuary Programs. With its many partners, the center works to preserve, protect, and restore Delaware's Inland Bays and their watershed. For more information, please contact Caitlin Chaney at cchaney@inlandbays.org or visit us online at inlandbays.org.

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