



MIDDLE PENINSULA CHESAPEAKE BAY PUBLIC ACCESS AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: MPCBPAA
FROM: Harrison P. Bresee III, PAA Staff
DATE: August 3, 2014
RE: August 8, 2014 MPCBPAA Meeting

This announcement serves as notice to call a meeting of the Public Access Authority on Friday, August 8, 2014 at or about 11 a.m. The meeting will be held in the MPPDC Regional Board Room in Saluda. Lunch will be provided.

If you have any questions, please call (804-758-2311) or email me (hbresee@mppdc.com) at your convenience.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of June 2014 Minutes
3. Financial Report
4. Public Comment
5. Virginia Interactive Update
6. Credit Card Discussion
7. Timbering Update
8. Essex County
 - a. CZMA draft proposal for land donation / marketing update
 - b. Prince Street Landing Resolution
9. Gloucester County
 - a. Capt. Sinclair Recreation Area update
 - i. Road Maintenance Update – Rowing Association Board Action
 - ii. Rental of Main House
 - b. Perrin Wharf Update
 - i. Gloucester Board – Port-a-potti at Perrin Wharf 2014-5
 - ii. Other Issues
10. Mathews County
 - a. Hall Donation Site Update
 - b. Tin Can Alley update (Rt. 633 on Gwynn's Island)
11. Middlesex County
 - a. Stammers Bay Update
12. Other Business
13. Chairman Observations
14. Next Meeting: October 10, 2014
15. Adjourn

MEMBERS

Essex County

Hon. Margaret H. Davis
(Vice Chair)

Gloucester County

Hon. Christopher A. Hutson

King and Queen County

Hon. Doris Morris

King William County

Mr. Trenton Funkhouser

Mathews County

Ms. Melinda Moran
(Chair)

Middlesex County

Mr. Matthew Walker

Town of Tappahannock

Mr. G. Gayle Belfield, Jr.

Town of Urbanna

Vacant

Town of West Point

Mr. John B. Edwards, Jr.
(Treasurer)

Saluda Professional Center

125 Bowden Street

P. O. Box 286

Saluda, VA 23149-0286

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PublicAccess@mppdc.com

**MIDDLE PENINSULA CHESAPEAKE BAY PUBLIC ACCESS AUTHORITY
MINUTES**

June 13, 2014

Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
Saluda, Virginia

1. Call to Order

Ms. Mindy Moran, Chair, called the meeting to order. Attending: Mr. Reese Peck, Essex County, Mr. Christopher Hutson, Gloucester County, Ms. Louise Theberge, Gloucester County, Mr. Tom Swartzwelder, King and Queen County, Ms. Melinda Moran, Mathews County, Mr. Matt Walker, Middlesex County, Mr. Bret Schardein, King William County, Mr. G. Gayle Belfield, Town of Tappahannock, MPPDC Staff, Mr. Harrison P. Bresee III and Mr. Lewie Lawrence, and Mr. Bill Nachman of the Gloucester/Mathews Gazette Journal.

2. Approval of April 2014 Minutes

Ms. Melinda Moran requested a motion to approve the April 2014 minutes. Mr. Tom Swartzwelder moved that the minutes be approved. Mr. Reese Peck seconded the motion. Ms. Melinda Moran, Chair, asked for any discussion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

3. Approval of June 2014 Financial Report

Ms. Melinda Moran, Chair, requested a motion to approve the June 2014 financial report subject to audit. Mr. Tom Swartzwelder moved that the minutes be approved. Mr. Matt Walker seconded the motion. Ms. Melinda Moran, Chair, asked for any discussion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Dan Kavanagh PAA Memorial Fund Established

Mr. Lewie Lawrence gave the board the sad news that Mr. Dan Kavanagh, former director of the MPPDC and instrumental in establishing the MPCBPAA, passed away in the Spring of 2014. Mr. Kavanagh spent his life committed to public service and often referred to the formation of the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority as his greatest accomplishment as a public servant. To honor this, and at the request of his family, the Dan Kavanagh Memorial Fund was established to support the MPCBPAA. Donations can be made at www.gofundme.com/9sbcfc.

