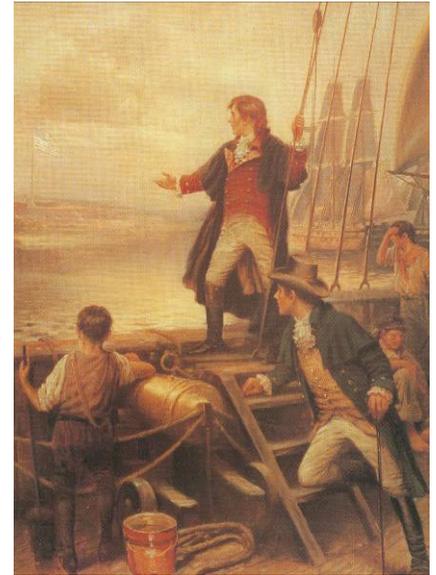




New National Trail Commemorates Chesapeake Campaign of the War of 1812 and the Birth of Our National Anthem

On May 8, 2008, the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail (Trail) was designated through an amendment to the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241). The new Trail consists of “water and overland routes totaling approximately 290 miles, extending from Tangier Island, Virginia, through southern Maryland, the District of Columbia, and northern Virginia, in the Chesapeake Bay, Patuxent River, Potomac River, and north to the Patapsco River, and Baltimore, Maryland, commemorating the Chesapeake Campaign of the War of 1812 (including the British invasion of Washington, District of Columbia, and its associated feints, and the Battle of Baltimore in summer 1814).” The legislation specifies that the National Park Service (NPS) will plan, develop and maintain the Trail in partnership with other Federal, state and local governments, landowners, volunteer groups, and residents.

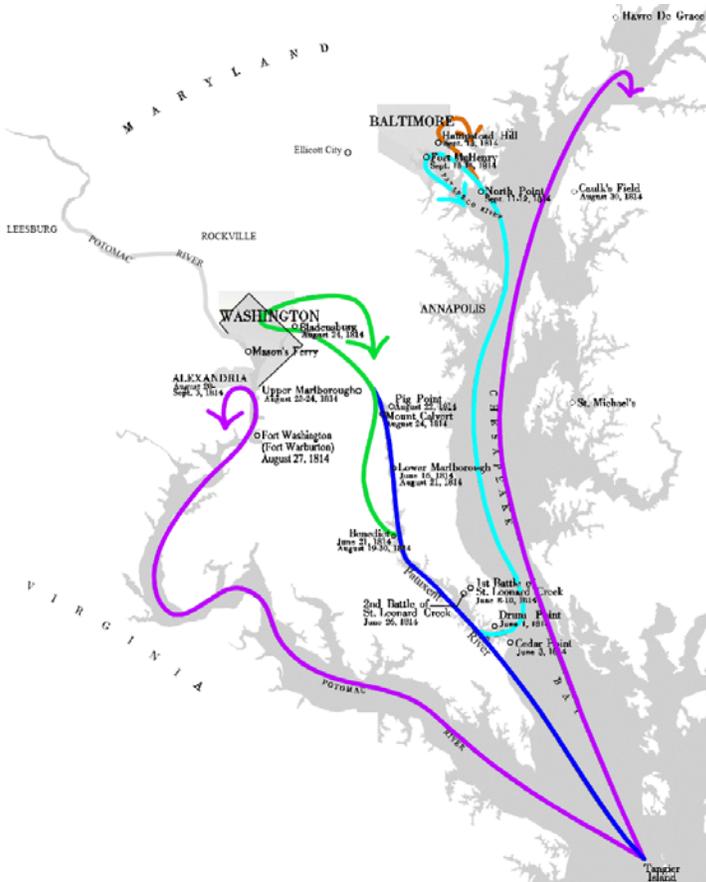
In perhaps the most well-known event of the Chesapeake Campaign, Francis Scott Key witnessed the Defense of Fort McHenry and the Battle for Baltimore from a truce ship in Baltimore harbor. Upon seeing an enormous American flag flying over the Fort after 25 hours of British bombardment, Key was inspired to write the poem that has become the National Anthem. The Campaign, near the culmination of what had been an often contraversial and divisive undertaking for the new American government, enhanced its international standing, influenced future defense policy, and irrevocably shaped the young nation’s cultural identity.



