

# Executive Summary of the Final Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

## Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and District of  
Columbia

February 2011

## Summary

On December 19, 2006, President George W. Bush signed into law legislation establishing the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (NHT) as part of the National Trails System and the first national water trail. The trail commemorates the explorations of John Smith on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries in 1607-1609, tracing approximately 3,000 miles of his voyage routes. The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for managing the trail. The trail's enabling legislation also specifically requires that the NPS coordinate trail administration with the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network (CBGN) and the Chesapeake Bay Program.

The purposes of the John Smith Chesapeake NHT are to:

- commemorate the exploratory voyages of John Smith on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries in 1607-1609,
- share knowledge about the American Indian societies and cultures of the seventeenth century,
- interpret the natural history of the Bay (both historic and contemporary), and
- Provide recreational experiences on water and on land along the trail.

When Captain John Smith explored the Chesapeake region in 1607-1609 he encountered a region rich in natural resources – fish, forests, wetlands, oysters, vistas – and rich in people, cultures and societies. A region that had been peopled for thousands of years by many different cultures, people we now refer to as American Indians, many of whom spoke different languages, had different cultural traditions, and lived together in different and complex societies. The native peoples revered their world and Smith and crew marveled at this world and the native peoples. While the Chesapeake region has changed dramatically in the intervening 400 years, descendant communities of the peoples Smith encountered continue to live in the region and many of the places, forests, wetlands, vistas and other resources, natural and cultural, continue to exist.

The promise of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, then, is to help the millions of people in the region and elsewhere experience, envision, come to understand, and care to protect what the explorers and the inhabitants of the region saw 400 years ago:

- by expanding access to the Bay and rivers,
- by protecting special places reminiscent or evocative of those times,
- by educating the public of the importance and exceptional nature of the region, its people, and its resources,
- by providing recreational experiences throughout the region,

- by creating partnerships amongst the many citizens, groups and jurisdictions to realize the vision, and
- by instilling awe and reverence for the special places in the Chesapeake region.

Visitor experiences on the trail will include journeys on land – walking, bicycling, motoring – and sojourns on water – paddling, sailing and cruising, in craft large and small. The trail will provide national park quality experiences through NPS partnerships with state and local governments, and non-profit and for profit organizations. The trail can serve as an important agent in promoting stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, and renewal of the human spirit.

Many partners will assist the NPS with future planning, development, and management of the trail. Its evolution will require a robust trail partnership involving the NPS, the trail’s friends, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network, federal and state agencies, communities throughout the region, nonprofit organizations, and businesses along the trail. Working collaboratively the NPS and its partners will develop component water trails, provide access to the trail, tell the trail’s stories, offer services for trail users, and protect the important resources related to the trail. Together, the NPS and all of its partners are dedicated to forging a future for the Chesapeake inspired by lessons from the past.

### **Purpose and Need for the Comprehensive Management Plan**

This document is a draft comprehensive management plan and environmental assessment (CMP/EA) for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The purpose of the CMP is to provide a decision making framework that ensures that management decisions effectively and efficiently carry out the NPS responsibilities for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. It is needed to guide management decision making for the trail for the next 20 years.

### **Major Management Issues Addressed in the CMP**

The CMP addresses management issues relevant to the future management of the trail. As part of the CMP planning process, the NPS planning team engaged its partners and the public to assist with identifying the issues. The CMP focuses on providing management direction in response to these issues, including:

- visitor experience on the trail,
- identification and protection of trail-related resources,
- accurate and respectful representation of American Indian heritage,
- public access to the trail,
- trail partnerships,
- trail planning, development, and management, and

- trail marking.

## Overview of the Alternatives Considered

The CMP/EA considers four alternatives for future management of the trail. Each alternative assumes a different management approach to addressing the major trail management issues, including the Continuation of Current Management (Alternative 1) and three action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4).