A motion was made by Mr. Tom Swartzwelder to re-name the "Clay Tract", a MPCBPAA property on the Dragon Run Swamp, to a name satisfactory to the family such as the JDK Wildlife Management Area. Mr. Matt Walker seconded the motion. Ms. Melinda Moran, Chair, asked for any discussion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

6. Prince Street Landing Resolution

Mr. Lawrence discussed the continued effort of the MPCBPAA to find solutions for developing public access at road endings in the Middle Peninsula. The Prince Street

landing, a VDOT owned road ending in the Town of Tappahannock, is one such location. A resolution requesting transfer of interest of the Prince Street Road ending (specifically: from the end of Route T1005, Prince Street, from the beginning of Newbill Drive to 150 feet East on Prince Street to the Rappahannock River) from the Commonwealth Transportation Board to the MPCBPAA was presented to the board. Mr. Reese Peck made a motion to adopt the Resolution. Mr. Matt Walker seconded the motion. Ms. Melinda Moran, Chair, asked for any discussion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

7. Virginia Interactive Update

Mr. Lawrence updated the board on the progress of the virtual reservation system for fees on the MPCBPAA lands. The prototype is available and works well. The system will be mobile device friendly, web based, interactive, and provide a fee schedule for MPCBPAA lands. The system is expected to be in place for the Fall 2014 hunting season. Updates will be made at future meetings.

8. Legal Closing Cost Funding Update

Mr. Bresee updated the Board on the staff's attempts to find funds to help fund the closing costs for donated properties to the MPCBPAA. 2 grants to foundations for \$3,000.00 each have been successful. The \$6,000.00 is enough to pay closing costs on two new properties. Mr. Lawrence mentioned that he was in discussion with the Middle Peninsula Land Trust. The organization is dissolving and may donate some of their waterfront properties to the MPCBPAA. Updates will be made at future meetings. No action taken.

9. Volunteer Recognition

Mr. Lawrence discussed the fact that there are a group of volunteers that have been providing various forms of unsolicited help to the MPCBPAA over the years. Mr. Pete Shepherd, longtime Gloucester County citizen and owner of Shepherd's Waterfront Property, has been involved with the MPCBPAA since its inception in 2003. Another group of volunteers have spent countless hours picking up trash at the Perrin Wharf. Mr. Lawrence recommended establishing a "Pete Shepherd Volunteer Award" to be awarded to volunteers on the recommendation of staff and/or the MPCBPAA Board. The MPCBPAA board agreed and directed staff to proceed.

10. Essex County

a. CZMA draft proposal for land donation /marketing

Mr. Lawrence advised the Board that staff is pursuing a CZMA grant designed to develop a marketing campaign for encouraging donations of land for public access in Essex County. If funded, the grant is expected to start in October. Mr. Reese acknowledged that public water access is extremely limited in Essex County and that he supports any attempt to develop more access in Essex County. No action taken.

11. Gloucester County

a. Lands End/Capt. Sinclair Recreation Area Update

i. NFWF – Living Shoreline Proposal is still pending.

- ii. Road Maintenance Update- Two loads of crushed concrete were applied to the roads to resolve pothole issues. Mr. Jeff McDermott, neighbor, filed a formal, written complaint about the state of the road and the lack of a maintenance plan. Mr. Chris Hutson stated that the Rowing Association Board has not met, but will discuss the road issue at the next meeting. The grass on the property has been cut.
 - iii. Virginia Sea Grant –VCU proposal update: As mentioned in the last meeting, Virginia Commonwealth University was awarded the grant from Virginia Sea Grant for the RFP titled “Waterfront Property Reuse and Community Development Plan” that was advertised this winter. The project is set to begin on June 20, 2014 and be completed on June 15, 2015. No local or MPCBPAA funds were used for this project.
 - iv. Mr. Lawrence updated the board on two other opportunities which staff is looking into. The “Go Native” Plants and the “Native Landscaping Plan” initiatives by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The concept of these initiatives is to install native plants on a property that will result in lower fertilizing and watering and reduce the need for mowing. Updates will be made at future meetings as needed.
 - v. Rental of the Lower part of the main house. The house is not rented, but upgrades to make the space livable are ongoing. Upgrades planned include a sink, a refrigerator and air conditioning. Updates will be made at future meetings.
- b. Perrin Wharf Update
- i. Payments to date. Mr. Bresee referenced the stickers in the Agenda Packet that will be used by staff to phase in a fee structure for users of the Perrin Wharf. For 2014, boats and commercial trucks utilizing the Wharf for loading and offloading will be required to pay a \$25 per year fee and attach a sticker to their boat or truck. Slip fees are \$100 per month and a sticker must be attached to their boat. At this time one \$25 fee has been submitted by Crabs Express for one of their trucks.
 - ii. Enforcement. Mr. Lawrence discussed the need to take a different path to begin collecting fees for the maintenance of the Wharf. Staff will talk to the Gloucester BOS, the Gloucester County Sheriff, and the state senator and delegate with the intention of setting up a meeting between these parties and the local watermen to discuss the issue. The meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible, with August as a target date.
- c. PAA Tax Bill – Gloucester Commissioner of Revenue
Tax bills on MPCBPAA property in Gloucester County continue to be sent from the Gloucester County Commissioner of Revenue. The MPCBPAA Board discussed the legal issues related to this and concluded, again, that the MPCBPAA is tax exempt.

