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The University of Virginia and Philippe Cousteau's Azure Worldwide Join Forces to Secure a Brighter Future for the Chesapeake Bay with the U.Va. Bay Game

-- Game simulates human impact on the Bay and aims to stimulate political and personal action to protect critical watersheds --

March 17, 2010 — The University of Virginia and Azure Worldwide, co-founded by Philippe Cousteau, are partnering to showcase a new concept in environmental engagement and action: the Bay Game, an interactive game that simulates the conditions of the Chesapeake Bay watershed with players taking the roles of people who live in the watershed and make their livelihoods from the resources of the Bay.

As the Game is played, every decision by watermen, farmers, developers and policymakers has an impact on the health of the Bay and the wellbeing of the stakeholders each player represents. Originally created in 2009 as a tool to help determine and demonstrate the importance of political and civic collaboration in conservation efforts, **a new version of the Bay Game will be unveiled and played by 163 students on Thursday, April 8, at 11:30 a.m. at Clark Hall at the University of Virginia. Philippe Cousteau will host the event with Thomas C. Skalak, U.Va.'s vice president for research.**

"The Chesapeake Bay Game's potential as a 'game changer' in many areas makes it truly unique," said Skalak. "It is our goal for the results of the game to inform public policies, private investment trends, and societal behaviors in ways that will enhance human health, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability. We also expect that this powerful approach to complex systems will be transferable to a broad range of societal issues, from other environmental challenges to our nation's financial infrastructure."

"The complex environmental, political and social issues facing the Chesapeake Bay require a creative approach to problem solving," said Cousteau. "Through the Bay Game, U.Va. has created a pioneering tool that considers both environmental impact and the wellbeing of real people and communities. This project gives people the knowledge to make a positive difference."

Extending over six states and the District of Columbia and covering 64,000 square miles, the Bay watershed is the largest estuary in the United States. It is impacted daily by a broad range of individuals, communities and industries within its boundaries. Representing the 16.7 million residents in the watershed, players in the Bay Game make decisions based on an assigned stakeholder role. Farmers make decisions about whether to leave land fallow or apply cover crops to their fields, for instance, and land developers decide between regular and sustainable development.

The Game provides a scientifically sound and true-to-life method to illustrate what will happen if we take collaborative action and the serious consequences if we don't. The Game is modular and can be adapted to address conditions in other watersheds.

About the Game

The U.Va. Bay Game is an unprecedented initiative made possible through a unique multi disciplinary development team. Sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Game was created with the input and knowledge of faculty members and students from eight schools, including: the School of Engineering and Applied Science, McIntire School of Commerce, College of Arts & Sciences (Environmental Sciences), School of Architecture, School of Law, Darden School of Business, Curry School of Education and the School of Medicine. Each team contributed the expertise and data for the Game's simulation, including real statistics on variables such as crab population and pollution. U.Va. students played an earlier version of the Game in April 2009; the new version features the latest scientific data and 51,000 mathematical equations.

About University of Virginia

The only public university founded with a national purpose, the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., is distinctive among institutions of higher education. In 1819 Thomas Jefferson designed U.Va. to educate citizens to apply the political principles and participate in the social institutions enabled by his Declaration of Independence and Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. Today U.Va. sustains Jefferson's ideal of developing, through public education, innovative solutions to our most challenging social problems. For information, visit www.virginia.edu.

About Azure Worldwide

Azure Worldwide was established to inspire action to cause positive change. A strategic development company, Azure Worldwide focuses on environmentally sustainable design, destination development, interactive media and strategic marketing and has worked on a variety of projects from Washington DC to Singapore to Costa Rica. Its purpose is to create new relationships, products and experiences that empower individuals, communities and businesses to improve the health and sustainability of their lives, community and environment while driving added value to stakeholders and partners. For more information, visit www.azureworldwide.com.