- **Alternative 1 – Continuation of Current Management**

In Alternative 1 trail management would continue to focus the visitor experience, resource protection, and partnerships on existing partner sites and existing water trails. Visitors would experience the trail through a variety of self-guided trips on the land and on the water, or as part of a general recreation experience in the Chesapeake Region. Interpretive experiences would be focused at some Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network (CBGN) partner sites where interpretive media would tell the trail's stories and where there would be occasional opportunities to participate in trail-related interpretive and educational programs. Visitors would learn about the John Smith voyages, the Bay and its related natural and cultural resources, and conservation and stewardship of Bay resources.

Visitors would orient themselves to the trail by visiting the trail website or by studying the trail brochures. Orientation would also occur at CBGN partner sites where trail-related literature would be available and staff would have knowledge of the trail.

Visitors would access the trail at existing public access sites within federal, state, and local parks and national wildlife refuges. Many of these sites would offer access to the water for both motorized and non-motorized vehicles.

Visitors would travel the trail on the land by following the network of existing hiking/biking trails, bike routes, and auto routes along portions of the trail. These would connect some partner sites and access sites that provide opportunities to view the voyage route at overlooks and from public access sites on the water. Some auto routes and trails would tell the stories of the voyages, such as *John Smith's Adventures on the James River Water Trail and Auto Tour* (Virginia DCR). New land-based trails and auto tours would develop over time as partners emerge to develop and manage them.

Water-based experiences along the trail would be largely self-guided. Along most of the trail, access points would be widely spaced and few if any visitor facilities and services would be available, except in the vicinity of settled areas and at CBGN sites. Very few overnight camping facilities would be available, greatly limiting opportunities for multi-day boating trips in remote areas of the Bay and its tributaries. Where water trails exist, trail partners would manage them, providing opportunities for visitors to travel portions of the trail

with the help of water trail guides and interpretive materials, and along some water trails, making available visitor facilities and services on the shore at or near access sites.

Trail managers would continue to gain some additional understanding of these resources – where they occur along the trail, their significance to the trail, the actions needed to protect them, and the opportunity they offer for visitors to experience the trail and to tell its stories. Cultural resource identification would occur through NPS and partner collaboration; partners would undertake studies consistent with their individual mission, with NPS support and technical assistance, as funding permits. There would be no further investigations to identify additional high potential route segments or high potential historic sites.

Land protection would continue to be at the discretion of local and state agencies, consistent with their mission and as funding permits. The potential for federal land acquisition would be minimal although acquisition could occur if there is a willing seller and a site is threatened with destruction or irreparable damage.

The NPS Chesapeake Bay Office would have overall responsibility for trail planning, management, and development, which would occur in coordination with the CBGN program. The trail would continue to develop as partnerships are forged or enhanced with traditional and non-traditional partners. However, partnerships would develop and operate in support of the trail on a piecemeal basis – there would not be a common agenda to guide the collective group of partners.

Federal and state agencies would support trail activities. Trail management would be integrated with management of other NPS units and national trails where they are in close proximity to the trail or overlap with the trail.

The Chesapeake Conservancy would be the primary NPS partner providing assistance with trail development through advocacy, fundraising, land protection, working with landowners, awareness building, and other functions. In addition there are and would continue to be other regional and even trail-wide partners with which the NPS would collaborate, including other federal agencies and state agencies.

- [Alternative 2 – Exploratory Voyages of Captain John Smith](#)

In Alternative 2 trail management would emphasize interpreting and protecting the most historically significant places directly associated with John Smith’s voyages. Visitors would travel the trail on the land and on the water stopping at the places where John Smith stopped and learning about the experiences he had as he explored the Bay. Interpretive experiences would be focused at voyage stops, connected by NPS designated water trails, auto and bus routes, and organized water tours. As visitors follow the trail, they would stop at visitor contact stations, national wildlife refuges, and other CBGN partner sites where they would find a broad array of interpretive materials and would have opportunities to participate in

interpretive and educational programs or witness living history exhibits and reenactments of voyage events. Interpretive materials and programs would tell the stories of the voyages, Smith's relations with American Indians, and the natural resources he encountered.