12. Mathews County

- a. Hall Donation Site Update – Mr. Bresee reported that a citizen requested access to the property to stabilize and repair existing structures (house and pier) and to

maintain the grounds (trimming trees, mowing grass, weeding, etc).
Authorization was granted for water access only to the property.

- b. Auburn Landing – the right of way on Auburn Landing road has been potentially infringed on by a private citizen. Specifically, posts have been installed on each side of the road in the right of way. Discussions are underway to resolve the issue.

13. Other Business

14. Chairman Observations

None.

15. Next Meeting

The Next Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority Meeting is scheduled for August 8, 2014 at 11:00 am in the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission's Regional Board Room.

16. Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Tom Swartzwelder and seconded by Mr. Matt Walker, and by unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:31 pm.

Balance Sheet

Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority

Period From : 07/01/14 to 07/31/14

Run Date: 8/4/14
Run Time: 11:03:48 am
Page 1 of 2

Assets:

10000	Checking	9,882.85
10100	LGIP	37,009.70
11001	Browne Tract	254,849.00
11002	Clay Tract	907,695.00
11003	Haworth Tract	174,000.00
11004	Hall Tract	305,700.00
11005	Shenk Property	226,500.00
11006	Captain Sinclair Landing	1,423,600.00
11007	Perrin Wharf	16,151.00
11008	Sloop Landing	49,400.00
11009	Dutchmans Point	167,900.00

Total Assets: \$3,572,687.55

Liabilities:

20000	Accounts Payable	250.00
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Total Liabilities: \$250.00

Projects

30015	FY15 PAA Administration	-549.00
31002	Clay Tract Administration	11,555.29
31003	Haworth Tract Administration	24,170.44
31006	Captain Sinclair Landing Property Administration	4,431.13
31008	Land Acquisitions	3,000.00
31009	Dan Kavanagh Memorial Fund	470.00
32000	Perrin Wharf Improvements	7.53
39000	General Fund Balance	3,529,352.16

Total Projects \$3,572,437.55

Total Liabilities and Projects 3,572,687.55

Net Difference to be Reconciled \$0.00

Total Adjustment \$0.00

Unreconciled Balance \$0.00

Balance Sheet

Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority

Period From : 07/01/14 to 07/31/14

Run Date: 8/4/14
Run Time: 11:03:48 am
Page 2 of 2

Reconciling Items

(1) Paid Salaries are	0.00	
Timesheets show	0.00	
Difference		0.00
(2) Leave accrued this year	0.00	
(3) Fringe Pool is	0.00	
Fringe allocated	0.00	
Difference		0.00
(4) Indirect Pool is	0.00	
Indirect Allocated	0.00	
Difference		0.00

