

# Captain John Smith CHESAPEAKE National Historic Trail



*Four hundred years ago, a small crew led by Englishman John Smith set out in an open boat to explore the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers. Today, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail follows their route and the related landscapes that were home to many American Indian communities. There are countless ways to explore the 3,000-mile trail — by land and by water — as it winds through Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York and the District of Columbia.*

## 2019 State of the Trail

### Conservation & Trail Protection

- **On the Nanticoke River:** 233 additional acres were protected, bringing the total amount of protected acreage in the Nanticoke watershed to 2,235 since 2013. This is part of the Nanticoke Rural Legacy Area, a perpetual conservation easement.
- **On the Upper James River:** 4,700 acres were added to the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The acquisition was made possible by the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- **On the Rappahannock River:** 252 acres were added to the Rappahannock National Wildlife Refuge at Fones Cliffs, ancestral home of the Rappahannock Indian Tribe, with support from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

- **On the Susquehanna River:** The purchase of 1,000 acres by the Lancaster Conservancy was completed in 2019 at a site known as the Hellam Hills Conservation area.

### Indigenous Cultural Landscapes

The Indigenous Cultural Landscape concept represents the context of American Indian people in the Chesapeake Bay region and their interactions with the landscape. Studying and describing ICLs in partnership with tribal citizens is important for those communities and for trail protection and interpretation. Each study illustrates historic and contemporary landscapes that tribal members identify as important.

In 2019, researchers at St. Mary's College of Maryland completed the trail's fifth ICL study. This study focused on the geographic context of Werowocomoco, an ancestral homeland on Virginia's York River, and on contemporary landscapes for members of the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe and Pamunkey Indian Tribe. You can find all five completed studies at [ChesapeakeConservancy.org](http://ChesapeakeConservancy.org):

- Nanticoke River (MD and DE)
- Susquehanna River (MD and PA)
- Nanjemoy and Mattawoman Creeks (MD)
- Rappahannock River (VA)
- York, Pamunkey, and Mattaponi Rivers (VA)



*Chief Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock Indian Tribe stands on newly preserved land along Fones Cliffs in Virginia. (Zhivko Illeieff, courtesy of the Chesapeake Conservancy)*

# Youth & Education



NPS

## Junior Ranger Program

More than 1,000 kids were sworn in as Junior Rangers on the Chesapeake Trail in 2019. Six activity programs were offered:

- The trail's Junior Ranger books: The trailwide web-based edition and the Susquehanna edition
- Night Sky Explorer
- Let's Go Fishing Junior Ranger
- Green Junior Ranger
- Space Flight Explorer
- National Junior Ranger Day event



Susquehanna National Heritage Area/ Allison Scholz

## Field Trips with the Susquehanna National Heritage Area

In 2019, 500 fourth-graders in Title I schools on the Susquehanna River visited the Zimmerman Center for Heritage to learn about river ecology and the Chesapeake Trail. They enjoyed a stream study, learned about the travels of Captain John Smith, and visited Native Lands Park to see the site of the Susquehannock town and learn how colonization affected where and how Indian people lived. Field trips were funded by Open Outdoors for Kids, a program of the National Park Foundation.



Susquehanna National Heritage Area/ Mark Platts

## Wilderness Inquiry's Canoemobile

The Canoemobile program hosted 390 fifth-grade students in 2019. Students enjoyed lessons in paddling 24-foot-long canoes and participated in land-based activities to learn about cultural, historical and ecological heritage. The program took place in partnership with Wilderness Inquiry, the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, NPS/ Chesapeake Conservancy's Roving Ranger, Susquehanna National Heritage Area, and National Parks Conservation Association, with funding from the NPS Chesapeake Bay office and National Parks Conservation Association.



Sultana Education Foundation/ Chris Cerino

## Field Trips with Sultana Education Foundation

At Sultana Education Foundation on Maryland's Chester River, 845 students in the fourth and fifth grades enjoyed field trips. They learned about the Chesapeake's ecosystem and what it was like four hundred years ago, conducting water quality tests, exploring wetlands, sampling marine life, and examining maps of the Bay and its rivers. While sailing aboard the *Sultana*, they raised sails and helped steer the ship. Field trips were funded in part by Open Outdoors for Kids, a program of the National Park Foundation.

# Native Stories in Native Places



NPS

## Werowocomoco: 'A Place of Leadership'

In 2016, NPS acquired Werowocomoco, the site of the capital of the Powhatan Chiefdom and the paramount leaders before him, on Virginia's York River. Werowocomoco is managed by the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail working in collaboration with the staff at Colonial National Historical Park and in partnership with seven tribal partners. In 2019:

- Dr. David Brown and Thane Harpole began work on Werowocomoco's Archeological Overview and Assessment. The AOA is a fundamental document that will guide future research and help direct an archeological resource protection plan. The AOA will be complete in August 2020.
- Trail staff contracted a Native ethnographer, Dr. Cedric Woods (Lumbee), to research and write the park's Ethnographic Overview and Assessment. The EOA is a fundamental report that assesses multiple levels of documentary evidence and interviews with tribal citizens about historic and contemporary connections to Werowocomoco. The EOA will be complete in September 2021.
- Since 2016, work has been underway on a multi-phased project to understand and describe how Werowocomoco can best welcome visitors and offer an experience that is instructional, reflective, and responsive to tribal concerns. In May 2019, NPS staff, the planning team, and tribal representatives met for formal consultation on ways to present Werowocomoco to the public. For inspiration and advice, two Native employees of NPS shared their experiences at their home parks, Knife River Villages National Historic Site and Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.



*The Maritime Crafts Field School was a featured event in the Rappahannock Indian Tribe's Return to the River initiative. (Cinebar Productions/Rich Borenstein)*

## Maritime Crafts Field School

NPS secured funding for a Maritime Crafts Field School and helped implement the program with the Rappahannock Indian Tribe and the Chesapeake Conservancy. Under the leadership of Chief Anne Richardson, 21 tribal citizens of all ages gathered at the Rappahannock tribal center on four summer Saturdays. Instructors taught tool building, net making, dugout canoe building, and river ecology.

The field school was a featured event of the tribe's Return to the River initiative, which aims to re-introduce young people to their ancestors' ways of knowing about the resources of their riverine environment. Participants expressed strong desires to continue learning about water quality in the Rappahannock River and how they might be involved in environmental conservation in their ancestral homelands.

NPS has secured more funding to continue the field school with a "train-the-trainer" model.

# Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

## Visitor Contact Stations

- ★ **Susquehanna River:**  
*Zimmerman Center for Heritage*  
In 2019, the Susquehanna Heritage Area became a National Heritage Area!
- ★ **Chester River:**  
*Sultana Education Foundation*
- ★ **York River:**  
*Gloucester County Visitor Center*
- ★ **James River:**  
*Jamestown Visitor Center*

In partnership with the



For information:

[www.nps.gov/cajo](http://www.nps.gov/cajo)

[www.chesapeakeconservancy.org](http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org)



Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

