

# CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL ADVISORY COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF MEETING, November 12, 2009

The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail ("The Trail") Advisory Council convened for its third meeting at 10:00 A.M. on November 12, 2009, at the Earth Conservation Corp in Washington, D.C. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from 10:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Council members present:

- Deanna Beacham
- H. Hedrick Belin John Griffin
- Gilbert Grosvenor
- Elizabeth A. Hughes
- Ann Loomis
- John Maounis
- Susan R. Moerschel
- Kim Nielsen
- Patrick F. Noonan
- John J. Reynolds, Chair
- J.W. Peyton Robertson, Jr.
- William H. Street

Others Present Representing Absent Advisory Council Members:

- Bill Daisey, Nanticoke Indian Association
- Jim Edward, Environmental Protection Agency
- Shane Farthing, District of Columbia
- Bill Pencek, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development

Others present for all, or portions, of the meeting were:

- Liz Clarke, NPS consultant
- Lisa Gutierrez, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Christine Lucero, National Park Service
- Drew McMullen, President, Sultana Projects, Inc.
- Jen Miller, Kilda Group LLC
- David J. O'Neill, President, Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail  
Danette Poole, Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
- John Salmon, Historian/ Consultant, Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail
- Charles A. Stek, Chairman, Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail
- Heather Wickens, National Park Service
- Jeff Winstel, National Park Service

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

John Reynolds and John Maounis welcomed The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail ("The Trail") Advisory Council members to the meeting. Each person present at the meeting introduced themselves to the group.

## **EARTH CONSERVATION CORPS**

Bob Nixon, host, and Chairman of the Earth Conservation Corps, introduced himself and gave an overview of the Corps' history and mission. A video clip from the show, "Expedition Blue Planet", featuring the facility and its members, was shown.

## **UPDATES**

### **EXECUTIVE ORDER UPDATE**

John Maounis presented an update of Executive Order 13508- Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration, which President Barack Obama signed on May 12, 2009.

Section 203 of E.O. 13508 requires that a draft implementation strategy be released for a 60-day public review. A notice was posted in the Federal Register on November 9, 2009 announcing the availability of a draft strategy for restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and requests public comment. Comments on the draft strategy must be submitted on or before January 8, 2010.

Section 202 of E.O. 13508 requires that within 120 days from the date of the E.O., draft reports shall be prepared and submitted to the Committee making recommendations for accomplishing 7 key challenges that are labeled A-G in the E.O. Section 202 E, "expand public access to waters and open spaces of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries from Federal lands and conserve landscapes and ecosystems of the Chesapeake Bay watershed" directly pertain to The Trail. Revised Section 202 reports will be posted for public comment.

8 major federal Initiatives were detailed:

1. Reducing Pollution and Restoring Water Quality
2. Chesapeake Farms and Forests for the 21st Century
3. Chesapeake Treasured Landscape Initiative
4. Restoring Habitats and Sustaining Species
5. Coordinate Tools and Science for Strategic Decision-Making
6. A Strategy for Chesapeake Communities and Resources to Adapt to Climate Change
7. Federal Leadership by Example
8. Planning for Livable Communities

Advisory Council members were encouraged to thoroughly review and comment on all of the section 202 reports and the 203 strategy.

### **NWR CONCEPT REPORT**

Liz Clarke shared a presentation regarding her research on opportunities for partnerships between National Wildlife Refuges and The Trail. Refuges would first have to determine The Trail to be compatible with the mission of the refuge prior to partnership. 16 National Wildlife Refuges in the Chesapeake Bay area were presented as potential partners, which were broken down into groups by "Most potential for partnership" to "Least potential for partnership" as follows:

- Group 1- On The Trail and open for visitors (with numerous existing facilities and programs): Rappahannock River Valley, Eastern Neck, Mason Neck, Occoquan, Eastern Shore of Virginia.
- Group 2- On The Trail and open for visitors (with few or no existing facilities and programs): James River, Presquile, Garrett Island.
- Group 3- Not on The Trail but open for visitors (with numerous existing facilities and programs): Blackwater, Patuxent.
- Group 4- On The Trail but largely closed to visitors: Plum Tree Island, Fisherman Island.
- Group 5- On the Trail but closed to visitors: Featherstone, Nansemond, Martin, and Susquehanna.

### **CONNECTOR TRAILS**

John Salmon and David O'Neill from the Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail provided a progress report on their connector trail research. They assembled a group of researchers to determine whether there was potential for several river segments to become connector trails to the main stem of The Trail.

Preliminary findings show the Upper James River, the Anacostia River, the Chester River, the Upper Nanticoke and Susquehanna as having potential close association with The Trail. Next steps are to analyze the research team's findings and make final recommendations to the National Park Service. NPS will then review the findings and recommendations and incorporate its findings into the Comprehensive Management Plan. It is the sense of the Advisory Council that the CMP will include the criteria against which connector trails will be evaluated for recommendation for designation by the Secretary of the Interior and the process for doing so. Once the CMP/EA is complete and approved by NPS, nominations for designation of connector trails can move forward through NPS and to the Secretary.

## **AMERICAN INDIAN CONSULTATION**

Jeff Winstel presented an update on the ethnography study being conducted by Karenne Wood, Program Director, Virginia Indian Heritage Program, University of Virginia. The objectives of the study are to consult with tribal leaders in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware as well as Virginia Council on Indians and the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs to learn about tribal heritage and cultural associations with sites and landscapes near The Trail. The study will conclude in February 2010.