Total adjustments	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
		\$0.00

Agencywide Line Item Revenues and Expenditures

Run Date: 08/04/2014
Run Time: 11:40:26 am
Page 1 of 1

Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Autho

Period: 07/01/2014 to 07/31/2014

Without Indirect Detail

Code & Description	Budget	Current	YTD	Un/Ovr	% Bud
Revenues					
40200 Interest Income	25.00	18.62	18.62	6.38	74.48%
40201 Donations	0.00	470.00	470.00	-470.00	0.00%
40210 Miscellaneous Income	6,000.00	7,424.46	7,424.46	-1,424.46	123.74%
40211 Hunting Fees	1,200.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
40212 Rental Income	22,680.00	4,519.04	4,519.04	18,160.96	19.93%
40213 Timber Sales	147,000.00	36,991.03	36,991.03	110,008.97	25.16%
40214 Wharf Tie-Up Fees	3,000.00	25.00	25.00	2,975.00	0.83%
Revenues	179,905.00	49,448.15	49,448.15	130,456.85	27.49%
Expenses					
52100 Property Insurance	3,233.00	1,039.00	1,039.00	2,194.00	32.14%
52101 Facilities Maintenance	7,500.00	3,415.90	3,415.90	4,084.10	45.55%
52102 Flood Insurance	3,767.00	0.00	0.00	3,767.00	0.00%
52110 Utilities	400.00	74.94	74.94	325.06	18.74%
56001 Consulting/Contractual	25,700.00	1,283.92	1,283.92	24,416.08	5.00%
56003 Accounting	522.00	0.00	0.00	522.00	0.00%
56004 Legal	7,000.00	0.00	0.00	7,000.00	0.00%
56008 Public Officials Insurance	0.00	539.00	539.00	-539.00	0.00%
57900 Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	10.00	10.00	-10.00	0.00%
Expenses	48,122.00	6,362.76	6,362.76	41,759.24	13.22%
Agency Balance	131,783.00	43,085.39	43,085.39		

**Memorandum of Understanding between
Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority and
Town of Tappahannock for the
Responsibilities of the Prince Street Road Ending**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines the terms of agreement between the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority (PAA), and the Town of Tappahannock ("The Town") regarding the responsibilities of each party for property located at the end segment of Route 1005 and existing boat ramp, from the beginning of Newbill Drive to 150 feet east on Prince Street to the Rappahannock River (Prince Street Road Ending).

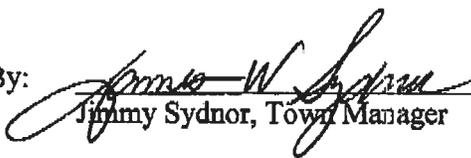
On July 16th the Commonwealth Transportation Board transferred its rights and interests in the Prince Street Road Ending to the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority to allow for improvement of the facilities for public commercial and recreational use.

It is the understanding between the Town and the PAA that the PAA holds interest in the Prince Street Road Ending and holds no responsibilities for the property or its facilities. The PAA is released of all liabilities as it pertains to maintenance and use of the property.

The Town and the PAA agrees that The Town has the responsibility of improving, maintaining and managing the Prince Street Road Ending and its facilities for public use. The Town is responsible for financing, operating and constructing any improvements to the property or any existing or future facilities associated with the property.

Accepted by:

Town of Tappahannock

By: 
Jimmy Sydnor, Town Manager

8-1-2014
Date

Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission

By: 
Lewis Lawrence, Executive Director

8-1-2014
Date

MATHEWS HERITAGE PARK

Public Water Access Plan

August 1, 2014

Prepared by Tom Robinson for

**The Middle Peninsula Public Access Authority
Mathews County Board of Supervisors
Mathews County Administrator**



In cooperation with the National Park Service, Chesapeake Gateways Network, Captain John Smith National Historic Trail, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency-National Estuarine Research Reserve System

Executive Summary

The Chesapeake Bay Region is rapidly urbanizing. More than eleven million people live in metropolitan areas close to the Bay. Regional residents increasingly seek opportunities to reconnect with the outdoors.

State, federal, and local governments are guardians of these opportunities, providing public sites where everyone can enjoy the natural and cultural bounty of the Chesapeake Bay watershed—relaxing, learning and reflecting in direct interaction with the region’s treasured outdoors. Some sites provide direct access to the Bay and its rivers and tributaries for boating and other water-related activities. Others provide spots where visitors without watercraft can fish, observe wildlife, walk trails, and camp along the water’s edge.

Open, green spaces and waterways with ample public access bolster public health and quality of life. People rely on these special places to exercise, relax, and recharge their spirits. Outdoor time strengthens family bonds and nurtures fit, creative children. At the same time, it builds personal connections with the very places that have shaped life in the region for centuries—especially its streams, rivers, and bays. This has a distinct economic value, too, as tourism, much of it associated with the area’s waters, is a potent force in the region.

The sense of place that evolves from outdoor experiences along Chesapeake waters often leads to a feeling of shared responsibility for the resources. People who enjoy the outdoors are more likely to become active citizen stewards, engaged in the many conservation and stewardship efforts taking place throughout the region.