Where is the Trail?

The route of the new Trail traces five segments of the 1814 Chesapeake Campaign, as identified in the 2004 *Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail Feasibility Study*, which have national significance, integrity, and the potential for recreation and/or interpretation. These five segments include the advance and withdrawal of the British on the Patuxent; various diversionary feints; the British land march and retreat; the Battle of North Point and defense of Hampstead Hill; and the approach up the Patapsco and defense of Fort McHenry. Nationally significant events that occurred along less well-documented Trail segments, including the flight of the Madisons, rescue of national documents from the White House, and the American movement toward Baltimore will be included in overall interpretation of the Trail.

The land and water-based Trail will provide and enhance visitor and resident access to and interpretation of newly-linked Trail sites and segments. The Trail will provide a richer context for existing NPS sites and designations that interpret the War of 1812, and strengthen geographic and thematic connections with neighboring sites. The Trail will complement the diverse resources of the Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network—a partnership of existing water Trails, parks, museums, wildlife refuges, and other sites that provide interpretation and Bay access—and connect the stories of Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine with the stories and sites that positioned the fort to play its pivotal role in the War and in the shaping of a new American identity.



Why Was the Trail Created?

Bi-partisan support of the established Trail reflects strong public and private interest in the bicentennial of the War of 1812 and, in particular, the valiant efforts of the people of the Chesapeake region to fight the “Second War for Independence.” The new Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail offers outstanding opportunities for the NPS and its partners to connect the public with the physical and historical landscape of the Campaign and its timeless themes and lessons, which continue to shape our nation today.

Helping people to understand the context and consequences of the War of 1812 encourages appreciation for this rich historical period in our nation’s history and fosters protection and stewardship of significant war-related assets. It also enables residents and visitors to understand the continuum of influences of the Chesapeake Bay’s geography and location on the nation’s physical and cultural development, from John’s Smith’s voyages up the Chesapeake Bay until today. The State of Maryland, City of Baltimore, Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine and the Chesapeake Gateways and WaterTrails Network in particular are already building awareness of the natural and historical features along some segments of the Trail. The National Historic Trail designation provides a framework to link these efforts and provide a more coordinated approach to administering the Trail in the years leading up to and following the War of 1812 bicentennial.



What is the Role of the National Park Service?

A feasibility study completed in 2004 recommended that the NPS take the lead federal role in administering the Trail, in joint management with a non-profit Trail organization and other federal, state and local agencies in Maryland, Virginia,



and the District of Columbia, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and landowners and residents. Based on the administrative authorities of the National Trails System Act, the NPS responsibility includes coordination of resource protection and Trail route marking, general oversight and promotion, interagency consultations, cooperative agreements, support of volunteers, inventorying of high potential sites and segments, coordination of interpretive themes and media, compliance with existing environmental laws and regulations, certification of appropriate sites and segments, provision of limited financial assistance (when such funds are available), and support of the Trail’s advisory council. Trail planning and development will be a broad community-based effort. The NPS will lead a collaborative and inclusive planning process to develop a management

plan that identifies the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders to making the Trail a success. These many partners will enhance the vibrancy of the Trail’s stewardship, interpretation, and visitor experience and increase the Trail’s relevancy to everyone.

What Happens Next?

The National Park Service will engage residents, landowners along the Trail, Trail groups and government agencies at all levels in workshops, meetings, and discussions that provide content for and direct the development of a comprehensive management plan for the administration and use of the Trail. The planning process will include identification and assessment of access points, interpretation, development of Trail and site linkages, and ongoing maintenance. The plan will describe the Trail’s purpose, significance, vision, goals, interpretive themes, activities, desired impacts, and preferred management structure. The plan, which is subject to public review and comment, is intended to reflect the consensus of the broad range of interests among Federal, State and local jurisdictions, landowners, and partners. An advisory council, to be named by the Secretary of the Interior, will assist the planning process.

Where Do I Learn More?

For more information on the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, including Trail planning, historical information about the people and places of the Chesapeake Campaign and the National Anthem, and links to events and places to visit, go to www.nps.gov/stsp. The following websites also provide Trail-related information:

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine: www.nps.gov/fomc

Maryland Office of Tourism: www.starspangled200.org