Visitors would orient themselves to the trail by visiting the trail website or by studying the trail brochures. Once on the trail they would obtain more information about the trail by stopping at one or more of the trail's five visitor contact stations located at existing CBGN partner facilities in the vicinity of significant voyage stops.

Visitors would access the trail from an expanded network of public access sites within federal, state, and local parks and national wildlife refuges, as well as on private conservation lands. New access sites would be located at or in the vicinity of voyage stops, enabling visitor to experience as closely as possible the locations where John Smith stopped. Access would include a mix of pull-offs with views of the trail, trails to the water, day-use facilities near the water, and boat access sites. New boat access sites would primarily be developed where additional access is needed to meet all types of boating demand along the trail.

Visitors would travel the trail on the land by following an expanded network of hiking/biking trails, bike routes, and auto routes along portions of the trail. These would connect partner sites, voyage stops, and access sites that provide opportunities to view the voyage route and voyage stops at overlooks and from public access sites on the water.

Over time water trails would develop offering recreational experiences along the entire length of the trail. Trail partners would manage the water trails, providing opportunities for visitors to travel the trail with the help of water trail guides and interpretive materials that focus on the voyages and the events that occurred at each voyage stop. Visitors would paddle, sail, or motor from stop to stop, learning about the voyages at each stop. Along most of the trail, access points would be widely spaced and few if any visitor facilities and services would be available, except in the vicinity of settled areas. Very few overnight camping facilities would be available, greatly limiting opportunities for multi-day boating trips in remote areas of the Bay and its tributaries.

Resource identification would emphasize voyage stops and 17<sup>th</sup> century American Indian archeological sites; secondary emphasis would be on evocative landscapes, historic American Indian town sites, landscape features and cultural sites of significance to modern American Indian tribes, indigenous cultural landscapes, and cross sites. Trail managers would continue to gain some additional understanding of these resources – where they occur along the trail, their significance to the trail, the actions needed to protect them, and the opportunity they offer for visitors to experience the trail and to tell its stories. Additional studies would identify and document the significance and stories associated with voyage stops, particularly those that occur within landscapes that are evocative of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when John Smith explored the area. Further

investigations would focus on evaluating additional significant voyage stops that might qualify for designation as high potential historic sites.

Land protection would focus on all voyage stops, particularly those that qualify as high potential historic sites. Partners would assume primary responsibility for protection and the NPS would provide technical assistance with education of landowners regarding stewardship, planning, partner acquisition, and identification of potential funding sources. There would be some potential for federal land acquisition, although acquisition could occur if there is a willing seller and a site is threatened with destruction or irreparable damage.

The NPS Chesapeake Bay Office would have overall responsibility for trail planning, management, and development, which would occur in coordination with the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network (CBGN) program. Trail development would occur in accordance with the CMP. Segment management plans for the trail's ten management sections would tier off the CMP, providing more detailed analysis and management guidelines for trail management sections. Segment management plans would provide the basis for prioritizing investment in trail development projects, including land acquisitions.

The trail would continue to develop as partnerships are forged or enhanced with traditional and nontraditional partners who would collaborate to generally emphasize programs, media, and trail facilities to tell the stories of the John Smith voyages. Trail section management plans would provide a common agenda to guide the collective group of partners.

Federal and state agencies would support trail activities. Trail management would be integrated with management of other NPS units and national trails where they are in close proximity to the trail or overlap with the trail. NPS and the U.S. FWS would collaborate to implement opportunities for trail visitors at national wildlife refuges that occur in the vicinity of voyage stops.

The Chesapeake Conservancy would be the primary NPS partner providing assistance with trail development through advocacy, fundraising, land protection, working with landowners, awareness building, and other functions. A friends group would support the work of the trail partners by assisting with resource protection, organizational capacity building, and development (fundraising). In addition there are and would continue to be other regional and even trail-wide partners with which the NPS would collaborate, including other federal agencies and state agencies.