Despite this, physical access to the Bay and its tributaries—the very resources that form the basis for the Chesapeake’s unique identity—is limited. This has real consequences for quality of life, for the economy, and for long-term conservation.

The *Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* was released in 2010, in response to Executive Order 13508 (Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration) issued by President Obama. It includes a key goal to increase public access to the Bay and its tributaries by adding 300 new public access sites by 2025. The basis for this goal lies in the long-standing public demand for greater access to the water in the Chesapeake Region.

The strategy explicitly calls for the National Park Service, in conjunction with the watershed states and other federal agencies, to “develop a public access plan to inform and guide expansion of Chesapeake watershed public access.” Further, the strategy directs the plan to assess the demand for public access; describe (inventory) the existing public access facilities; assess barriers to public access; determine gaps in the public access system; identify opportunities for new access sites; and help direct federal, state, and local funding toward public access opportunities.

This *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan* serves these purposes. The plan was produced in concert with a Public Access Action Team, which includes people involved in public access planning and implementation in each of the Chesapeake watershed states. They worked with the National Park Service staff, helped guide the planning process, and participated in key decisions with respect to scope and definitions. Team members also served as the primary contacts and reviewers of data as it related to their specific jurisdictions.

This plan reflects public access to significant streams, rivers and bays in the entire Chesapeake watershed. No prior plan for the region has addressed this broad geographic scope.

Specifically, the plan covers all tidal streams and bays with boating opportunities; streams classified as “fifth-order” and higher; and streams smaller than fifth-order when they are part of a water trail or contribute to its development.

Public access sites are locations owned and managed by a public entity (or a nonprofit organization in an agreement with a public entity). As regards the Mathews Heritage Park, the following is anticipated:

Boat-related access for human or wind-powered paddle craft and/or small sailboats,

Fishing access: pier, bank fishing facilities or easements and parking nearby to the water.

Viewing access for water, wildlife, and shoreline areas: nature trails, hiking or biking trails, waterfront trails, boardwalks, and observation decks located at or leading to the water’s edge.

Nighttime nature walks/talks, limited camping for organized groups and when pre-scheduled. All after hours activities will require the presence of assigned security and/or management personnel.

Facilities for the display of historic working vessels and waterman-related artifacts that greatly added to Mathews County’s waterfront heritage.

Through an extensive process involving review of existing local, state and federal data, public workshops and an online mapping tool, this plan describes the status of existing public access as follows:

There are 1,150 documented existing public access sites where people can launch boats, fish, swim, or look out over the Bay and its tributaries. About a third of these sites provide more than one type of access.

The number of access sites is very low in comparison to the amount of shoreline in the Chesapeake watershed. There are just 770 existing access sites along the shorelines of the Bay and tidal portions of its tributaries, a combined length of 11,684 miles—equivalent to the distances along the United States' west coast from Mexico to Canada.

Multiple studies and plans, including all state outdoor recreation plans, continue to document high public demand for access to streams, rivers and bays.

Significant stretches of shoreline have little or no access. In some cases, the gap between sites is dozens of miles. For example, the southern bank of the tidal James River includes a 64-mile stretch with no regularly open access sites. And there are long stretches of the Rappahannock, Potomac, as well as other Virginia shorelines of the Bay where the public has little or no access to the water. Long, inaccessible stretches make it difficult to plan trips along water trails and reduce the benefits of ecotourism. A lack of public access also leads to trespassing, as users have no other option for getting on or off the water.

Less than half of access sites provide launches or landings for boats or paddle and sail craft. Mathews Heritage Park has no plans to provide launching facilities for motorized recreational vessels.

To identify potential new public access sites, the planning team reviewed existing planning documents to identify and assess all previously proposed potential sites, and members of the public identified hundreds of additional desired sites at workshops and online. The team reviewed and refined the list of these sites for this plan. This revealed, as regards the Mathews Heritage Park, that:

A large number of potential sites are along existing water trails or national historic trails, which can often bring strong community and local support for developing needed sites.

Members of the paddling public frequently expressed a desire for small primitive campsites, picnic area, and restrooms at appropriate locations along water trails.