## **ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

Jeff Winstel presented an update on the alternative transportation systems study being conducted by the Volpe Center for Transportation Studies. Volpe's current activities include conducting a region-wide survey of alternative transportation systems, conducting a needs assessment and gap analysis, inventorying outfitters, identifying stakeholders. Research due to be concluded in early February of 2010. Some advisory council members exchanged knowledge of various state regulations regarding water access along roads and bridges. Jeff Winstel will follow up and pass along relevant information to the Volpe Center for the study.

## **BUILDING THE TRAIL- IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS**

### **JOHN SMITH'S ADVENTURES ON THE RAPPAHANNOCK**

Danette Poole discussed the implementation of this water trail. She discussed the vision of the trail, themes and products to include maps, website and mapped driving trail.

### **JOHN SMITH EXPEDITIONS & SASSAFRAS RIVER WATERTRAIL**

Drew McMullen, President of Sultana Projects in Chestertown, Maryland shared information about what his company does and how it ties into The Trail. Sultana Projects' John Smith Trail Expeditions is the first educational program designed specifically for the National Park Service's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Utilizing a fleet of canoes and kayaks, the goal of the John Smith Trail Expeditions program is to encourage students to explore and learn about areas of the Chesapeake that are reminiscent of the Bay John Smith experienced 400 years ago. The program has a dual focus on history and environmental science.

Drew also discussed the development of the Sassafras and Chester River's Water Trail (official name of the trail is still pending.) Sultana Projects' Sassafras River tour will lead paddlers down Captain John Smith's epic 1608 exploration of the Sassafras River. The tour evokes Smith's fascinating interactions with the Tockwogh Indians.

### **CHICKAHOMINY RIVER WATER TRAIL SIGNAGE**

William Street presented an update on the development and status of the Chickahominy River Water Trail Signage and exhibits were unveiled at the recent Chickahominy pow-wow. They are currently engaging regional outfitters and developing online maps of the trail.

### **NANTICOKE WATER TRAIL**

Susan Moerschel presented an update on the Nanticoke water trail which has been designated as part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network as well as a component of The Trail. Delaware received a grant from the Network to develop the trail. Stakeholders are currently developing a map and guide and are conducting a gap analysis. A group called the Nanticoke Creekwatcher volunteers ("Creekwatchers") lent their boats and their knowledge and took stakeholders out for a tour along the river. A companion website is being developed and properties along the water trail that are evocative landscapes have been identified. The website will be launched in early 2010 and the map and guide are to be launched in July 2010.

### **BUOY UPDATE**

Peyton Robertson gave an update on the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System (CBIBS). A ceremony for the launching of 7<sup>th</sup> Smart Buoy in the Severn River was held recently. CBIBS was awarded the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's prestigious Administrator's Award. Future plans for the CBIBS program include deploying additional buoys and creating a presence on Facebook and a Wiki.

### **LUNCH**

A working lunch was held.

## **COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP)**

### **CMP MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES WORKSHOPS**

Liz Clarke gave a detailed account of the alternative concepts to the Comprehensive Management Plan that was presented at public workshops in October 2009. The public workshops educated the public on what The Trail is, why the National Park Service is preparing the Management Plan, what alternative concepts are being considered, and how the public can comment on the alternatives. The four preliminary alternatives include:

1. Continuation of Current Management
2. Exploratory Voyages of Captain John Smith
3. Chesapeake Region in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century
4. Recreation on the Historic Trail

The public workshops featured 20 posters in 4 sections, illustrating each alternative at four different locations on The Trail. A total of 130 people attended the workshops. December 1, 2009 is the deadline for public comment. The Advisory Council meeting attendees were asked to view each of the 20 posters that the public viewed. General discussion ensued.

Jeff Winstel and John Maounis reported on the public's comments from the public workshops. The public liked and disliked elements of each alternative, however it was reported that alternative # 3- Chesapeake Region in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, was overwhelmingly the most popular option, with an interest in the additional public access aspect of alternative #4.

### **NEXT STEPS IN THE CMP PROCESS**

John Maounis and Jeff Winstel gave an overview of the next steps in the Comprehensive Management Plan process as follows:

- November 2009- Comment period close-out, Management Alternatives Comment Analysis and Report (PEPC), Final edits to affected environment and environmental consequences due.
- December 2009- Preferred alternatives, cost estimates and high potential sites and segments due.
- January 2010- Assemble final draft document.
- February 2010- National Park Service review and comment.
- March 2010- Solicitors office review and National Park Service approval to print.
- April 2010- Public review period and final draft CMP/ EA, print and distribute for comment.
- May 2010- Comment analysis and response, briefing of the Advisory Council and prepare and submit Findings of No significant Impact (FONSI).
- June 2010- FONSI packet reviewed and signed.

### **MEETING MINUTES APPROVED**

Meeting minutes from the last Advisory Council meeting were approved.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Charles Stek urged all present to contact their respective Governor and urge their states to include money for land conservation in their fiscal year 2011 budgets. He also thanked the Advisory Council members for their participation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 P.M.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

John Maounis, Superintendent  
Captain John Smith National Historic Trail  
National Park Service

John Reynolds, Chairman  
Captain John Smith National Historic Trail  
Advisory Council