- [Alternative 3 – Chesapeake Region in the 17th Century \(Preferred Alternative\)](#)

In Alternative 3 trail management would emphasize interpreting and protecting the world of the Chesapeake that Smith encountered during his voyages – its natural abundance and its complex American Indian cultures. Visitors would travel the trail on the land and on the water enjoying a variety of enhanced

recreation experiences while exploring places reminiscent of the Bay in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and stopping at the places where John Smith stopped. Immersed in an evocative landscape along much of the water trail, visitors would enjoy multi-day experiences on the Bay and its tributaries. They would also hike or bike between voyage stops, fish, and picnic near the water, while learning about the experiences Smith had as he explored the Bay, the natural world he discovered, and the American Indian cultures he encountered. Interpretive experiences would be focused at voyage stops, evocative landscapes, significant archeological sites, and landscape features and cultural sites of significance to modern American Indian tribes. NPS designated water trails, auto and bus routes, and organized water tours would connect sites. As visitors follow the trail, they would stop at visitor contact stations, interpretive and education centers, national wildlife refuges, and other CBGN partner sites where they would find a broad array of interpretive materials, could participate in interpretive and educational programs, or witness living history exhibits and reenactments of voyage events. They could also participate in environmental stewardship programs and safety/skills programs.

Visitors would orient themselves to the trail by visiting the trail website or by studying the trail brochures. Once on the trail they would obtain more information about the trail by stopping at one of the trail's two visitor interpretation and education centers or by stopping at one of the trail's five visitor contact stations. These facilities would all be located at existing CBGN partner facilities; the centers would be developed to provide multiple interpretive, education, and orientation functions for the Star-Spangled Banner NHT, the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT, and the CBGN.

Visitors would access the trail from a greatly expanded network of public access sites within federal, state, and local parks and national wildlife refuges, as well as on private conservation lands. Many new access sites would be located at or in the vicinity of voyage stops and evocative landscapes, enabling visitors to experience as closely as possible the locations where John Smith stopped and world of the Chesapeake he explored. Accesses would include a mix of pull-offs with views of the trail, trails to the water, day-use facilities near the water, and boat access sites. Boat access sites would also be developed where additional access is needed to meet all types of boating demand along the trail. Where these sites do not adjoin evocative landscapes, they would also offer other recreation opportunities, such as day-use facilities for picnicking, fishing, hiking, and, at some sites, primitive camping.

Visitors would travel the trail on the land by following an expanded network of hiking/biking trails, bike routes, and auto routes along portions of the trail. These would connect partner sites, voyage stops, access/recreation sites, high potential historic sites, recreation sites, visitor interpretation and education centers, and visitor contact stations.

Over time water trails would develop offering recreational experiences along the entire length of the trail. Trail partners would manage the water trails, providing opportunities for visitors to travel the trail with the



help of water trail guides and interpretive materials that focus on the voyages and the events that occurred at each voyage stop, the natural history of the region, and the histories of American Indian communities. Visitors would paddle, sail, or motor from stop to stop, immersed in evocative landscapes along much of the trail. Addition of access points would reduce distances between put-ins/take-outs, providing more opportunities for shorter one-way day trips within the physical capabilities of average paddlers. Visitors would also be able to have multi-day experiences on the water, made possible by the addition of primitive camping facilities at new access sites as well as in the “backcountry” – where they would be accessible only by water.

Resource identification would emphasize evocative landscapes; secondary emphasis would be on voyage stops, 17<sup>th</sup> century American Indian archeological sites, American Indian town sites, landscape features and cultural sites of significance to modern American Indian tribes, indigenous cultural landscapes, and cross sites. Trail managers would continue to gain some additional understanding of these resources – where they occur along the trail, their significance to the trail, the actions needed to protect them, and the opportunity they offer for visitors to experience the trail and to tell its stories. Additional studies would identify and document the voyage stops, evocative landscapes, cross sites, 17<sup>th</sup> century American Indian Archeological sites, historic American Indian town sites, and landscape features and cultural sites of significance to modern American Indian tribes. Further investigations would evaluate and seek to designate high potential route segments and high potential historic sites along the length of the trail.