The plan recognizes and documents a series of planning and policy considerations that will influence a strategic approach to expanding public access. In addition, the plan sets out a series of actions for moving access development forward. These considerations, for public access sites in general, and the Mathews Heritage Park in particular, include:

1. Make funding a priority.
2. Carry out and support more detailed assessments and project design.
3. Incorporate identified, successful, public access sites and actions in key plans.
4. Further examine other public access issues and needs.
5. Work with private sector funders to develop endowments.

6. Build opportunities for citizen stewardship.
7. Inform adjacent property owners whenever changes are proposed that were not in the original plan.
8. Encourage public input and participation at every opportunity.

Implementing these actions and responding to the specific opportunities for adding access sites will expand the number of places for people to get to the water by more than 20 percent by 2025.

Ultimately, this undertaking is about extending the scope and range of access to the water to greater and greater reaches. Citizens of the region want more places along the water where they can walk, sit, play, picnic, camp, fish, watch wildlife, and put in their canoes, kayaks, paddleboats and sailboats. Public access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries is important to their quality of life.

DRAFT

Introduction

The *Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* was released in May 2010, in response to Executive Order 13508 (Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration) issued by President Obama. This strategy includes a key goal to “Conserve Land and Increase Public Access.” Specifically, the strategy aims to increase public access to the Bay and its tributaries by adding 300 new public access sites by 2025. The basis for this goal lies in the long-standing public demand for greater access to the water in the Chesapeake region.

The *Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* explicitly calls for the National Park Service, in conjunction with watershed states and other federal agencies, to “develop a public access plan to inform and guide expansion of Chesapeake watershed public access.” Further, the strategy calls for the plan to assess the demand for public access; describe (inventory) the existing public access system; identify opportunities for new access sites; and help direct federal, state, and local funding toward public access opportunities.

This *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan* serves these purposes. The plan was produced in concert with a Public Access Action Team, which includes people involved in public access planning and implementation in each of the Chesapeake watershed states. They worked with the National Park Service staff, helped guide the planning process, and participated in key decisions with respect to scope and definitions. Team members also served as the primary contacts and reviewers of data as it related to their specific jurisdictions.

Over the following pages, the plan is organized to:

- Summarize the demand for public access in the watershed in general, and the Mathews Heritage Park in particular.

- Outline the process, steps, and definitions used for this plan.

- Describe planning challenges to be considered in the development of Mathews Heritage Park.

- Summarize findings and set out next steps for implementing the plan and increasing access.

The Demand for Public Access

Americans' demand for access to water is echoed in the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) report. AGO listening session participants expressed strong support for their waterways and better access to water-based recreation. This resulted in a goal in the AGO report to "Empower communities to connect with America's great outdoors through their rivers and other waterways." Recommendations under this goal include establishing a national blueway trails initiative and facilitating recreational access to waterways. The report notes that many people cannot access their local water bodies due to physical barriers, unsafe conditions, or lack of awareness as to what may be close at hand. The *America's Great Outdoors Fifty-State Report*, which outlines two specific actions to enhance people's outdoor connections in each of the 50 states has at least one action involving the enhancement of public water access in Virginia. Thus again, a strong need has been demonstrated to enhance public access opportunities for all segments of the population throughout the Commonwealth.

Demand and Need at the State and Local Levels

The six Chesapeake watershed states and the District of Columbia have all noted a high need for additional access in their State-wide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPS), public access plans, and boating infrastructure plans. In Virginia's current SCORP, for example, the highest ranked outdoor recreation need is for better public access to the state's waters. Throughout the six-state Bay region, water-based recreation—including fishing, boating, swimming and beach use—are among the top twelve activities based on the percent of the population participating in each activity. Wildlife observation and enjoying a water-related view from observation decks or the water's edge are also highly desirable. Economically, this is demonstrated by the higher fees users are willing to pay in some state park systems for campsites and cabins with water frontage. Picnic shelters, cabins, and campsites located on the water are the ones most requested and usually reserved first.

Another indication of the demand for new access sites is the growing popularity of water trails. Pennsylvania's SCORP, for example, shows that 45 percent of the people surveyed said there was a need for more water trails—not surprising, since participation in paddle sports has grown significantly over the past decade and is expected to continue. The Outdoor Foundation's *2011 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report* showed that participation in kayaking, paddle-boating, and windsurfing increased by 33 percent in just the past year. In the Chesapeake watershed, a 2011 survey in Virginia found that canoeing and kayaking increased by over 70 percent in the last five years. In all six states in the Bay watershed and in the District of Columbia, numerous local agencies and organizations have worked with state and federal partners to develop new water trails. Today, there are more than 3,200 miles of water trails in the Chesapeake region. Many new trails are under construction. Additional public access sites are needed to support these trails, as well as those yet to be developed.