Land protection would focus on all voyage stops (particularly those that qualify as high potential historic sites), cross sites, evocative landscapes, and sites providing access to the trail for recreation. A cooperative resource preservation and land conservation agenda would be developed and implemented in partnership with federal, state, and local government agencies, NGOs, American Indian communities, and private property owners. Partners would assume primary responsibility for protection and the NPS would provide technical assistance with education of landowners regarding stewardship, planning, partner acquisition, and identification of potential funding sources. There would be potential for federal land acquisition, if there is a willing seller and the site is important to implementation of the trail.

The NPS Chesapeake Bay Office would have overall responsibility for trail planning, management, and development, which would occur in coordination with the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network (CBGN) program. Trail development would occur in accordance with the CMP. Segment management plans for the trail’s ten management sections would tier off the CMP, providing more detailed analysis and management guidelines for trail management sections. Segment management plans would provide the basis for prioritizing investment in trail development projects, including land acquisitions.

The trail would continue to develop as partnerships are forged or enhanced with traditional and nontraditional partners who would collaborate to generally emphasize programs, media, and trail facilities

to tell the stories of the John Smith voyages. Trail section management plans would provide a common agenda to guide the collective group of partners.

Federal and state agencies would support trail activities. Trail management would be integrated with management of other NPS units and national trails where they are in close proximity to the trail or overlap with the trail. NPS and the U.S. FWS would collaborate to implement opportunities for trail visitors at national wildlife refuges that occur in the vicinity of voyage stops.

The Chesapeake Conservancy would be the primary NPS partner providing assistance with trail development through advocacy, fundraising, land protection, working with landowners, awareness building, and other functions. A friends group would support the work of the trail partners by assisting with organizational capacity building, development (fundraising), working with the NPS on developing a resource protection and preservation agenda, and facilitating implementation of the agenda with partners. In addition there are and would continue to be other regional and even trail-wide partners with which the NPS would collaborate, including other federal agencies and state agencies.

- [Alternative 4 – Recreation on the Historic Trail](#)

In Alternative 4 trail management would emphasize increasing public access and recreation along the trail, with limited resource protection and interpretation at access sites and at recreation sites. Visitors would travel the trail on the land and on the water enjoying a variety of enhanced recreation experiences and participating in volunteer environmental programs. Visitors would hike and bike between voyage stops, enjoying multi-day experiences on the water, and enjoying a variety of recreation experiences near the water while learning about the natural history of the region and the Captain John Smith voyages.

Interpretive experiences would be focused at voyage stops where recreation opportunities are also present. NPS-designated water trails, auto and bus routes, and organized water tours would connect sites. As visitors follow the trail, they would stop at visitor contact stations, national wildlife refuges, and other CBGN partner sites where they would find a broad array of interpretive materials and would have opportunities to participate in environmental stewardship programs and safety/skills programs.

Visitors would orient themselves to the trail by visiting the trail website or by studying the trail brochures. Once on the trail they would obtain more information about the trail by stopping at one or more of the trail's five visitor contact stations located at existing CBGN partner facilities in the vicinity of significant voyage stops.

Visitors would access the trail from a greatly expanded network of public access sites within federal, state, and local parks and national wildlife refuges, as well as on private conservation lands. Some new access sites would be located at or in the vicinity of voyage stops, enabling visitors to experience as closely as

possible the locations where John Smith stopped. Accesses would include a mix of pull-offs with views of the trail, trails to the water, day-use facilities near the water, and boat access sites. Boat access sites would be developed where additional access is needed to meet all types of boating demand along the trail. Where these sites do not adjoin evocative landscapes, they would also offer other recreation opportunities, such as day-use facilities for picnicking, fishing, hiking, and, at some sites, primitive camping. Some recreation sites would also include developed campground facilities.

Visitors would travel the trail on the land by following an expanded network of hiking/biking trails, bike routes, and auto routes along portions of the trail. These would connect partner sites, voyage stops, access/recreation sites, high potential historic sites, recreation sites, and visitor contact stations.