The demand for new access sites was clearly and consistently demonstrated during the public input meetings held for the development of this plan. On the average, participants identified over 25 needed access sites at each of the four workshops held in the Bay region. Additionally, an online survey was in process and the public submitted hundreds of potential new access sites on waterways throughout the study area.

Economic Benefit

According to the 2006 study *The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy*, paddle-based recreation and fishing alone have a total national economic value of \$97.5 billion. Clearly, water-based recreational activities make important economic contributions to states and localities across the Bay region. This drives the high demand and need to not only maintain what exists but also provide new access and support facilities for water-based recreation.

A number of communities are developing and promoting water trails as a part of their eco-tourism initiatives. The development of appropriate access both up and downstream from these “trail towns” is important to their success. Depending on the size of the waterway, these trails can include facilities to support paddle craft, small sailboats, and historic watercraft. Each community promotes their trail and support amenities in an effort to attract tourism dollars. Partnerships are developed with state agencies, local governments, non-profits, outfitters, and the food and lodging industry. Success stories in this regard include the Mathews County Blueways, which has developed a series of water trails in the county and support services to visitors.

Communities throughout the region are undertaking activities to meet residents’ needs and boost tourism. For some, the emphasis may be on upgrading and/or maintaining their infrastructure to support both sail and paddle craft for popular traditional activities such as fishing and improved boating skills. Others may be developing water trail projects and support facilities. Some are undertaking efforts to add or improve public parks along the water to support a variety of activities. No matter the path, success depends on the provision and maintenance of adequate public access and the services to support it.

Connecting Families With Nature

Providing public access to the region’s waterways can play a key role in connecting people, especially families, with our natural world. This is becoming more and more important as trends show that Americans are spending an average of 90 percent of their time indoors. Outdoor experiences have become particularly critical for children, who typically spend over 7.5 hours each day using electronic entertainment. This contributes to an increase in obesity and associated health problems, not to mention a loss in social and interpersonal skills.

New studies are showing that interaction with nature is important to personal development and human health. It cannot be replaced with indoor electronic gaming. New evidence gained from workplace, education, health, and childhood development

studies is revealing that interaction with our natural world is far more important to sound development than some had previously thought. Access to public waters throughout the Bay region could help reconnect families with their natural world and all of the associated benefits that outdoor activities can bring.

Geographic Area

This plan reflects public access to the waterways of Mathews County in general, and the Mathews Heritage Park in particular. The overall plan, from which this localized plan was developed, uses a uniform definition of the water bodies covered by the full plan as it relates to the entire region, to ensure a consistent planning process and facilitate future tracking efforts. Included are:

First, consistent with the past public access planning efforts of the Chesapeake Bay Program, all tidal streams and bays with boating opportunities are included in the planning area.

Second, the plan covers “fifth-order streams” and higher. Stream order is a system for classifying streams and rivers based on a scale of 1 to 12, with first-order streams being the smallest and twelfth-order the largest. Typically, first-through third-order streams are small headwater tributaries. Access sites can be considered on streams smaller than fifth-order when such streams are part of a water trail or contribute to its development.

Definition of Public Access and Types of Access Development

This plan recognizes that ownership and management responsibility of a public access site are key factors in planning for and funding public access development. Maintaining an accurate inventory of open, available public access sites—and their associated amenities—is a critical component for planning, marketing and funding. For this reason, and to make a clear distinction between sites in the public estate versus those operated by others, public access sites are defined as those sites owned, operated and/or managed expressly for a type of public access by:

1. Any unit of federal, state or local government, or
2. A non-governmental organization operating under an agreement with a governmental agency.

The types of access included in this plan, as it relates to the Mathews Heritage Park, include the following:

- Boat-related access: car-top boat launches, soft launches (supporting paddle craft and small sailboats)
- Fishing access: dock, bank fishing facilities or easements, and parking adjacent to the water.

- Viewing access for water, wildlife, and shoreline areas: nature trails, hiking or biking trails, waterfront trails, boardwalks and observation decks located at or leading to the water's edge.
- Overnight activities (camping, nature walks, educational talks, social/fundraising events, etc. All evening activities will include proper security and management.