Over time water trails would develop offering recreational experiences along the entire length of the trail. Trail partners would manage the water trails, providing opportunities for visitors to travel the trail with the help of water trail guides and interpretive materials that focus on the voyages and the events that occurred at each voyage stop. Visitors would paddle, sail, or motor from stop to stop, learning about the voyages at each stop. Addition of access points would reduce distances between put-ins/take-outs, providing more opportunities for shorter one-way day trips within the physical capabilities of average paddlers. Visitors would also be able to have multi-day experiences on the water, made possible by the addition of developed campgrounds and primitive camping facilities at new access sites as well as in the “backcountry” – where they would be accessible only by water.

Resource identification would emphasize evocative landscapes; secondary emphasis would be on voyage stops, 17<sup>th</sup> century American Indian archeological sites, American Indian town sites, landscape features and cultural sites of significance to modern American Indian tribes, indigenous cultural landscapes, and cross sites. Trail managers would continue to gain some additional understanding of these resources – where they occur along the trail, their significance to the trail, the actions needed to protect them, and the opportunity they offer for visitors to experience the trail and to tell its stories. Additional studies would identify and document the voyage stops, evocative landscapes, cross sites, 17<sup>th</sup> century American Indian archeological sites, historic American Indian town sites, landscape features and cultural sites of significance to modern American Indian tribes, and indigenous cultural landscapes. Further investigations would evaluate and seek to designate high potential route segments and high potential historic sites in the vicinity of significant voyage stops and recreation sites.

Land protection would focus on all voyage stops (particularly those that qualify as high potential historic sites), evocative landscapes within which voyage stops are located, evocative landscapes in the vicinity of recreation sites, and sites providing access to the trail for recreation. Partners would assume primary responsibility for protection and the NPS would provide technical assistance with education of landowners regarding stewardship, planning, partner acquisition, and identification of potential funding sources. There

would be potential for federal land acquisition, if there is a willing seller and the site is important to implementation of the trail.

The NPS Chesapeake Bay Office would have overall responsibility for trail planning, management, and development, which would occur in coordination with the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network (CBGN) program. Trail development would occur in accordance with the CMP. Segment management plans for the trail's ten management sections would tier off the CMP, providing more detailed analysis and management guidelines for trail management sections. Segment management plans would provide the basis for prioritizing investment in trail development projects, including land acquisitions.

The trail would continue to develop as partnerships are forged or enhanced with traditional and nontraditional partners who would collaborate to generally emphasize programs, media, and trail facilities to tell the stories of the John Smith voyages. Trail section management plans would provide a common agenda to guide the collective group of partners.

Federal and state agencies would support trail activities. Trail management would be integrated with management of other NPS units and national trails where they are in close proximity to the trail or overlap with the trail. NPS and the U.S. FWS would collaborate to implement opportunities for trail visitors at national wildlife refuges that occur in the vicinity of voyage stops.

The Chesapeake Conservancy would be the primary NPS partner providing assistance with trail development through advocacy, fundraising, land protection, working with landowners, awareness building, and other functions. A friends group would support the work of the trail partners by assisting with resource protection, organizational capacity building, and development (fundraising). In addition there are and would continue to be other regional and even trail-wide partners with which the NPS would collaborate, including other federal agencies and state agencies.

### **Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives**

The environmental assessment (EA) portion of this CMP describes the affected natural, cultural, scenic, and socio-economic environment along the trail and the anticipated impacts on the environment associated with the four CMP alternatives. Eleven impact topics are addressed: aquatic resources; terrestrial resources; threatened and endangered species; archeological resources, historic structures; ethnographic resources; cultural landscapes; trail access; visitor experience; socioeconomics; and trail administration and management

Determining environmental consequences included identifying the regulations and polices applicable to each impact topic, defining the methods used to conduct the analysis, and defining relative terms to qualify impacts, such as "negligible" or "moderate" effects for each impact topic. Analyses were performed to

evaluate impacts along the trail and on a more regional scale in terms of cumulative impacts. Analyses involved comparing conditions that would occur with changes in management (Alternatives 2, 3 and 4) to conditions that would occur if current management practices continued (Alternative 1). The results are presented in Table 3.8 of the CMP/EA and are summarized as follows:

#### Beneficial Impacts of the Alternatives:

- All alternatives would have beneficial impacts on aquatic resources, terrestrial resources, and threatened and endangered species. Beneficial impacts would be negligible and minor, except for Alternative 3 which would have greater (minor to moderate) beneficial impacts.
- Alternatives 2 and 3 would have beneficial impacts on archeological resources, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Beneficial impacts in Alternative 2 would be minor, except for historic structures where they would be moderate. Beneficial impacts would be greater in Alternative 3, being moderate for all four types of cultural resources.
- All alternatives would have beneficial impacts on trail access. Beneficial impacts would be negligible to minor for Alternative 1 while they would be moderate for Alternatives 2, 3, and 4.
- All alternatives would have minor long-term beneficial impacts on visitor experience.
- Alternative 2 would have minor long-term beneficial impacts on socioeconomics. Alternatives 3 and 4 would have moderate long-term beneficial impacts on socioeconomics.
- Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would have minor long-term beneficial impacts on trail administration and management.

#### Adverse Impacts of the Alternatives:

- All alternatives would have long-term negligible to minor adverse impacts on aquatic resources, terrestrial resources, and threatened and endangered species.
- Alternatives 1 and 4 would have negligible to minor adverse impacts on archeological resources, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes.

Overall, Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative) would have the greatest beneficial impacts, including moderate long-term beneficial impacts in seven topics and minor long-term beneficial impacts in four topics. Adverse impacts associated with Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative) would be negligible to minor and long-term in only two impact topics and negligible to minor and short-term in only one impact topic.

#### **Public Involvement in the CMP Planning Process**

During the CMP planning process the NPS has reached out to the public on numerous occasions for input regarding trail management issues, the range of alternatives under consideration, and the types of impacts to be addressed in the trail's new plan. This process has involved the general public, interested individuals, civic organizations, trail user groups, American Indian tribes, and various federal, state, and local agencies.

As the planning process has progressed the NPS has provided information and updates via newsletters, news releases, the trail website, briefings, and public workshops.

### **Agency Preferred Alternative – Alternative 3**

The NPS has identified Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative to guide long-term management of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Selection of Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative is based on the analysis and findings of the CMP planning team as well as on public comments received during the planning process. The CMP planning team has determined that Alternative 3 would fulfill the NPS statutory mission and responsibilities of the trail and would offer a greater overall advantage when compared to the other CMP alternatives considered. Alternative 3 would offer greater advantages with respect to: protection of trail-related resources; interpretation, education, and understanding for visitors; public use and enjoyment of the trail; and effective development and management of the trail.

### **The Next Steps**

Following distribution of the Draft CMP/EA, there will be a 30-day public review and comment period. The public will have opportunities to provide comments on the management alternatives, including the preferred alternative. The public will be able to comment on-line or in the form of email and letters, which must be post marked by the due date posted on the website.

Following the comment period the CMP planning team will evaluate comments received from other federal agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals regarding the Draft CMP/EA. If the results of public and agency review do not identify any potential for significant impacts, the CMP planning team will prepare a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) that will summarize the comments received on the Draft CMP/EA and document the alternative selected for implementation. Conversely, if agency and public review reveals potential for significant impacts, the NPS may proceed with a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the alternative selected for implementation would be documented in a Record of Decision once the EIS process was completed.

### **Implementation of the Plan**

Implementation of the approved trail management plan would depend on future funding from NPS and its partners. Some actions would also depend upon partnership funds, time, and effort. The approval of a CMP/EA does not guarantee that funding and staffing needed to implement the plan will be forthcoming.

Full implementation of the plan by the NPS and its partners could be many years in the future.

Once the Regional Director for the NPS Northeast Region has approved the CMP/EA, additional feasibility studies and more detailed planning, environmental documentation, and consultations would be completed, as appropriate, before the NPS can implement certain actions in the selected alternative. Future program

and implementation plans, describing specific actions that managers intend to undertake and accomplish, would tie from the desired conditions and long-term goals set forth in this CMP.