The Mathews Heritage Park, based on its strategic location, will become an important addition to the existing, and planned, water trails in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It will eventually become an integral component in the growing Chesapeake Bay waterway network, including: The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, and Chesapeake Bay Gateways Water Trails. Development of any new sites along these trails will not only contribute to meeting the goal of 300 new sites, but also support a network of trails that can provide a broader depth of experiences to visitors by strengthening the connections between a location and its historical and/or environmental importance.

Camping and Related Water-to-Land Access

In addition to the high public demand for new water access sites for boating, fishing, viewing, hiking, etc, there is also a strong interest in accessing camp sites from the water. Making a multi-day trip down one of the Bay's rivers or streams can be difficult without a place to go ashore and camp for the night. Time and again, members of the paddling public expressed a desire for small primitive campsites, picnic area, and restrooms at appropriate locations along water trails. Any considerations given to overnight activities at Mathews Heritage Park will be determined by the availability of on-site management, maintenance and security personnel.

A system of appropriately planned water-access campsites would provide safe and legal places for boaters to stay. It could also enhance the ecotourism benefits of water trails and bring more dollars into the local economy. Such sites could be located on public or private lands, through cooperative agreements with water trail managers.

Input from the public meetings, online survey tool, and state-led studies also revealed a full spectrum of access needs beyond the traditional land-to-water access. The growing interest in water trails extends to adding capacity for boaters to access historic sites, other important sites along waterways, food services, lodging, and other amenities. Detailing the needs and opportunities for these types of access is beyond the scope of this preliminary plan but merits attention in the future.

Conclusion

The Mathews Heritage Park property was donated by Mr. Conrad Hall for the establishment of a passive greenspace, water access facility to be visited and enjoyed by the citizens of, and visitors to, Mathews County. Mr. Hall envisioned a park that, upon completion, would provide to the general public:

- ❖ a peaceful place to see nature up close and personal
- ❖ a site to learn about the rich water-related and boat-building heritage of our county
- ❖ a place to study the flora and fauna of the Middle Peninsula
- ❖ a maze of hiking/biking trails throughout the park
- ❖ hundreds of feet of water frontage for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, sailing or just relaxing on the dock or benches along the water's edge
- ❖ demonstration oyster beds for observation and research
- ❖ small, boat-building opportunities for children and adults alike
- ❖ organized camping (Boy/Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Club, 4-H, Church groups, etc.
- ❖ future activities as approved by the MPPAA and public input meetings.

Security for the park will be provided by the Mathews County Sheriff's Department. Deputies will maintain keys to the proposed gate, which will be closed at sundown and opened each morning (except during those occasions when supervised activities have been planned for evening hours).

All restoration and building projects, landscaping, and programming will be accomplished by "Friends of the Mathews Heritage Park" a volunteer group managed by an equally-volunteer advisory board. Funding for current and future projects will be derived from state and federal grants, individual financial and in-kind donations, and planned fundraising activities.

Upon completion of renovation on the existing dwelling we anticipate that it will be occupied by one, or more, research students. As has been done successfully in national, state and local park facilities for many years, park residents tend to be graduate students from local universities who are performing research projects directly related to the overall goals of the park itself. In lieu of rent, the "residents" agree to live on the 2nd floor and keep the downstairs public areas in a clean and presentable condition. They also serve as docents and schedulers in many cases. The "Friends of Mathews Heritage Park" will also provide daily volunteers for the general operation and security of the park and its visitors.

The park's volunteers will maintain the park grounds, its road access, dock and dwelling in a clean and presentable condition. They will be trained to provide accurate information to the visitors about Mathews County, its wildlife (both land and sea), its history, and to assist visiting instructors and educators from the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, and other local, state and federal agencies that may be present to teach classes to visiting school groups.

The volunteers will make certain visitors remain within the confines of the park at all times, also directing visitors to keep all electronic music devices at a level that will not disturb neighbors, visitors or wildlife.

It is the heartfelt desire of every individual now involved in the organization and initial stabilization of the dwelling, dock and grounds of the proposed Mathews Heritage Park, that this desirable, but long-overlooked, facility will soon become a beacon for historians, wildlife enthusiasts, kayakers, canoeists, small sailboaters, artists, painters, writers, school groups and visitors to our beautiful county.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Robinson

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